



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: November 19, 2024

DATE: October 10, 2024

TO: Washoe County Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Faye-Marie Pekar, Park Planner,
Community Services Dept., 328-3623, fpekar@washoecounty.gov

THROUGH: Aaron Smith, Operations Division Director
Community Services Dept, 328-2172, aasmith@washoecounty.gov

SUBJECT: Recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve an Easement Exchange Agreement with Sunny Hills Ranchos over Hidden Valley Regional Park Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 051-330-01; to provide potential access to Sunny Hills Ranchos property APNs 016-840-11 and 016-840-12, in exchange for a Facilities Easement to Washoe County that supports the construction of a water tank and associated infrastructure at Hidden Valley Regional Park for the storage and distribution of recycled water from the South Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility and; direct staff to apply for an NV State Park Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) land conversion and Bureau of Land Management Reversionary Interest application for the proposed access easement. Community Services. (Commission District 4.) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION.

SUMMARY

Washoe County, through its Utility Program in the Community Services Department, is responsible for the management and treatment of recycled water. Washoe County's Utility treats an average of five million gallons of recycled water per day at three regional recycled water plants, including the South Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (STMWRF). The STMWRF is undergoing expansion to align with current and future population growth. As part of the expansion project, the Utility Team identified Hidden Valley Regional Park, APN 051-330-01, as one of the locations for the distribution of treated recycled water. This water tank expansion project is supported by the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission and included in the 2022 Board adopted Hidden Valley Regional Park Master Plan.

To distribute recycled water at the park, the new water tank would convert the park's existing potable water irrigation system to a recycled water irrigation system. Special Use Permits and building permits were obtained for the construction of the water tank and associated infrastructure in 2021 and 2023. To begin construction, a Facilities Easement over private property owned by Sunny Hills Ranchos, APN 016-840-11, is required. This agreement allows Sunny Hills Ranchos to provide the necessary Facilities Easement to Washoe County in exchange for staff efforts to assist in obtaining legal access to Sunny Hills Ranchos property through Hidden Valley Regional Park adjacent to Pony Road.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

The requested access easement to Sunny Hills Ranchos property would need to be reviewed and approved by Washoe County through its Parkland Easement Application and Policy process by the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission and Board of County Commissioners (Board). NV State Parks and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) review and approval of the requested access easement to Sunny Hills Ranchos property is also required as the parkland is deed restricted. This agreement does not guarantee approval of the access easement Sunny Hills is requesting over a portion of Hidden Valley Regional Park. If approved, the agreement relinquishes the necessary Facilities Easement to Washoe County Utilities for the construction of the future water tank, and in addition, the agreement would allow Sunny Hills Ranchos to advance in submitting a Parkland Easement Application to the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission for review and consideration of approval for the requested Access Easement over park property.

Washoe County staff held a public neighborhood meeting on September 5, 2024. As a result of this public neighborhood meeting, additional language has been added to the Agreement that states the requested Access Easement will only provide access to a total of four (4) single family residences.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Economic Impacts: Meet the needs of our growing community.

PREVIOUS ACTION

June 25, 2024 – The Board of County Commissioners requested that the proposed easement exchange agreement be pulled from the consent agenda and for the item to return to BCC after a public meeting is held with the citizens of Hidden Valley.

May 22, 2024 – The Open Space and Regional Parks Commission recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve the following Easement Exchange Agreement with Sunny Hills Ranchos over Hidden Valley Regional Park APN 051-330-01; to provide access to Sunny Hills Ranchos property APNs 016-840-11, 016-840-12, 016-840-13 and 016-840-14 in exchange for a Facilities Easement to Washoe County that supports the construction of a water tank and associated infrastructure at Hidden Valley Regional Park for the storage and distribution of recycled water from the South Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility and; direct staff to apply for an NV State Park Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) land conversion and Bureau of Land Management Reversionary Interest application for the proposed access parcel.

February 2, 2023 – Building Permit was approved for the water tank construction and associated infrastructure.

June 21, 2022 – Hidden Valley Regional Park Master Plan adopted by Board.

May 3, 2022 – Hidden Valley Regional Park Master Plan approved by Open Space and Regional Parks Commission.

August 3, 2022 – Bureau of Land Management approved construction of the water tank at Hidden Valley Regional Park.

January 28, 2022 – A non-exclusive license and usage agreement was obtained by Washoe County Utilities staff to enter Sunny Hills Ranchos property (APN 016-840-11)

to begin geotechnical and survey work for the water tank 30-inch pipeline alignment and design.

September 2, 2021 – Special Use Permit obtained for the water tank construction and associated infrastructure.

February 2, 2021 – The Open Space and Regional Park Commission moved to recommend that Community Services Department staff apply for a special use permit to construct a one-million-gallon water tank and associated infrastructure at Hidden Valley Regional Park for the storage and distribution of recycled water from the South Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility.

August 4, 1966 – The Board accepted a Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act patent for a 260-acre portion of Hidden Valley Regional Park.

May 23, 1968 – The Board accepted an R&PP Act patent for a 200-acre portion of Hidden Valley Regional Park.

April 29, 1969 – The Board accepted an R&PP Act patent for a 40-acre portion of Hidden Valley Regional Park.

BACKGROUND

The Washoe County Utility Program plans to construct a water tank at Hidden Valley Regional Park for the distribution of recycled water to support the expansion of the South Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (STMWRF) as approved in the 2022 adopted Hidden Valley Regional Park Master Plan. Appropriate permitting has been obtained in 2021 and 2023 by Washoe County Utility staff for the water tank and is ready to be constructed. Construction will consist of a one-million-gallon water tank located at Hidden Valley Regional Park, construction of a 15-ft-wide gravel road to provide access to the tank for operations and maintenance purposes and additional project elements would include the installation of $\pm 3,400$ feet of 30-inch pipeline to connect the tank to the STMWRF over Hidden Valley Regional Park and private property owned by Sunny Hills Ranchos (APN 016-840-11).

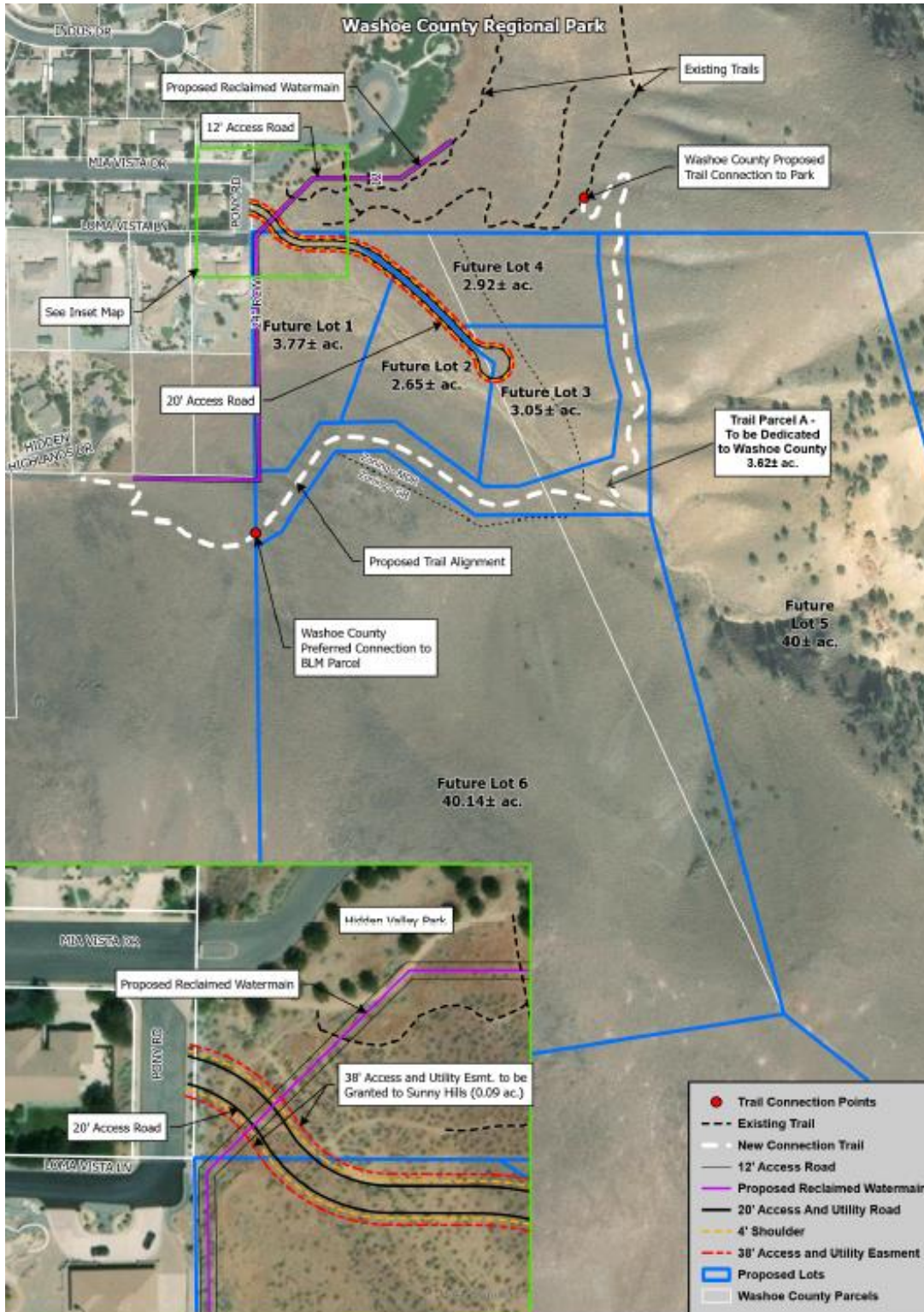
In January 2022, Washoe County Utility staff obtained a non-exclusive license and usage agreement from Sunny Hills Ranchos to enter their private property (APN 016-840-11) to begin geotechnical and survey work for the water tank 30-inch pipeline alignment and design. During this time, Washoe County Utility staff initiated discussions with Sunny Hills Ranchos to obtain a permanent Facilities Easement for the 30-inch pipeline that would impact the west portion of Sunny Hills Ranchos property, APN 016-840-11 as shown in “Graphic A”.

Sunny Hills Ranchos is willing to provide the Facility Easement to Washoe County in exchange for efforts to obtain legal access to their parcel through Hidden Valley Regional Park adjacent to Pony Road as shown in “Graphic B”. The requested access easement to Sunny Hills Ranchos property would need to be reviewed and approved by Washoe County through its Parkland Easement Application and Policy process by the Open Space and Regional Park Commission and Board of County Commissioners. NV State Parks and the Bureau of Land Management review and approval of the requested access easement to Sunny Hills Ranchos property is also required as the parkland is deed restricted. This agreement does not guarantee approval of the access easement Sunny Hills is requesting over a portion of Hidden Valley Regional Park.

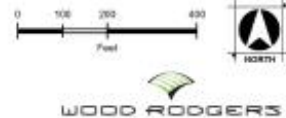
Graphic A



Graphic B



**SUNNY HILLS / HIDDEN VALLEY PARK
 TRAIL PARCEL AND EASEMENT EXCHANGE**
 SUNNY HILLS
 WASHOE COUNTY, NV
 FEBRUARY 2024



Washoe County holds a Recreation & Public Purposes (R&PP) Act patents for Hidden Valley Regional Park. These patents were secured in the late 1960s. Any park development requires review and approval by the Bureau of Land Management to ensure that the development is consistent with the R&PP legislation. The park is also Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) restricted and the access easement that Sunny Hills Ranchos would like to acquire over Hidden Valley Regional Park requires review and approval by the National Parks Service.

If approved, this Easement Exchange Agreement would support the STMWRF expansion that will provide community wide benefits but also a number of park benefits, including a conversion of the existing potable water irrigation system to a recycled water irrigation system, a future proposed irrigated fenced dog park, and potential wetlands trail area. Additionally, Sunny Hills Ranchos has offered to dedicate a Trail Access Parcel to Washoe County as part of the LWCF land conversion that would connect Hidden Valley Regional Park to the adjacent BLM parcels to the west of property owned by Sunny Hills Ranchos (see Graphic B). This proposed trail connection is supported by the 2022 Hidden Valley Regional Park Master Plan by creating new trail connections from the park to adjacent public lands. Moreover, the approval of this Easement Exchange Agreement would support the future proposed Virginia Range Trail Corridor Plan design overseen by Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation that was approved and funded by City of Reno Council in November 2023. The \$50,000 of funding pledged by City of Reno for the Virginia Range Trail Corridor Plan aims to preserve wildlife habitat and support recreation within this area as it anticipates future trail connection needs from Hidden Valley Regional Park trail system south to Geiger Grade.

On September 5th, 2024, Washoe County staff held a public neighborhood meeting regarding the proposed Easement Exchange Agreement between Washoe County and Sunny Hills Ranchos at the Rosewood Nature Study Area (6800 Pembroke Dr. Reno, NV 89502). Notices were sent to 328 individual property owners. Neighborhood meeting notifications were also published on the Washoe County Neighborhood HUB website, provided to the Hidden Valley Community Alliance (HVCA), and posted on Nextdoor. Approximately forty (40) members of the public were in attendance. Parks and Engineering staff provided a presentation on the proposed Easement Exchange Agreement, reviewed maps, answered questions and address public concerns. Discussions about the community wide long-term benefits of the water tank construction and use of recycled water within Hidden Valley Regional Park, the proposed future public trail parcel over Sunny Hills Ranchos property, funds used to construct the water tank, the County's development code for rezoning requirements, restriction of hill side development and traffic impact study thresholds were discussed. Primary public concerns revolved around the conceptual future development of four (4) single family residential homes on Sunny Hills Ranchos property, traffic impacts of the proposed four (4) homes, maintenance of the proposed private road and concerns of Sunny Hills Ranchos developing their property further south than what is currently proposed. All materials from the public meeting and meeting summary can be found on the Washoe County Neighborhood HUB website and were provided to attendees via email as well as the HVCA for distribution. As a result of this public neighborhood meeting, additional

language has been added to the Agreement that states the requested Access Easement will only provide access to a total of four (4) single family residences (see item I within the Agreement recitals).

Park Benefits

Construction of the water tank and pipeline would allow for the conversion of the park's existing potable water irrigation system to a recycled water irrigation system. Potable water would be maintained for drinking fountains, but any landscaping could utilize recycled water. Additionally, this less expensive, sustainable water source would allow for the installation of further landscaping improvements and other park amenities. The potable water rights currently in use at the park could also be utilized for other purposes. This new recycled water source would ultimately allow for additional landscaping and other potential amenities in the park and would also allow for a portion of the potable water currently in use at the park to be utilized for other municipal purposes.

The proposed Trail Access Parcel to be dedicated to Washoe County through the LWCF Land Conversion process with National Parks Service is supported by the 2022 Hidden Valley Regional Park Master Plan by creating new trail connections from the park to adjacent public lands. Similarly, the Virginia Range Trail Corridor Plan anticipates trail alignment needs from Hidden Valley Regional Park connecting south to Geiger Grade. The proposed trail parcel would serve as a future trail alignment connection from the park to BLM parcel, APN 021-270-34.

Next Steps

Should the Board of County Commissioners support the Easement Exchange Agreement, the Facilities Easement will be released to Washoe County Utilities to begin construction of the water tank at Hidden Valley Regional Park. The next step for Sunny Hills Ranchos is to submit a complete Parkland Easement Application that would be reviewed by the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission at a future meeting. Should the outcome of that review be favorable, the proposal would need to be reviewed and approved by the National Parks Service via NV State Parks for the LWCF Land Conversion, as well as reviewed and approved by the Bureau of Land Management through their Third-Party Use Policy or reversionary interest purchase process. After National Park Service and BLM approval for the access easement is obtained and the deed restrictions no longer encumber the proposed access parcel over Hidden Valley Regional Park to Sunny Hills Ranchos property, Washoe County through the Board of County Commissioner review and approval process can issue an access easement over Hidden Valley Regional Park to Sunny Hill Ranchos.

FISCAL IMPACT

Costs associated with the Easement Exchange Agreement and anticipated next steps will be the responsibility of Sunny Hills Ranchos.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve an Easement Exchange Agreement with Sunny Hills Ranchos over Hidden Valley Regional Park Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 051-330-01; to provide potential access to Sunny Hills Ranchos property APNs 016-840-11, 016-840-12, 016-840-13 and 016-840-14 in

exchange for a Facilities Easement to Washoe County that supports the construction of a water tank and associated infrastructure at Hidden Valley Regional Park for the storage and distribution of recycled water from the South Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility and; direct staff to apply for an NV State Park Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) land conversion and Bureau of Land Management Reversionary Interest application for the proposed access easement.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Commission agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to approve an Easement Exchange Agreement with Sunny Hills Ranchos over Hidden Valley Regional Park Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 051-330-01; to provide potential access to Sunny Hills Ranchos property APNs 016-840-11, 016-840-12, 016-840-13 and 016-840-14 in exchange for a Facilities Easement to Washoe County that supports the construction of a water tank and associated infrastructure at Hidden Valley Regional Park for the storage and distribution of recycled water from the South Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility and; direct staff to apply for an NV State Park Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) land conversion and Bureau of Land Management Reversionary Interest application for the proposed access easement."