



Newsletter #2

September, 2016

Save Open Space – Carson City

A group of citizens with a common interest in preserving Carson City's unique identity and growing our community in a smart and sustainable manner have formed a new organization called **SaveOpenSpace-Carson City** (SOS Carson City or SOS-CC). We are a Nevada non-profit organization registered with both the state and the city.

Our Mayor recently gave out medallions praising Carson City as “a community that values its citizens.”

SOS-CC agrees with this sentiment and is concerned about valuing the citizens already living in Carson City. We are committed to continuing to work toward a sustainable solution for all of Carson City's residents.

You can find us on the web at SOSCarsonCity.org, as well as on Facebook (SOS Carson City) and Twitter (@SOSCarsonCity). **We encourage you to spread the word about SOS-CC to family and friends who live and have a stake in our community's future.** They can keep up with the latest information at the [Updates](#) page. We also have a [Donate](#) page on our website for those who would like to contribute to the work of SOS-CC.

Vintage Project Approval Process Update

While the public will be offered an opportunity to present comments at the meeting, written comments submitted by 12:00 PM on September 20 will be included in the packets sent to the Planning Commissioners one week in advance of the meeting. Comments received after this deadline, but by 12:00 PM on September 28, will be given to the Planning Commissioners the evening before the meeting. All comments received after that date must be presented at the Planning Commission meeting. SOS-CC will hold a special meeting on September 13 at in the Fritsch Elementary School that will help the public prepare comments. To send your comments earlier, email Lee Plemel at lplemel@carson.org or write to Planning Commission, 108 E. Proctor St., Carson City, Nevada 89701.

The applications will then be scheduled for a subsequent meeting of the Board of Supervisors, who has final decision authority on the applications. For more information, visit: www.carson.org/vintage.

Critical Upcoming Dates

All meetings held in Sierra Room @ Carson City Community Center, 851 East William Street, unless otherwise noted.

- **September 6th 5:30 PM** – Parks Commission review of trails and parks within the development
- **September 13th 6:00 PM** – An SOS-CC sponsored **public meeting** to prepare for the Planning Commission meeting will take place in the Fritsch Elementary School auditorium, 504 Bath Street
- **September 29th 5:00 PM** – Planning Commission meeting to review and possibly approve the Vintage project
- **October 6th 8:30 AM** - earliest possible Board of Supervisors meeting to vote on Planning Commission decision regarding Vintage Project

A Healthy Argument for Green Space

Overweight and obesity rates have risen dramatically in the United States since the 1970s, and, during a similar time period, physical activity rates have declined in both children and adults. Being physically active is more than a personal decision; community design and the availability of open spaces and recreation areas strongly influence how active people are.

Living close to parks and other recreation facilities also is consistently related to higher physical activity levels for both adults and youth. One national study found that adolescents with easy access to multiple recreation facilities were both more physically active and less likely to be overweight and obese than were adolescents without access to such facilities. The Institute of Medicine has stated that improving the walkability of neighborhoods and increasing access to recreation facilities are essential strategies for preventing childhood obesity.

A recent study published in Environmental Science & Technology underscores just how important green spaces are for our long-term well-being. When a group of researchers from the UK's University of Exeter looked at five years' worth of mental health data for 1064 participants who moved their residence during the study period, they found that those who moved to urban areas with more surrounding green space showed higher overall mental health scores—meaning that they were happier and had lower levels of anxiety and depression—for the very first year after their relocation compared to the years prior to moving.

Even more important, they found that these benefits lingered. Participants who'd moved to greener areas showed higher mental health scores for a full three years after their relocation, when the study stopped collecting data.

From: Americantrails.org and Smithsonian.com

Open Space Provides Economic Benefits

Not only do open spaces, recreation areas, and walkable neighborhoods strongly influence how active people are, they provide fiscal benefits to municipal governments as well as nearby residential property values.

A review of over 60 studies on the impact open spaces have on residential property values showed that most do increase property values but the magnitude depends on the size of the area, its proximity to residences, and the type of open space. A land containment program in Salem, Ore., added about \$4,200 more per acre to the value of urban land near the greenbelts than urban land located 1,000 feet away from the boundary. The impact greenbelt land has on urban land value extends about 5,000 feet (about 1 mile) inward from the urban growth boundary.

The positive effect natural open space has on nearby property values can result in higher assessments and thus higher property tax revenues for local governments. In one Boulder, Colo., neighborhood, the overall value of the greenbelt was approximately \$5.4 million, which contributed potentially \$500,000 annually to the overall neighborhood property tax revenue. The purchase price of this greenbelt for the city was approximately \$1.5 million and, thus, the potential property tax revenue alone would allow a recovery of initial costs in just three years.

The synthesis also found that preserved farmland in rural and suburban areas has a greater impact on surrounding real estate values than land that may be developed. Because many studies on the subject have been conducted in specific geographic areas, there is mixed evidence about how much households are willing to pay to preserve the farmland. However, studies do show there is a price premium when farmland perceived to be under the threat of development is preserved. A 2002 study found that people in Maryland were willing to pay \$3,307 more for a house near permanently preserved open space rather than pastureland that could be developed at some point in the future, suggesting that people value open space because it is not development.

From: Americantrails.org

(Note: monetary figures were adjusted to 2016 dollars for consistency)

Millennial Attraction

According to the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) our workforce is aging and declining. The Chamber of Commerce agrees that the primary age groups needed in Carson City are from the 124-million strong Millennials (under age 35). However, while Carson City is valiantly attempting to change the image of the city from the staid place it sees itself to a vibrant community for the young, to tap into this potentially huge market, competition will be fierce.

Across the country, cities are putting out the welcome mat for coveted professionals aged 25-34 in targeted social media and advertising campaigns, and with offers of internships, housing subsidies and student loan reimbursements. Some cities are paying people to move there. There's a reason for this: 1 million young adults move each year, according to a 2014 City Observatory [study](http://cityobservatory.org/ynr/) (<http://cityobservatory.org/ynr/>). Their presence in a city is a direct reflection of its health and well-being, the study found, as young migrant professionals are key to fueling economic growth and urban revitalization.

But research shows that college-educated young adults aged 25 to 34 are twice as likely to live within three miles of a city's downtown core, said Joe Cortright, an economist and director of City Observatory, a think tank funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. "The one thing we know about this group of people is they're extremely mobile. If they don't like a place, they move on. The trick is less in attracting people to move, it's building an appealing reality that will get them to stay," he said.

In attempting to attract these age groups to replace retiring seniors, do we really need another senior residential development? Wouldn't abundant green/open space recreational opportunities go a long way to attract and retain young professionals who wish to settle and raise a family in a unique, community-oriented setting?

The downtown core redevelopment into unique shops, restaurants and living space is a tremendous start, but Carson City has so much more potential that it must live up to in order to really compete for and succeed in gaining a vibrant and sustainable future.

Further Taxing Already Strapped Emergency and Health Services

How will the City emergency and health care services deal with an influx of over 305 new senior citizens? Of the 305 living units proposed, 93 are assisted and extended care units; these residents, dealing with various health crises, require an inordinate amount of city services (time and money).

At a recent Board of Supervisors meeting, Supervisor Jim Shirk read a letter from the Fire Department Chief that stated they were unable to meet the existing demand. Approval of another senior project will further stress already tapped-out emergency health services.

Carson-Tahoe Hospital is currently seeking 25 new primary care doctors and is already planning to expand its facilities.

Both the Sheriff and Fire Departments are understaffed and under-equipped already. Who will pay for the cost of expanded services – we the taxpayers! This is a form of corporate welfare that often goes overlooked during the development and growth process. So it seems there should be no rush to approve more development projects at this time. It may be wise to slow down and take a deep breath.

Opening the Flood Gates

Floods have been described as the most devastating of all natural events. Engineer-speak will refer to "the 100-year flood, meaning that the chance of a major flood every year is 1%. Evidence suggests that the most damage occurs from smaller floods, the frequency of which has been increasing in recent times.

It's not just the Carson River. Less than 20 years ago, **most** flood damage was caused by several major gully washers raging down Kings, Ash, Vicee and other canyons from the west. Gabions, structures designed as dams, were quickly filled with debris, overflowed and bypassed by floodwater. Many homes were impacted. Most of this water, joined by overflow from Ash Canyon, surged down Winnie Lane, continued along Mountain Street to the former location of CTH and then down Washington, Telegraph, and King Streets onto Fifth Street and eastward. As a result of the extensive movement of water and debris from the Carson Range, large areas of Carson City, were flooded, causing damage **totaling \$11 million in today's dollars.**

Green/open spaces preserve and enhance the natural functions of the floodplains, and accomplish this goal in a manner that protects and enhances the environment in a natural, not engineered, manner. **Flood mitigation capability on this land should not be taken for granted.**

Commercial? C'mon!?

The Vintage developer is proposing 5½ acres (240,000 sq ft) of Neighborhood Business Zoning. Among the potentially allowable uses in such a zoning district are: automobile servicing, convenience store; dry cleaning; gaming; dry cleaning and other similar business types per CCMC 18.04.120.1.

Neighborhood business zoning here is inappropriate due to incompatibility with the existing surrounding neighborhood. Nowhere else directly adjacent to the property boundaries do these types of land uses exist.

Moreover, approving new businesses for this development is counter to the millions of dollars taxpayers are investing in the downtown redevelopment, and furthermore makes no sense when there are so many vacant commercial buildings dispersed throughout the city.

Estates Worth Emulating

When it comes to a quality, walkable community development, one not need look all that far. The Long Ranch Estates represents an excellent example of a development that has not only integrated, but has maximized green space and recreational opportunities. Averaging roughly 125 feet in width, trail buffers surround the entire perimeter of the development and the trails see heavy use. Interior trail buffers ranging from 25- 75 feet in width are valuable from the standpoint that they expand the urban trail network. However, these see much less traffic. The difference in usage likely relates to the due the difference in buffer width - the larger perimeter buffer affords much better views of the mountains.



Long Ranch Estates off King Street in west Carson City.
Yellow = residential parcels, light green = open space/trails
dark green = open space/park

The Vintage should strive to emulate the fantastic Long Ranch Estates. The opportunity exists to provide vastly expand the urban trails network, while providing greater connectivity to C-Hill, and the foothill trails in Kings Ash and Vicee Canyons. Andersen Ranch should serve as a gateway to these recreational opportunities. In many ways, Carson City's future appeal, growth and prosperity depend on the fate of this property.



Yard Signs

Show your support with a yard sign!
Email us at SOSCarsonCity@gmail.com if you would like to get one (or perhaps several, for your neighbors, friends or family). You have a choice of two signs: (1) SOS Carson City, or (2) Stop Vintage. A donation of \$5 is requested to cover a portion of the production cost.



By participating with SOS-CC, you will be contributing to one of the most important issues facing our community's future – growing Carson City in a smart and sustainable manner. When you submit a comment on our website, you will be subscribed to our e-distribution list, so that you are kept informed of the latest news, activities and progress on our efforts.

Please attend one or more of the meetings listed on page 1.

YOU KNOW IT'S RIGHT, SO JOIN THE FIGHT!!!