

West Wash Dam Rehabilitation Public Comments

The following comments were received during the comment period ending December 19, 2021 that are shown as italicized text and responses are in bold text:

- Went to the website link and received the message "no information found" Where can I get information on this project?

The website (<https://www.reno.gov/westwashdamrehabilitationproject>).

- I want to register for the zoom call October 19 about the West Wash Dam Rehab. Project, but I'm having trouble. Could you assist me?

Registration for the meeting can be done by using (clicking) the following link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_b2vEBhrTQMingA3ib8BbPw

- I am looking forward to understanding what the West Wash Dam project is. I have found no proposed actions within the City of Reno website, only statements regarding the dam's purpose and regulatory authority of NRCS program. We have, over the decades, had a number of proposed enhancements to the West Wash Dam, including the most recent raising the height of the dam. I would love to comment on this project which backs to my property but I have no idea what is proposed. Is it possible to update the City's website so that the public may be more informed? I see that there are a number of reference studies and reports for flood management. What I don't see are more recent studies regarding this watershed. With the construction of Leadership parkway, which acts as a dam and apartments, which create impermeable surfaces, we don't have actual data corresponding to what our landscape now looks like and what we should be concerned about for future management. These studies and models would be helpful along with models for climate change, which I know FEMA is working on as well. Thank you for helping me be an informed citizen!

The upcoming meeting is for public scoping only and an alternative to rehabilitate the dam has not been selected. Once an alternative is selected, additional information will be provided within the environmental document which will be available to the public for review and comment. This information is anticipated to be available in late summer 2022. Additional information will be available at the scoping meeting and will be posted to the project website after the meeting for public review. All members of the public are welcome to submit questions or comments regarding the dams, the resources present and the goals of the NRCS Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program. I appreciate your comments and your concerns will be included in the public scoping record for the project.

- I live in the area affected by the above referenced project and received your letter. I tried to register for the meeting on October 19, 2021. Sadly, the link listed in the letter does not work.

Try using the following link to register to the upcoming meeting: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_b2vEBhrTQMingA3ib8BbPw

- What about the previous project?

This is a complete start over with new alternatives.

- Thank you for your work with the West Wash Dam Rehab Project. At the location of the East Wash Diversion Dam has there been any talk about engineering a standing wave feature such as Boise has? I was just on the riverwalk in Boise and bought a surfboard. Their wave attracts eight to ten surfers at a time even during this time of year with lower flows. Could be an awesome way for the city to transform what has been a dangerous low-head dam feature into a great benefit for the community and visitors to the region.

Since the East Wash Diversion Dam is not on the Truckee River and only receives flow during large storm events, a feature such as this would not serve the purpose as intended.

- Where do we find out more about this? Will there be a meeting? The FB post says something about Oct 19, but there is no further instructions.

**Please use the following City link for recent information about the upcoming meeting: <https://www.reno.gov/Home/Components/News/News/19864/576>
For more information, visit: [Reno.gov/WestWashDamRehabilitationProject](https://www.reno.gov/WestWashDamRehabilitationProject)**

- I'm so pleased that the city is interested in rehabilitating the west wash dam. I have lived here for 2 years and was very disappointed when I started using the west wash to see how many people leave pet waste there without any consideration for the natural landscape. I'd love to attend today's meeting, however I'll be in the middle of another meeting. Thank you so much for taking the time to ask neighbors how they want this natural area converted from the wasteland that it currently is into something better for our community. When will decisions be made?

There were additional residents that were not available to join the meeting so the recording of the meeting was added to the project's webpage which can be viewed (if interested) with the following link: <https://www.reno.gov/government/departments/public-works/west-wash-dam-rehabilitation>. Once an alternative is selected, additional information will be provided within the environmental document which will be available to the public for review and comment. This information is anticipated to be available in late summer 2022.

- I wasn't able to properly jot down the link for further information and commenting regarding this project. Would you be able to forward that link to me? Thank you for making this meeting possible. I found it very interesting, but I didn't feel I knew enough - even with the excellent overview by the engineering firm - to comment. I hope to continue to learn more about the project. We live very close to the east wash dam.

The following consists of the link: [reno.gov/WestWashDamRehabilitationProject](https://www.reno.gov/WestWashDamRehabilitationProject). In the next few days we will include the presentation and additional information throughout this process.

- Will the recording be available for viewing?

The recording has been added to the project website and can be viewed with the following link: <https://www.reno.gov/government/departments/public-works/west-wash-dam-rehabilitation/>

- Unfortunately I was not able to participate in the meeting last Tuesday discussing the West Wash Rehabilitation project but I was curious to find out what was going on the north end of the wash near McCarran. It was my understanding that it was being developed for retail and housing but some of my neighbors had mentioned that this plan had been nixed. However, there has been some construction going on there and wasn't able to find what was being planned.

The project is in for a grading permit and the current status is on hold. The project includes retail and housing as initially planned; however, it has been redesigned to reduce grading. There were some non-permitted grading activities going on in the site but Building Department staff required the contractor to stop all construction activities.

- I'm so sorry I missed the meeting. I didn't see your confirmation and reminder until too late. I tried to get on from where I signed up and couldn't navigate it.

The recording from the meeting you missed has been added to the project website and can be viewed with the following link: <https://www.reno.gov/government/departments/public-works/west-wash-dam-rehabilitation/>

- Attached and below, please see our public comments. Regarding developing a recreation site adjacent to the dam site, I simply ask you be aware of our separate request to Parks and Recreation and do whatever you can to coordinate your project with their effort. I included you in an email sent to Parks and Recreation.

We look forward to future meetings.

Public Comment: West Wash Dam Rehabilitation, City of Reno

We live across the street downhill from the East Wash Dam site. We received a letter inviting us to comment and watched the presentation October 19, 2021. The following are comments and questions we would like addressed by the project team.

- 1. Protect life and property. If the dams were removed or nothing done to improve the site, our home of 30+ years and all of our resources are in the direct line of water flow down Keystone Ave. We want the team to create a plan for maximum protection from extreme water events.*
- 2. Prioritize nuisance mitigation during construction. Wind and dust are common in the area so dust mitigation is a high priority. Please limit construction/noise between 8 am to 5 pm on weekdays only. There is a blind corner at Keystone and Van Ness. Cars speed in the area as they make their way to the North McCarran freeway. Hikers, mountain bikers and dog walkers regularly cross the street as they move from the Open Space over to Rancho San Rafael trails. Please address specifics in your upcoming presentations.*
- 3. Enhance area for neighborhood use. The neighborhood uses the site as Open Space for hiking, biking, dog walking, recreating. We want the City to improve and develop the Dam and adjacent 3.7 acre City owned parcel into an official Recreation and Park amenity. The City owned property is Parcel 001-190-15 3.7 acres zoned Greenway and Open Space. A separate*

request (attached) is submitted to Recreation and Parks but we request your team coordinate an effort with their department.

4. Enhance biodiversity and resilience.

a. Enhance biodiversity. The year round water flow attracts a rich assortment of species to the area. We want improvement and enhancements to protect and build upon naturally occurring biodiversity, in particular natural pollinator species and birds. What plantings and natural features can be repopulated in the area to support this goal?

b. Eliminate use of biocides for vegetation management. We want the City stop using chemical biocides for vegetation management. In the past, the City has blown biocides in the area with NO PUBLIC NOTICE, blowing these chemicals into our back yards and homes. We exercise and walk our pets in this area and are concerned about the long term effects these chemicals have on biodiversity and our health. Please address these concerns in upcoming public meetings.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and provide input on the West Wash Dam Rehabilitation Project. Two residents that live near the Keystone Van Ness Intersection.

Utility Services Department is researching and gathering information for this.

- Please include the following proposal as part of public input for your City of Reno | Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Service Plan. You will be excited to learn we already have City owned land zoned for Open Space and Greenways in the midst of a heavily used trail system that be developed into a low cost recreation site in Northwest Reno near Keystone and North McCarran! The site was preserved thanks to the efforts of the former West University NAB, citizen input, and Council Person Jardon.

I am copying Council Person Jardon's office, the Director of Parks and Recreation Jaime Schroeder, and Steve Gamilis the project coordinator for the West Wash Dam Rehabilitation project. I plan on presenting this proposal at an upcoming Parks and Recreation Commission meeting at public comment and hope you will support the idea. Please see the attached document with a summary below.

Request for Support: Keystone Van Ness Recreation Site Development, submitted October/November 2021

What: 3.7 acre City owned land currently zoned Greenway and Open Space parcel 001-190-15

Where: Near Keystone and North McCarran adjacent to the East and West Wash Dams in Northwest Reno

General Location using Google Earth

Keystone Van Ness General location.png

Specific Parcel Outline and Zoning using City of Reno GIS map tempsnip.png

Request: Support and prioritize development of a low maintenance recreation facility on City of Reno parcel 001-190-15. Examples may include a trailhead, dog poop station, seating to take in the view of the Sierras, labyrinth, public art, picnic tables, shade structures, and native species plantings to enhance biodiversity.

Why:

1. West and East Wash Dams are scheduled for major Federal rehabilitation work between now and 2025 which presents a unique opportunity to dovetail recreation enhancements in the area. Steve Gamilis in the Utility Services Department at the City of Reno is the Project Coordinator. Email: gamiliss@reno.gov, Office: 775-334-2461. Please see their web page for further details.

2. *The City already owns the property!*
3. *The property is already zoned for Greenways and Open space thanks to efforts from the former West University NAB, citizen efforts, and Council Person Neoma Jardon!*
4. *It fits with the City of Reno Park and Recreation priority of creating a healthy community by developing low maintenance open space enhancements. The site is adjacent to several regional trails in the West/East Wash Dam, Keystone Canyon trailhead, and connectors to Rancho San Rafael already heavily used for hiking, mountain biking, running, and dog walking. For a relatively low cost, the City of Reno Recreation and Parks can enhance and preserve an important quality of life resource for our neighborhood.*

Thank you for providing input on our Parks, Recreation and Open Space Service Plan. Your comments will be incorporated with our public input.

- I was unable to attend the zoom meeting regarding the West Wash Dam. Is there is a summary of that meeting available please?

Your concerns will be included in the public scoping record for the project.

- I am finally able to sit down and provide my thoughts on the West and East WASH Dam rehab project.

My husband, son and I have enjoyed walking down into the open space between the two earthen dams since 2003. There have been wet years, when the stream expanded, the seasonal 'pond' filled up and ducks and other water fowl converged. The willows expanded, and sanctuaries for wild animals both of wing and ground habits increased. Later, we watched motorized vehicles move into the spaces, causing damage to the stream bed and trails. When the City finally blocked off entry to motorized traffic, and designated the area a 'greenway' we were very pleased. We again found this area to provide a small, nearby peaceful place to amble.

Since the pandemic, in 2020, this area has seen a huge increase in recreational use. We have seen new bicycle paths cut into the eastside slope, and dog and foot traffic traversing any open area. The stream is but a trickle during the drought, and shrubs, grasses and willows are all challenged to survive. Pathways lead across the stream in many locations, disrupting the meager protections for small wildlife, and the plants that help to anchor the soil. Its rare to see wildlife there now, nor hear much of the songbirds we might once have heard in the morning or evening.

That said, it is our hope that the engineering firm tasked with evaluating the safety of the dams, and the prospect of greater flooding events, will decide to maintain/improve/even enlarge the dams now in place. Removal of the dams doesn't make sense to us. In its current state, the area is heavily used and the soil is disrupted. Flooding would likely be heavily sedimented. Flooding of the area would also pick up dog waste, which could also be detrimental, downstream.

Weed control through spraying has been a concern to nearby neighbors, who have had wind carried spray, or actual direct application onto their properties. Please address non-chemical ways to manage unwanted plants. Introducing native plants into a managed setting might help, if allowed to establish through certain protections, and controlled irrigation.

Given that the City is reevaluating its parks and recreation master plan, would not this area be a great candidate for a City Park?

Established pathways would help to cut down on off-trail traffic; signage and pathways could make it clear when illegal pathway cutting would occur. Native plants could again take root, and help retain soil.

Dog waste could be better handled with poop stations and trash receptacles.

Why not establish a fenced off area for dogs, to allow other areas to remain dog free, to allow for the establishment of native plantings, and sheltering of wildlife.

We have anticipated a bicycle shop and test riding pathways to be constructed just north of the parcel. Perhaps this business would be willing to help fund specially selected trails for bicycling on the parcel

A small parking area on the south end - to the west of the West Wash Dam - and paved pathways to meet ADA standards, and a seating area.

Perhaps there are local businesses that would be interested in donating park benches, or scheduling volunteer days in coordination with KTMB or the Parks Foundation.

I will be writing to those in the Parks and Recreation Department as well.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my thoughts on behalf of my son, and husband.

Your comments and your concerns will be included in the public scoping record for the project.

- I live very near the West Wash Dam and am aware of the upcoming work to be done there. I enjoy walking in that area and am hoping that as part of the plan there could be recreational enhancements. This area is a natural wildlife habitat and I often see/hear birds and other wildlife along the little stream that runs through it. The open area has a park like feeling that could be developed nicely. The downer though is the huge amount of dog poop as people walk their dogs and don't pick up. If there were more distinct trails, maybe a few benches and definitely a dog poop station or two I think people would have more respect, and would keep it clean. With ever encroaching building taking our open spaces (like all the apartments across the street) we need to protect and enhance the natural areas we still have left. I hope you will agree and see the potential of this little area

Your comments and your concerns will be included in the public scoping record for the West Wash Dam Rehabilitation Project. Once an alternative is selected, additional information will be provided within the environmental document which will be available to the public for review and comment. This information is anticipated to be available in late summer 2022.

- We live a block away from the West Wash Dam. I understand there will be some improvements made to the site. I would like to understand what mitigations will be made for noise and dust. And I would like to urge the city to allow this spot to be a recreational area with connector trails. It is well used by the local community at this time for biking and dog walking. If it can be enhanced in any way, we would appreciate it.

Your comments and your concerns will be included in the public scoping record for the project.

- Thank you for the presentation back in October, appreciated the consultants and NRCS information.

Based on the powerpoint given during the discussion, I'm trying to figure out the "overtopping" models for the dams, since these were presented without context. The 100-yr events are daily/hourly #s? From what I can see we've had at least two of these, in the past 25 years and really only the East Wash dam gave me concerns, though it never reached the spillway to deliver water to the West Wash retention area. That event also sent a lot of water to the drainage below the West Wash dam, so I assume that was used as storm drainage from somewhere else. The West Wash dam did very well in 1997. Of course this was before the

upstream apartment land was conceived, creating acres of impermeable surface (whatever happened to the City's quest for permeable pavement and covering?). Anyway, I look forward the consultants modeling.

What I really wanted to comment on is the land within the wash areas. The drainages support native riparian habitat which had done very well until recent declines in native tree species with non-native invasive Russian olive taking over. Adjacent to the riparian tree canopy are now large swaths of perennial pepperweed a Nevada C listed weed. Additionally, some of the upland area has recovered or was not significantly affected by original construction, these areas contain native shrubs and forbs. Areas that have had fairly recent fires have supported invasion of non-native State listed weeds including madusahead, puncture vine, jointed goatgrass, a variety of invasive thistles and ever present cheatgrass.

Should earth moving activities occur, say for borrow sites, please place these sites in areas that support non-native species and refrain from disturbing the ever-dwindling native shrub patches. Post construction, a restoration plan with native plant seeding specs., should help reduce the potential for fire by reducing the flammable non-native annual grass species. A weed abatement plan should be developed and followed post construction with certified weed applicators.

The drainage within the West Wash dam used to support diverse amphibians. Western toad and Sierran tree frog used to be common here. I realize this is probably a fruitless request but allowing relatively shallow ponding of water before it drains would enhance the re-establishment of these amphibians.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to reviewing the draft EA.

Your concerns will be included in the public scoping record for the project.