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SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

08 February 2021 - 14 February 2023

PROJECT NAME:

Upper DeFord Trail Project



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 | Please provide feedback on the Upper DeFord Project Proposal. Click Here to View the Map.

montanatom1950

7/05/2022 06:30 PM

I am formally requesting that you STOP this proposed project right now. Please cease all scoping, planning, public outreach, comment gathering, budgeting and justification for this project. There are 3 far more urgent transportation needs in Helena ,Montana that need to be accomplished before any more staff time, taxpayer money and use of resources are frittered away on recreational amenities. Only after the following 3 infrastructure priorities are completed would it be appropriate for the City of Helena to develop more recreational amenities in Dry Gulch. Please note that I say "Dry Gulch" There is no "Davis Gulch" The United States Geological Survey topographic map titled "Helena, Montana" is the true and final wisdom on geographic place names in Montana. If you look at the "Helena, Montana" topographic map you will see that the gulch extending south of Helena from Davis Street is correctly called "Dry Gulch" Even the upper portion of the "Dry Gulch" beyond Tucker Gulch is still "Dry Gulch" Lewis and Clark County incorrectly named the road in this stretch of "Dry Gulch" as "Davis Gulch Drive". But all that is but an aside. Here are the 3 projects the City of Helena, Montana must complete prior to developing more recreational trails in Dry Gulch. 1. Finish the cross town "Centennial Trail" By finish the trail I mean that you need to fill in all the missing segments with new paved trail. You need to pave all the current unpaved bits of the trail. You need to have a Centennial Trail bridge constructed over Henderson Street. You need to get the trail extended to the east beyond Walmart and connect it to the paved trail to East Helena. You need to provide a safe crossing of Montana Avenue by the Centennial Trail. 2. Designate, stripe, paint, construct, whatever it takes, more bicycle lanes on existing streets in Helena. Priorities would be on Park Avenue, Cruse Street, Colonial Drive and several east/west routes and several north/south routes. 3. Change existing City of Helena transportation ordinances to Require that there be sidewalks along Every street in Helena. Where possible this would be required on both sides of the street. On narrower streets a variance to require a sidewalk on only one side of the street could be a possibility. By Every Street I mean every existing street and all streets to be constructed in the future. By Every Street i mean all those streets that are maintained by the City of Helena, as well as those streets that are maintained by the Montana Department of Transportation. Please note that when implemented completely, all of these 3 proposed projects would serve to reduce motor vehicle traffic and Global Warming Emissions in Helena, Montana. Your proposed recreational amenities in Dry Gulch would however increase motor vehicle traffic and Global Warming Emissions in Helena, Montana.

This is because a large percentage of trail users somehow feel that every bike ride and every walk or run should be preceded by a motor vehicle drive. Thanks so much. Tom

BikeDad

7/08/2022 02:22 PM

I fully support all components of this well thought out project proposal. As an experienced mountain biker, I love the existing South Hills trail system. However, my wife and son have struggled with most of these trails due to exposed trails, rocky terrain and tight switchbacks. The lower Deford trails have provided hours of fun for my family each week. I can ride the bigger jumps while my wife and 6 year old son ride the beginner/intermediate flow lines. This gives them the opportunity to gain confidence with both their climbing on the main trail and ride the "rollercoaster" as my son calls it downhill. Adding an upper section on Davis Gulch will complete the experience and further broaden the experience for all riders. These trails also provide hikers and persons with disabilities access to low gradient trails with beautiful scenery along Davis Gulch.

MTgadgetgirl

7/08/2022 05:02 PM

Shawn Whyte

MTgadgetgirl

7/08/2022 05:16 PM

Shawn Whyte

Johnanna Sullivan

7/08/2022 06:35 PM

Ending the UA easy trail (blue trail) shy of the road doesn't make sense.....users should be able to use the trail to get to the road but from the description it says it would end 100-300 ft from the road. Consider a UA connector to the road for people who need access to the road but need to use the UA trail. Marking the trails appropriately and in easy to understand language, highly visualized areas, and signing the rules will be necessary to allow users to understand the trail assignments appropriately. This many trails too close together is a primary concern of mine. People get easily confused. Why do we need another directional trail? Directional trails are confusing to the general public.

Nick Maffei

7/09/2022 06:34 AM

This looks to be a well thought out plan to improve trail experience in the Upper Deford area for all users. Dedicated hiker, uphill, and skills course routes should mitigate user impact and improve the outdoor experience for all. I fully support this plan as proposed.

A. Fiaschetti

7/11/2022 11:12 AM

I support the proposal for improvement of the upper deford trails by the working group.

EFiaschetti

7/11/2022 06:43 PM

I want to express my support for the Upper DeFord Project Proposal. The proposed project will allow important connectivity for all users, and allow users to continue to safely use the trail system in the DeFord area. I appreciate the hard work of the working group and consideration of all users. Helena trails are an important part of our community, and this project will improve this wonderful trail system.

Carissa

7/13/2022 10:29 AM

Component 2 indicates, in the proposal, that dogs would be required to be leashed for public safety and user enjoyment on just this trail. This does not align with other trail use requirements in the South Hills, and to my knowledge, there is no approved policy from the City that has changed dog leash laws on trails. Given this, I question this special requirement for this trail; this also does not seem like it is under the purview of this committee, but rather related to dog use in the South Hills trail system overall. Taking a piece-meal approach, without communication to the public or clear announcement and opportunity for public comment, by individually designating trails as dog leashes/non-leashed will result result in confusion, concerns, lack of public input, etc. It will also result in pedestrian use with off-leash dogs on the skills course, where the proposal does not limit dogs to be on leash. And, mountain bikers will be able to have off leash dogs on the skills course, which is very close to the proposed on-leash trail discussed in component 2, potentially resulting in even more conflicts, which this committee and project has been created to alleviate, not create even more of.

Denise Barber

7/13/2022 02:48 PM

I am in support of this Upper DeFord Project proposal.

ECN

7/20/2022 09:51 AM

Please consider more mountain bike specific descents. The south hills trails commonly continuously follow the fall lines, straight down the mountain sides, which create unsafe mountain bike speeds due to poor traction and off camber sections, increased user conflicts, well as increased erosion. There are ways to build mountain bike trails that are challenging but are constructed in a way to reduce user conflict and erosion. Our trail system users would greatly benefit if we could design and maintain trails to more modern standards. Also, almost all of the climbs are too steep to be appealing all but the fittest riders. Please consider mountain bike climbs that are more efficient, especially for the sake of children and families getting into the sport.

Kristi Ponzozzo

7/25/2022 09:11 AM

I commend work the City of Helena is doing to improve recreation throughout the entire DeFord corridor. Thank you for all your hard

work on this project. While no longer residents of Helena, we look forward to coming back to visit and use the trail and bike skills course and the entire area. You all are doing an amazing job managing our trails and in Helena. Thank you City of Helena!!

Bikefinder

7/27/2022 03:39 PM

I would imagine it might be an easier, less expensive and more popular approach if the trails above/south of the parking area on Davis Gulch (the parking area above/south of the Archery Range) were as follows: Existing trail expanded to accommodate both walkers and bikers by making it either wider or offer up two trails along the bottom. Keep and tweak the skills trail. —There is an issue with water runoff in our wet years, so that building a wider trail or two trails would need to be considering this erosion potential in the design and deployment aspects. —I think I inventing or updating an old uphill trail above the existing skills trail is not really necessary if the bottom trail is expanded. I am definitely an intermediate mountain biker, but not gonzo, and would have difficulty riding UP the new trail created. —I am also quite disappointed in the new downhill trail below and along the Archery Range. It is engineered in a very odd way, and maybe isn't quite done yet? I say this as it is very bumpy, the constructed "bumps" make no sense unless one is jumping the bumps, which is not what many folks do, and if the bumps are to slow down the traffic, we'll, it certainly slows me down!! I can easily ride uphill or downhill on the existing trail that has been in place over the years. —If the plans go ahead as is, there will be many people riding on the road up to the junction of Tucker and Dry gulches, which is going backwards in the effort of trail design and building of the past... we should be getting folks off the roads where we can! The new trails in the bottom currently are driving many folks to ride down Davis Gulch, rather than taking the new, bumpy, poorly engineered downhill trail. Also, as an addendum to the comments on the upper De Ford plans, the two new trails above Le Grande Cannon are also very rough and definitely not mountain bike friendly trails. We are curious if they are still a work in progress and will be further tweaked? It may be that the city needs to hire a seasoned trail designer for these new trails being developed. Standpoint, Idaho has such a person, we have been told...and have ridden some of the trails the person has designed. He has made awesome trails!

Optional question (13 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question