

Fitch Mountain Park and Open Space Preserve

Response to Public Comments and Final Management Plan Changes

Comments received on draft Management Plan through 11/28/2016; Prepared 12/10/2016

Comment	Commenter (source)	Response
Introduction		
Added information on Preserve land donations; updated plan development process	City initiated	Plan updated
Preserve Description		
Park Improvement Areas: new section added describing Park Improvement Areas; second Park Improvement Area #2 added to summit incorporating 0.7 acres (with map).	City initiated	Plan updated
Clarified existing facilities and uses	City initiated	Plan updated
Undeveloped land: remove sentence that the Preserve makes up the entirety of the undeveloped portion of the mountain (pg 11); FMA notes sentence misleading	Pat Abercrombie (comment card from public meeting); Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Plan updated
Public beach access: remove river access reference on Redwood Drive	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Plan updated; reference removed from text and exhibit
Physical Features		
Geology: add discussion about Preserve geology; information provided	Ted Calvert (letter)	Plan updated; additional geology background provided

Comment	Commenter (source)	Response
Climate: recommends adding weather station	Kate Symonds (letter)	Comment noted; weather station not currently planned; Plan updated to include note about value of topographic diversity for climate resilience
Watershed: recommends identifying impairment status of drainage	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	No change to Plan; stream noted on Fitch Mountain as impaired for fecal coliform in 2012 by RWQCB; exact location unknown (on or off Preserve?)
Date Collection Methods		
Plant survey timing: note surveys in wetter years may find additional plant	Kate Symonds (letter)	Plan updated
Biological Resources		
Plant communities: add reference to logging from a reliable source	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Plan updated
Broom: add information about broom status on mountain (much more extensive prior to removal efforts)	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Plan updated
Napa false indigo: add Napa to areas of occurrence	Kate Symonds (letter)	Plan updated
Resource Management		
Updated information on road repairs in drainage along Fitch Mountain Trail below water tank, additional recommendations on fir thinning, minor edits	City initiated	Plan updated

Comment	Commenter (source)	Response
Native plantings: recommends natural regeneration over active planting	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Plan updated; additional language added to focus plantings where no natural regeneration occurring and protecting native seedlings noted as an option
Vehicle use: limit vehicle use to preserve wilderness like experience	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Plan updated with additional clarification on vehicle use as per Conservation Easement
Vehicles: for any fire or other heavy equipment that cuts into cross-drainage ditches (and damage them), make drivers responsible for the repair	Joe Taylor (letter)	Plan updated with additional clarification on vehicle use as per Conservation Easement
Staff trainings and communications: establish stakeholder group	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	No change to Plan; comment noted
Numerous recommendations on fir thinning; establishment of rarely-occurring species; presence of black walnut; rookery status; herbicide use and ground disturbance; addition of wild turkey management; and additional pathogens	Kate Symonds (letter)	Plant updated as appropriate; comments noted
Invasive species: recommends not transporting invasive plants in seed and additional locations/plant-specific recommendations for invasives	Kate Symonds (letter)	Plan updated
Fire Risk Abatement		
Minor edits	City initiated	Plan updated

Comment	Commenter (source)	Response
Increased risk with public access: low water pressure in the Sunset Drive/Valley View Drive water tank; not enough supply capacity at that pressure for homeowners and emergency fire trucks accessing hydrant; recommends installation of a variable pressure pumping station	Gary Wilson (letter)	No change to Plan; water supply/pressure issues are outside the scope of the Plan; this would need to be addressed by Public Works or the Fire Department
Fire risk: exclusion of fires of any kind (no cooking, BBQ, smoking)	Pat Abercrombie (comment card from public meeting) and Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Plan updated; additional clarification provided
Controlled burns: a week or so after brush fire have been extinguished; cover the charged area with adjacent dirt and leaves to hide area from view; don't want people to associate charred areas with a permission to burn	Joe Taylor (letter)	No change to Plan; comment noted; fires prohibited on Preserve as outlined in Plan, with exception of controlled burns; burn pile treatment would be handled by the Healdsburg Fire Department or CalFire

Public Uses and Engagement		
Added reference to future public uses associated with Park Improvement Area 2 in "All Public Uses"	City initiated	Plan updated
Updated allowable public uses to be consistent with Conservation Easement and public input; added summary information on all trail uses based on monitoring results; developed recommendations further for public use management (PU-1); added existing dogs use data and refined actions (PU-2); updated mountain bike use discussion with new actions (PU-3); revised Special Event actions (PU-4); added camping discussion; and refined equestrian use discussions.	City initiated	Plan updated

Dogs: not supportive of dogs on the Preserve; lease laws not enforced; owners do not pick up after their dogs	Joan Gipe (email)	No change to Plan; comment noted; public use recommendations consistent with Conservation Easement
Mountain biking: supportive of “responsible biking access” on the Preserve	Petition submitted by Ted Calvert and Spoke Folk Cyclery, signed by 69 individuals in support of mountain biking	After additional public input and review, City determined restricting mountain biking was not consistent with current public use and the Plan was updated; use of the Preserve for mountain biking is consistent with Conservation Easement; see Enforcement section in Plan
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	Roger Bartels (email)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	David Reed (email)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	Sarah Beard (email)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	Ryan Grutzw (letter)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	Anonymous resident on S Fitch Mountain Road (letter)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	Alisha O’Loughlin, Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition (email)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve; existing unobtrusive use	John Murphy (comment card from public meeting)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve; rider for many years without issue	Matt Wells (comment card from public meeting)	

Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve; allow bikes and engage with cycling advocacy groups to help deal with issues of erosion, safety, and maintenance	Timothy Nordvedt (comment card from public meeting)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	Levi Leipheimer (comment card from public meeting)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve; biking for 30 years	Matthew Norelli (comment card from public meeting)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve ; engage REMBA for assistance in trail maintenance and safety for hikers, great opportunity	Joe Taylor (comment card from public meeting)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve; already ride in the area, with little disruption	Liz Peacock (comment card from public meeting)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve; easy access, supports at risk youth sport	Anonymous (comment card from public meeting)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	G. Clifford Grutze (comment card from public meeting)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve; historic use activity on the Preserve, where are they in the plan?	Michael Welch (comment card from public meeting)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve; REMBA wants to be active participants in trail maintenance and general stewardship on the Preserve	Nick Nesbitt, co-founder and chairmen of REMBA (comment card from public meeting)	
Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve; very few bikers; virtually zero impacts; illegal trail cuts not a problem	Kevin Feldman (email)	

Mountain biking: supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	Redwood Empire Mountain Bike Alliance, Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition, and Sonoma County Trails Council (letter)	
Mountain biking: recommends meeting with representative mountain bike groups to discuss issue further; since City has met with FMA, bikers deserve their time	Sylvia Seventy, FMA Board of Trustees (comment card from public meeting)	
Mountain biking: not supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Comments noted; after additional public input and review, City determined restricting mountain biking was not consistent with current public use and the Plan was updated; use of the Preserve for mountain biking is consistent with Conservation Easement; see Enforcement section in Plan
Mountain biking: not supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	Barb Recchia (email)	
Mountain biking: not supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	Linda Selover (letter)	
Mountain biking: not supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	Conrad and Roberta Winn (letter)	
Mountain biking: not supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve	Kate Symonds (comment card from public meeting)	
Mountain biking: not supportive of mountain biking on the Preserve; if allowed needs monitoring and control	Barbara Recchia (comment card from public meeting)	
Equestrian/livestock use: not supportive of uses on the Preserve	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	No change to Plan; comment noted
Fire Free Fitch: delete reference, since no longer active	Pat Abercrombie (comment card from public meeting)	Plan updated

Special events: exclude vehicles associated with any event; no catering trucks or shuttles	Anonymous (comment card from public meeting)	Comments noted; special event usage on the Preserve/Park Improvement Area is allowed assuming events meet the reserved and restricted rights outlined in the Conservation Easement; see Plan updates for additional clarification
Special events: supports leave no trace events; recommends additional information on event requests; limit events to those that directly relate to the Preserve	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Comments noted; special event usage on the Preserve/Park Improvement Area is allowed assuming events meet the reserved and restricted rights outlined in the Conservation Easement; see Plan updates for additional clarification
Enforcement: notes need to ensure adequate resources are available	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	No change to Plan; comment noted
Education: supports recommendations and would like to partner with City on this	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	No change to Plan; comment noted
Volunteers: requests details on roles, authority, and clothing	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Comment noted; already provided in text; noted that volunteers would not be asked to directly enforce rules.
Trails and Recreation		
Clarified Park Improvement Area recommendations specific to 1 and 2; added a third phase to Preserve development to address Park Improvement Area 2; developed new objective and action specific to Park Improvement Area 2	City initiated	Plan updated

Figure 4. Updated section markers, included downhill arrow on access road from upper Villa lot; minor edits; added map information to signage section; updated memorial and dedications section; add site furnishings and vehicles sections with new actions	City initiated	Plan updated
Access: provide town access from S. Fitch Mountain Road via Hassett Lane/McDonough Heights Road, fire road, to Sunset Drive, to Villa	Ted Calvert (comment card from public meeting)	No change to Plan; feasibility of accessing the Preserve from alternative located was completed; fire road from McDonough Heights is a not a public trail and access is not feasible at this time
Access: announce that the entrance is best accessed from Powell Avenue and not S. Fitch Mountain Road	Matthew Norelli (comment card from public meeting)	Plan updated; additional language added to clarify access route
Access: recommend alternative entry location from Pileated Woodpecker Trail to Annex Road connector; due to better, easier access	Ted Calvert (letter)	No change to Plan; alternative access points were evaluated during the conceptual design phase; current location chosen based on topography, existing natural resources, and desire to create a centrally located, accessible Preserve entryway that utilizes existing trails with lower gradients
Access: concerned about access from upper Villa to lower parking lot and drop offs during events; bringing traffic into the center of the main trailhead is problematic; same concern for folks leaving the trailhead via cars and driving through events at upper Villa; recommends closing road to emergency vehicles only and footpath	Gary Wilson (letter)	Plan updated; road from upper Villa Chanticleer parking lot to lower lot will be designated one-way

Access: supports new trailhead recommendations but notes that if funding is limited, a less elaborate trailhead would also be adequate	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	No change to Plan; comment noted; entryway features designed to provide basic park amenities including a gathering location for groups of trail users, signage and information kiosk, and improved access for all users; terracing the individual spaces is an effort to work with existing site topography as opposed to developing an elaborate trailhead
Access: requests reference to beach access at Redwood Drive be removed	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Plan updated
Trails: feasibility of a low-gradient trail all around the mountain	Craig Anderson (verbal comment)	No change to Plan; comment noted; developing a low-gradient trail around the mountain from the trailhead is not currently feasible given existing topography, associated drainages, property boundaries, impacts on natural resources, and costs associated with planning and construction
Butterfly Trail: supports trail as pedestrian only trail	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Comment noted; after additional consideration, City determined restriction was not necessary and was not enforceable; Butterfly Trail will be a multi-use trail
Butterfly Trail: recommends not restricting leashed dogs from using trail; restriction is not necessary and unenforceable	Joe Taylor (comment card from public meeting)	Plan updated; after additional consideration, City determined restriction was not necessary and was not enforceable; Butterfly Trail will be a multi-use trail

<p>Fitch Mountain Trail: recommends a new parallel trail adjacent to drainage below water tank due to large population of banana slugs, no people on road, use alternative trail</p>	<p>Kate Symonds (PCI notes from meeting)</p>	<p>No change to Plan; an alternative trail from the water tank to bottom of drainage is not being considered at this time; an additional trail would result in unnecessary impacts to natural resources and there is no guarantee that native wildlife would not be impacted with alternative trail location; also existing road currently serves as access to the water tank and could not be decommissioned, keeping people off the road is not practical, even with an alternative trail location</p>
<p>Illegal trails: supports decommissioning of all unofficial trail heads</p>	<p>Joan Gipe (email)</p>	<p>Comment noted; Plan supports decommissioning all unofficial trails and trailheads within the Preserve</p>
<p>Restrooms: recommends placement of 3 to 4 outhouses at several locations on the mountain</p>	<p>Linda Selover (letter)</p>	<p>No change to Plan; developing and servicing restrooms outside of the Park Improvement Area is not currently proposed; installing facilities within the Preserve would detract for the open space feel of the land and facilities would be difficult to maintain; facilities at the Villa Chanticleer trailhead will be improved; Preserve visitors will have access to these facilities</p>
<p>Restrooms: not supportive of a restroom at the top of the mountain</p>	<p>Barbara Recchia (comment card from public meeting)</p>	<p>Comment noted; Park Improvement Area allows development consistent with Conservation Easement</p>
<p>Vista points: recommends not placing a picnic table on summit due to butterfly “hill-topping”; will lead to compaction, heavier use, and adds an element of development; recommends eliminating Vista Point 1 due to presence of uncommon native plants</p>	<p>Kate Symonds (comment card from public meeting and PCI notes from meeting) and Fitch Mountain Association (letter)</p>	<p>Comment noted; picnic table removed from upper summit; only one table at lower summit; additional language provide in Plan to avoid impacts to native plants; seating at Vista Point 1 will be located on the uphill side of trail</p>

Vista points: recommends not placing picnic tables on summits due to potential for trash accumulation	Joe Taylor (letter)	Comment noted; Plan updated and picnic table removed from upper summit during initial development; Preserve will be monitored, if trash accumulation noted at picnic table, use can be adjusted accordingly and table removed
Seating: recommends logs to sit on along trail at various places	Linda Selover (letter)	No change to Plan; document supports numerous resting spots on the Preserve
Dog park: dog park next to wildlife preserve does not work	Anonymous (comment card from public meeting)	No change to Plan; comment noted
Signage: requests additional “no parking” signage at N. Fitch Mountain Road/Hilltop Road intersection, and ends of paved portions of Riverview	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	No change to Plan; parking sign installation/maintenance and enforcement on county roads is outside the City’s jurisdiction
Signage: keep signage to a minimum	Joe Taylor (letter)	No change to Plan; signage will be kept to a minimum to maintain the open space feel of the Preserve; most signage will be located at the Villa Chanticleer trailhead within Park Improvement Area
Memorials: don’t import boulders for memorials; limit number and location of memorial features.	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Plan updated; boulders removed and actions refined
Trash: place trash cans only at Villa trailhead, not within Preserve.	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Plan updated; trash receptacles only proposed at Villa Chanticleer trailhead during initial development

Exhibits		
<p>Exhibit 2 – edits to vista points (see Exhibit 6) and added Park Improvement Area 2</p> <p>Exhibit 5 – added culvers per LandPaths, removed informal trails outside Preserve boundaries, edits to vista point locations/seating, removed inactive rookery symbol</p> <p>Exhibit 6 – Removed vista point on Fitch Mnt Trail, beach on Butterfly, added bench to Hilltop, added Park Improvement Area 2</p> <p>Exhibit 7 – removed parking symbols, control outside City’s jurisdiction</p>	City initiated	Plan updated
<p>Exhibit 2. Verify pedestrian access points on Riverview; add “No Parking for Preserve” icons further down roads to alert drivers earlier.</p>	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Pedestrian access is correct; Plan updated and symbology adjusted to clarify locations; parking beyond Preserve boundaries is beyond City/Plan jurisdiction (see above)
<p>Exhibit 5. Verify whether road to Hilltop water tank is to be decommissioned.</p>	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Plan updated; removed trail segment from exhibit, decommissioning is not planned
<p>Exhibit 7. Outline Riverview in red if for emergency access.</p>	Fitch Mountain Association (letter)	Plan updated; intended for emergency egress of passenger vehicles only
Appendices		
<p>Appendix B –wildlife added</p> <p>Appendix C – updated invasive plant recommendations</p> <p>Appendix G – updated all actions to reflect Plan changes and Park Improvement Area 2</p> <p>Appendix H – developed staff management time estimate</p>	City initiated	Plan updated

Other		
Can members of the Park and Rec Committee and the City Council make “line item” changes to the plan?	Dave (comment card from public meeting)	No change to Plan; the Parks and Recreation Committee can make recommendations on Plan changes; City Council has full authority to make line item changes to the Plan; changes to the Plan require District approval
Downloadable trail map; include no parking indicators at Fitch Mountain Road, Riverview, and Hilltop	Anonymous (comment card from public meeting)	No change to Plan; City can only designate parking or no parking locations on the Villa Chanticleer; roads/parking designations surrounding the Preserve beyond City/Plan jurisdiction (see above)
Wildlife List: add black-headed grosbeak and western screech-owl	Joe Taylor (comment card from public meeting)	Plan updated; additional wildlife species added
Gas line: reminder about gas line under County access at end of Riverview Drive; comes off N. Fitch Mountain Road (?) and extends to Rio Linda Academy	Sylvia Seventy, FMA Board of Trustees (comment card from public meeting)	No change to Plan; gas line is outside the scope of the Plan and City’s jurisdiction