

**What is being planned?** An additional 6.4 miles of natural surface trail throughout a 65-acre parcel of land that was acquired by the City. The new trails will connect to and extend the existing 2.5 mile trail network. Additional parking accessed through a driveway entrance off of Racetrack Road will accommodate increased use. Ultimately, public restrooms, a drinking fountain, and a group picnic area, and some paved or surfaced trail near the trailhead and parking area may be built. The existing entrances near Alpine Lane and Woods Creek Park will not be modified. In the future, pedestrian-only access may be accommodated near the intersection of Leland and Redbud Lane.

**What will the new trail network be like?** New trails will be very similar to most the existing trail network. However, all new trails will all be about 4 feet wide (some of the existing trails are wider because they were built on old roads), which allows for two people to walk side by side, or for passing. The new trail network will consist of two primary paths to peaks located on the new parcel, which will afford even better views than are enjoyed today. These paths are designed at very moderate slopes, similar to the existing trails. Additional paths will be designed at steeper slopes, allowing for varied routes and intensities.

**Who will use the trails?** Many of the diverse groups of users who enjoy the existing Dragoon Gulch Trail will enjoy the new trail as well. During the community outreach process, we heard that many different groups – runners, walkers, hikers, bicyclists, bird-watchers, and dog-walkers, among others – enjoy the trails. We appreciated the comments from many of these users expressing that they enjoyed sharing the trail, and believed that the trail brings the community together. We want to continue this spirit of sharing by encouraging multiple uses. This requires common courtesy, and signs expressing trail use and expectations will be posted at new entrances, similar to the current signage. Motorized vehicles and equestrians will not be permitted on the trails, as with the existing trail network.

**I live near the newly purchased property, and like the way it is.** This area is beautiful, and developing a master plan to govern future development ensures that the beauty is maintained and can be appreciated by all. The natural preserve and trail functions envisioned by the master plan mean that no subdivisions, commercial uses, or other development will occur on this land. The master planning process incorporates feedback from all stakeholders. That feedback has resulted in a plan that respects the adjacency and privacy of residential property owners near the trail by establishing significant buffer zones for and preventing direct views to adjoining residential property.

**I'm concerned about the trail bringing undesirable elements.** Prior to the development of the original trail, squatters' camps and trash were seen in the area. Bringing positive and mainstream users naturally deters these undesirable elements. This positive result of intentional development and regulated use has been well documented and is an almost certain side effect. Development of the trail will discourage squatters, trespassers, and dumping. Studies of trails in similar communities and throughout the United States overwhelmingly support this positive effect<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Research is extensive and consistent on this point. For three examples, see:

**Who will take care of the trail?** City of Sonora Police and Public Works are responsible for trail safety and maintenance. City of Sonora Fire will be the first responder during emergency situations. Additionally, the City maintains a negotiated caretaker position. This individual regularly monitors the trails, cleans up debris, and performs minor brush clearing and maintenance. The caretaker will be able to access and monitor the 65 acre parcel via the new trail network.

**How will new construction be funded?** Funding for all planned construction has not yet been identified. However, the project is being planned in phases to allow for flexibility as grants or other funding is available. Opportunities for sponsorships and gifts will also be available. Many aspects of trail construction can be accomplished by volunteer groups.

**I live near the planned trail area, how will my property value be affected?** Proximity to trails and open space is one of the most frequently requested amenities of homebuyers. In addition to making nearby properties more marketable, it may also have a quantifiable benefit to resale value. This is supported by studies of similar areas, as well as the premiums that new home builders assign to lots with similar adjacencies. By pursuing a master planning process, the City is ensuring that this area will remain open space in perpetuity, assuring these benefits.

**How will the trail benefit me?** The Dragoon Gulch area is unique in its size and close proximity to both residential subdivisions and a downtown core. Very few communities enjoy such a resource. Numerous studies cite the benefits of cardiovascular exercise – even 15 minutes a day can improve circulation, metabolism, mental health and well-being, and more. But even if you don't personally use the trail, having such a scenic amenity will draw users from the local and surrounding areas, resulting in measurable economic benefits. This includes increased revenue from trip-related purchases such as food, gas, and even lodging, as well as outdoor recreational equipment and even non-related items.

**How can I get involved?** Walk the existing trail to get a feel for the benefits and enjoyment it offers. Wave and say hello to your neighbors. Email or call the City staff with questions or input. Join with your neighbors or fellow outdoor enthusiasts for weekly outings, trail clean-up or maintenance days. Form a

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Evaluation of The Burke-Gilman Trail's Effect On Property Values And Crime. May 1987  
[www.broward.org/Greenways/Documents/burkegilman.pdf](http://www.broward.org/Greenways/Documents/burkegilman.pdf); found that a nearby 12 mile trail had no impact on crime and was frequently used as a selling point in real estate transactions.

Schenectady County Department of Planning. The Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail: Its Impact on Adjoining Residential Properties. Schenectady, New York, 1997; a survey of residents adjacent a 35-mile mixed use trail showed that 86% or higher use the trail, were satisfied or neutral about the trail as a neighbor, felt that the trail increased or had no effect on their ability to sell their homes, and felt the trail did not pose a risk to their own or their family's safety.

Moore, Roger L., et al. The Impacts of Rail-Trails: A Study of Users and Nearby Property Owners from Three Trails. Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1992,  
[www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/.../impact\\_railtrail\\_final.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/.../impact_railtrail_final.pdf); a study of three trails showed that users of the trail were demographically similar to residents, having no motor vehicles was an asset to the real and perceived safety and use of the trail, users reported no serious complaints, and all three trails provided significant economic benefit to their communities.

“Friends of Dragoon Gulch” committee to organize fundraising or volunteer efforts. But most importantly, get out there!

**Where can I find out more?**

For a history of the area, see

[www.sonoraca.com/visitsonoraca/Dragoon/History.pdf](http://www.sonoraca.com/visitsonoraca/Dragoon/History.pdf).

For information about the existing trail, see

[www.sonoraca.com/visitsonoraca/trailsparks.htm](http://www.sonoraca.com/visitsonoraca/trailsparks.htm).

For a hiking-specific review of the existing trails, see

[http://www.hikespeak.com/trails/dragoon-gulch-trail-sonora/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+hikespeak+\(hikespeak.com\)](http://www.hikespeak.com/trails/dragoon-gulch-trail-sonora/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+hikespeak+(hikespeak.com)).

For current information about the Dragoon Gulch Master Planning Process, see

<http://www.tuolumnecountytransportationcouncil.org/DragoonGulchMasterPlan.html>