

10-23-2024 - Reno City Council Meeting - Item # C.1 Bella Vista Ranch Phase II PUD Amendment											
Written or Voicemail	Name	On Behalf Of	Ward	Email Address	Phone Number	Address	Support	Oppose	Concerned	Total	Date
							0	0	1	1	
Written	Leslie Mix			<a href="mailto:leslie.a.mix@gmail.com">leslie.a.mix@gmail.com</a>		2845 Idlewild Dr. Apt 114 Reno NV 89509			1		October 20, 2024 at 10:03 am



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## Bella Vista Needs to Provide Access to Water for Wild Horses and other Wildlife

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**From** Leslie Mix <leslie.a.mix@gmail.com>

**Date** Sun 10/20/2024 10:03 AM

**To** Hillary Schieve <SchieveH@reno.gov>; Naomi Duerr <DuerrN@reno.gov>; Devon Reese <reeseD@reno.gov>; Jenny Brekhus <BrekhusJ@reno.gov>; Miguel Martinez <MartinezMi@reno.gov>; Kathleen Taylor <TaylorK@reno.gov>; Meghan Ebert <EbertM@reno.gov>; Jackie Bryant <BryantJ@reno.gov>; Leah Piccotti <PiccottiL@reno.gov>; Angela Fuss <FussA@reno.gov>; Mike Railey <RaileyM@reno.gov>; Public Comment - CC <PublicComment@reno.gov>

Dear Mayor Schieve and City Council Members,

I am writing to provide public comment on the Bella Vista II project, owned by Sunnyhills, that appears on the October 23, 2024 City Council agenda. I am requesting that this project be denied until there is a clear plan in place to provide mitigation - or funding for mitigation - for the loss of wildlife corridors and access to water for wild horses and other wildlife.

With Sunnyhills' recent history in our community, including their cavalier disregard for the lives of our wild horses, I am uncomfortable with their current request to revise their plan for constructing over 600 homes for their Bella Vista II project. Nothing is provided in the proposed plan to mitigate for the loss of access to habitat and water which will be lost with construction of the project.

The previous version of the Bella Vista II project was denied by the Reno City Council specifically due to the developers' failure to provide adequate water for horses. Nothing has changed.

Thus, I ask the Reno City Council to deny the Bella Vista project until:

1. Natural migration corridors are protected for wildlife and wild horses, including access to water, OR
2. Funds are provided by the developer specifically to benefit the wildlife, including wild horses, in our area.

Generational natural wildlife corridors must be protected.

Wildlife is part of the natural landscape of our community. Wildlife should not be forced out or killed because of human encroachment. They must not be denied their right to life due to our non-stop growth.

I am an engaged community member. I do not belong to any wildlife or wild horse groups, yet I know how important wildlife, including wild horses, are to our community's quality of life. The animals that call this community home have no voice. So, I will use mine. And, I urge others to use theirs.

This summer I watched as all Virginia Range wild horses were fenced out of the pasture along

Steamboat Creek at the north end of Rio Wrangler by the Sunnyhills developer. This is the last remaining open water source for wild animals for a 12-mile stretch between I-80 and Geiger Grade - an area the horses have called home for well over 100 years, and probably much longer.

Finally, after almost 5 days with close to 100° temperatures, the Sunnyhills developer relented and reopened the pasture and access to the life-giving water of Steamboat Creek - but only temporarily.

A few weeks later, the Wild Horse Connection non-profit had moved all of the horses out of the Bella Vista II location. However, the developer had made it virtually impossible to close the gate to the area by blocking it open with rocks that required heavy machinery to move. By the next day, a number of horses had filtered back into the property in search of water.

At that point, the Nevada Dept. of Agriculture (NDA) - at the behest of the Sunnyhills developer - rounded up 24 horses on the property, loaded them into vans and shipped them to Carson City to be sold at auction.

It was blistering hot that day. On that scorching afternoon I saw horses heading down to the water source they have been using for generations - only to be captured by the NDA.

That day I thought about what a beautiful neighborhood it would have been if the developer had allocated a pathway to the creek, and how the people that purchased homes in that neighborhood may well have enjoyed sharing the land with the wild ones. It would just have been a strip of land, a mere drop in the bucket in terms of revenue for the developer. To those animals on that hot day it was their life.

I won't even go into what happened afterwards in trying to get the remaining, uncaptured wild horses relocated to unfamiliar water sources. It was not pretty. In fact, it was harsh and cruel. Some horses were near death due to dehydration. Even after being relocated to water that the City of Reno opened up using emergency funds, the horses took days to recover. I appreciate the many hours and money put in by the City and the non-profits so those animals would not die a terrible death. I am just sorry the developer was not required to be out there working alongside them, helping, in the heat.

I am well aware of the statistics of what happens to wild horses once they are removed from the range. Much of it is utterly abhorrent. It was an unnecessary action by the Dept. of Agriculture to round up those horses. As a community member it was intolerable to experience.

Private development must be required to fund alternate wildlife corridors and access to water when those pathways are blocked by their private project.

There must be a plan put into place and followed to protect wildlife when development comes through. I am appalled at the amount of public money that has been paid out to date in the interest of private enterprise on this issue. As private development stands to gain the most financially, I would like them to be required to protect wildlife impacted by their development, including wild horses, and to be required to fund appropriate solutions.

Reno City Council Members - Please do the right thing for our wildlife, including our wild horses. Require the Sunnyhills developer to mitigate for the impact of their development on the wild horses and other wildlife in our area.

Sincerely,

Leslie Mix  
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