



**Public Spaces Commission
Regular Meeting
AGENDA**

(to be held both at the physical and virtual locations below)

Civic Center Annex ♦ 411 West Clay Street ♦ Ukiah, CA 95482

To participate or view the virtual meeting, go to the following link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81764322746>

Or you can call in using your telephone only:

- Call (toll free) 1-888-788-0099
- Enter the Access Code: 817 6432 2746
- To Raise Hand enter *9
- To Speak after being recognized: enter *6 to unmute yourself

September 9, 2025 - 5:30 PM

1. ROLL CALL

2. INTRODUCTIONS

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.a. Approval of the Minutes for the July 8, 2025, Community Forum.

Recommended Action: Approve the Minutes for the July 8, 2025, Community Forum.

Attachments:

1. 2025-07-08 Draft Minutes

4. AUDIENCE COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

The Public Spaces Commission (PSC) welcomes input from the audience that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the PSC. In order for everyone to be heard, please limit your comments to three (3) minutes per person and not more than (10) minutes per subject. The Brown Act regulations do not allow action to be taken on audience comments.

5. COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6.a. Consider Letter of Support to the Ukiah City Council for Approval of the CEQA Document for the Lookout Peak Trail Project Providing Direction to Staff and the Ukiah Valley Trail Group to Begin Trail Construction.

Recommended Action: Approve sending the City Council the attached letter of support for the Lookout Peak Trail project CEQA document and recommend a notice to proceed with trail construction.

Attachments:

1. Lookout Peak Support Letter
2. Correspondence Received - Dennis Aseltyne

- 6.b. Consider Recommendation to Change the Name of the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area.

Recommended Action: Recommend a new name for the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area for adoption by the City Council.

Attachments:

1. 2025-08-06 Ukiah Valley Trail Group Letter

7. NEW BUSINESS

8. ADJOURNMENT

Please be advised that the City needs to be notified 72 hours in advance of a meeting if any specific accommodations or interpreter services are needed in order for you to attend. The City complies with ADA requirements and will attempt to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities upon request. Materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the Public Spaces Commission after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection at the front counter at the Ukiah Civic Center, 300 Seminary Avenue, Ukiah, CA 95482 during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

I hereby certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing agenda was posted at the main entrance of the City of Ukiah Annex, located at 411 West Clay St, Ukiah, California, not less than 72 hours prior to the meeting set forth on this agenda.

Araceli Sandoval, Deputy City Clerk
Dated: 9/5/25



Public Spaces Commission
Community Forum
MINUTES

East End of Norgard Lane ♦ Ukiah, CA 95482

Alex Rorabaugh Community Center ♦ 1640 South State St ♦ Ukiah, CA. 95482

Virtual Meeting Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81764322746>

July 8, 2025 - 5:30 PM

1. **SITE VISIT – 5:30 P.M.**

The Public Spaces Commission conducted a site visit and tour of Norgard Lane at 5:30 P.M.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Public Spaces Commission met at a Community forum Meeting on July 8, 2025, having been legally noticed on July 3rd, 2025. The meeting was held virtually at the following link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81764322746> and in person at the Alex Rorabaugh Recreation Center at 1640 South State Street, Ukiah, CA 95482. Commissioner Babbini called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. **Commissioners Present:** Elora Babbini, Steven Ratley, and Joe Scriven. **Commissioners Absent by Prearrangement:** Chrystal Thurman. **Staff Present:** Neil Davis, Community Services Director and Yvonne Avila, Community Services Administrative Assistant.

3. **INTRODUCTIONS**

Alex de Grassi and Lucy Kramer.

Commission consensus to hear agenda item 8a out of order.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. Community Forum to Solicit Input on Desired Features and Plans for a New Park at the East End of Norgard Lane (6:00PM)

Presenter: Neil Davis, Community Services Director.

Public Comment: Lucy Kramer and Alex de Grassi.

Input provided to Staff.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. Approval of the Minutes for the May 13, 2025, Regular Meeting.

Scriven/Ratley to approve the Minutes of May 13th, 2025, a Regular Meeting; as submitted. Motion carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: Babbini, Scriven, and Ratley. NOES: None. ABSENT: Thurman. ABSTAIN: None.

5. **AUDIENCE COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

No public comments were received.

6. **COMMISSIONERS REPORTS**

No Commissioners reports were received.

7. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS (DISCUSSION ONLY)**

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Yvonne Avila, Public Spaces Commission Clerk

DRAFT



AGENDA SUMMARY REPORT

SUBJECT: Consider Letter of Support to the Ukiah City Council for Approval of the CEQA Document for the Lookout Peak Trail Project Providing Direction to Staff and the Ukiah Valley Trail Group to Begin Trail Construction.

DEPARTMENT: Community Services **PREPARED BY:** Neil Davis, Community Services Director, Jake Burgess, Community Services Supervisor

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Lookout Peak Support Letter
2. Correspondence Received - Dennis Aselyne

Summary: Commissioners will consider the submission of a letter of support in favor of adoption of the CEQA document for the Lookout Peak Trail Project.

Background: The Public Spaces Commission has been consulted regarding the potential development of recreational access in the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area (WHWPA) for more than two years. These discussions have included the development of a Baseline Assessment of the Area (8/2/2023), the WHWPA Management Plan (2/7/2024), a Community Forum on Development of Ukiah as an Outdoor Recreation Hub (3/12/24), and the discussion of designating the WHWPA as a community forest (1/14/2025). In accordance with the 2040 Ukiah General Plan and the WHWPA Management plan, Staff and the Ukiah Valley Trail Group have been developing a proposal to build trails in the WHWPA. The Lookout Peak Trails Project proposes the development of a passive-use public access trail system for hiking, mountain biking, and access to nature in the WHWPA. GIS mapping of the trail system has been completed and is represented in the link below. The concept trail alignments were created by Jon Schubbe Consulting, informed by onsite evaluations and scoping followed by computer-assisted layout design. The scope of work proposes two trailheads accessed from public street locations off Helen Ave and Doolin Canyon Ave. approximately 350 feet apart.

The trail system provides a “Stacked Loop” design allowing users a wide variety of options with up to 22 miles of trails. The system lays out approximately three and a half miles of trail in the “Gateway” area and an additional eighteen miles of trails in the Lookout Peak area. The Gateway area will provide two small loops that are expected to see the most use. A single out and back trail will connect the Gateway area (lower loops) to the upper loops of the Lookout Peak area. There will also be three loops with a mountain bike downhill-only trail bisecting two of the upper loops. The top loop will circumnavigate the upper extent of the property and provide 360-degree views of three different watersheds. Additionally, the Lookout Peak area trails will provide multiple interfaces with existing truck roads providing additional options for users who care to experience the roads.

The trails will be built in accordance with the Ukiah Valley Trail Group Design and Maintenance Standards (See link below). Trail grades will vary according to topography with average grades of 7 to 8 percent, for the majority of the trails, with some shorter trail sections in the steeper areas reaching approximately 12 percent. However, trail routes will ensure that the average grade for the entirety of the trail does not exceed a 10 percent threshold. The proposed trail will run almost entirely beneath a substantial tree canopy cover of natural woodlands consisting mainly of native tree and understory species (see photos in Attachment A of the Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration in the link below). The trail will be 2 to 4 feet wide, back sloped to create an angle of repose and built using a variety of best-practice methods including out sloping and rolling

dips to allow sheet water drainage. Seasonal and class III drainages and swales will be hardened or spanned with small footbridges with footings outside the bed and bank of the drainage.

Discussion: Staff have prepared an Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The ISMND and attachments are available at <https://cityofukiah.com/lookout-peak-trails/>.

City staff released a Notice of Availability (NOA) on July 11th allowing an initial thirty-day review. On August 8th, a Notice of Intent (NOI) was released to allow a second thirty-day review period. The NOA tells people the project is being considered, and the NOI tells people the agency is planning on moving forward with the project. An ISMND does not require the NOA but the City of Ukiah often allows this additional review period when some degree of opposition is expected. Projects that propose to open previously private areas to public access frequently receive opposition from neighbors. The NOI comment period will end on September 8th at 5PM. On Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at 5:15 p.m. or soon thereafter, the Ukiah City Council will conduct a public hearing and consider adoption of the ISMND.

As anticipated, a few neighbors have written letters expressing opposition or requesting additional mitigations. The areas of concern focus primarily on a fear of increased fire risk, trespass, invasion of privacy, vandalism, litter, and decreased neighborhood parking.

The CEQA document provides mitigations to neutralize the environmental impacts of the project. Staff have been meeting with neighbors and responding to letters that express opposition or areas of concern. Most of the neighboring concerns are "quality of life" concerns as opposed to actual environmental impacts. Staff are investigating options to further reduce the impact of the project on the neighbors. As of this writing, comment letters are five to one (41:8) in favor of the project, with the opposition letters almost exclusively from immediate neighbors.

While the immediate neighbors will experience more traffic and less parking, the benefits to the community must also be considered. The project will provide quality of life, health, and economic benefits to the entire community and is supported by the 2040 general plan.

Staff recommends the Commission approve the attached letter of support (Attachment A) for the project to be forwarded to the Ukiah City Council.

Recommended Action: Approve sending the City Council the attached letter of support for the Lookout Peak Trail project CEQA document and recommend a notice to proceed with trail construction.

City of Ukiah
300 Seminary Dr
Ukiah, CA 95482

RE: City of Ukiah Lookout Peak Trail Project
Attn: Katherine Schaeffers

Ms. Schaeffers,

The Public Spaces Commission has been involved in consultation with staff regarding the potential development of recreational access in the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area (WHWPA) for more than two years. Future public access and trails have been discussed during agendized meetings of a Baseline Assessment of the WHWPA (8/2/2023), the WHWPA Management Plan (2/7/2024), a Community Forum on Development of Ukiah as an Outdoor Recreation Hub (3/12/24), and during discussions of the WHWPA as a community forest (1/14/2025). We understand that in accordance with the 2040 Ukiah General Plan and the WHWPA Management plan, staff have been developing a specific proposal to build trails in the WHWPA.

After review at our September 2nd, 2025, meeting, we believe the scope of work is appropriate, and the CEQA document is thorough and provides appropriate mitigations to any possible environmental impacts. We believe the social, health, and economic benefits of this project far exceed potential impacts and encourage you to approve the CEQA document and provide staff direction to move forward with construction of the Lookout Peak Trail System as soon as possible.

Public Spaces Commission

In Favor

Opposed

Lookout Peak Trail Project Agenda Item 6A

From Dennis Aseltyne <dpaseltyne@gmail.com>

Date Sun 9/7/2025 6:11 PM

To Meeting <meeting@cityofukiah.com>

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please consider an option to further reduce the impact of the Lookout Peak project on the immediate neighbors of the Helen Ave trailhead. Mitigate our concerns of the increased fire risk, trespass, invasion of privacy and decreased neighborhood parking by using one entrance to the Lookout Peak Trails at Doolin Canyon. The Helen Ave entrance is only 350 ft from the Doolan Canyon trailhead. The proposed Doolin Canyon trailhead is away from private property off a public road in a much less congested area. Having two proposed trailheads so close together adds many more substantial safety issues for our neighborhood. Two trailheads actually adds to the neighborhood congestion instead of its intended purpose to disperse numbers of hikers and bikers at the trailhead in our neighborhood. The Doolan Canyon trailhead has worked very successfully for our neighborhood and its hikers for over 40 years, please consider using the one trailhead option for the proposed Lookout Peak trails project.

Thank you,
Dennis Aseltyne



AGENDA SUMMARY REPORT

SUBJECT: Consider Recommendation to Change the Name of the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area.

DEPARTMENT: Community Services **PREPARED BY:** Jake Burgess, Community Services Supervisor,
Neil Davis, Community Services Director

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2025-08-06 Ukiah Valley Trail Group Letter

Summary: Commissioners will consider possible new names for the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area and consider recommending the new name for adoption by the City Council.

Background: At the January 14, 2024, Public Spaces Commission meeting the commission agenda'd a discussion of updating the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area Management Plan and "consider renaming the property." After discussion, the commission opted to leave the Management Plan in place without edits. Regarding renaming the property the consensus was that the current name is unwieldy and there is merit to renaming the property. Commissioners expressed an interest in returning to the topic at a future date.

The discussion also included the topic of Community Forests. Community Forests are protected forestlands that contribute to healthy, flourishing communities. Importantly, they offer residents and community members a direct say in how these lands are stewarded over time. These assets are being nurtured across the country as they are increasingly recognized as land-based economic development tools that deliver positive outcomes to the residents, visitors, and businesses located in their service areas. Benefits from community forests include economic development, improved individual and community health, wildlife habitat preservation, and water supply protection. The key aspect of a community forest is local community control of how the asset is used. Typically, community forests are provided permanent protection through conservation easements. However, at the January meeting the Commission was not in favor of placing a permanent conservation easement on the property.

Because the Public Spaces Commission provides local control of how the area is used, commissioners agreed that designating the area a community forest might be appropriate despite the lack of permanent conservation. Again, the decision was to further discuss the issue at a future meeting.

On August 6th, the Ukiah Valley Trail Group sent a letter to the PSC (Attachment 1) recommending the area be renamed the Lookout Peak Community Forest. The letter outlines the disadvantages of the cumbersome WHWPA title and states they are referring to the area as Lookout Peak. Lookout Peak is the highest point in the property and is listed on most publicly available maps of the area. The UVTG stated no specific rationale for calling it a Community Forest.

Discussion: There are essentially two components to the current and UVTG proposed names. The first half of the name is a designation of the place (Western Hills vs. Lookout Peak, Doolin Ridge etc.) and the second refers to the type of property (Watershed Protection Area vs. Community Forest, Open Space, Recreation Area etc). Other options that are common in naming open space areas include naming after a former property owner, donor (i.e., Richie Rich Open Space), or land use (i.e., Old Mine, Fish Hatchery etc.).

The key point made by the UVTG is simply that the current name (WHWPA) is difficult to remember and say either in full or as an acronym. Additionally, shortening the name to "Western Hills" is not specific enough to be useful. Another option would be to wordsmith the current name into a memorable acronym. Staff followed up with the UVTG Board who clarified they like the name "Lookout Peak" but have no particular preference for the land use designation portion of the name.

Staff recommend a land use designation in the name that references the City Council's direction that the area be conserved. This likely rules out the possibility of using the term "Park," which might denote a lower level of protection. Land use designations such as Open Space, Preserve, Preservation Area, Conservation Area, Community Forest, Protection Area, Watershed Protection Area all might be suitable. Regardless of what land use is designated in the name, most residents will likely refer to the area simply as Lookout Peak.

Here is a non-exclusive list of possible names with the associated acronyms for consideration.

- Lookout Peak Open Space (LOPOS)
- Lookout Peak Preserve (LOPP)
- Lookout Peak Conservation Area (LOPCA)
- Lookout Peak Community Forest (LOPCF)
- Lookout Peak Watershed Protection Area (LOWPA)

Staff recommend the PSC decide upon a practical name for the area and forward a recommendation for the name change to the City Council.

Recommended Action: Recommend a new name for the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area for adoption by the City Council.

Ukiah Valley Trail Group
759 S State St #25
Ukiah, CA 95482

September 6, 2025

To: City of Ukiah Public Spaces Commission

Re: Name of Western Hills Property

Commissioners,

The Ukiah Valley Trail Group is working with the City of Ukiah on a plan to build up to 18 miles of trails in the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area. The CEQA document is out for public comment at this time, and we are hopeful it will be approved by the City Council in September. While we do not yet have funding for the entire project, we do have funding available for us to begin construction once the CEQA is approved.

As we have worked through the planning process, we found the name Western Hills Watershed Protection Area cumbersome. A prominent feature that is identified on most existing maps of the area is "Lookout Peak." Because Lookout Peak is easier to remember, easy to say, and descriptive, we began referring to the trail project as the Lookout Peak Trail Project and it is identified as such in the CEQA documents.

We fear the name Western Hills Watershed Protection Area will never take hold with the general public. With such an unwieldy name we suspect the public will find a name of its own, but who knows what that may be. The name may be great, or not. We believe it would be wise to proactively rename the area.

We understand that you discussed the idea of using the term Community Forest at a previous meeting and believe this is an accurate representation of the area. On behalf of the Ukiah Valley Trail Group board of directors we respectfully request that the City of Ukiah rename the area the Lookout Peak Community Forest.

Respectfully,

Mike Cannon

Mike Cannon, President
Ukiah Valley Trail Group