

AB 379 Park District Legislation

Talking Points

Who is proposing the legislative changes?

- A grass roots coalition of citizen advocates who have been concerned with the trend of declining budgets and lack of resources and focus on parks, trails, open spaces and natural resources in their neighborhoods and communities.
- This is a statewide initiative with expressed interest from other communities throughout Nevada.

Why do we need this legislation now?

- Local governments have cut their park budgets up to 50% in the past 10 years and recovery of those budgets has not occurred and infrastructure is failing.
- Broadening the existing chapter NRS 318 *General Improvement Districts* will allow local communities the flexibility to self-determine a new model or methodology to manage their resources and provide services in their communities. Existing Statewide legislation is not adequate to address neither the existing and future needs nor the demands placed on our resources.

What are the proposed amendments within NRS 318?

- We are requesting to broaden the Districts authority to manage natural resources and other park related areas to encompass what a potential District could be responsible for, related to, watersheds, natural resources, parks, trails open spaces and recreation related programs.
- We are expanding the partnership ability to include non-profit and or non-governmental organizations to help address mission critical goals.
- Strengthening the ability to include alternative funding resources.
- The existing NRS 318 gives counties the authority to establish a District. The amendment will allow cities and other existing Districts the opportunity to opt-in to be part of a District to enjoy all or a portion of the benefits of the newly formed district. This would be based on a mutually agreed upon agreement between all parties.

How is a proposed District established?

- Upon legislative enactment, local citizens and their government elected officials may choose to begin the discussion and process of forming a district and formulating a Plan.
- The Plan would include elements such as, defining the scope of services to be provided, the boundary of the proposed district, the governance structure,

funding mechanisms that would be fully analyzed both fiscally and organizationally and include the development of an implementation plan. The final Plan would be collaboratively determined.

- Then this proposed Plan to form a District with the associated details would then be put to a vote of the people within the proposed District.
- Once approved by the voters the process of implementation would begin with any necessary agreements and rolling out of the formation of the District.

When would a potential District be considered in a community and how long does it take?

- Upon approval of the amended Bill by the 2017 State Legislature and subject to the final ratification date, anticipated by mid-2017, local citizens could initiate the discussion with their local elected officials. One of the first steps in the process is establishing a committee to study and analyze the options for a District's formation. Information received from other similar Districts indicates that it can take 1- 2 yrs. depending on the scope of the district.

What is the benefit of a District?

- The District will have the sole mission of meeting the livability and economic vitality needs of the community through a robust park, recreation and natural resources services system.
- It frees local governments to focus on their mandated services.
- The investment into our outdoor recreation, open spaces, trails, parks, recreation and natural resources translates into a direct return on investment both in increased tourism and in enhancing the attractiveness of a community for future residential and commercial development. This in turn has a positive impact on property values in a community.
- It will provide focus and emphasis on a community's livability and the related economic impact that outdoor recreation brings to our communities. It will protect the economy, the businesses, the communities, and the people who depend on the ability to enjoy our great outdoors. Outdoor Recreation is an essential component to our economy. We know statewide Outdoor Recreation generates:
 - \$14.9 Billion in annual consumer spending
 - 148,000 direct Nevada jobs
 - \$4.8 Billion in wages and salaries
 - \$1.0 Billion in state and local taxes(Note: Statistics from the Outdoor Industry Association based on surveys conducted 2011-2012. Because of the large impact Outdoor Recreation has on the economy, the Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of Labor Statistics are now tracking the outdoor recreation sector of the economy)

- This is a citizen-directed initiative where local citizens can determine what is lacking in their community and prioritize and tailor the District services and organization to meet their own community's needs.
- A District funding model can provide a broader base of commitment and a diverse foundation of financial resources to establish a more consistent and sustainable long-term approach to managing our natural and built assets.

Why don't the local governments fix what they have now? (This is where advocates can speak to a local issue they are struggling with i.e., the Truckee River or Washoe Valley's fire ravaged hillsides, or lack of recreation facilities)

- Local government's limited funding resources have been reallocated and focused on other mandated municipal and county services.
- The result of the Great Recession has left an essential service that the citizens routinely enjoy without adequate resources and focus that it deserves and without required sustainable funding.
- Growth is now on an uptick and is accelerating negative impacts on existing resources that are not being addressed.
- Our natural resource assets have always had very limited attention and with the added pressure of increased fires, flooding and cuts to staff have left communities unprepared or lacking options to self-direct funding and action to their communities.

Where are some of the existing successful Districts located?

- There are over 1,400 Park & Recreation Districts nationwide some examples of successful Districts are:
 - East Bay Regional Parks-San Francisco, California
 - Truckee Parks & Recreation District-California
 - Metro Parks and Natural Areas-Oregon
 - Bend-Metro Park and Recreation District-Oregon