



Helena Citizens' Council
316 N. Park Avenue, Room 324
Helena, MT 59623
Phone: 406 594-0010
hcc@helenamt.gov
www.helenacitizenscouncil.com

Date: February 26, 2025
To: Helena Mayor, City Commissioners and City Manager Burton
From: Ben Kuiper, Chair, Helena Citizens Council
Subject: Recommendation re: Le Grande Cannon Right-of-Way

Greetings Mayor Collins and Helena City Commissioners Dean, Logan, Reed, Shirtliff and City Manager Burton.

Let it be known that the Helena Citizens' Council, at its regular full board meeting on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, voted and passed the following recommendation for your consideration:

RECOMMENDATION

HCC recognizes that City leadership committed in 2020 to vacate its public road rights-of-way along Le Grande Cannon and protect this trail and land parcel as part of Helena's incredible network of open space for outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat.

This recommendation was moved by the Helena Citizens' Council based upon the findings presented in this document submitted by HCC District #1 Representative Diana Hammer in collaboration with Joel Gerhart of the Helena Trails Alliance. The referenced document is attached to supplement your consideration of the HCC's recommendation.

The HCC recommends the City Commission act in 2025 to vacate this right-of-way as originally intended.

We appreciate your consideration of this recommendation,

Helena Citizens' Council Members



Ben Kuiper, HCC Chair

Background:

The LeGrande Cannon Trail (LGT) is located on Helena's Upper West Side (Figure 1) and is a popular and important part of Helena's wonderful trail system. The LGT provides an easy to access wide and low gradient trail for families and users of all abilities. The Mount Helena and South Hills trail provide many challenging trails but limited opportunities for easy beginner trails in the forested areas south of Helena. The LGT alignment is still a road ROW and as such remains vulnerable to any attempt to re-open for vehicles. Development of the adjacent subdivisions poses a temptation to maintain the road ROW and keeps open the potential to reopen the road for several reasons to support the developments (Figure 2).

The ROW must be removed or modified to limit uses and permanently protect LGT forever as a much-appreciated local trail. Removal of the ROW is also needed to prevent development impacts to the adjacent public lands in a manner inconsistent with the intent of so many who worked to protect the adjacent lands as public open space. When the land was transferred to the City, it was understood that the city planned to remove the ROW in accordance with the wishes of the land donors and the public.

Currently, the City has made no apparent effort or progress toward removing the ROW to permanently protect the trail. The City is currently considering annexing other lands in the area and will be deciding on the annexation in 2025. This annexation process presents a good opportunity for the City to fulfill its long-held, stated intention to abandon or modify the ROW to prevent any future potential use as a road.

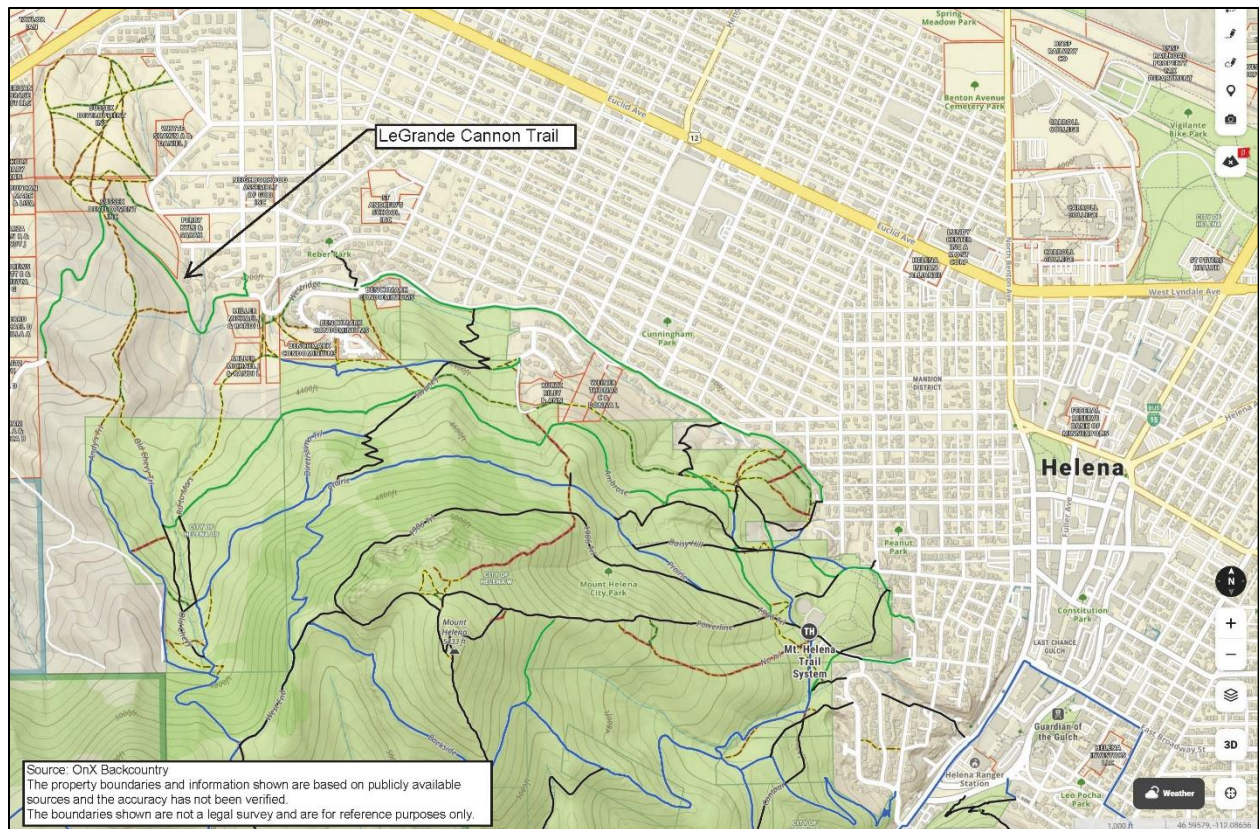


Figure 1 - LeGrande Cannon Trail Location

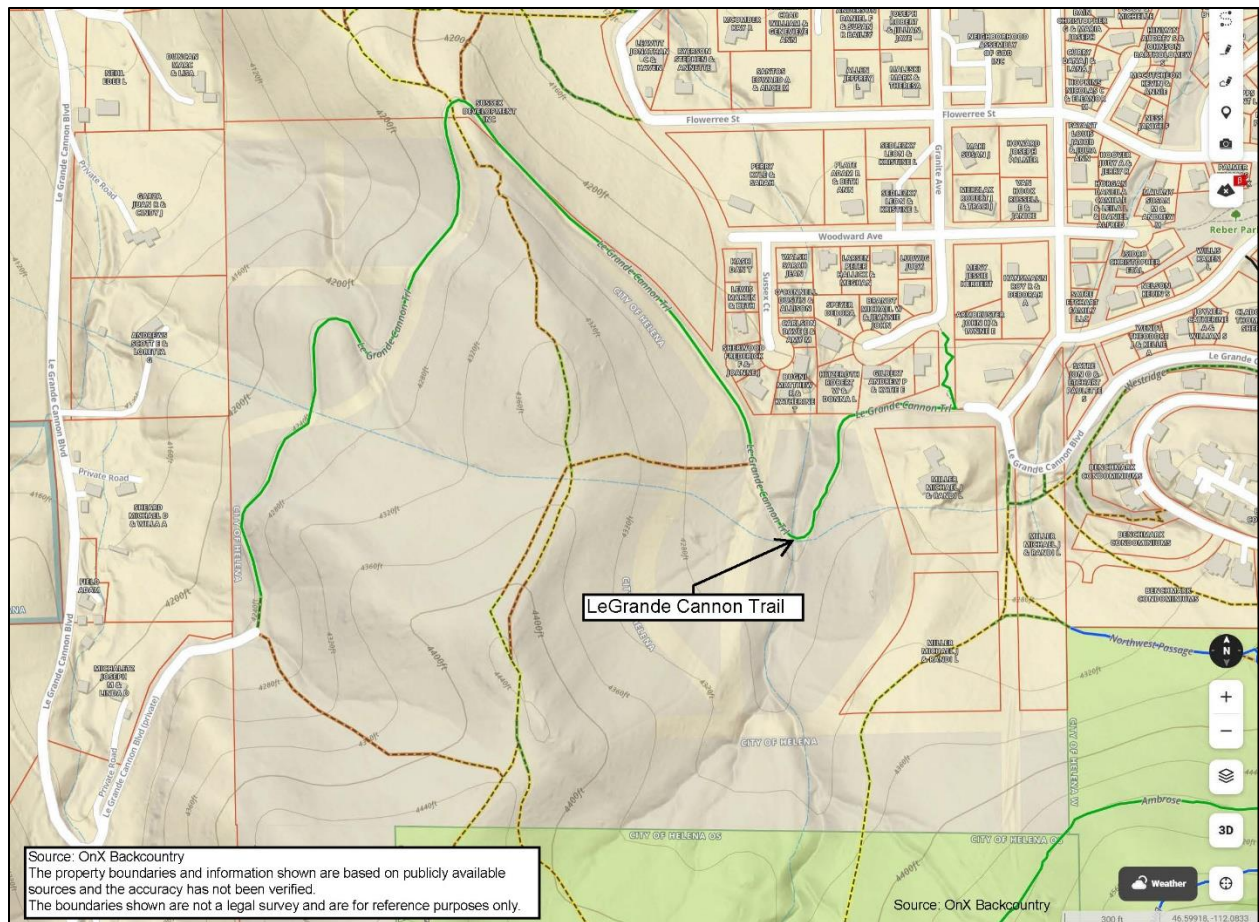


Figure 2 - LeGrande Cannon Trail Detail