

Dry Creek Greenway Public Planning Team Meeting #4

June 19, 2003
9:30AM – 11:30AM
Roseville City Hall

Attendees:

Sharon Roseme, Loomis Basin Horsemen's Association, Horseshoe Bar MAC
Noe Fierros, Placer County Planning Commissioner, District 1,
Lisa Ferrari, City of Roseville Public Works Transportation Division,
John Costa, BIA
Ernie McPherson, RCONA,
Chris Schmidt, Placer County Planning Department
George Brown, West Placer MAC
Kate Kirsh, Foothill Associates,
Ed Armstrong, Foothill Associates.

Discussion:

Kate Kirsh briefed the group on the public forums conducted June 2nd and 7th. Approximately 50 people attended the two meetings. The attendees were generally sensitive to environmental issues, but many were concerned about potential impacts from the use of the Greenway on the qualities of the area that they enjoy. These residents were generally worried that people coming to the Greenway for recreation might cause mischief or degrade the creek system.

There was some discussion on funding and implementation. Noe Fierros asked whether the Greenway project would provide signs for private property owners to post that discouraged public access. Kate responded that the project will provide design standards for signage and trails to discourage trespassing on private property. For instance, the plan will recommend that trails not dead-end in a private parcel, but loop back to a street or other pedestrian/bicycle route. Chris Schmidt suggested that the plan include guidelines for signage on roads at bridges to aid residents and visitors in identifying the creek systems over which they travel while driving (often on a daily basis).

Chris stated that many of the public forum attendees did not initially appear to have a good understanding of the goals of the Greenway and were worried about the impacts on their properties; however, by the end of the meeting, most of their concerns seemed to have been addressed.

The PPT next discussed management issues for the Greenway, the primary topic for this session. Foothill Associates distributed a framework for discussing the various management issues (see Figure 1). Highlights of the discussion are presented below.

Management Issues:	Maintenance			Capital Improvements	Public Safety			Restoration	Education	Acquisition	Other
	Trails	Improvements	Habitat		Patrols	Fire	Ordinance Enforcement				
Who is responsible for...?											
Who determines frequency of...?											
Who determines priority of...?											
Who determines standards for...?											
Costs											
Recurring or one-time											
Potential for volunteer/donation											
Funding											
Sources											
Constraints											
Administration											
Accountability											
Leverage											
Collaboration											

Figure 1 - Management Framework

Maintenance can be funded and/or performed by the local jurisdiction, a HOA/CFD, or a non-governmental organization (NGO) such as a land trust or conservancy. There was also some discussion of the use of an overall management agency, such as a Joint Powers Authority (JPA). Kate suggested that one of the strengths of a JPA is that it provides a central point of coordination, but jurisdictions may be reluctant to relinquish control of their lands in the Greenway.

Morgan Creek was discussed as an example of a trail maintenance agreement between the County and an HOA. The land in the 100' easement between the Morgan Creek community and the riparian zone will be dedicated to the County. However the HOA and the CSA will be responsible for maintaining the trail corridor. This is in contrast to some communities, where the Home Owners' Association (HOA) both owns and maintains the common property. The Greenway Master Plan will specify that the local jurisdiction is responsible for establishing the maintenance provisions, either through the jurisdiction, a third party NGO, or the HOA. As an example of a third party organization, the Habitat Management Foundation is a non-profit group that assumes the management responsibility for habitat management of small properties. Due to their nature and liability issues, trails would require an NGO specialized in trail management and maintenance. Loren Clark with Placer County Planning is currently working with local jurisdictions to explore formation of a JPA to manage open space resources. Chris will ask him to provide additional information on how this is working. The Greenway plan will not specify which particular management mechanism should be implemented, but will suggest several options for consideration.

Some provision may be required for cost sharing of trail maintenance for small developments where the HOA cannot afford the cost. These agreements will be the responsibility of the developer and the local jurisdiction approving the development plan.

Jurisdictions that hold properties in public ownership should have the option of providing for maintenance directly or contracting to a third party. The City of Roseville uses both HOA/development agreements and general funds to maintain public properties. If the PPT and Oversight Committee decide that a JPA is the best solution, the plan could recommend it as the preferred management entity.

Capital Improvements are to be negotiated for new developments and are not expected for existing private property owners. They may potentially be funded using grants or public revenues. The plan will include design guidelines/standards for park improvements such as staging areas, trails, signage, etc.

Public Safety discussion included jurisdictional differences in existing trail and access rules. For example, one jurisdiction may prohibit dogs the trail system while another does not. This can cause confusion when trail users cross jurisdictional boundaries. It was suggested that signage be posted at jurisdictional boundaries where such rules differ. The earlier discussion from the second meeting regarding dogs in the Greenway was reiterated. The Greenway plan will recommend that dogs are required to be on leash at all times, that dog hygiene stations should be provided for pickup of dog wastes, and that local jurisdictions are encouraged to provide off-leash dog parks in other areas outside of the Greenway.

The American River Parkway was suggested as an example trail system that could be used as an example for how to manage public safety issues. A County patrol team manages public safety within the Parkway. Standards for public safety will be included in the Greenway Plan.

Fire management was briefly discussed. Good fire management may be contrary to healthy riparian habitat. Local fire jurisdictions should be responsible for defining their defensible space requirements, and managing within those guidelines. The plan will recommend that standards for fire management be developed by local jurisdictions. Kate asked whether people were allowed to clear trees to create defensible space around a home, if it involves removal of valuable habitat, but is within the recommendation of the fire department. The Placer County tree ordinance provides an exemption for tree removal that is necessary to comply with CDF Fire Safety Regulations.

Restoration is generally performed by whomever is interested in doing it. This is probably any one of a number of local and state agencies, or environmental groups. The plan should recognize those entities that are currently working in the watershed. The Dry Creek Watershed Council provides a central entity to ensure that individual projects and groups are coordinated and working efficiently together.

Education follows the same model as restoration. The important education issues will be funding and providing training for educators. This topic covers both school education and education of the general public.

Acquisition is primarily the responsibility of the local jurisdictions, possibly working with NGOs. Acquisition could potentially be coordinated through a JPA if one is formed. George Brown suggested that perhaps a special district could be formed to acquire properties. This could be potentially tied to development, similar to off-site mitigation. Other acquisition mechanisms include donation of conservation easements and adoption of a watershed-wide additional park fee designated for acquisition and maintenance of the Greenway.

Other maintenance issues: Noe asked if the Master Plan will include preferred standards to reconcile conflicting standards between different jurisdictions. He also asked if the Master Plan will address water quality. The plan will provide information related to both issues under the policies for habitat and guidelines for maintenance.

Costs were categorized as recurring or one-time fees. The Greenway Plan will discuss the role of volunteerism in all of these areas. It will also point out the benefits of coordinating volunteers through a funded position/coordinator and working with the Dry Creek Watershed Council to leverage existing volunteer resources.

Funding Sources and limitations: Maintenance and public safety are the most difficult of the management efforts to fund. An open space fee could be assessed by the local jurisdictions to dedicate to maintenance and/or public safety for the Greenway. This may be a tax, or may be a reallocation of existing park (or other) fees. Other sources include grants or donations, although these programs typically won't provide funding for operational costs such as maintenance or public safety. Laura Svensgard will be recommending funding sources for Greenway implementation and maintenance. Fees are also a possible source of funds for the Greenway. These might include user fees, facility rental fees, group activity fees, cell tower leases, etc. There was some discussion about the appropriateness of cell towers within the Greenway. Noe expressed concern about opening the Greenway to commercialization. The plan would need to recommend an assessment be performed of location, placement, and obtrusiveness of the tower. Tower fees could bring in up to \$60K annually per site which could be spent on trail and habitat maintenance, patrols, etc. Parking fees are another potential source of revenue, although they may discourage low income people from using the Greenway. Another issue is the fact that the boxes used in collecting parking fees are not very secure, and the local jurisdictions would have to arrange for collection. Costs associated with staff time may make this impractical. It was suggested that donation boxes could be located at a kiosks. One possibility for collection could be the establishment of a "Friends of the Greenway" group which would staff nodes on weekends and collect fees. Sponsorship was mentioned as an option for encouraging donations.

Funding administration and accountability was discussed. Many NGOs may not have the structure capable of meeting requirements for accountability that many granting agencies require. Securing of grant funds by an NGO would probably require the NGO to work with local jurisdictions to manage the grant money.

Funding leveraging and collaboration: The Greenway should be seen as a regional amenity that has the potential to create a destination spot for visitors. Regional groups such as SACTO and SACOG could be utilized to promote the Greenway as a recreational destination.

Next Steps in the Greenway Plan

Foothill Associates and Placer County will be developing the Concept Plan that contains goals and policies, existing conditions, proposed improvements, management strategies, a cost estimate, and funding sources. This plan will be developed within one month and will be emailed to the PPT group, the Oversight Team, and posted to website. The PPT will reconvene following public forum #2, in late September. The second forum will be conducted in mid-August and will present the conceptual plan to the members of the public for feedback.

A Capital Improvement Plan will be developed as part of this project. It will focus on the County, but if the Roseville, Rocklin, and Loomis are interested in including projects [planned for their areas, these will be addressed as well.

The next meeting was scheduled for September 30th for comments on the final plan. The concept plan will be released in mid-July for comments. Ernie McPherson requested that the concept plan be distributed in Word format.