



PROJECT NUMBER: # 15-065PLN ISSUE DATE: April 24, 2015
PROJECT NAME: Clark County Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan

RECORDED BY: Jean Akers & Laurie Lebowsky
TO: FILE
PRESENT: Anita Will, Whipple Creek Restoration Committee
Betty Espey, Whipple Creek Restoration Committee
Ron & Patty Everson, neighbors at Whipple Creek Park
Ryan Ojerio, Washington Trails Association
Sean Vergillo, Lacamas Trail Advisory Group
Ed Fischer, Camas Bike Shop
Alice Heller, CC Executive Horse Council
Leith Dist, Washington Trail Riders Association
Mike Schultze, Clark County Saddle Club
Susan Staub, Clark County Saddle Club
Jan Verrinder, Vancouver Bicycle Club
Kelly Punteney, Parks Advisory Board, co-chair
Bill Bjerke – Clark County Parks
Laurie Lebowsky – Clark County Community Planning
Jean Akers – Conservation Technix

SUBJECT: Stakeholder Session Meeting Notes: Trail User Groups (04/23/15)

Bill Bjerke welcomed the representatives from various trail-related organizations to discuss trail system priorities for the county parks plan. Participants introduced themselves and shared their relative roles within their organizations. Bill provided a short summary of the project and thanked the stakeholders for their time.

DISCUSSION / COMMENTS

- 1. What does your organization see as the key priorities for the county's regional and local trail system?**
 - Safe, usable parks and trails that are accessible to broader range of users.
 - More ADA access that includes natural settings.
 - How are we defining trails and how many trails should we have?
 - Should primitive trails be pursued for more bang for the buck?
 - The natural evolution of regional and local trails has often started with an informal trail created by users. Then improvements have been made in phases and along sections of the trail until the trail is eventually fully developed.
 - Washington Trails Association (WTA) seeks an experience for users in nature. WTA is more focused on local trails and more local trails are needed to provide this experience. Good design and layout is required.
 - Local trails need to be built correctly.

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- Some attendees expressed desire for more local trails rather than widening existing trails as population increases.
- Another member expressed the desire for trails to connect different areas in the county.
- Primitive trails often don't have ADA compliance.
- Ecogreen grid is now being used for erosion control in Whipple Creek as an alternative surface to paving when trails are in areas with difficult soil types. Hoof grid is another alternative for creating stable surfacing without using pavement.
- Moss growing on pavement is a maintenance challenge.
- Once trails are good the trailhead parking becomes a challenge and signage is needed as well as more parking.
- Many cyclists can bike both pavement and gravel.
- Trails are great for cyclists who are too timid to ride on the road.
- Vancouver Lake and Frenchman's Bar Parks are great resources but getting there (on Lower River Road) is scary. Traffic through the Port of Vancouver is heavy and fast. The Port is working on an off-street shared use path but it is not complete yet.
- Best practices for trail design should be implemented for local and regional trails.
- Many runners prefer a softer surface (not asphalt).

2. What are the highest priority gaps for connecting the community's trail facilities?

- Could Frenchman's Bar and Vancouver Lake connect to the Burnt Bridge Creek Trail and Salmon Creek Trail?
- Ron Onslow has stated that Ridgefield would love getting a connection to Frenchman's Bar. What about the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)? Could that connection be made?
- Could horseback riding come back to the Ridgefield NWR again?
- Equestrians have access to tractors that can really help with trail building projects.
- What about providing opportunities for kids and families? Could the Safe Routes to School concept be leveraged with schools and cities to get to and from schools and fill gaps in trail access?
- The future of biking requires kids to be users and future advocates.
- The Intertwine just announced a \$1M funding for wildlife refuges improving access to urban populations. How can that kind of resource be tapped?
- Population density is a key criteria for connecting to existing parks like the Cougar Creek local trail (connection gap).
- Burnt Bridge Creek – is it being extended east or west? Connect Burnt Bridge east to Lacamas Lake Trail.

- There is a need to connect people from where they live to where they recreate so they don't have to drive to recreational opportunities. Connect dense population areas to parks and trails.
- Access to Green Mountain is needed. That regional park property is a huge resources that is untapped.
- Is Clark County involved with the Port of Camas/Washougal and their waterfront trail project?

3. What does your organization see as the future role for county parks in helping complete the regional trail system?

- Camas had a trail plan that was left up to developers to implement. Those trails are underutilized, scary and poorly maintained. One entity needs to oversee and plan the trail system so it's defined and coordinated.
- Are there plans for a trail planner position?
- The parks comp plan recommendations could include adding staffing to work on the trail system planning and implementation.
- The County should be like "Stone Soup" – providing the role of convening people and resources; acting as coordinators to get grants and permitting; and being leveraged by volunteer and user groups assistance.
- County staff could be in a role of communicating with cities; coordinating projects, programs, players and permitting.
- Volunteers are the key to trail system success.
- Is there a rule that trails can't be only four (4) feet wide?
- There is a hierarchy of trail types and trail definitions.
- Does a trail system have a percentage of pavement coverage?
- County sponsored signage, parking signs, directional signs, trail closure signs are needed.
- Clinics and educational events could be conducted to aid in understanding good trail behavior and shared use.
- Grant writing assistance to chase more support.
- It is helpful to have county staff who like volunteers.
- Having county help with staging materials for volunteer projects is very helpful.
- A community planning meeting was conducted to review light industrial and ag/rural land uses. Make sure new land use zoning includes implementation of trail plans.
- County leaders should support parks and trails.

4. What contribution, collaboration, and responsibilities can your organization bring to the future implementation of the county-wide trail system?

- Whipple Creek Restoration volunteers have logged thousands of hours of labor, provided equipment and materials for trail improvement for shared use in Whipple Creek Park. They have coordinated fund-raising with the Saddle Club – 30% contribution to trails. Their organization provides a model for other volunteer groups and could be a template for future programs and projects. Proof of volunteer value.

- Equestrian community can spur their clubs to be more involved doing clean-up and trail maintenance. Some volunteers get burned out by doing too much. Clubs need to consider a better way to manage and sustain member volunteers.

- Encourage clubs & groups to get involved with trails.
- High school involvement has been valuable getting kids involved. It may be related to lower vandalism occurrence.
- Other service organizations have community service goals.
- WTA's volunteer program and future advocacy focus is being expanded.
- County needs trail planning staff to coordinate.
- Coordination is important.
- Public access to Green Mountain regional park property is needed to allow use of this untapped regional park resource. Volunteers could help with trail planning, once access is provided.

Every effort has been made to accurately record this meeting. If any errors or omissions are noted, please provide written response within five days of receipt.

-- End of Notes --

cc: Bill Bjerke
project file