



Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting #6 DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Ann Arbor City Hall (301 E. Huron Street), second floor Council Chambers
8:30am – 10:30 am
September 13, 2017

Attendees: Public Present: 8; refer to Appendix A for sign-in sheet.

CAC members present: Terry Bravender, Vince Caruso, Nancy Goldstein, Sue Gott, Robin Grosshuesch, Jim Kosteva, Darren McKinnon, Sarah Mills, Rita Mitchell, Melinda Morris, Seth Peterson, Alice Ralph, Sonia Schmerl

CAC members absent: Peter Allen, Maria Arquero de Alarcon, Eric Boyd, Robin Burke, Bob Galardi, Chris Graham, Ellen Ramsburgh, Sandi Smith

Council members present: None

City staff present: Kayla Coleman, Connie Pulcipher

Consultants present: Neal Billetdeaux (SmithGroupJJR), Oliver Kiley (SmithGroupJJR)

Meeting Purpose:

- Share project updates and next steps in the master plan approval process.
- Question and Answer discussion with Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) members.
- Open house to review and comment on final draft master plan materials.

1. Updates

- The draft master plan has been distributed for jurisdictional review.
- The project team is making presentations to various City boards and commissions.
 - Transportation Commission: September 13
 - Parks Advisory Commission: September 19
 - Environmental Commission: September 28
 - Downtown Development Authority Board: October 4
- Upcoming Community-wide Meeting for the Treeline Allen Creek Urban Trail Master Plan project is Wednesday, October 4 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, second floor City Hall (301 E. Huron Street).
- Tentative dates for the approval process:
 - November 8: Planning Commission Public Hearing (to be confirmed)
 - December 18: City Council Action (to be confirmed)
- Thank you to CAC members for guidance and participation during the past 1-1/2 years!

2. Discussion

The CAC members shared the following feedback and perspectives during meeting discussion. Comments below are paraphrased, this is not a direct transcription. Where responses were provided from the consultant team they are shown in *italics*.



- I hope that as this plan evolves the City Flood Mitigation Plan is considered. There are opportunities to reduce the flood hazard in this area that should be pursued. Need to explore opportunities to purchase properties that are in the floodplain. As an alternative to spending \$55 million on a trail that isn't as green as we hoped, maybe the funding would be better spent purchasing homes that are in the floodplain; you could buy a lot of homes for that amount of money.
- Who will bear the on-going responsibility for this master plan? What is the future of the Treeline master plan? Will it remain in Systems Planning? Or, move to Planning and Development? Will resources be allocated to staff for on-going oversight of the master plan?
 - *It is not yet determined who will maintain the master plan, but it will involve close coordination between the City and the Treeline Conservancy. It is still being determined how to staff on-going oversight of the master plan.*
- Where will the funding come from?
 - *The Treeline Conservancy is developing a business plan that identifies funding sources and strategies. Grant resources for funding will be pursued and The Treeline Conservancy is looking at a broad range of private funding: including crowd funding, philanthropists, naming rights. The Treeline implementation will take a lot of different funding sources and will take time.*
- Is the project team exploring selling City properties to provide funding for this project? Is that being discussed? Has it been decided?
 - *The project team is not aware of the sale of any City properties being discussed to fund this project.*
- Prior Allen Creek Greenway studies should be incorporated into this report to show that this has been an ongoing discussion. The past effort and discussion should be shown.
 - *The master plan appendix includes a chart of related materials, including hyperlinks to access prior Allen Creek Greenway studies. Within the main body of the report there is a section that highlights the most relevant prior studies.*
- I am disappointed that the University of Michigan (U—M) has not stepped up in this effort, U—M would benefit tremendously from the Treeline. Employees are drawn to the University for the amenities that Ann Arbor provides.
 - *The City takes great pride in our relationship with the University and they have said that they are willing to continue to discuss The Treeline.*
- I am faculty at U—M. Better walkability makes an employer more attractive. I have watched all of the football fans walking down the tracks every game day; it is illegal and dangerous.
 - *The on street alignment now shown adjacent to U—M property does not solve the problem of people walking down the tracks illegally because this tracks are the most direct route to athletic facilities. The previously proposed alignment provided a safe alternative that paralleled the route the fans already take.*
- U—M response: The University does value and recognize the quality of life here in Ann Arbor, it is a huge contributor to our success in attracting faculty and students. We wish it were just a strip of land that was needed for the Treeline, if it were then the University would likely be agreeable. But the previously proposed trail alignment would have impacted the marching band practice field, parking spaces, the heating plant, and the golf course. It was not just a strip of land, it was activity used and programmed space. It would cost tens of millions of dollars in renovations and relocation expenses. In the previously proposed trail alignment there was no flexibility and no cost accounting for how student



recreation and those parking spaces would be accounted for. If it were just a strip of land that would be easy but the proposed plan wasn't easy.

- As staff at the University, I encourage that the University and City continue to work together. The City and University are two connected entities. The Treeline would improve the resource for employees, students and faculty.
- I am concerned that the on-street plan on the south end would require removal of trees. I do not support the removal of trees for the trail.
 - *There would likely be tree removal associated for constructing some sections of the trail within the street right-of-way. We have not yet quantified the number of trees that would be removed.*
- We should be working toward amenities that attract people to our community and serve the ones that live here. Why does this route seem to be as close to a road as you can get? We don't want more roads. We have a desire for a route that is more integrated with our natural systems. When I envisioned the greenway, it was a lot greener. Need to remember that it is a living plan and times are changing rapidly. Our response to climate change doesn't seem to fit with more pavement as is proposed here. Need to plan ahead to mitigate for negative reactions that the community will have to what has been proposed here. Additionally the huge price tag should be explained better, the general public will have a negative reaction.
 - *As each section is built we can look for more opportunities for stormwater management. Those conversations will need to continue to evolve. We don't know yet what we might be able to achieve until we begin the design phase.*
- Greenspace creates reasons that people want to be on the trail, this will attract trail users. Greater planning for the use of those public properties is something that I would like to see.
- Millions of dollars of federal funding is available for projects that will open up the floodplain, such as Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding to remove houses from the floodplain. Other communities have taken advantage of those opportunities and there may be even more funds available for flood mitigation in future years. Ann Arbor has quite a few homes that are in the floodplain, many residents don't know how they are going to afford flood insurance in the future. If you shrink the floodplain by removing structures from the floodway then water can flow unimpeded. A lot of factors play into economic viability.
 - *These comments speak to the need for coordinating with those projects (e.g. potential projects on City-owned properties). What happens on the full extent those properties will be a separate discussion.*
- Would it be helpful for CAC members to know what to say to the general public when concerns are raised about the project, such as about floodplain and stormwater management?
 - *The Washtenaw County Water Resources Commission (WCWRC) owns the Allen Creek drain and the City works closely with the County for grant applications. Having a defined message to help CAC members communicate about the project would help. It is important to be able to explain (1) the price tag, (2) city owned properties, and (3) stormwater and floodplain management. The Project Management Team will work to develop consistent responses that are clear and coordinated to help CAC members respond to community questions.*
- If a property owner doesn't want the trail shown on their property the plan should be clear about that; i.e., an explanation of why this is the chosen approach even though it didn't score as well as other alignments.



- *All of the alternatives are included in the master plan appendix but that is a helpful suggestion to provide a better explanation where the preferred alignment is different than the highest scored alignment.*
- It is important to explain the conflict and show that the trail alignment is a compromise. This is not what we are going to “pay for” yet. It should be clear that there is a lot more that is yet to be resolved.
 - *We do have narrative in the report that says we maintain flexibility to seek alternative routes when landowners are willing to become partners in development of the trail.*
- We have to keep listening to the public who hasn’t had as much exposure throughout the plan development process.
- I hope that the public will understand that if there is a trail planned on your property that it will increase the property value. People are moving more and more to walkable and bikable areas. The economic benefit to property values should be included in discussions with the property owners. Also, if we open up the floodplain more than we have now, we could have a better impact on flooding. Plant trees. Don’t build structures near the floodplain.
 - *Almost all of the property owners recognized the benefit of having a trail through or adjacent to their property.*
- I want to echo the importance of listening. I have missed one meeting, but I have read a lot of what is online. We are doing a lot of listening. One of the opportunities is to think about how this trail serves our future not just our existing community. The University will be opening a new stadium along S. State Street. The City has done a great job thinking about State Street further south and the connectivity along all of State Street will become more important from the new athletic campus to Ross Athletic Campus. There is clearly an opportunity to improve safety through the trail. We will try to help work with the City to improve safety and to be green and to accomplish all of the design principles that have been discussed. To envision that as an opportunity.

3. Public Commentary

Members of the public shared the following feedback and perspectives during public commentary time:

- I am a longtime Greenway advocate. I have reviewed the master plan report narrative that is available online and I believe that it needs more language about the current alternatives shown. Need to better understand how you got from there to here. This is a living document, an evolutionary process. Ongoing talks with larger entities is important. As we realize new realities those can be incorporated into this. I always saw the greenway as being an agent of significant transformation of the community and an opportunity to improve Quality of place and promote economic development. This idea could bring together the City and University. I hope the narrative brings together innovation and integration.
- I was an early supporter of a Greenway path. This is so different than what I had envisioned. This seems like just a walking path along existing streets. I am also shocked about the costs, and how hard is that 55 million figure? How is that going to be funded? With planning being done without even getting the ok from the railroad or U—M, are we putting the cart before the horse? It seems like we ought to get the “okay” from people first before spending more money on planning. This reminds me of train station project where there was a lot of money put into planning when they hadn’t even talked to the Gandy



Dancer property owners. The cost is much higher than I had expected for what we are getting. Maybe end the Greenway at Huron.

- I am shocked at the amount of hardscape. Is there a net green loss with this project? Without trees along a path it is very unpleasant and feels like a long unenjoyable walk. Without trees to provide shade the path won't be used in the summer. I am shocked at the emphasis on hardscape and I am shocked about the bridge at Madison that looks expensive.
- Regarding the jurisdictional review process, would that also go to the University for their review? And within the University to Student Government?
 - *The notification requesting jurisdictional review went to Sue Gott and Jim Kosteva's offices and also to student government groups per Planning Commission request.*
- How many students are on the U—M Ann Arbor campus? Response from U—M: 44,000 students on the Ann Arbor campus.
- How many students are voting age? Response from U—M: estimate ¾ of that.
- Is there a total cost estimate including land acquisition?
 - *Not yet, potential cost of land acquisition would need to be identified as a next step. This is the beginning of the project. The master plan identifies the preferred alignment. We have many future steps.*
- Comment from Treeline representative, Joe O'Neal: I have been working on this for 17 years. This is great progress. We have a master plan. Now we need to build the section from the B2B to Kingsley. We need to have public meetings to develop a design and get it built. We need to focus on the north end, but if something in the south comes up and becomes available, we need to pursue that. The Conservancy is in the process of preparing the business plan. U—M Ross Business School graduates are working on the business plan for the trail, helping identify how to fundraise and get money, and also a structure for the Treeline Conservancy governance.

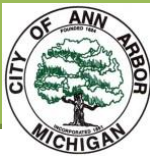
Questions for the Treeline Conservancy

- Has the Conservancy done land acquisition yet? Treeline Response: We are involved in land acquisition. We have not progressed yet to the point of purchasing any property. There are discussions about valuation.

4. Written Feedback

Display boards of final draft materials for the Treeline Master Plan were available during an open house portion of the meeting for review and comment by CAC members and public attendees. Written feedback (copied as written) left on the display boards are provided below:

- [Implementation Board]
 - Had to leave early. Questions/comments: 1) Liberty/First is too busy to be a major gateway 2) Is there a benefit to Gelman plume mitigation in water routing? Thanks
- [South Main Bridge Perspective]
 - Out of scale, really need to elevate here?
 - Agree with out-of-scale comment. Would be better to change signaling on ground. Drivers would appreciate it too (left-turn signal)
 - If you put a elevated bridge through 521 S Ashley Property, may lose chance to do a green flood mitigation project. Bad placement some floodway
 - Please apply the lessons of the liberty street gateway to S. Main gateway bridge
- [Project Purpose Board]
 - Helpful to call out what feasibility entails (spec. property access)
- [Overall Illustrative Plan]



ALLEN CREEK GREENWAY

- Integration w/ 721 N. Main Critical- open space storm water mgmt..
- Integration with 415 W. Wash is critical - PLACE MAKING
- Integration w/ 1st and William critical
- [Spiral Ramp North Main Bridge Perspective]
 - This spiral, while exciting and provocative, seems too far into the specifics - untimely controversy?
- [Liberty Street Gateway Perspective]
 - Do not sell this to fund the Treeline
 - Sidewalk on E side of 1st, S. of Liberty yay!



ALLEN CREEK GREENWAY

Appendix A: Public Sign-in Sheet

DAN WALTERS	↓
Pat Mertz	resident / OWS Edge
Zione Grosshuesch	resident
Margaret Wong	resident greenway fan
Janine Easter	TreeLine Conservancy
NORMAN HERBERT	TREELINE CONSERVANCY
AKIIE RALPH	-
Janeth Walkley	TreeLine Conservancy
Sue Dickinson	Midwestern Consulting