

## **Allen Creek Greenway ~**

Initial and Preliminary

### **Vision, Definition and Principles**

for inclusion in A2 Downtown Development Strategy

**“It was called (Ann) Arbor on account of the noble aspect of the original site of the village—which was a Burr Oak opening, resembling an arbor laid out and cultivated by the hand of taste”.**

**Mary Clark, 1863**

Ann Arbor's first historian

### **Preliminary Vision**

There's something about Ann Arbor...

Its one-of-a-kind name conjures an image of a delicate intervention within an Arcadian landscape. Eons ago, the glaciers receded and left behind a topography that determined the flow of our rivers and streams. In turn, this physical context influenced its patterns of settlement—the location of its commerce, industry, institutions, neighborhoods, and open spaces.

This interplay of context and aspiration continues today; much of “Tree Town's” enduring charm stems from the way potentially conflicting forces somehow find a state of charged reciprocity.

As downtown Ann Arbor approaches a denser and taller future, we must strengthen the presence of the natural resources that have played such a critical role in Ann Arbor's history.

The synergistic expression of contrary and complementary characteristics will be the Allen Creek Greenway.

The physical divide that is currently the Allen Creek Valley will become a place of destination, circulation, civic gathering, physical activity and repose.

The Greenway will be a prominent part of the image of the City for those who live in, visit and hear about Ann Arbor.

The design of the Greenway will incorporate both change and permanence.

### **Preliminary Definition**

The Allen Creek Greenway can be preliminarily defined:

1. as a community-wide asset consisting of a sequence of environmentally sensitive open spaces in a City setting, and
2. as largely following and relating to the Allen Creek floodplain and its watershed

The Greenway's personality will be the sum total of its internal amenities, and its adjacent external uses and activities. The opportunity exists to configure a reciprocal, synergistic and beneficial relationship between the land, land use, and creekshed in the Allen Creek valley, and the Greenway's relationship to other parts of the City and to the Huron River.

## **Preliminary Principles**

### **1. Physical elements within the Greenway**

The Greenway will...

- a. emphasize and follow the Allen Creek floodplain
- b. provide a continuous and barrier-free pathway that integrates with adjacent City sidewalk, street and transportation patterns and public spaces
- c. incorporate the floodway portions of the City owned parcels at First and William, 415 W. Washington and 721 N. Main as destination public spaces within the Greenway
- d. consider the best uses of the floodplain portions of 415 W. Washington and 721 N. Main in the context of complementing and enhancing the Greenway
- e. express the presence of water by incorporating progressive practices to manage rainwater as an asset
- f. incorporate innovative and environmentally friendly runoff water management, and improve water quality and public safety while recognizing its location within the larger Allen Creek watershed
- g. contain year round uses and amenities that will actively populate the Greenway during day and evening hours

### **2. Relationship of surrounding neighborhoods and community to the Greenway:**

The Greenway will...

- a. be a distinct place with a sense of coherence that unites its entirety and provides a fluid sequence of experiences, each considerate of the changing edge conditions
- b. promote partnerships to use public and private land to establish and develop the Greenway and its edges
- c. spur appropriate adjacent economic development including residential, retail, institutional and community-use opportunities that are mutually beneficial to each other and the Greenway
- d. create a safe environment through diverse edge development which fronts onto and places “eyes” on the Greenway
- e. provide connections to other public spaces and community facilities, and to destinations such as downtown, the Huron River Greenway, and the County’s Border to Border Trail

The **Allen Creek Greenway** will take its place alongside the best and most progressive urban spaces.