



PAC/Task Force/Eugene Parks Advisory Group Joint Meeting

Meeting Notes (Preliminary Draft Subject to Approval)

The Lane County Parks Advisory Committee, Master Plan Task Force and City of Eugene Parks Advisory Group met on **June 8th, 2017**, in the Lane County Public Works Goodson Training Room. The purpose of this meeting was to review the agencies planning processes and talk about what opportunities for collaboration might be. Additionally, the Rivers to Ridges Partnership was discussed as a long-standing collaborative effort. Six PAC members, Five Task Force members, and seven Eugene Parks Advisory Group members, 3 County staff and one member of the public were in attendance.

This summary highlights key points from the meeting discussion. For a full record of the meeting, please see the meeting recording, available at www.lanecounty.org/parks. Look for the “Parks Advisory Committee” link on the left side of the page.

List of Meeting Participants

Wayne Lemler, Parks Advisory Committee – Chair
Greg Hyde, Task Force member – Chair
Carl Steifbold, Parks Advisory Committee
Kevin Shanley, Parks Advisory Committee & Task Force member
Jim Mayo, Parks Advisory Committee
Mary Brorby, Parks Advisory Committee & Task Force member
Ellen Otani, Task Force member
Ashley Adelman, Task Force member – Information Officer
Natalie Inouye, Task Force member
Sandy Schaffer, Eugene Parks Advisory Group
Marjorie Smith, Eugene Parks Advisory Group
Rick Kincaid, Eugene Parks Advisory Group
Philip Richardson, Landscape Architect with City of Eugene
Carolyn Burke, Parks Planning Manager with City of Eugene
Lylle Parker, Eugene Parks Advisory Group
Tim Elsea, Public Works Director
Mike Russell, Parks & Animal Services Division Manager
Charlie Conrad, Parks Supervising Analyst
Devon Ashbridge, Public Information Officer

Public in Attendance

Marty James

Materials Provided

- Agenda
- Implementation Options Handout from City of Eugene

Welcome

- Introductions

Public Comment

No public comment

Discussion Highlights

- Carolyn Burke asked about the relationship between the PAC and Task Force and indicated the City of Eugene is exploring development of an advisory committee as they are currently a fairly informal group that informs the parks system plan.
- Carolyn Burke provided an **overview of the City of Eugene Parks and Rec System Plan process**, better known as Parks & RECreate – Picture. Plan. Play! The goals of the plan are to address current problems, plan for future population growth as well as trends and create an exciting vision.
 - Current problems include insufficient funding for maintenance and operations. Parks, pools and community centers are not equally distributed and many are outdated and too small. Additionally, there are neighborhoods without parks in ½ mile, parks without amenities and safety concerns due to increased illegal activity and vandalism.
 - Vision highlights are as follows:
 - Renovate existing community centers, pools, parks and natural areas
 - Build new facilities in underserved areas
 - Enhance recreation along Willamette River
 - Collaborate with school districts on recreation facility projects.
 - Build a new multi-field, multi-sport complex
 - The 30 year vision includes 250 individual projects totaling \$350 million.
 - The 10-year implementation options provide scenarios of investment that would encompass 4%, 13%, 22% or 40% of the community’s vision. A handout on implementation options and project details was passed out. Given the cost of the vision, it is important to recognize that implementation will require taking small bites at a time.
 - The City of Eugene is nearing adoption of their plan following a two-year plan development process which included extensive outreach efforts. The planning process included the following steps: Collect (2015), Build (2016), Reflect (Summer 2016), Refine (2017), and Adopt (Fall-Winter 2017).
- **Rivers to Ridges Partnership**
 - Philip Richardson provided an overview of current partners and expressed the benefit of sharing what each are doing – “we are stronger when we are working together”. The work within the partnership is visionary and aspirational, but progress has been made over the last 22 years.
 - In the presentation, maps were shared starting from 2003 (8 years into the partnership) until the present. Each map indicates various components of the system and yearly maps show the conservation accomplishments.
 - The partnership has four teams: executive, operations, acquisition and implementation.
 - The 2017 priorities are the McKenzie-Willamette Confluence, Lower McKenzie River Bend/Armitage and the Willamette Confluence/Seavey Loop/East Ridgeline.

- The areas of overlap include ridgeline trail development, connections to the south, the “farm belt” (would allow for greater access on North side of metro area and it is of importance from an equity standpoint) as well as river access.
- Three City of Eugene projects of interest include:
 - Golden Gardens Park (270 acres) – potential site for sports complex
 - Wetland Mitigation Bank Property – connections to recreation opportunities near Fern Ridge
 - River Access Study – Looking at the Willamette from I-5 Bridge to Beltline, what are the suitable access points for recreation activities including boating, swimming, fishing, etc.?
- Other planning efforts to keep informed on include the City of Creswell Parks Plan Update (about to launch), the City of Coburg community visioning (currently in process) the City of Veneta planning efforts.
- Mike Russell provided an **overview of the Lane County Parks Master Plan process.**

(Due to task force knowledge of process, summary does not reflect details.)
- Areas of mutual interest include connections to Fern Ridge as well as well as connections to Howard Buford Recreation Area and Dorris Ranch through alternative transportation.
- Following the planning process overviews, the meeting was opened for **further discussion on project opportunities** beginning with framing questions and comments from Kevin Shanley.
 - What do we want to accomplish in 50 years? What will be the needs of the future? The foresight of a plan allows inexpensive acquisition when the cost of undeveloped land is low. Are there gaps that should be addressed? Are there trail connections to be made? Sometimes when agencies reach the edge of their respective jurisdictions, challenges arise around whose responsible for improvements. It is our job and we can make it happen together.
 - Willamette River Greenway/Water Trail
 - The trail begins with the Coast and Middle Fork and extends to Portland.
 - Eugene has participated in the conversation and there has been a lot of work on the northern portions.
 - It is helpful to do things on a larger scale in cooperation with other organizations. The Willamette Greenway is a good example. Years ago, a canoe trip was organized where state representatives and the governor were invited to tour the river. This helped to get attention in a bigger way, helping to move the vision forward.
 - Regular newspaper article updates helps to spread the word.
 - Traveling along this water trail, getting on the water, it changes your perspective!
 - Engagement Process Learning
 - Lane County Parks was curious what the engagement process looked like for the City of Eugene (outside of the well-known pop up tour).
 - The City recognized the needs for additional outreach within the Latino population. There is an increase in Latino families accessing the outdoors for recreation, as way to stay active and healthy. A welcoming atmosphere is necessary.
 - Targeted outreach was done through partnership with their Office of Human Rights and Neighborhood Involvement and UO Latino Studies

- Department course taught by Gerardo Sandoval focused on community outreach.
- Spanish speaking volunteers spent a Saturday at Plaza Latina to gain input. They also worked with Downtown Languages. It was extremely important to meet people where they were rather than inviting them to a meeting.
 - Outreach was successful due to working with nonprofits that are already providing services to the population.
 - Mike Russell expressed interest in hearing more detailed feedback, report will be shared. Orchard Point Park (a County park) received positive feedback and folks said “Do what they do!”
- Many trail systems are getting loved to death. We need to address this in communication efforts in order to maintain these areas. People value, love and want to use park system.
 - Members of the group asked how many staff the City of Eugene have for their planning effort. There are members of the parks planning team, recreation service, marketing staff. In the beginning, the parks advisory group was meeting weekly.
 - In 2005, MIG did the system plan for the City of Eugene. Now, they are doing more in house work in order to do the targeted outreach.
 - The Coos Bay Rail Line was discussed as a potential connection to the coast. Perhaps we could work on getting a passenger car or the self-powered carts to the trail for a tour? (The self-powered carts are successful for a tour from Joseph to Enterprise).
 - For the “farm belt” north of the metro area, what is the vision? There are many ties to agri-tourism opportunities. The idea is to start at Hileman Landing, connecting to the Fern Ridge Path System. It would be a great bicycle trail and there are many farms and wineries to visit in the area. However, there are challenges with putting trails through farm land. Some of the land is poplar tree farms owned by the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission (MWMC).
 - There is an active local food movement in the area. The Local Food Connection is a growing annual conference that is empowering this as well.
 - Washington has an example of a partnership with people who conserve farmland. Land acquisition isn’t that difficult. The real challenge they have found is securing the future of young farmers. They have been working with angel investors to support the capital needs. Now there are farm training opportunities. It is a web of systems working together – they have even formed a regional brand.
 - Seavey Loop is another potential area due to the many farms but it would need to be of a certain scale. The idea of a northern farm belt is very attractive. One option is to acquire the land as it becomes available, establish recreation trail and sell it back to young farmer. At that point, it would be an existing facility rather struggling with landowners to develop the trail.
 - Armitage to Coburg is also an area of potential. Many folks are already biking out to Agrarian Ales and Hayworth Winery adds another attraction. How could we figure out crossing the river to join the farm belt?
 - The East Lane County Bicycle Tourism Studio is working to bring more bicycle tourism dollars to the area, they are looking at road, mountain and gravel routes.
 - Mapping efforts are in progress – both digital and printed.
 - An example of support for bicycle tourism can be found in Grant County – they just widened all the shoulders to improve safety.
 - Other safety concerns include the quality of the road surface.

- There are three Oregon Scenic Bikeways in Lane County – Willamette Valley, McKenzie Pass and the Covered Bridges. Each of these has a \$12 million economic impact.
- National Bike Route Map – the interstate of bike routes. The Trans-America route 76 begins on the Coast and travels through Eugene all the way to Virginia Beach.
- The next effort is agritourism but there is a need to convince owners it is in their best interest.
 - Wineries in the area have a track record of working together.
 - Is agritourism business bringing in enough money to pay landowners for trail?
 - There are opportunities for farms to sell goods and services. Education opportunities for future farmers is also attractive. It is a matter of introducing people to a concept they haven't necessarily heard before.
- Clear Lake Road may be going through a zoning change to light industrial. 4J owns property on the North end of Terry.
- Would Rivers to Ridges be a good opportunity for a tourism connection?
 - Jeff Krueger and Joe are involved in conversations around the interface of recreation and conservation and the apparent conflicts. Could this also address agriculture?
 - We could check with Michelle Emmons. She is one of many involved in the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative and is in strong support of recreation goals related to stewardship. One example is service project tourism.
 - Folks are looking for destination parks and trails, they are a reason for people to visit and recreate.
 - The Timber Trail is another great possibility for connection to long haul rides.
 - Off road trails are good for areas that have safety issues.
 - The SW side of Territorial to Wolf Creek has amazing old growth. These types of trails have so much value as they help to tell our story, our history of timber, ag, etc.
- Outdoor Education/Outdoor School
 - Opportunity for youth to get involved in stewardship
- Springfield and Willamalane – Any needs that are unmet that Lane County could help with? What can these agencies do to coordinate?
 - Physical connections such as the Thurston Hills to Willamette National Forest.
- Are there gaps in services? Each agency fills different niches and we don't want to duplicate.
- Are there ownership swaps that make sense for reducing costs?
 - McKenzie and Middle Fork swaps with State Parks
 - Cinderella Park to Creswell
 - Lane County is always looking for opportunities to make services more efficient, to better serve the public good.
- Connections around Fern Ridge and Orchard Point
 - Amazon Bike Path currently ends and Royal and Green Hill. The idea is to expand to Fern Ridge.
 - Fir Butte needs larger shoulder to ensure safety for cyclists.
 - There is a ring of land around Fern Ridge that creates a 20 mile loop – you can already walk to Clear Lake Road from Royal, but there is potential to expand this.

Next Steps

- Lane County is continuing the public involvement process and will review draft plan with City of Eugene.
- Would there be interest in regular meetings?
 - The City of Eugene Parks Advisory Group is just about to have their final meeting but looking into establishing a long term advisory committee.
 - It would be great to have Willamalane and Springfield at the table.