

meeting summary

March 21, 2018
6 – 8
Armory

Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting

attendees

Chris Rust
Jeff Mohr
Kendal Fields
Lelia Wendel
Michelle Knight
Ben Reynolds

Joe Schwerling
Rob Hans
Ron Dill
Chris Manning
Sara DiLandro

discussion items:

- Chris Manning welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed what the committees have been working on for new attendees.
- Chris and Sara reviewed the feedback that was received from the public Open House in January and encouraged committee members to check out the materials posted on the <https://ftcommunityplan.com/>.
- Scheduling:
 - > Phase 2 (Exploration): March- May
 - > 2nd public meeting: Early June (has not yet been scheduled)
 - > **Next Committee Meeting:** Suggested **Wednesday, May 2nd**, 6pm. We'd like to give members as much notice as possible so please tell us if this date does NOT work for you!
- Chris reviewed the project team's progress since the public open house. After the team compiled feedback from the public, we met with the Mayor and City Administrator, Ron Dill to review topics introduced in Phase 1 and discuss a plan for moving them forward in Phase 2. The majority of our meeting was spent discussing the big idea topics.
 - > Riverfront/Route 8: The future of the riverfront and Route 8 as a local park road is one topic area that the Parks & Open Space Committee was asked to explore. This topic was introduced as a result of KYTC's study and the proposed local park road designation (which will require coordination with KYTC) will allow the City to slow traffic to 35 mph and use the riverfront for low-impact park and recreation activities (i.e., hike/bike trails, camping/glamping). Once in place, the local road could be temporarily closed for races, events and festivals.
 - This big idea would also incorporate several nodes that will function as small designated parking areas, trailheads, and kayak put in/take outs. They will also serve as access points for paved shared-use trails connecting the riverfront to Ft. Thomas.

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Nodes/ trailheads are currently proposed along the Route 8 corridor under the 275 bridge, at Tower Park, at the HHS/HMS greenbelt connection, and a potential fourth location further north is still being explored.

- The Riverfront/Route 8 opportunity also allows the city to celebrate the river and enjoy the natural amenity. South Bank has been working with the Army Corp of Engineers and the NKY River Cities to restore the banks of the Ohio River. Their study proposes examples of restoration methods that cities can use and a natural restoration approach has been proposed for Ft. Thomas. This study has informed the decision to celebrate Ft. Thomas's riverfront as a connected greenspace.
 - Using the Riverfront for passive recreation opportunities like camping/glamping is another big idea that will be explored in Phase 2. The City owns some riverfront property and there may be opportunity to purchase additional land and/or partner with property owners like Aquaramp to collaborate on the Ft. Thomas River Camps opportunity. The project team will reach out to Aquaramp to further explore this opportunity.
- > The proposed riverfront node at Tower Park includes a proposed paved shared-use trail as a multi-modal connection to Ft. Thomas for pedestrians, bikes, skates, etc. The Committee decided to consider two alternative locations for this node/trailhead/shared-use path.
- One alignment would utilize the stream corridor/access path/current hiking trail that connects to the basketball courts. The stream has recently been restored by NKU and as part of those efforts, a conservation easement was created that overlaps the proposed trail alignment. The project team will coordinate with NKU to determine if an enhanced paved path is permissible as under the conservation easement conditions. This alternative would use an existing trail corridor and could offer the opportunity to expose and educate the public on NKU's stream restoration efforts.
 - A second alignment alternative could parallel the Tower Park mountain bike path by the Mess Hall and follow the stream corridor down to the riverfront. This path may impact the mountain bike trail and additional mountain bike trail may be needed to cover any loss to the shared-use path.
- > There's an opportunity for a Tower Park ropes course/zip line as an ecologically-sensitive recreation feature. This opportunity could introduce a new public/private partnership with an organization who could assist with the design/construction/maintenance. It could also offer opportunities to coordinate with local schools/sports teams/businesses/corporations to use the team building space along with Midway District businesses.

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The location proposed in Phase 1 overlaps NKU's conservation easement so an alternative location was identified by the Mess Hall/ trailhead was identified by the Committee. Ropes Course users could then utilize the Mess Hall as part of their field trip/team building activity.

- > The Committee has also been asked to further explore a new Highland Park entrance on James Avenue as another big idea for Phase 2. There is a possibility of purchasing one or two residential lots on Highland Ave. adjacent to James Ave. to accommodate the new park road. The new entrance proposal also involves turning Mayfield into a cul-de-sac with pedestrian-only access to the park. There will still be emergency vehicle access. There is also an opportunity to sell one or two residential lots from park property at the new cul-de-sac to help fund the proposed park improvements. The Committee considered 3 different roadway alignments and decided to explore two.
 - The first alternative is an internal road that travels along James, around the existing Swim Club parking lot and up through the park, connecting to the park road in between the restrooms and Shelter #2. By connecting at this location, baseball traffic can turn here and avoid impact to the playground and restrooms. This alignment allows for a new aquatic area at the sand volleyball courts. Two parcels at Mayfield could be sold for residential development to help fund this alternative. While this alternative bisects the park and impacts the cross-country area, it impacts surrounding properties the least and provides a safe route for baseball traffic.
 - The second alternative travels along James and around the existing parking but hugs the property line as it travels through the park up to the proposed cul-de-sac. This alignment allows for a new aquatic area at the sand volleyball courts, separated from the Swim Club by the new park road. Only one parcel at Mayfield could be sold for residential development to help fund this alternative. While the alternative impacts less of the park by hugging the property line, it would align closer to surrounding residential properties.
- > Sargeant Park is a big idea for consideration in Phase 2 though the City Administrator, Ron Dill will reach out to the City of Dayton first to gauge interest in this potential collaboration opportunity.
- > The Committee also discussed the potential for proposing a Bike Park for Ft. Thomas youth and the importance of locating it at a location that is accessible by bike. Michelle has a BMX contact that could help the committee's efforts.
- > The Committee also discussed integrating innovative park features (similar to those in Ziegler Park) into the Ft. Thomas Parks.