

meeting summary

May 2, 2018
6 – 8pm
City Building

Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting

attendees	Jeff Bezold	Joe Schwerling
	Jeff Mohr	Zach Newman
	Jim Millar	Chris Manning
	Kim Rehtin	Sara DiLandro
	Lelia Wendel	

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 what was discussed at the March committee meeting and outlined the Phase 2 schedule (March- June) with the 2nd public meeting occurring in late June. The public meeting has not yet been scheduled but will mimic the organization/layout of the first public meeting with a formal presentation of highlights from each committee followed by a breakout where individuals can view boards of each committee's ideas in more detail.
 - > **Next Committee Meeting: Monday, June 11th**, 6pm at the City Building. We'll be reviewing progress on the big idea concepts and discussing the committee's list of detail/support ideas.
- Chris and Sara reviewed the project team's progress since the last committee meeting. The majority of our meeting was spent reviewing/discussing the big idea topic concepts.
 - > **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 an off-road trail circuit of both land and water trails where walkers/bikers/kayakers/etc. can recreated along the river. This idea would 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.

Nodes/ trailheads are currently proposed along the Route 8 corridor under the 275 bridge, at Tower Park, at the HHS/HMS greenbelt connection, and the City's riverfront park.

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- 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. At the March Committee meeting, the Committee decided to consider two alternative locations for this node/trailhead/shared-use path due to the conservation easement along the stream corridor by the basketball courts. However, after meeting with NKU, the conservation easement will allow the City to construct a paved trail along the stream corridor with coordination with NKU. 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.

There’s an opportunity for a Tower Park ropes course/zip line as an ecologically-sensitive recreation feature by the Mess Hall. This opportunity could introduce a new public/private partnership with an organization who could assist with the design/construction/operation/maintenance. It could also offer opportunities to coordinate with local schools/sports teams/businesses/corporations to use the team building space along with the Mess Hall and Midway District businesses as part of their field trip/team building activity.

At the March Committee meeting, the group discussed the opportunity for a bike park as a space for multiple generations (starting as young as 2 years old), families and all skill levels to enjoy. Locating this park by the practice fields in Tower Park allows for accessibility and visibility, which is important. The Committee reviewed the presented concept and support images. Zach Newman from Reser Bicycle Outfitters was present to answer any questions about bike culture, bike park logistics, and the need for such a park in Ft. Thomas/ Northern Kentucky. If it’s designed well and maintained, it could be a local drawl for youth and families. There could be an opportunity to partner with KyMBA and CORA. The nearby stables building could offer space for refreshments and a bike shop.

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- > 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 is considering 2 different roadway alignments and will plan to present both options to the public for feedback at the public meeting.
 - 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. This is the committee's preferred alternative.
 - 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.

The Committee is exploring a splash park located at the sand volleyball courts in Highland Park, adjacent to the Swim Club property. This opportunity would provide a much needed amenity for the community, especially those who aren't members at the Swim Club. The Committee reviewed the presented concept and support images that propose a facility with a lazy river, spray areas for tots and youth, waterfalls, water play areas, lounge chairs and tables, and restroom/shelter facilities. The concept also proposes a pedestrian connection to Moyer Elementary. The group was excited about this idea and highlighted the importance of right-sizing the proposed additional parking. A second splash park that's more modest in size will be considered and presented at the public meeting as an alternative for the local community (versus an attraction for non-residents) that requires less maintenance.

- The Committee also discussed detail/support ideas to present at the public meeting such as activities for seniors (i.e., bocce ball, pickle ball, shuffle board, chess/checkers), canopies/shade structures for existing parks, upgrades to play structures, exercise/American Ninja Warrior stations, marked distance trails, and Riggs Memorial swing repairs. There is

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interest in investing in the existing park assets before creating new parks. The Design Team will advance this list of ideas and send out to the committee before the next meeting.