

American River Parkway Plan Update Citizen's Advisory Committee

Meeting Highlights—September 13, 2004

Key Outcomes

Members received a **briefing on riverfront planning and design initiatives around the country** and discussed possibilities and key concepts to apply to Integrated Area Planning.

Members began **preparing for outreach for Integrated Area Planning**. Members are requested to contact Sharon Huntsman, shuntsman@sbcglobal.net, to provide suggestions and contact information for groups that should be contacted during community outreach, or to work with Sharon on outreach messages and strategies.

Draft RCMP-related policies improved. Members discussed and improved draft policies on natural resource management and flood control. Discussion will continue 10/4.

Decision Items for October 4 Meeting @ Hart Senior Center

- Continue to review RCMP-related policies on natural resources management.

Announcements

- Gina Bartlett gave birth to her son, Maximilian Bartlett Halpern, on August 9! Pictures were sent to the UCAC in a separate email.
- Update Committee meetings will be meeting approximately monthly through the remainder of 2004. The schedule for 2005 is forthcoming.

Wallace Roberts & Todd Presentation on Visioning for the IAP Area's Future

Steve Hammond of Wallace Roberts & Todd (WRT), a consulting firm with a major area of practice in waterfront design, gave a presentation to demonstrate several examples of **what's happening in riverfront planning and design around the country** to promote both environmental quality and urban quality of life. The purpose of the presentation was to stimulate thinking about possibilities for Integrated Area Planning (IAP). Copies of the presentation can be sent electronically upon request to Sunny.

The presentation was based upon an American Planning Association publication which Steve recommended, *Ecological Riverfront Design* (APA Planning Advisory Services Report 518-519). Significant portions of *Ecological Riverfront Design* are available online at <http://www.amrivers.org/ecologicaldesign.html> The entire book can also be ordered from this website.

The presentation reviewed riverfront design examples from the Anacostia River in Washington, D.C.; Ohio River in Louisville, KY; Napa River, CA; Willamette River in Portland, OR; South Platte River in Denver, CO; and Buffalo Bayou in Houston, TX. The presentation emphasized reconnecting rivers to communities and the human landscape, while promoting best management practices and providing for a mix of innovative environmental, educational, recreation, and neighborhood economic development initiatives. Steve emphasized that river planning should occur in the context of the surrounding community and watershed, with care and attention to making linkages and extending the riverfront's impact and feeling into the surrounding area. This can make a river into the centerpiece for a community, and makes it more likely that the river will be valued and cared for.

Discussion:

- Members noted, and staff agreed, that none of the rivers in the WRT presentation are quite like the LAR. The rivers discussed tended to be much more damaged and urbanized and had to be reclaimed from these conditions, while the LAR has been comparatively protected from encroachment. One member noted that these rivers were more similar to the Sacramento River than the LAR.
- Several members commented that one concept from the presentation that could be especially useful for IAP is the concept of transition zones along the waterfront. This is the idea of having different types of riverfront planning moving through urban areas (more focused on urban uses) to less urban areas (more focus on habitat value), with buffer or transition zones in between.
- Members requested more information on funding these projects. Steve responded that it was different for each project. Sources included funding from the Army Corps of Engineers for flood control, private sector (foundation) funding, leveraging Superfund money for brownfield restoration; transportation funding; money from public redevelopment agencies; and leveraging environmental investments to attract private developers. Steve commented that it is helpful if public officials make river redevelopment a priority.
- A member commented that the UCAC should think about drains (e.g. Mayhew Drain) into the rivers, and how better interaction with surrounding communities could avert some pollution. He pointed out that there are pockets of development along the river, e.g. south bank restaurants, and agreed it would be helpful to think of connectivity.
- Several members voiced support for looking at connectivity and development along the downtown sections of the river, with more preservation in the less urban upstream areas. One member commented that everything along the river should be as wild and scenic as possible, but the UCAC does have to balance urban uses.
- A member asked for more information on how other communities have dealt with river crossings. Another member replied that if there's an impact, there must be mitigation. A staff member commented that the UCAC can talk about what they would like mitigation to be, instead of waiting for agencies to decide what the mitigation will be. A member of the public mentioned the example of the new pedestrian bridge in Redding, where the designer was charged with not letting the bridge touch the river.

- A member asked how do you “daylight” a tributary stream? Steve replied that you rip out the culvert, lay back the banks, and revegetate.
- Staff clarified that nothing in the WRT presentation was intended as a prescription for the LAR. Examples were provided only to stimulate thinking about possibilities.

During the break, members examined maps of the Parkway. Sunny reminded the group that these maps can also be found in their copies of the RCMP.

Next Steps on Integrated Area Planning

Sharon Huntsman (CCP) will **assist the UCAC with community outreach for Integrated Area Planning**. She provided a handout on the goals and timeline of the IAP process. Sharon reminded members that the IAP area is approximately 1,000 acres out of 4,500 acres in the Parkway. For IAP, consultants will conduct at least three iterations of revising maps and narrative descriptions of the IAP area plans with community and UCAC feedback. The end product will be maps and narrative descriptions that the UCAC can forward as their recommendation for updating these area plans.

Sharon’s job will be to help the UCAC get community input from all Parkway stakeholders, including the organized groups represented on the Update and to Sacramento geographic areas. It will be important to reach out to people who live near or actively use the river AND people who may not yet know that the river is such a tremendous resource.

At this stage, the primary task is to make sure the Sacramento community knows that one of the most important planning processes in 2005 in this region, IAP, will start in January. Sharon distributed a chart for members to fill in with the names and contact information for groups that should be included in the outreach process. She also invited members to form a subcommittee to help her design outreach messages and strategies.

Discussion:

- A member asked for clarification about what the “Integrated” in IAP means. Staff and facilitators replied that the “Integrated” refers to the fact that each area plan will not be revised in isolation, but rather will be considered as it relates to, and integrates with, the other area plans and the Parkway as a whole. “Integrated” also means that many types of information will be integrated, e.g. information about natural resources, opportunities and constraints of the different areas, legal constraints, land uses on other side of the levee, adjacent land uses, and community input.
- A member asked whether the UCAC will also work on other policy topics during the IAP process. Answer: Staff will do their best to keep the UCAC moving forward on Parkway-wide policy topics throughout the process.
- A member asked what is a landscape architect? A staff member replied that a landscape architect is a designer, like an architect, only for land use rather than for a particular building. They are responsible for synthesizing existing topography, natural resources, utilities, what the community is looking for, etc. to develop a plan. The landscape architect is the person with the skills to revise the area plan maps in the Parkway Plan.

- A member asked for clarification on why IAP will only address the lower 5.5 miles of the Parkway (measured from the confluence of the LAR and Sacramento River); another member commented that he felt the upper reaches of the Parkway should get just as much attention as the lower reaches. Staff clarified that funds are simply not available to do an intensive, community-based revision of land use planning for the whole Parkway at this time. However, the Parkway-wide policies that the UCAC will address will provide policy direction for all areas and form a solid basis for future revisions of other area plans.

For this revision of the Parkway Plan, the lower 5.5 miles of the river were selected for intensive revision of land use (which is what will happen during IAP) because they are the area of greatest need. This is the stretch that runs through the urban core of Sacramento city, is the focus of community concerns about safety, and some of this land was not part of the Parkway in 1985 and therefore, doesn't have a detailed land use plan. Additionally, a lot of funding has recently become available to improve these areas: \$12 million has been authorized by Congress for restoration at Cal Expo and Woodlake, and SAFCA has procured a CALFED grant for restoration and planning in the Northgate/Gardenland area.

Staff reiterated that even though the middle and upper reaches are not part of IAP and therefore will not have a comprehensive overhaul of their area plans, the Update Committee may look at some issues that affect land use in these areas, e.g. redesignating the land use category for Fair Oaks Bluffs. Staff and UCAC members can identify specific land use issues for the UCAC to address outside of the IAP process.

- A member asked for more information about the SAFCA grant. Answer: SAFCA is trying to acquire property from Henry Urrutia, who owns and lives on property in the Parkway at Gardenland / Northgate and has a mostly-exhausted sand and gravel mining operation there. SAFCA is also trying to acquire the nearby trailer park site. The CALFED grant would pay for restoration of these sites and also provide some money for IAP, since this is the land use planning and community outreach process for these areas of the Parkway. SAFCA will have an MOU with the County to expend grant money as part of the Update IAP process.
- A member asked about the Blue Diamond plant, another commercial property along the American River near the confluence with the Sacramento River. Answer: Blue Diamond is private property on the land side of the levee, outside of the Parkway. The landscape architect can give ideas for how to better integrate that area of the Parkway with Blue Diamond, if desired.
- Members noted that some of their issues have to do with the Parkway Corridor Combining Zone (PCCZ), which is a separate regulatory document from the Parkway Plan. They asked what the UCAC can do with regard to the PCCZ? Staff answered that there could be policies in the Parkway Plan that speak to adjacent uses. Staff also noted that there are other planning processes going on, such as the City and County updating their General Plans. The UCAC could suggest a subsequent planning process to update the PCCZ. A UCAC member commented that the PCCZ is private property outside of the Parkway, and that although the UCAC might be

able to make advisory recommendations about updating it, updating the PCCZ should not be taken on as a duty of the UCAC.

- A member commented that it could be difficult to make decision about land use in IAP when there are many general Parkway policy issues that have not yet been decided. Staff replied that regardless of which comes first, IAP and policy issues will have to be iterative; the Update will have to go back later to look at policies that have been implicated by IAP, and, conversely, make sure IAP elements are consistent with policy recommendations.

RCMP Policies—Continued

Sunny Williams (County Planning) briefly explained that **all natural resource management topics identified by the UCAC now have draft policies**, which are all packaged together in the document sent to the UCAC for review entitled “Chapter 2 Goals and Policies”. She also explained how the **formatting of the RCMP Policies has changed** from the last meeting in order to respond to member comments that they wanted to see the policies in strike-out version in the context of the Parkway Plan.

Sunny explained how the new list of policies was numbered: Policies were broken into sections and sections were numbered chronologically for convenience. Sections of the Parkway Plan that have not yet been addressed by new policies were omitted from the list. This created some difference in numbering between the new policies and the old sections of the Parkway Plan. Sunny provided a slide that showed a side-by-side comparison of the new section numbering and the old sections in the Parkway Plan.

John Folk-Williams (CCP) briefly discussed the “big picture” context for the changes in natural resource policies. The three significant new elements since 1985 are: 1) The Water Forum, which created agreements for water use in the Sacramento area that affect the American River, including an agreement upon improved pattern of fishery flow releases from Folsom Reservoir; 2) New flood control understanding and projects on the river; and 3) the River Corridor Management Plan (RCMP) developed by the Lower American River Task Force. These three big changes represent new information and new mandates for managing the river, which, along with community concerns and ideas, form the foundation for the Update of the Parkway Plan.

Committee members discussed the draft policies and provided feedback.

Discussion:

- An agency representative commented that there should be a clear and compelling reason, and a high standard, for changing policies in the Parkway Plan, i.e. “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” Changes should be pared down to what is needed to add or subtract from the Plan to solve problems with the current Plan. Several members commented that they agreed this was a good idea.
- A member of the public requested that there be umbrella language that embraces balanced resource management. Staff replied that this language had already been agreed upon at the last meeting and will be included in the draft.

- Policy 2.2. A member felt that the language that facilities should be “necessary for management needs of Parkway,” was too demanding of a standard. For example, this would exclude facilities that are not for Parkway management, but for some other public works purpose, or for recreation. Outcome: Staff will defer this item until later when talking about Parkway facilities. A member also suggested that the Parkway Plan needs to deal with how to approve public works projects that are not Parkway-related but that some other agency feels is necessary for greater good, e.g. the DNA - RT rail crossing and possible station.
- 2.3. A member commented that who determines “net benefit to the Parkway” is unclear. An agency representative commented that the standards about using material (e.g. it cannot be used outside the Parkway and cannot be used for financial gain) will have negative impacts: i.e. When excavation must be done, why shouldn’t the County be able to use the excavation material elsewhere or sell it? Should it just be sent to the dump? The agency rep suggested that the language “No commercial mining shall be allowed in the Parkway” is sufficient. A facilitator suggested that the interests here are that material should be allowed to be excavated for the good of Parkway, not for financial gain, but once excavated, the Parkway Plan should not limit financial gain if that gain will be used for the Parkway. A member who was uncomfortable with this section requested more time to think about the wording and implications. Outcome: This section will be revisited at a later date.
- 2.3.4. A member asked what is the definition of “harm” and “significant”? Staff replied that “harm” could be defined later. “Significant” is a CEQA term.
- Members and staff noted that some of these natural resource policies are connected to other areas, such as wildlife management and recreation. Staff will have to devise a method to make these connections as the UCAC continues to address policies.
- Policies may be linked to a “State of the American River Parkway” report.

Addressing the remaining natural resource policies will be the focus of the October 4 UCAC meeting. **Committee members should call or email Sunny by September 27 with specific comments and questions on the policies.** Getting member feedback ahead of time will help staff to speed up the review at the next meeting.

Action Items & Follow-Up

Who	What	When
Committee Members	Give all remaining comments on draft policies, including “wordsmithing” suggestions, to Sunny	By Sept 27
Committee Members	Provide suggestions / contact information for groups that should be contacted during community outreach	
Committee Members	Contact Sharon Huntsman, shuntsman@sbcglobal.net , if you would like to work with her on outreach messages and strategy	

Topics for October 4 Update Committee Meeting

- Complete review of proposed changes in RCMP-related natural resources management policies.

Attendance

Members: X=Present, Alt=Alternate present

	Name		Representing
X	Jerry	Ahlin	City of Rancho Cordova Appointment
X	Katie	Baygell	American River Parkway Volunteer Equestrian Patrol
X	Peggy	Berry	District 2 - Supervisor Collin Appointment
X	Lea	Brooks	Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA)
	Frank	Cirill	Save the American River Association (SARA)
Terry Thomas	Dave	Ford	California Fly Fishers Unlimited
	Al	Freitas	Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS)
X	Michael	Gunby	Sacramento City Appointments
X	Lou	Heinrich	American River Natural History Association
X	Ken	Miller	American River Parkway Foundation
	Bob	Horowitz	Sacramento Area Mountain Biking Association (SAMBA)
X	Eric	Johnson	Dist 1 - Supervisor Dickinson Appointment
	Eddie	Kho	Dist 5 - Supervisor Notolli Appointment
X	Connie	Miottel	Sacramento City Appointments
	Mark	Murray	Buffalo Chips Running Club
X	Ted	Sheedy	Sacramento City Appointments
X	Janel	Silva	Sacramento Area Dog Owners Group (SACDOG)
X	Greg	Speicher	Boating
X	Peter	Tateishi	Dist 3 - Supervisor Johnson Appointment
	Renée	Taylor	Dist 4 - Supervisor Niello Appointment
X	Frank	Wallace	California Native Plant Society (CNPS)
X	Art	White	Sacramento County Recreation and Parks Commission: ex-officio
X	Melinda	Williams	Sacramento City Appointments

Others

Ed Cox, City of Sacramento
 Gregg Ellis, JSA
 Steve Hammond, WRT
 Valerie Holcomb, JSA
 Jackie Kuhwarth, SACDOG Alternate
 Steve Launey, CalExpo
 Leighann Moffit, County Planning
 Steve Peterson, City of Sacramento Planning
 Helen Selph, City of Sacramento Planning
 Ron Suter, County Parks
 Tim Washburn, SAFCA
 Betsy Weiland, SARA

Leo Winternitz, Water Forum
 Sue Wise, County Parks

Project Staff

Sunny Williams, Project Manager, Sacramento County Planning
 Gary Kukkola, Sacramento County Parks
 Laura Kaplan, Facilitator, Center for Collaborative Policy
 John Folk-Williams, Facilitator, Center for Collaborative Policy

