

# American River Parkway Plan Update Citizen's Advisory Committee

## Meeting Highlights—January 17, 2004

### Key Outcomes

**Members reviewed and refined emerging planning principles.** MIG presented the planning concepts that they will use while preparing the draft updated Integrated Area plans. UCAC members and the public gave input to refine these principles.

**Members reviewed and gave input on existing conditions, opportunities, and constraints** for each of the areas in the Integrated Area Plan (Discovery / Tiscornia Park, Woodlake, and Cal Expo).

**Members were briefed on their role in the upcoming IAP community workshop.**

**Members were introduced to the new project website**  
<http://americanriverparkwayupdate.org>.

### Decision Items for February 15 Meeting @

- IAP Site Analysis

### Announcements and Updates

- Staff presented the proposed meeting schedule and location for 2005. Some UCAC members expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed new meeting location (South Natomas Community Center) because it is difficult to access by bike and not convenient to light rail. Members discussed that this would be unacceptable since this is a public meeting that should be accessible to all, and especially because the UCAC has bike advocates as members. Members suggested four locations that are bike accessible, centrally located and/or close to light rail. Staff will broaden their criteria and try to find a location that meets the needs of all.
- The new project website will soon be up and running! Members and the public are encouraged to visit <http://americanriverparkwayupdate.org>. Members have received their login names and passwords via email.
- The first community tour for IAP will be held Saturday, January 29 at the Cal Expo Turf Club. The role of UCAC members will be to listen and help track and report public input.

## Process and Schedule

MIG reviewed the process and schedule for IAP development with UCAC members. See graphic below.



## Discussion of Plan Framework

Daniel Iacofano (MIG) presented a framework for updating the Parkway Plan, based on input received so far from the UCAC, public, and sponsoring agencies. He first reviewed the existing Parkway Goals from the 1985 Plan, which will be carried forward in the updated Plan.

- Provide, protect, and enhance for public use a continuous open space greenbelt along the American River extending from the Sacramento River to Folsom Dam.
- Provide appropriate access and facilities so that present and future generations can enjoy the amenities and resources of the Parkway which enhance the enjoyment of leisure activities.
- Preserve, protect, interpret and improve the natural, archaeological, historical and recreational resources of the Parkway, including an adequate flow of high quality water, anadromous and resident fishes, migratory and resident wildlife, and diverse natural vegetation.
- Mitigate adverse effects of activities and facilities adjacent to the Parkway.
- Provide public safety and protection within and adjacent to the Parkway.

Daniel then presented the emerging planning principles below, which MIG will use when drafting the Integrated Area plans. UCAC member feedback was sought on these planning principles, to ensure they reflect the thinking of the group.

### **Overarching Principles**

1. Maintain the intent of the American River Parkway Plan.
2. Protect the corridor while addressing short- and long-term needs.
3. Align and coordinate City, County and other agency plans and policies within Parkway Plan Update.
4. Provide for long-term operation and maintenance of the Parkway.  
Identify a long-term financing and governance strategy.

Discussion: A UCAC member raised the question: “Is it our charge to identify financing and government strategy?” This member commented that there are others working on the financing plan. The 1985 Parkway Plan did not include financing strategies. A County Parks representative responded that we made it a charge of the Update, but put off consideration until near the end of the Update in the expectation that other, parallel processes would by then have come up with potential solutions.

Daniel was asked to elaborate on the types of funding strategies. He stressed the need to use this process to create a sustainable plan that has financial attainability. Several more members added their opinions, including the point that the UCAC shouldn’t let the financial aspects be too binding because current economics won’t allow fruition of the plan in general. Discussions included that the UCAC needs to be mindful of restrictions, but if the UCAC focuses on funding it might never reach agreement. The UCAC is not likely to be able to solve the financial issues, but many members would like to keep a discussion of funding on the table to return to later in the process.

### **Habitat Protection and Enhancement Principles**

1. Identify the areas to preserve and reclaim for habitat restoration, recreation, and interpretive uses.
2. Incorporate biologic management principles for long-term habitat improvement.
3. Protect and manage riparian habitat.
4. Maintain flood protection and erosion control.
5. Reduce non-native and invasive species and manage vegetation throughout the Parkway.

Discussion: Striped bass fish are not native, but are not going to be removed, so 5 should not say “non-native” species. It should be specific to vegetation. Consider adding another principle specific to wildlife species. The suggestion was made that if plants/species are both non-native and invasive, they will be removed.

### **Recreation Principles**

1. Create a mix of sensitively designed passive and active recreation and interpretive areas.
2. Provide a balance between the natural areas and human activity areas.
3. Enhance existing recreational areas to increase utilization.

Discussion: Active vs. passive recreation: A UCAC member pointed out that the plan as it exists today does not endorse active recreation (organized sports) as far as he can tell. Another member stated that we have covered this before (Natural Resources document). Another member said that if there are not other places to do that activity (that is, if it is dependent upon the resources of the Parkway), then it can be introduced in the Parkway. Organized and active recreation are not the same. One UCAC member added that it wasn't decided that active recreation could not be expanded; some felt the need for more. Another member suggested adding the term "non-motorized" land-based uses to these principles and getting more specific about defining active vs. passive.

### **Pedestrian and Bike Ways Principles**

1. Create a comprehensive trail and way-finding system throughout the Parkway.
2. Increase the level of activity and use by legitimate users to increase safety and change the perception of danger.
3. Increase ADA accessibility throughout Parkway.
4. Improve connectivity with adjacent neighborhoods.
5. Incorporate pedestrian access in bridge construction/ renovation.

Discussion: There were no suggestions for changing this set of principles.

### **Interpretive Facilities Principles**

1. Develop an environmental education and interpretive program to draw more people to the Parkway.
2. Increase environmental awareness and education, including improving water quality and restoring native species.
3. Find suitable sites for a nature center and a Native American cultural center.

Discussion: One member said that Principle 3 assumes that we will find a site within the Parkway for the cultural center, but it should be clear that this site might not be within the Parkway. There is disagreement about whether this site has been identified already (Riverdale). Modify the language to say "evaluate suitability of sites for..." so that it is not our responsibility to find the site. A UCAC member reminded the UCAC that the group making this decision (the California Indian Heritage Center Task Force convened by State Parks) is going forward and thus the language should be "UCAC will evaluate any site that is identified..." A member stated that this is such a big discussion that UCAC members need to require project proponents to come up with ideas/suggestions and the UCAC will respond. The UCAC did not have the resources to "evaluate" a proposal of this scale.

Principle 2 is ambiguous in terms of how water quality will be improved. State and Federal regulations already exist. The difference is between "maintaining" and "improving." The existing laws are not necessarily improving water quality. A UCAC member added that EPA is raising the bar for water quality. A UCAC member suggested that there is too much in that principle, and it should end after "education." Focus this principle on the public contribution through education. Add the words, "Encourage stewardship."

## **Transportation, Circulation, and Parking**

1. Develop and strengthen connections between the City and the Parkway and supporting amenities.
2. Make the most of the proximity to downtown so citizens experience it everyday.
3. Site parking locations adjacent to recreation, interpretive facilities and trailheads.
4. Minimize the effect of the proposed DNA rail crossing.

Discussion: Clarify that access is not just vehicular, that it pertains to pedestrians and bikes. The word “minimize” in Principle 4 does not account for the potential light rail station, and that should not be automatically ruled out. Add a principle that states that the Parkway is a transportation corridor for bicycle commuters especially and any interruptions/construction should provide detours or alternate routes. Principle 2 should replace “it” with Parkway.

## **Associated Development Principles**

1. Create a more dynamic relationship between the Parkway and urban development.
2. Coordinate City’s plans for the Richard’s Boulevard Redevelopment to improve access to the Parkway, while maintaining the natural character.
3. Reuse existing structures within the Parkway where appropriate and safe from flooding.
4. Protect views and view corridors.
5. Consider ways to increase legitimate use of the Parkway.

Discussion: Identify the criteria that judges “visual intrusion” so that down the road, the development can be determined as visually intrusive or respectful of view corridors. Principle 2 brings up Richard’s Boulevard, which is an on-going plan that is undergoing changes and it will be the most controversial subject that the committee has to review. A UCAC member recommended that the Richard’s Boulevard Redevelopment plan be presented to the UCAC so we know what is in the works. Rancho Cordova has plans underway about developing their portion of the Parkway and UCAC should review this as well. It will also be beneficial to hear from Richard’s boulevard residents/representatives so we know how they envision the area to be used, in addition to how the City sees it. It needs to be laid out now so no surprises come up later. A City Parks representative confirmed that the City can present their current ideas for Richard’s Boulevard. and recognizes the need to coordinate with the Parkway Plan Update. There is an existing Richard’s Boulevard plan and a separate process for changing that. It’s important not to get ahead of discussions with existing landowners in this area .

Principle 5 needs clarification about how much activity is desired within the Parkway. Are we talking about activity levels similar to Venice Beach or other highly active urban waterfronts? UCAC needs to discuss in more detail. There is a Parkway Corridor Combining Zone or Development Zone that may not be entirely enforceable yet, but should be used as an implementation tool.

Explore the option of agricultural cultivation in areas within the Parkway and how that fits into the principles and could reduce the amount of invasive species. The member was not advocating agriculture, but thought it should be considered since it is a historical use. The argument against

this is that the Parkway should be naturalistic area/experience. Farmland exists in many other places and should not necessarily be brought into the Parkway.

### **Public Comment**

- Funding groups need to give an update on their process.
- Caution that certain areas/neighborhoods do not need increased activity. They don't experience safety issues (for example at Bradshaw) and will not benefit from increased use.
- The levee itself is different from the Parkway and isn't compatible with the planting of vegetation.
- Where/how will the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act affect the Parkway Plan? It requires certain levels of protection of the river and areas around the river. This will dictate areas that active uses can and cannot take place. Response: the Federal statute is often vague and requires interpretation by the National Park Service., but the Parkway Plan will be responsive.

### **Review of Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Constraints**

MIG presented maps of the existing conditions—including topography, floodplains, vegetation, special species, and invasive species. They noted that a Biological Resource Inventory will be completed. An enormous amount of data was collected by the RCMP and will be incorporated into the IAP. MIG then gave a summary of opportunities and constraints for the Integrated Planning Area, based on prior input from UCAC and the River Corridor Management Plan (RCMP). (MIG's full presentation, including maps, can be found on the project website <http://americanriverparkwayupdate.org>).

### ***Biological Opportunities & Constraints Analysis***

MIG is preparing a biological opportunities and constraints analysis which will include the following:

- Identify primary influences on biological resources.
  - Elevation/Landform
  - Hydrology
  - Soils
  - Infrastructure
  - Land Use
  - Disturbance factors
- Identify range of desired future conditions:
  - Target plant and wildlife species
  - Target wildlife habitats and vegetation communities
  - Desired habitat quantities and ecological values
- Identify areas where existing appropriate uses substantially limit options.
- Identify areas where existing resources should be maintained.
- Identify areas where existing resources should be improved.

## *Discovery Park*

### RCMP: Opportunities:

- Enhance cottonwood and valley oak riparian forest.
- Restore Bannon Slough, Bannon Island and the archery range into riparian forests to connect riparian and other habitat areas.
- Reconstruct east banks to enhance native elder/willow riparian scrub and cottonwood forest.
- Enhance riparian habitat along Bannon Slough.
- If Urrutia property is reclaimed, reconstructing the banks will provide wetland habitat and an outlet to river for fish habitat.
- Regrade the south bank to create cottonwood and mixed riparian forest.
- Remove nonnative species along south bank to improve public access and safety.

### RCMP: Constraints:

- High floodplain surfaces currently limit the restoration of riparian areas.
- Urrutia property is not public land. The City has to enforce the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act.
- Access and maintenance of transmission lines may limit habitat restoration in some areas.
- Cultural resources need to be preserved. Nine cultural sites have been identified.

### UCAC: Opportunities:

- Improve programming (that accommodates flooding) to make better use of the space.
- Use quality materials/treatment so that not all trails are concrete. The Parkway should maintain and reflect the natural conditions.
- Provide water and fishing access that avoids sensitive areas and is easily accessible.
- Use the development of Richard's Boulevard Area as a positive addition to the Parkway to increase eyes on the street and legitimate users.
- On the left bank, explore concepts for integration of new development along the edge of Parkway.
- Create "naturalistic" recreation and development such as bike trails, Native American Center, dog walking areas, nature centers.
- The Downtown-Natomas light rail route could reduce auto-dependence in Parkway.
- Consider possible light rail station in or near Discovery Park.
- Determine what Measure A funding (\$1M for 3 years) can be used for.

### UCAC: Constraints:

- Determine the requirements of Urrutia Property reclamation in order to plan adjacent uses and restore habitat.
- Illegal camping is damaging sensitive habitat and landscape (proximity to Loaves and Fishes).

- Relocate the mobile home park as is the most unnatural part of the Parkway.
- Existing lack of safety between Tiscornia and 16th Street will need improvement to make better use of south bank.
- Ensure light rail bridge construction is sensitive to habitat.

Discussion: Opportunities:

- Add: Formalize Boat launch sites; expand upon or improve existing boat launch sites.
- Correction: Funding for Measure A is \$1M for **30** years for transportation.
- Add: The flooding of Discovery Park currently prevents using trail system. Enhance portion of bike trails between Natomas and Downtown.
- Correction: Change language on bullet that starts with: “create naturalistic...” to clarify that “design criteria” that promotes naturalistic recreation and development is desired

Discussion: Constraints:

- No comments.

***Woodlake***

RCMP: Opportunities:

- Habitat restoration in the form of riparian woodlands, grasslands, elderberry savanna, and seasonal wetland habitats.
- Potential to create the Parkway’s longest continuous patches of riparian woodland.
- Potential to excavate Swamp Timothy and provide a spawning habitat for Sacramento splittail.
- Potential to consolidate or relocate trails, dirt roads and firebreaks to higher elevations so they are not prone to flooding.
- Potential to enhance interpretive areas and public access for fishing and bird watching.
- Incorporate the preservation of cultural sites in the interpretive trail network.
- Potential to improve raptor habitat.

RCMP: Constraints:

- High elevation limits some types of riparian habitat.
- Illegal camping, fires, trash, and invasive weeds have deteriorated natural habitat in some areas.
- VELB mitigation in NW corner is not working well due to vandalism and lack of protection.
- To connect the trail along the south bank will require eminent domain and contamination clean up.

UCAC: Opportunities:

- Utilize the Two Rivers Trail to access the south bank in the form of a promenade for pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Use an ambassador/ partnership program to monitor Parkway to increase “ownership” and ease management.
- Rehabilitate south bank with native species and bank regrading.
- Identify areas for boat launch, fishing, and an off-leash dog park.
- Ensure bike/pedestrian access on Pipe Bridge.
- Potential for mountain bike trail.
- Potential for cross-country course.

Discussion: Opportunities:

- Add: Potential for agricultural uses (including corn mazes or pumpkin patches) in Woodlake.

Discussion: Constraints:

- No comment

### *Cal Expo*

RCMP: Opportunities:

- Expand riparian scrub and forest areas and Bushy Lake wetland habitat.
- Improve the water quality and fish habitat in Bushy Lake and adjacent urban creeks.
- Continue VELB mitigation in grassland areas.
- Replace nonnative species with native vegetation.
- Re-grade right bank to improve riparian habitat.

RCMP: Constraints:

- The elevation of the floodplain limits the amount of riparian habitat restoration.
- The VELB mitigation efforts may greatly constrain management and restoration activities due to the sensitivity of the elderberry beetle.

UCAC: Opportunities:

- Provide boat take-out points in the Cal Expo area.
- Create interpretive trail that links to the state fair activity.
- Potential for educational water filtration demonstration site in restored Bushy Lake.
- Create areas for passive recreation, including strolling, biking, and riding.

Discussion: Opportunities:

- Add: Potential for mountain bike trails in Cal Expo as well as in Woodlake.
- Add: Potential for off-leash dog areas in Cal Expo as well as in Woodlake.
- Add: Potential for agricultural uses (including corn mazes or pumpkin patches) in Cal Expo as well as in Woodlake.

Discussion: Constraints:

- Add: Maintain overflow parking area for state fair.

**Action Items & Follow-Up**

Who	What	When
Staff	Prepare a new version of the RCMP policy document reflecting changes discussed at the special meeting on 1/11/05 and distribute to UCAC for comment.	ASAP
Staff	Find alternative locations for future meetings scheduled at the South Natomas Community Center.	ASAP
Committee Members	Promote the public tour of the IAP area to colleagues and neighborhoods you represent. Contact Sharon Huntsman at <a href="mailto:shuntsman@sbcglobal.net">shuntsman@sbcglobal.net</a> if you have additional suggestions for groups to contact or other outreach activities	Ongoing
Committee Members	Participate in first Community Workshop and Tour, starting at CalExpo Turf Club.	January 29th
Staff	Make sure all libraries and community centers receive the press release for the tour.	ASAP

**Meeting Materials:**

- **Agenda**
- **Hard copy of December wall graphic**
- **Hard copy of planning principles slide presentation**
- **Copy of December UCAC meeting summary**

**Topics for February 15 Update Committee Meeting**

- IAP Site Analysis
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**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)
X	Frank	Cirill	Save the American River Association (SARA)
X	Dave	Ford	California Fly Fishers Unlimited
X	Al	Freitas	Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS)

X	Michael	Gunby	Sacramento City Appointments
	Lou	Heinrich	American River Natural History Association
X	Ken	Miller	American River Parkway Foundation
X	Bob	Horowitz	Sacramento Area Mountain Biking Association (SAMBA)
X	Eric	Johnson	Dist 1 - Supervisor Dickinson Appointment
X	Eddie	Kho	Dist 5 - Supervisor Notolli Appointment
	Connie	Miottel	Sacramento City Appointments
X	Mark	Murray	Buffalo Chips Running Club
X	Ted	Sheedy	Sacramento City Appointments
X	Janel	Silva	Sacramento Area Dog Owners Group (SACDOG)
	Greg	Speicher	Boating
X	Peter	Tateishi	Dist 3 - Supervisor Johnson Appointment
	Renée	Taylor	Dist 4 - Supervisor Niello Appointment
	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

Leighann Moffit, County Planning  
Tim Washburn, SAFCA  
Sue Wise, County Parks  
Bob Overstreet, City Parks  
Teresa Haenggi, City Parks  
Steve Launey, CalExpo  
Kathleen Franklin, City of Rancho Cordova

Jim Morgan  
Betsy Weiland  
Bert Hodges  
Lisa Owens  
Jackie Kuwarth

## Project Staff

Gary Kukkola, Sacramento County Parks  
John Folk-Williams, Facilitator, Center for Collaborative Policy  
Daniel Iacofano, MIG  
Paul Curfman, MIG  
Rosemary Dudley, MIG