

# **American River Parkway Plan - Update Citizen's Advisory Committee (UCAC)**

## **Meeting Highlights—January 3, 2006**

### **Key Outcomes**

- UCAC members and the public gave feedback for revising Parkway Plan Chapter 8: Public Access and Trails. Agreed upon changes are listed in these notes in bold type with exclamation point bullets. Additional UCAC and public comments are listed in normal type with round bullets. These will be reviewed by staff in developing a final draft of this chapter.
- One priority policy for this chapter—language on new bridge crossings—did not receive final direction so this discussion will return to the UCAC when Chapter 8 is finalized on April/May 2006.

### **Decision Items for January 24, 2006 meeting 6-9 PM at the Library Galleria, 828 I Street.**

- UCAC member direction on IAP specific policies, maps, and narratives.

### **Welcome and Announcements**

Sunny Williams (Project Manager, County Planning) welcomed UCAC members. She reminded the group what they have accomplished in the past two years, including developing the IAP draft concept plan. Starting in September 2005, UCAC members have given input to staff to revise Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5 of the Parkway Plan. Six chapters remain to complete by March. Starting in April, all revised chapters will be returned to UCAC for final review.

A revised schedule was distributed with two new dates: March 7 was moved to March 6, and April 17 was added. There will be two UCAC meetings per month for the remainder of the process.

Sharon Huntsman (facilitator, Center for Collaborative Policy) reviewed comments submitted by UCAC member Peggy Berry, who expressed concern that new proposals submitted by UCAC members on the night of a meeting did not allow enough time for other UCAC members to digest the proposal and to discuss with their constituents before making a decision. Staff agree that UCAC members' need adequate time to understand decision items, and when decision items are clear, the UCAC needs to move forward by making a decision. Staff will do their best to get UCAC members' proposals circulated ahead of time, and promise to share information as soon as it is available.

Sharon also clarified that when the UCAC calls for a vote-to-vote, a part of that process is to discuss whether or not Committee members are ready to vote that night, or if they need more time or information about the proposal. The UCAC already have the ability to defer a vote if they wish to. Most of the UCAC's decisions will likely be non-voting, or consensus decision on proposed policies.

In response to Sharon's summary of Peggy's concern and the staff response, a UCAC member suggested making a new rule that proposals could not be submitted "last minute." Another member

disagreed, saying that would lead to never ending review cycles, since new things will always happen in a meeting, which would then have to be reviewed at the next meeting. Sharon pointed out that there are two meetings reserved at the end of the process to review all the revised chapters.

Staff requested that UCAC members get proposals in to Sunny as soon as possible and she will redistribute to all UCAC members. Sharon asked UCAC members to anticipate that since staff proposals come out a week before the meeting, it might happen again that a UCAC member sends comments right before the meeting. She concluded that if UCAC members feel they need more time to review a controversial proposal, they can decide as a group if they want to delay the decision, as 50% of the UCAC must be willing to change to a decision by vote.

A couple of UCAC members commented that if a new proposal like Bob Horowitz's off-paved-trail cycling proposal were to be submitted on the night of a meeting during which they'd need to make a decision about it, they would want to delay the vote to the next meeting. Several members agreed with Peggy that it can be very confusing to receive multiple versions of the same proposal on the night of the meeting without extra review time. Staff affirmed that they do not want to have the UCAC voting if they're not clear on the proposal, or on how their constituency would want them to vote. UCAC members need to share their concerns with each other during the discussion of whether or not they are ready to vote on an issue.

Question: When will the UCAC see a revised chapter 5? Answer: April and May are set aside for reviewing final drafts of each chapter. Staff might bring some chapters back earlier.

## **High Priority UCAC Policies in Chapter 8: Trailheads and signage**

### Policy 8.19

- ! **Add public safety and visitor management as purposes**
- ! **Add historical interpretation (Staff comment: This probably fits best in Chapter 3, interpretive resources section.)**

### **Public comment**

- ! **What about adopt-a-mile signage that currently exists? Is that permitted?**  
**Answer: Staff will add recognizing stewardship to the list of purposes.**
- ! **The term "way finding trailheads" is confusing. A trailhead is a location; it does not do way finding. The language should be "way finding signage at trailheads" or "directional signage".**  
**Answer: Staff will rewrite for clarity.**

### Policy 8.20

- A UCAC member said that this policy feels too detailed on operations and maintenance issues, e.g. the use of stenciling. Members discussed that stenciling is less intrusive than free standing signs, which can be targets for vandals; stenciling is also very useful in fog. A member gave the example of helpful stenciling on the Goethe footbridge. Members also discussed that mile markers are very useful for calling for help in an emergency and that using reflective material or some other means of making mile markers visible from the air would be good. Gary Kukkola (County Parks) affirmed that Parks uses a combination of approaches to fit the conditions, which is consistent with the draft policy 8.20.

- A member suggested adding GPS coordinates to Parkway maps, for better communication with emergency personnel. Staff noted the suggestion for operations.

### **Public comment**

- What about educational signage about natural resources? Answer: This is embedded in Chapter 3 and also policy 8.19.
- Using natural colors and materials is a good principle, but signs should be visible and not blend in too much.
- ! **Provide information relative to wildlife cycles and sensitivities, e.g. sign the presence of seasonal salmon redds, nesting birds, coyote pups. Answer: Staff will add this to the narrative.**

### Policy 8.21

- ! **Some signs are missing, and there are gaps in signage between access points. Directional signage is needed periodically. Answer: Staff will add language on signage between access points.**

### Policy 8.22

- Perhaps the Parkway signage should be consistent with the brown state highway signs that denote parks. Answer: County Parks staff are looking at the State Parks signage model, which would have added benefits of making the County and State portions of Parkway signage blend together.
- ! **Using the word “navigation” to refer to landside way finding is confusing; “navigation” is a nautical term. Answer: Staff will use a different term.**
- ! **“Jurisdictions” are not the only players who could be responsible for regional signage outside of the Parkway; this policy should refer to “appropriate organizations” as well. Answer: Staff will edit to recognize the multiple entities who could contribute to signage outside of the Parkway.**

### Policy 8.23

- ! **Staff will move this policy to the section on access.**
- ! **This policy needs to include responsible agencies, not just municipalities and jurisdictions. Answer: Staff will rewrite, e.g. “municipalities and jurisdictions.”**
- Do we need a policy requiring permission and oversight of signage, e.g. for events? Answer: This is governed by existing ordinance. Signage is covered in event plans, which must be approved.

### **High Priority UCAC Policies in Chapter 8: Bike / pedestrian bridge crossings (1985 Parkway Plan policy 7.11)**

- A UCAC member asked why differentiate between bike/ pedestrian and vehicle bridges when the environmental impact is the same. Other members argued that the impacts are not the same, e.g. size, width, light, noise, trash, and their impact to wildlife are all greater with

automobile traffic. Staff reminded the UCAC that they wanted more bicycle/ pedestrian connectivity with neighborhoods.

- A UCAC member reminded the group that the Parkway Plan could be considered the management plan for the river under the federal and state Wild and Scenic Rivers Acts. By law, bridges with pilings in the river must be approved by the federal Wild and Scenic River coordinator for our area and be consistent with the management plan.
- 8.17 should apply to all bridges, not just vehicular.
- Policy 8.17 uses the term “Parkway environment” and 8.18 uses “natural resources.” These should be combined in both places to “Parkway environment and natural resources.”
- A member suggested that it is appropriate to leave some discretion in the plan regarding bike / pedestrian bridges.
- A member suggested that additional vehicular (automobile) bridges across the river are politically infeasible in Sacramento, and that time could be saved by simply prohibiting these in the Plan (e.g. would require an update of the ARPP at the local and state level).
- A member argued that building new bridges already requires amending the Parkway Plan, so they are effectively outlawed already. Another member stated that he thought this was a weak legal argument and suggested adding clear guidance to the plan stating that new automobile bridges are inconsistent.
- If “vehicular” bridges are banned, make sure that light rail bridges are not grouped in this category.
- A member commented that widening bridges, if it requires new pilings in the river, is also governed by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (W&SR Act). A policy to prevent widening existing crossings might be politically infeasible.
- A member asked whether the new Folsom bridge will also be governed by the W&SR Act, and suggested using parallel language to what is in the State Parks management plan about this bridge. Answer: The Folsom bridge is not on a W&S River, so no, it is not governed by the W&SR Act. However, staff will follow up and look at the language in the State Parks management plan for Lake Natoma.
- There should be language allowing upgrades on existing bridges and rebuilding in case of failure. A member noted that reconstruction in the same place is probably the only viable option in case of bridge failure, but you never know.

**Public comment:**

- I do not support 8.17. The second sentence should be struck entirely.
- There should be a statement that bridges impact wildlife and recreation.
- I support banning motor vehicle bridges. There should be a statement “No additional motor vehicles shall be built without environmental study and amendment of the Parkway Plan.”
- Add language that any new crossings interfere with the values of the Parkway.
- Does the Parkway Plan currently require amendment for motor vehicle bridges, e.g. between Sunrise Avenue and Watt Avenue?
- There is language on bridges on pages 2 and 7 of the current draft. This is confusing; they should be together.
- The Plan should state a preference for tunnel crossings instead of bridges. A tunnel was proposed for the new DNA-RT light rail line, but was found to be too expensive.

- Eliminate confusion by using the word “crossings” to encompass both bridges and tunnels.
- The Plan should say something about the colors of bridges, that they should be earth tones. This would require Caltrans to adopt the guidelines.
- Signature bridges might be an option.

At this point in the meeting, staff called for a break and, with the help of UCAC members Al Freitas and Ron Stork, summarized important concepts from the preceding discussion. The following points were written up for UCAC discussion and potential agreement and were added to during the discussion:

A) Expanding the capacity of existing bridges is not inconsistent with this plan, if after careful consideration it is determined that additional capacity is needed...

B) ...and provided that the design of the expansion is careful to result in the least impact to Parkway resources and environment (include aesthetic considerations such as color, etc).

C) No new bridges are permitted under this Plan unless shown on the general land use map and area plan map of this Plan. [Staff comment: The general land use map will be adopted by the Legislature, and would require State legislation to amend]

UCAC discussion of clauses A-C:

- A UCAC member commented that clause C only makes sense if all current proposals for new crossings (automobile and non-automobile) could be examined by the UCAC during this Update for possible inclusion on the general and area plan use maps.
- A member asked if the ARPP could legally block new crossings. Answer: Yes, if such a policy is adopted during this Update as part of the Parkway Plan.
- A member suggested joining the narrative with the policies. Another objected that would be confusing.
- A member expressed concern that it might not be feasible to discuss and map all proposed new crossings in the time left to the UCAC.
- Can we be sure that we even know all the possible crossings? Staff listed some examples of known crossings (Tiscornia, the DNA-RT light rail line, the possible bridge associated with the interpretive center in Woodlake, the Gristmill bridge suggested by Eddie Kho, etc). Staff expressed concern about the time remaining to examine areas of the Parkway outside of the IAP. While it will be possible to develop a list of bridges that have been discussed during this process, it may not be possible to explore the length of the Parkway for agreement on possible bridge crossings.
- What about the option of allowing non-automobile crossings to be adopted just at the Area Plan level (not requiring amendment of the general land use map by the Legislature)?
- The DNA-RT light rail line is already on the map.
- Staff need to map the bridges agreed to in IAP, e.g. the bridge from Tiscornia to West Sacramento.
- Retain language from 1985 plan re: studying alternatives before expanding crossings.
- Bridge needs outside of the IAP area have not been studied by the UCAC.

- The narrative already clearly conveys that new bridge crossings degrade the environment and are not desired.

**Public comment:**

- I am not convinced that all potential crossings have been identified.
- I don't like the language on studying alternatives. Omit.
- I'm afraid to open the door for SACOG and the MTP to propose new automobile bridges. This language says "Bring your ideas and get them in now!"
- On 8.18, I am opposed to additional non-vehicular crossings, e.g. at Gristmill

**Outcome on bridge crossings:** No clear direction was received tonight. The UCAC were generally inclined to have a policy preventing new vehicular crossings, but there were several who were concerned about treating non-vehicular crossings the same as vehicular crossings, and questions about whether it will be possible to explore and map all potentially needed crossings during the remainder of the update. Discussion of this policy will return to the UCAC during review of the final draft of Chapter 8. Staff will seek input from the PMT and may suggest options for new policy language for the UCAC to consider.

**High Priority UCAC Policies in Chapter 8: Design standards for boat ramps**

- Ramps pertain to all types of boats.
- Concrete ramps might be easier to maintain than gravel or other more natural ramps. Staff stated that there isn't one best type of ramp; the design depends on the area.
- Use the word "consistent" rather than "adaptive".
- What new boat ramps are being considered? Answer: Three new ramps are slated for the IAP area, plus renovation of the Fair Oaks launch to correct the alignment.
- The Fair Oaks launch has issues with parking and crossing the bike trail.
- ! **All areas that are historically used for launching need to be designated in the Plan; they are not all currently listed. Answer: Staff will work with Dave Ford and the Aquatic Resources subcommittee meeting in February to define existing launch areas and whether these are sufficient.**
- There is launching at upper Sunrise, mile 21, which is unsafe due to the presence of 4 wheelers. Answer: This area is not a desirable launch location, so staff do not want to encourage it in the Plan.
- ! **There is another launch area at Gristmill with problems. There should be better physical controls on vehicles, e.g. to prevent them from coming into contact with the river. Answer: Staff will verify that existing 1985 language on minimizing contact with water is brought forward.**
- There is another area near Watt Avenue where there is launching.
- Be clear about prohibiting vehicles crossing the bike trail in certain areas.
- ! **Add language to ensure the design of boat facilities minimizes impact to other users. Answer: Staff will make the change.**
- Should we prohibit boat launching at non-designated areas? UCAC members discussed that there is historic use, e.g. launching on gravel bars.

**Public comment:**

- A needs assessment should be done on launching: how crowded are the areas? Are more needed? Should some be eliminated?
- Are launches near sensitive areas? This should be figured into a needs assessment. Sensitive species should be signed, if nothing else, e.g. spawning near Rossmoor and Sailor Bars.

**Other UCAC Policy Discussion and Direction in Chapter 8**

Policy 8.2

- Locating access points near neighborhoods might be preferable.

Policy 8.3

- Specify unpaved

Policy 8.4

- Require valet bicycle parking (special events section of the Plan)
- Bicycle commuting before dawn and after sunset should be allowed. Have hours for commuters.
- Measure A funding should be detailed in the County maintenance plan
- Flood detour signage should be clear and timely, including denoting the end of the flood detour
- Bicyclist speed limit should be reconsidered. Currently, many cyclists including commuters are regularly in violation
- ! **Staff commented that the Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail (bike trail or JSMT) is a recreational trail used by commuters, which leads to education and management issues. Staff will work with Lea Brooks and other interested UCAC members to adapt the narrative to take into consideration the above comments on 8.4.**
- ! **8.4 should include bikes in the list of alternative modes of transportation.**

Policy 8.5

- ! **The term “structured materials” won’t be understood by the average reader. Define it or use common language. Staff answer: Structured materials are not pavement. They allow infiltration of water to soil. A definition will be provided in the Plan.**
- Keep in mind that the Plan can’t prevent every danger.

**Public comment:**

- 35% of cyclists exceed the speed limit in a recent study, but 65% do cycle at 15 MPH or under.
- The JSMT is constructed to Class 1 bicycle trail whose design standards are for 25 MPH. Most of the JSMT meet those criteria, however, there are areas where there are sharp turns, poor line of sight, etc. where it would not be wise to have a speed limit higher than 15 MPH.
- **The issue is not so much the speed limit as it is courteous and safe cycling. Answer: Staff will include this in the narrative.**
- Pedestrian crossings of the bike trail should be better signed.

- Instead of “pavement” say “non-porous material”

## Action Items & Follow-Up

Who	What	When
Staff and consultants	Revise chapter 8 based on UCAC input for review by UCAC. Consult PMT re: policy on new crossings of the AR	By April

## Meeting Materials

- Agenda
- Schedule of UCAC meetings 2006 draft 1-3-06
- Chapter 8 Public Access and Trails (Staff revised version)
- Chapter 8 Public Access and Trails (1985 Parkway Plan version)
- Meeting Highlights from December 6, 2005 UCAC
- California Indian Heritage Center meeting announcement

## 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)
	Michael	Gunby	Sacramento City Appointments
	Lou	Heinrich	American River Natural History Association
X	Bob	Horowitz	Sacramento Area Mountain Biking Association (SAMBA)
X	Eric	Johnson	Dist 1 - Supervisor Dickinson Appointment
	Eddie	Kho	Dist 5 - Supervisor Notolli Appointment
	Connie	Miottel	Sacramento City Appointments
X	Mark	Murray	Buffalo Chips Running Club
	Ted	Sheedy	Sacramento City Appointments
	Janel	Silva	Sacramento Area Dog Owners Group (SACDOG)
	Greg	Speicher	Boating
x	Ron	Stork	Friends of the River
	Peter	Tateishi	Dist 3 - Supervisor Johnson Appointment
	Renée	Taylor	Dist 4 - Supervisor Niello Appointment
X	Annemarie	Vincent	American River Parkway Foundation
X	Frank	Wallace	California Native Plant Society (CNPS)
	Art	White	Sacramento County Recreation and Parks Commission: ex-officio
x	Melinda	Williams	Sacramento City Appointments

## Others

Leighann Moffit, County Planning

Forrest Adams, Sacramento City Fire Dept

Teresa Haengi, Sacramento City Parks  
Ron Suter, County Parks

JP Tindell, Sacramento City Parks  
Ed Cox, Sacramento City

Betsy Weiland  
Bert Hodges  
Maxine Clark

Matt Frank  
Rick Bettis

## **Project Staff**

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