# CITY OF ORANGE COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT PARK PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION Minutes of Regular Meeting Held April 13, 2006 300 East Chapman Avenue

## I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gilmer called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

## 1.1 Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Hairston led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## 1.2 Roll Call

Present:

Chair Tom Gilmer

Vice-Chair Gary Remland (Arrived at 5:55p.m.)

Commissioner, Lisa Blanc

Comissioner, Mike Hairston

Absent:

Commissioner Jack Selman

## 1.3 Adoption of Agenda

Motion: Commissioner Hairston Second: Commissioner Blanc Ayes: Gilmer, Blanc, Hairston,

## 1.4 Approval of the Minutes for the regular meeting of March 09, 2006

Motion: Commissioner Blanc Second: Commissioner Hairston Ayes: Gilmer, Blanc, Hairston, Community Services Department Park Planning and Development Commission Regular Meeting of April 13, 2006 Page 2 of 8

#### II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

#### III. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Blanc noted that Arlen Craig, a member of our community, has passed away. Arlen contributed a great deal of his time and energy to supporting the City and the community in its quest for parks, trails and open spaces. He was a member of the Greenway Alliance and volunteered to help clean up Santiago Creek and to nurture the plants and flowers that were sown along the newly created trails. Arlen will be sorely missed.

Chair Gilmer asked when the barbeques that were removed from parks would be replaced. Mr. Robertson reported that staff was in the process of evaluating various barbeque units, and that it is anticipated that the barbeques will be replaced by the end of the fiscal year, and replaced on a rotating basis throughout the year.

## IV. ORAL REPORTS FROM STAFF

None.

#### V. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

5.1 City-wide Trails Update of the City of Orange's comprehensive trail system.

Ms. Galera said that she would present an update of the trails. The purpose is to update the the Commission on the current trails system which also coincides with the General Plan update that will be presented by Anna Pehoushek, Principal Planner with the Community Development Department, and discuss the combined trails map. Ms. Galera noted that Brad Beyer from the Crime Prevention Unit of the Police Department was also present to answer any questions the Commission might have.

Ms. Anna Pehoushek reported that for the past year and a half the Planning Division has been working on an update to the City's General Plan. The City's General Plan was last updated in 1989. The comprehensive plan update encompasses all the City of Orange including the recently approved east Orange area as well as the City's sphere of influence. The General Plan is the City's most fundamental planning document and establishes future growth and change over the next twenty years. The plan is a key tool for influencing the quality of life in the community and serves as a blue print for addressing all aspects of community development and community enhancement including: land use, housing, traffic, natural resources, safety, public resources, economic development, open space and recreation including recreational trails.

The General Plan includes a series of chapters known as elements. Included in these elements is a 1.) Resource element and 2.) Circulation element that provides goals, policies and

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implementation measures related to open space, trails and bikeways. The foundation of the General Plan is the Community Vision Statement. The Vision Statement expresses the shared values of the community and identifies ideals to work toward within the timeframe of the plan, and also provides guidance to the vision makers as they work toward the quality of life of Orange. Information related to the Vision Statement was provided in the Commission's packets for review. The draft of the Vision Statement was developed from feedback provided by the public in the series of workshops that were held in the summer of 2005, as well as input provided by the General Plan Advisory Committee. The Vision Statement establishes ideals for the City to work toward that ultimately affects where we live, work and play.

The two categories that reflect on open spaces and recreation are: where we live and where we play. In terms of where we live, the Vision Statement sets forth the objective of improving the quality of life in the City by ensuring that new developments exist in harmony with the urban and natural environments and providing connections between residential and commercial recreation areas via a balanced multi-modal circulation network that supports a healthy and active community (multi-modal circulation i.e., pedestrians, hikers, bicyclers, equestrians, all aspects of getting around town). In terms of where we play component of the Vision Statement, the statement seeks to define neighborhoods through the use of open space areas and a trail system that provides a source of esthetic beauty and recreational opportunities, as well as a comprehensive system of parks, open space, equestrian areas, scenic resources and a full array of recreational activities, and to develop a connected multi-modal network that provides access to parks, open space, scenic areas and different areas in the City.

The goals, policies and implementation measures, the resource element and circulation element, work to support the City's Vision Statement. Within the resource and circulation elements, reference is made to a series of supporting documents:

- Land Use General Plan
- Master Plan of Recreational Trails
- The Bikeway Master Plan
- Santiago Creek Vision Plan
- Other Regional Planning Documents

Staff has been working on the plan for a year and a half and are at the point where a consultant is developing administrative drafts of the elements. As soon as a resources element becomes available, staff plans to bring it to the Commission in a form of a study session.

Ms. Galera noted that by reviewing the trails systems and making appropriate changes, the Commission can assist in implementing the General Plan. The trails update presentation reviewed:

- ► Types of trails
- ► The purpose of the combined trails map
- ► Supporting planning documents
- ► Current Projects
- ▶ Proposed trail alignment changes to the trail map

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## (Vice-Chair Remland arrived at 5:55p.m.)

Ms. Galera thanked the City's GIS Coordinator, Neil Milward, for his work in putting the map together.

The combined trails map indicates linkages for both bike and recreational trails. The combined trails map includes park, school, medical, commercial and public facilities within the City of Orange as important destinations of work, recreation and education. Another important aspect of trails is loops, links and crossings which are also indicated on the map. The map indicates both proposed and existing grade separated crossings and signalized intersections. Most of the segments on this trail map are currently unfunded, however, they are an opportunity to evaluate them and possibly put them on the Department's priority of projects. Some of these trail segments represent some severe engineering challenges, and some of them may not be supported by the neighborhoods they serve. Ms. Galera added that the rail trail opportunities were included on the map because they still represent an opportunity even though some of these are now under private ownership.

The City of Orange trail system includes:

- 1.) Off road paved bike path (Class I)
  - Separated from vehicular traffic
- 2.) On road bike lane (Class II)
  - Signed and striped bicycle lane on roadways
- 3.) On road bike route (Class III)
  - Designated connection to destinations or other trails
  - Preferred route based on low traffic volumes, road widths, and regulated intersections
  - No striped lane so bicyclists must share the road with moving and parked traffic
  - Signage will alert the drivers to the presence of bicyclists
- 4.) Shared Roadway on all City streets (no bikeway designation)
- 5.) Multi-purpose recreational and/or equestrian trails
  - Not paved

The City is currently under construction for the footbridge at Glassell Street and SR 22. For future Class I off-road bikeways; staff is working on the Santiago Creek Bike Trail as the next important project. Another opportunity that has been identified is along the Santiago Creek Bike Trail around the bond pits. The bond pits provide both an opportunity and a challenge for linking northeast Orange and southwest Orange. Staff has determined that a trail along the west side of the bond pits would be extremely challenging because there is a very steep cliff. The next viable option would be the southeast portion of the bond pit. Staff is now proposing to upgrade the trail from a Class II to a Class I.

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Another opportunity that has been discussed is to utilize drainage channels as trails. One of the most prominent drainage channels is the Santa Ana River. Ms. Galera emphasized that staff has been working with other City departments including the Police Department. Brad Beyers has gone out to check trail alignments. Some of the shared concerns for these trails is visibility, surveillance, and access.

Some of the drainage channels are owned and operated by the County of Orange and the City will approach the County concerning issues such as liability, access etc., if the channels are viewed as a viable option. Several channels that are being considered:

- ► Fletcher Channel connecting Glassell with the Santa River Trail
- ► Collins Channel connection to the Santa River Trail
- ► Buckeye Channel connecting Glassell to the Santa Ana River Trail and Shaffer Park with Tustin Avenue
- ▶ Buckeye Channel connecting Tustin with Taft Elementary School and Shaffer Park
- ► Bitterbush Channel adjacent to El Camino Park connecting Main Street with the Santa Ana River Trail
- ► James Channel north east of La Veta Park
- ► Handy Creek in east Orange.

The City has several Class II bikeway connections. The main north/south connection is on Cambridge St., a portion of Handy Street, and a portion at Santiago St. There are several proposed Class II bikeways. Staff also evaluated the City corridors. The east/west corridor would be Lincoln, Meats, Taft and a continuation of Walnut. The proposed north/south segment would be a small portion of Main Street and a small portion of Glassell Street and then a continuation of Cambridge Street. Cannon would also be a north/south connection.

A Class III bike route is a way to funnel users away from very high traffic areas. At present, the City does not have designated Class III bike routes, but there are several that are proposed. The proposed route is mainly in Old Towne for those who want to go to the train station, City Hall or the Library. There would be signage to alert motorists that there are bicyclers; the routes would be designated on maps.

Recreational trails are not paved, but are constructed of earth or decomposed granite. Recreational trails are not recommended for commuter bikes. The City currently has a network of recreational trails in East Orange. East Orange Trails – The Irvine Company will complete a network of off-road bike and hiking trails as part of their development agreement for East Orange. Most of the trails will be County of Orange operated and maintained and opened to the public. The trails will be built as part of the development, but must be accepted by the County before they are opened to the public. There will be private trails that will be owned and maintained by the Homeowners Associations but must remain open to the general public as part of the development agreement. These trails are not yet indicated on the combined trails map.

The final map will have a legend that will differentiate between, City, County, and private trails that are open to the public.

It is recommended that some of the proposed alignments be amended or added to the plan:

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- Add recreational trail linkage along eastern Serrano Avenue to Santiago Oaks Park near Fred Barrera Park
- Add recreational trail connection along waterway through Mayberry Ranch connecting the Cerro Villa Park, via the existing under crossing at Serrano Avenue, with the existing recreational trail at Santiago Creek.
- Add Handy Creek alignment in East Orange
- At the request of Holy Sepulcher, revise trail alignment on Santiago Canyon Road
- Revise trail alignment west of Chapman and Orange Park Blvd.
- Additional recreational trail linkage to Santiago Oaks Regional Park

Staff will continue to work with Public Works, Planning and the Police Department regarding the viability of all the options. Once the combined trails map is completed, it will be included in the updated General Plan. Along with this process, the Bikeway Master Plan and Recreational Trails Master Plan maps will also be updated.

**Public Comment** 

Mr. Peter Wetzel 7217 E. La Cumbre Orange, CA

Mr. Wetzel said that the bikeway and trail system is the envy of not just surrounding communities, but people throughout the state and other areas of the country. Mr. Wetzel commended the staff for their work on the trails, and the Commission for their willingness to help.

Mr. Tom Davidson Orange Park Association President

Mr. Davidson commended Ms.Galera for the job that she has done on the trails project, and noted that it was a huge undertaking. Mr. Davidson addressed the length of the Handy Creek Channel. Twenty years ago, Handy Creek was converted into an underground channel in Orange Park Acres that crossed into the Santiago Creek Channel. It took a tremendous amount of water out of the Handy Creek Channel. The way the channel runs, if a pipe was installed underground, it wouldn't have to be a big pipe because there isn't a huge demand for that channel and the water runoff any more. It would be a tremendous bikeway.

Commissioner Blanc noted that the Walnut Crossing and the Handy Creek connections are important crossings. Commissioner Blanc emphasized the need for a Trails Coordinator to take undo stress off the staff. In fairness to the equestrian community, biker community and for those who just want to get out and walk, she would like to see staff identify a number of projects and to see how many of them could be coordinated so the City could move forward. Commissioner Blanc noted that the area around the bond pit made her nervous, as there have

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been many accidents on that road. Ms. Galera said that the bicycle trail would be classified as Class I and would be separated from the road.

Commissioner Hairston commented regarding Orange Park Acres, that we have to take a harder look at that crossing. A new alignment would be very helpful for that community. This group has worked long and hard and their needs deserve our attention. Vice-Chair Remland said he appreciated the input that the Orange Park Association has given.

Chair Gilmer noted that an area of concern for him were the potential dangers that existed with Class II and Class III bike trails. He said he was not clear about Class II having a striped line with cars parked in it. Class III just has signage. He said he would like to see a study that gauged the degree of use of the Class II and Class III trails.

Ms. Galera noted that there is a good example of Class II parking at Villa Park High School. The Class II lane is located on a side street with a low volume of traffic and those riding bikes have their own lane. Class III is really just a bike route. The City will be proposing a Class III to keep people off of Chapman Avenue and routing them on to smaller streets away from traffic.

Chair Gilmer asked if there had ever been a study where a barrier might be utilized to delineate an area or a berm of some kind? Ms. Galera said she was not aware of any studies like that. Commissioner Hairston said he thought Chair Gilmer was speaking of a system to alert people that they were traveling in a high risk area.

Chair Gilmer asked the equestrians at the meeting if they were able to utilize the Santiago Equestrian Trail. With the telephone poles in those areas that have support arms jutting out, he was not sure how horses could travel through. Do the equestrians have to go out into the roadway? Mr. Davidson said that most people travel from the southern part of Santiago Canyon Road before you reach Amapola Avenue. Most people use it as a loop.

Vice-Chair Remland inquired about a trail at Glassell St. and Fletcher St. It is his understanding that it is gated and there is a really significant drop. He wanted clarification on how a trail would work there. Ms. Galera said that the area would have to be evaluated and staff would work with the various departments to determine the potential dangers that exist. Vice-Chair Remland noted that the trail would run along residences and he was interested to know what the Police Department's evaluations were. Brad Beyer of the Police Department said that there would be challenges to overcome with some of the trails, but assessing these problems early on in the planning process allows staff to work closely with each department to meet the challenges. Windy roads, lack of visibility and block wall communities all present issues in the planning of trails.

Vice-Chair Remland asked how the City planned to make a trail of the channels. Ms. Galera reported that staff had contacted other communities. The City of Fullerton has a wonderful trails system. Originally staff was concerned because they did not have the funds to build a trail. The community made a trail with their feet and they planted flowers and pulled weeds, until soon it became a wonderful amenity for the community.

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Commissioner Hairston asked Ms. Galera what the process is to prioritize projects and push them forward toward completion. Ms. Galera responded that the vehicle for this would be to include individual segments in the department's priority of projects. Staff evaluates them on their merits, needs and funding opportunities.

Commissioner Blanc noted that over the years the priorities of the community have changed. At one time residents used to ask about the parks but now their questions pertain to the use of trails. It is time to send a message to our elected officials that the priorities of the community have changed and we need their support to move some of these projects forward.

Chair Gilmer requested that staff compile a priority list of the most realistic trail projects that would allow the Commissioners to discern which projects are the most viable.

Chair Gilmer moved to receive and file the city-wide trails update, and recommend staff to include the proposed trail map changes in all planning documents as appropriate.

Motion: Chair Gilmer

Second: Commissioner Blanc

Ayes: Gilmer, Blanc, Hairston, Remland

#### VI. NEW BUSINESS

None

## VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

#### IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Commissioner Hairston Second: Commissioner Remland

Ayes: Gilmer, Blanc, Hairston, Remland

The next Regular Meeting will be Thursday, May 11, 2006.

Bonnie Hagan
Park Planning and Development Commission
Tom Gilmer, Chairman
Attested on

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