

Appendix E

PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL/INPUT MEETINGS AND PUBLIC HEARING

Appendix E-1

Public Informational/Input Meetings Comment Summary

September 9, 2003 – Glacier Hills County Park

- More multi-use trails within the parks.
- Create horse and biking trails within the County parks.
- Provide a nature center that does not duplicate services of existing nature centers in the surrounding areas.
- Preserve more open space, not for park construction, but for hunting and fishing recreation areas.
- New and expanded lake facilities. Provide a timetable for goals.
- Target priority properties.
- Provide areas for hunters to control the wildlife population.
- The County should be more proactive when acquiring land.
- Provide farmland education at future nature center.
- Allow more hunting to control wildlife population.
- Start measuring Gypsy Moth control for County lands.
- Preserve agriculture land and crops.

September 10, 2003 – Village of Kewaskum

- Create a dog park in the County.
- Provide more swimming areas and water access.
- Provide maintenance costs for the parks.
- Protect farmland.
- Include more snowmobile trails; for example: Rails to Trails.
- Compliments from citizens regarding the Sandy Knoll Park and the nice swimming area that is provided.

September 11, 2003 – Public Agency Center

- What can the County do for farmland preservation?
- Provide the tools available for farmland preservation.
- Add a timetable for Comprehensive Planning as it relates to agriculture preservation.
- Does park use warrant costs for the County?
- Tax base concerns for acquisitions and value of land.
- Change the language in the plan regarding ways in which land is preserved. Example: Change acquisition to protection for nonprofits and trusts.
- Add that quality of life is an important factor for employment for local businesses.
- Need lake access on Big Cedar Lake.
- Compliments from citizens regarding the swimming beach at Ackerman's Grove.
- Have a systematic approach to preserving land.
- Define role of County vs. other municipalities regarding zoning.
- Connect more trails throughout the County and add bicycle trails.

- On Table 25—Geological area—add the area to be protected at STH 33 and CTH Z.
- Accelerate creation of trails and encourage the County to integrate with other existing trails.
- Protect wildlife corridors.
- Protect the banks of the Milwaukee River and create trails along the river.

Written comments obtained after the meetings through one-half sheet comment cards or e-mails

- Add horse trails.
- Need more creative uses of park land, not the same thing.
- Use the Conservation Plan sites for Germantown site. Money is available through the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District to preserve land.
- Include PDR program as strong recommendation.
- Protect the banks of the Milwaukee River.
- Integrate County trails system with municipal trails.
- Mention open space in the introductory text referring to the benefits of parks and open space.
- Define difference between parks and open space.
- Expand the long-term plan to address the economic and aesthetic benefits of protecting open space—including farmland.
- Add railing to stair apron at Ackerman's Grove.
- Improve entrance signage at parks.
- Control thistle growing in parks—especially at Ackerman's Grove.
- Implement a PDR program to preserve farmland and open space.
- Preserve farmland for hunting purposes and “country” living.
- Preserve farmland and “country” living.
- Preserve farmland for farming and hunting, instead of creating new parks.
- Control the invasive species problems in the parks, etc.
- Preserving farmland in Washington County still adds greatly to quality of life.
- Preserve farmland for farming and hunting, instead of creating new parks.
- Hunting needs more consideration in the open space plan.
- Need for County-wide pedestrian and trail system.

Appendix E-2

Minutes of Public Hearing and Public Comments

WASHINGTON COUNTY PARK AND OPEN SPACE PLAN PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 3, 2004

The public hearing was called to order by Chairman Strupp at 7:00 p.m. in Room T101 of the Moraine Park Technical College. Strupp read affidavit of posting.
Those present included:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Maurice Strupp, Chairperson
Mark McCune, Vice Chairperson
Paul Beistle
Donald Berchem
John Stern

STAFF:

Paul Mueller
Deb Sielski
Kelly Kravis

OTHER:

Dan Wilson
Dave Schilling, SEWRPC
Heather Nemoir, SEWRPC

EXCUSED ABSENCE:

Mary Krumbiegel (changes at 3/10/04 meeting)
Herbert Tennes

FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS:

Presentation of Preliminary Draft Park and Open Space Plan

Wilson began presentation with an overview of public participation. Schilling reviewed the planning process. Sielski presented the recommendations of the preliminary draft Park and Open Space Plan.

SECOND ORDER OF BUSINESS:

PUBLIC HEARING: An opportunity for public comment on preliminary draft plan.

Bob Retko (Chairperson of the Land Conservation Partnership of Washington County)

The Planning and Parks Department and the Park and Open Space Plan Technical Advisory Committee should be applauded for their efforts in preparing the Park and Open Space Plan for Washington County. It is obvious that a considerable amount of time, research, and forethought was put into developing the draft plan.

Retko stated on behalf of the Land Conservation Partnership of Washington County, he would like to express the partnerships hope that the final Park and Open Space Plan will be a useful tool for preserving our counties agricultural lands and natural landscapes and help maintain the farming economy. The partnership was pleased to see the suggestions regarding the protection of prime agricultural lands were included in the most recent draft. However, they feel a stronger recommendation be included in reference to the pilot purchase of development rights program (listed in Chapter 6, page 12). The current wording suggests considering a pilot program only if the opportunity should arise. Based on the strong support for farmland preservation at recent public hearings, they feel that Washington County should undertake a study to consider the use of development right programs for prime agricultural lands and monitor the success the transfer and purchase of development rights of agricultural lands within the North Branch of the Milwaukee River Wildlife and Farming Heritage Project area.

They are thankful to have had the opportunity to review the draft plan and to have started a dialogue with County staff and supervisors as to how they can work together to make the plan a reality. It is our hope that these discussions can continue and that they can develop a strong partnership that leads to a better quality of life in Washington County.

Kine Torinous (Ozaukee Washington County Land Trust President)

Torinous thanked everyone who participated in the great job done in planning the Park and Open Space Plan for Washington County. The Ozaukee Washington County Land Trust has been involved in protecting our landscape as best as they can and would like to continue in a partnership.

They were pleased to see that the protection of the geological areas in prime agricultural lands was included in the most recent draft. However, they do believe that a stronger position should be taken in Chapter 6, page 12 of the Plan. The current language suggests considering a pilot program if the opportunity should arise. Based on the strong support of farmland preservation at all the past public hearings, they urge that more direct language be used to include farmland protection programs, zoning, purchase of development rights, and scenic easements. Torinous explained some history of the Ozaukee/Washington Land Trust and how they conducted a survey several years ago to look at the economic impact of the farm/agriculture industry has on the counties economy. From that study which the American Farmland Trust help fund, they found that there was a \$145 million dollar industry there that even the Economic Summit has addressed as an important part of the counties economy. Torinous added some other economic benefits from farmland preservation; the land remains on the tax roles, does not require continue maintenance. The farmers who own the land or other land owners continue preparing the land.

Torinous continued that the land trust would like to add that the cost of community services is far less for farmland than it is for any residential development. This should be considered as well. They also need to consider some of the natural benefits of water recharge and wildlife corridors. Lastly, for the benefits of having the farmland even considered as open space, there is the scenic value that benefits the human soul.

That land trust is aware that farmland preservation will be addressed in greater detail in the Washington County Comprehensive Plan and would like to be part of that process and offer any assistance they can. They know that this will be a wonderful tool to continue to make our County a wonderful place to live and maintain our livable communities.

Carol Knapp (Washington County Resident)

Knapp commented that the flyer she received for the public hearing was the first item received regarding park public participation meetings. She added that she does not receive any county papers and occasionally will receive the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. She was curious on when the County would be contacting her in regards to purchasing some of her property since this is the first time she was aware. The error for information leaves a little to be desired as far as people being impacted by these meetings.

Kelly Valentino (Jackson Parks & Recreation Director & POSPTAC member)

Valentino stated that the Technical Advisory Committee did work very hard and did their best to bring forth the best draft plan as possible could that would benefit all of Washington County and had great leadership. Valentino noted that anything of this magnitude and any projects like this will always have items that can be overlooked and may not be checked as a group. The Park and Open Space Plan Technical Advisory Committee is grateful for all the public participation which will help make a better plan. Valentino went on record thanking everyone for coming and participating in the public hearing.

Jerome Zier (Washington County Resident)

Zier commented have several concerns about the proposals in this plan. The use of County funds – firm believer if the County is purchasing land that it should be open to all uses and should not limit or

eliminate any uses. Therefore, no county fund should be used or should the county partner with any other organization where easements, which limit or eliminate some uses, that have been put in place. County residents should not be asked to fund a park system that is a magnet for out of county residents use. If they are proposing beaches, baseball diamonds, facilities, and soccerfields. Non-residents should pay their fare share and keeping these facilities up and for the development costs that these facilities will put a burden on County taxpayers.

Kevin Thusius (Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation)

Thusius thanked everybody for also considering Ice Age Trail in this plan. As many of you may, or may not know that the Ice Age Trail is a national scenic as designated by congress in 1980, and it is the only State scenic trail in Wisconsin. Thusius commented further on what the governor said in the most recent State to State address regarding the Ice Age Trail: They have 400 miles permanently protected now, and the goal is to protect the next 400 miles in the next 10 years. That calls on not only the State but also the County to give the Ice Age Trail the highest priority possible both in the plan and when planning comes to action.

Gary Koppelberger (City of Hartford Administrator)

Koppelberger state he is representing the City of Hartford at this public hearing and apologizes in advance for the imbalance of his comments. The City of Hartford is in general agreement with the draft Park and Open Space Plan, but the comments will be limited to those aspects of the plan in which the City disagrees. Koppelberger provided 5 pages of comments to the Committee on October 23, 2004, which he understands has been included and never-the-less it does not appear that the document has been changed with respect to several of our key areas of the cities concern.

The City is concerned about any threatened financial competition for it's recreational resources. Like most cities, the City of Hartford has enormous investment in organized recreational facilities and activities. In many cases the fee's charged to participants using the facilities offset the property tax levies which support them. Introducing similar facilities at the County level in areas in which are already adequately served enforces additional taxes on our citizens without additional services. The City has no objection to the development of play fields within our service area. The City will object to the development of sporting fields or other facilities, which are already provided in Western Washington County by its municipalities. These are revenue producing government facilities and do not benefit by competition. Because sporting organizations may wish to come and construct such facilities is not a reason to interfere with established revenue streams.

Koppelberger noted with curiosity that the plan for Heritage Trails Park includes a swimming beach, which would be in close proximity to swimming lakes which are constructed by the Village of Slinger, Pike Lake State Park, Hartford Pond, and the Veterans Pool facility and Hartford Signicast Family Aquatic Center. Each of these facilities, to some degree or another, are supported by fee's used to offset local property taxes. Placing another facility in this location whether on a fee bases or not, imposes a competition which will affect the City revenue stream. The City of Hartford anticipates a \$2 million-dollar reconstruction of Veterans Pool within the next 7-8 years. Much of this cost will be supported by property tax dollars and the City does not wish to see it's citizens further taxed for swimming facilities in County Parks from which they derive no benefit and which in fact undermine existing recreational efforts.

The second issue of concern, any plans by Washington County involving developable lands within our growth area. They do appreciate that the draft plan excludes municipal service areas from pilot PDR activities. However, the plan recommends PDR adjacent to all 12 park sites. Two of which are in the

Hartford service area. Portions of the Pike Lake State Forest are already within the corporate limits of the City and should be corrected in the draft plan. The City anticipates eventually the whole Pike Lake Unit.

The City has advised the Department of Natural Resources that they will cooperate in fulfilling the Pike Lake Master Plan for this area, as well as any successor plans provided that they do not absorb large parcels of developable land. The 20-year growth area for the City of Hartford includes areas South of the Pike lake Unit, North and some portions of Dodge County. The City will oppose any attempt to arbitrarily limit or frustrate the completion of the cities Compact Urban Model and is pretext to provide any additional park land, agricultural acreage, or open space within these areas, where such additions are clearly a secondary concern only to disguise any development motivations. The County Parks and Open Space Plan should not be a tool for undermining the orderly growth and development of urban areas in the County.

Clearly the City of Hartford anticipates annexing the whole Washington County Golf Course, Marx Nature Preserve, and Family Park site probably within the next 6 years. This entire area is already contiguous to the City as well as being with our existing sanitary sewer service area. The City Council has authorized a petition to SEWRPC for a further expansion of sewer service areas in this region. The City has previously indicated its future intention in placing major utility infrastructures in the Highway 83 and Clover Road area and beyond. The City expects to construct these infrastructures in advance of development in these areas. These infrastructures are expensive and typically funded by assessments by those who are benefited. When developable land along these infrastructure corridors is barred from development, this action imposes a financial barrier to the orderly growth and development of the City.

The draft plan recommends an addition of 200 acres to this site, which will be an increase in acreage of a whopping 62%. This recommendation is all the more puzzling given the results of the public opinion survey preceding this document were only 39% of those responding indicated at the time wish to see improving or expanding the facilities of existing parks. The City has no objection to the acquisition of additional acreage at this site, provide none of this acreage is developable and all acquired lands are annexed to the City. In addition, the City objects to the acquisition by the County of any lands adjacent to the South of Hilldale Drive where the City is maintaining its ongoing Rubicon River Parkway project. This road creates a reasonable delineation between County and City projects and avoids a patchwork of jurisdictions in this area.

The direct document recommends the addition of formal picnic areas, playgrounds, support facilities, and play fields. This cannot be accomplished on the 15 acres, which the County now refers to a Family Park. Recent conversation with the Planning and Parks Department the impression is that the County intends to acquire unspecified, but additional developable lands in this area. Which is anathetical to the interest of the City of Hartford. You cannot build parks around golf courses located in municipal service areas. You build condominiums around them there by increase tax space and provide immediate clientele. If the County were truly interested in preserving prime agricultural lands, this site or any development in this area the golf course then should have never been constructed in the first place. You will recall that it was a farmstead. To now use the presence of the golf course as a pretext for the acquisition for additional developable land for an existing 15 acre park is the tail wagging the dog.

In conclusion, in general the City of Hartford stands in opposition of any portions of the draft document, which threatens the cities Compact Urban Growth model. This model is based upon 5 key tips, it exercised to preserve growth space, the development of inter-municipal agreements to find areas of

mutual cooperation not within the urban model, a ban on development of property within our corporate limits without benefit of sanitary sewer, a broad and flexible sanitary sewer service area, and a ban on the development of suburban subdivisions with on-site sewer systems, except in areas already established for that purpose.

The City favors urban development consistent with the Rock River Coalition's recently published rules, development guidelines and policies, which strongly associates the preservation of open and agricultural spaces with the development of compact urban models. Urban models, never the less, require growth space. For the City of Hartford that space is defined by a 3 mile extraterritorial limit.

Scott Mathie (Metropolitan Builders Association) – (See Attached letter).

Craig Johnson (Representing the Agriculture Cluster Council) –

Johnson thanked everyone involved who worked on the plan. He added that Washington County is blessed with the tremendous amount of open space to date and a lot of that is a great aesthetic and natural resource value and applauds everyone involved for having the foresight to look ahead to protect that rather than have things happen before its too late. Johnson made comments on behalf of the Agriculture Industry Cluster Council. Many discussions have ensued regarding the agriculture land preservation. The council is pleased that agriculture is mentioned in the plan. The council would like to have stronger policies and practices in place. They have good reason to believe that there is significant support from private residents and local officials to support those same concerns for preserving agricultural lands in the County, not only for quality of life issues, but also as a viable piece of the economic picture. Johnson encouraged the County to do as much as possible, and the Cluster Council would welcome the opportunity to work on the plan with all the other partners who show interest for that piece of the puzzle.

Dale Jacques Sr. – No Comments

Mike Dricken (Washington County Resident) –

Dricken commented on the proposed upgrade to the parks. Dricken stated that he feels that when the development of the parks occur, it should not compete with existing private business, and if possible and some of the proposed upgrades and new facilities should be done by the private sector, thereby saving tax dollars and generating tax revenue. He added that user fees should be used wherever possible, due to the long term costs associated maintaining the parks and believes user fees should definitely be implemented, which would protect the tax payers. Finally, setting land aside and protecting for future generations is prudent, but at the same time feel that some of the proposed upgrades and new facilities is somewhat excessive.

David Schwengel (Washington County Resident)

Schwengel commented that he is in support of parkland. He has been reading that the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District is planning to acquire a large amount of land located in the Germantown area for flood control, and does not know if that is incorporated in the plan.

As farmland preservation is concerned he feels that this is a very worthy goal. As far of what farmland to preserve as through a PDR program, they should focus on what is the best land, whether or not it is next to a County parks should be a secondary consideration, because there might be places to preserve some very large blocks of farmland. Schwengel highlighted concerns regarding the railroad corridor. (See Attached).

Jeannine Peters (West Bend Resident)

Peters echoed a sentiment from earlier that this was not clearly brought to our attention until recently. While they enthusiastically support the parks and the parks and open space that our often created through the development process. They are also concerned about property owner's rights. They seem to be speaking of these lands as they don't belong to anybody and are not privately owned. Peters expressed concern about how this will affect property owners, because land is often used a long term investment, and may affect property value particularly when calling for zoning of 35 acre minimum. Peters expressed the importance to re-look at the calculations as to true fair market value of these lands. It's important to go to the people who are affected by this plan, the landowners, taxpayers, businesses and professionals who are associated with the developing industry. They are the ones who have to work with the plan that you set forth in the future. A plan of this scope and magnitude should welcome and solicit balanced input from those specifically affected by the plan. They are doing a disservice to our residents and they encumbering our future. Peters stated that it is premature to consider the plan at its present state.

Dean Atay (Washington County Resident)

Atay stated concerns regarding how the County parks are run. Atay stated that he lives near Ackerman's Grove County Park and express his disappointment on grass cutting. Atay stated additional concerns regarding County Park signs and the planning for parks.

Herbert Nickel (Washington County Resident)

Nickel commented that the public hearing flyer was the first indication that he received regarding public information meetings for the parks. Concerned about long term economics and the additional costs for running these facilities. He added that he lives near Homestead Hollow Park and questions why four soccer fields were built. Who is going to use the soccer fields? He added that the County is doing a disservice by not contacting enough citizens.

Motion made by McCune, seconded by Stern to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul E. Mueller, Administrator

Approved by Mary A. Krumbiegel
Mary Krumbiegel, Secretary

Date 3-17-04



METROPOLITAN BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

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February 3, 2004

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WASHINGTON COUNTY
PLANNING AND PARKS DEPT.

Debora Sielski
Washington County Parks & Planning Department
Public Agency Center, Suite 2300
333 East Washington Street
PO Box 2003
West Bend, WI 53095-2003

Dear Debora,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our comments and provide some general observations about the County's preliminary draft of its Park and Open Space Plan. Natural and recreational areas are very important to the quality of life in Washington County and the attraction of the area.

We applaud the efforts made by the Park and Open Space Plan Advisory Committee, Washington County officials, and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) to create an action plan that hopes to address the green space needs of the County's future growth.

While the Metropolitan Builders Association (MBA) generally supports efforts to preserve recreation and open space areas, there are occasions where the preservation approach does not recognize the true costs and impacts on small businesses, taxpayers, farmers, and private landowners. Related park and open space plans and other smart growth land use vehicles have become increasingly important to our industry because of the multitude of issues that are being addressed and cross-referenced within any given related plan. Further, this recent proposal will ultimately set the tone for the County's future smart growth planning and local municipal approaches to land use. As you may be aware, by 2010, state law requires that all zoning and land use decisions must conform to the Smart Growth Plan.

The following comments should provide the architects of this plan and the County Board, and their related committees, some constructive feedback and observations with respect to key components of this plan. Our Association looks forward to an opportunity to explain in greater detail our observations and help to improve the Park and Open Space Plan.

Participation in the Plan was Limited. Although a significant number of people may have participated in the process, it was not a diverse group that represented all legitimate stakeholders on this matter, such as farmers, landowners and the business community. Our Organization is willing to discuss and provide detailed comments about this proposal or any other.

The Plan Could Usurps Local Control. The Plan calls for a one-size-fits-all 5-acre zoning category on over 43,000 acres of land throughout the County, which does not respect the plans of local officials or individual landowners. Innovative design techniques could be implemented into this plan to provide a market driven approach to allow for increased open space potential, such methods include conservation subdivision design and density bonus provisions.

The Plan Understates the Cost to Taxpayers. We estimate that the true cost of the expenditures called for in the Plan are at least four to five times more than estimated. It may make sense to survey Washington County land sales data from the 2001-2002 Annual Land Sales Report for Metropolitan Milwaukee (Data is published 2001-2002 by Mark A. Harvey, MAI, SRA). This should provide County officials realistic land values that will help in providing accurate plan estimates for the future purchase of land.

The Plan Goes Beyond Its Intended Scope. The Plan attempts to regulate over 43,348 acres of land (15.70% of the entire County) that are NOT intended for park or trail use.

Individual Landowners Will Bear the Majority of the Costs. The Plan calls for the down zoning of all land the County desires to protect but cannot afford to purchase.

The Plan Improperly Addresses Farmland Preservation. The issue of farmland preservation is affected by matters having nothing to do with park and open space planning (e.g., economic viability of farming), the data used in the Plan is inaccurate and outdated (based on an obscure 1981 Report), and the proposed solution to farmland preservation relies solely on zoning regulations which infringe on local control and the choices of individual farm families (Restrictive Agricultural Districts). Further, the County intends to have a future plan that will address agricultural matters.

The attached document provides our Association's detailed comments pertaining to the Park and Open Space Plan. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss and work on the direction of this Plan with County officials. Our organization is optimistic that we will have a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the recommendations in the plan so it can reflect and be supported by all persons with legitimate concerns over land use in the County.

The MBA looks forward to working with the County and SE WRPC to address our concerns. Please feel free to contact me directly at 262-436-1122 ext. 19 with questions.

Sincerely,



J. Scott Mathie
Director of Government Affairs

Cc: Matt Moroney, Executive Director
Washington County Supervisors
Ken Miller, County Board Chairman
Paul Mueller, Administrator PPD
Phil Evenson, SE WRPC
Dave Shilling, SE WRPC

METROPOLITAN BUILDERS ASSOCIATION
Washington County Park and Open Space Plan
TECHNICAL COMMENTS
FEBRUARY 3, 2004

PARTICIPATION IN THE PLAN WAS LIMITED

Our first concern involves the very selective and limited number of stakeholders involved in preparing the Parks and Open Space Plan. Our Organization would recommend that before moving forward with this plan that a comprehensive focus group made up of interests who, up to this point, have not participated in the Plan, including farmers, landowners, builders, economic development officials, realtors, large employers, small businesses, taxpayer organizations, and elected government officials who should all have an opportunity to provide some constructive feedback about the plan before us. Such groups may have different, though equally legitimate perspectives on how certain lands should be used and how tax dollars should be spent.

Several County Officials and County Board members recognize that our Organization can be and has been a strong and fair-minded partner in assisting in the development of such planning documents. We would have provided a perspective that was not represented on the Advisory Committee. In the future, we would ask that our Organization or a representative of the building industry be included in advisory committees that seek to impact or change land uses.

THE PLAN COULD USURPS LOCAL CONTROL.

Our Organization believes that if the land cannot be acquired for County purposes, its use should be left for local officials and individual landowners to determine. Innovative design techniques could be implemented into this plan to provide a market driven approach to allow for increased open space potential adjacent to residential uses, such methods include conservation subdivision design and density bonus provisions.

In 1986, the County gave up its zoning authority (outside of shore lands) to permit individual Townships to determine their own destiny. This decision has resulted in an extremely diverse and vibrant County as each Township, through locally elected officials, has evolved to suit the desires of its residents. Vastly differing views on land use co-exist in the County with the contrasting visions of Polk and Richfield as only one example. Other Townships such as Jackson and West Bend have negotiated border agreements adding even more diversity to certain areas.

In this context, we view the “one size fits all” 5-acre density requirement as a huge step backwards. This proposed mandate would restrict almost 16% of the County and could have an impact on local town officials who were not closely involved in framing the Plan’s recommendations.

Further, with respect to lands near incorporated areas, this Plan may not appropriately address one of the “three most important recommendations contained in the regional land use plan”:

Encouragement of a more compact pattern of urban development, one that can be efficiently served by such essential public facilities and services as centralized sanitary sewerage, water supply and mass transit.

THE PLAN UNDERSTATES THE COST TO TAXPAYERS.

The Plan stated that 17,758 acres, or about 6.5% of the County is already protected through public or conservation ownership. The Plan recommends an additional 16,228 acres (another 5.8% of the County) be acquired with an estimated cost of \$40,600,000, with the County's share being \$8,223,000 or 20.85% of the total.

With our understanding of land prices in the County, the Plan's numbers appear to be understated. The Plan estimates that property in the County can be acquired for an average cost of \$2,500 per acre (\$16.6 M/ 16,228 acres = \$2501.84). The plan also states "landowners will receive fair market value for their property." With our familiarity with land values, we believe that prices are more realistic at a range of \$10,000 an acre in the northern Townships to over \$20,000 an acre closer to Milwaukee. Assuming a very conservative \$12,000 an acre, we would estimate that this Plan actually calls for spending at a level of approaching \$200 million (\$12,000 x 16,228 acres = \$194,760,000).

For a realistic County estimate, it may make sense to survey Washington County land sales data from the 2001-2002 Annual Land Sales Report for Metropolitan Milwaukee (Data is published 2001-2002 by Mark A. Harvey, MAI, SRA). This should provide County officials realistic land values that will help in providing accurate plan estimates for the future purchase of land.

We do not believe that the Park and Open Space Advisory Committee would feel comfortable in recommending that the County Board budget approximately \$95,705,190 (County's 20% share) for park and open space lands. Our Organization would also like to point-out to decision-makers that our comments do not address the fiscal implications of maintaining such lands or the loss of revenue from eliminating lands from the tax rolls.

THE PLAN GOES BEYOND ITS INTENDED SCOPE.

Under the heading "Need for the Plan" the County "Plan Summary," states that the "new plan maintains county eligibility to apply for and receive Federal and State aids ... for the acquisition and development of park and open space sites and facilities." In other words, the County needs a plan to identify future parkland so it will be eligible for grant money - a concept we all can support.

However, the Plan goes beyond its stated scope by identifying an additional 43,348 acres - or another 15.70% of the entire County - which the Plan admits "are not needed for future park or trail development."

It is also interesting to note that the Plan indicates that public and conservation entities already own 17,758 acres of lands and are targeting an additional 16,228 acres for future acquisition.

In addition, the Plan designates thousands of acres for "exclusive agricultural zoning" even though the seven "Plan objectives" under chapter V of the Plan make no mention of farmland preservation.

INDIVIDUAL LANDOWNERS WILL BEAR THE MAJORITY OF THE COSTS.

Our Organization does not believe it is the intentions of the Committee to recommend that individual landowners bear the majority of the costs; however, this proposed Park and Open Space Plan does exactly that. The Plan recommends that the 43,348 acres not needed for "future park or

trail development” be down-zoned in “protective zoning districts, which limits development... to an overall density of one dwelling unit per five acres.”

This recommendation will result in a severe hardship to those who deserve it the least. Farmers and landowners have been adding to the quality of life in the County for generations and just when the time comes for the well-deserved or necessary retirement, their primary asset is taken or substantially devalued with no compensation. Please remember that most farmers do not have 401-K plans.

In contrast, the 16,228 acres the County intends to purchase will come from “landowners that receive fair market value for their property”. How fair is it that one landowner should receive fair market value while another landowner, perhaps right next door, will receive nothing.

THE PLAN IMPROPERLY ADDRESSES FARMLAND PRESERVATION.

The issue of farmland preservation is an extremely important and controversial subject and should not be resolved as an after-thought to a Park and Open Space Plan. Park and Open Space relates to the identification and establishment of resources intended for active and passive recreational uses. Farming is a business involving an entirely different set of issues that need to be addressed, including the economic viability of farming, the affect of technology on the amount of farmland needed, the long-standing surplus of farm commodities and the respect for the decisions of individuals who elect to retire from or move out of farming operations. None of these key issues were even addressed in the Plan.

The supporting data is outdated

The entire basis for the Plan recommendations regarding farmland preservation is based on a Report prepared for the County in 1981. This Report has not been widely distributed and is only available upon specific request and with payment of a fee. Has anyone on the Technical Advisory Committee or the Park and Planning Commission even read this 1981 Report? If so, they would discover that the 1981 Report was prepared under the following conditions which do not apply in early 2004:

- The Report states that agriculture and related production are “leading sector’s of the County’s economic base.” (page 3) Presently, agriculture accounts for only a small fraction of the County’s economic base.
- The Report speaks in terms of “an improving farm economy” (page 1) which is totally out of touch with the dire circumstances of farm commodity prices over the last 5 years.
- The Report speaks about how the “inflated taxes” (page 6) are causing the loss of farmland, an issue which has no relevance today since the statewide implementation of the Use Value assessment system.
- The Report speaks about the “decline in building construction due to high interest rates” and “abundance of vacant platted residential lots” (page 8). Of course assumptions made during the depth of the 1979-1981 recession could not be more out of touch with today’s environment of low interest rates and extreme shortage of vacant residential lots.
- In 1981, the County’s population was 84,848, but has since jumped to approximately 122,000, a 50% increase during the last 23 years.

- In 1981, the County fully administered zoning in 9 of 13 Townships and was the approving authority for all Townships. Now County zoning is limited to Shoreland areas.
- In 1981, mound systems were considered experimental and first being “tested” in the County (page 54).
- In 1981, the U.S. 45 expressway did not exist and much of Highway 33 and 60 were still 2-lane roadways.

Despite these fundamental differences between 1981 and 2004, the Plan recommendations for farmland preservation are the same as set forth in the 1981 report. We can understand how consultants in 1981 could have never foreseen the facts of life in 2004. Our concern is over how planners could use a 1981 report to make decisions about life in 2004.

The Plan infringes on local control and personal choice

The Plan’s only solution to farmland preservation is the establishment of exclusive agricultural zoning districts with 35-acre minimum lot sizes. Again, this is a one size fits all approach to planning which the County ended in 1986.

Agricultural zoning is not the answer, even at the local level. Each farming family should be free to continue farming indefinitely, or if they so choose, to convert their land to a different use. The viability of farming is a function of commodity prices, production costs, career choices and retirement age and no zoning regulation or other artificial government decision should change that. The County should encourage and assist with the continuation of farming not mandate it.

Better information is needed

Absolutely no data about the farming industry in Washington County has been generated since 1981. We do not know how many people are still farming, or what part of the County’s economy is related to farming, or the expected economic viability of farming in Washington County over the next 20 years. All of these and many other important questions should be researched and answered before any recommendations can be made about farmland preservation.

Paul G. Hayes
N63 W5795 Columbia Road
Cedarburg, Wisconsin 53012
Telephone 262 377-7880

January 31, 2004

Washington County Planning and Parks Department
Washington County Planning Conservation and Parks Committee
Washington County Courthouse
432 E. Washington St.
West Bend, WI 53095

Gentlemen and Ladies,

I am co-chair of the Mid-Kettle Moraine Partners Group, a coalition of public and private organizations with a goal to connect the north and south units of the Kettle Moraine with a greenbelt centered on the Ice Age Trail.

We congratulate Washington County for preparing a countywide Parks and Open Space Plan. You clearly lead most other Wisconsin counties in this farsighted action that will help assure that the natural beauty of Washington County will remain a regional, state and national attraction.

We were not surprised to discover in reading your plan that hiking and walking were the most popular outdoor activities listed in your public opinion poll of citizens who use Washington County Parks. That conforms to findings nationally.

Our members are pleased that your plan recognizes that the Ice Age Trail should be completed through Washington County. The segments already completed, including the North Kettle Moraine State Forest, west of West Bend, Pike Lake, Holy Hill and Loew Lake are among the most popular along the entire route of the Ice Age Trail in Wisconsin.

We believe that completion of the trail in Washington County should be priority number one in any park and open space plan. Because the trail links natural areas, park lands, geological features and environmental corridors that also are recommended for permanent protection, the trail's completion would accomplish many more of your goals as well.

It is especially critical that the trail corridor and associated natural areas be protected at once because of the rate of urban development in Washington County.

Integral to the beauty and the natural health Washington County is the protection of farmland and other open space that are contiguous to the principal natural assets already identified in Washington County. These should be protected not only for the health of your agricultural community, but as scenic and natural buffers to such

wonderful places as Loew Lake , Pike Lake, Holy Hill woods, the Cedar Lakes and the upper Milwaukee River.

Nonprofit groups such as our members, Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation, and Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation, already are working hard to accomplish many of your goals, but limits of staff and funds restrict their efforts. Without close cooperation with county government, some of our shared goals may never be realized.

In this regard, we believe that the Washington County Parks and Open Space Plan should recommend more direct action to be taken by the county through farmland protection programs, zoning, scenic easements and purchase of development rights of critical open space and endangered resources.

You have our admiration for your good work.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Paul G. Hayes".

Paul G. Hayes
Co-Chair, Mid-Kettle Moraine Partners Group
Board Member, Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation



Village of
★★★
Germantown
Willkommen

RECEIVED

Planning Department JAN 23 2004
Jason Gallo, Village Planner WASHINGTON COUNTY
N112 W17001 Mequon Road P.O. Box 337
Germantown, WI 53022-0337 PLANNING AND PARKS DEPT.
(262) 250-4735 direct line
(262) 253-8255 fax

January 22, 2004

Deb Sielski, Assistant Administrator for Planning
Washington County, Planning & Parks Dept.
P.O. Box 2003
West Bend, WI 53095-2003

RE: A Park and Open Space Plan for Washington County

Dear Deb:

Thank-you for sending the Village Planning Department a copy of the preliminary draft of the Park and Open Space Plan for Washington County. I have read through the text and reviewed the many maps included within the document.

At this time, the Germantown Planning Department has no concerns with the comprehensive document. Once approved I feel this will be a valuable resource for my Department for linking parks, preserving significant lands and assisting in making long-range planning decisions.

Good luck with the public hearing on February 3, 2004 and if there is anything I can do to assist you with your efforts feel free to contact the Planning Department at (262) 250-4735.

Sincerely,
Village of Germantown


Jason Gallo, AICP
Village Planner/Zoning Administrator

cc: Juliene Hetter, Recreation Director
Property File



THE LAND CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

Feb. 3, 2003

Washington County Planning and Parks Department
Washington County Planning, Conservation and Parks Committee
333 E. Washington Street, Suite 2300
West Bend, WI 53095

My name is Bob Retko and I am the chair of the Land Conservation Partnership of Washington County; a group of individual, businesses and organizations working to protect farmland and natural areas in Washington County.

The Planning and Parks Department and the Technical Advisory Committee should be applauded for their efforts in preparing the Park and Open Space Plan for Washington County. It is obvious that a considerable amount of time, research and forethought was put into developing the draft plan.

As you well know...land use is fast becoming the greatest environmental challenge in the United States. Across the county, land preservation initiatives, "Smart Growth" planning laws and anti-sprawl campaigns have dominated the local headlines. Despite these positive signs, overall land use trends are not good. This is especially the case for agricultural lands.

Since the 1980's, Washington County has been one of the fastest growing counties in the state. Between 1989 and 1997 about 6,000 acres of agricultural land in Washington County were removed from production and converted to some other use. The future bodes a similar fate. Over the next 20 years, the population of Washington County is projected to increase from 117,500 to approximately 131,000, an increase of about 12%.

On behalf of the Land Conservation Partnership of Washington County, I would like to express our hope that the final Park and Open Space Plan will be a useful tool for preserving our county's agricultural lands and natural landscapes, and help maintain the farming economy.

PO Box 917 • West Bend, WI 53095 • phone 262/338-4881 • fax 262/338-4881 • email millinco@sbcglobal.net

A partnership of individuals, businesses and organizations working to protect farmland and natural areas in Washington County

The Partnership was pleased to see that the suggestions regarding protection of prime agricultural land were included in the current draft. However, we feel a stronger recommendation should be included in reference to the pilot purchase of development rights program listed in Chapter VI page 12. The current wording suggests considering a pilot program only if the "opportunity should arise." Based on the strong support for farmland preservation at the recent public hearings we feel Washington County should undertake a study to consider the use of a purchase of development rights program for prime agricultural land and monitor the success of the transfer and purchase of development rights of agricultural lands within the North Branch of the Milwaukee River Wildlife and Farming Heritage Project area.

We are thankful to have had the opportunity to review the draft plan and to have started a dialogue with County staff and supervisors as to how we can work together to make the plan a reality. It is our hope that these discussions can continue and that we can develop a strong partnership that leads to a better quality of life in Washington County.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Again, we look forward to working with you to preserve the beautiful countryside, farmland, and special natural areas that make Washington County a great place to live.

Sincerely,



Bob Retko
Land Conservation Partnership of Washington County, Chair

Saving Spaces... Protecting Places

**COMMENTS ON COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN
PUBLIC HEARING OF FEBRUARY 3, 2004**

My name is Gary Koppelberger. I am the City Administrator for the City of Hartford, and I am representing the City at this public hearing. I want to apologize in advance for the unbalanced nature of my comments this evening. The City of Hartford is in general agreement with the draft Parks and Open Space Plan; however, because my time allocation is limited, I will direct my comments to those aspects of the Plan with which the City disagrees. I provided five pages of comments to the Committee on October 23, 2003, which I understand have been included in the documents circulated in this matter. Nevertheless, it does not appear that the final draft document has been changed with respect to our key areas of concern:

A. The City of Hartford is concerned about any threatened financial competition for its recreational resources. Like most cities, Hartford has an enormous investment in organized recreational facilities and activities. In many cases the fees charged to participants using these facilities offset the property tax levies used to support them. Introducing similar facilities at the County level in areas which are already adequately served imposes additional taxes on our citizens without additional services. The City has no objection to the development of "play fields" and similar areas for informal recreational activities within our service area, but the City will object to the development of sporting fields or other facilities which are already provided to western Washington County by its municipalities. These are revenue producing government-owned facilities, which do not benefit by competition. Merely because sporting organizations may wish the County to construct such facilities is not sufficient reason to interfere with these established revenue streams.

I note with curiosity that the plan for Heritage Trails Park includes a swimming beach. This swimming facility would be in close proximity to the swimming lake newly constructed by the Village of Slinger, the beach at Pike Lake State Park, the Hartford Millpond, our Veterans' Pool facility, and Hartford's Signicast Family Aquatics Center. Each of these facilities, to some degree or another, is supported by fees used to offset local property taxes. Placing another facility in this location, whether on a fee basis or not, imposes competition which will affect our revenue stream. The City anticipates a \$2 million reconstruction of our Veterans Pool facility within the next 7-8 years. Much of this cost will be supported by property tax dollars. The City does not wish to see its citizens further taxed for new swimming facilities in County Parks from which we derive no benefit, and which act to undermine our existing recreational efforts.

B. A second concern to the City of Hartford are recreational and open space plans by Washington County involving developable lands within our growth area. We appreciate that the draft document excludes municipal service areas from proposed agricultural land protection plans. However, the draft document does recommend acquisition of agricultural lands (including the Purchase of Development Rights) adjacent to all 12 major park sites. Two of these major park sites are in the City of Hartford's sewer service area. Portions of the Pike Lake Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest are already within the corporate limits of the City of Hartford (which should be corrected in the text of the draft report, where this park is described as lying within

**COMMENTS ON COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN
PUBLIC HEARING OF FEBRUARY 3, 2004**

the Town of Hartford), and the City anticipates eventually annexing the whole of the Pike Lake Unit. The City has advised the DNR that it will cooperate in the fulfilling of the DNR master plan for the area, as well as any successor plans, provided they do not absorb inordinately large parcels of developable land. The 20 year growth area for the City of Hartford includes areas south of the Pike Lake Unit, north of the Pike Lake Unit, and into some portions of Dodge County. The City of Hartford will oppose any attempt to arbitrarily limit or frustrate the completion of the City's compact urban model under the pretext of providing additional park lands, agricultural acreage, or open space within these areas, where such additions are clearly of secondary concern and act only to disguise the true anti-development sentiments which occasion them. A County Parks and Open Space Plan must not be a tool for undermining the orderly growth and development of urban areas in the County.

C. The City of Hartford anticipates annexing the whole of the Washington County Golf Course/ Marx Nature Preserve/ Family Park site, probably within the next six years. This entire area is already contiguous to the City, as well as being within our existing sanitary sewer service area, and the City Council has authorized petitioning SEWRPC for a further expansion of sewer service areas in this region. The City Council has indicated its future intention of placing major utility infrastructures along Highway 83 north to Clover Road and beyond, and the City expects to eventually construct a water tower in this area. These infrastructures are expensive. Many are typically funded by assessments upon those benefited. When developable land along these infrastructure corridors is barred from development, this action imposes a financial barrier to the orderly growth and development of the City.

The draft plan recommends the addition of 200 acres for this site, which would be an increase in acreage of a whopping 62%. This recommendation is all the more puzzling given the results of the Public Opinion Survey preceding this document. Only 39% of those responding indicated at that time that they wished to see improved or expanded facilities at existing County Parks. However, the City has no objection to the acquisition of additional acreage at this site, provided none of this acreage is developable, and all acquired lands are annexed to the City. In addition the City objects to the proposed acquisition by the County of any lands adjacent to this site located south of Hilldale Road, where the City's ongoing Rubicon River Parkway project is expected to continue. Hilldale Road creates a reasonable division between County and City parklands, and avoids a patchwork of jurisdictions in this area. The draft document recommends the addition of formal picnic areas, playgrounds, support facilities, and play fields at this site. This certainly cannot be accomplished on the meager 15 acres which the County now refers to as a Family Park. Recent conversations with the County Planning Department leave the clear impression that the County intends to acquire additional unspecified but developable lands in this area, which is antithetical to the interests of the City of Hartford. You do not build parks around golf courses located within municipal service areas. You build condominiums around them, thereby increasing tax base and providing an immediate clientele. If the County had been truly interested in preserving prime agricultural lands in this area, it

**COMMENTS ON COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN
PUBLIC HEARING OF FEBRUARY 3, 2004**

would not have opted to construct this golf course. You will recall it was originally a farmstead. Using farm land converted to a golf course as an excuse to purchase development rights to adjacent farm land is illogical at best. To use the size of the golf course site as a pretext for the acquisition of additional developable land to augment what is, in reality, a 15 acre Family Park, is the tail wagging the dog.

D. In general the City of Hartford stands in opposition to any portions of the draft document which threaten the City's compact urban growth model. This model includes five relevant tenets:

1. the exercise of extraterritorial jurisdiction to preserve growth space,
2. development of intermunicipal agreements to define areas for intermunicipal cooperation not within the urban model,
3. a ban on development of property within our corporate limits without benefit of sanitary sewer,
4. establishment of a broad and flexible sanitary sewer service area; and,
5. a ban on the development of suburban subdivisions with on-site sanitary systems except in areas already established for that use (in keeping with SEWRPC's published 2020 Land Use Plan.)

The City favors urban development consistent with the Rock River Coalition's recently published Rural Development Guidelines and Policies, **which strongly associates the preservation of open and agricultural spaces with the development of compact urban models.** Urban models nevertheless require growing space. For the City of Hartford that space is defined by our three mile extraterritorial limit. Therefore, the City jealously guards against attempts to interfere with the completion of this model by operation of other governmental units.

February 3, 2004

**Washington County Planning, Conservation & Parks Committee and the
Planning and Parks Department**

On behalf of the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, I compliment you all for your efforts in preparing the Park and Open Space Plan. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the creation and implementation of the plan.

The County and the Land Trust, along with other organizations such as the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation and Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation, share many common goals and we believe by partnering, we can have a greater impact on the preservation of Washington County's natural areas and agricultural heritage.

Our members were pleased to see that protection of geological areas and prime agricultural land is included in the most recent draft.

We do believe, however, that a stronger position should be taken in the recommendation for a pilot purchase of development rights program listed in Chapter VI, page 12. The current language suggests "considering" a pilot program if the "opportunity should arise." Based on the strong support for farmland preservation at all the past public hearings, we urge that more direct language be used to include farmland protection programs, zoning, purchase of development rights and scenic easements.

There are economic, cultural and aesthetic benefits for including farmland in your open space plan.

1. The March 2002 Ozaukee Washington Land Trust report *The Profile of Washington County Agriculture* found that the Ag/Food industry in Washington County contributes about \$145 million dollars to the county economy. The Washington County Economic Summit included the agriculture business cluster in their report.
2. The land remains on the tax rolls.
3. The cost of community services is far lower for farmland than residential developments.
4. No maintenance costs are borne by the county.
5. Real estate values increase in areas near protected natural areas and open spaces.
6. The land remains open for water recharge and wildlife corridors.
7. The land provides scenic value to the people who live in the county.
8. Businesses cite the protected natural areas and farmland in our county as some of the attractions to recruit and retain new employees.

It is our understanding that farmland preservation will be addressed in greater detail in the Washington County Comprehensive Plan. The Ozaukee Washington Land Trust again is eager to offer assistance in the development of that plan.

We are confident that the final Park and Open Space Plan will be a useful tool for protecting what makes Washington County a great place to live, work and play.

Together, we can preserve our sense of place and maintain livable communities.

Sincerely,

Kine Icks Torinus,
President, Ozaukee Washington Land Trust

RECEIVED

FEB 02 2004

WASHINGTON COUNTY
PLANNING AND PARKS DEPT.

THE NORTH WESTERN CORRIDOR

**A multiple-use transportation plan for the
Milwaukee – Fond du Lac railroad corridor.**

David A. Schwengel

West Bend, WI

Summary and Overview

FIRST DRAFT

January 29, 2004

David A. Schwengel
Railroad Safety Specialist
174 Minz Park Circle #3
West Bend, WI 53095-5275
Phone: (262) 334-3862
E-Mail: rdave@onwisconsin.com

Date: January 29, 2004
To: All Concerned
Subject: ***NORTH WESTERN CORRIDOR***
My "North Western Corridor" Rail-With-Trails plan

Overview

The North Western Corridor Rail-with-Trails plan would provide a combination passenger rail and recreation trail corridor between Milwaukee and Fond du Lac. The project would begin in the area of 124th Street and County Line Road on Milwaukee's far northwest side and continue to the south side of Fond du Lac.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has selected the West Bend rail line as the route for future Chicago-Milwaukee-Fox Valley-Green Bay Amtrak service.

The multiple-use corridor would be on or near active or abandoned railroad rights-of-way now owned by the Canadian National Railway or the Department of Natural Resources. The 46.5-mile corridor would stretch from Milepost 99.5 on the Canadian National West Bend Subdivision to Milepost 146.0, near Morris Street in Fond du Lac.

The project would be modeled after several dozen other Rail-with-Trail projects now in place throughout the United States. The North Western Corridor would provide multiple recreational opportunities by providing two recreational pathways on the 100-foot wide right-of-way, one on each side of the track.

In urban areas, trail use would likely be limited to passive activities such as hiking and bicycling. In rural areas, one trail would be limited to passive activities while the other pathway would be opened to snowmobiling and other active sports, each in their season. The trails would be separated by the railroad track, as well as some vegetative barriers and safety fences where appropriate.

Rail and trail uses are compatible and mutually beneficial:

Safe parking areas for trail users at rural crossings may be arranged through safety improvements necessitated by the rail service. For example, "vision corners" or sight triangles would be cleared in the quadrants of highway crossings where land is available. These areas could be used to allow trail users to park clear of the highway.

Having a substantial portion of the railroad right-of-way in trail use would make it easier to keep brushy vegetation under control near highway crossings. This has been a continual problem in many areas due to deep ditchlines and other topographical features.

The proposed snowmobile trail would be located on the west side of the Corridor and designed to allow the trail to catch drifting snow from prevailing winter winds, thus keeping it off the tracks.

The presence of the snowmobile trail, wider than the bike path, would benefit rail operations by allowing off-rail access for major maintenance projects, which would occur every few years. This path would also allow firefighters easy access to suppress grass fires and would be invaluable in the event of a derailment or other emergency in an area away from a public crossing.

The Corridor would require little in the way of major re-engineering south of West Bend. Some work is needed to ease some curvature between West Bend and Kewaskum. The Corridor would be raised out of a "sag" through downtown West Bend to allow the Water Street and STH 33 Washington Street crossings to be grade separated.

Between Kewaskum and Eden, the removal of the track provides the opportunity to redesign and reconstruct the section of the Corridor with the greatest engineering deficiencies (poor drainage, narrow cuts, sharp curvatures and/or steep grades.) This would involve substantial grading, which would allow the snowmobile path to be built as a state-of-the-art facility. Some existing grade crossings would be replaced with bridges.

Many existing railroad bridge structures are inadequate for modern rail service. These would be replaced with new structures. Some existing bridge components are adequate for trail uses and could be reused to carry the trails over waterways.

The track bed, centered on the right-of-way, would be restored and reconstructed to carry the 79 mph Chicago-Milwaukee-Fox Valley-Green Bay intercity passenger service under the Midwest Regional Rail System. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has selected the route through West Bend to carry these trains.

Environmental Enhancements

Construction of the rail-with-trails project would provide incentive and funding for environmental enhancements along the way. The project would work well with, and may enhance, the efforts of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) to purchase easements and title to large areas of undeveloped land in Germantown to reduce flooding on the Menomonee River. The rail/trail route passes through large areas of Menomonee River headwater wetlands.

Also in Germantown, two parallel railroad tracks, on separate rights-of-way, could be consolidated onto one right-of-way. This would improve rail operations and make available some 27 acres for the trail and a nature area. Some wetland restorations may be feasible in partnership with MMSD flood control efforts. The state already owns one right-of-way.

In West Bend, the trail would cross the West Bend Co. millpond on a separate causeway, with the railroad grade used for rail service only. The rail embankment would be modified to raise a "sag" and ease two sharp curves.

The river channel would flow through a smaller millpond, improving water quality by reducing warming of water in the summer. The area between the trail causeway and the rail line would become a water treatment marsh, with stormwater runoff routed into the marsh to clean up pollutants before being allowed to enter the river channel. At the north end of the millpond, a branch trail to the Lac Lawrann Conservancy area would be routed beneath a slightly elevated rail grade.

Further north, additional wetland areas could be restored and enhanced. The project would result in small losses of fragment wetlands in the railroad ditchline. These areas would be replaced several times over by purchase or easement of larger trackside parcels. On these parcels, larger and more useful wetlands can be created or restored, resulting in a large net gain of quality wetlands along the line north of Kewaskum.

Other Benefits

Grade crossing safety: Any at-grade public highway crossings would be equipped with state-of-the-art gates and flashing lights. These signals would have 12-inch LED lights and constant-warning-time circuitry.

Grade crossing separations: Where traffic, topography and other conditions make grade-separations advisable, rail traffic would be routed over or under the highway. Some likely locations include Pleasant Valley Road in the Town of Jackson; Decorah Road, Water Street and STH 33 Washington Street in West Bend; and CTH "V" north of Campbellsport.

Quiet Zones (no train horns): The Federal Railroad Administration has issued proposed rules for the installation of signals and median barriers to allow the cessation of train whistles at particular crossings. Some crossings on the line could be easily adapted to these requirements.

Trail Extensions

Along the way, the trails would intersect other public pathways, such as the West Bend Riverwalk and the Ice Age Trail. Other branch trails are possible.

The North Western Corridor could be extended south into Milwaukee County to connect with that County's trail system. Another extension would be to the east along County Line Road to the Mequon Nature Preserve and the Interurban Trail. North of Fond du Lac, a track consolidation project (as proposed in Germantown) could allow the trails to be extended to the south side of Oshkosh.



The Kruegers
<turtle@nconnect.net>

02/04/04 10:39 PM

To: <landeb@co.washington.wi.us>
CC:
Subject: A Comment on the Park and Open Space Plan

Deborah,

I took a few hours and read over the Plan at the library. Too much to read and digest at one sitting. Overall it looks good. I'm happy our county is doing such a thorough job. I'm especially happy that so many of our special areas are going to be preserved. Keep it up.

When we talked briefly last night I mentioned the need for an invasive control component in the Plan. In this note I want to "officially" make that point.

Preserving ecologically significant areas and putting them into "greenspace inventory" is only part of the picture. In 1900 this may have worked. Invasives were not present. And at that time just about every woods and field had a farm family looking over them. The lands were loved and cared for. We, to a some extent, mirrored the central European model where all lands are cared for by responsible parties.

THIS DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE HAPPENING IN WASHINGTON COUNTY.

When a municipality preserves lands with a plan lacking a husbandry component (the farm family to care for the land), the plan cannot be considered complete.

To an extent never seen before in our country, invasive plants are eroding our native plant inventory. When evaluating the botanical aspects of an area, "Green is not Green". The untrained eye does not see the degradation of the biological diversity. It's happening (BIG TIME) here in Washington County and needs to be addressed.

I work for the DNR, BCLPRD, LCLPRD, CLCF, and advise several communities through Urban Forestry Grants. In my travels I visit and evaluate many former high-quality natural areas. To illustrate my point a few noticeable local problem areas from the County Plan are listed below. Twentyfive years ago these were all pretty much pristine natural areas with "pre-settlement" plant diversity. Today they are not.

The Little Cedar lake western wetlands, the Gilbert Lake wetlands and the Paradise (Little Silver) Lake wetlands. In 1975 these were all healthy and, species-diversity-wise, pretty much "OK". Today, when one walks these areas one sees that the buckthorn, honeysuckle and purple loosestrife are a major (and exploding) component of the plant inventory.

I'm getting wordy. Please note my message. The following example may make my point "clearer" to some of the decision makers.....

A family that loves dogs cannot keep adopting new puppies. At some point they will no longer be able to do a good job of caring for the puppies. A plan needs to be in place for that time. Additional help may be needed. Otherwise the family's good intentions will end up hurting the pets rather than helping them.

Thank you.

Lee Krueger
West Bend
338-0539



"Britton, Gary"
<gbritton@uwc.edu>
02/05/04 12:04 PM

To: <Deb.Sielski@co.washington.wi.us>
cc:
Subject: Park and Open Space Plan

2-5-04

TO: Deborah Sielski

FROM: Gary Britton

I want to complement you and the Washington County Planning and Parks Department on the Park and Open Space Plan that you presented at the public hearing Tuesday PM. The foresight shown for the park and open space needs of Washington County residents for several years is excellent. You are to be commended for not only the final product, but also for the process you used in getting there!

At the end of the hearing there were a few speakers who criticized the way that this plan was developed and stated that the public had not been well informed during the months leading up to the final draft. I beg to differ with them, but had not filled out one of the speaker forms so didn't say anything during the hearing. If you are still taking public opinion, please accept this note as an indication of my support for your efforts toward informing the public of the Department's activities in preparing the plan. Through articles in the newspaper, information presented at the series of meetings throughout the county over a year ago, and the material available at the library and your web site, I felt very well informed. Thanks for making it possible.

Best wishes as you proceed with adoption and implementation of the plan.

Gary Britton

4458 Summit Ridge

Slinger, WI 53086

gbritton@uwc.edu

Attn: Deb Sielski
Planning & Parks
333 E Washington St., #2300
West Bend, WI 53095

Feb. 2, 2004

Dear Deb and Committee,

I am unable to attend the Feb. 3 hearing for the Washington County Park and Open Space Plan, therefore am enclosing copies of my original communications and am asking you to make them a part of the public record. My position remains as stated: I would support the use of motorized vehicles and horses on a separate section of the corridor only if it doesn't detract from the aesthetics, safety and functionality of the trail's usefulness for human-powered activities.

I'm also sending copies of two documents found on the Internet. One, Promoting Physical Activity Through Trails, is published by the Centers for Disease Control and has health statistics and trail usage ideas highlighted.

The other document, Lighten Up. Iowa, has information about an acclaimed initiative to get its residents active on trails.

Thank you.

Sincerely,


Renee Vertin

257 Lincoln Dr N
West Bend WI 53095

Enclosures- 3

"Renee Vertin"

<renee_vertin@hotmail.com> To: landeb@co.washington.wi.us
cc:
Subject: Input to Park & Open Space Plan
09/24/03 09:00 PM

Hi, Deb.

I didn't make the meeting, and thought I had too much to submit on a comment card, so I chose to send you my impressions via e-mail.

Thanks for giving the opportunity to present written feedback. I reviewed the draft chapters and maps of the Park & Open Space Plan. It appears that it presents the creme de al creme option if full finding could be acquired. In light of the budgetary constraints, likely imposed because of the large state deficit, I'd like to see priority given to several developements mentioned in the plan for recreation.

1) Proposed county parks A, B, C, D & E. A, B & C give county residents in remote areas access to parks in their vicinity, which is only equitable. It may be an incentive for more outdoor physical activity, especially for lower income families and individuals who do not join activities at health clubs or recreation centers.

D & E should be given priority to avoid a lost opportunity; perhaps the general public would never again get a chance to enjoy access to these lakes if not developed now.

2) I wholeheartedly encourage an areawide trail. Again, not to capture this part of the plan will result in a lost opportunity. (I've been a user of the Ozaukee County trail and can enthusiastically endorse its well maintained trail, which includes long stretches of paved trails with a limited number of intersection crossings. I've also lived in the Chicago area and can attest that physical activity is not as enjoyable when one has to contend with recreation trails that have not been developed from well-designed plans.)

As a fairly new resident of Washington County, I see the proposed trail as a great opportunity to provide for a badly needed resource: a trail of considerable length (and hopefully paved in part) to accomodate residents who like to bike, in-line skate, ski, walk or run for distance in a safe manner. For example, to in-line skate for one hour (the recommended amount of physical activity most days for optimal health) I need to make 5 laps around the Sandy Knoll Park; it is the only park nearby that I feel accomodates safe skating (low traffic, gently sloping declines, quality surface).

A trail which would provide paved, fairly level segments may also appeal to seniors, which make up an ever expanding segment of the population as the Boomers reach their golden years. Making the trails a priority for implementation would likely save thousands of dollars- consider the value of physical activity in terms of preventing or delaying the onset of chronic disease.

Finally, I'd like to note that in Jan. 2003, I attended a program in West Allis, WI, entitled Moving to Healthier Lifestyles: How to Implement

Community-Wide Physical Activity Initiatives. One of the presenters was an Organizer of Wisconsin Walks- Kit Keller, JD, who resides in Cedarburg. Ms. Keller has been instrumental in making communities more friendly to physical activity; she has worked with community planners, planning commissions, public health departments and other organizations to get more fitness locales (accessible to all segments of the population, including those who are physically challenged) into communities.

The other presenter of the program I attended was an exercise physiologist; Kathleen Madden, B.S., ACSM (American College of Sports Medicine- Certified), provided information on the best practices in physical activity initiatives and how to involve community partners.

With the epidemic of obesity among the youth and adults in this country and our sedentary lifestyles, being proactive and reactive is key to improving health. Professionals such as those I've mentioned could prove to be a useful part in making the Park & Open Space Plan truly useful to the residents of Washington County. (By the way, copies of the handouts given by these speakers are available from me upon request.)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. I'm a citizen, educator and health care professional who is concerned about the allocation of space for physical activity, and the future health of county residents.

Sincerely,

Renee Vertin, R.D.
257 Lincoln Dr. N.
West Bend, WI 53095

Hi, Deb.

This is an addendum to a previously sent e-mail. - 9/24/03

The National Institutes of Health issued a press release on 7/3/03 stating that Reducing Nationwide Obesity Starts in Neighborhoods. The Hearts 'n Parks Program brought science and skills to 50 communities. The coordinator of the National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute Obesity Education Initiative stated, "Combining proven health interventions and skills training with local recreational facilities seemed like a natural. Now we have the information to show that it really works."

For more on this program, go to these websites:

www.nhlbi.nih.gov

or

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/prof/heart/obesity/hrt_n_pk/index.htm

or call 1-800-649-3042.

Thank you.

Renee Vertin,
West Bend resident

landeb@co.washington.wi.us Deb Sielski @ Planning & Parks on 1/12/04 > RAILS TO TRAIL.
bcc to Dan Wilson and Ruth Moegenburg

To Deb and Other Key Decision Makers:

I have been to several meetings on this issue, including the last one on 1/8/2004, so my verbal and written remarks are on record. As a professional educator concerned about fitness and health, I want to add to previous comments before the close of the comment period.

When considering the design of the trail and the grants to secure, again I ask that you give priority to the sports that involve ambulation. Diet/inactivity rank number 2 (tobacco abuse being first) as the leading preventable causes of death in the U.S. With the current trends of obesity and overweight in this country (and I surmise in this county), improving the means to allow people to increase their physical activity would help to counter this trend.

Here are some interesting excerpts from e-mail that I received from a listserv of a professional nutrition organization.

1) U.S. teens are more likely to be overweight than are teens from 14 other industrialized nations, according to survey information collected in 1997 and 1998 by two agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services as well as institutions in 13 European countries and in Israel. The study appears in the January issue of "The Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine".

HHS authors of the study were Mary Overpeck, Dr.P.H., of the Health Resources and Services Administration and Mary Hediger, Ph.D., of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, one of the National Institutes of Health.

"Overweight adolescents have an increased likelihood of being overweight during adulthood, and adult overweight increases the risk for such health problems as heart disease and diabetes," said Duane Alexander, M.D., Director of the NICHD.

2) Fitness Lowers Overweight Diabetics' Death Risk
Tue January 6, 2004 02:00 PM ET

By Amy Norton

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - Being fit can lower a diabetic man's risk of dying, even if he is significantly overweight, new research suggests.

Investigators found that diabetic men who were physically fit were less likely than their less-fit peers to die of any cause over about 15 years. What's more, men who were heavy yet fit had death risks similar to those of fit normal-weight men.

"This is a testament to the power of being physically active," said lead study author Dr. Timothy S. Church, medical director of the Cooper Institute in Dallas. **"Essentially, fitness totally negated the effects of being overweight,"** he told Reuters Health.

3) NHLBI STUDY TESTS NOVEL WAYS TO HELP AMERICANS KEEP WEIGHT OFF

- >
- > The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) today
- > announced the launch of a major study that could help solve
- > one of the hardest aspects of weight loss-keeping off lost
- > pounds. The study, called the "Weight Loss Maintenance
- > Trial," will be done in two phases at four clinical sites.
- >
- > The study will include 1,600 men and women in its first
- > phase, and 800 in its second. Phase I is a 5-month weight
- > loss program; phase II will try to help those who lose 9 or
- > more pounds in phase I keep the weight off for 2½ years.
- >
- > The study has begun seeking participants, who must be
- > overweight or obese, age 25 or older, and taking medication
- > to control high blood pressure and/or high blood
- > cholesterol. About 60 percent will be women and 40 percent
- > will be African American.
- >
- > "Maintaining weight loss is a critical element in the
- > struggle against overweight and obesity, which have reached
- > epidemic proportions in the United States," said NHLBI
- > Director Dr. Claude Lenfant. **"Two of every three adults are**
- > **overweight or obese.** This study could yield answers that
- > can help many Americans lead healthier lives."
- >
- > "Americans have shown that they can lose weight in the
- > short-term," said Dr. Laura Svetkey, Director of the Duke
- > Hypertension Center and of Clinical Research at the Sarah
- > Stedman Nutrition and Metabolism Center at Duke University
- > in Durham, NC, and lead investigator in the study. "Yet,
- > only a small proportion of them achieve long-term weight
- > control. **To successfully fight the obesity epidemic,**
- > **clinicians and other health care providers must have**
- > **options that are effective and feasible for a broad range**
- > **of people.**
- >
- > "The best weight-loss strategy will not only lead to long-
- > term weight control, but also achieve it by establishing a
- > **healthy dietary pattern and physical activity routine that**
- > **lasts a lifetime,"** she added. (my emphases in bold)

Also, I've learned recently that there are a high number of commuters in Washington County. They

have less time for physical activity than residents who don't commute, and may be more likely to engage in it if it's convenient, user-friendly, and developed in a way to minimize noise.

Please also take into deliberation the needs of limited income residents (when deciding on whether or not to implement a fee system). Try to also make accommodations for the disabled, the elderly, the very young, and in-line skaters (many of whom need paved and more gently-sloping sections on the trail).

Making the trail multi-use (walk, run, bike, cross-country ski, in-line skate) would serve to get the greatest number of people on the trail and active. I would support the use of motorized vehicles and horses on a separate section of the corridor only if it doesn't detract from the aesthetics and functionality of the trail used for human-powered activities.

I'd also like to address one comment made on 1/8/04 by a resident and the possibility of disruptive youth becoming a problem on the trail. The "Ambassadors" sounds like a good program. Another option might be to consider posting a phone number at several spots along the trail so that trail users could report incidents. Addressing any incidents in a swift, forthright manner may help to prevent problems from recurring.

Another idea for construction: it would be a welcoming gesture to the Hispanics in the county to include Spanish language on the trail signs.

Please refer to my last e-mail re: the use of a consultant (e.g., Kit Keller) and plan.

In closing, I was cheered to hear that the City of West Bend has set 2005 as a goal to get immediate parts of the trail in West Bend up and running. I am very much looking forward to the rest of the trail being constructed.

Thank you for allowing me to submit other comments.

A concerned citizen and health professional,

Renee M. Vertin

257 Lincoln Dr. N

West Bend, WI 53095