

Green Plan Committee Notes Accepted 5-13-2008

Green Plan Sub-Committee
Meeting Notes
April 17, 2008
Summary

Present: Brad Tracy, Jim Hamlin, Kirk Franz, Bill Drummond, Marie Garrett

- A. The committee members reviewed the results of the Green Plan citizen survey and mapping exercises.
- B. The committee discussed possible recommendations for the Open House and draft report. The results of the discussion are summarized below:

Parks:

1. In the next five years establish three small, scenic parks with picnic areas on the Chattahoochee River to provide access to the river for people in the western, central, and eastern portions of the City.

The Chattahoochee River is a vital regional and national resource. Citizens of Johns Creek currently have only limited access to the river. Three small riverfront parks with picnic areas will allow citizens of east, central, and west Johns Creek to have direct access to the river.

2. In the next five years create two community parks (of 25 acres or more) in the central section of the City, which has at present no City parks.

The NRPA recommends a 2-mile service area for community parks (of 25 acres or more). GIS analysis shows that the eastern and western areas of the City have access to current City parks, but the central section does not. Two new community parks will dramatically improve park access in the central section of the City.

3. Set a target for acres of local parkland per 1,000 residents.

In earlier discussion the Green Plan Advisory Committee set an aspiration target of 8.0 acres per 1,000 residents. Discussion of this goal with City staff and leaders resulted in the conclusion that this goal was not feasible within the time framework of the plan, and further discussion is needed.

4. Over the longer term develop a network of smaller sized (10 to 15 acre) neighborhood parks throughout the City.

At present the City has no neighborhood (15-25 acre) parks. Expansion of the park system beyond the riverfront parks and new community parks should emphasize a network of smaller neighborhood parks.

Recreation:

5. In the next five years create three new soccer/lacrosse/football at parks to serve the eastern, central, and western portions of the City.

The Green Plan survey results highlighted the need for additional facilities for soccer, lacrosse, football. At least one new soccer/lacrosse/football field should be constructed for residents at a current or future park in each of the three (eastern, central, and western) sections of the City.

6. In the next five years create three new baseball/softball fields at parks to serve the eastern, central, and western portions of the City.

The Green Plan survey results highlighted the need for additional facilities for baseball and softball. At least one new baseball/softball field should be constructed for residents at a current or future park in each of the three (eastern, central, and western) sections of the City.

7. Develop Shakerag Park with playing fields and recreation programs.

Although Shakerag Park is a City park, it does not have well-developed recreation facilities. To serve citizens in the eastern section of the City, it should be developed for active recreation and sports programming.

8. Construct a combined recreation and community center building with a gymnasium, meeting rooms, and facilities for arts and crafts.

Adjacent communities with population characteristics very similar to Johns Creek have multiple gymnasiums, recreation centers, and community centers. Johns Creek establishes one such center, which can serve multiple purposes, including community meetings.

9. Coordinate with the principals of Fulton County schools to establish joint recreation facility agreements.

The City should continue efforts to develop joint-use agreements with Fulton County schools. For newly-planned schools, volunteer citizen groups could develop and maintain school-site cross-country courses that

would also be open to the community.

Conservation:

10. Prohibit residential, commercial, and industrial development in the 100-year floodplain.

The current policy of discouraging development in the 100-year floodplain should be continued.

11. Conduct an ecological study and create an overlay conservation zone for the Chattahoochee River corridor.

The Chattahoochee River is a vital environmental resource of regional and national significance. The Metropolitan River Protection Act was based upon an ecological study conducted in 1972. A more recent E.P.A. study identifies important ecological land along the Chattahoochee River corridor. There is land within the MRPA corridor that, according to the EPA study, is not significant, and some land outside the corridor that is significant. The City should undertake a detailed ecological study of the north bank of the river as the basis for a conservation overlay zone.

12. Encourage creation of a non-profit land trust to solicit and hold conservation easements for land in and near the City.

A citizen-led land trust could raise funds to quickly purchase environmentally important land in danger of development, and it could solicit and hold conservation easements, scenic easements, and agricultural conservation easements.

13. Extend the Autrey Mill Nature Preserve to available, adjacent land.

The Autrey Mill Nature Preserve could be expanded to nearby undeveloped land, creating a larger, more effective preserve.

14. Create a conservation subdivision ordinance to allow denser development on a portion of larger parcels in return for increased open space on the remainder of the parcel.

A conservation subdivision ordinance would allow the permanent protection of environmentally sensitive lands at no cost to the citizens of Johns Creek.

Greenways:

15. Link all current and future parks to the greenway system.

At present Ocee Park is not connected to the adopted trail system.

16. Establish a new greenway along upper Johns Creek.

Where Johns Creek runs north of Abbotts Bridge road the area is 100-year floodplain and either undeveloped or adjacent to a golf course. This area of Johns Creek is well-suited for a creekside greenway to allow public access to the City's namesake.

17. Extend the greenway system along the Chattahoochee River where not precluded by existing development.

A Riverwalk Greenway has been considered by both the transportation and green plan advisory committees. The currently-adopted greenway network includes a trail linking the two easternmost CRNRA areas south of the City. An extended Riverwalk Greenway would utilize undeveloped land in the 100-year floodplain. Linkage along the entire length of the river would not be possible due to riverfront development at multiple places.

18. Collaborate with the National Park Service to maximize greenway connectivity.

City greenways should connect to trails within the CRNRA where possible.

19. Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions for interconnected greenways.

The City's greenway system should be linked to those of adjacent jurisdictions, including Forsyth County, Gwinnett County, and the City of Alpharetta.

20. Beautify the greenways and major roads with street trees, landscaped medians, and landscaped entrances to the City.

At the behest of the transportation advisory committee, the Green Plan committee recommends that the City consider beautification of the current road network including the landscaping of medians, the addition of street trees, and the beautification of major entrances to the City.