

**HIKE AND BIKE TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
CITY OF LEON VALLEY  
MAY 9, 2017 MEETING MINUTES**

The Hike and Bike Trail Advisory Committee met on Tuesday, March 9, 2017 in the Large Conference Room at 6:00 p.m. City Hall, 6400 El Verde Road, Leon Valley, Texas.

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**HIKE AND BIKE TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING, 6:00 P.M.**

**1. Call the Meeting to Order and Determine if a Quorum is Present**

Staff member McLeod called the Hike and Bike Trail Advisory Committee meeting to order at 6:03 p.m., with the following committee members in attendance: Chairman Matthew Hodde, Vice-Chairman Henry Diecker, Belinda Benavidez, Roger Christensen, Josue de la Torre, Diana Frazier, Richard Hendricks, Cynthia Koger, and Darby Riley. Absent was committee member Patricia Manea. Also in attendance was City Manager Kelly Kuentler, City Councilman Benny Martinez, and City Staff member Megan McLeod.

**2. Walking Tour of Proposed Route**

To visualize possible routing options for the proposed Hike and Bike Trail, meeting attendees reconvened at the end of El Verde Road and entered Bexar County's LC-17 Huebner Creek construction area. IDS Engineer, Jess Swaim, and City of San Antonio's Brandon Ross answered committee member questions.

Mr. Hodde and Mr. Ross noted that they believe LC-17 construction will result in a gradual slope up towards El Verde, but the opposite side of the creek will have a steep incline. Mr. Swaim noted where the flowline will likely be in relation to El Verde Road, stating that the widening of the channel would create a gradual slope upwards from where the committee stood. Mr. Swaim indicated that the construction will continue to cut out ground and the area in which the committee stood will be considerably lower.

**3. Discussion with Brandon Ross, AICP, San Antonio Parks & Recreation**

**a. Experience with COSA Greenway Trail Design**

A layout of a proposed trail as designed by Mr. Swaim was projected on screen for committee members. The image illustrated where the future hike and bike trail is likely to intersect with San Antonio's Leon Creek trail. Chairman Hodde asked Mr. Ross what his opinions are regarding the locations of Leon Valley's proposed stretch of trail from Shadow Mist to Bandera Road, and what pros and cons should be considered when deciding if the trail should be closer to the road or lower towards the creek base. Mr. Ross explained that the relationship to the floodplain can limit what kinds of trees and plants are permitted along the trail, and if the trail is in the flowline where floods drain, trees may potentially block water flow, reversing the intended flood prevention measures.

Mr. Ross further explained that, in general, pedestrians who utilize urban trails want trees, shade and other natural elements to be present during trail utilization. Mr. Ross advised the committee to recommend a trail design that enables as many tree plantings as possible. Mr. Ross explained that trees will make a significant difference, but noted that trail design will require a balancing act between quality-of-life features (such as tree plantings) and working within the parameters set by floodplain engineers.

Mr. Ross explained that a buffer with various vegetation species would ensure less of an impact on homeowners while simultaneously ensuring a pleasant, more natural experience for people using the trail. Mr. Ross suggested using larger trees for shade and other shorter, more dense vegetation for buffer quality.

**b. Erosion Control Measures**

Mr. Ross noted that the existing Leon Creek trail crosses the channel at its low point in a perpendicular angle, and this intentional design was designed to avoid the lower area. Mr. Ross noted how Leon Creek Trail crosses over the creek bed and then continues outward from the creek bed for another 50 to 200 feet from the center of the channel. Mr. Ross explained this design was meant to help prevent erosion from flooding events, and also to avoid maintenance issues caused by runoff debris that may settle on the trail. Mr. Ross explained that the grading of the trail can affect the way in which water may settle on the trail.

Mr. Ross advised the committee to consider advantages to routing the trail closer to the street and away from the creek bed, specifically in terms of preventing erosion and allowing more options for landscape and natural shade-cover.

**c. Potential Property Agreement**

Staff noted property agreements are not required and would not warrant discussion.

**4. Discussion with IDS Engineer, Jess Swaim, and Director of Public Works, Melinda Moritz**

**a. Respond to Walking Tour Questions**

Mr. Swaim began by advising committee members to consider how installation of any large amenities or structures in the channel may create obstructions to water flow, impeding the intended prevention measures of the drainage project. Mr. Swaim explained that at the completion of the trail development project, Leon Valley will need to be able to demonstrate that trail development has not created any rise in the floodplain. Creating a rise in the channel would result in a violation of the required floodplain permit. Mr. Swaim warned committee members that a flat trail in the channel, without trees for shade, would not be an enjoyable experience for trail users, particularly in July or August. Mr. Swaim suggested that the committee could consider split-rail cedar fencing and/or vegetation as a buffer option between the trail and El Verde Road.

Mr. Swaim indicated that the projected exhibit featured a trail route located at the base of the **'toe of slope'**, which is the lowest part of an embankment slope. Mr. Swaim explained that this design was intended to avoid any cutting into the side bank. Mr. Swaim further explained that cutting into the side bank will cause water velocity to increase.

Mr. Swaim then identified a yellow line, indicating the **'top of bank'**, which engineers have intentionally designed to handle the event of a 100-year flood. Mr. Swaim informed committee members that the projected trail design runs parallel to the channel to avoid any crossings, as channel crossings will certainly increase costs for trail development and maintenance.

To minimize potential maintenance associated with the trail, Mr. Swaim advised committee members to consider natural seating made from rock material which would not require paint

or cleaning, and therefore may be more cost effective. Mr. Swaim noted that this would also help to make the trail look as natural as possible, and added that the limestone approach is fairly easy to install. Mr. Swaim indicated that bull rock may also be an option for any necessary retaining walls, which would also foster more of a natural appeal than concrete. Mr. Swaim also proposed the option to cut cost by incorporating ribbon-curbing with crushed granite or other substances that are cheaper than concrete, should the City choose to route the trail at a higher elevation. Mr. Swaim added that the savings could be put towards plantings or signage.

In reference to the ribbon-curbing option mentioned by Mr. Swaim, Chairman Hodde asked to what extent trail materials could potentially vary, with considerations for weeds and surface conditions for bicyclists. Mr. Hodde also asked Mr. Swaim to share the long-term maintenance implications of this option. Mr. Swaim informed the committee that roundup spraying may become necessary to maintain this particular kind of surface material for the trail. Mr. Swaim also explained that TDLR reviews regarding ADA compliance will measure the trail in terms of how “firm” and “stable” it is. Mr. Swaim added that joggers typically prefer the softer materials like crushed granite, as concrete has harder impact on joints, but trail users in wheelchairs may not have the same preference.

Chairman Hodde shared that he likes the granite gravel idea, as well as other pervious composition options, but does not like the idea of heightened maintenance necessary to sustain the trail’s surface. Mr. Hodde asked Mr. Swaim for an opinion regarding short-term costs versus long-term costs related to permeable surface material compared to concrete pavement. Mr. Swaim explained that maintenance will be needed for permeable surface materials, however, if drainage is handled appropriately, maintenance can be minimal.

Member Christensen asked for clarification regarding the options as he understood them, which are to place the trail route at the top of the bank, or to place the trail at the toe-of-slope. Mr. Swaim confirmed Mr. Christensen’s understanding of options as they were being presented. Mr. Hodde followed up by explaining a third option – separate from the ones presently presented to the Hike and Bike Advisory committee – was a sidewalk option along El Verde Road, which was quickly tossed back by citizens as undesirable. Mr. Swaim clarified that the sidewalk proposal was more of a glorified sidewalk, with sections that did venture further from the road. Mr. Swaim shared that citizens communicated immediate disinterest in having a trail so close to the road, but explained citizens had not been able to engage in conversations as detailed as the current conversation happening with the Hike and Bike Advisory Committee. Mr. Hodde also elaborated by saying that turmoil also focused around trail design implications on the natural area, and that there could have been more room for clarification regarding the various options.

**b. Review Drop Structure Implications**

Mr. Swaim shared that drop structures are utilized to change elevation. Mr. Swaim explained that the projected trail exhibit illustrates need for a drop structure just before intersecting with Bandera Road, where the proposed trail route takes a hard turn down the slope. Mr. Swaim further explained that as water flows outward from the park under Bandera Road, water must interact with a concrete structure that creates an eight-foot waterfall, and a new detailed survey must be conducted to measure trail implications related to a drop structure.

**c. Discuss Trailhead Destination at Bandera Road**

Mr. Swaim shared that IDS designed an under-bridge crossing to intersect the trail route with Bandera Road, and their recommendation is to proceed with this destination routing, which would bring trail users up out of the channel to higher ground. Mr. Swaim explained that this option would be safest, even without a paved trailhead on the other side of Bandera Road. Mr. Swaim noted the trail route could simply merge with the existing sidewalk near the natural area, which is more likely to facilitate a safe exit from the channel.

Mr. Swaim further explained that the committee would then have two options: create a dead end with signage, or merge the trail with the existing sidewalk to get trail users up and out of the creek bed. Member Diecker suggested that a trail destination intersecting with Bandera Road may be complicated by any future development by TxDOT. Staff clarified that TxDOT will require a review of the trail design before approving development, as they are a funder for the project.

City Manager Kuenstler noted that she would need to leave the meeting, but wanted to first disclose that an expedited trail route recommendation may result in an agreement with Bexar County in which they would complete grading at no cost to the City of Leon Valley, which would save the City and Leon Valley taxpayer a significant amount of money that they could then put back into amenities and landscaping. However, Bexar County has expressed intent to withdraw that offer due to the fact that no trail route has been approved yet. The Manager informed the committee that if they could reach an expedited decision and receive Council approval, she would work to reestablish the offer from Bexar County.

Staff posed to the committee that a second May meeting can be scheduled to present options for passing along a recommendation to Council by June 6<sup>th</sup>.

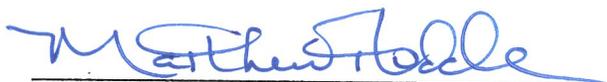
Member Darby shared that the option of a trail route between the top of bank and El Verde Road, with appropriate buffer measures between the road and the trail, might be a good option to explore, now that we've been presented with additional details. Chairman Hodde noted that it would be beneficial for El Verde residents to have another opportunity to attend a meeting and hear the additional information, adding that the newer information may change opinions when compared to the original understanding that the trail would be designed like a sidewalk along El Verde. Mr. Hodde clarified that home owners along El Verde were not in favor of a sidewalk option connecting the trail way system.

Chairman Hodde moved to schedule a second Hike and Bike Advisory Committee meeting before May 30 to consider possible action and recommendation for Council review. The motion received a second by Member Darby Riley. The motion was approved, 10-0.

**5. Next Steps for Trail Amenities (i.e benches, markers, signage, dog-waste pick-up stations, landscaping, solar lighting, etc.)**

A motion was made by Chairman Hodde to postponed Agenda Item 5 to the June meeting. The motion received a second from Member Riley. The motion was approved, 10-0.

**6. Adjourn**



Matthew Hodde – Chairman



Date