

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ABBREVIATED MINUTES

January 12th, 2012

4:00 – 5:30 pm

|                 |              |                         |                    |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Present:</b> | Mary Manning | Ethel MacDonald         | <b>Absent:</b>     |
|                 | Tim Aldrich  | Adam Liljeblad          | Bob Clark          |
|                 | Bert Lindler | Gary Knudsen            | Maureen Bookwalter |
|                 | Jeff Stevens | Jenny Tollefson         |                    |
|                 | Jed Little   | Beth Hann, Park Brd Rep |                    |

Also Present: Jackie Corday, Open Space Program Mgr, Dave Shaw, Parks & Trails Design Mgr & Jim Habeck

**Trails Annual Update – Dave Shaw**

2011 Completed Trail Projects:

- **Bike/ped Map** – Dave began by showing members the new bike/ped on-line map that allows you to zoom in on neighborhoods all over Missoula. A PC needs to have Silverlight downloaded to use the online GIS service. <http://explorer.arcgis.com/?open=98ea6842816b487d9fa1c28ea8f1fdbf>
- **Milwaukee Trail** – Russell to Reserve: In 2011, Parks completed a 1-mile 10' wide asphalt trail that extends the Milwaukee Trail from its former western terminus at Russell Street to Davis Street in the River Road Neighborhood. This vital commuter connection created a new non-motorized link between the existing commuter trail to the Reserve Street underpass that has been waiting, unconnected, for several years. The trail brings with it new “way-finding” signage that bears the original Milwaukee Railroad logo. Following the signs helps trail users stay on the path as it winds its way through the neighborhood. The trail also features safety enhancements at street crossings, pockets of landscaping, way-side rest areas with benches, and pet waste stations. The River Road Neighborhood Council played an important role through both the acquisition and design processes that has led to a trail that fits well into the fabric of the community. CTEP was the project’s main funding source. The remainder of the funding and local match came from a combination of State RTP, MRA funds, Open Space Bond, and a donation from the Missoula Rotary Club.
- **Riverfront Trail at Silver Park** – Osprey Field to California Street Bridge: In 2011, MRA led the construction of the Silver Park Phase III which included the installation of a new trail bridge connecting the Riverfront Trail to the California Street Bridge. The bridge was the final link in the trail expansion through the Silver Park site which lies on the south side of the Clark Fork River between Osprey Field and California Street. The riverfront trail is heavily used and this connection was a significant one for people of all abilities and ages as they use the trail system for transportation and recreation. The Silver Park Phase III project also included all of the landscaping adjacent to the trail and the parking lot as well as the new trail lighting. CTEP was a major funding source for this project as was matched by a variety of local sources.
- **BBT Spruce to Toole** - A redevelopment project at 806 West Spruce Street has completed a 1-block extension of the Bitterroot Branch Trail between Spruce Street and Toole Avenue. We are working with the owners of the property to finalize a public trail easement for the trail as part of the project. The trail is not far from the Northside Bike/Ped Bridge, a short ride or walk along quiet neighborhood streets and sidewalks. This trail is one more link in the system that will make non-motorized transportation that much easier.

2012 Projects in Progress:

- **Grant Creek Trail:** For many years, Grant Creek Valley residents have been working to have an 8' wide asphalt trail installed to connect the large majority of the neighborhood. 2011 brought the substantial completion of the easement acquisition process for the project. A CTEP agreement was also reached this year that authorized expenditure of CTEP funding for PE services. The project is currently finalizing the acquisition phase and will be in design over the winter of 2011/2012. CTEP is the major funding source for the project

along with \$170k from the Open Space Bond. Local residents formed the Grant Creek Trail Association, a 501(c)3, that is currently fundraising for the local matching funds.

- **Kim Williams connection to Canyon River Loop**: Several years ago, a loop trail was developed at the Canyon River Golf Course that is open to the public. The loop trail is close to, but remains separated from, the eastern end of the Kim Williams Trail that lies on the old Milwaukee grade in Hellgate Canyon. This CTEP project would connect these two trails with an 8' wide asphalt trail. Complications in the acquisition process have kept this project moving slowly over the last few years but in 2012, it is Parks' goal to complete the acquisition process and move the project into design. CTEP is the main funding source identified for the project and local match will be provided by City and County funds.
- **Rattlesnake to University X-ing (RUX)**: The "RUX" project will create a new trail connection between the Rattlesnake Valley and the University of Montana. It will include a new bridge over Rattlesnake Creek, a 10' wide asphalt trail connection and bicycle/pedestrian enhancements to the Van Buren/Broadway intersection. Because the project impacts this heavily used intersection, it is being managed by City Public Works with Parks playing a role in design and reviews. This inter-agency partnership is proving effective at creating a stellar project. Western Federal Lands is the funding source for this project but the funds will be administered through the State CTEP office.
- **Milwaukee Trail Lighting**: Lighting is an important component of a well-functioning, accessible commuter trail – especially with Missoula's short winter days. Much of Missoula's riverfront trail system has had lighting for decades and this project poses to extend and upgrade that tradition. With the older infrastructure showing its age and new, highly efficient technologies available now, this project will produce a new design standard for trail lighting. The new lights will utilize the latest LED technology for efficiency, will be compliant with dark skies initiatives, will be easy to maintain, and will reflect Missoula's historic railroad-town character. The MRA and Parks are funding design and engineering and MRA has pledged to fund construction.
- **Bitterroot Branch Trail – South to Livingston**: Closing the gap in Missoula's Bitterroot Branch Trail has been a high priority since the late 90's. To do so, vital easements need to be acquired on MRL properties between North Avenue and Livingston Avenue. Recently, MRL has approved the City to move forward on acquisition of the segment between South Avenue and Livingston Avenue. Parks plans to move ahead on and complete the acquisition process in 2012. In 2011 MRA funded preliminary design and has pledged to help fund construction.
- **Rimel Road Trail** – When John Rimel granted a conservation easement on his 80 acres at the west end of Rimel Road, he also granted a 20' wide non-motorized trail easement that parallels the road. In order to use the easement, we need to either acquire possibly 1 or 2 more easements to reach Hillview Way. We had hoped to do have time in 2011 to move forward on researching this project, but everything else listed above kept that from happening. We will try once again in 2012 to make progress on this trail.

Ethel asked Dave about vandalism of the new lights. Dave said the poles are 16' tall and the "target" is way smaller and harder to get at than the ones along the trail between Orange & Higgins. Jim suggested that since the UofM students are the biggest users of the trail system near the University, they should be bigger partners in solving trail problems that come up. Dave said they were very involved and good to work with on the new section of trail that connects the Madison St underbridge with the University.

### **Open Space Updates**

Jackie updated members on several projects:

- 1) **Fred Stout Property** – Fred owns over 90 acres located adjacent to Council Grove State Park off Mullan Road in the Grass Valley Cornerstone. His property consists of beautifully managed farmland that forms the entrance to the park and the eastern and northern boundaries. Jackie sent a letter to Fred in 2009 asking if he would be interested in talking to her about preservation options. He did talk with her but decided the timing wasn't right. In September 2011, Fred contacted Jackie to ask if the City was still interested in his property. They got together to discuss several possible options, but the one that rose to the top was selling most of his acreage to the City to then be transferred to FWP to become part of the state Park. Fred asked Jackie to inquire of FWP's interest in this idea. He has made no commitment, but wants to know if it's a viable option.

Jackie did meet with FWP staff to discuss the possibility in December, but that discussion made it fairly clear that FWP is trying not to acquire any more lands, even if it is gifted, unless it meets certain criteria and needs. In

years past, FWP would have welcomed this beautiful addition to the park, but politics and budgets have changes substantially.

Thus, Jackie decided to look to other potential partners, including Community Farm & Agriculture Coalition. CFAC has been discussing the possibility of managing an incubator farm for quite some time, and this parcel seemed like a great candidate for them to consider. See High Country News story that explains what an incubator farm is all about: [http://www.hcn.org/issues/43.20/farm-incubators-help-would-be-farmers-succeed-on-their-own/print\\_view](http://www.hcn.org/issues/43.20/farm-incubators-help-would-be-farmers-succeed-on-their-own/print_view) Jackie will be meeting with CFAC staff and members to discuss this possibility. Members commented that they really liked the idea of working with CFAC to preserve prime farmland and having it be farmed to produce crops for the local markets.

- 2) FS Motorpool Site – Jackie continues to keep in contact with FS staff involved in the facilities planning process. The master facilities plan must be completed before the FS can move forward with any sale. They are likely another 6 months away from having any significant news on whether or not they will move forward with selling the motorpool site.
- 3) California St Island Bridge – MRA has moved forward with closing on the approximately 5 acre island parcel. It will become the responsibility of the Parks Dept to maintain the island as a public park in the near future. It will have minimal improvements installed as it is located in the floodway and was almost entirely underwater this past spring.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm with the next meeting date scheduled for 4:00–5:30pm on February 9th at Currents.