

Creekwalk Community Advisory Group Meeting
October 27, 2015
Meeting Notes

(Notes by R. Houck, Engineering Dept.)

Community Advisory Group Update

- Aggie Lane and Sharon Owens provided an update on reaching out to local residents and owners. Their efforts focused on the Tallman/Coyne area; provided some information on the 450 Tallman (Kearse) property.
- The Community Advisory group also talked with Rev. Nebraski of the Living Waters Church (Huron St). Rev. Nebraski indicated that a trail routing on the west side of the creek along Hovey St. would be preferable to the east side route. Property owners and renters on Hovey St. who provided a comment indicated previously that an east side route was preferable.
- Will try to get Rev. Nebraski and Lyles family (Midland Ave) to the group meetings.

Route Options

The group discussed Creekwalk routing options including:

Midland Bridge to Rich Street – CW route could run on either side of the creek between Midland Avenue and Rich St. The east side route would augment the existing sidewalk through the County property and also use the greenspace near the Rich St. Bridge. Trees and brush would be thinned near the banks. A trail could be added at the very top of the bank.

The west side route would use Hovey and Marginal Streets, but would move closer into the creekshelf where possible. Hovey/Marginal streets would most likely become a one-way street as road width would be needed for the trail. Much brush and tree thinning would be needed.

The east side route would be less expensive as there is an existing new sidewalk and retaining walls would not have to be built as would be required on the west side. Pros and cons of both options were discussed. Design engineers to look closely at these two alternatives and provide a rough cost estimate for each.

Southwest Community Center connection – the proposed route options include a connection from the creek or Midland Avenue to the SWCC. There is currently a 4-foot wide asphalt path connection from Midland Avenue to Lincoln Street. As many people walk to the SWCC, a connection from the eastside was considered important.

The benefit of adding a connection between Midland Ave. directly to the proposed creek-side route was questioned. The group found acceptable other connectors between the creek and the SWCC including using Midland Avenue, the community garden at Bellevue/Midland or the proposed greenspace at the old Oxford Inn area. Signage could be used to help provide a connection.

The Midland/Bellevue corner was suggested to be converted to a greenspace, and could be used as a potential environment teaching area.

Rich St. Bridge – The open area on the east side of the creek near the Rich St. bridge is proposed to be used as a trailhead/greenspace if the Creekwalk runs on this side. Tree and brush thinning is needed and an opening to the creek would be established. Getting over the Rich St Bridge to Lower Onondaga Park would require widening one sidewalk, adding a delineated bike lane, or allowing a shared use of the roadway. One way traffic and closing the Rich St Bridge were also discussed. No strong support or opposition to closing the bridge was heard at the meeting.

Connection to downtown – From south to north, the trail would cross Onondaga Street at West at the existing bump-out pedestrian crossing; the unused parcel on the east side of Onondaga St (private property currently) could be developed into a greenspace or park. Minor ROW acquisition would be needed at the convenience store at the Onondaga/West intersection. The West Street alternative route includes using the existing bike trail on the service road. The sidewalk would be enhanced and greenspace added. The route is tied into Walton street downtown currently and the tie-in would be enhanced.

The creek-adjacent route option would use Onondaga Street from West to Gifford Street and would require a difficult/wide crossing of Onondaga Street. The trail would run past Dickerson Street and into the Trolley lot. Trolley lot roadwidth would have to be taken to install in the Creekwalk trail. The very narrow crossing through the tunnel under the railroad would have to accommodate bikes and peds. The area behind the MOST is very narrow and would require taking parking areas for trail installation.

Update from City

- Outreach – Letters were sent in late September to approximately 100 residents and owners along the Hovey/Marginal/Midland/Tallman/Taylor route which explained the project, provided route alternatives, asked for input, and to meet with owners/residents. The City followed up on the letters with a door-to-door effort to the residents/owners in early October. Contact was made with approx. half the households. Approx. 80% of the respondents supported the Creekwalk 2 project and 20% opposed. The creekside route in the Midland Avenue area was supported; the Midland Avenue route was not supported.
- Assessment – Russ Houck spoke with the City Assessment Dept. which indicated that subdivided properties (where part of the property is acquired) would be immediately re-assessed by the City. It could be not determined if an assessment rate would be raised or lowered until the assessment was made. Russ is checking to see when the area was last assessed.
- Environmental – NYSDOT (Rich Sawzak is the local DOT liaison) indicated that based on the potential amount of property acquisition, a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required for the CW 2 project. The City has a meeting with DOT on 10/30 to determine what is required for the EIS and the associated schedule. The EIS would consider the effects of the project on local flora and fauna.
- Public Hearing- NYSDOT also indicated that based on the potential amount of property acquisition, a formal public hearing is required. The City has a meeting with DOT on 10/30 to determine what is required for a public hearing and the associated schedule.

- Continuing Outreach – The City (Planning and Engineering) will continue to work on contacting key commercial and residential property owners along the proposed routes where ROW might need to be acquired or where there would be larger impacts. An update will be given at the next meeting.

Trail Safety

The group discussed the need for safety on the trail to promote usage. Visibility was considered a key safety feature meaning that trees and brush would need to be removed/thinned along the route. Items discussed:

Lighting – the entire trail will be lit; lighting would be directed away from adjacent properties and take environmental issues into consideration. Light pole spacing is to be determined, but would probably be at wider intervals than the CW1 project. Existing lighting will be used where possible to reduce costs.

Camera/Emergency Boxes – The group indicated that both cameras and emergency boxes would provide a significant safety improvement for the trail. It was found on the CW1, that project funds cannot be used for cameras and emergency call boxes. Other funding/grants would have to be allocated for cameras/emergency boxes. The Police Dept. estimated that each pole-mounted camera costs approx. \$10,000.

Fencing – would be used on the Creekside of the route and adjacent to private property. Existing fencing would probably be removed and replaced with more-aesthetically pleasing fence (wrought iron type (steel), chain and post., etc.) This would be a detail based on each section of the Creekwalk.

Police Patrols - The SPD currently has a downtown bike patrol which patrols the Creekwalk to the lake at intermittent times. This patrol can also be used for the Creekwalk to the south. Suggestion was made for an additional bike patrol for the new section of trail. The Pedals to Possibilities bike organization was suggested as a resource to ride the Creekwalk as an informal patrol at least once per week and could report any problems. Councilor Bob Dougherty is the contact.

Benches – The group stressed to not install benches for most of the route to prevent people sleeping on the trail. Benches might have potential application for specific trailhead areas. Trash cans were recommended along the route, but would need regular maintenance – daily? City DPW and Parks Depts. would be responsible for maintaining the Creekwalk.

Lowered trail – the trail could be lowered approx. 3 feet from adjacent properties to enhance security; this would also provide more flood storage.

Local Work

The advisory group indicated that a significant portion of the project construction work should go to local workers. This would help gain support for the project and promote community ownership. The project is a locally-administered federal aid project, with 80% of the funding coming from the federal government, and administered through New York State. This form of project does not provide for a local work set-aside. The NYSDOT was asked if work can be set aside for local workers ; DOT is looking into this but indicated it is not part of the standard process. Standard project goals for a trail project include DBE goals of 6%, and workforce EEO goals of 6.9% women and 3.9% minority.

The City will fund 20% of the project as state Marcheselli funds are not available. The group advocated that the City look into local worker set-asides for the City-portion of the work. It was discussed that it is hard to split contracts by the funding source, but it might be possible to target specific work items in the construction contract for local work. City to investigate further.

Barry Lentz of the Urban Jobs Task Force summarized the current USDOT pilot program which is supporting and assessing geographic-based hiring for a number of federally funded projects. To be a part of this program, the CW 2 construction would have to be open for bidding by March 2016. The current CW 2 schedule is targeting 2017 for construction bidding.

Public meeting

Based on the requirement of an EIS and public hearing, the November 2015 public meeting will be postponed. Once established, the preferred alternative is intended to be presented at the public hearing. The City and the Community advisory group targeted early January for the next meeting. Informal meetings can be set up at request.

Action Items

1. City/C&S Engineers to detail further the east- or west-side route options from Midland Avenue Bridge to Rich Street. Rough costs to be established for comparison.
2. City Planning and Engineering Depts. to contact key commercial and residential property owners on potential Creekwalk routes to discuss project information and potential ROW acquisition.
3. City/NYSDOT meeting planned for Oct 30 to discuss EIS, public hearing requirements, project budget, and local work.

Onondaga Lake Creek Walk
 Advisory Committee Meeting
 October 27, 2015
 6pm
 Southwest Community Center

Name	Telephone Number	Email
Russell Houck, ^{City} Engineer	448-8059	rhouck@syrgov.net
Aggie Lane	478-4571	aggie.lane@verizon.net
Katherine & Michael Duclos	646-209-5923	KADuclos@gmail.com
Joanne Stevens	476-8540	
Barry F. Leutz	472-5401	belsyre@aol.com
Andrew Maxwell		
Sharon Owens	691-5801	sowens@succsy1.
Mercedes Jones	315-299-7868	stksblam@yahoo.com
Sgt. K. Calverase	448-8650	kcalverase@syracusepolice.org
Sgt. DOUGHERTY	956-5544	BDougherty@gmail.com