

West Coyote Hills Trail Planning Session Report **Prepared by The Acorn Group, May 2009**

Members of the West Coyote Hills Trails and Open Space Committee, together with the West Coyote Hills planning team, met at West Coyote Hills on May 30, 2009. Committee members included: Monika Broome, Sue Bulger, Steve Eldredge, Frank Fuetterer, Bob Hayden, Chris Heusser, Tom Horton, Jacob Staggs, Curtis Stoermer, Jerry Young, Art Munguin, and Mark Willis.

West Coyote Hills planning team members included Ron Baers, Roger Bell, Steve McCormick, Jim Pugliese, Jennifer Rigby, and Kavita Rodrigues.

The purpose of this session was two-fold: 1. To present information on the trails master plan and share draft architectural renderings for the vista points, trail gateways, trailheads, and rest stops and 2. To walk the property to explore and discuss the proposed ideas in context.

Part I: Jim Pugliese began the session by providing an overview of the project. The trail advisory committee has met five times since fall 2008, focusing on both the trails system and interpretive messages and media. During the January 31, 2009 meeting, the committee studied options for improvements in the trail system. The planning team integrated the committee's recommendations regarding trail details, use patterns and linkages. The work revealed during Saturday's session was based on those recommendations and a follow up discussion with City of Fullerton Park and Recreation Department staff.

Ron Baers then presented the master plan concept, trail standards, and nine trail detail plans that addressed trailheads, key vistas, rest areas, trail connections with control gates, and alternate routing details at the Nora Kuttner trail. Ron explained that the West Coyote Hills trail plan will be comprised of five types of trails: abandoned, multi-use, hikers only, accessible, and the promenade (casual walking and strolling). He distributed a map that depicted both the field trip route for the day and trail detail map key (enclosed, page 4).

Ron also identified three trails segments proposed for relocation within the plan:

1. Castlewood trail at Coyote Hills Drive. The existing trail in red is proposed to be abandoned. It will be rerouted to restore habitat and move the trail closer to Coyote Hills Drive. This removes a troublesome spot since "eyes" will now be on the trail.
2. Crossing at Euclid. The idea is to take the trail and reroute it around the proposed nature center site and the church, to Laguna which is a safe crossing
3. Castlewood-Nora Kuttner trails. This trail is proposed to be re-routed to follow existing oil field roads which will avoid steep grades, improve privacy for existing homes, and create the opportunity to restore habitat.

Ron also reviewed a change in trail standard applications for the trail route from Rosecrans to Hawks Pointe parallel to the West Coyote Hills western boundary. This trail segment was re-designated as a multi-use trail (changed from hiking only) so that a complete multi-use loop to Rosecrans, within the project boundaries could be provided.

He also noted that full accessibility is proposed for two key vistas (see number 6 and 7 on map) plus the nature center site.

Tail Standards were also reviewed, including the following details.

Trail Surface: paved or stabilized compacted soil (an additive added to soil with the advantage of allowing all sorts of traffic).

Grading: the maximum grade for accessibility is 8.33%.

Trail width: the closer you are to neighborhoods, the wider the trail; the farther away and closer to nature, the more narrow the trail. See map for varying width codes (standard multi-use, single track (hikers only) nature trail, accessible trail, etc.).

Ron also shared architectural/landscape architecture drawings with the committee in order to convey the "look and feel" of various trail features.

Key vistas are designed to be sensitive to topography and the needs/use patterns of visitors. They are located within restored habitat; thus, there is concern about their footprint. Efforts have been directed at minimizing their impact.

Detail 6 (key vista 3) is central to the project. It is near the proposed (underground) reservoir, and has space for automobile parking, restrooms, horse trailers, water fountain, shade, and a 16' wide accessible trail that can accommodate service vehicles (using stabilized soil). This is an accessible key vista. The current 12-14% grade will be reduced with either re-grading or extending the trail. As visitors get off the main access trail, they take a trail up the hill to a 12x12' shade structure, natural seating with boulders, and interpretive media.

Three of the key vistas were revised to have parking for horse trailers; however, concern was voiced during the meeting about the provision for horse trailer parking anywhere at West Coyote Hills. The recommendation voiced during the meeting is to provide for such parking at just one site (knowing some equestrians will be parking at the existing equestrian center site located off Euclid St.). The planning team intends to broach this topic with Parks and Recreation. Regardless of the outcome of this meeting, equestrians will still be welcome on multi-use trails; tie-downs and automatic waterers are proposed to be provided.

The question was posed, what happens at night? While City parks currently post signs that state parks are closed at night, this is not controlled. We need to consider control measures. What do they look like? Closed gates? Municipal code may be revisited (e.g.,

“closed from midnight – 4 a.m.”) which would mean that cyclists riding at night may prove to be helpful security. This issue will be brought up with Parks and Recreation.

Detail 8, located near the current reservoir on the western boundary, showed a typical access trail from the neighborhood to the adjacent multi-use trail.

Detail 4A is located near the Gilbert Bridge. Ron shared an illustration showing a trailhead with parking stalls, bike racks, restrooms, rest area with shade trees and boulder seating, and trails of varying width, from hiker only-trails to wider multi-use trails. It also shows a branch trail that goes under Gilbert Bridge, thus avoiding a street crossing of the main project collector street.

Detail 1, located in the reserve, showed an illustration of the current width of an oil field road (20'), a 6-8' wide multi-use trail, a narrower nature trail (3-4') for hikers only, a revegetated road swath, and rest stop.

Part II: The second part of this meeting took place in West Coyote Hills. The tour began at the Gilbert Bridge, overlooking the underpass trail. It was pointed out that the 8' wide underpass trail offers the advantage of avoiding a surface crossing at the main collector street. This site is a logical location for a trailhead. Amenities here include restrooms, drinking fountains, seating areas, shade trees, and hitching posts.

Our next stop was near the intersection of Castlewood and Parks Road to point out the recommended action of re-routing Castlewood Trail onto the existing oil road. This would offer three benefits: privacy of neighbors, greater potential for habitat restoration, and a more gradual trail grade. An alternate trail route was also shown that would avoid one of the steeper grades on the existing oil field road. Renderings of two different trail gateway architectural features were shared here as well. Design option A closely reflected the design elements of the community gateway monuments—stone columns, tile caps. Design option B incorporates remnant oil production “artifacts” into the design, such as oil pipe casings and large concrete counter weights. The group expressed greater interest in the latter option. Bob Hayden reminded the team of the “high clearance” needs of equestrians.

The group studied trail connector possibilities at stop no. three, close to a “hangout for illegal activities.” By abandoning the existing trail, access to the “hangout” area is removed, neighbors gain privacy, and there are additional opportunities for habitat restoration. A new trail connector to the Nora Kuttner Trail will complete access from the oil road trail. There will be a controlled access to the nature trail junction at this intersection.

At stop no. four, the group studied a detail plan of a nature trail and typical rest area. Rest areas are currently slated to include boulder seating apart from benches and shaded viewing platforms or more simple structures. Discussion ensued regarding the need for shade.

Here, Jim explained the early trail opening plan. The intent is to open up a temporary trail system based primarily on use of existing oil field roads currently closed to the

public. The early opening system will include existing oil road segments for multi-use and nature trails for walkers only. The western multi-use segment is temporary since it will be converted to a nature trail (hikers only) in the permanent system. Overall project implementation calls for phased development/construction, including the proposed new trail system. As this occurs, asphalt will be removed and trails will be constructed according to specifications for use, meaning the very wide road the group was standing on ultimately will become a 3-4' nature trail for hikers.

Stops no. five-six were combined into one stop at a vantage point that enabled the group to see the points of reference, including key vista one and its prominent sandstone cliffs. There was discussion about use of control gates and parallel trail options. The group expressed interest in having a single multi-use trail along the ridge with control gates to intersecting nature trails (hikers only). A major benefit is saving habitat by reducing the trail footprint.

Stop no. seven was also discussed where a multi-use trail combined with sidewalks bisects neighborhoods. The group concurred that this approach provides more privacy for neighbors and more area for landscaping.

Following the tour/discussion, lunch was served. Jim shared the topographical model of the project.

Action steps:

Please review these meeting summary notes. Feel free to electronically track any changes and/or add comments, and send them to Jennifer Rigby (emailacorn@aol.com) and copy Jim Pugliese (jim@westcoyotehills.com) and Scott Starkey (scott@westcoyotehills.com). If you do not have access to email, please feel free to fax your comments to Jenny's attention at (714) 838-5309. We would appreciate hearing from you by June 26, 2009.

We would like to schedule the next planning session with the Trails and Open Space Advisory Committee in July. This session will focus on the conceptual design package for interpretive media on the trails, nature center, and nature center grounds.