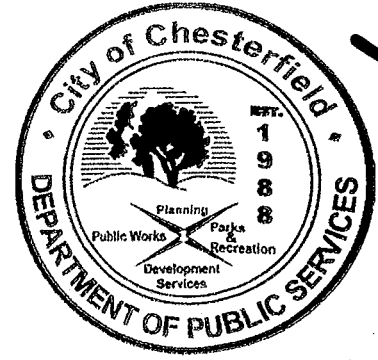


MEMORANDUM

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DATE: April 17, 2013
TO: Michael Herring, City Administrator
FROM: *me* Mike Geisel, Director of Public Services
RE: Chesterfield Levee Trail

As you are aware, the City of Chesterfield originally partnered with the Great Rivers Greenway District and the Chesterfield Valley Transportation Development District for the design and construction of the Chesterfield Valley Levee Trail. The trail project, initiated in July of 2005 was estimated to cost in excess of \$8 million. The Great Rivers Greenway District agreed to fund \$4 million and the Chesterfield Valley Transportation Development District (TDD) initially funded the trail project at \$2 million. Since that time, the TDD has agreed to fund the remaining \$2 million. Since 2005, the City has managed the design and construction of 10.51 miles of levee trail and both temporary and permanent trail heads. The remaining section of Levee trail is at the east end of the Valley, from the Hardee's Ice Sports facility to Highway 40 - I 64. Unfortunately, design and construction of this section of trail is temporarily suspended due to the Corps of Engineers construction of the storm water pump station immediately north of the highway, and decisions relative to the trail alignment adjacent to the Graeller property. As such, there will be minimal trail improvements prior to 2015. Upon completion, total trail length will be approximately 11.8 miles.

The first and most formal trailhead was built at the west end of the Chesterfield Valley Athletic Complex. At that location there are restrooms, pavilion shelters, parking, and ADA access ramps. A second, less formal trail head is provided along Edison Road, immediately east of Long Road. This site provides parking and ADA access for trail users.

During the planning phases of the Levee Trail, we anticipated that some trail users would access the Levee Trail from the existing Missouri Department of Conservation's Howell Island access at the west end of the Valley. Although this section of trail and the Department of Conservation's lot exist outside the Chesterfield City Limits, it initially appeared to be a compatible and beneficial use. As such, we approached the Department of Conservation about potential improvements to the Howell Island parking lot and a potential paved connection to the trail. While the Department of Conservation was agreeable to

the concept, we experienced a series of problems and conflicts that have led us to question the efficacy of constructing a trailhead at this location, and ultimately to recommend that we abandon our efforts to do so.

While the Missouri Department of Conservation was receptive to accommodating the trail access, they questioned whether it was appropriate to subject trail users to successful deer hunters and what may accompany them back to their vehicles. Accordingly, the City staff began the conceptual design of a new, separate parking lot. Please note that the existing parking area is not paved, but exists as a gravel lot which is accessed from Eatherton Road. If constructing a paved lot, it made sense to also pave the entrance to the lot and abut the new pavement to the pavement on Eatherton Road. This necessitated work in the Eatherton Road right of way, which triggered review from St. Louis County. During its review, St. Louis County indicated that it would not permit the work in the right of way unless the property owner dedicated additional right-of-way for the future expansion of Eatherton Road. While we did consult and confer with the Department of Conservation about the dedication of additional right-of-way, they had no desire to do so. As such, we modified our design to remove any improvements within the right of way and simply to pave the new parking area. This eliminated the need for County approval, but also resulted in a less than optimal "pavement / gravel / pavement" parking lot.

Another hurdle to overcome was the relatively new water quality improvements of MSD. In order to meet these requirements, we specified the use of porous asphalt pavement as a structural best management practice. Unfortunately, as part of MSD's review, they required that the owner of the property execute a maintenance agreement to ensure the long term maintenance of the water quality improvements. The City of Chesterfield offered to execute said agreements, but MSD requires that these be executed by the underlying land owner. Again, we contacted the Department of Conservation to assess their willingness to execute the required maintenance agreements, given that the City would be willing to formally commit to the required ongoing care and maintenance. The Missouri Department of Conservation was, again, very amenable to allowing for the construction of the improvements, but they simply refused to execute any documentation or formal agreements.

Frankly, this series of issues and conflicts caused us to reconsider the need for construction of an improved trail head at Howell Island. **The layered permitting requirements, water quality requirements and separation of parking facilities has increased the costs related to this trail head, which was originally planned as minor parking area for trail access, to increase to approximately \$200,000.** Understanding that trail users will certainly be able to use the access location as it currently exists, there is marginal benefit to improving this access and substantial costs associated therewith.

Accordingly, **I recommend that City suspend further efforts to improve the Howell Island Access. It is, at best, redundant. The existing trailhead located at the CVAC is less than three trail miles from Howell Island, and the Centaur Road connection is only 1.25 miles\feet in the other direction. In my opinion, the CVAC trailhead adequately serves the trail users in this area.** Given the location outside of the City, the costs associated with construction, the ongoing costs for maintenance, and the above described problems with implementation, the pursuit of an improved trailhead at Howell Island is simply unwarranted at this time.

As such, **I recommend that this information be forwarded to the Parks and Recreation Committee for information and direction.** If you have any questions or require additional information, please advise

Cc Tom McCarthy, Parks and Recreation Director



OK'D
JSH
4/18/13

FYI → NEXT PARKS/REC
COMMITTEE: THURSDAY,
4/25/13