



Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting #19

Location: Rabbit Creek Community Church

Date: January 21, 2008 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

AGENDA

1. Introduction – introductions of CAC, consultants, guests, public attendees; (Vic Mollozzi vice - chair) (10 minutes)

CAC

- Vic Molozzi
- Dave Lappi
- Carol Fries
- Lori Davey
- John Weddleton
- Dee High
- Chris Hamre
- Niel Thomas
- Wayne Westberg

Staff

- Chris Beck, Agnew::Beck
- Heather Stewart, Agnew::Beck
- Tom Nelson, MOA Planning
- Kristi Bischofberger, MOA PM&E Watershed
- John McPherson, HDR

Public

- Mike Goodwin (public) (Upper Rabbit Valley, Prater subdivision, since 1983)

2. Update on Schedule and Products (Chris Beck – 10 minutes)

- “Framework Plan” - mid February
 - Format: summary report; background reports
 - Contents: big picture, options regarding land use, infrastructure improvements and means to pay for ongoing improvements and maintenance
- Informal outreach – discuss with CAC
- Public Workshops – tentatively mid March

Discussion

- Will the CAC see the framework plan before it is released to the public?
 - Yes, we’ll show it to you for discussion at the February CAC meetings (2/15 is our internal deadline; the CAC should see it that day)
- The Planning Group would like to meet with various Hillside groups
 - HALO’s agenda Feb 7
 - Rabbit Creek CC meeting, Feb 14 (3rd Thurs)
 - Mid and Hillside East and Huffman O’Malley CC on Feb 21

- LRSA meeting (lunch probably better) – Lori will email Jerry and try to have him coordinate it or she will; should check with John McPherson and Lance Wilber
- Hoping workshops will be the week of March 17, but this is still very tentative

3. Upper Hillside land use and infrastructure

- Process
 - meetings with developers and community groups
 - opportunities and constraints; built/green infrastructure – roads, trails, drainage
 - means to pay for construction and maintenance
 - alternatives: a) base case - build out under existing zoning b) alternative development standards
- Review draft green/built infrastructure map

Discussion

- The map presented at the meeting shows an initial set of recommendations for roads and trails. John pointed out the first priority major road and trail systems
- Some of the consultants and CAC members met on Jan 17th with six Hillside developers/landowners then Jan 21st with additional Potter Valley developers/landowners; they can describe those reactions to this map
- Working with this map as a start, the idea is that the HDP process will result in the refinement and extension of the existing trails plan (focused on a small set of key trails), and to establish a clear and consistent approach to drainage and roads on the Hillside. The hope is to set this “built/green infrastructure” system in a way that works for developers and that limits the impacts of their proposed developments
- John McPherson pointed out:
 - Various proposed subdivisions (where developers intend to develop, at what densities, and the road/trail network they intend to use).
 - Road network (building from the map reviewed at the December 17 CAC meeting)
 - There is a CIP project in place today to improve the Romania connection
 - In Bear Valley, there is an existing homestead road and a proposed plat with various ideas for getting into the existing road network.
 - We’ve been getting feedback that we should think about alternatives for certain trail connections
 - in planning for roads, trails and Chugach State Park access, we’re trying to make sure there is some circular connectivity so there’s more than one way to get in and out
- Please don’t make Park access-point parking lots look too big
- Change map to make it easier to see what roads and trails exist today and what is proposed
- How much of this is private property?
 - Nearly all of it; a few areas of HLB land.
 - Road connections/extensions could be partially funded by subdivisions as they are built; State contributions are also a possibility for primary roads
- Through this planning process (and with this map as a start), the Planning Group is trying to take advantage of the private landowners/developers’ internal planning process to get some assurance of a framework road that allows more than single access

- Rickie Road: Portions of it are platted, portions of it are on section lines. The east-west connector looks do-able in the western section. It connects schools together and starts to take some pressure off Rabbit Creek Road.
- Do you realize that making Rickie Road a thoroughfare may be contentious with South Park residents?
 - Initially there wasn't supposed to be a connection from Goldenview Park to South Park because they didn't want the traffic impact. Now there's a connection. Those people are going to take it as adding insult to injury. We need to make sure we're thinking about how these connections will impact neighborhoods.
 - There are two possible places to try to make that connection. We're trying to distribute some trips, also if you have more places to get traffic out, it's not all funneled to one place. More connections will spread out the load that the roads have to bear, so they'll be less busy, e.g. the Rabbit Creek-Goldenview intersection.
 - If you extend to Elmore Road, it will be steep "that will be a death trap".
 - John explained that road connection is already in the LRTP.
- Can we expand this map to include South High so we can see that picture?
 - Starting with this quadrant, it will expand to include the whole study area.
 - It would still be nice to get this map to include DeArmoun.
 - We think we can get the whole study area at this scale in four maps.
- The connection to South High is pretty important.
- Could you show graphically how busy these roads are so that we can see which are the most densely used roads?
 - John explained the Fall Issues, Goals Choices report has a map that shows exactly this
- Can you define these different kinds of roads?
 - Right now we've put forth these as "primary" and "secondary" roads. We don't want to use words like "arterial" because people tend to think of five-lane highways when we're really talking two-lane roads, even though it basically performs the same function. These roads provide important connectors/collectors for the area; they are the main routes in and out of the Hillside for most trips. The "Secondary" roads are for neighborhood or secondary access (e.g., emergency response).
- There is a key north-south connection from Bear Valley school, with some portions currently existing and some in CIPs. On this map, we tried locating that road as far east as the terrain will allow to get another north-south route that connects all the way across to Potter Heights Road. That's the kind of road that would benefit Goldenview Drive; it catches traffic and funnels it before it gets to Goldenview.
 - Based on wetlands and input, you end up with this circuitous route – is it really available? Can you really make that connection? I think this connection needs to be made as well, but I don't think it's going to be quite as smooth as you're making it out to be on this map.
 - Yes, if these parcels are someday all built out at this density, I imagine the road will be one lane in each direction.
 - We need to look at this map more carefully and get feedback on it
- Have you done traffic studies on these routes?
 - For some of them we have, but we need to know where the subdivisions will be before we can do meaningful traffic projections

- Land use information is needed to generate traffic studies, and the MOA is currently compiling land use population projections. We're still waiting for the data, but there will probably be less traffic than there currently is on Goldenview or somewhere around that level.
- When a traffic study was done in this area, developers were pretty open about what they thought development was going to be, rather what the zoning allowed. The real eye-opener when developers said, "I don't think we're going to make that density at all." It seems like they anticipate less density than what is zoned for the area.
- We're thinking that the plan will present two scenarios: 1) a base-case scenario according to existing zoning as tempered by wetlands/environmental constraints; and 2) a scenario based on what we're learning through these discussions right now with developers, and incorporating the "built/green infrastructure" approach. We don't know for certain, but it seems likely there will be no more, and perhaps less units proposed in this alternative
- The Planning Group hasn't gotten to including drainage considerations on this map yet, but the consultants are working on it. They have talked to developers about clustering subdivisions.
- It is not necessarily essential that proposed road and trail connections follow the exact lines or routes as depicted in the map, It is more important that there is a connection in that general direction. The idea is that it provides connectivity and access points as depicted on the map. We're going to continue to modify and develop this map as it goes forward and more information becomes available.
- Why would the plan not show the connection along the section lines as opposed to crossing a landowner's property? The assumption is that you might first try to stay along the section line?
 - Topographically, following section lines may be gnarly to impossible
 - Not all section lines are valid section line easements (there are only a few places on the Hillside where that's not the case)
- There has been the suggestion that the need for a community road system is being imposed on landowners (same for trails), that the Muni is going in and telling private landowners what to do with their property.
 - With the HDP, we're trying to set up an objective and consistently applied system that landowners/developers can rely on when platting their subdivisions.
- John McPherson pointed out trails and trail connectivity on the map.
- Have you considered existing informal trails?
 - Yes, we tried to use a "primary" and "secondary" approach (similar to the roads), so we started with the trails identified in the existing trails plan and ideas from past plans, community workshops, etc. This resulted in the pink dashed lines.
- There is a set of primary trails, which are the spine/backbone of the trail system; the secondary trails provide connections between primary routes, there is also the attempt to make a continuous trail along the southern edge of the study area
- Some trails lead into/through Section 36, with the assumption that additional planning will work out details for that area.
- The "P's" are potential parking lots/access points to Chugach State Park
- Why are some P's crossed off?
 - From the discussion with landowners, there is a real problem with expecting private land owners to incorporate public trailheads on their property, mostly due to the lack

- of management of these areas leading to littering, vandalism, trash. These issues are being addressed by the trails DCON (Land Design North).
- Who would manage/maintain these trails? Who would deal with issues at trailheads? It is (in part) those kinds of uncertainties that prevent developers/landowners from creating more publicly-accessible trails. A private property owner does not want to be the only one watching over these issues (liability, trash, etc.). If trailhead could be dedicated (with the government or some clearly defined group having the resources to bear these responsibilities), private developers might be more cooperative.
 - These issues are being addressed by the trails DCON (Land Design North).
- Are there other trailheads in Chugach State Park?
 - There are some on Heritage Land Bank (HLB) land. There is some disagreement among the Municipality and the State about who should be responsible for these trailheads. The State seems like it might be more open to locating them on State land; it anticipates receiving more funding for this in the future.
 - It's an issue with the Municipality, too: they don't have the funding to maintain trails and trailheads. Where does the cash come from?
 - But we already pay taxes for recreational services. This is true for most of the Hillside but not in the upper reaches where many new trails and trail heads are proposed.
 - (Vic Mollozzi) MOA pays for trail maintenance as part of its city-wide responsibilities. I can go over the budget in detail with you. The reality is that the Parks and Recreation Department gets less and less funding every year.
- What about all the little red lines dribbled over the map?
 - Some are underlying trails data that the GIS guy didn't turn off.
 - The smallest red lines are drainage ditches along roads.
 - That's why I'm raising this – I can picture the public looking at this and being confused or making assumptions...
- Is there some criteria that determines what kind of spacing you want in trails? Is this a little dense? Why not along roads?
 - The smaller pink routes should have been turned off.
 - The black dashed lines are trails adopted in the AMATS Trails Plan. Some trails might be seasonal trails (maybe it's wet or only usable in the summer), some might only be appropriate for certain activities (a winter route for skiing, primitive natural hiking, riding your bike along a gravel road, etc) or provide different kinds of experience (more natural experience versus neighborhood recreation). We haven't gotten to the point of deciding that we don't need a trail there, there and there, but if we take this trail off, can people connect by crossing the road here, etc...
 - We've been showing these to various folks, got some other suggestions (Chris pointed one out); we've heard pretty clearly the same question. Having all these trails doesn't seem defensible, but having them as alternatives to each other might be a way out of this. The criteria for these trails are: to protect well-liked, existing trails (even though it might cross private property), to legalize popular trails that have been used a long time, to provide access from lower areas to upper areas, to respect existing trails and make connections.
- Are we going to take the same approach with trails as we did with roads – i.e. say, “We want a connection from here to here, but we'll be flexible about exact route”?

- I think that we have to if we realistically want to get trails dedicated/protected
- This approach might result in a compromise that is less what the trail user would want, but we don't have the money to go buy all the rights/easements to ideal routes.
- We need to make the idea of "experience" very clear to landowners; more so than connectivity. From a trail user's point of view, it's not the same experience to be hiking in the woods as when you're walking along the road.
- We also need to recognize that by asking for trail dedications, we're asking developers to give up land. Probably we can work out routes that will be acceptable to all. But then you have to deal with the terms of easements and finding the money to build the trails; that's another consideration. How much of that is the developer responsible for and how much is borne by the Municipality or designated trail-steward?
- At this point, we're probably focusing more on preserving trail routes than asking developers to construct them. We might have to ask developers to construct 100ft of trail to get people to Chugach State Park access points, for example, but for longer routes, you can't ask the developers to foot the entire bill.
- Do these roads have to be built to same standards as downtown? Maybe there is some logic here for lower-impact standards. Steep slopes are an issue that the MOA is still working on.
- The planners need to describe the general characteristics of primary and secondary roads if people are going to accept them. If they're residential roads today, people don't want them to become a major thoroughfare with increased traffic. Spell it out for people.
 - Be honest – some of these changes are going to have a huge impact on the character of these roads
- Primary routes could receive funding by a district-wide road service area. That road service area would have to decide if secondary roads would be eligible for the same pot of money. Access to that funding might be an incentive for people to upgrade their roads to primary status.
- For drainage, we are recommending main channels/streams with 50' buffers on one side for primary channels (total 50ft corridor), and secondary channels with a 25ft buffer on either side (total 50ft corridor). These are intended to be a development setback. The intent of this integrated approach on drainage, roads and trails ("built/green infrastructure") is to set up a system that works for both land owners and residents. Residents and recreation users get a better maintained natural environment. The hope is that landowners and developers get more certainty in return, so they know going in what the regulatory framework will be. Ultimately, it becomes the basis for a deal between the development community and those looking for environmental protection, trails and recreation.
- 50ft setback for structures? Does septic count as a structure?
 - Septics are governed by a separate code. They have 100ft buffer, and it will remain 100ft unless someone changes it in the onsite code.
 - But a well setback? A well is a structure. Then must be permissible at 50ft.
 - Some discussion about what the measures should be; we've been going through iterations of that. The current Title 21 stipulates 25ft buffers except 100ft for R10 district. The current proposed draft of the Title 21 rewrite requires 50ft buffers everywhere. The Municipality is working on concepts where there could be some

flexibility, concepts that would give more flexibility for the smallest streams on high Hillside.

- (Kristi Bischofberger) The current amendment to the new code as we're writing it deals with stream order: 1st and 2nd order streams will have 50ft buffers, 3rd and 4th order streams will have 25ft buffers. Drainage-ways (not considered a stream because surface flow storm events are periodic, not steady, although there is a clear drainage path) will also have a 10ft setback on each side. We're trying to get streams and drainage mapped and make sure there's continuity.
- I've seen people on the Hillside dam up their rivulets to make ponds.
 - That's not okay under existing codes.
- I don't think they're all bad – we use them for fire water supply.
- Do these setbacks show up on plats?
 - Yes, drainage-ways show up on plats; we're trying to tighten up our reviewers to look at that.
- Can you run a culvert up your driveway?
 - Yes, there are some provisions for that.
- Can you re-route it?
 - Good question; there is a process for determining that.
- I'm concerned that these 10ft easements will cripple development.
 - (Kristi Bischofberger) We have mapped the Hillside now; we know where a good chunk of the streams are. It's making development on the Hillside way more difficult.
- So the mapping has been done for streams, but still needs to be done for drainages?
 - (Kristi Bischofberger) When development is proposed, they have to call us. We've done some mapping, but then we go out there and double-check to get to the nitty gritty.
- We also need to consider that there are a lot of people who already live there; this plan cannot accommodate one population to the detriment of the others.

4. District-wide Roads (John McPherson)

- Existing road system
- Options for improvements

Discussion

- The 1984 Hillside Roads and Drainage study went down to the level of local roads; in the HDP, we're just looking at a framework level of connectivity (the mile and half-mile connections). We're not looking for these routes to become major Anchorage-wide routes, rather these connections would provide internal neighborhood accessibility. In other words, we don't want someone to have to go three miles out of their way to get one mile over to the neighbor's house.
- We tried to focus on half-mile section lines.
- Certain connections might also have been proposed because of access to a trailhead or other public space.
- John McPherson brought markers if CAC members want to point out areas that should have more connections, or cross off unnecessary connections, etc. The CAC noted that it

would be easiest if John could send a version to the CAC to mark up and send back to him.

- Along 112th Street, it seems like more homes are oriented to use that than [some other alternative].
- The possibility of higher density on the BLM lots could be the most controversial part of this plan. Those people bought into a lifestyle believing that that's how things would have to be.
 - Changing zoning would not change what's on the ground instantaneously.
 - But you set the stage for continual conflicts.
 - If I bought into that land with certain expectations, I'd be angry that they were changed on me.
 - To clarify, those lots have been zoned R-6 for 30 years, and you can divide them under the existing zoning.
 - Yes, but any greater allowed density than the 1.25 acres is not okay with the community.
 - The situation is that over time, with population growth, cities become denser and you have to decide if you want to lock in the low density now or not.
- Have you driven these roads that you're proposing as secondary roads?
 - Not where they don't exist, but where they do exist, most of them.

5. Brief update on implementation mechanisms

- E.g., service districts for drainage, roads, trails
- Role of non-profits (e.g., Greatland Trust)

Discussion

- We need to find a way to pay for some of the ideas coming up in this plan.
- We keep talking about a service district for trails; if you're going to sell that you need to explain to people how that relates to the taxes they're already paying for parks and recreation. They don't want to be taxed twice.
 - But according to the survey, people said that they were willing to pay more for parks and recreation.
 - At the Municipal level, people are saying, "Take better care of what you have with the resources you already have before you start adding more." That's why the issue of pools keeps coming up. We have to tell people that their tax dollars are going into maintaining everything that we have right now.
 - Tax notices just came out, assessed values went up, and taxes went up significantly. You can't just expect people to jump on board for more taxes.
 - One of the points in these discussions is that the plan is rooted in assumptions about growth. Growth funds itself if done right. Existing owners will only pay for part of it; new landowners and developers will also contribute.
 - But that's part of the problem; we have an under-funded infrastructure system on the Hillside. Yes, new development ought to pay its own way, but the existing system needs to be funded and maintained as well.
- When will report on this be ready? – Mid-February.
- Can you write this so that we can see what all of this means to the individual landowner?

- You're not going to see the details of costs in mid-February. You'll see some options, some projections of revenue based on assessed value and mill rates, but we don't yet know enough about what the plan might cost to know whether it's going to fund those mechanisms.
- But that's what I'd like to see – a menu with prices. Let's be honest with the public and find a clear way to present it so they know what all this will cost them.
- For example, how do you go about allocating the area-wide mill-rate pot of money collected by the service district? Break it down.
- Does Eagle River have one pot of money? – Yes, but just for roads and drainage.
- Don't forget about State funding. If you show you're willing to tax yourself you go way up in State funding priority.
- Many of these roads don't need to be built until the development happens. It's an incremental process.
- There are some important connections that need to be made regardless of subdivision development.
- What kind of resistance did you get in Goldenview when you became an RRSA? Or when you paved?
 - 86% yes, because it will cost less in maintenance over the long run.
- But the LRSA is local; we all have a stake in that. What we're talking about here turns into this big amorphous taxing entity with possibly no local control. This is not cheap.
- Areas outside the road service area could see a \$1000 increase because they're not paying into it at all right now.
- You are making a good point that it depends on how fast you build it.
- But you can come up with a base – get some numbers to start with; they'll change with inflation and the rate of development, but we need something to start with.
- Eagle River just decides on a certain amount of money and does as much as they can with that much money in a given year, regardless of how long it takes. The Hillside could do it that way as well.
- Whether or not the plan gets adopted and it's a good idea, you (CAC members) are the ones who have to go to community councils and sell this idea. Otherwise you'll continue to have the same problems from incremental development that you have now.
- There are two different types of problems: existing problems that need to be addressed and the impacts of future development.
- We need new funding mechanisms to deal with future growth. This plan isn't going to trigger a lot of growth; the growth is happening on its own, independent of any extra push this process may provide.
- How close can you get in cost estimates?
 - (John McPherson) The way I think about it, if the routes serve a State function (State road, State Park, State Trailheads), the State should contribute to funding; for the blue roads (Secondary), as the subdivision is developed, the developer should help pay for them; some roads are a combination and should be the Municipality's responsibility; and if not part of the Municipal road network, those roads would be part of the district-wide service area. A road board would have to make the decision of whether to build the road or not, and that's a local decision.

- One thing to remember: these things that you want need some means of funding them or they're going to go away. The private land trail system will gradually go away without some funding mechanism for preserving easements and maintaining trails.
- Ideally, you have a board that is responsible for making these decisions; you can pass a vote to create the service area. If you recommend this board, it's local control.
 - That's all we can do is make recommendations.
 - This isn't like a DOT or city project where we're trying to convince you that something is good and you should do it. It's your plan; we're just giving you our expertise and recommendations.
- I would amend the parlance to make it clear that new homeowners are going to pay for new development.
- One suggestion: on the map, try to put text boxes to explain what you just said. I've seen maps interpreted as law when they are really conceptual images. I think you don't want a conceptual suggestion in a plan interpreted by the Municipality as law.
 - Wasn't it a text box that got us in trouble before? – Yes, but my point remains.
- Summary it's important to me to know that it's different pieces with different solutions, not just government gone wild. This might work if we have a system that sets out different kinds of roads and trails, and recognizes different parties are responsible for each (e.g. regional vs. neighborhood trails). Likewise this might work if Hillside residents and landowners maintain control of the process for setting priorities.

6. Wrap-up (5 min)

- Assignments
- Next meetings
 - Jan 23, 2008 - optional meeting on drainage pilot project in the Little Rabbit Creek and Little Survival Creek drainages; 6:00 – 8:00; Tudor Rd MOA Permit Center
 - Monday Feb 18th - review draft framework plan
 - Tuesday Feb 19th - review draft framework plan

Public comments:

- This is clearly a complex process; thanks for taking it on.
- In the May 2007 household survey, Hillside residents said that they are largely satisfied with things as they are. Obviously what you've covered tonight could have great and gross impact.
- One item I brought up personally in the first workshop is cell tower development. Prior to that meeting I asked the Mayor about the city's policy on this, and he told me that we're all over the map. I think that this issue should be addressed in this plan. Don't want to see cell phone towers cluttering up the ridgelines. I would like to see cell towers kept off remaining ridgelines.
- People have a problem with light pollution and visibility of the night sky. Almost all towers have to have flashing lights. Could there be a consideration to downsize existing towers that are no longer needed in the HDP?
- At the first public meeting, there was an issue raised about forbidding development on Class A, B, or C wetlands. I know the city has identified wetlands in this area. How much

consideration is being given in all this potential development about using Class A, B, or C wetlands?

- [The Municipality] is doing our best to map them. We have new information coming in, and are trying to see how accurate that is. Through this drainage planning process, we are trying to identify some portion of those wetlands that serves a valuable water retention function. This plan doesn't make rules about the wetlands, but we can certainly map them.
- Think the Municipality has a responsibility to protect these wetlands.
 - It would be very difficult to develop much of these wetlands due to the topography on the Hillside
- There are more and more demands uphill of those of us with our septic systems. I am concerned about downhill impacts. I understand that there could be public sewers in this area, and the idea of individual septic systems is not part of the Potter Valley area.
 - We're looking at that. Right now we're re-examining the service boundary. We're unlikely to see much change in that existing boundary.
- I hear a lot of discussion about trails and connectivity and access. Clearly that dominated most of the discussion here tonight. Is there a point person for those issues?
 - Agnew::Beck is covering the land use aspects of this discussion; John McPherson of HDR has responsibility for transportation, and Land Design North is doing the trails portion.
- I would suggest local/community loop trails so people can just get out for an hour in their neighborhood. Focus on a couple of key access points.
- How would you maintain these trails?
 - Not sure. I don't think the State will help out. Taxing ? Maybe. The Municipality has to have some buy-in (perhaps with the youth employment program).