



The Allen Creek
Greenway
Conservancy

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The Conservancy
is dedicated to
creating a Greenway
along the alignment
of historic Allen Creek
through Ann Arbor
from Stadium
Boulevard to the
Huron River.

The Conservancy
is a 501(c)(3)
not-for-profit
corporation.

525 West William St.
Ann Arbor, Michigan
48103

February 1, 2011

Amy Beth Kuras, Park Planner
Parks and Recreation
City of Ann Arbor
100 North Fifth Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-8647

RE: 2011 – 2015 PROS PLAN

Dear Amy:

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in the preparation of the
2011 – 2015 **PARKS & RECREATION OPEN SPACE PLAN**.

Since the mission of the Allen Creek Greenway Conservancy is to create
a Greenway along the alignment of Allen Creek connecting
neighborhoods and the downtown to each other and to the Huron River
Greenway (Border to Border Trail), we are extremely interested in the
long-term vision for the community as expressed in the PROS Plan.

The Allen Creek Greenway is unique in one major way – it will self-fund
if designed properly and if zoning changes are carefully implemented in
conjunction with that design. In fact, our research indicates that if these
two elements are done with care and foresight, the Greenway will return
an amount in excess of what it costs.

The earliest reference to the Allen Creek Greenway, that we can find, is
in the **1981 Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces** (Introduction
to Task Force Report). Admittedly, the creation of a meaningful
Greenway is not an overnight project. After 30 years of thinking, it is
now time to begin acting. The valley will never be as readily available
for change as it is today. Much work must be done to lay a proper
foundation. With each passing day of inaction the task becomes more
difficult.

We are a nonprofit with volunteers dedicated to fulfilling the initial steps
to make this community dream a reality. We have talked with the
University of Michigan. We have established a serious dialogue with the
Ann Arbor Railroad. We are in early discussions with potential donors
and other funding sources. We are very serious in pursuing these efforts.
A solid backing in the City's **2011 – 2015 PROS Plan** will serve as a
catalyst to the enthusiasm of those whose help we need.

We would appreciate your favorable consideration of the following changes:

- 1) Remove mention of the Allen Creek Greenway in **SECTION VIII: Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment SUBSECTION I. Potential New Recreational Facilities and Park Amenities**, and create a new **SUBSECTION J.** entitled **Allen Creek Greenway**.
- 2) Change the wording of the new **SUBSECTION J.** to read as follows:

“A greenway running generally along the alignment of the buried Allen Creek has been proposed in several previous PROS Plans as well as the 1988 Downtown Plan. The main branch of the Allen Creek runs along the railroad tracks in the transitional area on the western edge of downtown. The 1988 Downtown Plan calls for the development of a highly visible ‘greenway’ on the valley floor of the Allen Creek to reinforce the visibility of the valley, develop an improved transition between the downtown core and the neighborhoods to the west, to establish a visual and recreational amenity, to create improved pedestrian and bicycle access to downtown, and to enhance downtown’s unique identity as a place. The connection to the Huron River is important for safety and to provide a more visible entry to the Huron River Greenway.

“In 2005, a task force was created to produce a report offering recommendations and options for the greenway (Council Resolution R-258-6-05). The report outlines conceptual recommendations for the three City owned properties at 721 North Main, 415 West Washington and the corner of William and First Streets. It recommends that the entirety of the William and First parcel become a greenway park. While proposing various options for the North Main and West Washington sites, the schemes consistently called for the floodway area to be set aside for exclusive greenway use. The report suggested examining streets and sidewalks as a starting point for connections, and recommended continued conversation with the Ann Arbor Railroad towards a possible Rails-with-Trails project. In 2005, the Allen Creek Greenway Conservancy, a non-profit corporation, was established to help with design and acquisition of the greenway. A report outlining a proposed route was completed by the Conservancy in 2008.

“In 2009, City Council Resolution **R-09-273** supported the recommendation to preserve the City-owned parcel at the corner of First and William, and stated that the City has secured partial funding for environmental remediation. A 2010 Council Resolution **R-10-028** proposed an investigative effort to look into the viability of creating a Greenway park and a community arts center at 415 West Washington Street. Efforts are ongoing by the Allen Creek Greenway Conservancy, the Arts Alliance, and the Mayor and two City Councilpersons to realize the creation of this greenway.”

- 3) Add the following bullet point to **Section VIII: Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment SUBSECTION D. Parkland Acquisition:**
 - “Designate the floodway portions of city-owned First and William, 415 West Washington and 721 North Main as Parkland”
- 4) Add the following bullet point to **SECTION VIII: Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment SUBSECTION F. Neighborhood Parks and Urban Plazas:**
 - “Begin the process of developing a Master Plan for the Allen Creek Greenway showing potential alignment and its relationship with all neighborhoods along the route, the Downtown, the University of Michigan (more specifically, the Athletic Campus), the Huron River Greenway (Border to Border Trail), the Ann Arbor neighborhoods south of Stadium Boulevard, and the opportunities to the south through Pittsfield Township to Saline.”
- 5) Label the **Allen Creek Greenway** on two of the **Huron River Greenway – Proposed Acquisition & Improvements** maps – the first (my page 125) showing all three Detail Maps and the second (my page 127) showing only Detail Map #2.

A copy of the “**Potential Route of Allen Creek Greenway**” discussed in your email of January 27, 2011 is enclosed. I will email a copy of the map and this letter so that you will have both in digital format.

Your effort to make these revisions will be of immeasurable value to us as we undertake to give life to the public side of this invaluable endeavor, and as we seek donors and grants to bring this vision into reality – small piece by small piece.

Sincerely,

THE ALLEN CREEK GREENWAY CONSERVANCY



Jonathan W. Bulkley
Chair

CC: Parks Advisory Commission
Planning Commission

Enclosure: **Potential Route of Allen Creek Greenway**

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

