



Via E-mail

RE: Comments and Recommendations on: The Treeline - Allen Creek Urban Trail Master Plan

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing as a member and representative of the Sierra Club Huron Valley Group, regarding the Treeline-Allen Creek Urban Trail Master Plan. I participated in the Master Planning process as a member of the Citizens' Advisory Committee.

The original Allen Creek Greenway proposal that provided the model for the renamed Treeline Master Plan, focused on non-motorized transportation and the green infrastructure provided by a series of connected public open space parks. The Treeline Master Plan emphasizes movement, connectivity, and structures generally limited to a width of 30 feet. Hardscape predominates in the Plan, including multiple bridges planned to span busy streets.

I am concerned with the lack of inclusion for green infrastructure, for open space to use for recreation and environmental services. The three public properties held at 721 N. Main St, 415 W. Washington Street, and between First and William Streets, are available to be transformed into areas that will attract members of the public to areas of interest along the route of the Treeline.

Public gardens, performance and education space, trees, and areas to enjoy the outdoors can be sited in the three publicly owned spaces, under the Treeline Conservancy management. The three properties offer the greatest opportunity for engaging the public in creative involvement with the Treeline as a public resource.

As you move to accept the Master Plan, please take steps to retain public ownership of the three public properties as essential to the Master Plan, and incorporate them as important nodes along the Treeline. Avoid cannibalizing the properties that can contribute to uniqueness and value. Sale of public properties that can allow most flexibility, will result in a Treeline with its dominant quality is reduced to merely a confining, undistinctive sidewalk/bikepath.

Non-motorized transportation is important, and will benefit the city. The Treeline can provide much more than a transportation corridor. For example, it can be used in increase, rather than remove trees. Use the Treeline as an opportunity to make a great project for the city.

Additionally, I question the need for a bridge in the area south of Liberty Street, at Main and Madison Streets. Safety may be best served by having fewer elevated sections of the path. Traffic in that location is slower than that at North Main Street, and could be managed safely. Other intersections of the Treeline are managed at ground level, as gateway entry points and provide examples that can be applied at South Main Street.

The Sierra Club Huron Valley Group will continue to advocate for maximizing the Treeline's green elements, with trees, plantings, and open space, in order to provide community benefits that will improve our air, water, and land.

Sincerely,

Rita Mitchell



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Member, Sierra Club Huron Valley Group