

Oxbow Park and Preserve
Draft Concept Plans Presented May 1, 2014
Summary of Public Comments

From: Casey Lynch [mailto:Casey@caseylynchcpa.com]

Sent: Sunday, May 04, 2014 4:35 PM

To: Metz, Cathy; Ford, Kent - 2; Hall, Kevin; Carver, Karen; Skillen, Buck

Subject: Oxbow parking

Cathy,

Please add this drawing to the suggestions for Oxbow (no laughing at my art work). I think there is a real shortage of truck and trailer parking for private vehicles. If we have enough room any parking that would work for both individual vehicles and for vehicles with trailers would be great.

I also wanted to take the time to thank you for your hard work. Durango is a better community because of you and the work you do! I know it is hard to put up with all of the different interests in our community. You are appreciated!!

Casey

Casey Lynch

Casey@CaseyLynchCPA.com

970-749-1388

From: Wegner, David [David.Wegner@mail.house.gov]

Sent: Friday, May 02, 2014 11:37 AM

To: Marbury, Sweetie; White, Dick; Rinderle, Christina

Subject: Oxbow Park and Preserve issue

Sweetie, Christina and Dick – greetings from cool and saturated WDC. I wanted to weigh in on what I read in the Herald this morning regarding the field meeting yesterday at the Oxbow Park and Preserve. I would like to say I was surprised to learn that the City consultant had not presented a full breadth of alternatives for development of the recreation aspect of Oxbow Park but that would be wrong. I have dealt with the Parks and Recreation enough over the years to know that they control the public process with a firm grip and present what they believe is the path forward. So no surprise there.

I would like to suggest that perhaps it would be wise to consider this before stepping off the ledge and potentially igniting a firestorm of public push back from the residents in the Oxbow area:

- Have an independent entity, perhaps affiliated with the college, conduct a Carrying Capacity study for the Animas River through Durango. The carrying capacity should look at the commercial boating, the recreation boating, the fishermen, and the folks who just enjoy using the river corridor for walking and enjoying the environment. Understanding the carrying capacity would give you solid data on which to make a determination if:
 - o We want to develop the river corridor further (i.e. are we potentially overloading it with boaters/tubers)
 - o What the seasonality needs and uses are
- The Carrying Capacity could then feed into determining what the public wants to see down with the river corridor rather than just a narrow subset of commercial users.
- This was suggested 6 or 7 years ago when we used to have the Animas River group – it was shot down by the commercial boating companies as they did not want to be limited in the number of folks they could put on the river. The city following the desires of the commercial companies nixed the idea quickly.
- Direct the consultant to look at a non-paving option to have people walk into the Oxbow park. If the desire is to use the park for low impact water recreation (tubers, kayakers, canoeists) then those boats can easily be carried in. You eliminate the concern over paving and you know, if you pave, they will come. The value of the Oxbow is to provide a different river experience than those found at 33 street or Santa Rita Park. Minimize development, focus on managing the already developed river more effectively (carrying capacity numbers) and work with the local community folks.
- Get updated on the contract to make sure the Parks and Rec people are doing what the City Council expects, not just what they want to see happen with the grand development of the river corridor.

My two cents. Worth exactly that (and a few electrons in typing). Until we can get back and reengage in City politics and river issues this seems to be the limits of my capacity.

Thanks for your hard work – I understand the effort required to do good policy and public process. You are to be commended. Thanks and have a great runoff season. Dave

David L. Wegner

Senior Staff

Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment

B-375 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC

202-226-0206

From: Alex Mickel [mailto:alex@mild2wildrafting.com]

Sent: Friday, May 02, 2014 10:56 AM

To: Metz, Cathy

Subject: Oxbow comments

Hello Cathy,

Thank you to the City for its extensive work in the planning process at Oxbow park and preserve. After review of the proposed site designs I would encourage the adoption of #2 or #3. The larger turn around will greatly increase the safety flow of traffic and not create any congestion at the turnaround point.

Thank you again for your efforts on this.

Sincerely,

Alex Mickel

Mild to Wild Rafting and Jeep Trail Tours, Inc.

P: 970-247-4789

F: 970-382-0545

www.Mild2WildRafting.com

From: Wilkes, James [mailto:jamesgwilkes2001@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, May 02, 2014 10:47 AM

To: Rec

Subject: Oxbow!

First, good job Cathy Metz, Andy Cora and all the folks taking a role in how Durango is managing the most awesome Animas River. Thank you for having the meeting at Oxbow last evening.

I am very pleased to see that most everyone believes in fair and unbiased access to something that should be as universally available as air, food, and shelter: our river and its water.

I hope the Durango's work on this project will inspire the state to legislate what all but a handful of states already have: the right to float law.

Considering the 3 options the city has drawn up for the park I would choose the 3rd as it provides the most parking, boat ramps and the separate entrance and exit to the site which I equate with safety. I think this will best serve the public as I think this will be a very popular park. Not only for boaters, but I think many people might also stage bicycle shuttles to ride the river trail once extended.

Thank you again for moving this project forward, it will be a great amenity to the Durango lifestyle.

James Wilkes

(C) 970 903 9428

From: Fischer, Drew [mailto:surfthesanjuans@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, May 02, 2014 10:26 AM

To: Rec

Subject: Oxbow

I second these well thought out comments made by Andy Corra;

"I'd like to submit the following comments/ preferences on the three proposed Oxbow designs:

Riverside vehicle access is an important component in making the park function properly. With that, I prefer the minimal boat launch footprint of design 1 (page 1 on the site plan pdf), but would like to see these elements of the other designs incorporated:

-Maximize upper lot parking (adjacent to Animas View Drive), while eliminating parking on the river side of the tracks. Design 3 shows 37 upper spaces with 3-4 trailer spaces. Parking will be a premium. Trailer parking could be discouraged, forcing trailers to run their shuttles first (if they trailered it in they have to trailer it out at the take-out), thereby opening more vehicle spots in the upper lot.

- Eliminating parking on the E side of the tracks allows the option to gate the boat ramp while not locking vehicles in the park. This in turn allows the City flexibility in setting launch hours.
- I prefer not seeing parked vehicles from the river/ beach side. The upper parking is largely screened from the river. Of course, with this, I'd want to see significant landscape buffers for residents on the S and N ends of the parking area

-The walk-in boat ramp, depicted on design 3 is a very nice feature that could work with design 1. It would contribute to the ramp area working more efficiently by allowing small, carried craft a launch site

-The larger "Picnic/ Overlook Area" on design 2 would be nice to incorporate

Lastly, I don't understand why the large area of land to the E of the RR tracks and bike path, and to the S of the boat ramp areas depicted in all 3 designs is ignored in the plans! This is the area filled with concrete and debris. It also has some nice Cottnwood trees, other greenery, and shade, with significant level areas. With cleaning up and landscaping, this could be prime picnicking and cool riverside bench and hang out area (permanent outdoor chess boards; sheltered picnic tables; quiet benches?). I encourage the designers to take a good look at the possibilities for this significant piece of the riverside portion of the park.

Thanks to the City for their inclusive, extensive, and exhaustive effort in hearing and evaluating the diverse view points in this design process. Attention to the river, river access, and riverside parks is overdue and very welcomed. These public spaces will be much loved and add tremendous value to our community."

surfthesanjuans.com

970-259-7873

From: Jeanne Bignall

Sent: Friday, May 02, 2014 9:37 AM

To: Marbury, Sweetie; Metz, Cathy

Subject: Oxbow Park Facilities

Cathy –

Yesterday's meeting gave us a chance to walk the Oxbow property and look at the proposed options for the park. I would like to emphasize again the desire for a designated park area with picnic tables, garbage cans and dog refuse bag dispensers. My biggest concern has always been the bonfires and parties on the beach. There needs to be a clear message sent that picnicking is confined to the designated developed park areas. Otherwise the beach will become scared with day camping, beach tents, hibachi grill fires, coolers drug across the sand and trash strewn about in the sand. Another concern is that the beach is well-known among our teens for its mud fights along the beach bank in the summer. While it may be great fun for the kids, this activity degrades and erodes the beach. With all the use by tubers and rafters we cannot afford to allow the beach to be torn up and destroyed in such a manner.

I think Ted Cooper has a great idea. He would like to have a swing set for kids placed in the designated picnic/park area. (I don't think it would be that difficult to bolt into the ground to keep it safe during the occasion high tide.) This would emphasize the park as being a "family friendly" area. It would give young kids an activity within the designed park area where their parents would be able to supervise their activities and keep an eye on them. Parent always need to be vigilant when young children are near water, especially swift running water that can quickly carry a child downstream. This would give children a "safe place" to play away from the water while parents are preparing to launch a raft or just sun bath in the park. With all the attention being given to activities by older adults and teenagers it is time for the City to look at this from the perspective of young children. Their needs are entirely different. It is important that Oxbow park establish a reputation as a family park, not a wild "party" park for adults only. I support Mr. Cooper's idea and think it makes a great deal of sense to promote the park as a family safe environment that offers age-appropriate outdoor activities for all who come to enjoy the outdoors. I think the inclusion of activities for young children will bring a calming influence to the park. It's just not "cool" to sneak a 6-pack down to the beach when there are young families and children running about. And face it – the more adult supervision in the park – the less need for police supervision. As families experience the fun of bringing their children to the park for a picnic lunch and a safe dip in the river the more it will become self-policing and less likely to attract misbehavior. The park would stand to benefit from this aspect in many ways.

As the park transitions with the inclusion of the bike/walking trail it will lend itself to activities other than just rafting. It is important that the City keep this in mind during this planning phase and keep an eye on the big picture. Rafting will only last for a few weeks in the summer. If planned right, family fun can take place all year round.

To that end I would like to make a request regarding the signage for the park. Please place the phone number of the Durango City Police in large bold letters on the sign with instructions such as, "Please call the Durango City Police at (970) 385-2900 if you observe any violation of the park rules. For emergencies call 911."

Sincerely,

Jeanne Bignall

From: Andy Corra [mailto:corras@riversports.com]

Sent: Friday, May 02, 2014 9:20 AM

To: Metz, Cathy

Subject: Response to today's Oxbow Herald article

Cathy,

You can post this on the Oxbow comments page too. Thanks.

5/2/14

To the Editor:

I'd like to clarify a mis-statement made by Herald writer Olivarrius-McAllistar in the May 2nd Oxbow article. Contrary to what was written, I'm not a commercial rafter. I'm principle owner of 4Corners Riversports, a retail store and small Paddle School. The rafting company, Four Corners Whitewater, does seasonally rent space in the same building as my business. Myself, nor my partner, own any interest in the rafting. While I'm not opposed to some form of commercial access at Oxbow, I have never advocated for it. My participation in this process (I too have been to every meeting) serves my 30+ year goal to see well-designed, functional, aesthetic, public access and river side parks in Durango; parks and put-ins that respect the river, nature, and surrounding neighbors, while allowing all in our community reasonable, safe, and legal access to the river.

I do believe there will be little commercial raft interest at Oxbow. Stand-Up-Paddleboard tours/ classes, small commercial kayak groups and the like?- probably. If the city and the public want to restrict or ban such uses, I think those are reasonable discussions to have. Such restrictions should not, however, jeopardize the public's right to functional access. Through a multi-year series of meetings (Animas River Trail; Animas River Management Plan; and now the Animas River Access Design) the public has participated and voiced its varied opinions. Oxbow was identified as important to help disperse congestion at 33rd and 29th on those 20 to 30 peak summer days. Desired amenities were identified, concerns were addressed, options were hashed, re-hashed, then hashed again! The consensus was, and is, that Oxbow, with river side access, is an important addition to Durango's limited launch sites, and can be achieved while respecting neighborhoods, nature, and the river.

I understand the frustration of neighbors who have not gotten all they want. But, to say that they have been ignored- that the city has not listened- is ludicrous! This has been a thorough, inclusive process. The city has listened and is moving forward with the greater community's wishes. That some feel slighted is unfortunate, but inevitable.

Andy Corra

From: Andy Corra [mailto:corras@riversports.com]

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2014 9:01 PM

To: Metz, Cathy

Subject: Design Comments

Hi Cathy,

Really hard to find comment submission link on the City website. Would you please post the following properly and send me a link or best email so I can pass it on to others?

I'd like to submit the following comments/ preferences on the three proposed Oxbow designs:

Riverside vehicle access is an important component in making the park function properly. With that, I prefer the minimal boat launch footprint of design 1 (page 1 on the site plan pdf), but would like to see these elements of the other designs incorporated:

-Maximize upper lot parking (adjacent to Animas View Drive), while eliminating parking on the river side of the tracks. Design 3 shows 37 upper spaces with 3-4 trailer spaces. Parking will be a premium. Trailer parking could be discouraged, forcing trailers to run their shuttles first (if they trailered it in they have to trailer it out at the take-out), thereby opening more vehicle spots in the upper lot.

- Eliminating parking on the E side of the tracks allows the option to gate the boat ramp while not locking vehicles in the park. This in turn allows the City flexibility in setting launch hours.

- I prefer not seeing parked vehicles from the river/ beach side. The upper parking is largely screened from the river. Of course, with this, I'd want to see significant landscape buffers for residents on the S and N ends of the parking area

-The walk-in boat ramp, depicted on design 3 is a very nice feature that could work with design 1. It would contribute to the ramp area working more efficiently by allowing small, carried craft a launch site

-The larger "Picnic/ Overlook Area" on design 2 would be nice to incorporate

Lastly, I don't understand why the large area of land to the E of the RR tracks and bike path, and to the S of the boat ramp areas depicted in all the 3 designs, is ignored in the plans! This is the area filled with concrete and debris. It also has some nice Cottnwood trees, other greenery, and shade, with significant level areas. With cleaning up and landscaping, this could be prime picnicking and cool riverside bench and hang out area (permanent outdoor chess boards; sheltered picnic tables; quiet benches?). I

encourage the designers to take a good look at the possibilities for this significant piece of the riverside portion of the park.

Thanks to the City for their inclusive, extensive, and exhaustive effort in hearing and evaluating the diverse view points in this design process. Attention to the river, river access, and riverside parks is overdue and very welcomed. These public spaces will be much loved and add tremendous value to our community.

Andy Corra

From: Denny Ehlers [mailto:dehlers@durangolaw.com]

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2014 5:10 PM

To: Metz, Cathy; Hall, Kevin

Cc: Brecken Larson

Subject: Oxbow Facility/Buffering from Animas Park for Mobile Homes

Cathy and Kevin,

The Coopers, owners of the Animas Park for Mobile Homes immediately adjacent to the City acquired Oxbow Property to the south, wish to express their concern that the huge increase in the intensity of use of the Oxbow Parcel will have potentially negative effects on the Mobile Home Park. In that context, the Coopers wish to express their feeling that some intensive buffering by landscaping vegetation and/or berm and fencing be developed to at least mitigate the impacts of the vehicles, restrooms, lighting, noise and otherwise likely trespass that would result from the new and intense use of the Oxbow Property lying west of the railroad tracks.

Your reasonable and thoughtful consideration of their concerns and mitigation efforts will be greatly appreciated. Denny

Denny Ehlers,

Crane | Leake | Ehlers | Bruzzese | Ehlers PC

102 West 18th Street

Durango, CO 81301

(970) 375-7411 Direct

(970) 259-6354 Fax

From: Teal, Louise [mailto:loptéal@yahoo.com]

Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2014 11:30 AM

To: Rec

Subject: Oxbow River Access Plan

Oxbow River Access Plan 4 seems like a good option for recreation, neighbors and wildlife.

Louise Teal

Durango, CO

From: Thomas McCampbell [mactaos@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2014 1:18 PM

To: Marbury, Sweetie

Cc: Brookie, Dean; White, Dick

Subject: Oxbow Park Commercial Rafting

Dear Mayor Marbury, Mayor Pro Tem Brookie and Councilor White, I am concerned about the rush to allow commercial rafting use at Oxbow Park.

Is commercial rafting at Oxbow something that people have already agreed is wanted, needed, or appropriate to the site? From the comments I read in last week's paper, at least one commercial company stated that what their customers wanted was "white water" – certainly not what you find at Oxbow. So why pave so much of the park for truck and trailer access?

I think I speak for most of my neighbors when I say that before allowing commercial access at Oxbow Park, that in accordance with City Ordinance 0-1984-9, we expect a public hearing on expanding commercial access beyond the seven access sites currently permitted in Durango.

Please, I urge you to move slowly on commercial use of Oxbow Park. City Ordinance O-1984-9 affirms the need for careful consideration of commercial use, " ... regulation of such activity is necessary for the preservation of the public health, safety and welfare."

Please go slowly!

Best,

Tom

Thomas McCampbell

582 Animas View Drive #1

Durango, CO 81301

575-770-3506

Mactaos@gmail.com<<mailto:Mactaos@gmail.com>>

From: espencerfarmer42@gmail.com [<mailto:espencerfarmer42@gmail.com>] On Behalf Of Betsy Spencer

Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2014 7:54 PM

To: Rec

Subject: Oxbow Option 4

Now we are finally talking! I still think there is too much parking although I realize parking for the bike path is included. I would like the designers to consider whether trees are the best buffer between the park and the road. When they get tall they will not screen the parking lot except with their trunks, whereas dense shrubs could be trimmed and also not obscure neighbors views of the river.

Sincerely,

Betsy Spencer

Neighbor

From: Sara Compton [<mailto:compton.sara@gmail.com>]

Sent: Friday, May 09, 2014 10:30 AM

To: Rec

Subject: Oxbow

I am writing in support of plan 4 for the development of the Oxbow passive recreation site. This plan is fair to all -- good access and facilities (parking, restrooms, etc.) for users who need to park and launch a paddle boat, yet respectful of neighbors' privacy.

I think plan 4 would be a delightful addition to the recreational scene in Durango and a tranquil sanctuary for animal life-- human and otherwise.

Thank you for your consideration, and for coming up with an excellent plan.

Sara Compton

From: Schuppner, David [<mailto:dschuppner@hotmail.com>]

Sent: Friday, May 09, 2014 2:15 PM

To: Rec

Cc: Metz, Cathy; Gantt, Joanne

Subject: Regarding Oxbow Park and Preserve / River Access

I would recommend and support Option 4.

This design offers the amenities and opportunities that are most fitting to the surroundings – a residential neighborhood surrounded by open space (Animas City Mountain to west -, farm land/open spaces toward the east and south). Most importantly this design would maintain a park like setting in the park and beach area while keeping the intensive activity and noise of buses, diesel pickups, cars, trailers, etc. close to the road and away from the park. Also this design provides many other desirable elements – safer pedestrian access, potential gate for better control if needed, smaller developed area (potential costs savings from a larger development).

In this way park goes as well as the nearby paddlers can enjoy a quality experience without the intensity of engine noise and potential traffic snarls. To assists the boaters who are unable to carry their boats I would support and recommend the use of not motorized carts/dollies if possible.

I believe the boaters and non-boaters enjoy many of same elements of a quality river experience: a chance to be outside, observe wildlife, and escape the “noise” and pace of activity “on land”. However, paddlers and boaters have an advantage in that they can paddle away from a launch site and the bustle of activity in that area. Those of us without the ability, desire, or means to paddle away do not have that advantage. Oxbow Park can provide a quality river experience for all with option 4.

David Schuppner

From: Spencer Compton [mailto:spencomp@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, May 09, 2014 12:47 PM

To: Rec

Cc: Marbury, Sweetie; Sara Compton; North Animas River Workgroup

Subject: In Support of Oxbow Access Plan 4

I am writing in support of Oxbow Access Plan 4. I live across the RR tracks from the Oxbow property and will be directly affected by this development. I feel that Oxbow Access Plan 4 is the best compromise between the environmental impact of this development and public use of the property.

Oxbow Access Plan 4 is safer for all users than the other three plans because it eliminates motorized traffic across the tracks and the multi-use (non-motorized) Animas River Trail. Plan 4 will help to clarify the intended use of the property as laid out in the City of Durango Adopted 2010 Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan (POST), which designated the intended use as a “Nature Paddling Trail.” Plan 4 is also meets the GOCO open space requirements for “Low Impact, Passive Recreational Use.” Plan 4 should reduce the volume of motorized traffic to the area compared with the other three plans and reduce the impact to local residents too.

Having lived at this location for the past 7 years I can attest to the natural beauty and abundance of flora and fauna that thrives and lives in this rare habitat. I understand the need for public access to the City owned property, but I strongly feel that we should keep this impact to a minimum to ensure that some

of this natural habitat remains unspoiled. Of all the proposals I have seen Oxbow Access Plan 4 seems to offer the best balance for recreational access, local resident concerns, and environmental impact.

Thank you,

Spencer Compton

580 Animas View Drive #3

Durango, CO 81301

From: Wiley, Janet [mailto:janet@jwadurango.com]

Sent: Saturday, May 10, 2014 12:46 PM

To: Rec

Subject: River Access Design Meetings Public comment - Janet Wiley

City of Durango - Staff-

Thank you for your continued efforts!

Sincerely,

Janet Wiley, RA, AIA, LEED AP

Janet Wiley-Architects, P.C.

1309 East Third Avenue #18

Durango, Colorado 81301

970.946.7633

May 10, 2014

Oxbow River Access Design: Public Comment

I prefer options 1-3 over options 4. I believe that Option 4 restricts the majority of river users, who voiced their desire to have a put-in and potential take-out at this location during the River management Plan process. The expectation from the community river users is that a vehicular access would be provided for rafts on trailers, whitewater dories, fishing dories, and heavy canoes and kayaks. There are people, whether they be elderly, young, disabled, but for whatever reason, would be excluded from enjoying this portion of the river, should option 4 be considered.

Providing a road down to the river's edge will actually increase safety across the railroad tracks as well. One trip by vehicle, to unload all, boat, frame, oars, life jackets, etc. would be safer than multiple trips by people dragging and dropping gear all along the walk-in path.

My preferred option is Option 3. The City acquired the Sherman parcel in addition to the Oxbow Park and Preserve. Being that this is along a developed roadway, makes perfect sense to keep parking and bathroom amenities on this portion of the site. I believe this will be a popular site and therefore Option 3 provides the most parking. In addition this Option provides for short-term/10 minute unloading, parking down at the river, whereas after unloading, a shuttle would be run. This Option has developed a nice river's edge picnic area, raft tie-off area and pedestrian access/beach along the river's edge. All of this proposed development is located in previously damaged riparian area and the footprint is well within (only 1.8ac) the allotted Go-CO Grant application which allowed up to 3 ac to be developed for river put-in amenities.

The concerns that the opponents have can be easily mitigated with management strategies such as limiting park hours to 9am-7pm; gating off drive to river when closed; monitoring user numbers and if need be close ramp access during daytime hours; develop River Ambassador Program; provide trash and bathroom amenities; develop a signage/education program that identifies the do's and don'ts along this river section.

Thank you for your consideration of my suggestions.

Sincerely,

Janet Wiley
