

The Preservation of Open Space in Brentwood

Recommendations of the Citizens for Brentwood Green Space to the
City of Brentwood Environmental Quality Coordinating Committee



July, 2009

To the City of Brentwood's Environmental Quality Coordinating Committee, Board of Commissioners, Administration and other interested parties:

Five years ago on the way home from church, my wife and I were passing the beautiful 550 acre farm of the Turner family. At that point, the community was discussing the efforts of the Turner family to create a development of many different features. They had done an excellent job of protecting as much property as they could in their plans, while still fitting a fairly significant commercial and residential development into the property. On that Sunday, as I complained about the prospective loss of that beautiful spot in our community, my wife said, "If you don't at least try to do something about it, you will never forgive yourself."

She was right, and shortly thereafter was born the Citizens for Brentwood Green Space. This group was formed from a relatively small group of concerned and committed citizens with only one goal: To preserve all that we possibly could of the beautiful hills, pastures, and water ways in our city while creating as much connectivity for everyone so that all of these properties were universally and consistently accessible. We put together a petition to hold a referendum that would have authorized up to \$50 million for the acquisition and protection of the still undeveloped pieces of property that would make this dream a reality. We missed passing that referendum by a very small amount in what was still the largest electorate turnout in the history of Brentwood. (Full disclosure: There was another item on the referendum too which surely added to the turnout.)

So while the referendum failed, it showed that there was a substantial segment of our community who were willing to raise their own property taxes in order to achieve green space protection. While there is no way to know for sure, we are of the opinion that our efforts, the referendum itself, and the continued commitment by our group served as a turning point in the community. It became apparent to everyone that if we weren't careful we would slowly but inexorably arrive at the year 2020 and ALL of our precious green space would have become developed. I would like to thank everyone who has played a part in this process: The Board of City Commissioners, Mike Walker and his staff, the citizens who voted for our referendum but most significantly, the core group of Brentwoodians who have given up nights, weekends and money to support our quest.

Even with the significant progress Brentwood has made in terms of adding open space in the community, we must do more. Time is of the essence -- open space is disappearing daily. Prices will eventually escalate; even more so as open space becomes rarer. The current low cost of capital and stagnant development create a unique window of opportunity for the City to aggressively expand its open space holdings and "bank" land for future parkland.

We hope that this report can help point the way forward. On behalf of the Citizens for Brentwood Green Space, it is my privilege to be a part of this important assignment.

Stephen Prince
Founder
Citizens for Brentwood Green Space

Executive Summary

Recommendations of the Citizens for Brentwood Green Space to the City of Brentwood Environmental Quality Coordinating Committee

- Create a permanent Citizen's Advisory Committee.
- Create an Open Space Master Plan – to include: an inventory of the City's remaining open space; specific criteria to guide the Committee in evaluating parcels being considered for open space acquisition; defined measurements for the assessment of the costs and benefits of acquiring open space; funding strategies for the Plan's implementation.
- Hire a qualified planning consultant to assist with the development of the Master Plan.
- Improve pedestrian/bikeway connectivity throughout the City.
- Develop creative strategies for future open space acquisition.
- Create an aggressive timeline for implementation.

Reasons for Recommendations

- Open space is an essential component of the quality of life valued so dearly in Brentwood.
- The Updated 2020 Plan supports the contention that the vast majority of citizens believe the preservation of more open space in Brentwood is important.
- Cost of Community Services (COCS) studies show on average that residential development does not cover its costs. From a purely economic standpoint, residential development is a tax liability to communities, not an asset.
- Empirical research supports the contention that open space contributes to increasing proximate property values, which can lead to higher tax revenues for communities.
- Trails and greenways can be actively used to augment transportation networks to link parks, public facilities (schools, libraries, etc.) and neighborhoods.
- Specific funds must be dedicated to open space preservation.
- Delays in open space acquisition can be costly, especially in light of the current economy. Failure to act raises the risk of increased costs to the City and the loss of desirable open space that may be currently available.

The Preservation of Open Space in Brentwood

Recommendations of the Citizens for Brentwood Green Space (CBGS) to the City of Brentwood
Environmental Quality Coordinating Committee

1. Introduction

The Citizens for Brentwood Green Space is a Tennessee non-profit 501(c) (3) corporation dedicated to the preservation and conservation of remaining undeveloped open space, landscapes and natural and historic features of Brentwood. The Board of Commissioners has taken a great step by creating the Environmental Quality Coordinating Committee (EQCC). This Committee now has the opportunity to take the next great step in preserving the quality of life in Brentwood that its citizens treasure so much.

CBGS is pleased to submit research, opinions and recommendations in the following pages for consideration in support of the EQCC's charge of the "preservation of additional open space".

2. The Benefits Of Open Space Acquisition

A good working definition of the term "open space" is publicly owned land (i.e. park systems and greenways) or privately owned land that is preserved, or has the potential to be preserved, for public recreation and conservation purposes. Open space comes in many varieties such as:

- Parks
- Greenways
- Nature preserves
- Undeveloped land
- Forests
- Farms
- Wetlands
- Bike trails

A common assumption is that communities must choose between "bare bones austerity" and open space protection in today's challenging times. Paul Anton is Chief Economist with Wilder Research (part of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation), in Minneapolis. His article, "The economic value of open space: Implications for land use decisions, second edition (2005)", outlines ways for local communities to more fully weigh the costs and benefits of open space when planning for development. Anton remarks:

"...providing open space can [be] seen as a luxury that uses scarce public dollars and precludes the use of land for residential or commercial development. Where that limited view of open space is adopted, less open space will be provided. ⁽¹⁾"

An increasing amount of research, however, suggests a growing recognition of the economic benefits of conserving open space. Will Rogers, President of the Trust for Public Land, states:

Too often we hear that communities cannot afford to “grow smart” by conserving open space. But accumulating evidence indicates that open space conservation is not an expense but an investment that produces important economic benefits. Some of this evidence comes from academic studies and economic analysis. Other evidence is from the firsthand experience of community leaders and government officials who have found that open space protection does not “cost” but “pays.” ⁽²⁾

The research Rogers alludes to confirms that bike trails, parks, nature preserves, greenways and streams have a positive effect on nearby property values. The positive impact of open space locally on property values is evident from even the most casual observation: People are willing to pay more money for a home located in Brentwood, due in part to its expansive open spaces, large residential lots and extensive park system and trails, than they are for a comparable home elsewhere. An important economic consideration is that increased property values lead to higher tax revenues.

Urban sprawl puts communities at risk for higher costs, typically requiring more tax-supported infrastructure to cover schools, police and fire services, sewer lines and roads. Rogers offers some excellent examples of the benefits of land conservation:

Instead of costing money, conserving open space as a smart growth strategy can save communities money:

- *Bowdoinham, Maine, chose to purchase development rights on a 307-acre dairy farm when research indicated that the costs of supporting the development would not be met by anticipated property revenues. “Undeveloped land is the best tax break a town has,” concluded selectman George Christopher.*
- *A study in Woodbridge, Connecticut, revealed that taxpayers would be better off buying a 292-acre tract than permitting it to be developed. “This town cannot afford not to buy land,” wrote Robert Gregg, president of the Woodbridge Land Trust. “Land conservation is often less expensive for local governments than suburban style development,” writes planner Holly L. Thomas. “The old adage that cows do not send their children to school expresses a documented fact—that farms and other types of open land, far from being a drain on local taxes, actually subsidize local government by generating far more in property taxes than they demand in services.” For this reason, even groups that usually oppose taxation have come to recognize that new taxes to acquire open space may save taxpayers money in the long run. “People are beginning to realize that development is a tax liability for towns, not an asset, because you have to build schools and hire more police officers. And that makes property taxes go up,” Sam Perilli, state chairman of United Taxpayers of New Jersey, an anti-tax group, told the New York Times.”* ⁽³⁾

Open space contributes to the quality of life and community character that supports economic development and well-being, an essential ingredient in attracting and retaining businesses and the work force they rely on. Rogers went on to add:

“Too many community leaders feel they must choose between economic growth and open space protection. But no such choice is necessary. Open space protection is good for a community’s health, stability, beauty, and quality of life. It is also good for the bottom line.” ⁽⁴⁾

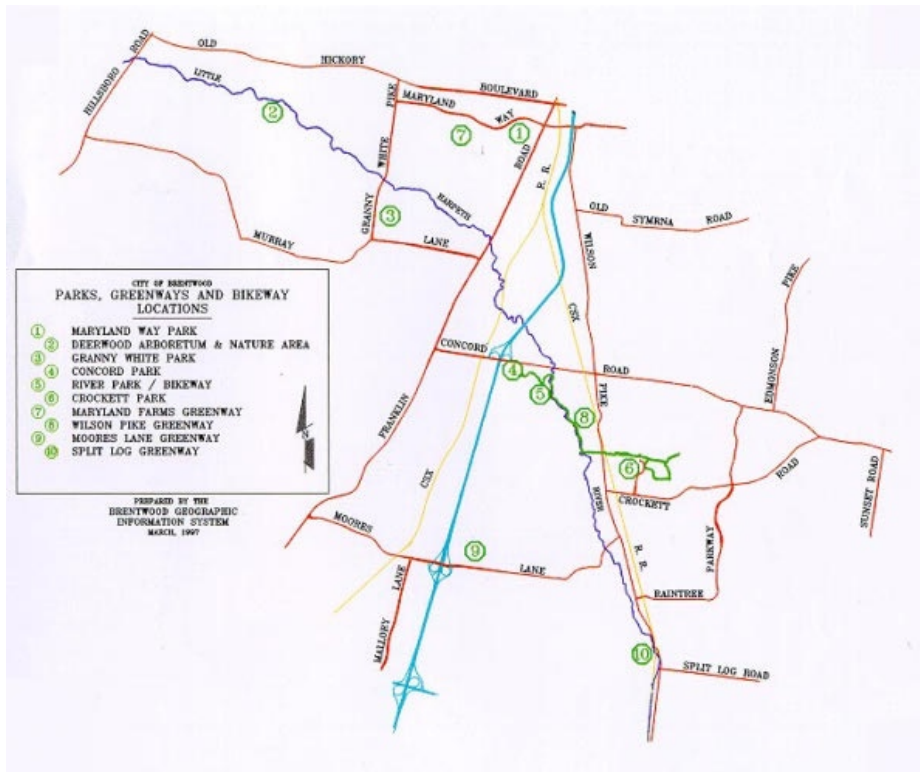
3. Current State

Three essential components make up the core of what the people who live here consider to be “Brentwood”: The large open fields and pastures, the one acre lot density and the great public school system. These components define the quality of life residents treasure so dearly. Few cities compare with Brentwood in terms of the amount of open space. The City had the vision to establish the original one acre density zoning and create new zoning techniques such as the Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) and the Open Space Residential Development-Innovative Project (OSRD-IP) overlay zoning to promote open space preservation. It is important to understand the current state in Brentwood when planning for open space needs in the future. As stated in the City’s Fall 2008 *Citizen’s Update*:

“It is always a priority of the City to increase the amount of permanent open space in the future as additional areas are made available at favorable pricing or presented with private development plans. The status of open space preservation is summarized below:

- Total City owned parkland/open space – 550 acres
- Additional parkland committed to the City – 75 acres (Note: some of the “committed” 75 acres to be added to the public park land total is up in the air because they are related to development projects that have not moved forward yet)
- Private, permanent open space in subdivisions – 2,490 acres
- Total preserved open space in Brentwood today – 3,115 acres or 4.87 square miles
- Total square miles inside the City Limits today – 42 square miles
- Percentage of land in current City limits – 11.6%”

Almost 2,500 acres of permanently preserved open space has been achieved through the OSRD method of zoning regulation. Brentwood also currently has nine parks and eight greenway/green spaces, covering approximately 550 acres of recreational land.



Source: City’s web site

Brentwood's Parks	
Concord Park: 1100 Knox Valley Drive - 40 acres	Maryland Way Park: 5055 Maryland Way - 7 acres
Crockett Park: 1500 Volunteer Parkway - 164 acres	Owl Creek Park: 9751 Concord Road - 21 acres
Deerwood Arboretum and Natural Area: 320 Deerwood Lane - 27 acres	Primm Park: 8331 Moores Lane - 31 acres
Granny White Park: 610 Granny White Pike - 32 acres	River Park: 1100 Knox Valley Drive - 46 acres
	Tower Park: 949 Heritage Way - 47 acres
Greenways are located in the following areas: Maryland Way, Moores Lane, Moores Lane East, Split Log and Wilson Pike. The City states that "Greenways are not for normal use and are not maintained for resident safety. They have been designed for protection from commercial development."	

Brentwood also has over 14 miles of multi-use trails throughout the community.

Communications with City Officials suggest that much is in the works in terms of adding more open space and trails:

- The 16+ acre parkland off of Pleasant Hill road has been accepted by the City.
- The Split Log road widening project, which should begin by the end of the calendar year, includes about a 1.2 mile extension of the Split Log road bikeway.
- The Concord Road widening will eventually include about a 3.8 mile bike/pedestrian trail from Green Hills Blvd to Nolensville Road. The first phase of the Concord Road widening project (Edmondson Pike to Sunset) will hopefully begin this calendar year. The City will build the section of bike/pedestrian trail between Green Hills Blvd and Edmondson to coincide with TDOT construction from Edmondson to Sunset – when complete, the section from Green Hills to Sunset will be approximately 1.7 miles.
- There is \$1.45 million in the Parks section of the 2010 Capital Improvement Plan for Parkland Acquisition/Development, but the money is programmed for FY 2012 & 2013. These figures basically anticipate that the land would be donated or otherwise acquired by the City and this funding would be used primarily for development of the area. However, it is all undesignated, so use of these funds could change based upon open space/park opportunities that present themselves over the next few years.

As noted above, some of the 75 acres proposed for new parkland is up in the air however:

- The 20+ acres associated with the Cooper tract in Maryland Farms is still pending.
- The proposed Shire at Owl Creek residential development between Owl Creek Park and Waller Road that included a proposed parkland dedication has been dropped by the developer due to the economy.

The National Recreation and Park Association provides a figure of 10 acres per 1,000 population as a commonly accepted standard used by communities for open space evaluations.⁽⁵⁾ These standards should be viewed as a guideline only. The City's estimated population in 2009 is 36,300. With over 36,000 residents, this suggests that Brentwood has more dedicated parkland (550 acres) versus "the standard" (360 acres).

The citizens of Brentwood overwhelmingly support the preservation of open space, as evidenced by their responses to the recent 2020 Plan Update. In 2006, for example, 81% of the City of Brentwood survey respondents thought that the Preservation of the City's "Remaining Farms and Other Large Open Space Tracts" should be a "Mid to High Priority" for Brentwood. Voting on the bond issue referendum in 2004 further supports the view of community support. Almost one half of the population was in favor of additional open space preservation even if it meant potentially raising the property tax rate.

"Once In-A Lifetime Preservation Opportunity"

Discussions with local commercial realty executives suggest that open space acquisition is needed sooner rather than later. The recession has provided a unique opportunity for the City to get premium land at less-than-premium prices, since developers have completely stopped or scaled back their plans until the economy stabilizes and the housing market picks back up.

Raw land, once going for \$100k to \$125k an acre in Brentwood, is now available for as little as \$30k to \$40k an acre. Whereas skyrocketing land costs made fee simple acquisition cost prohibitive for the City in the past, prices have come down to the point where an opportunity exists for the City to compete with great advantage for the open space that continues to remain in Brentwood.

There also looms the risk that foreclosures may be a possibility for certain developers who are unable to meet their debt obligations in the next year or so. Devalued land appraisals create the specter of significant write-offs. Lenders may find themselves in possession of foreclosed or highly devalued land that they might not want to hold or have difficulty getting rid of.

4. Open Space Master Planning

Brentwood is well situated with its current park system and positioned to take advantage of the current climate of stagnant development and flat property values. But time is of the essence -- open space seems to disappear daily. Prices will eventually escalate; even more so as open space becomes rarer. Conversely, anything acquired now will only grow in value.

Anton believes that *"decision-makers who understand the value of open space will be more likely to take the time to assemble the tools needed to implement their open space plans before priority lands are developed. They will pass ordinances and a land protection plan and will invest in a land protection fund."*⁽⁶⁾

5. Connectivity Is Essential

Brentwood is a wonderful city to bike in with over 14 miles of multi-use trails throughout the community and bike paths strategically adjacent to many of the major arteries in the City. So it is no surprise that the city has a growing and thriving bicycle scene from a recreational standpoint.

Sustained increases in energy costs, however, are underscoring the need for alternative modes of transportation. In an era that is bound to be dominated by energy shortages, increasing environmental concerns and an aging population, we must honestly confront the fact that Brentwood is chopped into pieces by the interstate, two rail lines and several heavily traveled roads, all of which impede pedestrian access from one section to another. The need for a system

of “walkable” and “bikeable” trails that connect neighborhoods with commercial areas will become increasingly important in the future.



Source: City’s web site

6. Balancing The Economics

The qualitative aspects of open space preservation are an easy sell. Who doesn’t enjoy a brisk walk in the park or a leisurely bike ride along a placid stream? There’s something special about the bond all humans have to their environment. It’s a rare individual that doesn’t recognize the unique pastoral qualities of Brentwood or the fact that if we continue to develop the open space we love so much that we lose the very reason many people came here to begin with. It’s the perceived costs of open space acquisition that create “the rub” in some quarters.

Specific funds must be dedicated to open space preservation. There are many financing mechanisms used by both local and state governments to fund open space acquisition.

The Trust for Public Land’s LandVote® Database is an excellent source of information on how governments raise public funds in support of open space conservation. LandVote® tracks two major types of conservation ballot measures: "Pay as you go" measures (i.e. sales, income or property taxes to pay for open space conservation) or Bond Measures (i.e. general obligation bonds). The database covers referendums as far back as 1988 and covers State and local initiatives. Out of 2,240 measures, 1,638 (76%) passed. Of note in Tennessee were the Brentwood Bond for open space preservation and parks measure of \$50 million (which failed

47.94% to 52.06%) and Knoxville's "Penny for the Parks," 1 cent sales tax to establish a trust fund to preserve parks and greenways for \$5 million in 2004 (which passed 62.76% to 37.24%).

The overwhelming majority of financing mechanisms used were bonds or property tax measures. The following chart shows the break out.

Finance Mechanism	County	Municipal	Special District	State	Grand Total	%
Bond	204	646	45	53	948	42%
Property tax	132	772	27		931	42%
Sales tax	92	79		5	176	8%
Other	12	44	11	10	77	3%
Income tax		74			74	3%
Real estate transfer tax	10	23		1	34	2%
Grand Total	450	1638	83	69	2240	100%

Surveys show that Brentwood's residents strongly support more open space acquisition, but the failure of the 2004 Bond Referendum also shows that there is a limit to community support when it comes to the notion of taxes for the funding of open space.

The following chart from Anton's research ⁽⁷⁾ includes some of the most commonly used policy tools that are utilized by Minnesota communities to achieve open space objectives.

6. Land use policy tools that can be useful in open space planning

Tool	Description
Fee Simple Acquisition	Permanent purchase of land
Purchase of Development Rights	Acquisition of easements or other interests in the property in order to control and/or restrict future development
Density Bonuses and Incentive Zoning	Granting a developer the privilege to build at higher densities or exemption from other zoning restrictions in exchange for providing open space amenities not otherwise required by local regulations
Clustered zoning	Reducing lot sizes in certain areas in order to preserve environmentally sensitive areas or open space
Transfer of development rights	Permitting landowners to transfer development rights from an area that is to be protected as open space to another area more suitable for development or increased intensity
Environmentally sensitive lands ordinances	Regulations that require new development to avoid wetlands or other sensitive areas
Critical areas regulations	Restrictions on development that threatens natural systems that perform functions of greater than local significance, i.e. the effects extend beyond the single municipality
Impact fees	Charges imposed on new development in order to provide for public facilities (including parks, for example) necessitated by new development

Source: Adapted from Freilich, Leitner & Carlisle, "Tools & Techniques: Smart Growth in the Twin Cities"

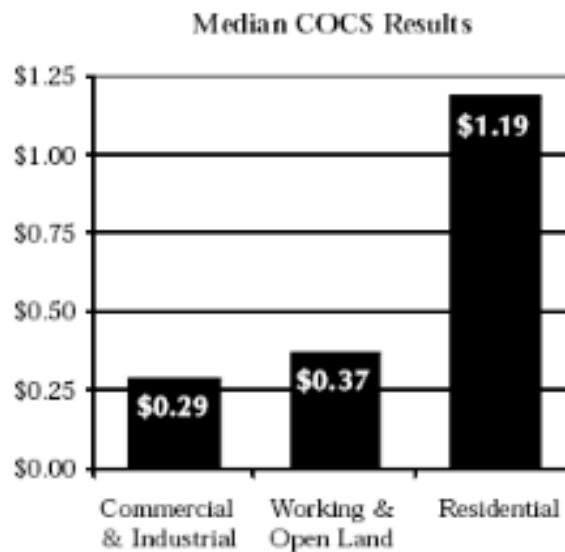
7. Residential Development Doesn't Pay Its Way

The term “Costs of community services” (COCS) refers to studies that focus on how various types of land use affect local government taxation and spending. COCS studies assess the fiscal impact of various forms of land use and how they contribute to or detract from local government budgets. These studies generally divide land use into three groups: residential, commercial/industrial, and farmland/open space.

The Farmland Information Center (FIC) is a clearinghouse for information about farmland protection and stewardship. It is a partnership between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and American Farmland Trust. The FIC offers many publications, including the “Fact Sheet on the Cost of Community Service Studies”, which provides an excellent summary of the COCS studies in publication. Numerous COCS studies suggest that residential development represents costs to the community that are not fully borne by the new residents.

COCS studies show on average that residential development does not cover its costs; they must be subsidized by other community land uses. This suggests that from a purely economic standpoint, residential development is a tax liability to communities, not an asset.

The chart below illustrates the point that residential land uses do not cover their costs and must be subsidized by other community land uses.



Median cost per dollar of revenue raised to provide public services to different land uses.

8. Recommendations

On the basis of extensive market research, survey findings and the expressed opinions of residents, as well as the charge of the EQCC to take action towards the preservation of additional open space, the following recommendations are respectfully made:

Creation Of A Permanent Citizen's Advisory Committees

The EQCC is an ad-hoc Committee created to oversee and coordinate efforts by the City of Brentwood to identify, facilitate and promote continuous improvement to the community's environment. The Committee will present formal recommendations to the Board of Commissioners no later than December 31, 2009. The Board of Commissioners has until June 30, 2010 to evaluate progress to date and determine if the EQCC should be incorporated within the City Code as a standing committee of the City of Brentwood.

CBGS recommends the creation of a permanent Citizen's Advisory Committee, either as part of the EQCC or separately, to keep a permanent focus on open space issues. The Committee could be comprised of citizens appointed by the Board of Commissioners and city representatives (i.e. from the Planning and Parks Departments), with accountability for:

- Advising the Board of Commissioners and City Administration on new open space recommendations
- Reviewing expenditures in an advisory capacity
- Monitoring implementation of new open space projects
- Communicating progress with the Board of Commissioners, City Administration and the public

Creation Of An Open Space Master Plan

Development continues to gradually consume Brentwood, with no sign of losing momentum in the future despite the current economic conditions. Concern over the preservation of open space has grown in recent years as the rate of development significantly increased.

CBGS believes that a comprehensive plan for the effective management of all existing and future open space in the City is needed. Such a plan would include:

- An inventory of the City's remaining open space
- Specific criteria to guide the Committee in evaluating parcels being considered for open space acquisition
- A mechanism for prioritizing open space goals in the Plan once available parcels have been identified
- Defined measurements for the assessment of the costs and benefits of acquiring open space
- Funding strategies for the Plan's implementation; and
- Evaluation tools to measure the successful implementation of the Plan

The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and The Land Trust for Tennessee announced plans on July 11th, 2009 "...to partner on a project that would inventory and set priorities on natural and cultural resources in Davidson County in an effort to protect open spaces. "The great cities

of our nation have progressive open space plans," Mayor Karl Dean said. "The preservation of our private and public lands and natural resources has a direct impact on the economic viability of the region and quality of life of its citizens." (8)

CBGS recommends that the City of Brentwood design and implement an Open Space Master Plan that will provide for the systematic preservation of open space in Brentwood. In fact, Brentwood could seek to either "piggy back" on Metro's study if possible or see if opportunities exist to have the study expanded to include Brentwood.

Hire A Qualified Planning Consultant To Assist With The Development Of The Master Plan

According to Shain Dennison, Greenways Director / Metro Parks, The Land Trust for Tennessee is managing the project in partnership with Metro. They will be sending Requests for Qualifications letters to potential consultants in the next few weeks. The plans include all of Davidson County. Ms. Dennison believed that whichever consultant is hired, Brentwood might be able to "piggyback" off of their involvement. While the consultant will focus on Davidson County, they will have to look at the regional perspective somewhat as well.

An experienced consultant is needed to help organize and guide a committee dedicated to the creation of the Open Space Master Plan. CBGS recommends that the City hire a professional firm to assist in the development of the Plan. As noted above, opportunities may exist to collaborate with Metro and create efficiencies since they have a similar objective recommended by the Green Ribbon Committee on Environmental Sustainability to *"hire a professional firm to develop an open space plan for Davidson County with an aggressive timeline for implementation."*

Improve Connectivity Throughout The City

CBGS recommends that the EQCC adopt as a prime objective the creation of a system of paths throughout the city which would enable citizens to traverse freely from residential areas to shopping and entertainment in either our northern or southern commercial areas without getting in a car. A few of the more critical routes for consideration are as follows:

- Passage through the "Flag Pole Property" from Concord Road to the northern end of the Cool Springs area with connections to the subdivisions along Franklin Road and General Macarthur Drive.
- A route paralleling Old Smyrna Road from Edmonson Pike to the Carondelet subdivision connecting to the subdivisions in our furthest northeast quadrant.
- A greenway connection between Murray Lane in the vicinity of Scales Elementary School to the Deerwood Park area.
- Connection between Deerwood and Granny White Parks, running along the Little Harpeth River basin.
- A passage from Wilson Pike in the vicinity of New Hope Church and along the interstate embankment to Heritage which would provide the thousands of citizens who live north of Concord and east of Wilson Pike pedestrian access to the library, the Y, and (via River Park Bikeway) to Crockett Park.
- A greenway from Concord Road along Sunset and Ragsdale Roads to Raintree Forest.

- A route from Ravenwood High School running behind Nashville Golf and Athletic Club to Carothers Parkway.
- Finally, rights of way through the Turner property which would tie many of the others together.

Develop Creative Strategies for Open Space Acquisition

Research show that bonds and property tax increases are commonly used tools in financing open space acquisitions. Consideration should be given as to the need to address long-term, recurring source of funds versus general-obligation borrowing. Under any financing scenario, however, prudent use of community resources is essential as taxpayers deserve a good return on the public funds that are used.

A well thought out Open Space Master Plan should provide for specific funds dedicated to open space preservation. CBGS encourages the City to continue to utilize creative strategies in acquiring open space and aggressively explore other non-monetary mechanisms as tools as well. Methods such as donations, conservation easements, purchase of development rights, matching funds and grants should be explored. Condemnation (eminent domain) should be considered a tool of “last resort”, used only in extreme cases. New policies that mandate or incentivize developers to either provide or pay for open space acquisition, development, and maintenance in their development plans should be seriously considered as well.

Create An Aggressive Timeline For Implementation

The confluence of declining land prices and the specter of foreclosures is creating a “once-in-a-lifetime preservation opportunity”. Some suggest, however, that the “window of opportunity” may be 1-2 years before the development market regains its economic footing. Anton raises some excellent points on timing and its importance to preservation efforts:

- *Delay in acquiring priority open space is expensive. A city or county that wishes to acquire open space for some public purpose, either for park development or as natural space, must pay more, sometimes much more, than it may have expected to pay just a few years ago. A local government with a complete and well-articulated plan for acquiring parkland and natural areas may find its plans compromised by the rising price of that land. As a result, a city may have to forego or scale back some parts of its open space plan if it does not act quickly to acquire priority open space.*
- *Time to make and implement open space plans is shortened. As private developers move to lock up more and more land for future development, cities have less time to form their plans and often must commit to purchases earlier in the land use planning process or risk losing control of desirable parcels. As a result, a city may not get an open space plan in place in time to bid for land that would be most attractive for public use, or it may not be able to muster the financial resources to purchase that land at the time it is put up for sale. In some cases, developers build parks and trails themselves or preserve natural areas via clustered development. While these actions do add to open space in the community, they may not be as effective as possible if they are not part of an overall community plan.*⁽⁹⁾

To reiterate the key points supporting the need for an aggressive timeline for implementation:

- Open space disappears daily
- Land prices will escalate
- The cost of capital remains near an all time low
- Community support for open space acquisition remains very high

CBGS believes that time is of the essence. Delays in open space acquisition can be costly especially in light of the current economy. Failure to act raises the risk of increased land costs in the future and the loss of desirable open space that may be currently available.

Current market factors and public support create a unique opportunity for the City to move aggressively in the creation of the Open Space Master Plan. Much can be done well before the June 30th, 2010 deadline.

While much work is left to be done, we believe it is not only reasonable, but necessary, for the City to have a qualified planning consultant retained and in place no later than December 31st, 2009. It is reasonable to expect that a motivated, organized effort can produce the Open Space Master Plan well before the June 30th, 2010 deadline.

Appendix

The Citizens for Brentwood Green Space, Inc. is a volunteer citizens group organized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Our mission is to preserve open space in the form of parks, trails, historic sites, and flood plains while being sensitive to the rights of landowners and developers. CBGS desires to assure that ongoing development of land resources is accomplished in a way that is beneficial to landowners, to existing citizens of the city, and to future generations of Brentwood residents. More information can be obtained at the Group's website located at: www.brentwoodgreenspace.org.

Insights and commentary for this report were drawn from the following articles and publications:

References:

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- (2) Rogers, Will (1999). "The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space: How Land Conservation Helps Communities Grow Smart and Protect the Bottom Line", The Trust for Public Land, Introduction, p.3.
- (3) Rogers, p.8.
- (4) Rogers, Introduction, p.3.
- (5) "Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines", National Recreation & Park Association.
- (6) Anton, p. 1.
- (7) Anton, p. 47
- (8) "Nashville plans to inventory, prioritize open spaces", Anne Paine. The Tennessean, July 11th, 2009.
- (9) Anton, p. 29

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