

Memo

To: Scott Goehri

From: Olivia Hough

Date: 8/23/2010

Re: Outline of steps required to open the future Jordan Valley West Meadows to the public.

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This memo serves as an outline for clarification in the process to open the West Meadows for public use. A timeline for opening the area to the public has not been established, and although this is a long term project, steps will continue to be completed as funds and recourses are made available in the most efficient manner possible. It is estimated that the West Meadows will be open to the public in five to fifteen years from now. Although this is a long term project, the City Council, staff, and community groups are supportive and anxious to move forward with achieving the far reaching community benefits it will bring as expressed by council members at the Council Lunch on February 16, 2010 and again at the City Council Meeting February 22, 2010 when council unanimously adopted the *Jordan Valley and Jordan Valley park Concept Plana and Design Guidelines*. The following outline is in chronological order and details the steps that must be completed prior to public use:

1. **Environmental Cleanup** – There are eight sites in West Meadows currently owned by the City and requiring environmental cleanup. The City currently has funds to complete cleanup on four out of the eight sites. These first cleanups are scheduled to be completed by the summer of 2011. This cleanup will include environmental remediation to restore a clean, safe, healthy area and preparation of the site for public use by bringing in top soil and stabilizing it with vegetation. The City will seek EPA grant funds to clean up the remaining four sites and indents to make application for these in October 2010 and in subsequent years as needed. The sites will be cleaned up in phases and achieve closure on individual sites through the Department of Natural Resources. Completion of this step could take up to 12 years for all eight sites.
2. **Rail Relocation** – An active rail line currently bisects the West Meadows Site #2 on the east end, restricting access to Fort Street for most of the property with the exception of Site #1 and part of Site #2. In order to complete the greenway trail system and make the meadows fully usable, this track must first become inactive and the City will need to obtain an easement from BNSF to cross the rail line with the trail. This is also necessary from a public safety perspective.
3. **Landscaping** – Resources to install landscaping features must be identified, and landscaping must be complete and established to a point that public use will not impact its stabilization. Minimal landscaping will be included in the environmental cleanup to stabilize the soil. Kansas State University completed a Landscape Master Plan for all of West Meadows to direct future planting and implantation of landscape elements. Stormwater Best Practice funds will be used to help

establish the wetland, and 319 Water Quality Grant, if successful, will be used to complete the streamside learning center and educational signage at the wetland. Staff is researching other landscaping grants to fund the purchase and installation of trees and plants. Landscaping will include native plants and grasses, trees, establishment of a wetland, rain garden, and riparian corridor restoration techniques in conjunction with the future Corps of Engineers storm water project.

4. **Greenway Trail Construction** – Ozark Greenways is a partner in this project and has identified the location of future greenways trails extending east and west through the property and connected to the trail system throughout Jordan Valley and the larger community. The construction of the trails will be completed post cleanup as funds are allocated to the project. The trail will provide public access in a manner accessible to all citizens.
5. **Maintenance funding and responsibility** - Allocation of a funding source for maintenance is necessary to ensure the West Meadows landscaping is well maintained and the area is free of trash and debris. A funding source will be identified by City Management and the Jordan Valley Staff Team in the next few years as the need arises. Staff is currently researching options to maintain native vegetation and wetlands and potential staff or organizations qualified to carry out the specialized tasks.
6. **Liability Insurance** – Before opening the West Meadows to the public a determination will need to be made about the type of insurance necessary. Bob Koumiss, Risk Management Human Resources provided the following statement relative to insurance during the current stage of the project *“As to insurance requirements, I believe that we can probably forgo any form of environmental impairment liability insurance at this time. Should we decide to later develop any part of the property, the nature of the development would need to be reviewed and the question of EIL would need to be revisited. A premises liability exposure will exist at the time that we take possession of the property; however, if we properly post the property with sufficient signage, I believe that we will be OK. The property does not appear to have any abandoned structures or any other type of attractive nuisance. If the property is to be fenced as indicated in the timeline that would be ideal. The purchase of premises liability insurance is not warranted at this time.”* The property is currently signed and fenced from nearby rail operations. Liability insurance will be revisited after cleanup is complete and as the City moves forward with preparing the site for public use.

**Additional Actions:** The following actions could occur at a future date and are not critical to opening the West Meadows to the public but are high priorities for implementing the Concept Plan and making the area full functional to the greater public.

- **Corps of Engineer Stormwater Project** – Although the vast majority of site grading has been included in the design and will be complete prior to or during the environmental cleanup, the full scope of the project is contingent on Corps approval and will not be complete until after the Feasibility Study is finalized by the Corps in 2-3 years and funding for the final design and construction of stream channel improvements is secured. Improvements will likely entail tiered

channel widening in the West Meadows area where there is currently a channel and construction of a new channel in the area upstream where a box culvert exists.

- **Union Pacific Environmental Study and Potential Acquisition** – The Concept Plan for West Meadows includes future acquisition of the Union Pacific property located immediately south of the existing City owned land to become part of the future project. The property has an active rail line utilized by MN&A. Rail reconfiguration would have to occur removing the need for this line before the property could be useful to the project. Environmental assessments are in process. A Phase I and Phase II have been completed through the EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessment Program. Contaminants above the MDNR standards were identified primarily related to the former turntable/fueling facility area and other historical rail activities. EPA is working to obtain access from UP to perform the recommended Phase III investigation to determine cleanup cost estimates and recommended cleanup alternatives. Access is critical to moving forward and EPA funding is nearing expiration for this work order.