


Source:

Mike Hood

*MH*

**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** City Manager and Staff   
**DATE:** December 22, 2006  
**RE:** Trail Alignment/Right-of Way Studies

Fiscal Impact

YES

NO

Other Info.

**SUMMARY:** The City's current Greenbelt and Trail Master Plan is conceptual in nature and does not identify specific trail alignments nor actual location or description of right-of ways needed for the trail easements. With the continuing pace of development in Columbia that impacts potential future trail locations, a need has developed to establish specific trail locations including right-of way descriptions for required easements. Staff is recommending that the City initiate a series of trail design studies using firms from the City's list of pre-qualified professional consultants. The design studies would establish a detailed alignment for each of the proposed trails and provide legal descriptions of the right-of-way needed to construct the trails along such alignments. Funding for the studies would come from the greenbelt and trail funds approved in the 2005 park sales tax ballot

**DISCUSSION:** The City's current Greenbelt and Trail Plan which was adopted in 2002 and updated in 2005 identifies a general location or route for each of the various trails proposed for future development in Columbia. That master plan has been and continues to be used by Council and staff to identify the need for future trail easements on properties which are being proposed for annexation or which are being platted for development. However, the master plan is conceptual in basis and does not identify an exact location/alignment of the trails or the right-of way needed for future construction. This has led to an inability to confirm actual easement locations in some instances, and the granting of easements in other areas which represent the City's best estimate of where a future trail will be located. Such future trails will then need to be designed to be located on those easements whether or not those easements represent the preferred location of trail at the time of final design.

Because of the continuing pace of development in Columbia and the increasing number of annexations and plats that impact possible future trail corridors, staff is recommending that the City initiate a series of design studies using firms from the City's list of pre-qualified professional consultants. The purpose of the design studies would be to establish a detailed alignment for the proposed trails including bridge crossings and provide a legal description of the right-of-way needed. Funding for the studies would come from the greenbelt and trail funds approved in the 2005 park sales tax ballot. It is anticipated that the initial study would include several high priority trail

corridors such as the 2005 ballot trail projects and projects which may be identified as a high priority for use of the PedNet grant monies. The ultimate goal would be to complete an alignment study for all of the trail corridors identified on the Greenbelt and Trail Master Plan. Once an alignment/right-of-way study is complete for a trail corridor, the information would be available for use by the Council, staff and property owners/developers in planning, negotiating, and acquiring needed right-of-way for the proposed trails.

**SUGGESTED COUNCIL ACTION:** If the Council concurs that such trail studies are needed, a motion directing staff to proceed should be passed.