

Meeting Summary

Gilleland Creek TMDL Ordinance and Planning Work Group Meeting

9/17/08

1:00-4:00pm

LCRA, RBC 225

Attendees:

Erin Wood, Robert Botto, Matt Hollon-City of Austin

Paula Morales-City of Round Rock

Jeremy Frazzell, Trey Fletcher- City of Pflugerville

Jon White-Travis County

Ward Ling-TCEQ

Kimberley Mueller, Amanda Ross, Tom Hegemier-LCRA

Alicia Reinmund – CH2M Hill

Meeting Purpose: Discuss and reach consensus on buffer zone component of the Gilleland Creek Water Quality Ordinance

Meeting Summary:

The group discussion began with a review of the workgroup goal. Discussion centered on whether the purpose of the workgroup was to agree on an ordinance or if the goal is to setup a template/framework ordinance that jurisdictions could then adopt. Current state laws (HB1445) states jurisdictions are to agree. For example, currently Travis County, which covers a large percentage of the watershed, has adopted the City of Austin's critical water quality zone regulations, but has not adopted the transitional zone criteria. Group consensus focused on recommending an appropriate range of criteria that provide equivalent protection. This group strives to setup a framework ordinance that includes a range of items that could be accepted by each entity.

Matt Hollon with the City of Austin presented information about the City of Austin's review of its current ordinance and provided background on possible changes in the watershed based on ordinance revisions. The City of Austin is reviewing its ordinance and hopes to move away from a double buffer system (critical and transitional) to a single buffer system, would like to have more protection higher-up in the watershed and this could require less protection lower in the watershed, and would help reduce the cost of erosion hazards. The City of Austin will be reviewing this information over the next year. The presentation began with a case study of Elm Creek. A possible option for the proposed buffer is to continue the 3 tier system, but to reduce the drainage area size. Currently, the buffers begin with the following drainage areas: major 1280, intermediate 640, and minor 320. An option would be to reduce the drainage areas to major 640, intermediate 320 and minor 64.

After the presentation, the workgroup discussed whether a uniform buffer is the best option, and if using the floodplain would be a better option. Currently floodplain data is based on current conditions and does not anticipate future growth. Paul Morales with the City of Round Rock will send Matt Round Rock's buffer requirements. Trey Fletcher with the City of Pflugerville is interested in rerunning the City of Austin model with updated FEMA floodplain data, development data in Pflugerville and other variables. Erin agreed to provide different drainage overlays. Erin will send Trey buffer zone information.

Tom Hegemier suggested providing options as part of an ordinance. Currently, LCRA's Highland Lakes Ordinance includes options and the development community has responded well. LCRA came to this conclusion because it was hard to find science to support a 200ft area/buffer (?) providing water quality improvements. There is science for a 75ft buffer providing water quality improvements. Possible buffer options for developments would include 1.) A static buffer (yet to be determined) or 2.) Floodplain plus 25ft (fully developed or built out). The workgroup liked the idea of giving developers options.

The workgroup also discussed the variance process. Variances will need to be handled on a case by case basis. LCRA staff reviews variances. Travis County variances must be approved by the Commissioners Court. Each jurisdiction will need to handle the variance process, but the workgroup could provide recommendations. A few questions were raised about the definition of a bluff and redevelopment. Erin will add definitions to comparison table.

The workgroup also discuss the timeframe for each jurisdiction to adopt an ordinance. Currently the City of Austin is reviewing these proposals internally and plan to meet with City Manager in Spring 2009. The COA Boards and Commissions process is expected to take six months to one year. City of Pflugerville is updating its comprehensive plan and hopes to complete by the end of 2008. Trey will be in front of the council to discuss the possibility of buffers. Travis County will have something in place by summer 2009 due to MS4 requirements.

Lastly, it was suggested to partner with the Austin-Bastrop River Corridor Partnership to host a workshop for developers in early 2009. Erin suggested Mike Kelly or Matt Hollon to present at the developers workshop. Concern was expressed that this might give the developers an opportunity to push developments ahead of schedule. The goal of the workshop will be to build alliances with the development community and to communicate that this process is happening.

Meeting Conclusions:

The workgroup agreed that they were developing an ordinance framework, which will have options for buffer zones based upon City of Austin proposals and the LCRA Highland Lakes Ordinance. The workgroup also agreed with the City of Austin's concept that narrower buffer zones in the downstream portion of the watershed were okay if buffer zones were included the upstream portion of the watershed. The workgroup also agreed upon the following goal for the ordinance: "The Ordinance should be written so that runoff from the 1-year, 3-hour storm is captured or treated. The Ordinance will apply to new development, resulting in the management of over 90% of the rainfall events in an average year."

Action Items:

Erin:

- Will provide different drainage overlay.
- Will send Trey buffer zone information.
- Will add definitions to comparison table.

Jeremy: Will work with Erin on updating model land use information.

Paul: Will send Matt Round Rock's buffer requirements.

Alicia: Will update Ordinance framework table and send out to the Workgroup

Next Meeting Date(s):

Thursday, October 23, 2008,

1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

LCRA Long Building, Room L 402