

Colfax North Park Development
Summary of Stakeholder Meetings
December 16 and 17, 2015
Colfax United Methodist Church

December 16, 2015, 1:00 PM

Attendees: Bill Talsma (I-80 Farms)
Dave Talsma (I-80 Farms)
Betsy Penisten (Colfax Main Street)
Mike Mendenhall (Jasper County Tribune)
Brian Kern (Kern Law Office/Schlosser Trust)

Strengths

- Areas are pristine
- Master plan will help sell (finances, scale, etc.)

Weaknesses

- Lack of money
- Too big / too much
- Can't change too much
- Nobody has been out here in years

Opportunities

- RV camping
- Other camping (need shade)
- Connection to DNR land?
- Fishing (but need to manage take)
- Balance between pristine nature and commercial development
- Brewery / winery
- Things to draw people into Colfax
- 7 empty store fronts downtown – supplement park needs
- Phased approach makes it more feasible
- Swimming beach
- Restaurant (could help market the park; needs to be unique; farm to table?)
- Schlosser Trust Land
 - Private foundation set up to benefit town as a whole
 - Typically give annual contribution to Historical Society
 - 3 trustees
 - Not averse to us including trust land in our planning
 - Need to see something to react to

Concerns

- Don't scare people – have to be careful how it's presented
- Where is the money to do it right?
- Keep safety in mind – shoreline
- Need Newton and Jasper County
- Concern with Access to Retail on site

December 16, 2015, 2:15 PM

Attendees: Andy Summy (Colfax PD)
Bob Rhone (Colfax Public Works)

Strengths

- Water (10" PVC) and sewer (4" force main) extend to north Kum & Go drive (ditch on east side)
- Water pressure 100 psi
- Can tap force main with saddle tap
- Waste water plant has plenty of capacity for camping / restaurants
- City has equipment available to let park use (need to work out an agreement)

Weaknesses

- State Highway 117 traffic – someday may need 3rd lane
- Widening may encroach on ditch
- Average Colfax income is \$29K
- Businesses leaving

Opportunities

- Second park access through the School Foundation property?
- Or through Historical Society property? (they don't want)
- Aid station / office
- Parking
- Chance to improve park ingress / egress
- Two City boats that may be kept on the water
- Camping
- Marina(s)
- Restaurant
- Private indoor shooting range
- Fishing
- Boat and vehicle access
- Dump station (Historical Society has a grinder pump on their property)
- Small hotel
- Housing?
- Provide golf carts to go to town?
- Market Area (Marshalltown, Des Moines, Grinnell, Ames – weekend and weeklong stays)

Concerns

- River broke through the dike in 1993
- Came in over the road in 2010
- What is the park going to cost residents?
- Typical small town

What the city can offer

- Loan city equipment because its city property (limited staff/volunteering)
- R.O.W. Grant from Trees Forever and IDOT

December 16, 2015, 3:30 PM (at Colfax High School)

Attendees: Jordan Roozeboom (Student)
Matt Barkalow (C-M CSD)
Todd Jones (C-M CSD)
Katie Craven (C-M CSD)
Tracy Hook (C-M CSD)
Jeff Sontag (C-M CSD)
Mike Rupert (C-M CSD)
Deb Hodgson (C-M CSD)

Strengths

- Close to I-80

- Like a small town – know everybody
- Town festivals
- Neighbors
- Cost of living
- Close to DSM but far enough away
- Proximity to other areas
- Possible to live a car free lifestyle

Weaknesses

- Flooding

Opportunities

- Look to Gray's Lake
- Connections to surrounding trails
- Outside trail / inside trails
- Trail connection to high school
- Adventure play / interact with nature
- Need something for extended stay – camping / hotel
- Sand by the water
- Shelters – outdoor and indoor
- Playground
- Fitness course
- Skatepark
- Waterpark
- Wading pool
- Utilize the separate lakes differently
- Beck's partnering with FFA
- Disk golf
- Wildlife area / nesting houses / partner with Neal Smith Refuge
- Bridge (think Gray's Lake)
- Bike shop
- Coffee shop
- Birdwatching area
- Quiet area
- Community garden / orchard
- Shuttle service?
- Housing?
- Marina
- Fishing
- Canoeing / kayaking
- Marketing approach - uniqueness, simple, relaxed

Concerns

- Safety – drop-offs at shoreline
- Restaurants – too many (don't compete with town)

December 16, 2015, 5:30 PM

Attendees: Brad Magg (Colfax City Council)
 Karla Jones (Colfax City Council)
 Curt Small (Colfax City Council)
 Skylar Rawlins (C-M School Board)
 Maranda Case (Colfax Parks and Rec)

Weaknesses

- Access – Need more than the highway

Opportunities

- Make it low maintenance / self-sustaining
- Campgrounds (RV with hook-ups / tent)
- Campgrounds need shade !
- Water recreation
- Beach and cabana
- Equipment rentals
- Winter use (cross-country skiing) No snowmobiles
- Multi-use trails
- Habitat for bird watching (osprey and eagles)
- Should lakes be connected or separate?
- Shoreline fishing
- Fishing tournaments
- Event center (e.g. Terry Trueblood) (Weddings/Historical Society)
- Restaurant (family bar & grill)
- Cabins
- Shelters
- Boat Rentals
- Nature education opportunities (trails, Springbrook, Jasper Co. Conservation)
- Beck's property (30-acre part) – FFA food products
- Classroom space in School Foundation Bldg.
- Office with space for gift shop
- Existing 4-H bldg. or Historical Society bldg.
- Go for low hanging fruit - trails, fishing, swimming (\$), camping (\$)
- Pedestrian bridge across skunk river
- Work nicely with Kum & Go and DNR Property

Concerns

- Flooding
- Competition with Historical Society Building or fairgrounds
- Traffic at Kum & Go and Casey's
- Who is going to own & run
- Noise from interstate
- On-going maintenance (need revenue source in park)
- Access through School Foundation property is not viable

Secondary Impact

- Attract Development/Growth
- Lease/Sell Land to Hotel/Restaurant
- Need a fish management plan

December 16, 2015, 6:45 PM

Attendees: Brant Fox (Fishing Club)
Don Edwards (Colfax PAB member)
Darla Edwards (Business owner)
Danae Edwards (Colfax PAB member)

Weaknesses

- Patrolling
- Nutrient levels in lakes
- Lack of habitat
- No full-time maintenance staff

Opportunities

- Fishing Club (Sportsman Club of Iowa) – Modeled after Isaac Walton League
- Brant has had 239 signatures as potential members at \$1,000/year (as far away as Twin Cities)
- Lease payment schedule for first 5 years (based on 300 members) – 25% of membership gross (\$75,000)
- 5 Yr. Total = \$375,000
- Envision maximum of 300 fishing members with no limit on social members

- Profit center for the park
- Club members as stewards (keep it clean and maintain)
- Help establish fishing regulations and limits
- Club to provide an annual re-stocking program
- Fishing Lodge (3-5 yr plan) Supported by club members
- Funding source for maintenance
- Not all members want to fish, some just want a lodge / restaurant (funded and built by Club)
- Restaurant would be open to public with full bar service
- Fishing tackle and bait shop
- Fish cleaning stations
- Club would have exclusive boat access to north and east lakes (public could be allowed shore access on these)
- West lake would be open to public for boat access
- Cabins
- Beach
- Food / drink
- Crafts – Iowa style or Amana style
- Retail on site helps with security and maintaining site

Concerns

- Money
- Re-stocking (need private hatchery because of flooding potential)
- Trash
- Lake nutrients & habitat
- Lack of rules and standards
- Grants – Do restrictions on lake access limit grant opportunities?
Can you use money from club as matching funds?
- Fish management – is it a solution and can pay for improvements?
- Limited access to fishing (Limits and rules)
- Board is not full support on fishing (may be convinced)

December 17, 2015, 10:30 AM

Attendees: Clark Matthews (Kum & Go Corporate)
Mindy (Colfax K&G store manager)

Opportunities

- Could sell bait
- Currently sell fishing licenses
- Sidewalk connection to store
- River tubing / kayaking
- Observation tower

Concerns

- Traffic
- Easements
- Bandit parking (control with signage)

December 17, 2015, 1:00 PM

Attendees: Denny Carpenter (Jasper Co. BOS)
Chaz Allen (State Senator and JEDCO Director)

Weaknesses

- No hunting (by public)

Opportunities

- Fishing
- Boating
- ATV? (City doesn't allow)

- Equestrian?
- Trail system connected to county system
- RV camping on main island
- Group camp (Scouts)
- Mushroom hunting?
- Get inflow/outflow stats from Main Street
- Hotel occupancy rates for County available from Visitors Bureau (Linda)

Concerns

- FEMA – Don't trust their judgment. Be ready to push back.
- No County or City funding until park is up and running and showing value
- Food study is sometimes not realistic
- DNR may not stock the pond

December 17, 2015, 2:15 PM

Attendees: John Halferty (Jasper Co. Sheriff's Office)
 Jerry Ratliff (Jasper Co. Conservation)
 Keri Van Zante (Jasper Co. Conservation)
 Nathan Unsworth (City of Newton)

Weaknesses

- Potential flooding?

Opportunities

- Boating
- Fishing
- Trail system
 - County needs to take the lead on regional connectivity
 - Extend trail into DNR land
 - If horse trails planned, keep them separate
 - Provide a .5 to 1-mile accessible loop and for interstate travelers to stretch
- Campground is a must for revenue
- Cabins (County cabins are booked every weekend)
- Clean out invasive plants
- Isolate camping from rest of park
- Park design something in between Gray's Lake and Rock Creek
- Gravel riding
- Canoe / kayaking
- Tubing (river access) or on the lake
- Paddleboarding
- Events staging areas
- Work with DNR to develop fish habitat plan
- Nature trips for schools
- County can bring users to the park (classes and equipment)
 - Canoes / kayaks
 - Snowshoes / skis
 - Fishing derbies
- Beach
- Shade (start planting trees ASAP)
- Central College interns (JCCB has connections)
- Utilize the crop land area
- Trees for Kids grants
- ISU forestry students can help with a tree management plan
- Need an area for a large event like a scout camp
- East end as habitat development
- Pollinator area

Concerns

- People angry at leasing land to pipeline contractor for staging

December 17, 2015, 3:30 PM

Attendees: Ian Strachan (Strac Scuba Shack)
David Mast (City of Colfax)
Andrea Boulton (Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation)
Sheila Navis (IHRC & D)
Bri Dennison (District Rep for Congressman Loebsack)

Strengths

- Utilize visibility from I-80

Weaknesses

- Flooding
- Sound from interstate
- Protect lakes from runoff
- Don't make the park all things to all people, but if you try: separate uses.
- Money

Opportunities

- River trail
- Horses
- Skiing
- Connections
- Paddle in camping
- Fitness trail
- Primitive camping
- RV camping
- Bike park
- Create varying depths for fish habitat
- Showers / Restroom facilities
- Connections to downtown
- Bike racks / benches, etc.
- Astronomy
- Amphitheater
- Utilize fairgrounds for large event parking
- Picnicking
- Protect viewsheds out of park
- Education center
- Diving (divers want 60'-100' depths)
- Controlled access to divers (need support area eventually for tank refill, service equipment, changing room, etc.)
- Need reliable access to water (dock to steps to platform)
- Private outfitter to check diver certification
- Paddleboats / canoes
- Federal Reserve program to support sustainable communities projects? (Sheila)
- Keep drainage from coming into the lake (quality and clarity)

December 17, 2015, 5:30 PM

Attendees: Gerry Schnepf (Keep Iowa Beautiful)
Karen Russell (Colfax Historical Society)
Shawn Cogley (Colfax Historical Society)
Jeff Davidson (Keep Iowa Beautiful)
Wes Synder (City Council)

Manny Toribio (City of Prairie City)
Bruce Showaltz
Nick Klepinger (sp?)

Weaknesses

- Flooding (but Colfax sign and flags were above water in 2010)
- Schlosser Trust is not following through with their mission.
- Possibility of neighbor's aesthetics negative

Opportunities

- Wow factor at entrance
- Make as visible from I-80 as possible
- Walkability
- Residential/retirement center
- DNR fishery? Protect one lake for fishery?
- Keep road access out of water
- Colfax Historical Society wants to add more storage
- Shared parking/entry (sometimes 100-150 cars)
- Camping
- Initially do a lot with a little
- Conference center
- Iconic bridges
- Big bold entrance
- Fountains (e.g. Fountain Hills, Phoenix)
- Trails (1-2 mi loop is popular distance)
- Natural Grasses
- Bison from Neal Smith
- Fishery
- Cantilevered Dock
- Sell whole thing to a private developer
- Health based community

By: Jim Host
Chris Shires