

**Review of the Proposed Inverness Community Greenway
Feasibility Study
June 8, 2007**

I. Executive Summary

Second paragraph. ... envisioned by residents of Shelby County as a **linear park** providing a greenway recreational corridor. ... evidenced by the many cyclists, **joggers** and pedestrians that that can be seen cycling, **jogging** and walking in the area.

Comment: The landscape architects that master planned Inverness could have designed the parkway as a straight line from Valleydale to US 280. Instead it is designed as a meandering roadway with an aesthetically pleasing alignment bordered by a forested buffer on each side. It truly is a parkway. The greenway, as a linear park, will compliment the parkway design and forested setting. We want to continue this design tradition.

II. Soil Types

No comment.

III. Road Crossings

No Comment

IV. Environmental Considerations

Comment: At the appropriate time, we concur that a public meeting is appropriate. Visuals of the proposed corridor along the parkway with cross sections as presented in the study will be helpful for residents to understand the proposal. We will need to reach out beyond the “borders” of Inverness to invite residents along Caldwell Mill Road and Valleydale Road. Likewise, there may be others outside the immediate community who will use the facility using Veterans Park as a base.

V. Proposed Community Greenway Route

A. First paragraph:
.... to provide environmental conservation; **enhance the forested setting of Inverness Parkway**; and to provide open space...

B. First paragraph:
Include in links “**small businesses and office buildings.**”

Comment: People will be able to walk or ride a bicycle to the Southern Company and walk to local businesses, particularly restaurants. There are several office buildings along Valleydale.

Third paragraph:

Comment: Include businesses at the intersection of Caldwell Mill Road and Valleydale Road in the listing beginning with ... “Other facilities along the proposed route include...”

Fourth paragraph:

Comment: We are surprised that TIIA Cref does not want their trail system integrated into the overall greenway system. At the same time, people will find their trails and walk them anyway. Most of their trails have an excessive out-slope which makes walking uncomfortable. I assume Gresham Smith contacted Taylor Mathis.

It is desirable for the trails to become a future part of the system and reconstruct the trails to a suitable standard. The trails would remain 4-foot wide. We suggest that a statement be made for the desirability of the system, at a future time, become part of the greenway system. Future work is covered by a plan.

Fifth paragraph:

Comment: Having a trail along Lake Heather crossing the dam and continuing through the office complex is ideal. We suggest that a 4-foot wide trail from the parking area for the new Inverness Park, using the tunnel under the parkway, graded to the Lake or using the existing access road (steep) to the launch site at the dam, parallel the lake between the lake and the office buildings and connect back to the main greenway at its intersection with Inverness Center Place and Inverness Center Drive. Connectors may be from Inverness Cove and the Lake Heather Apartments. By showing this section, the proposal is covered by “a plan” and in the future it may become a reality. Due to private lands surrounding the lake, we doubt if a trail will ever be completely around the lake, as most homeowners would not want a trail in “their backyard.”

C. Alternative Transportation Concept

Comment: In this section we would like to see a sentence that states “when developed, the Inverness PUD had no public areas for recreation. The development of Spain Park and the recent acquisition of the new Inverness Park will provide for both active and passive recreation opportunities. The greenway will link neighborhoods to both parks.

Comment: We would like a reference to the greenway contributing to the health of residents by providing a facility for walking, jogging and riding bicycles. A recent study found that Alabama children have a high rate of obesity.

Access:

Comment: The speed limit on the parkway is 35 mph not 45 mph.

Character:

Comment: There are subdivisions where wooden fences are prohibited. I believe Summerwood is one of those. Since Summerwood will be impacted by the greenway being in close proximity to homes, I suggest that we work with the owners to design a fence that is aesthetically pleasing and consistent with subdivision covenants. Any privacy screens (fences) should be made with natural materials such as stone or wood. I suggest the wording be changed to **“Where privacy fences may be desirable to screen properties adjacent to the parkway, use natural materials, such as wood or stone, that is compatible with subdivision covenants.”**

D. Greenway Segments

Greenway Segment 1:

Comment: We feel a final location at the fire station needs additional evaluation. We want to meet one more time to evaluate the alternatives. The premise of a decision should be one that maintains or enhances the aesthetic values of the parkway particularly this section being a primary entry to Inverness and the greenway as a linear park.

If the greenway goes behind the fire station, there is no conflict with pedestrian traffic and fire trucks or other vehicles. The portion of the greenway paralleling the drive from the parkway to the rear of the concrete station apron may be steeper than desired. The area behind the fire station can be contoured with fill to eliminate the boardwalk. A culvert will be needed to drain a low area. If the tot lot and shelter were moved to the new Inverness Park, no additional ROW would be acquired. The present parking lot becomes a trailhead parking area for the greenway. The fuel storage tanks can be secured by fencing and/or screening. We will lose parking spaces between Dr. Smith’s Office and the existing parking lot (along the chain link fence) to gain a 10-foot width.

We have concerns for the aesthetics of removing trees and vegetation to place the greenway on the berm between the parkway and the fire station parking lot as well as removing landscaping at the intersection of the parkway and Valleydale. There are grade concerns along the berm. The high point may need to be cut to lower the grade. There appears to be ample space for the trail and it could meander between most large trees.

We concur with the proposed entry point into the natural area near the intersection of the parking lot and the parkway with the greenway intersecting the Valleydale greenway somewhat mid-way between the parkway intersection with Valleydale and Dr. Smith’s property. This location moves a “pedestrian congregation point” away from a busy intersection, providing a “safety buffer” to the intersection, while protecting landscaping.

Eric’s suggestion to place the greenway along the existing curb of the parking lot next to the island berm has merit. It would be best to place 5-feet of the greenway into the berm and reduce the parking lot width by 5-feet to accommodate the 10-foot greenway without making the parking lot one-way and adding a crossover at the parkway. The parking lot seems to have ample width. A retaining wall may be needed.

Cross Sections:

Suggest including a cross section of the parkway adjacent to the Summerwood subdivision showing a privacy screen. A privacy screen is a significant concern of the residents.

Suggest a 10-foot greenway link be constructed to the Inverness Country Club. The owners have agreed to the location on the pool-side of Country Club Road.

Drawing Segment 1A, Section 31, Inverness Parkway to the fire station parking lot: Recommend grading and stacking (as needed) 12"x12" treated timbers lengthwise and elevating the trail tread through this area to eliminate the need for a boardwalk or bridge. We do not want a 10- foot wide boardwalk. This is costly to construct and future maintenance will be high.

Drawings Segment 1 Section 06 and Section 08 at Golf Cart Tunnels:
Will a railing be required on top of the headwall for additional protection?

Drawing Segment 1 Section 9:

We suggest a heavy fence consisting of 10" diameter round treated posts with 6" round treated rails. Fences take abuse and a heavy fence will reduce maintenance in the long term. A heavy round fence is aesthetically park-like.

General Comment:

We concur with the proposed connections to Caldwell Mill Road and Spain Park from Berkley Drive.

General Comment:

Several cross sections show a low wall or a curb retaining a cut-bank. We recommend these to be rock veneered with native stone or a manufactured stone. Several building signs in Inverness have a natural rock base. It would be aesthetically consistent to continue the use of this stone.

E. Signing, Way Finding and Security

Signage:

We concur with the need for signing. We recommend as part of the design phase a signing plan using a distinctive logo be developed. We concur with labeling mile markers. We recommend quarter mile markers. We had not thought of emergency call boxes, but at each a "you are here" sign would be helpful to direct emergency workers.

Way Finding:

We support this concept as essential, particularly when linking communities, neighborhoods and subdivisions to the greenway. It should be integrated with the signing program. Together this cost could be substantial. Are these costs in the plan?

Security:

It will be difficult to enforce a “daylight use only” condition for use. During the summer, we observe many people jogging the parkway after sunset up to 10:00 PM. Is there a need for bollard style lights that light only the footpath?

Comment:

We suggest a section be added to address enforcement issues.

This section should include:

- 1) Consider the restricted use of golf carts along designated sections of the trail from Inverness Point Drive to Selkirk Drive connecting with the following streets and neighborhoods:
 - Inverness Point Drive to Country Club Road
 - Woodford Drive to Country Club Road.
 - Summerwood to Country Club Road
 - Norwalk Drive (Cobblestone) to Country Club Road
 - Old Stone Drive (Adam Brown) to Country Club Road
 - Kirkwall Lane (Kirkwall) to Country Club Road
 - Kerry Downs Road (Kerry Downs) to Country Club Road
 - Selkirk Drive (Summerwood and Selkirk) to Country Club Road.

- 2) Prohibition of motorized vehicles including:
 - All Terrain Vehicles
 - Motor bikes, motor scooters and go-carts
 - Utility vehicles such a “gators”

Place bollards at designated entry areas to enable small pick-up trucks access to the greenway for maintenance. Also the section from the parking area at the new Inverness Park will need to allow access for larger trucks for maintaining the power line and sewer line and related structures. This should be addressed in the master plan for the park.

VI. Proposed Surface

Comment: We concur with an asphalt surface with a substantial base to allow for light vehicle maintenance traffic.

VII. Required Bridge Structures

Due to initial cost and long-term maintenance needs, we recommend that no bridges be constructed.

VIII. Connections

Facility Type- Suggest that churches, businesses and office buildings be added. We feel that the greenway will contribute to the economic prosperity of businesses, particularly restaurants, ice cream shops, coffee shops and convenience stores. These are along Valleydale at its intersections near US 280 and Caldwell Mill Road as well as those along

U.S. 280. The greenway will enable residents some to walk or ride a bicycle to work. Churches may be expected to have church outings along the greenway.

Include the Inverness Country Club in the connections sections- golf course, pool and tennis courts.

IX. Rights of Way Requirements

No comments. We would like to field review these so we have a better idea of the obstacles facing the project.

X. Cost Estimate

No comments.

XI. Greenway Maintenance

We note that several sections through the document refer to relocating automatic irrigation systems. This section refers to watering planted areas. We see the need to maintain a grassed shoulder to slow run-off from the trail, with exception of the new Inverness Park, which may have leaves or pine needles instead of sod. There may be locations identified during the design phase that we may plant shrubs or trees.

Irrigating is essential to maintaining sod and shrubs during the summer. We recommend that an irrigation system be installed the length of the asphalt greenway where the shoulder will be sod. An irrigation system will not be needed through the new Inverness Park.