

**Sawtooth Bluff Visioning and Master Plan**  
**Steering Committee Meeting #4**  
**December 11, 2017 @ 11:30 – 2:00 p.m. – Cook County Courthouse**

**Attendees**

Sue Abrahamson	Lisa Kerr	David Demmer	Myron Bursheim
Mike Roth	Dave Tersteeg	Anton Moody	Andy Hubley
Barb Caskey			

**Summary**

The meeting began at 11:30 at the Cook County Courthouse. Barb Caskey, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, welcomed everyone in attendance. The primary purpose of today’s meeting is to review Phase I public input received during the November 27 – December 8, 2017 public comment period. 54 responses were received via the interactive online map and 4 responses were received via email. Copies of all responses received were provided to the committee. A large printed copy of the interactive map including all data points added by respondents during the public input process was also provided.

**Review**

The responses and comments were reviewed and categorized into the following potential uses:

Residential development	Business development
Camping	Multi-use facility
Gondola/cable car	Dog park
Trail system	Trail center/hub
Softball field	Disc golf course
Rock climbing	Shooting range
Do nothing /current uses only	

The Steering Committee discussed guiding principles to ensure proposed development is consistent with the overall vision for the site, and developed recommendations for each potential use consistent with the vision.

**Guiding Principles**

- The emphasis should be on recreational development, rather than residential or business development.
- Planned, limited, low-profile development on this site supporting recreation for residents and tourists may offer greater protection from unpopular development options than doing nothing.
- This site is large enough to accommodate multiple user groups while still leaving large areas of the designated park area undeveloped to preserve environmental assets (fen, wetlands, unobstructed views).

**Recommendations**

**Residential:** The property owned by the City of Grand Marais that is in a half moon shape to the east of the Gunflint Trail curve was identified as the most appropriate area to consider for residential development due to the proximity to utilities. This area will be removed from the designated park area.

**Business:** With the exception of a concessionaire or services integrated with other uses, business development will not be considered within the park boundaries.

Camping: Campsite development should be considered, especially sites that support destination uses of the park (hiking, biking, saddle sports, etc.). Rustic, dispersed camping was discussed, similar to the Devil Track Campground. Follow up information was provided after the meeting (attached).

Multi-use facility: A multi- use facility could be developed in close proximity to recreational amenities (campground, dog park, hard surface trails, disc golf) and offer showers, concessions, class rooms and event space, including festival support space for future trail-related events that might be conducted (i.e. bike races). The Steering Committee recommends identifying a proposed location for future development of a facility but recognizes that the costs to develop and maintain a facility may be prohibitive and not feasible.

Gondola/cable car: The Steering Committee does not recommend development of a gondola/cable car on this site. Costs are prohibitive and development at this site would compete with the existing Gondola at Lutsen.

Dog park: Development of a fenced dog park is recommended, with a suggested size of 2.5 acres, to be located in the area directly north of the medical campus and abutting 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue West. Another option would be to locate the dog park further northwest, if there are other types of development there (parking, rest rooms, etc.)

Trail system: The Steering Committee recommends development of a trail system to support multiple uses including hiking, mountain biking, dog walking, skijoring. Development of an ADA-compliant hard surface trail loop (granite sand) which could also be used for skijoring was also recommended. General zones for proposed trails were identified, recognizing that terrain, topography, elevation and other considerations will affect trail development. User-groups will be asked to identify potential trail locations within designated areas. Development costs and ongoing maintenance requirements need to be addressed as funds are sought to develop trails. More information is needed re: proposed horseback trails, as the trail needs for horseback riders differ from other uses (require more parking space, height of trails) and horseback riding may not be compatible on trails designed for hiking or biking. The Steering Committee recommends that a trail/boardwalk be developed on top of the bluff that allows users to view and learn about the unique fen (wetland) there. The trail/boardwalk should be constructed in an environmentally friendly manner. The trail/boardwalk would be accessed by developing a small, very simple parking lot off the Old Ski Hill Road. The Steering Committee recommends that the Superior Hiking Trail be re-routed to move through this site in an appropriate and scenic corridor. It also recommends that any trails developed in the Sawtooth Bluff area be connected to other existing systems when possible. This includes connections to the Pincushion Trails system and to the Community Center, School area. The Steering Committee received no input regarding ATV use or snowmobile use on the site. There is no recommendation for ATV or snowmobile trail/amenity development or improvement on the site.

Trail head/hub: Development of a trail head is included as a desired amenity in the county's trail plan and the Steering Committee recommends a multiuse trailhead be developed either in the area directly north of the medical campus and abutting 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue West, or in an area further to the northwest near the furthest point west on the Gunflint Trail curve. The trail hub should have parking and other amenities that support the trails and their users.

Softball field: The Steering Committee recommends additional dialogue with the Community Center Board of Trustees to explore options for development of additional softball fields, preferably near the existing fields by the Community Center and the School.

Disc golf course: Development of a disc golf course is recommended, with a suggested location near other amenities (camping, dog park, parking) with the potential for also having cross-county ski trail use in the winter.

Rock climbing: The Steering Committee supports the development of rock climbing options within the park at viable locations. Rock climbing infrastructure should be subtle and not have major impacts on the views of the hillside.

Shooting range: The Steering Committee does not recommend development of shooting range on this site.

Do nothing: Comments were received suggesting that no development occur on this site, citing concerns about road access, environmental concerns, proximity to existing residences and costs associated with development and maintenance of proposed amenities. The Steering Committee is committed to ensuring that environmental concerns are identified and mitigated (voluntary EAW), development of low-profile and low-impact options are explored, and user-groups are actively engaged in seeking funding for development and maintenance of proposed amenities.

### **Follow up information**

Recommendations developed today will be summarized and shared with the group prior to the next meeting. ARDC will also identify what level of detail is required to be included in the master plan prior to submission for funding from the GMRTC.

### **Next Meeting**

Friday, January 5, 2018 10:30 – 1:00 p.m., ITV Room, Cook County Courthouse. The primary purpose of this meeting will be to finalize the Phase II public input process and materials.