December 16, 2015
3:35 p.m.
City/County Government Center
7th Floor, Room 7096
DMD Hallway, Large Conference Room
Albuquerque, New Mexico

REPORTED BY: Deborah L. Dickey, NM CCR #157
WILLIAMS & ASSOCIATES
1608 5th, NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
APPARENCES

Mr. Richard Barish, Co-Chair of Sierra Club,
Ms. Camilla Feibelman, Co-Chair of Sierra Club
Ms. Mary Beresford, ADA Commission
Mr. Michael Hamman, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District
Ms. Yasmeen Najmi, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District

City Personnel:
Mr. Michael Riordan, City of Albuquerque Chief Operations Officer
Ms. Barbara Taylor, Parks and Recreation Department
Mr. Keith Reed, Parks and Recreation Department
Mr. Matt Schmader, Parks and Recreation Department
Open Space
Ms. Rebecca Burke, City Council
MR. REED: I want to go ahead and get the meeting started here. Thanks, everyone, for coming. This is the Bosque Working Group meeting. Today is Wednesday, December 16th, 2015, and it's approximately 3:35 p.m. Let's go around the room and introduce ourselves. I'm Keith Reed, co-chair of the BWG.

MR. BARISH: I'm Richard Barish. I am here on behalf of the Bosque Action Team and Sierra Club.

MS. FEIBELMAN: This is Camilla Feibelman. I'm the co-chair of the Bosque Working Group with Keith, and director of the Rio Grande chapter of the Sierra Club and coordinator of the Bosque Action Team.

MR. SCHMADER: And I'm Matt Schmader, and I'm the superintendent of the City of Albuquerque Open Space Division.

MR. HAMMAN: Hi. Mike Hamman. I'm the chief executive officer for the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District.

MS. BERESFORD: Mary Beresford, ADA representative.

MR. REED: I asked the guests to introduce themselves as well.

MS. BURKE: I'm Rebecca Burke, policy
analyst for Councilor Brad Winter.

MS. TAYLOR: Barbara Taylor, Director of Parks and Rec.

MR. RIORDAN: Michael Riordan with the City of Albuquerque mayor's office.

MR. REED: Thanks, everyone. As everyone can tell, we have a court reporter that's helping us to take notes at the meeting today. So please, let's try to speak one at a time, and speak slowly and clearly so she can capture all the information that needs to be captured.

So with that, the next -- that was the introductions. Item 2 on the agenda is to discuss the public process and the schedule for the Bosque Multiuse Accessible Path, Phase 2 project, I-40 to Campbell Road. And with that, I will let Mr. Riordan talk to us about that.

MR. RIORDAN: Thanks, Keith. Our suggested timeline for the Bosque Trail Extension, it started before this. I'm going to start with where we've been and then move forward. The first steps were the bosque tours, the actual field tours, and we had three of those. One occurred on November 15th, one occurred on November 28th, and one occurred on December 5th. That's correct?
MR. SCHMADER: Yeah, that was correct.

MR. RIORDAN: About how many attendees did we have for all those?

MR. SCHMADER: Total, Mr. Riordan, were 83 for the attendees.

MS. FEIBELMAN: For the record, the members of the working group were not consulted on the dates of those.

MS. BERESFORD: Some of us were. That's how I was there.

MS. FEIBELMAN: Yes, but not consulted on the dates or the working group. We were just told the dates.

MS. BERESFORD: Okay.

MR. RIORDAN: We're going to be finalizing, in the alternative. We're going to -- based on those working tours and the comments we had, comments we received from that, in conjunction with the environmental document from SWCA, we're going to be finalizing alternatives from now to the end of December.

MR. BARISH: Mike, I've got a question about that.

MR. RIORDAN: Yes, sir.

MR. BARISH: Would you like to finish, and
then I'll ask my question?

MR. RIORDAN: Certainly.

MR. REED: Yeah, let's do that.

MR. RIORDAN: Thanks. We'll be having a public meeting on January 7th to provide the alignment alternatives that were developed in December. From -- through the month of January, we'll be doing MRGCD coordination. After the public meeting, the SWCA final review and public comments will be documented and released, along with a final selected alternative. And then in February, we'll be doing the construction layout and cost proposals.

MS. FEIBELMAN: I'm sorry, Mike. You're not giving us dates with SWCA, the public comment time.

MR. RIORDAN: Throughout January. So after the public meeting 'til the end of January.

MS. FEIBELMAN: So SWCA would present the final review at the end of January?

MR. RIORDAN: They'll be doing their review throughout -- through the end of January, and at the end of January, we'll be providing their public -- their final document or final review. The documentation of the public comments and the selected alternative.
MS. FEIBELMAN: All right.

MR. RIORDAN: Then we'll be doing our construction layout and cost proposal plans from February 1st to February 15th, and beginning construction on February 15th.

MS. FEIBELMAN: Could you repeat what you said from the first to the 15th. I didn't catch it.

MR. RIORDAN: Let me go over this from the beginning again. We had three bosque walking tours or field tours. November 15th, November 28th, December 5th.

MS. FEIBELMAN: Okay.

MR. RIORDAN: We're using the information from those tours to finalize alternatives through the end of December. So December 31st, 2015. We'll be presenting any alternatives at a public meeting on January 7th, at the Los Duranes Community Center, between 5:30 and 7:00. We'll be doing MRGCD coordination through the month of the January. So from January 4th is the first working day of January, until January 30th.

After the public meeting, we will be -- SWCA, we'll be reviewing those plans in accordance with the environmental document, and we'll be developing the public comment record 'til January
30th of 2016. There will be the published selected alternative on February 1st. There will be a construction layout/cost proposal happening between February 1st and February 15th.

We'll be begin construction on February 15th. I'll expect that to last about six weeks. So between February 15th and the 1st of April.

MS. FEIBELMAN: So when will -- Richard had a question, and I had one.

MR. BARISH: I have a couple questions. In the future Bosque Work Agreement, it was contemplated and it's stated that the alternatives would be developed by the working group, working together. Is there going to be an opportunity for us to work with the City to develop the alternatives that will be presented on January 7th?

MR. RIORDAN: If you attended the bosque walking groups, you were able to provide documentation there, or through written comment, which I believe was already published in a letter to -- our publishing letter about the no alternative action request or wanting to reduce access for people in wheelchairs to save a section of the experience.

MR. BARISH: We haven't submitted comments.
MR. RIORDAN: But you know how to in the newsletter I saw.

MS. FEIBELMAN: Let me clarify what the question is. Will we participate as stated in the future works agreement in the development of alternatives? It's a simple yes or no question.

MS. TAYLOR: The answer is it will be on the agenda today. Matt will discuss them with you.

MR. BARISH: Matthew will discuss the alternatives by us working together?

MS. TAYLOR: There will be alternatives available for discussion today.

MR. BARISH: The question Camilla asked, though, was in the future Bosque Work Agreement, the procedure we agreed to was the alternatives would be developed by us working together and not just by the City. Is that not going to happen, that we will develop those alternatives working together?

MS. TAYLOR: We're together, and we're going to discuss alternatives.

MR. BARISH: So the alternatives that are presented to the public, are we going to be able to have some say in that? Some decision-making authority.

MS. TAYLOR: We're together, and we're
going to discuss the alternatives.

MR. BARISH: You're still not answering my question.

MS. TAYLOR: I'm absolutely answering your question.

MS. FEIBELMAN: You already have the alternatives set, and you're going to talk to us about that, or do we have the opportunity to provide something?

MR. SCHMADER: I have a range of proposed alternatives for us to look at and discuss.

MR. BARISH: And we have what alternatives that are presented to the public? Is that a decision made together?

MS. TAYLOR: No decision will be made on the alternatives until the public at large has an opportunity to comment.

MR. BARISH: There are going to be certain alternatives presented to the public.

MS. TAYLOR: You're not going to be unhappy, so let's proceed and not beat this horse to death.

MR. REED: I agree. I think we have a tight agenda, and we need to move along.

MS. FEIBELMAN: Let's make a point of
record, which is that we would not be having this
disagreement if we were following the agenda.

The second question is when will the public
comment.

MR. RIORDAN: May I address that?

MR. REED: Yes.

MR. RIORDAN: This was something agreed to
in April. If this was passed in April, this
wouldn't be an issue, either.

MS. FEIBELMAN: When is the public comment
period?

MR. RIORDAN: The public comment period
started with the first tour of the bosque in
November, on November 15th, and it will continue
with a public meeting on January 7th, and public
comment will be able to be received through January
15th, where it could truly be incorporated all the
way up to the 30th, when the final document is
actually produced.

MS. FEIBELMAN: Have you published a formal
request for public comment in any public venue, like
the Albuquerque Journal online or your website?

MR. RIORDAN: Are we allowed to without the
consultation of the Bosque Working Group?

MS. FEIBELMAN: I guess we're working to
figure that out. I mean, you haven't consulted --

    MR. RIORDAN: If that's what's decided
today, we can, but we're going to be publishing the
public meeting in the Albuquerque Journal for
January 7th, and at that meeting we'll be letting
people know that the comments we received up to that
point are being incorporated and any future comments
from that meeting forward, through January 15th,
will also be included into the public record.

    MS. FEIBELMAN: One last question. When
people -- can you talk a little bit about what the
format will be at the public meeting?

    MR. RIORDAN: It has not been determined.

    MR. REED: I think the public meeting is
going to be -- what we discussed is there will be a
30-minute presentation, discussion about the
project, and the available alternatives, and then an
opportunity for public comment for the next hour
after that.

    MR. BARISH: So prior to the January 7th
meeting, are the alternatives going to be available
for people to review and to submit comments prior to
that time?

    MR. SCHMADER: We're working them through
the end of December. So if they are, it will be for
a couple of days, at that meeting. If that seems to
be a little bit ahead of the board, there are the
ones we determined could come out of that day. We
cомmented on them online. That depends on today's
meeting.

MS. TAYLOR: Yup.

MR. REED: If there's no more questions for
Mr. Riordan, we'll move to the next item.

MS. FEIBELMAN: If it's okay with you, I
want to make sure everyone at the table has had the
opportunity to express any concerns that they have
about the process. Mary or Mike.

MR. REED: Nobody is speaking up, so I'm
going to move to item 3, which is the alternatives
discussion for the Phase 2 project. And with that,
I'm going to turn the floor over to Matt Schmader,
who is going to give us a presentation on that.

MR. SCHMADER: Thank you, Mr. Co-chair.

Pursuant to the three hikes and the participation on
those, the discussions that happened in the field,
but particularly in receipt of the written comments
that were received, I've begun analyzing what the
public's comments are on trail alignment, primarily
to this point. We received about 20 written
comments since the comments started being received.
The alignments sort out into a set of fairly logical groupings. And I'll pass these around so people can look at them. I'll hold them up first. I apologize. We probably could have put them up on the white board.

But the first alternative is basically what we would call no action, and so that is where the existing trails are today, without any improvements built on them at all. So that's sort of one logical grouping of comments that we've received from the public.

MR. REED: I've seen it. Maybe Mary and Mike would like to.

MR. SCHMADER: The second alternative is basically to build improvements only where there are currently existing trails, which is the route that we walked from the beginning of the trail near I-40 and ending at Campbell Road. It's about 5,800 feet, about 1.2 miles or so. And so that is depicted here with this pink line, and so that shows a proposed trail that would go only where there's an existing trail at this point.

The next set of alternatives, I'll call them a set, basically uses existing trails north from I-40 up to where -- there's the power lines, so
up to the power lines, and then goes away from the
bank of the river and leaves that second half, the
northern half, as unbuilt, and then proceeds on a
new trail that would be approximately halfway
between the levee and the river bank, and that would
extend from where the power lines are to Campbell
Road.

MR. BARISH: Can you describe a bit more
where the power lines are? I could imagine them.
What I understand is the bank lowering.

MR. SCHMADER: Yes, it's south of the bank
line lowering projects. And I'm sorry for the court
reporter, but the bank line lowering projects
occurred north of the power lines and along the bank
here. There was a restoration project that was also
done on this island.

MR. REED: Just for the record, you were
gesturing to a location that was south of the power
lines on that last statement. Do you want to repeat
that? I want to make sure that it gets captured
correctly.

MR. SCHMADER: Richard was asking, there
have been some habitat restoration projects that
have occurred. The bank line lowering has occurred
in this vicinity.
MR. REED: Can you describe for the record in more detail, kind of where that's located.

MR. SCHMADER: It's approximately two-thirds the way north from I-40 to Campbell Road. In this vicinity (indicating). And then I made reference to a habitat restoration project that was done on an attached bar down here by the Interstate Stream Commission.

So what these last maps show is different places that the trail would take off from the bank line and go to the interior. And each one of them takes off at kind of a logical point, continuing at various points further north. So there were basically four different places where you could cut over to the interior trail.

MR. REED: Matt, can you describe some of the logic behind the deviation from the bank going towards the center -- away from the bank in the northern half and kind of what the logic was behind some of that?

MS. FEIBELMAN: Why doesn't he answer first.

MR. SCHMADER: There are two lines of consideration there, and again, this is based on public comment. So public comment made reference to
the narrowness and isolation and existing mature
bosque canopy in that area. So expressing a desire
to stay out of as large portion of that if possible.

And the logic for then routing towards the
interior is that that part of the bosque had been
burnt before, and so with the restoration work
that's occurred, there's fairly open canopy, and
there's a fairly easy route to be able to select
that would be away from the river bank, but would be
-- would provide good access into that part of the
bosque.

Also, the bosque is narrow at the south end
and then widens as it gets up toward Campbell, so at
some point you don't really have enough room to have
two parallel trails until the bosque is wide enough
in the vicinity of that power line crossing
(indicating). These were all basically factored in
from the public commentary and from the
on-the-ground existing conditions.

The interior route follows an old
restoration road that Open Space had established.

So it's kind of on a previously disturbed tract.

MR. HAMMAN: My recollection, too, in that
portion of the trail, it's fairly wide, used up,
until the bosque does start to widen out, then the
trail gets pretty small along the edge of the river there. That's more primitive in nature, close to --

MR. SCHMADER: That's a good observation.

The existing trail itself widens the further north you get from that.

MR. BARISH: On this last option, can you explain where this is that the trail would leave the river bank and go into the interior, because -- and here are my landmarks. There's the bank lowering project and this old restoration project, as you can see. Then there's the bank lowering project and this old restoration project that Matt mentions.

Then the bank lowering project continues even in this very narrow stretch. Then you get into that narrow, more intimate space that people really enjoy.

MR. SCHMADER: Correct.

MR. BARISH: About halfway through that, to your east, is still the burn area. Then halfway through, you get into an area where there is a cottonwood canopy all the way between the river and the levee. So where is -- where are we leaving the bank on this option in relation to those landmarks? Is this still the burn area here?

MR. SCHMADER: Yes. The burn area is
basically a wedge that follows along like this
(indicating).

MR. BARISH: Where is the area that is the continuous cottonwood canopy from the river to the levee?

MR. SCHMADER: It's really only in this last probably 200 feet or so that it goes from bank to levee.

MR. BARISH: I think it's actually much bigger than that. I think it's actually a much bigger area.

MR. SCHMADER: I guess it depends on the definition of "continuous."

MR. BARISH: It's still the cottonwood trails and the trail through there that would be a shaded space.

MR. SCHMADER: Right. That runs probably maybe 300 feet or so before you hit the north end of the berm.

MR. BARISH: I think it's longer than that.

MS. FEIBELMAN: There's a quick question. It talks about burn area to be removed.

MR. SCHMADER: Right.

MS. FEIBELMAN: Are you talking about a
drop-down that goes not from the river to along the river?

MR. SCHMADER: The "to be removed," these were notes from -- I'm using an older base map, so there was a suggestion we might want to revegetate underneath the power line, and this is -- Richard, I don't know if you remember where this is, but there's a service road that comes down off of the levee and goes into the bosque here, and then there's a labyrinth, and that labyrinth is somewhere just a little bit north of that surface road.

So the to be removed, actually, the proper label on these boxes should probably say something like to be revegetated. In other words, when you go in, drive in, you leave a footprint, and then as you back out, you should attempt to revegetate.

So what we really have is we have a no action, we have on-existing, and we have four variants of a hybrid, which is partially along the existing and then departs into the interior, and each one of them is a slightly different take-off point based on the kinds of views and access for -- primarily for wheelchair access if we can accomplish that.

MS. BERESFORD: Not only wheelchair, but
also other people who want to make it more accessible. For children, strollers, people that have any kind of mobility issues. If you have an older-population people who want to come down, needs to be able to enjoy it.

I'll tell you right off the bat, I find -- I went on two of these walks, and I found some of the comments really difficult, and these -- a lot of these comments are the reason why the Americans with Disabilities Act came into being because a lot of people cannot think beyond their own framework of experiences, and they say things like "The trail is perfect just the way it is," and it's hard for them to think beyond their framework of "It works for me, so that should be good enough."

And I heard that from a few people that said the bosque is their backyard. "Leave it the way it is. We don't want more people in here."

I asked who gets to determine who gets to enjoy this trail all along the bank, and who doesn't? I find it extremely offensive, and I will fight tooth and nail to have the path all the way along the bank. I will not be put as a second-class citizen and told "You people can be over here, but only we who have mobility abilities can enjoy the
You talked about intimate space that people enjoy. I like intimate spaces just as much as you do, and I have the right to those intimate spaces, just as much as you do. And I find it offensive that you and others have said, "Let's build this over there for you people, so you can be satisfied with that."

The only way I would be satisfied with that is if you close that entire thing down so even you don't get to enjoy it. We all take that inner line. If you get to enjoy it, I get to enjoy it.

The bosque trail is -- hang on -- the bosque trail is 40 miles long. We're asking for a couple of miles that we can get in there. Not only people in wheelchairs. Families with children, older folks, whatever can get in there and enjoy the bosque, and I find it really annoying that you try to put us off. Hang on. Hang on.

Under the ADA, it was stated that separate is not equal. Separate trails are not equal trails. Equal access, and the ADA allows for equal enjoyment, too, and access, too, to what other people in the general population get to have. That means we're going to take the trail, and I want to
see it all the way up to Campbell Road like we walked up on it. No reason why we can't.

MR. BARISH: Would a good compromise be to....

MS. FEIBELMAN: Before we talk about compromise, I want to make a point. I think your points are important, and they need to be heard, but when we talk about doing a public process, many more than just we or you get to comment. Okay? So we lead wheelchair outings monthly, and many people in our outings say, "Well, why does it have to be a six-wide trail? Why can't be it a three-foot wide trail with outtakes for passing?"

When you look at Forest Service guidance, which is what informed the Federal board on how to handle accessibility in natural areas, those array of options are provided to land managers to explore, and it is my sense that if we want to deal with accessibility in a way that gets lots of different views, it would be worth actually getting a workshop on what the best practices are, what the law says, but also have real time for people to get feedback.

We can sit here and say, you know, ultimately, it's a protective place, so first we have to see what's good for the environment and if
closing that trail along the river is the best thing
to do and move everyone away from the river, that's
what we should do.

But I think our point here is that
everybody needs an opportunity to comment. People
in electric chairs and manual chairs and strollers.
I've walked that leg of the trail with a stroller,
I've propelled my godson and his wheelchair through
there. We were there together in your wheelchair,
and in his wheelchair, and so --

MS. BERESFORD: And he could not access it
independently. He had to have somebody push him.

MS. FEIBELMAN: He was 13, so he couldn't
access it.

MS. BERESFORD: If he was independent, he
couldn't.

MS. FEIBELMAN: Here's my point, Mary.
Your view is extra valid, but so is the point that
protected spaces need to be first cared for as
protected spaces and then dealt with for human
access. And so my point, and I think the next
question here is it seems like in addition to
alignment, we need to talk about width and service
alternatives.

So that -- you know, because, Mary, you
might say, "I like the six-foot wide trail. That's
the best thing." But the land manager might say for
nesting birds, nobody should be down there. Not on
your bike, not walking, not rolling.

Another wheelchair user might say, "I want
a three-foot-wide trail."

MS. BERESFORD: I understand that, but what
I'm saying is what's offensive is when people are
saying, as they did on both of those walks I was on,
"We don't need" -- basically they're saying, "We
don't need you folks on this trail. We want it as
it is and want a select few people to come down."

This is a State park. It's open and should
be accessible to all people equally, not just a
select few people.

MS. FEIBELMAN: Absolutely.

MS. BERESFORD: We're only asking for a
little bit of trail. It's a long bosque trail. And
I don't want to have to go with a group of
wheelchair people to go on a hike. I want to be
able to go on my own, independently. Take my book,
take my picnic lunch, and sit the exact same places
you go, in those nice intimate places. I want to be
able to access those.

MR. BARISH: I think if we thought about
different alternatives for trail design, maybe have that as a three-foot-wide trail instead of a six-foot-wide trail, you could have the same access. But the problem is when you expand, you have to get rid of vegetation, you lose some of that sense of intimacy.

But instead, having a narrower trail that's still accessible might be a way to get around that.

MS. BERESFORD: You lose vegetation when you only have a three-foot-wide trail, and you have bicyclists, hikers, whatever coming the other way. And as a person in a chair, I have friends in a wheelchair, if you walk in a three-foot-trail, you can walk next to somebody. This means I have some behind me, somebody up in front of me, and I lose that sense of intimacy with somebody.

MR. BARISH: Even when you're hiking, you can't walk side by side, next to them.

MS. BERESFORD: If they're wide enough, you can.

MR. BARISH: If they're a three-foot trail, you can't.

MS. BERESFORD: That's why I'm saying on a six-foot trail, you can. I can go side by side with another person in a wheelchair, and we can enjoy
everything the same way as you can when you walk
down the trail with an individual.

    MR. BARISH: When I walk down those trails,
you can't walk side by side.

    MS. BERESFORD: You can't now.

    MR. BARISH: That's right. And that's part
of the experience that we get into with a trail.

    MS. FEIBELMAN: Let's get back into this
issue. You get 50 people in a room and you're going
to have 50 different views, but at the end of a day,
a protected space, and first protecting the space
and then accessible people.

    It seems to me for each of these alternate
routes, there ought to also be proposed a series of
alternate routes and alternative surfaces. It seems
to me none of us have done the due diligence of
looking at what the National Accessibility Board's
best practices are for ADA accessibility to the
bosque. It's not actually ADA. It's the Alternate
Practices Act, which is being used for trails by the
Federal accessibility trails.

    If you look at what ADA says, recreational
trails are not applicable to ADA, which in some ways
sends us over to the best practices for Federal
trail accessibility, which is kind of nicer and more
appropriate stuff anyway. I've circulated the
resources and links to that information, but it
seems to me like widths and surfaces ought to be
based on the Federal accessibility board best
practices.

MR. REED: We have other items on the
agenda. I also want to make sure that Yasmeen has
joined us, as well. I want to make sure that's on
the record. She didn't have the chance to introduce
herself earlier. Welcome, thanks for coming. Do
you want to introduce yourself?

MS. NAJMI: Yasmeen Najmi, a planner with
the Rio Grande Conservancy District. I apologize
for being late.

MR. REED: Thanks for coming. To close on
the alternatives discussion, because we do have two
more agenda items that we need to get to today, and
I'm noting we have about 20 minutes left in the
scheduled meeting that's supposed to end at 4:30, so
if there's other -- if you want to note some
specific widths and surfacing types of things you
want to have entered into the record, if you could
please do that quickly, then we would be able to
entertain that, then.

MR. BARISH: I didn't have specifics. I
want to ask Matt, is that contemplating that there
will be different widths and surfaces?

MR. SCHMADER: At least in some. If you
start doing a whole suite of widths and materials
for each one, we'd have about 12 or 15 alternatives.
So we've got to --

MS. FEIBELMAN: There will be some measure.

MR. SCHMADER: Yes.

MS. FEIBELMAN: I'll recirculate that.

Maybe when things are a little bit calmer, Keith, is
there a way that you and I could set up a meeting
focused specifically on that topic?

MR. REED: I don't believe so. I think
we're going to meet as the Bosque Working Group, and
there's not going to be any side meetings.

MS. FEIBELMAN: Actually, Sierra Club will
set up a workshop, and anybody who wants to
participate....

MR. REED: Barbara, did you have something?

MS. TAYLOR: Yes, I would like to make one
point on that subject. First of all, we have a
laboratory, and it's the path between Central and
I-40. I would make the point this is not
wilderness, this is a high-density urban area, and
if you haven't been on that path, if Mary were on
that path the other day when I was out with Robert
Ramirez, when the bike at 15 miles an hour came
flying down the path, Mary would have been toast.

So there is a -- everything a thousand feet
won't cut it because if she's between the thousand
feet, she's toast. So her wheelchair, as I think
she pointed out at the last meeting, is 30 inches
wide. I have a picture, which I brought in a file
here, of two women walking side by side, very
heavily, with strollers on the six-foot path.

So I think the City has said continuously
that the width and surface of the path is the width
and surface of the path as we go forward. Our
experience between Central and I-40 validates, and
smile at me, Camilla, but the fact is --

MS. FEIBELMAN: Matt has said there will be
widths and alternatives, and you're saying no.

MS. TAYLOR: I'm correcting. The width and
surface of the path have been decided.

(Ms. Feibelman speaking at the same time,
unheard by reporter.)

The route of the path and the network of
paths, because I think we will have some
pedestrian-only paths and some accessible paths,
the cut-off points or the way the path meanders or
-- that is not yet decided, but the width and
surface of the path and our experience with the
durability of the degree -- the paths survived all
of our summer storms, with --

MS. FEIBELMAN: Why not let the public
comment, Barbara. In the future works agreement, we
said we would have an opportunity --

MS. TAYLOR: The future works agreement was
vetoed --

THE REPORTER: Wait, wait, wait. One at a
time.

MS. FEIBELMAN: -- alignment with and
surface. What is the fear of allowing the public to
comment?

MS. TAYLOR: The Future Works Agreement was
vetoed by the City -- and the veto was upheld by the
City Council. The continual reference to the Works
Agreement was not, in my opinion, constructive.

What we are doing now is providing lots of
opportunity for public comment. We are here today,
discussing alternatives, as you wanted to do. How
the route will go.

MS. FEIBELMAN: We're discussing them with
no opportunity to go further.
MS. TAYLOR: But we have a laboratory that has told us that the widths and surface of the path works and is consistent with the Indiana study.

(Ms. Feibelman speaks inaudibly.)

THE REPORTER: Wait, wait, wait. One at a time.

MS. TAYLOR: I will give it to you. You once told me you gave it to me, but it was actually Terri O'Hare. I will be happy to give you the Indiana Trail Study.

Are we going to move on?

MR. REED: We need to move on. Richard, one final thing.

MR. BARISH: Just a couple. You say that the path that you have south of I-40 works, but we also don't know that there aren't other kinds of paths that would work and that would also have other advantages. That's what Camilla is talking about, in terms of best practices of the architectural.

MS. TAYLOR: Well, the Indiana study is eloquent on this topic.

MS. FEIBELMAN: That is not the law.

MS. TAYLOR: None of that is the law.

MS. FEIBELMAN: That is what concerns me, is we're here, that you have said we built a
six-foot wide with this surface and this surface,
and some people like it. We have said why not allow
the public to comment.

    MS. TAYLOR: Huge numbers of people have
commented.

    THE REPORTER: Wait, wait. One at a time.

    MS. FEIBELMAN: Seriously, I just don't
understand why it is an issue to allow people to
comment. You can choose the six-foot-wide crusher
fine trail. It's fine. Just build it. But allow
people to comment.

    MR. REED: On that, we're going to move on.
So item number 4 is the update on the restoration
activities, and I'm going to turn the floor over to
Barbara Taylor to discuss the restoration
activities.

    MS. TAYLOR: So we -- as we said we would
do at the last meeting, we have prepared a scope,
and I signed a contract yesterday with Geo Systems
Analysis, and Geo Systems Analysis will be
evaluating the entire bosque from Central to
Montano, and they will be developing priority
restoration areas.

    MR. BARISH: When you say "evaluate,"
evaluate what?
MR. SCHMADER: What they're going to do, they're going to document the existing vegetation communities, they will test the depth to groundwater, they will characterize the soil texture, and based on that, they will be able to identify areas of highest restoration need and be able to present habitat restoration targets for the existing communities.

MR. BARISH: Good. So maybe we'll find out that there are better opportunities than the green blobs and then....

THE REPORTER: I'm sorry. Better opportunities than the....

MR. BARISH: Than the green blobs.

MS. TAYLOR: That actually means something. Sorry.

MR. SCHMADER: That's a term of art. Richard is exactly right. They may determine that some of our preselection of a couple of restoration sites was not the highest priority or the exact shape.

MS. FEIBELMAN: So then you won't?

MR. BARISH: What's the time frame for that report being done?

MR. SCHMADER: They will work for the
months of January through April.

MR. BARISH: So can -- am I correct, then, that restoration work will happen there either in the summer, if it can be done without disturbing nesting birds, or in the fall?

MR. SCHMADER: Generally we don't start restoration work until the first week of August, and the schedule for restoration will have to depend on funding and consultation with the administration.

MR. BARISH: That's a question I have. Will there be funding in the fall to allow the restoration work? The reason I'm concerned about that --

MS. TAYLOR: We don't know what restoration work was going to be recommended. I can't value it.

MR. BARISH: Whatever it is, will there be funding for restoration work involved? The reason I'm concerned is this administration has one more year after -- starting the fall, it would be one more year.

MS. TAYLOR: I know why you're concerned.

MR. BARISH: I want to make sure it gets done, obviously.

MS. TAYLOR: Me, too.

MR. BARISH: So can we get a commitment
that funding will be available?

        MS. TAYLOR: You can get a commitment that
the Parks & Recreation Department and the Open Space
Division is determined to do restoration work in the
bosque. I cannot give you the timing, I haven't
seen the report, I don't know how extensive it will
be, I don't know how expensive it will be.

        We can always do something, Richard. Maybe
we can do a big something if it's not expensive,
maybe we can do a little something if it's
expensive. But I think the question you asked needs
data to be answered.

        MR. BARISH: There's always more that can
be done, and so can we get a commitment that
something will be done this fall?

        MR. REED: I'm going to interject now
because the Open Space Division and Parks & Rec
Department are continually committed to doing
restoration work in the bosque, perpetually.

        MR. BARISH: I think that's true, and I
appreciate that. But we do -- as part of the Phase
1 of this plan, there was a commitment to restore
the green blobs, and I don't care if it's an
(inaudible) area, but I would like a commitment that
something will be done.
MR. REED: The Parks & Rec Department and the mayor have already had the youth initiative through last summer doing quite a bit of -- extensive amount of restoration work that is not insignificant in the least.

To continually focus on the green blobs, we've already been doing work in the green blobs and outside the green blobs. So there are going to be other activities that are going to come out of this, we expect, from the Geo Systems report, and we don't know what that entails yet, but once the report is available and we have a chance to evaluate it, we'll be looking at what funding we have available and what other work we can continue to do in the bosque this fall, next year, and for years to come.

So Barbara, is there anything else on the restoration?

MS. TAYLOR: And hand work doesn't have to wait until the fall. We can do hand restoration in the summer.

(Ms. Feibelman speaking inaudibly.)


MR. REED: Barbara is speaking, so you all have to --

MS. FEIBELMAN: Let me make sure I
understand. So the three blobs at this point are being set aside. Let me just ask Keith, I'm not trying to say anything. I'm trying to make sure I understand. So will the Geo Systems -- is the Geo Systems study meant to get at that fourth restoration that we talked about and we're going to be analyzing through the different documents, or is it meant to totally reevaluate what restoration you do in general?

Like are you going to say we want this restoration about the three blobs and what else, or is it let me take a fresh look at it?

MS. TAYLOR: I understand the question.

MS. FEIBELMAN: What is the answer?

MS. TAYLOR: The answer is we're not going through multiple documents. We're going to let the professionals evaluate the bosque from Central to Montano, and based on sound scientific principles recommend priority projects for restoration. That's what we're going to do. We're not going to sit around and say, "Maybe this is a good idea."

MS. FEIBELMAN: You're not starting on the green blobs, then.

MS. TAYLOR: No.

MS. FEIBELMAN: You're waiting to see what
they say about the whole idea. Okay.

    MS. TAYLOR: No, I'm paging through this because I thought I had a list, a comprehensive list, but I seem not to. But this demeaning the work that was done by the mayor's Summer Youth Program --

    MS. FEIBELMAN: We have no --

    THE REPORTER: Wait, wait.

    MS. FEIBELMAN: We have no problem with the work done by the youth. We're happy they did it. We have students that are paid to do it. We're lauding you for your work with the youth. I hope we can see the rest of the restoration.

    MS. TAYLOR: I hope that that continues to be true in the emails that you don't send me.

    MS. FEIBELMAN: We don't criticize those youths' work. It's not restoration. It's debris removal. We have no problem with that. It's just not the whole job.

    MR. REED: We're not going to continue getting into the semantics of that. We're moving to number 5, which is the update of the other bosque projects, and with that I'll turn that over to Barbara Taylor again.

    MS. TAYLOR: So that's restoration.
Yasmeen wanted to know where we were with the three
projects, and that is expanding the parking north of
Central, by the Rotary park, expanding parking and
access to the Corps of Engineers bridge south of
Central and the bridge over the siphon. And as we
noted in the last meeting, the parking has been
defered because the difficulties of expanding the
park -- the parking north of Central seemed to
outweigh any gain that we would have.

So for a refresher, the easy way to expand
the parking north of Central is to go north, but
that would have people parking their cars, crossing
the paved Paseo del Bosque bike path, and that's
obviously a really bad idea.

We can provide substantial parking on the
south side of the bridge, and I want to be perfectly
clear, because this has been miscommunicated. There
is a mutual interest between the Parks Department
and the Department of Cultural Affairs, Cultural
Services, in improving that parking area, and so
there will probably be mutual funding between the
two departments to accomplish that task.

MS. NAJMI: Do you have some idea when that
coordination and that kind of project improvement is
likely to happen?
MS. TAYLOR: I don't. Michael, do we --
we're working with -- I believe that there is a very big planning effort going on with the Bio Park in general and that this piece is part of that planning. I don't think it's years, but I don't think it's weeks, either.

MR. RIORDAN: The hope of that tax money, there's a plan out there on the Bio Park tax money, has civic priorities. Those are the priorities. This is a project that the Bio Park staff has said if funding is available, they would like to do some enhancement over there.

So it's not something that's going to happen in the first six months of the funding. That funding does not come available until July of next year. I just -- I hesitate talking about that funding because it's used. That will not be part of the project we're talking about today, any of the trail or the parking lot improvements that we're talking about today.

What might happen is when we do what I call the rotary park parking lot, that's also an entrance to the zoo and the Bio Park area and the aquarium area. There might be a joint project that would affect our design, using the trails and parks.
MS. TAYLOR: Yeah.

MS. NAJMI: I'm interested, since we have that area there, and I would -- my question is just is the City planning to coordinate with the Bio Park, find out what they're doing, and find something way to make this happen, this ADA connection from an improved parking lot to the board walk and platform.

MR. RIORDAN: The Bio Park is the City, and we're meeting weekly in preparation for the funding becoming available. And I sit on both sides of that aisle, so I will be able to jury that.

MS. NAJMI: I want to make sure someone is making that happen, make that connection.

MS. TAYLOR: We haven't abandoned that.

MS. NAJMI: It's a missed opportunity and leaves a missed connect. I see it as a priority.

MS. TAYLOR: It's very important to me, personally, that we are able to provide the opportunity for Mary to get down to that deck, because it is really a wonderful experience.

MS. BERESFORD: You're talking about the water, the deck?

MS. TAYLOR: The deck? The deck.

MS. BERESFORD: I've been to the deck, but
it's been pretty rugged getting over things. It's very difficult. A manual chair couldn't do it. And if I fell, I'd hate to get hurt.

MR. REED: Can we move on?

MS. TAYLOR: So the third thing on that, of course, is the bridge over the siphon.

MS. BERESFORD: That's what I was going to ask.

MS. TAYLOR: That project, I have nothing new to say from the prior meeting, but we do have the engineers who work for Dekker Perich designing that bridge. They have been coordinating with MRGCD and the Corps and all the appropriate people. That project will have to go to Open Space Advisory Board, that is an extraordinary facility, and be approved. So we're not -- we're doing it.

MS. BERESFORD: When do you anticipate it might go to the advisory board?

MR. SCHMADER: We could put it on the January agenda.

MS. TAYLOR: Okay. That's good. Let's do that.

MS. BERESFORD: There is a beautiful trail, so it would be nice to connect it.

MR. REED: Mike.
MR. HAMMAN: One thing, I know we're getting close to the end of the day. I want to make a comment with regard to the MRGCD available, where we're at, and it's difficult to get a word in edgewise because of the tension in the room. Unfortunately, it's still with us.

And the District in general, I've talked to our board members that represent Bernalillo County, and I think it was unfortunate that the Future Works Agreement process fell apart when it did. We were hopeful it would kind of keep us together, moving forward, and we would have an appropriate partnership.

With that said, we understand what you're up against, what the City would like to do, and we're very pleased that the District's being consulted on this, and we really want to have a strong, you know, engagement here with the trail choices and where those particular alignments are going.

The one thing that I'm hoping we can get to, and I think our board members have indicated that they wanted to work at the political level with the City to try to get the Future Work Agreement strategy kind of implemented in our future piece of
legislation, and I think that's going to be forthcoming.

As far as what the District is appreciative of here is that there is going to be a public process, and I think we're going to be heavily engaged in helping that be a success, and also the segment of the trail as well.

So we think, you know -- we understand the rationale behind the fast tracking, what you guys are up against, as far as that goes, but we generally feel like we're in the middle of this, and we're hopeful that we can somehow pull the Bosque Action Team in with the Bosque Working Group strategy when we start working on future segments of the trail.

So that's important to us, that we have a good partnership, which includes the folks around this table and the Bosque Working Group, as well as some others that are outside the process, looking in. So that's kind of where we're hoping we can guide this, going forward.

MR. REED: Thanks, Mike. I wanted to state that all the members of the Bosque Working Group, including MRGCD, are more than welcome to attend the public meeting, and we encourage you to do that.
And that's Thursday, January 7th, at Los Duranes Community Center at 5:30 p.m.

MS. BERESFORD: Where is that located?

MR. REED: Rather close to the project area as well. It's off of -- north of I-40 and west of Rio Grande Boulevard.

MS. BERESFORD: Thank you.

MR. REED: Of course, any of the MRGCD board members, we encourage them to attend, as well, and it would be fantastic.

MS. FEIBELMAN: I would like to make one quick point before we end. One is maybe a last thing, can we try to set a general week that we'd like to meet again, just so people are thinking about it.

And then, secondly, I've heard a couple of statements of people being concerned that we email our members, and I'd just like to clarify that point a little bit. As an organization that aids people in taking action to protect natural places and other parts of the environment, we view it as our job to keep our members apprised of stuff.

And emails that we send out, we don't have any problem if you see them, if you read them.

That's why we send them. The E message that we sent
to people asking them to comment was with the understanding that the comment period had actually opened, but, you know, I think we also feel like there's information that we're not getting.

You know, you said that there's this public process now, and now we know what those dates are, but the public process began with no formal initiation, no indication of what the dates would be or times or when people could comment.

And so, you know, my sense is we have to send out an email telling people to comment because that email didn't come out from the Working Group, and it didn't come out from the City.

We've understood that it's begun because of the dates of the outing, but it seems to me like typically in a public process, there's a formal statement of the public process that says, "This is the question at hand, this is the timeline," and absent that, we felt that it's important to communicate to people that they communicate to Matt their views since it was said on the outings that that input was being requested.

And throughout the whole process of the bosque vision, we have regularly informed our members that's what our job is, that's why we have
members, and I'm sorry that sometimes our message
doesn't feel like what you would like us to say, but
I think we also feel the same.

And so I think to the extent that this
colorful process can be formally written out and
published to the public, that would be helpful.

MR. REED: Okay. Anybody else? Mary?

MR. RIORDAN: If I could. Mary, go ahead.

MS. BERESFORD: I would like to make a
quick comment. I really appreciate the support of
the mayor's office and the City of Albuquerque in
supporting public access to places like this, so we
can get to them. I have fought under the ABA, I've
done a lot of work on it, and it's because of a lot
of unfortunate attitudes towards access that we've
had to fight and demonstrate and boycott just to get
the ADA in, just to be equal to what everybody else
is. Nothing special. Equal.

The best comments I have on the ADA is the
ADA has people with disabilities to boldly go where
everybody else has gone before. Boldly be able to
enjoy the bosque, boldly be able to go. I
appreciate people understanding because when I went
on these walking tours, people don't get it at all,
and I walked away very frustrated. Thank you very
much.

MR. REED: Mr. Riordan.

MR. RIORDAN: As far as the communication coming out of the group, I believe the mischaracterizations of some of conversations we've had before has led to a lot of tension. So I do request the court reporter recording this, after the Board has reviewed it and concurred with the statements in that, that that's what the official public record of the communication that happened today, not any additional mischaracterizations.

MR. REED: Anybody else?

MS. FEIBELMAN: Actually, Michael, when you talk about mischaracterization, I think we can both say mischaracterizations, but you're on the City Council recording, agreeing to the agreement in April.

MR. REED: Okay.

MS. FEIBELMAN: When we talk about mischaracterization, it always helps when there's an agreement in writing, to please the working group, and Matt, I'm sorry to interject, but I'm asking as co-chair of this working group that there be a published description of the public process, and I do not think that is too much to ask.
MS. TAYLOR: I think the meeting is adjourned, and --

MS. FEIBELMAN: I'm sorry, I'm going to request of the members of the working group, which apparently you and I, Barbara, that there be a published communication.

MS. TAYLOR: We're going to publish the court reporter's notes so that there is a verbatim record of what we've discussed today, because the funding has been mischaracter- -- because there have been mischaracterizations.

MS. FEIBELMAN: On both parts. On both parts.

MS. TAYLOR: Now that we're adjourned and we're off the record --

MS. FEIBELMAN: You have not adjourned the meeting.

(Ms. Feibelman talking at same time as Mr. Reed and therefore not audible.)

MR. REED: I'm going to adjourn the meeting because this isn't productive.

THE REPORTER: Wait, wait, wait. One at a time.

MS. FEIBELMAN: I want an agreement from the group that there will be a public communication
of the public process. Counselor Winter asked for
it and others. I would like to -- if we don't
agree, then we will vote, but I want out of this
meeting a formal communication of this public
process.

    MS. NAJMI: Is that your intention? Are
you planning to do that? And if not, why not?

    MS. TAYLOR: Michael read into the record
before you got here today exactly what the public
process is going to be.

    MR. REED: Correct.

    MS. FEIBELMAN: And you expect the public
to read the meeting transcript?

    MS. TAYLOR: We'll put the schedule on the
web today.

    MR. REED: Yes.

    MS. NAJMI: You're going to publish the
meeting and what the process was?

    MR. RIORDAN: I handed Mary the proof of
the ad that will be in the paper. The ad will be in
the paper three times.

    MS. BERESFORD: Three times?

    MR. REED: Correct.

    MS. FEIBELMAN: And should we also see the
proof of the ad? When do you share this
information?

MR. RIORDAN: It says there's a meeting. Look at it. This is a standard ad that the City puts in the paper all the time when we have a public meeting. Nothing nefarious. There will be a public meeting, and here's what it will be, and these are the times.

MR. REED: With that, I'll move we adjourn the meeting.

MS. FEIBELMAN: Okay.

MR. REED: Thank you all for coming, and with that, we're closed.

(The meeting was concluded at 3:19 PM.)
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Deborah L. Dickey, CCR #157, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that I did report in stenographic shorthand the proceedings set forth herein, and the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the proceeding had upon the taking of this hearing to the best of my ability.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither employed by nor related to nor contracted with (unless excepted by the rules) any of the parties or attorneys in this case, and that I have no interest whatsoever in the final disposition of this case in any court.

____________________________________
Deborah L. Dickey, CCR, RPR
WILLIAMS & ASSOCIATES
1608 5th, NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102