



Town of Erie Open Space and Trails Advisory Board

From: Town of Erie Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB)
To: Deborah Bachelder, Senior Planner, Community Development
Date: November 1, 2016

Subject: Ranchwood Minor Subdivision Tract B, Sketch Plan
Document Date: September 6, 2016
Location: south of Erie Police Dept., west of County Line Road

OSTAB has reviewed the package materials, compared them to Town planning documents, and prepared the following comments, questions, and recommendations for the Town's consideration in evaluating this project.

Open Space and the Natural Areas Inventory (NAI):

Discussion: There are no NAI sites in this application; there is no dedicated open space in this application. The Plan includes rezoning the 28.65 acre parcel into 2 high density residential lots (13.5 acres) and 2 future community commercial lots (12.56 acres). The residential lots would have 216 family apartment units. The required dedicated open space for those apartment units is roughly 10.25 acres. The applicant is requesting to pay a fee in lieu of dedicating open space.

We are in favor of the applicant's request, for the following reasons:

1. There is no adjacent open space that could be combined into a large open space tract;
2. The required open space would consume roughly 35% of the total site;
3. The current zoning, Community Mixed Use, permits both high density residential and Community Commercial.

The Leyner Cottonwood Ditch runs diagonally across the entire parcel from NW to SE, to the intersection of Erie Parkway and County Line Road. The ditch is underground beyond that intersection. The applicant is requesting that the Ditch be located underground across the entire site.

Recommendation:

1. Accept the applicant's request to pay a fee in lieu of dedicating open space;
2. Accept the applicant's request to locate the Leyner Cottonwood Ditch underground across the entire site.

Spine Trail:

Discussion: There is no Spine Trail in this application. The Town's PROST Master Plan does not include a future Spine Trail at this location.

Neighborhood Trails:

Discussion: There is an existing 8’ concrete trail on the north side of the Ditch in the Sunwest Subdivision. That trail currently ends at the western boundary of this application. The narrative states: “The existing trail system will be continued through the sites pocket park and reconnect on the east side of the proposed Ranchwood Avenue.” We do not agree with that statement. Sheet 3 of the Sketch Plan contains the following, from west to east:

1. A short paved trail (roughly 15’ in length) from the property line to a parking area;
2. A marked walkway across a large parking area;
3. A path through the pocket park;
4. Another marked walkway across another large parking area;
5. Sidewalks adjacent to the large parking area and an apartment building.

That configuration does meet our definition of a trail system. We have a much better idea. The existing 8’ paved trail in the Sunwest subdivision should be extended along the western edges of this application to both Erie Parkway and the extension of Jasper Road. It should be in a landscaped tract that is at least 50’ wide. The existing sidewalk on the north side of Erie Parkway is 8’ wide. Thus our proposed trail would provide an 8’ wide access from the existing trail in Sunwest to the nearby Erie Community Center and High Plains Library. We believe an 8’ width is necessary to safely accommodate a mixture of pedestrian, bicycle riders, carriages, and other usages, especially when children are participating. In addition, the landscaped tract along the western edge of this application would provide a buffer to the existing homes in Sunwest.

We also believe that there should be a west-east 8’ trail in a landscaped tract that would connect our proposed trail along the western border to the pocket park and proposed commercial area east of Ranchwood Avenue. We prefer that this trail NOT cross large parking lots. If it does, pedestrian activated traffic controls should be required.

Jasper Road west of this application includes a 5’ bicycle lane on both sides of the road. The extension of that road in this application to County Line Road should be sufficiently wide to include identical bicycle lanes.

Recommendations:

1. Provide an 8’ trail in a landscaped tract along the western border of the entire property. It should connect to both Erie Parkway and the extension of Jasper Road;
2. Provide an 8’ trail in a landscaped tract that would connect our proposed trail along the western border to the pocket park and commercial area east of Ranchwood Avenue;
3. Any trail that crosses a parking area should contain pedestrian activated traffic controls;
4. The extension of Jasper Road from the western property line to County Line Road should be sufficiently wide to include 5’ bicycle lanes on each side.

Please pass this referral letter to the Applicant, and appropriate town departments, boards, and commissions. Thank you for your attention to these matters. OSTAB is available to discuss any of the above in more detail as needed.

Sincerely,

Open Space and Trails Advisory Board

Phil Brink
Bob Braudes
Dawn Fraser
Monica Kash
Nicole Littmann
Ken Martin (Chair)
Joe Martinez