



## CITY COUNCIL REPORT

August 6, 2008

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: <sup>PN</sup> Phillip L. Nelson, City Manager  
John M. Lamerato, Assistant City Manager/Finance & Administration 

SUBJECT: Fitness Trail in Raintree Park

### Background:

- Over the past several weeks, David Ross, has appeared before the Council seeking changes to the alignment of the fitness trail in Raintree Park.
- Mr. Ross feels that the path interferes with his privacy and that people walking dogs on the path create a conflict with his dogs.
- Original layout and construction of the path was based on layout of the entire park including adjacent land uses for baseball and soccer. Design around the perimeter of the park gives users a facility that offers exercise and fitness within a park that has been one of the most highly used parks in the City's system.
- Staff has looked at ways to improve the situation for homeowners adjacent to the path including planting additional landscaping and earth berming the area to the south of the path to try to reduce some of the views into the backyards of adjacent properties. A copy of a staff memo and landscaping plan is attached to this cover memo.
- Park staff has met with Mr. Ross to explain planting and landscaping plans. Thus far, Mr. Ross has rejected all options other than removal of the pathway.
- Two other property owners, one on the south side of the pathway, and one on the north side of the park have expressed interest in additional landscaping materials being installed.

### Financial Considerations:

- Estimated cost of the landscaping and berming plan is \$4,000.
- Removal of the pathway is estimated to cost \$11,600
- Realignment of the path to eliminate the two 90 degree turns and move the pathway further away from the adjacent properties is estimated at \$12,000 to \$15,000 if constructed by DPW staff. This would be in addition to the \$11,600 for removal of the existing pathway. Realignment of the pathway could also jeopardize some of the usability of the athletic fields to the north of the pathway.

Legal Considerations:

- The existing pathway was constructed as a part of the overall development plan to install walking/bicycle pathways in all city parks.
- The existing pathway is located entirely inside the legal boundaries of the park.

Policy Considerations:

- 42% of respondents to a community survey as part of the Parks Master Plan indicated that their highest priority is the development and construction of hike and bike trails. Overall, 67% of respondents listed hike and bike trails as either their first, second or third highest priorities.
- One of the "Preferred Futures" of the Troy Futures Report called for "In 2020, Troy has a special focus on fitness, helping residents maximize their health and fitness goals. Health and fitness opportunities are accessible, convenient, entertaining and diverse".
- The proposed City Master Plan contains a quote by Richard Florida author of The Rise of the Creative Class that states "Creative class people value active outdoor recreation very highly. They are drawn to places and communities where many outdoor activities are prevalent—both because they enjoy these activities and because their presence is seen as a signal that the place is amenable to the broader creative lifestyle".
- According to a study completed by the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, homes located within one-quarter to one-half mile of a community park could add up to 20% to the value of a home.

Course of Action:

Staff has tried to offer options that could lessen some of the perceptions of adverse impacts voiced by neighboring property owners. Installation of landscaping and earth berms will enhance the property, and could reduce some of the perceived adverse impacts of the trail. The trail meets outcomes 1 and 2 by improving livability and the health of the community, and adds value to adjacent properties. Staff would recommend that landscaping and earth berming be completed, and that the trail not be removed.

July 31, 2008

To: Phillip L. Nelson, City Manager  
From: John M. Lamerato, Assistant City Manager/Finance and Administration  
Carol K. Anderson, Parks and Recreation Director *CYA*   
Subject: Raintree Park Path Update

There has been an effort in recent years to offer more opportunities for residents to walk and bike in the community. Installation of the pathway at Raintree Park, as well as the pathways in Robinwood, Boulan, Beaver Trail Parks and the Troy Community Center is in response to this effort.

The asphalt pathway at Raintree Park was installed by the same process used in other installations. The installation was done by the DPW staff and the restoration (seeding, grading) is being done by the Parks staff. The estimated installation cost is \$108,800. Restoration is estimated at \$5000 including materials and labor.

The edges of the new pathway within the developed portion of the park have been seeded or hydro seeded. The edges of the portion of pathway that winds through the wooded area of the park have been treated with wood chips. The rerouting of the disc golf course was planned to be completed after installation and restoration later this year.

The path is an improvement to the park and a benefit to the community. It is being enjoyed by many, including parents with children, senior citizens, and wheelchair-bound individuals. It offers access to portions of the park that were previously unavailable, and opens up new recreational opportunities to park users.

It is unfortunate that the pathway has created perceived reductions of privacy for at least one resident whose property backs up to the park. Mr. Ross has requested removal of a portion of the path. Cost to remove is estimated at \$11,600. Removal and rerouting of the path would be impossible as the route would be through the soccer fields. Included in this memo is a schematic of the park showing the soccer field placement (attachment 1). Rerouting the path by removing the southern section parallel to North Lake would eliminate the use of the soccer fields.

Parks and Recreation department staff have met with and/or talked to Mr. Ross on several occasions with the intention of coming to an agreement about how best to resolve this situation. Most recently, Mr. Ross contacted Carol Anderson on July 22, 2008 requesting a scaled drawing of the proposed landscaping between the pathway and his property line that he could have reviewed by an architect. He also expressed frustration that the path had not been removed and that the city has done nothing. Ms. Anderson indicated that there had been no direction to remove the path.

Staff provided Mr. Ross with a scaled drawing on July 29, 2008 showing plant material planted on 2'- 3' berms, for consideration by him and his landscape architect. That drawing has been included with this memorandum (attachment 2). The berms and plant material illustrated on the drawing can be installed by City staff, with an estimated material cost of \$4000.00. There is some existing screening of the path on private property and the proposed landscaping should provide a complete screen of the pathway from Mr. Ross' property within two growing seasons.

As city crews have worked on the restoration, Mr. Ross has approached the staff asking about the tasks completed, what they were doing and why, etc.

Mr. Ross has contended that the reason for his opposition, in part is because of concerns about the safety of his dogs. He has also stated that if the dogs are outside they will bark anytime someone is on or near the path.

Two other property owners (one along North Lake and one on the north side of the park on Oakcrest) have contacted the City inquiring about additional screening. Both residents have indicated that they would like to wait to see the effect of the path but would like the option for the city to install screening in the future.

Staff efforts in this matter have been in good faith. Mr. Ross has indicated that he wants the path removed. Staff maintains that the location of the pathway at Raintree Park is appropriate and should not be moved or removed. Unless directed otherwise, the installation of the proposed landscaping will be initiated.

Pictures of the path are attached.

RAINTREE PARK



1 inch equals 175 feet



CITY OF TROY  
OAKLAND COUNTY MICHIGAN

The information provided by this program has been compiled from recorded deeds, plats, tax maps, surveys, and other public records and data. It is not legally required to be surveyed. Users of this data are hereby notified that the source information represented should be consulted for verification.

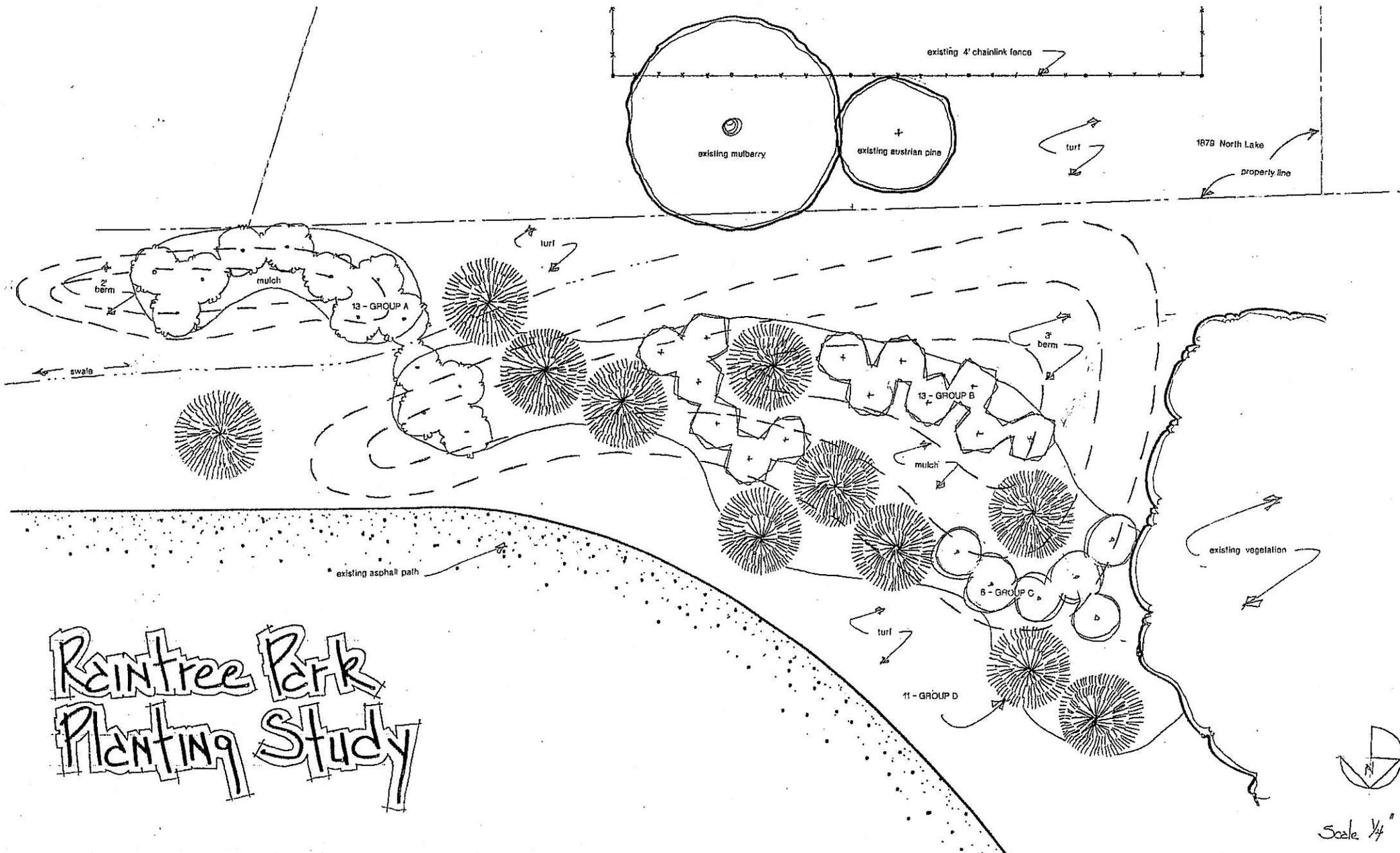
KEY

- ① 43' 6" To edge of Soccer field (west edge)
- ② 107' SOUTH PATH EDGE TO GOAL SLEEVES
- ③ 105' BETWEEN SOUTH EDGE PATH & PATH INTER-SECTION

SOUTH



Attachment 2



# Raintree Park Planting Study

Scale 1/4"

# Possible Plants for Raintree Park Planting Study

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## *Group A*

*Myrica pensylvanica*

*Physocarpus opulifolius*

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## *Group B*

*Forsythia x intermedia*

*Juniperus chinensis*

*Juniperus scopulorum*

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## *Group C*

*Syringa vulgaris*

*Spiraea x vanhouttei*

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## *Group D*

*Picea pungens*

*Pinus sylvestris*

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## Notes:

- Unless otherwise indicated cultivars may be used if form meets screening requirements.
- Groups A, B and C planted 4 feet on center typical unless cultural requirements for selected plants dictate otherwise.
- Group D minimum planting distance 10 feet.
- All plants to be planted in mulched beds with natural cut edge.
- Final locations of plants to be determined on site.
- Plant selection may vary depending on availability.

From Road Looking South



#A S



#7 S



#95



#105



#115

