

Three Mile Creek Watershed Management Plan

Appendix B – Public Participation

Results from 2013 Public Meetings

Summary

Members of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and Dewberry Consulting arranged and executed 13 public meetings held within the Three Mile Creek watershed during April and May of 2013. The presentation included a history on Three Mile Creek, maps of the watershed in reference to the public meeting location, a summary of the Watershed Management Plan and timeline for the publication of the Plan. At the end of the presentation, attendees were asked the following questions regarding the restoration of Three Mile Creek:

1. What do you like?
2. What don't you like?
3. What opportunities and/or ideas should we consider?
4. What could threaten our success?

Results

1. Public- Envisioned Strengths of TMC Restoration Planning:
 - Overwhelming support for a connected corridor for biking/kayaking/walking/running
 - Could be a form of transportation for commuters and would reduce traffic.
 - Let's see people moving – families out on picnics, walks, exercising.
 - Mobile could become a bike-friendly community.
 - TMC could be a symbol of Mobile. TMC could be Mobile's Central Park – an escape to nature from urban life next door. It is a beautiful wilderness hidden in the city.
 - Would improve home values, economy and environment.
 - Once it is further connected, public investment will grow and will build a momentum which will help with future planning efforts.
 - Getting people out in TMC is the best way to preserve it.

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- Current project of moving outfalls out of TMC will improve water quality.
 - Would be a positive for children – get them outside, prevent them from joining gangs. Keep focus elsewhere.

2. Public Concerns re: TMC Restoration Planning:

- There is a huge amount of trash and litter and it smells - such an eyesore.
- Creek has been so degraded over time. We have lost so much of the natural resources already.
- Concerned for people consuming fish caught in the Creek.
- People don't even know the Creek exists.
- Existing bike paths are not maintained.

3. Opportunities and Ideas for TMC Restoration:

- Raising public awareness is key to this task – need a public awareness campaign.
- Any trails built need to be safe, designed smartly using eco-friendly ideas and sustainable-use planning and should provide space for potential races.
- Trails on both sides of TMC would be ideal.
- Would like to see vessel launches for recreation.
- Consider a river walk shopping center with restaurants.
- Community development block grants are a great way to secure future funding.
- TMC needs a new name. Implies it is only 3 miles long. What about returning it to Bayou Chatogue?
- Get the word out on churches. Can work with our congregations to hear about meetings.
- Engage community action groups in the restoration of TMC.
- Involve churches, sororities/fraternities, schools and civic clubs.
- Tricentennial Park is great, but packed – need more access areas along TMC.
- Will need to work on this one section at a time to build up public trust and overcome negativity.
- Need to think of groups that would use future parks and think of the businesses who could sponsor park beautification/maintenance.
- Use existing plans – don't try to reinvent the wheel.
- Connect citizens to project – make it personal – to obtain support.
- Piggyback on existing meetings.

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- Need public/private partnership.
- Start with east of I-65. West of I-65 already has Tricentennial Park, so work with east to build confidence in intent of project.
- First step should be to put in trails before we can tackle water quality improvement - having visual improvement will help get the community behind it.
- Need sufficient lighting along any built paths.

4. Threats to Success of TMC Restoration

- Safety is a priority and we need to make sure people feel secure visiting TMC. We don't want to attract the wrong crowds.
- Big challenge will be changing the littering culture in this area.
- Potential for more crime if linear park connects all neighborhoods.
- Physical obstructions in TMC will limit use by kayakers/boaters.
- Different perceptions of east vs. west of I-65.
- Industrial sites will be problematic.

Public Participation for Plan Adoption

Note to reader of Draft TMC WMP: this section will be completed after the comment period is completed.