



Rita Garcia
Tana Ridge HOA
4677 Lily Ave N
Lake Elmo, MN 55042

March 14, 2011

Dear Rita,

First, thank you Rita, for your phone call last week regarding the status of the City's efforts to develop a base trail between the Old Village and Stillwater High School, specifically the possibility of Tana Ridge's trails being utilized in the development of the trail. As you are aware, the City's Trail Guide Plan does identify segments of Tana Ridge's existing private trail system as potential segments of this particular base trail. As I indicated in our conversation though, the Trail Guide Plan is only conceptual in that it identifies significant origins and destinations and links the two with a possible trail alignment that is considered only general in nature. The Trail Guide Plan, as reflected in its title, was developed as a general guide for trail development with considerable flexibility in terms of specific trail segment alignments.

Of the eight base trails identified in the Trail Guide Plan, the City's Park Commission has identified the Old Village / Stillwater High School base trail as their highest priority. Given this, staff and the City's consulting engineer are currently in the process of reviewing all possible trail alignments that might be utilized in the development of this particular base trail. The possible utilization of existing private trail through Tana Ridge will be reviewed and considered, but other potential trail alignments through that general area will be considered as well. In addition, we are in the process of developing a policy regarding the acquisition of private trails, should an acquisition of this nature be beneficial at some point in time.

As we discussed, the issue of private trail acquisition is a complex one for both the City and HOA's. Just some of the issues and questions that need to be addressed include: *nature and degree of public purpose* (must an acquired trail meet a certain standard of public purpose? How will private trails with little or no public purpose be handled?), *trail condition* (will it be required that trails be of a standard or condition at the time of acquisition?), *trail maintenance* (who will be responsible for maintaining the trails and what will be the standard for maintenance?). No doubt these and other issues will be the subject of considerable discussion at the staff, Park Commission and City Council level. Likewise, I understand that the subject of releasing property is likely to be a controversial and complex issue for HOA's.

I hope you find this information helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss this issue further.

Carol Kriegler
Project Assistant
City of Lake Elmo