THE RIVEREDGE EXPANSION

The primary focus of this master plan has been the evaluation of the multiple impacts of the expansion of the existing riveredge Park. This expansion is primarily concerned with the development of a network of trails that ties into existing and proposed regional trails and parklands.

The 1987 National Parks and Recreation standards indicate that Kent is underparked, having less than 1/4 of the needed parklands and 1/14th the required trails (See Figure 9 & 10).

THE GOAL OF THE STUDY

The task of this Master Plan, as defined by the Park Board had three distinct goals:

1. Connecting to Tower's Woods, a county owned park.
2. Tracing the Historic Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal to the location of a proposed nature center near the Franklin/Ravenna Township line, north of Summit Road.
3. Connecting to the Metroparks bikeway system/developing existing Riveredge Park lands west to the Stow/Kent boarder.

In the process of evaluating these possibilities, we have found a diversity of interests in both the geographical and biological aspects of the proposal. These interests, that we have described in public presentations by the acronym H.E.R.E. (for Historic Preservation, Economic Development, Recreational Opportunity, and Ecological Education) provide a good way of understanding the possibilities before us.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

All sections of the proposed trail have some aspect of historic interest for all ages. Particularly fascinating are remnants of the Pennsylvania and Ohio canal, which include 90' stone culvert at Plum Creek outlet, miles of canal bed, and remnants of a lock in downtown Kent. Opportunities exist for interpretive walks, the development of literature, archeological digs, preservation of remnants, and development of park areas to gain access to such places.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Parks are an important amenity for any community, and contribute greatly to the quality of life of our citizens. While the development and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities and programs come at a cost, these costs are more than balanced by the benefits of a healthy and active populace. In turn, the development of parks facilities with a regional interest provide opportunities for local residents to find outdoor activities close to home. Aside from the obvious savings in fuel and time, (which are kept in the local economy), the increased recreational opportunities make the region a more interesting place for visitors as well. In other parts of Ohio, regional bikeways draw hundreds of thousands of visitors per year. (Little Miami Scenic Bikeway)

Another aspect of economic development are the opportunities for primary and secondary expenditures in the construction, maintenance use of recreational facilities. Bike Shops, athletic stores, restaurants, retail and hospitality businesses all benefit from visitors and citizens alike using such amenities.

A 1992 study conducted by the National Park Service and the Leisure Studies Program at Penn State University - The Impact of Rail Trails, found significant expenditures of local and visitor funds in activities related to rail trail development.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

It goes without saying that the development of a comprehensive system of trails and related activity areas provide increased recreational opportunity. What we can say however is that trails in an urban area provide not only a place to go during leisure time, but also a corridor for walking or biking rather than using an automobile. This reintegration of exercise and recreation into daily life is increasingly being seen as a vital part of the opportunity we have to create a healthier society.

Norman Ford, authority on the healthiness of communities, has found that communities that provide outdoor recreation facilities, and especially encourage walking and bicycling, on average, are superior places to live and retire. (See The 50 Healthiest Cities to Live and Retire in the United States, Mills & Sanderson, 1991)

ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION

In so far as life is education, the use of trails brings their users in closer touch with the outdoors and the historical and ecological setting where the trail is found. Trails offer a never ending array of opportunities for learning about the ecological niche where we live and indeed the impact of our lives upon the world. Outdoor education can be very formal, with tours, hikes and interpretive materials, or as informal as an evening stroll. No matter how one approaches the use of trails, one cannot help to learn from the experience.

PROSPECTS AND PLANS

Each of these aspects of the development of parks and recreation facilities came to the floor in our discussions with residents, property owners along the trail, local officials and advisory committee members. In the following sections of this report we elaborate on the particular aspects and concerns of the proposed plans...
### FIGURE 9 PUBLIC PARK STANDARDS

(From NRPA Standards, 1987, p.66)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARK TYPE</th>
<th>ACRES PER 1000 PEOPLE</th>
<th>SIZE/ACRES</th>
<th>SERVICE AREA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>1 Neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16-99</td>
<td>Several Neighborhoods or Community Wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100-499</td>
<td>Several Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Entire Metropolitan Area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FIGURE 10 RECREATION TRAIL STANDARDS

(Adapted from NRPA Standards)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACILITY</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>REQUIRED BY</th>
<th>KENT EXISTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiking</td>
<td>1 mile/4,000 pop.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature or Interpretive</td>
<td>1/2,500</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian</td>
<td>1/6,250</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>-0-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle/Jogging</td>
<td>1/2,000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>On Streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Country Skiing</td>
<td>EXERCISE</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>par course @ KSU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
METHODOLOGY

The method used to develop this plan was to accumulate the ideas of as many people as possible and distill them through the use of public participation workshops and an advisory committee. This plan is the result of the work of our firm and its consultants responding to the ideas and concerns of the citizens of Kent and developing the best case scenario with all the knowledge we have before us.

From February to May we held a series of workshops to study the possibilities of the proposed trails. At these workshops, discussion and comments ensued that have contributed much to the out come of this plan. A large 1" = 100' scale map (14" x28") was used to discuss the ideas.

In June we held a public meeting where the overall plan was presented for comments. This meeting included small groups discussions as well. On July 4th, during KentFest, the big map was placed on display and a survey was distributed. In August - October this draft report was developed, with commentary and advise from the advisory committee and parks and recreation staff.

As with any plan, this is meant as a structure and guide to provide for change. Its greatest attribute is that it provides a vision of a possible future, one that we might not be able to realize without it. While the changes proposed here-in may never be realized, the very process of considering them has given all of us a new view of our community and the tremendous resource we have.

SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

In the course of our investigations and workshops, we divided the study area into four distinct areas. As a result of the planning, as well as a need to present findings in a report form, we have further divided these areas into 12 distinct sections with some sub sections.

In the following pages, each of these sections is illustrated, analyzed and discussed in varying amounts of detail.

OUTLINE OF PARK SECTIONS

WESTERN EXTENSION:

1. Bikeway Connection to Metro Parks

2. Stow Corporate Line to Wooden Trestle (Wheeling & Lake Erie)

EXISTING PARK:

3. Wheeling and Lake Erie Trestle to Harvey Redmond Bridge (including Knap An Fields)

4. Harvey Redmond Bridge to Tannery Park via Riveredge

SA Tannery Park to Main Street Bridge (West side of River)

SB Tannery Park to Main Street Bridge (East side of River)

6. Main Street Bridge to Brady's Leap

EASTERN EXTENSION:

7. Brady's Leap to Crain

8. Crain to Towner's Woods via the Connal Rail Corridor

9. Crain to Riverhead Park:


11. Canal Trace: Cuyahoga River to proposed Regional Nature Center

12. Proposed Regional Nature Center
EXISTING METROPARKS OFF ROAD BIKEWAY

PROPOSED OFF ROAD BIKEWAY (Kent to Ravenna)

EXISTING SIDEWALK BIKE ROUTE

1. POSSIBLE EDISON RIGHT OF WAY RAILS
2. POSSIBLE RIVER-EDGE ROUTE
3. RECOMMENDED ROUTE/ON SHOULDER

FIGURE 1-1
BIKEWAY CONNECTION,
AKRON METROPARKS BIKEWAY TO
PROPOSED OFF-ROAD ENTRY
AT CRAIN AVENUE
SECTION I

BIKEWAY CONNECTION TO METROPARKS TO PROPOSED REGIONAL BIKEWAY

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

One of the primary concepts in regional parks development is the connection of parklands and trails. For this study we evaluated connection to the Metroparks bike trail that ends at Munroe Falls Kent Road in Kent (figure 1-1)

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

At present, there is an on-street bike trail that begins at the end of the Metroparks trail, turns onto Munroe Falls-Kent Road and then to W. Main Street and then to Davey Jr. High and Roosevelt High School. This trail, developed in the 1970's under the direction of Dr. Walter Lang and the Rotary Club, provided for curb cuts and signs so that children could safely cycle to school on sidewalks.

In considering the connection of the Riveredge Park development to the Metroparks trail, we evaluated three possibilities for this extension:

1. Continuing along Ohio Edison property to the northeast.

2. Following along city streets to the park for a river edge bike trail (as far west as possible).

3. Following Munroe Falls - Kent Road to Middlebury Road, and then through the Park to Stow Street, and then downtown.

CONTINUING NORTH EAST

At first glance, it would seem logical to extend the bikeway to the Northeast along the Ohio Edison Property. While this would be possible, and might be worth pursuing, it would not take the rider/hiker to a destination much more favorable than the present trail. At Leonard, a cyclist would need to go on street and follow the existing route.

ACCESSING RIVEREDGE PARK AT MIDDLEBURY ROAD.

A second possible route is to take Munroe Falls - Kent Road to Akron Boulevard, connecting to existing parkland on the North or South side of the river. Aside from being very difficult to access, the terrain of the parkland is very steep and therefore fragile. It was the general consensus of the February Workshop that developing a bicycle trail along the Cuyahoga River was contradictory to the use of the riveredge as a natural area. This is discussed in greater detail in Section 2.

ON ROAD BIKEWAY VIA MIDDLEBURY ROAD

Discussion at the February Workshop, as well as subsequent discussions with the City Engineer, leads us to recommend that the present bike route (on sidewalks) maintained for children, and be supplemented by an on street-class III bike path following Munroe Falls - Kent Road to Middlebury Road. It would then follow across parkland to Stow Street and through downtown to the Conrail right of way.

A Class III bike path is defined by Ohio Department of Transportation as a paved shoulder with a stripe between the vehicle lane and the cycling lane. Lane and shoulder widths and speeds are determined by road conditions and right of way width. Such an upgrade of the street would require special considerations as Middlebury, Munroe Falls-Kent and Stow are all relatively "unimproved" roads. It is recommended, that such improvements be made as part of general upgrading improvements are scheduled for these sections. At present, The cities unfunded capital plan indicates a repaving of Middlebury Road and a total reconstruction of Stow Street. Upgrading them in width to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians would be at an expense in addition to those already planned. The difficult with both of these streets is that they have a very narrow right of way.

At present, Stow Street is programmed to receive 28' wide pavement, new storm drainage and sidewalks. Making the street wider to more comfortably accommodate cyclists would be difficult. A 14' wide curb lane is the minimum recommended width for a street with cyclists. Given the visibility, grade and speed issues of this street, one alternative scenario would be to widen the street, and cut the grade to make it safer for cycling. This would require the purchase and demolition of existing homes. Other alternatives, including limiting or eliminating access to Stow Street from Haymaker Parkway, should be evaluated as alternatives means to creating a safe bicycle and pedestrian access to Fred Fuller Park.

Vehicular egress from the Kramer Fields has also been an issue in recent years primarily due to the difficulty of turning left out of the park entry. Restricting left turns, the use of parking lot shuttles and/or the creation of a second access roadway to the park should be a part of the Stow Street evaluation.

Middlebury Road is presently planned to be paved only, and then at a 20' width. This is significantly below the city standard of 26', and does not accommodate pedestrians. In the past there has been no neighborhood interests in upgrading the street for width, curbs and sidewalks. Before cycling is encouraged on Middlebury and Munroe Falls-Kent Roads, paved lanes or separate path will need to be provided.
The primary benefit of bringing cyclists down Middlebury Road is that it brings them adjacent to present and possible future park access points at Fred Fuller Park. The Metroparks bikeway is primarily a "greenway" or off road/nature area trail, so this scheme would offer opportunities for cyclists passing through to access comfort and picnic facilities, and for locals to safely reach the park and its recreation and picnic facilities.

The map (Figure 1) indicates on road trail crossing park land from Middlebury Road to Stow Street. At Stow Street improvements will need to provide a smooth transition and it will require careful marking due to limited visibility. The 10MPH posted speed limit will also need to be strictly enforced, and/or speed bumps put into place.

Beyond the Stow Street bridge, the bike trail could go through town in two ways.

1. Use the soon-to-be abandoned Conrail right of way from Stow Street to Crain Avenue, or
2. Use of Franklin Avenue, W. Main and North Water Street.

CONRAIL RIGHT OF WAY
In the case of the Conrail right of way, clearing, grading and pathway construction would be required, depending upon long term use of the rail. As of this writing, the continued operation of the rail is being pursued by the Portage Private Industry Council. If operation is continued, a joint use agreement would be required for a pathway to be feasible. (See section 8)

ON STREET OPTION
The second option through town, using Franklin Avenue, West Main and North Water Streets, is relatively easy to do, given that there is good visibility. The rough brick surface of Franklin Avenue has some effect on keeping speeds low, but special signage, indicating a cycling zone would also be required. (See Policy & Procedures for Bicycle Projects - Ohio Department of Transportation, current edition).

The costs of this bikeway connection, from the present City line, are calculated below. These costs assume that there is no volunteer, in kind or other donation of materials and labor.

EVALUATION COST
The cost for upgrading streets for bikeways has been determined by ODOT to be approximately $55,000 per mile if completed as a "stand-alone" project. Assuming that the widening of shoulders would occur with regular street upgrades, this cost could be less. The work to Middlebury Road, Munroe Falls, Kent and Stow Street could therefore cost over $100,000.

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY
It was the recommendation of the February workshop as well as the Kent City engineer, that the route for the bikeway be Munroe Falls - Kent, Middlebury, through Fred Fuller to Stow, Franklin Avenue to North Water Street and then to the Conrail corridor. We think that this route offers the best possibilities for experiencing the natural cultural, and historic amenities of Kent.
FIGURE 2-1
STOW CORPORATE LINE TO WOODEN TRESTLE
(Wheeling and Lake Erie)

Approximate Limit City Property
Approximate P & O Canal Location

See Detail Figure 2-4
SECTION 2

STOW CORPORATE LINE TO WOODEN TRESTLE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION
This area is characterized by a wooded, steeply banked flood plain with intermittent wetland areas beside the stream of the river. This area has been owned by the parks system since the 1930's, but has not been developed (figure 2-1).

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

1. Provide additional trail along the river edge to meet hiking/exploring and naturalist needs.

2. Provide a pedestrian/off road access to existing park from west side neighborhoods.

3. Trace the historic P & O Canal bed/fox path, which links into Stow. Possibly connect to Akron Metroparks ‘Munroe Falls Park.


5. Provide access for recreational boating and fishing.

ANALYSIS/RECOMMENDATIONS

A boat launch area formerly operated about 450' west of the Akron Boulevard/Middlebury Road intersection, It was closed due to a dispute of property ownership and the impact of traffic, parking and noise on the neighborhood. Plans are currently being pursued to develop a boat ramp at a more accessible location upstream. On the south side of the river, the city owns a large parcel bordered by Middlebury Road bridge on the west and Lake Erie trestles on the east and the CSX Railroad right of way on the south. This area contains a significant remnant of the P & O Canal including canal bed and stone culvert. A large wooded area that is relatively seclude also offers opportunity for natural education activities. This side is the most likely area to be developed.
ACCESS/ENTRY

Access to the south side of the river is the primary reason why this area has not been developed in the past. To the west, access has been restricted by the Tomkin's Corporation which has developed up to the river edge. To the east, there is a steep embankment between the river's edge and the CSX tracks making access extremely difficult. Reaching the culvert at Plum Creek (See figures 2-2 & 2-3) is therefore only possible by crossing over railroad tracks from Cherry Street or traveling a steep area from the western edge of the developed park.

Possible improvements to access this area include developing a boardwalk trail on the east or a bridge over the Cuyahoga at the southern end of Longmore. Both of these possibilities would be very expensive and of questionable worth, especially if the goal was to make them handicapped accessible. Another concern, expressed by parks staff, is that if only one of these is implemented, we would be left with a "dead end" trail, which can be an attractive nuisance.

Given the historic nature of the area, such limited access would perhaps encourage vandalism. Probably a more realistic way of accessing this area (especially the Plum Creek Culvert), is by water. Once a boat ramp and dock facility is installed at Kramer Field, the culvert is a short paddle downstream. The creation of an appropriate dock facility near the culvert would provide a means for the Historical Society or even school groups to access the site.

If this were accomplished, some clearing of the Towpath and perhaps a small picnic area, might be in order (figure 2-4).

A last alternative, but not very desirable at this time, would be to obtain an easement from the Tomkins Corporation and use their access drive back to city property. From here the Towpath could be developed to provide access to the culvert.

FIGURE 2 - 3
NORTH SIDE OF PLUM CREEK
STONE CULVERT
COST EVALUATION

Depending upon the scenario chosen and the means used to achieve it, development of access to this section of the park would cost as follows:

All costs based upon contracted labor. Volunteer labor could reduce those costs by as much as 75%.

SUSPENSION BRIDGE ACROSS THE CUYAHOGA.

Bridge & Supports (150’ span) (including engineering) 200 FT  30,000
Signage Lump Sum 1,000
Entry Trail (50’) Lump Sum 500

SUBTOTAL 31,500

TRAIL CONSTRUCTION FROM BRIDGE TO TOWPATH (using Edison right of way)

Trail 500’ LF x 5’ wide x 1 SF 2,500
Towpath Trail (1/2 mile)
Trail improvement 2640 LF x 5’ wide x .20 SF 13,200

Signage Lump Sum 1000
Landscaping Lump Sum 3000

SUBTOTAL 19,700

IMPROVEMENT AT CULVERT

Clearing Lump Sum 1000
Dock Area 200SF x 50 10,000
Picnic Area Lump Sum 3000

SUBTOTAL 14,000

BOARDWALK TRAIL FROM WOODEN TRESTLE TO TOWPATH

1600LF x 5 = 8000SF x $25SF 200,000
(Cost includes clearing, all construction and design)

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance of any development of this section would naturally depend upon the level of development. It could range from a low $200 per year to a high $5000 if significant structures are constructed.

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

If through discussion with the historical society and other concerned citizens access to the culvert is found to be desirable, we recommend the following:

Short term: Create a boat docking facility at the culvert with space for picnicking with a bring it in, bring it out rule.

Long term: If the area is respected and the limited access of boating is found to be undesirable, evaluation of bridges and boardwalks should be pursued.
FIGURE 3-1

WOODEN TRESTLE TO HARVEY REDMOND BRIDGE

EXISTING TRAIL

PROPOSED TRAIL

PROPOSED BIKEWAY

SHELTER HOUSE

MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

PARK OFFICE

BOAT RAMP

BALL FIELDS

PLAY GROUND

STOW STREET

MIDDLEBURY ROAD
SECTION 3

WHEELING AND LAKE ERIE WOODEN TRESTLE TO HARVEY REDMOND BRIDGE (including Kramer Fields)

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain existing uses
2. Improve condition of existing trails and structures
3. Complete planned hiking trails
4. Develop proposed boat launch and restroom facility

DESCRIPTION

This section of the park is a part of the existing park land. It has been in continuous use for perhaps 50 years, and provides for a diversity of active and passive recreation opportunities, including trails, picnic areas, play grounds, and ball fields. Also included in this area are park offices, a shelter house (multipurpose building available for community use), and parks maintenance facilities (figure 3-1).

This area is characterized by a relatively wide flood plain, rising steeply on the north bank of the river. Numerous springs emerge from the sand and gravel of the mature forested hill side. This area is said to have been an site of early settlement because of available spring and relative good surveillance of the river. One of the more picturesque sections of the park is found in a trail that traverses the edge of the river at about 1/3 the way up this hillside.

ACCESS AND ENTRY

The river edge park presently extends on the north side of the river to the wooden trestle. At this west end there is a hillside trail that allows access from the picnic area at Fred Fuller Park (figure 3-2). Fred Fuller Park, the shelter house, maintenance facility and offices are all accessed off of Middlebury Road. The trail is also accessed from a stair at the end of the picnic area, (which is very eroded) as well as one behind the Roy Smith Shelter House (the replacement of which is planned). The last access point to the river edge is at Stow Street, just north of the Harvey Redmond bridge. Kramer Fields, a popular recreation area, is accessible only by way of the Redmond bridge, a single lane wood piling structure.

Access is not a significant problem on this stretch of trail, other than not being well marked. The only issues that we have found to be a concern are the bottleneck of the one way Redmond Bridge and the dead end nature of the existing trail. Options for Redmond bridge are discussed in section 4.

The present hope for the trail is to gain access to the semi-abandoned wooden trestle and create a bridge to access the south bank of the river. Clearing has already been accomplished on developing a trail that would loop back to Kramer Fields and Redmond Bridge, creating a trail of about 1/2 mile that could be used for cross country skiing.

FIGURE 3-2

DETAIL OF FRED FULLER PARK
ACTIVITY AREAS

The existing activity areas are the picnic and play areas of both ends of Fred Fuller Park, the ball fields of Kramer Field, and the shelter house. A proposed boat ramp for Kramer Fields would provide a much needed access for boaters.

In general, the development of these areas is fairly complete, with the exception of continual need of repair of pavilions and restroom facilities. Pavements, paths and stairs are a development concern, with a need to maintain a delicate balance between a good surface that doesn’t erode the surroundings and the natural character of the park. We would recommend that only minor uses of gravel be used in this regard.

PATH SURFACES/BARRIER
FREE DESIGN

The existing trail is accessible except for the need for a small bridge over the ditch on Stow Street north of Redmond Bridge. The path surface is rather hard, and only in need of the replacement of a few culverts that carry springs waters under the trail. It may be possible to make the proposed trestle bridge and south side trail accessible as well.

The terrain of this trail is above the annual flood plain and should be relatively easy to maintain in excellent repair with the use of compacted limestone screening.

At the February workshop, it was mentioned that at one time there was a cross-country trail around the Kramer Fields. In recent years that facility has not been maintained or promoted, and would be a possible secondary trail development to the Riveredge Loop detailed above.

TRESTLE BRIDGE

It has been proposed that the wooden trestle (figure 3-3) be modified to create a bridge. Wheeling and Lake Erie (WLE) removed the major timbers, ties and mil in 1991, and appeared to be abandoning it. Discussions originally indicated that they would be willing to sell it for the price of the land on both sides of the river. Subsequent contacts with WLE have indicated a state of indecision on their part.

If the trestle can be obtained, it would be fairly easy to create a bridge for use by pedestrians by spanning between piers. Area boaters would like to see some of the pilings removed to open up passage which often gets clogged by dead fall. It would be possible to create this linkage and satisfy the desires of both user groups. As we discussed in the last section, further development of the trail to the west would be difficult, although during the fall the water might be low enough to traverse the stretch to Plum Creek outlet along the south shore.

FIGURE 3-3

PHOTOS OF
WOODEN
TRESTLE
(Wheeling and Lake Erie)
VEGETATION, LANDSCAPING AND BARRIERS

One of the primary motivations for trail development in this area would be to provide access to the beautiful setting while at the same time preserving the fragile river banks. In this regard, there is little need for adding additional landscaping except perhaps to replace areas disturbed by construction or to add seasonal color. No trees should have to be removed for any of this proposed work.

RIVER ACCESS/BOAT RAMP

These are several areas in this stretch that the river is accessed by fisherman with little impact on the stream bank ecology. Because of the popularity in this stretch of the river for recreational boating and fishing, plans are underway for the development of a small boat launching facility at Kramer Field (See figure 3-1). This facility will give access to five miles of river, from the falls at Main Street in Kent to the falls in Munroe Falls. Probably the most interesting prospect is that it would allow access to the culvert at Plum Creek (See section 2). The development of another boat launching facility at Riverbend Park, a lively north of the Main Street bridge and a canoe portage at the Kent Dam, would create a nine mile navigable stretch from approximately route 91 in Munroe Falls to State Route 59 in Franklin Township.

ENVIRONMENTAL/HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As mentioned above, this area has a historic role in Kent’s development, with the Stow Street/Middlebury Road being home to early settlers. Few remnants remain west of Stow Street, except a stone spring structure and some stone retaining walls of unknown origin. We have been told that prior to the advent of a central water system, this spring was a frequently used source of drinking water for Kent.

A whimsical historical feature that was popular in the 1950’s was a lily pond located north of the wooden trestle. We were told by several people that this was a popular spot to take children on Sunday afternoons to feed the gold fish. There is interest by parks staff to recreate this feature.

This part of the park is also said to have been a popular spot to wash ones car.

COST EVALUATION

Costs for developing this section depend upon the actual level of development. The major elements of construction would be the boat launch and restroom facility, the trestle bridge, and development of stairs and other minor path upgrading.

BOAT LAUNCH AND RESTROOM FACILITY

Parks staff has applied for a grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for 75% of the costs to develop this $65,000 project.

TRESTLE BRIDGE

The development costs of the trestle bridge would be based upon the actual final design. For preliminary purposes, we can assume that the work would entail the removal of some piling, creation of new beams, deck, rail and approach ramps. The following is a preliminary estimate for these:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remove piling</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Deck and Beams (250 Lf x $100 Ft)</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach Ramps</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(150 Lf x $100 Ft)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, Engineering, Surveying &amp; Administration</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUB TOTAL Trestle Bridge 62,500 (Based on Contracted Labor)

For the development of other upgrades, it would be wise to budget at least $25,000 for materials.
FIGURE 4-1
REDMOND BRIDGE TO TANNERY PARK

NEW SIDEWALK
TRAIL MADE ACCESSIBLE
SECTION 4

HARVEY REDMOND BRIDGE TO STOW STREET (TANNERY PARK)

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This area is generally characterized by a wooded wide flood plain. The soils are sand and gravel, which has resulted in erosion in all developed areas. Existing structures are deteriorated, and many areas need to be filled, and/or bridged to create a dry pathway.

This section of the park has not had significant capital investment. It is presently not handicapped accessible.

DEVELOPED OBJECTIVES

1. Hiking/Resting/Picnicking
   - Natural and Historical Education
   - Fishing
   - Cross Country Skiing
2. Increase accessibility and safety
3. Maintain natural scenic beauty
4. Decrease ecological impact of park users.
5. Increase wildlife habitat.

ANALYSIS/RECOMMENDATIONS

ACCESS/ENTRY

Pedestrian access of the park from Stow Street (Summit Street Extension), is hampered by a lack of sidewalk both west of the bridge, (approximately 350 lineal feet) and east of CSX tracks to Franklin Avenue (approximately 100 lineal feet). Completion of the eastern section of sidewalk, in conjunction with projects underway in the park would provide the completion of a 3/4 mile pedestrian loop from Main to Summit along the Riveredge Park and Franklin Avenue, one of the most historically significant areas of the county.

Completion of the western section, combined with additional walkway improvements in the park would result in the creation of a 1/2 mile loop from Tannery Park along Stow Street to the Harvey Redmond Bridge, and back to the Tannery via the Riveredge walkway.

Pedestrian and wheel chair access to the park section known as Tannery Park (because it was the historic location of John Brown's Tannery) is hampered by a lack of a curb cut, as well as by the speed of traffic on Stow Street. Access and egress from the pedestrian and vehicular entrances would be greatly enhanced by improved speed control in this section. The view from the access drive is also greatly restricted by low vegetation at the north western edge of the park.
Modification of this shrubbery, off set by increased landscaping on both the parkway and park side of Stow Street, could be a way to alleviate this visibility problem, decrease maintenance costs and enhance the natural setting.

Secondary issues relating to vehicular access include finding ways to discourage bicycle use of the foot trail, controlling evening access and improving parking area conditions. Possible solutions to these include secure bicycle racks, reinstalling historic cast iron billiards, installation of concrete grass pavers, and/or gravel and planters. Storm water drainage control also needs attention. This existing rip rap concrete drainage course should be evaluated to make it more pleasing and maintenance free. A modified French drain/catch basin, constructed of barn stone with broken concrete fill, could restrict flow to a small outlet pipe.

Signage, including natural and historical interpretative markers, control and entry signs, should be systematically designed and sensively placed. The entry to the north side of Stow Street has mature landscaping which should be maintained, with some modifications for placement of an appropriately scaled sign. The Tannery Park entry areas (pedestrian and vehicular) are in deteriorated condition and not identified well.

ACTIVITY AREAS

The major uses of this stretch of park are picnicking, strolling, sitting, and fishing. These activities are accommodated by the gazebo, several fishing beaches and miscellaneous benches and tables. Because of the parking area and its proximity to a potential bike trail also makes Tannery Park and this stretch of Riveredge Park an area that will need attention to accommodate increased usage in the coming years.

The primary facility recommendation for this area is the development of a multi-purpose pavilion/picnic area that can be used for gatherings, concerts, and other activities. This can be done sensitively in the area shown, if care is taken to consider its impact on the neighborhood, the view of the river and the underlying soil conditions.

Other activity areas include the Pioneer Cemetery (historic), fishing areas and general resting (See Gazebo and River Access). In general, the development of seating and tables that are integral to boardwalks and other development should be designed as unobtrusively as possible, with custom built, all wood structures being preferable to prefabricated and metal surfaces.

The gazebo and fishing areas will be addressed as separate sections of the report.
PATH SURFACES

The path surfaces in Tannery Park are in a very eroded condition, due to the sand and gravel soils. This erosion has exposed the underlying landfill, which contains extensive qualities of debris and glass. Retaining walls and steps constructed in years past have in part aggravated the problem by creating a restricted stream.

Brick paved paths are inaccessible and dangerous due to missing and mis aligned pavers. Pavers need to be mortar set, or replaced with boardwalks. Asphalt paving was not recommended by consensus of the February 1, 1992, planning workshop.

Beginning with a curb cut at Stow Street, we recommend a resetting of bricks, and the construction of an accessible ramp that connects the parking area, gazebo and riveredge. This ramp would preferably be of wood or brick construction. This ramp/walk would have a total rise of 14 feet, over a run of approximately 200 feet. At the time of construction, the pathway should be relocated west of its present location, and the present walk area infilled and planted.

Path surfaces from Tannery Park to Redmond bridge are in a varied condition. In some low lying locations path seeking caused by erosion has left a tangled web of roots and puddles. This area needs to receive a boardwalk placed at the highest possible elevation and planted with appropriate landscape materials to retain soil, provide seasonal color and wildlife habitat.

In other locations, springs and run offs have created the need for paths to have small bridges. Existing bridges are constructed of railroad ties set on grade which for accessibility purposes will need to be replaced with flush and even surfaces with appropriate guards.

The remainder of path surfaces up to Redmond Bridge are in fairly good condition, with an occasional stretch that requires a retaining wall or some minor surfacing. We recommend the limited use of compacted limestone screenings.

At Redmond Bridge, there is the need for the construction of approximately 200 linear feet of boardwalk/ramp that will provide access down to the grade of the path. The most logical path would be to follow the contour of the hill, perhaps ending near the eastern edge of the Pioneer Cemetery - a logical place for an access stair.

FIGURE 4-3

GAZEBO GROUND SURFACES
GAZEBO (Figure 4-3)

The wood gazebo has suffered in recent years by vandalism of both the paving bricks and balusters. This structure can be brought back to a better condition by developing permanent paving or boardwalk as mentioned above. In turn, replacement of balusters with sensitively designed heavier members would be in order.

VEGETATION AND LANDSCAPING MATERIALS

This stretch consists of natural landscaping eroded by use with some planting and grass areas at Tannery Park. A reduction of landscape maintenance and an increase in appearance can be achieved by the planting of appropriate ground covers and wild flowers. As this area is a naturally occurring meadow, a native plant mixture would be worth consideration, to be mowed on a yearly or twice a year basis only. An overall reduction of short grass areas is recommended.

Increasing landscaping for erosion control, enhancement of wildlife habitats and seasonal color is recommended. Indigenous species should be the primary plants used for this purpose.

REDMOND BRIDGE

The existing Harvey Redmond Bridge is in need of some maintenance. These matters are being evaluated by the Parks and Recreation staff.

The surrounding trail system requires a foot bridge under the bridge, or a diversion up to the walk at a higher level. For accessibility purposes, it would not be necessary to develop the low trail to the same standards outlined above. At the bridge, a ramp would connect the two grades, allowing wheel chairs and strollers to access the upper level trail.

PARKING AREAS

The existing parking area is addressed to some degree above, under the heading of access. The improvement of these areas in a park is always difficult subject. Consideration of long term improvements would be the use of grass filled concrete pavers. This would increase the beauty and decrease erosion.

The center planter with the Pin Oak will also need attention in the long term, root depth and diameter will impact the tie wall that surrounds it.

RIVER ACCESS

This stretch of the river, with a wide and low flood plain, is particularly popular for hiking, fishing, and wading. The difficulty is that these uses have increased erosion of the stream bank. Ways of decreasing erosion that might be considered are the limitation of access by pathways, signage and landscaping. It may also be desirable to provide docks and docks at key fishing areas. The concept will need to be further evaluated with park users.

HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBILITY

This stretch is a likely candidate for provision of handicapped accessibility in that it has no major obstacles, has an excellent drop off/parking area for vans and provides a critical linkage in the over all parks development. The facilities available in this location, connecting through to the downstream end of the existing park, make this stretch a very desirable place to concentrate development funds. When completed, a person could "walk" from the observation dock to the existing end of the park, a total of approximately one mile.

When the handicap accessibility restrooms are completed at Kramer Fields, this will be an excellent community facility.

COST ANALYSIS

The cost for this development was estimated early in 1992 for the purpose of applying for block grant fundings. The overall estimate for materials was 30,000, of which $15,000 was funded. Parks and Recreation staff and Fuller Design Group are evaluating how much of the work can be done within this budget.
SECTION 5A
TANNERY PARK TO MAIN STREET BRIDGE WEST SIDE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION
This area is the most extensively developed section of the Riveredge Park. It is composed of steep wooded banks with exposed bedrock in a few locations. The area is crossed overhead by the State Route 59 bypass (built 1970's) and contains Mill Race drive; a city owned street that accesses a paper box manufacturing facility (Historic Kent Woolen Mill).

In the late 1960's this stretch of the river edge was taken on by the Kent Environmental Council. Over the past 20 years, the area from Stow Street on the south to Brady's Leap on the north has been transformed from a garbage dump to a very heavily used urban park. In the past 5 years, the Kent Parks and Recreation Department along with many civic organizations, have used volunteer labor, capital budget, and block grant funds to build boardwalks, decks and stairs. Additional construction is in the works to upgrade this entire stretch. It is also a very historically significant stretch, containing the major mill sites of 19th Franklin Mills.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES
1. Create an accessible hiking path.
2. Create opportunities to learn about historically significant features.
3. Create opportunities to appreciate the natural beauty of the riveredge.
4. Encourage wildlife habitat

ANALYSIS/RECOMMENDATIONS

ACCESS/ENTRY/PARKING
This section is in the center of town and is accessible from Stow Street on the south, from River Street on the west, and Main Street on the North. At Stow Street there are a few parking spaces as well as a larger parking area in the Tannery Park. These spaces are unimproved, and consideration should be given to this when improvements are made on the street. Also, this entry is relatively obscure due to the mature landscaping. Consideration should be given to the careful placement of a sign perpendicular to Stow Street in this location. "Park Entry" signs and other control measures should also be considered for Stow Street (figure 5A-2).

A second access point is via a stairway that comes down the park from River Street. This entry has an extensive flower bed and a
new sign. The park has use of this parking area by easement. From this point north, there is a project for the trail to be illuminated during certain evening hours. When this comes to pass, additional improvements to this access point may be necessary.

The third access point is from Main Street, adjacent to the Bisler Building. At this point there is a pedestrian access that goes from street grade down to the Terrace level of the Bisler Building. The trail then continues north with access south under the bridge. There is not parking at this access point, so it serves mainly downtown residents, workers and visitors.

**ACTIVITY AREAS**

The main activity of this section is passive exploration of the riveredge and its natural and historic features. Presently there are pathways and decks developed to make viewing the falls and reaching the riveredge easier. There are 3 stairs that go to the riveredge that allow wading during low water. There are also a few spots where one can explore old mill foundations. Two observation decks allow for a place to sit and enjoy the shade and/or view the falls. The walkway under the bridge as well as the deck that goes down by the falls are both occasionally used by fishermen.

Possible improvements for activity areas are decks or stairs accessing the foundation of the 1836 flour mill. These foundations are in deteriorating condition and will need some preservation work if they are to last very far into the next century.

**PATH SURFACES AND BARRIER FREE DESIGN**

This stretch of trail presently has a variety of surfaces, consisting of brick pavers, gravel, soil, asphalt pavement, and boardwalk. Plans are under way to remove brick under the bypass and replace it with asphalt in order to relieve drainage and vandalism problems as well as make it wheelchair accessible. The stretch of trail directly below the paper box factory is very close to the river and is also most subject to erosion. This area will continue to need additional loads of gravel/limestone screening. Up hill, there is a stretch that runs from under the bypass to the cul-de-sac at Mill Race Drive that is being designed as a final link of an accessibility plan. This area requires an easement from a private owner. With this in place, a small amount of grading, retaining wall and paving is required to complete this link. With an additional piece of sidewalk on Stow Street, a complete historic and natural walking tour will be open for all.

Further north is the recently installed (1990) asphalt path which makes the pathway barrier free from a point on Mill Race Drive adjacent to the Box Factory to a deck overlooking the falls. A boardwalk ramp traverses the hill side to this deck and then...
proceeds to an access stair with a deck down near the base of the falls.

Proceeding north, deck and boardwalk has been replaced to a point just south of the Main Street Bridge. Adjacent to the bridge area is a filled area with a stone retaining wall that goes under one of the historic stone arches of the 1876 bridge. This area is susceptible to occasional flooding and needs occasional path maintenance. Beyond the bridge is a fairly steep path that is subject to severe erosion. At this point much rock is exposed and repair is needed. Options include a filled box type stair or a wood tread stair similar to other improvements (Figure 5A-3).

At the top of this grade is a stair that provides access to the Bissler Building. The stair was renovated in 1989-90 with a copper roofed kiosk and sign.

One concept that has been expressed is the creation of a high level boardwalk that would connect the upper boardwalk adjacent to the law office to the terrace level of the Bissler Building. This structure would eliminate the closure of the walkway due to flooding as well as make the entire riveredge park accessible. Such a structure would require the creation of a bridge under the stone arch, which could possibly be suspended from the stone arch. (Subject to discussion with the Historic Preservation Office) This walkway would be very expensive to construct (See cost estimate)

LANDSCAPE MATERIALS/VEGETATION

This area of Riveredge Park is the most developed section and so is susceptible to the concerns of a variety of interest groups. Most concern comes from the maintenance of trees and shrubs as opposed to creation of views of the falls and the historic downtown beyond. Clearly there is opportunity for a successful compromise with some carefully thought out planting, pruning and tree removal.

Views can be created by very simple pruning and removing non desirable tree species. Shrubbery can be planted to create wildlife habitat and seasonal color. Most importantly, plant materials must be chosen and installed at a spacing and proximity to paths so as to preclude need for maintenance and pruning. Indigenous species of shrubbery and ground cover provide the best opportunity to create a visually pleasing yet low maintenance environment. If possible, the need to mow grass should be eliminated to the extent possible. (See general recommendations)

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

The repair and maintenance required for the facilities in this stretch of the park are considerable. Removal of graffiti, mowing and periodic repair of wood and stone are required. Staining and painting of stairs, boardwalks and decks are also required.

In recent years, planning has accounted for the need to make improvements as maintenance free as possible.

HISTORIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The area bounded by Franklin Avenue/Mogadore Road on the east, Main Street on the North and River Street on the west is the National Register of Historic Kent Industrial Historic District. The primary historic elements that remain in the park are remnants of old mills. The foundation of the original Haymaker/Kent Flour Mill are in particular need of stabilization. These should be protected as much as possible.

Otherwise, views of the falls and other historic buildings as well as interpretive literature, should be developed. Environmentally, the increasing development of structures, while reducing the natural character, does serve to protect the fragile hillside.

COST EVALUATION

The cost of improvements in this section will be based upon the actual work to be undertaken. Monies have already been programmed for completion of accessibility portions under the bypass. Funds to protect/restore mill foundations, new signage, interpretive displays, boardwalk improvements, landscaping and an under bridge - bridge have yet to be programmed.

Preliminary costs for these items are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive Displays</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive Literature</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restore/Protect Mill Foundation</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boardwalk Improvements</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Bridge &quot;Bridge&quot;</td>
<td>85,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk on Stow Street</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>