

FOREST PRESERVE ADVISORY BOARD
REPORT TO COUNCIL

Report No. 2015-02

SUBJECT: Pumpkin Walk trail usage

DATE: May 28, 2015

BACKGROUND: The annual Greenbelt Pumpkin Walk has existed longer than the forest preserve. Since its inception, the annual walk was conducted on existing trails in either Area A or Area B of the forest preserve. The actual decision on the trail alignment for any given year has been determined by the organizers of the Pumpkin Walk, in consultation with the City of Greenbelt.

DISCUSSION: Historically, the usual location of the Pumpkin Walk has been on existing trails in Area B. Recognizing the community support for this program, as well as usual location, the Forest Preserve Management and Maintenance Guidelines recognize the pumpkin walk as an approved contingency use. The M&M Guidelines designate Area B as the permanent trail location for the Pumpkin Walk.

Since then practice has been to continue rotation of the Pumpkin Walk between Area A and B, depending on the trail condition prior to the Pumpkin Walk.

ANALYSIS: The reason the contingency within the M&M Guidelines was written to limit the Pumpkin Walk to Area B is that the Area B trail was well worn, was sized appropriately for the activity, and the Task Force (as authors of the M&M Guidelines) did not believe the activity should be moved around the preserve. Impacts should be limited to a specific site. Just as limits have been placed on the community gardens in terms of sun and access, limit were placed on the Pumpkin Walk.

Decisions on the annual location of the Pumpkin Walk are being made by the walk organizers, and approved by the city. The FPAB has also agreed with the rotation of the walk between Areas A and B in the past, even though the M&M Guidelines are specific that the walk be limited to Area B.

The FPAB has been challenged over the last several months to interpret the M&M Guidelines relative to other issues. The Board has consistently held that when the wording of the M&M Guidelines is specific, then the policy should be followed as written. Keeping with this philosophy, the FPAB believes that the practice of allowing the Pumpkin Walk to be rotated between Areas A and B should be discontinued, and that the Pumpkin Walk should be conducted in conformance with the M&M Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION: The Pumpkin Walk should be conducted in conformance with the M&M Guidelines and be held in Area B.

This report was approved by a vote of