

CITY OF SPOKANE
PARK BOARD RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION outlining the Park Board's support of exploring a pilot project, outdoor learning center at People's Park, in partnership with kʷu cnxi? (We Join In) nonprofit, Spokane Tribe of Indians, and Spokane Public Schools

WHEREAS, the Park Board is interested in exploring a possible partnership with kʷu cnxi? (We Join In), Spokane Tribe of Indians, and Spokane Public Schools to draft a collaborative framework to pilot an outdoor learning center school at People's Park; and

WHEREAS, this partnership would promote physical activity and mental well-being among students by encouraging outdoor education and recreation, which have been shown to improve academic performance, reduce stress, and support overall health and wellness, thus contributing to the holistic development of Spokane's youth; and

WHEREAS, educational outcomes for Indigenous students have historically been the poorest in the state for nearly a century. Brain science tells us that for information to be retained in long-term memory, it must be contextual and relevant to students' lives and identities; and

WHEREAS, kʷu cnxi? (We Join In) is a non-profit with this mission: "kʷu cnxi? (We Join In) looks to our First Language Speakers and Cultural Knowledge Keepers to guide us in recreating indigenous education that our ancestors practiced prior to colonization"; and

WHEREAS, kʷu cnxi? (We Join In) recognizes the significant challenges in implementing an Indigenous culture-grounded curriculum. This partnership would emphasize that our culture begins with our land, and our stories tell us that our ability to speak and the sounds of our language come from the land and animals themselves. We aim to provide language and cultural experiences to students farthest from opportunity with the utmost cultural integrity by connecting them with the land, language, and traditions. Our goal is to revitalize our language and culture, improve educational outcomes, and increase emotional well-being for children who have historically struggled the most in public school education; and

WHEREAS, for over 700 generations, Spokane Tribe of Indians people gathered at the Spokane Falls, living and thriving on what is now called Peaceful Valley and People's Park. To this day, there is medicine and teachings that the land and river provide. Spokane Tribe of Indians' goal is the healing that comes with learning your language, and being connected with the world around you, to propel youth into a society

where they step with confidence, they are empowered, loved, and supported people; and

WHEREAS, a collaboration to establish outdoor education centers with Spokane Public Schools will enhance the learning experience by providing students with hands-on, experiential learning opportunities in natural settings, thereby fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of environmental science, ecology, local ecosystems, and indigenous culture; and

WHEREAS, an outdoor learning center aligns with the Park Board adopted Parks and Natural Lands Master Plan which supports this type of use, including:

- Goal B: Inland Northwest Living, Objective 1, prioritizing nature play in District 3
- Goal C: Preserve our Wild, Objective 3, initiate interdisciplinary partnerships for land management
- Goal C: Preserve our Wild, Objective 5, enhance our natural lands with projects to restore ecologies
- Goal E: Care for and Activate the Spokane River
- Goal H: Build Awareness, Objective 3, partnerships with schools
- Goal I: Diversity of Offerings, Objective 2, commit to diversity, equity, and inclusion in programming
- Goal K: Maintain & Care, Objective 4, environmental education, “explore partnerships for pilot projects for school-based environmental learning camp or after school program”
- Goal K: Maintain & Care, Objective 5, expand programs for improved park sustainability and resilience, “integrate additional education and outreach programs that promote natural resource stewardship, and explore possibility for nature and water center of education of community including youth”

WHEREAS, People’s Park is recognized as a culturally significant site for the Spokane Tribe of Indians; and

WHEREAS, the parties are committed to engaging the neighborhood and other stakeholders to gather important feedback about this possible pilot project and its impacts; and

WHEREAS, next steps will include parties establishing objectives/goals, phasing/timing, preliminary design concepts (infrastructure, security/controlled access, natural resources assessment), community outreach, and drafting a joint memorandum of understanding (MOU) that lays out the roles and responsibly of each partner; and

WHEREAS, an MOU for this pilot would build upon the current Joint Use Agreement between Spokane Public Schools and City of Spokane Parks & Recreation, and align with a separate MOU in development between the Spokane Tribe and Spokane Parks & Recreation regarding snx^w mene? island in Riverfront Park.

NOW, THEREFORE,
BE IT RESOLVED the Park Board is supportive of further exploring a pilot project, Outdoor Learning Center at People's Park, in partnership with k^wu cnxi? (We Join In), Spokane Tribe of Indians and Spokane Public Schools.

ADOPTED BY THE PARK BOARD ON _____

Park Board President

Attest:

Approved as to form:

City Clerk

Assistant City Attorney