



City of Spokane Park Board Land Committee Meeting

3:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 06, 2025
Hybrid in-person and WebEx virtual meeting
Al Vorderbrueggen – Park Operations Director

Committee members

- X Greta Gilman – Chair
- X Sally Lodato (left 4:27)
- X Kevin Brownlee
- X Doug Kelley

Parks staff

Al Vorderbrueggen
Berry Ellison
Nick Hamad
Fianna Dickson
Angel Spell
Jennifer Papich
Kris Behr

Guests

David Puente, Jr.

SUMMARY

- The committee passed the following action items which will be presented to the Park Board for consideration and approval:
 - None
- David Puente, Jr., Director of Washington State Veterans Affairs, provided information on a possible access easement at Dwight Merkel for the new Spokane Veterans Home.
- Al Vorderbrueggen presented information for a replacement boiler for Manito's Gaiser Conservatory, which will go the Finance Committee for a vote next week

The next regularly scheduled Land Committee meeting is set for 3:30 p.m. Wed. Sep. 03, 2025.

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by committee chair Greta Gilman.

Public Comments: None

Action items: None

Discussion Items:

1. [Spokane Veterans Home replacement and Dwight Merkel access easement briefing](#) – David Puente, Jr.
 - a. A previous unsuccessful proposal was presented to the Land Committee for an easement for a residential development on the parcel owned by Fairmont Cemetery. Since that time, the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) has signed a purchase and sale agreement for the property.
 - b. WDVA is proposing a replacement Veteran's Home facility in Eastern Washington on this property. They are investigating a 41.5-acre parcel of land adjacent to the current VA medical center and Dwight Merkel Sports Complex. This parcel would provide access to more outdoor activities, a larger facility with more amenities and a home-like setting, better infection control and a much-needed memory care unit. The WDVA is hoping to close on the purchase in October. Construction will likely be several years out, as funds have not yet been secured. The Federal VA will provide 65% of the funding with a 35% State match. Before any Federal funding can occur, the State must take care off all off-site improvements, such as utilities, easements and land acquisition.
 - c. There are two possible access points through Dwight Merkel, with the preferred location being east of the BMX track using the existing park access drive. This route would cut through a small junior soccer field, which would require mitigation. The current private access road would need to be improved and made public. The current utility lines are not suitable for this type of development and new lines would need to be run. The proposed easement from Assembly would be a shorter distance than the alternative easement route extending south to Wellesley Avenue, thus making it less expensive.
 - d. Nick Hamad pointed out that the alternate easement location from Wellesley is slated to have both a road and utility lines run provided the School/Parks levy passes. It is possible the VA could use those lines for their facility. Although it is more expensive, the Wellesley route would not bisect the existing complex & future potential expansion and there is a possibility for a cooperative effort to reduce costs. Greta was concerned the noise and lights from the sports field would be disruptive to the VA center, however Mr. Puente didn't think that would be problematic. He feels that the residents would actually enjoy the proximity of the fields and walking paths. Traffic and pedestrian safety was also discussed. Unlike the previous residential neighborhood proposal, there would be considerably less traffic in and out of the VA facility. Nick mentioned a possible solution for the loss of the sports field would be to allow access to the trails to the southwest of the proposed facility site, provided the VA intends to keep this parcel. Kevin Brownlee responded that if the levy passes, the loss of the field would not be an issue but access to the trails would be a substantial gain. Jennifer Papich voiced concern over the access route from Assembly as it does cut through the soccer field and appears to be close to the spectators at the larger fields. She is also concerned about the unknown plans for development of the current walking trails. She would tend to lean toward the Wellesley access point. Nick noted the existing access drive to the BMX facility would be improved as a part of the proposed levy / bond Merkel expansion, which already bisects the proposed ballfields so safe pedestrian crossing would be important whether or not the VA uses

the east access drive. Nick emphasized the need for a studying traffic prior to making any specific decisions to ensure pedestrian safety. Mr. Puente pointed out that it may be necessary to sell the walking trail areas to offset the higher cost of the easement from Wellesley. As a whole, the committee is more comfortable pursuing the Wellesley route, but they are all willing to continue discussions with additional information.

2. [Apparent low responsive bidder / Gaiser Conservatory replacement boiler \(not to exceed \\$150,000 plus tax from major repair & replacement reserve\)](#) – Al Vorderbrueggen
 - a. The current Gaiser Conservatory boiler was reclaimed from the old Liberty Park Pool and was installed at Gaiser about 10-12 years ago. It has failed a number of times and propane heaters were necessary to keep the delicate plants alive. Parks established a Major Repair & Replacement Reserve Policy with sufficient funds for a replacement boiler. However, the policy states the PB Finance Committee, and the full Park Board must approve the use of these funds.
 - b. The bid consists of a base and an alternate bid. The base bid adds a boiler to the existing 2m BTU boiler. This is not ideal. The alternate adds a duplicate boiler to the base bid boiler and includes removal of the existing boiler. This comes with a 12-month workmanship warranty as well as a manufacture limited lifetime warranty. These boilers operate at a higher efficiency, whereas the old boiler does not.
 - c. The Friends of Manito have tentatively approved up to \$80,000 (or 50%) of the funding for this project. Al will follow-up with the Friends of Manito. The project bids are due Aug. 19th, in time to present to the Park Board. As soon as the contract is executed, work may commence. The entire project is targeted for completion by Thanksgiving.

Standing Reports: none

Alternate Use Requests:

1. Fish Lake Trail request is exhausted and will be removed.
2. Rimrock Drive is exhausted and will be removed.
3. High Bridge Park – American Indian Cultural Center update will be presented at the September meeting.

Unfinished Business:

1. Beacon Hill has not seen any construction activity. Nick indicated Parks is still awaiting approval from the National Park Service to proceed with work and anticipate its arrival this month. The play equipment & restroom building materials have arrived as is at Park Ops.
2. Al will be giving a ROW presentation and recap to the Park Board in October. Water and Parks and still finalizing details on next steps.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Land Committee meeting is set for 3:30 p.m. Wed. Sep. 03, 2025.

Spokane Parks Board Presentation on Proposed Spokane Veterans Home Replacement

August 2025

Spokane Veterans Home Replacement Project

WDVA is committed to serving Eastern Washington's Veterans and Families at the Spokane Veterans Home

A new facility will provide:

- More outdoor areas allowing Residents to take part in outdoor activities. (Existing parcel is 1.75 acre.)
- More amenities to improve care and quality of life for residents.
- A home-like setting using the VA's small house model.
- Better infection control.
- Memory Care Services, allowing Residents to safely age-in place.
- Improved work and support areas for staff caring for residents.

Site Plan



Floor Plan



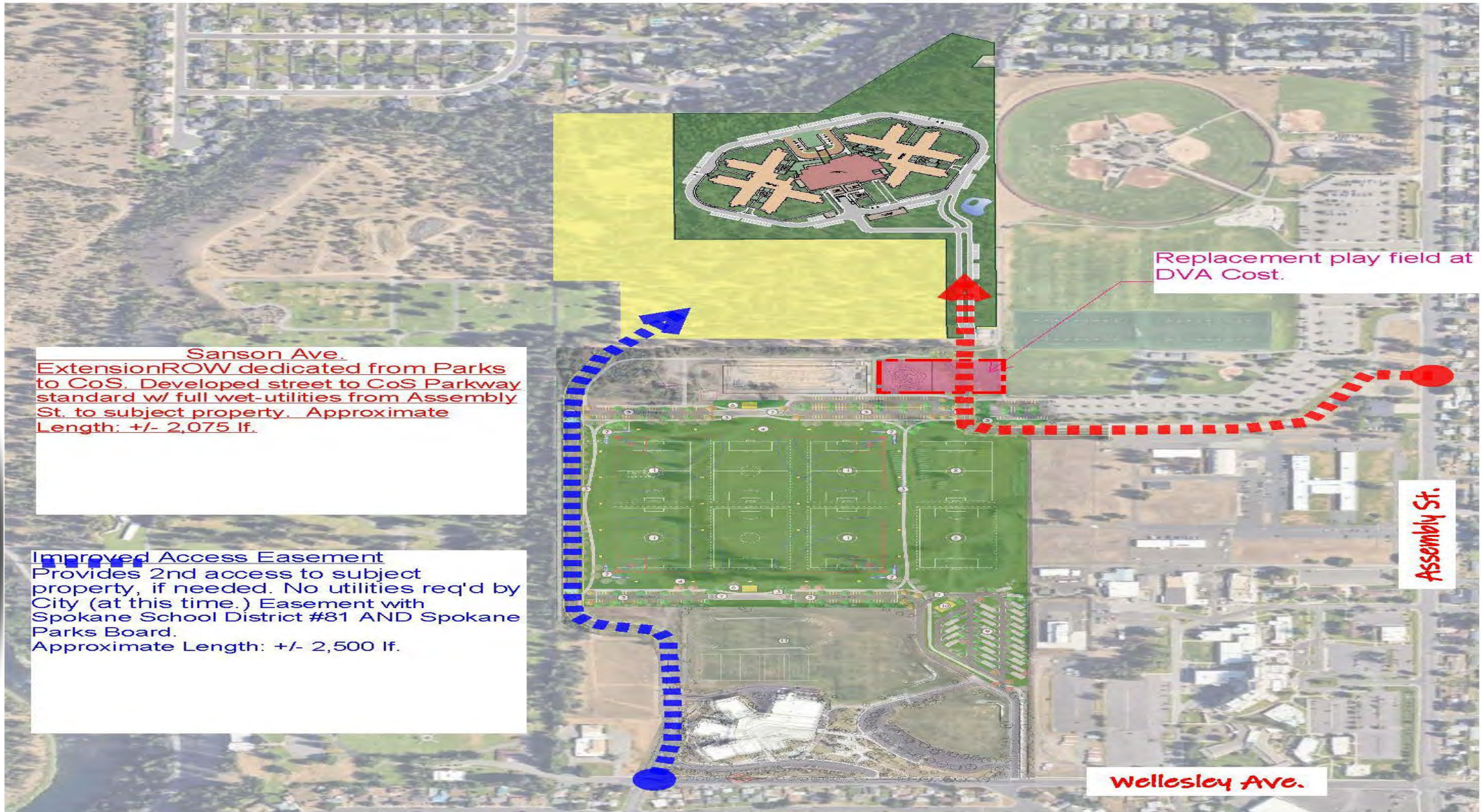
Current Project Status

- **Pre-design study:** Completed in October 2024.
- **Capital request:** WDVA submitted a 2025-27 Biennium Capital Request totaling \$162 million (\$97 million federal; \$65 million state)-not funded yet, \$8M for the land purchase is funded in the 25-27 State Capital Budget.
- **Land Purchase Status:** WDVA executed a Purchase and Sale Agreement with Fairmount Memorial Association for land adjacent to Dwight Merkel Complex. Expect to close by October contingent upon ALTA and Geo-Tech Surveys .
- **Next Steps:**
 - Complete site survey work and close on property
 - Additional capital funding requests for design and improvements
 - WDVA submitted a grant application to the federal VA. Federal VA provides 65% of funds for on-site construction. 35% state match required.
 - All off-site improvements (utilities, easements, etc) and land \$ are borne by state.
 - **It will likely take several years before all funding is secured and construction can begin.**

Future Use of Existing Spokane Veterans Home Building

- Transitional Housing
- Adult Day Health
- Other partnerships with County, City, and nonprofit organizations to serve Veterans and their families.

Known Easement/Utility Run Options



Spokane Parks Discussion Points

- **Easement Location-** DVA prefers access closest to land, east of BMX Park.
- **Road Improvements-** Maintain Current Private Right of Way for Merkel Parkway vs. Public Roadway
- **Mitigations** Alternatives to replacing ball fields due to easement; potential continued public access to DVA land (e.g. walking paths)
- **Utilities** – Options for utilities runs (water, electrical, sewer, gas, data) on parks property instead of running from Assembly or Wellsley Roads.
- **Opportunities/concerns** with future parks construction timelines

Park Operations & Natural Resources



Land Committee Presentation

August 6, 2025



Gaiser Conservatory Boiler Replacement

SUMMARY

The existing boiler at Gaiser Conservatory has fully depreciated and needs replacement. No backup heating system currently exists.

Parks has an established 'Major Repair & Replacement Reserve Policy' with sufficient funds to fund the replacement.

*** Use of these funds must be approved through Finance Committee and Park Board*



Gaiser Conservatory Boiler Replacement

MAJOR REPAIR & REPLACEMENT RESERVE POLICY

5.2 Criteria for use of funds are:

- 5.2.1 Expenditures must be for the repair and/or replacement of significant mechanical capital assets; specifically excluding vehicles, trailers, maintenance equipment or any other capital asset for which there is another specific reserve account in the Parks Cumulative Reserve Fund (Fund 1950).
- 5.2.2 Intended uses for this reserve would be items including, but not necessarily limited to, pumps, compressors, boilers, or other costly pieces of equipment required to keep a Park facility or program in operation.
- 5.2.3 Funds cannot be used for new equipment and must be used for the repair or replacement of failed, or near-failing mechanical equipment.

6.0 PROCEDURE

- 6.1 Only Parks and Recreation Directors, including the Parks Executive Officer shall be permitted to request expending these funds.
- 6.2 The request for expenditure from this reserve shall be presented at the next Park Board Committee meeting associated with the request.
- 6.3 If approved at the appropriate Committee, it shall be presented as an action item at the next Park Board Finance Committee.



Gaiser Conservatory Boiler Replacement

PROJECT

- The bid is separated into a base bid and an alternate. Base bid adds one (1) boiler system that is expected to operate the system with the current 2m BTU boiler (the existing boiler would remain).
- New unit is proposed to be a Lochinvar 990k BTU boiler with accompanying 200gal buffer tank, circulation pumps, gas regulators, low temp protection valves, and magnetic strainer.



Gaiser Conservatory Boiler Replacement

PROJECT

- An Alternate adds a duplicate new boiler to assist the base bid boiler to reduce demand, increase efficiency, and extend the overall lifespan of the system.
- The Alternate includes the removal of the existing boiler.

Contractor Workmanship Warranty of 12mo and
Manufacturers Limited Lifetime Warranty.



Gaiser Conservatory Boiler Replacement

FUNDING PARTNER

The Friends of Manito have tentatively approved funding of up to \$80,000 or 50% of this improvement.

Final funding approval set for Monday, August 11





Gaiser Conservatory Boiler Replacement

▪ **NEXT STEPS**

- No Action needed by Land Committee (presentation only)
- The Friends of Manito Board Meeting – 8/11/25
- Presentation to Finance Committee – 8/12/25
- Project Bids Due – 8/19/25
- Presentation to Park Board – 8/21/25
- Project start – upon contract completion
- Project completion – 11/21/25

