

SPOKANE PARK BOARD

Park Board Study Session – July 10, 2014, 3:30 P.M.
City Hall Conference Room 5A

Notes

1. Introductions:

- A. Park Board Members Present: Randy Cameron, President; Leroy Eadie, Secretary; Ross Kelley, Susan Traver; Ken Van Voorhis; Preston Potratz; Kristine Meyer
- B. Park Board Absent Excused: Chris Wright, Vice President; Susan Traver; Kristine Meyer; and Preston Potratz
- C. Staff Present: Sam Song; Garrett Jones; Tony Madunich and Nancy Goodspeed
- D. Guests Present: Brian Coddington and Marlene Feist

2. Discussion Items:

- A. Riverfront Park Master Plan Capital Investment Messaging– *All*
The Members discussed the method of messaging the proposed capital investments for Riverfront Park. Discussion included: the Pavilion, lighting, and park themes. A document entitled "Riverfront Park Master Plan 2014 Park Board Study Session – Frequently Asked Questions" was distributed. *See attached.*

3. Adjournment: 4:36 p.m.

- A. Next Park Board Study Session: August 14, 2014, 3:30 p.m. City Hall Conference Room 5A

Riverfront Park Master Plan 2014

Park Board Study Session – Frequently Asked Questions

July 14, 2014

Why a Master Plan?

- In 2012, the Park Board wanted to look at the Park in a comprehensive manner. There have been numerous studies over the years, but none of them looked at the Park in its entirety, its operations and the ongoing viability of its uses.
- Much of the infrastructure is aging and in disrepair. While historic parks spend on average \$1 million annually on capital improvements, Riverfront Park has invested substantially less than \$100,000 annually since EXPO.
- The current irrigation system is hydraulic and obsolete. Staff can no longer find replacement parts. 1/3 of the meadows' irrigation systems are manually turned on and the potted plants are all hand watered, no drip irrigation system.
- All of the bridges within Riverfront Park need maintenance. The south channel Howard Street Bridge needs to be replaced entirely.
- Because none of the existing buildings within the Park are up to current energy code requirements, by upgrading these facilities, the Park will be cutting its energy use in half.
- Riverfront Park has supported an annual average deficit of over \$1 Million over the past 5 years.
- The 40th Anniversary of EXPO.
- The Park Board decided to look at Riverfront comprehensively in early 2012. The first phase, adopted in the fall of 2012, took a broad brush look at the Park and potential possible uses. The Riverfront Park Master Plan 2014 commenced in the spring of 2013 with the formation of a 20-person, citizen Advisory Committee.

How would a yes vote affect my taxes?

- Currently, city residents pay 91 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value toward the repayment of one street and two park bonds. This new proposal, with its strategic refinancing, keeps the individual taxpayer share the same and would generate \$60 million for reinvestment in Riverfront Park and \$25 million annually for street improvements.
- The Spokane Parks portion of the 91 cents is 34 cents. The Riverfront Park Bond would extend the current rate homeowners are paying for parks an additional seven years.

Do I have to vote for both the Street Levy and Riverfront Park Bond together?

- No. These will be separate ballot issues.

Why does the Bond language reference \$64.3 million and not \$60 million?

- \$4.3 million would be authorized to pay debt service in the first five years of the 20-year bond.

Why a Logo for the Master Plan?

- The Advisory Committee developed a set of guidelines and goals for the Master Plan. Central to these was the idea of bringing people to the center ... to the Pavilion and to the River. The Logo characterizes this central idea and creates new imagery as the Park looks to the next 40 years.

I have heard that the Master Plan plans to pave over the existing meadows in the Park?

- The Master Plan proposes a large, landscaped Central Plaza, where the current IMAX Meadow now exists. The Central Plaza aims to accommodate all vendors for future events and help pull people to the U.S. Pavilion. Presently, large events are hosted in the Gondola Meadow. The Gondola Meadow sustains substantial amounts of damage due to overuse; forcing Parks staff to fence off the area for weeks to repair damaged sod. The Gondola Meadow also has about 6" of grease build-up within its topsoil due to vendor use over the years, contributing to damage to the sod.
- Where the current IMAX building now stands, the Master Plan recommends a new meadow be developed. The new meadow would be adjacent to the Spokane River.
- Two existing parking lots, Lot 1 and portions of Lot 5 (near the former YMCA building) are recommended to become additional meadows/playgrounds.
- Specifically the additional paved space proposed by the Master Plan is less than 2% over existing hardscape areas. All new hardscape will be concrete pavers or similar. The Master Plan aims to remove all asphalt, except for parking lots, from the Park.

I have heard that the Master Plan proposes a much more commercialized Park?

- The Master recommends removing two commercial ventures, the IMAX theater and amusement park rides and replacing these with a leasable event space within the U.S. Pavilion.
- The Master Plan is exploring the potential for a longer term lease for a centrally located restaurant within the Park, operated by a local chef.
- The Master Plan recommends minimizing development with the Park, moving from 18 facilities to 11. And that new structures sit delicately on the landscape, deferring to the natural landscape.
- Development of the north bank, just north of Riverfront Park, and not included in the Riverfront Park Bond, has the potential to be developed in partnership with private enterprises such as a Field House, a Climbing Gym and/or possible destination ride.

Is an outdoor music venue a viable enterprise at the U.S. Pavilion?

- Business planning for the Master Plan looks at a 2200+ outdoor amphitheater within the U.S. Pavilion.
- The proposed event space could accommodate a summer concert series as one of the venues to be held within the Pavilion. Other uses looked at in the planning include, highschool graduations, nonprofit fundraisers, performances by the Spokane Symphony, the Hoopfest Center Court game, and the Bloomsday awards ceremony. The business plan looks at potentially 43 events being held within the Pavilion on an annual basis.

How many trees will need to be removed as a result of the Master Plan?

- There are five areas of potential tree removal within the Park, with the greatest amount being in the area of the newly proposed Central Plaza.
- In general, Riverfront Park is overplanted. Parks arborists have been working every year to clear overgrown plantings of trees. Many trees have exposed root structures and are too densely planted.
- Parks staff is working with the Urban Forestry Committee to identify trees within the five areas of potential tree removal, which should be prioritized for preservation.
- All trees removed within the Park will be replaced within the city limits at a ratio of 1:1.

What is going to happen to the Butterflies from EXPO '74?

- The Master Plan recommends that if one or all of the Butterfly sculptures are to be restored a complete replacement and re-design be conducted to restore kinetic movement and longevity.

How does a new Park aim to address the \$1 million deficit in operating expenses?

- Parks staff is working with the Finance Division of the City to generate a number of development scenarios around a sound business plan in the Park.

Isn't \$60 Million a lot to put into one Park?

- The median capital investment nationwide for parks for construction costs is \$82 million.
- Just covering infrastructure alone was going to cost us \$20-\$25 million, the Spokane Park Board felt that in order for citizens to notice and appreciate the investment they wanted to include improved amenities and uses within the Park as well.
- Nationwide Parks Manager Survey – Parks spend \$1 million annually on capital improvements, RFP well below that threshold over the last 40 years, (of the surveys cited, 1/3 of the 58 had surrounding residential populations of less than 500,000).
- Comparative chart on other park investments nationwide (below):

PARK	CAPITAL INVESTED
Seattle Waterfront (Proposed)	\$450 Million
World's Fair EXPO '74 100 acres	\$117 Million (Est. \$581 Million - \$1.2 Billion in today's dollars)
Spokane Street Bond 2004	\$117 Million

Tacoma Park Bond 2014	\$100 Million (recently passed)
Olympic Sculpture Garden, Seattle	\$85 Million
Spokane Convention Center/ Arena Expansion 2012	\$65 Million
McEuen Park, Coeur d'Alene 15 Acres	\$20 Million