



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Item 2
March 4, 2021
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	Luther Burbank Dock Draft Preferred Concept Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Review plan and provide input to the Subcommittee	<input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

PRESENTERS:	Peter Struck, Subcommittee Chair Paul West, CIP Project Manager
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Jake Jacobson
EXHIBITS:	1. Draft Preferred Concept Plan 2. Elements of the Draft Concept Plan 3. Draft Preferred Concept and Alternatives Analysis

SUMMARY

The Luther Burbank Dock Subcommittee has developed a draft preferred concept plan for the full Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) to review. See Exhibits 1 and 2. The draft plan rates well on the evaluation criteria set forth by the Commission which demonstrates that the preferred concept is more beneficial overall when compared to the three concept alternatives initially proposed. See Exhibit 3. The subcommittee invites the commissioners to provide feedback on this draft product so that it can be finalized for adoption at the April 1 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

BACKGROUND

Principles

The subcommittee's work was informed at the outset by the evaluation criteria that the PRC developed for this project. As the subcommittee's work progressed, the essence of the subcommittee's focus could be characterized by four principles:

- **Environmental Quality** – The subcommittee sought to protect environmental quality. The aquatic environment, the park environment (including trees and impervious surfaces) and the neighborhood were in mind when we discussed various elements.
- **Intensity of Use** – The subcommittee considered how different elements might affect use of the park. Our overarching concern was to respect the passive, open space character of the park.
- **Congruence with the Master Plan** (and other City plans) – The subcommittee reviewed the Luther Burbank Master Plan to understand its vision for the developed waterfront.
- **Compliment the Unique Character of the Site** – Luther Burbank's waterfront has historical, functional and artistic elements that make it different from other waterfront areas. How can these be highlighted to work with the planned uses of the waterfront?

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

The subcommittee spent its first meeting (January 27, 2021) discussing the commissioners' concerns and considerations with the design team. The design team developed a preliminary draft plan for the second meeting (February 10, 2021). The subcommittee went through the plan element-by-element. Its work product consists of two documents: the graphic plan (Exhibit 1: Draft Preferred Concept Plan) and a descriptive list of the recommended project elements (Exhibit 2: Elements of the Draft Concept Plan). The Elements list provides additional details that would not fit on the graphic plan. In some cases, it also provides guidance for the next phase of design.

The subcommittee was able to make recommendations on most of the design elements as follows:

- Dock Configuration – the consultant's preliminary schematic reflected the input from the subcommittee and was generally accepted at the second meeting. There were some differences of opinion about whether overwater coverage should be maximized. There were also some questions about why finger docks were needed. These concerns were resolved fairly quickly.
- ADA access to North Beach – The subcommittee agreed that ADA access to the north beach should be included, but that it should be constructed to blend in with the shoreline landscape. Access below ordinary high water would be provided by movable mats instead of a permanent ramp.
- Pavement – the subcommittee understood the need to replace the plaza paving. Selection of material and design could not be completed at this phase and was deferred to the 30% design.
- Seating – The subcommittee wanted both benches and picnic tables, but in limited numbers to avoid clutter and facilitate movement through the plaza. Additional movable picnic tables could be part of seasonal programming.
- Signage – Generally, the subcommittee understood the need for signage but wanted it located to reduce clutter and integrate with the surroundings. Interpretive signage was discussed in principle and it was agreed that one or two interpretive signs could be located on a building or at the edge of the plaza near pathways. The topics and content for those signs was left to be determined later in design.
- Lighting – The subcommittee wanted to limit lighting to that needed for safety. There was a general consensus to avoid lighting that supported nighttime activities.
- Decorative Elements – There was general consensus that decorative elements did not fit with the character of the site and could send the wrong message about the purpose of the facilities.
- Outdoor Classroom – The subcommittee was enthusiastic about the outdoor classroom on top of the restroom. This would provide boating programs a space to operate without taking over the main plaza area. It also provides an additional viewpoint for park users when it is not programmed.
- Trees in the Plaza – The subcommittee was generally supportive of replacing the trees in the plaza, given the difficulty of repairing the pavement around them and their stagnant growth condition. There was an understanding that the location and type of the trees would be worked out during 30% design in concert with decisions about the replacing the pavement.
- Concession Stand – The subcommittee understood the need for a secure retail space to support boating programs and rentals.
- Pumpout Station – as part of the design work that was funded by a Boating Facilities Program grant, the City was asked to consider siting a pumpout station at the Luther Burbank docks. This could have water quality benefits for Lake Washington. The subcommittee weighed the pros and cons of this idea and declined to include it in the concept plan.

Some elements generated more extensive discussion. By the end of the third meeting (February 22, 2021), the committee suggested strategies on three issues that will involve the PRC's review at a later date:

- Wider North Beach with rockery – The lake is highest mid-May through mid-July which overlaps with peak boating season. The beach is very narrow during this time and it is difficult to land or launch paddlecraft there. For both boating programs and general use, a somewhat wider beach would be much more useful. The concern about widening the beach is its impact on existing trees. There are two poplar trees that could be impacted depending on how the next phase of design goes. The subcommittee agreed to the wider beach in concept phase with PRC’s review of tree impacts at the 30% phase.
- Bulkhead Steps and Handsome Bollards – The landscape architect informed us that the bulkhead next to the Handsome Bollards would probably require a railing if the plaza improvements trigger permitting. He suggested that steps down to the water from the bulkhead could avoid the railing while providing seating and offer additional unprogrammed space to reduce congestion in the passage next to the Boiler Building. This element would increase the project’s overwater coverage and is likely to complicate permitting. The subcommittee members liked the steps in concept. However, they wanted to understand how the Handsome Bollards would function with the steps and they wanted to weigh the environmental impacts and costs involved. Their questions could not be answered without additional design work. It was agreed to keep the steps in the concept plan and explore permitting and Handsome Bollards integration issues during 30% design development. In addition, the subcommittee wanted to involve the Arts Council in reviewing the situation and discussing the options for the future of the Handsome Bollards. The results of these investigations would be brought to the full PRC at the 30% design review.
- Cost analysis – The subcommittee requested cost information on various options, but the design team was unable to respond. At the concept stage, it is difficult to estimate costs. The design team did explain some of the constraints on grant funding that informed the subcommittee’s decisions. The 30% design will include an estimate of probable costs for key project elements. That will be an opportunity for the PRC to adjust scope if needed to fit anticipated funding sources.

PREFERRED CONCEPT AND ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

Starting in November 2020, the PRC developed a set of design evaluation criteria over the course of three meetings. These criteria were created to analyze the concept alternatives. They reflected what the PRC believed were the community’s interests based on the commissioners’ knowledge of the community and input from several City-led public engagement efforts:

- The project webpage
- August 6, 2020 design charrette
- September 2020 public open house and online survey
- Email comment

The PRC ranked each evaluation criterion as a high, medium or low priority. Higher priority criteria were to be given greater consideration, meaning they merited more discussion and analysis to understand the costs and benefits of a given alternative.

Staff have prepared an analysis of the Draft Preferred Concept Plan in comparison to the original concept alternatives using the criteria. This analysis uses a five point scale to rate how well the preferred concept and each alternative perform in achieving the group criteria. A color gradient was added to provide visual interpretation of the results. See Exhibit 3. This product shows that overall the preferred concept is more beneficial than any of the alternatives. It also shows that high priority criteria in particular were well addressed by the design.

NEXT STEPS

The subcommittee will take feedback from commissioners at this meeting and determine how to incorporate it into the plan at its next meeting on March 10, 2021. It will return with a revised product at the April 1 regular PRC meeting. If the PRC supports that version of the concept plan, the subcommittee will seek a motion to approve the plan and recommend it as the preferred concept to City Council.

Once City Council approves a concept plan, the design team will begin work to produce a 30% design. This will take several months. The outstanding issues discussed above will be addressed during this process. The PRC will take up the project again in the Q3 of 2021 as this stage of design comes to completion.

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss the draft preferred concept plan. Provide the subcommittee with input for finalizing the plan.