



City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Department Source: Convention and Visitors Bureau and Parks and Recreation

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: April 15, 2019

Re: Set Public Hearing: Approve Flat Branch Park Expansion Master Plan

Executive Summary

The Parks & Recreation and Convention and Visitors Bureau Departments request a resolution to set a public hearing for the revised Flat Branch Park Expansion Master Plan. The revision is needed due to the recent acquisition of approximately .4 acres and the proposed downtown district's Gateway Plaza. City staff worked with the park committee of the Mayor's Task Force for Bicentennial Planning (CoMo200) and members of the Downtown District on proposed plans for the park. Following an interested parties meeting and subsequent online survey regarding plans for the park, two options were being considered. The CoMo200 Task Force endorsed their plan, Option 1, which included the original Gateway Plaza design based on an existing Memorandum of Understanding with the Downtown District and the City of Columbia. The owners of the adjacent building proposed Option 2, which retained their original parking spaces and added several more, thus reducing the amount of space for the Gateway Plaza. In order to develop a possible compromise option, staff developed a third option that retained some parking. Council may choose one of the three options or consider an alternate plan.

This action would set a public hearing to consider the options presented. Staff will present a separate resolution approving the option endorsed by CoMo200 for council consideration at the May 6 Council Meeting following the public hearing. If Council desires a different option be adopted as the master plan following the public hearing, that resolution may be amended prior to adoption to replace the master plan attached.

Currently there is no funding for the development of the park so Council action will simply establish the master plan for the park. However, the Downtown CID has dedicated funds in its budget for the Gateway Plaza. CoMo200 is requesting Council approval of the master plan so it may begin fundraising for the park and bicentennial celebration. Once funds are raised staff will return to council to appropriate the funds and authorize construction.

Discussion

On October 17, 2017, City Council approved the acquisition of approximately .4 acres of land for the expansion of Flat Branch Park, including related Providence Road improvements. With the City of Columbia's bicentennial celebration occurring in 2021, the Mayor established a Task Force on Bicentennial Celebration Planning. The Director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau was assigned as the staff liaison to the task force.

One goal of the task force is to create a plan for the site near Columbia's origin, Flat Branch Park. The Mayor's Task Force, known as CoMo200, had two members of the Downtown



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Community Improvement District of Columbia (CID) on the committee and understood that there were already existing plans for the Gateway Plaza on City property located at the southeast intersection of Providence Road and Broadway. An agreement between the City and the CID was approved for this project on December 18, 2017.

After months of site survey work and initial park planning, a draft master plan was prepared. Park planning efforts concentrated on the park portion with the understanding that the design would be phased toward the Gateway Plaza. An interested parties meeting was held on January 31, 2019 to solicit comments and an online survey was made available from January 28-February 19, 2019. Six pages of comments may be seen at this link:

<https://www.como.gov/parksandrec/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2019/03/IP-Meeting-Comments-Flat-Branch-Expansion.pdf>

There were a wide range of comments from complete support to abandoning the entire project. Owners of the adjacent property utilized Simon Oswald and Associates (SOA) to design an alternate plan, which in most part was similar to the CoMo200 plan; but the primary difference was that their proposed plan retained the parking lot on the west side of the building and added several more spaces, thus eliminating a large portion of the Gateway Plaza. This plan was submitted as part of the interested party meeting and is presented as an option for council consideration.

Recognizing that there were two completely different plans on how to use the Gateway Plaza portion and related parking spaces, city staff developed a third option that retained some parking.

All master plan options include the following key elements of park design:

1. A pedestrian bridge connecting the .4 acre property to Flat Branch Park. This is a highlight amenity of the park and would consist of a functional pedestrian bridge adorned with attractive railings and lights in order to create a visual impact as you view and approach the park from Cherry Street.
2. Gateway Plaza, located at the corner of Providence and Broadway as presented by the Downtown CID and Arcturis Architectural Firm. The location and size may vary in Option 2 due to the parking lot design.
3. A 30' X 20' concrete overlook that will serve as a scenic point to observe the park and Flat Branch Creek and also be used as a performance space during special events at that park. The space could be used by a small group of musicians or for special presentations.
4. The park design will include space for three art sculptures. The installation of the sculptures would be coordinated with the Office of Cultural Affairs.
5. Park staff would work with Public Works staff to lengthen the northbound right-turn lane along Providence Road.
6. A donor wall recognizing contributions to the expansion development would be constructed in the existing portion of Flat Branch Park.
7. Upgrade existing lights in Flat Branch Park to LED technology.



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Listed below are the three options with a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

Option 1. This is the option that is endorsed by the CoMo200 committee, Downtown Leadership Committee (letter attached), and the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Gateway Planning project began in 2013 and after numerous public input meetings the Gateway master plan was completed in 2016. This includes the original Gateway Plaza design that was proposed to the City Council on 12/18/2017. The Gateway project reflected many of the recommendations made to the City of Columbia in the 2010 Charrette Report that was prepared by H3 Studio. H3 recommended The Gateways concept including expansion of green space around Flat Branch Creek and Park including daylighting the Flat Branch Creek in areas where appropriate. As mentioned earlier, as part of the existing agreement between the City and the CID for the development of the Gateway Plaza, the CID agreed to invest a substantial amount of money for the development of the plaza. This plan eliminates the public parking spaces on the west side of the lot and narrows the entry drive so that the private parking on the west side of the building is inaccessible. On August 21, 2018 the parking lot agreement with Mark Stevenson expired with the possible intent that the entry drive would have to be closed due to proximity to the Providence/Broadway intersection. The east side of Flat Branch Creek that is on the private property would not be restored. There are parking spaces on the south side of the building. It is anticipated that the Gateway Plaza would function similarly to the City's keyhole structure on the corner of Broadway and 8th Street.

Option 2. SOA developed plan. This plan retains all of the original parking next to the building and creates two standard parking spaces and an ADA van accessible space. This option requires that the "COLUMBIA" lettering of the Gateway Plaza be shifted further to south, reducing its visual appeal from the intersection. It may also reduce the size of the "COLUMBIA" lettering in order to fit it on the reduced space. There is concern that if this option is selected, the CID may abandon the Gateway project and use funds that have been raised for this corner of the property for other downtown improvements. In return for this option, staff suggests that an easement or land donation be initiated in order for the existing owner's east creek bank to become included for creek restoration. This option may also result in a complete redesign of the corner. If this option is chosen, negotiation with the adjoining property to acquire the property will be required. In connection with any real estate transaction, staff recommends a restrictive covenant be placed on the conveyance which would prohibit the construction of any structures and would limit the use to open air parking or open space.

Option 3. Compromise plan would create four standard parking spaces and one ADA van-accessible space. This plan shifts the entry drive closer to the building eliminating all of the parking spaces against the building. This requires an agreement or easement with the owner and should include a land swap or easement for use of the land on the east side of the creek for restoration as discussed in Option 2. The "COLUMBIA" lettering may have to be shifted some, but it would primarily remain in the same vicinity. A street light pole would have to be removed and a storm water drain would either need to be relocated or



replaced with a flat, drive-over grate. Depending on final layout of the Gateway plan, there remains a concern that if this option is selected, the CID may abandon the Gateway project and use funds that have been raised for this corner of the property for other downtown improvements.

CoMo200 task force is ready to begin fundraising for the park development and having an approved master plan is critical to their efforts as it relates to the overall bicentennial event celebration.

The proposed timeline for future events is as follows:

- April – May 2019 Approve Park Master Plan
- June – December 2019
 - Public Fundraising Campaign (as part of overall CoMo200 campaign)
 - Once funds are raised, staff will return to Council for appropriation and approval of project.
 - Final design and construction documents prepared and bid
- January – March 2020
- Contractor(s) selected and contracts signed, permits issued
- April 2020 – March 2021
 - Park groundbreaking ceremony (April)
 - Construction
- March 2021 Dedication of Park
- May 2021 Bicentennial Finale Celebration

The selection of the master plan only confirms what would be constructed in the park and on the Gateway Plaza. Once funds are raised, staff will return to council to appropriate the funds and authorize construction of the project.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: This is approval of the master plan only.

Long-Term Impact: This is approval of the master plan only.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Social Equity, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Environmental Management, Tertiary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities



Legislative History

Date	Action
01/07/2019	B321-18: Approving funds for engineering services relating the Flat Branch Park Expansion project. https://gocolumbiamo.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3781235&GUID=B9C0C7C6-1376-4584-85D4-7D5309F22E87&Options=&Search=
12/18/2017	B376-17: Authorizing a memorandum of understanding with the Downtown Community Improvement District as it relates to the construction of a Gateway Plaza on the southeast corner of the Providence Road and Broadway intersection. https://gocolumbiamo.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3269481&GUID=5FF3C133-8E86-4D1B-A627-DFE914F960F4&Options=&Search=
12/04/2017	R171-17: Establishing a Mayor’s Task Force on Bicentennial Celebration Planning. https://gocolumbiamo.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3269480&GUID=588F30EA-7D0F-47C4-B318-BAE377C02236&Options=&Search=
06/16/2017	B159-17: Agreement with Allstate Consultants LLC Engineering Services Relating to the Demolition of the McAdams building. https://gocolumbiamo.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3062166&GUID=334CA0C1-E407-4264-B472-B6634391C0A1&Options=&Search=
10/17/2016	B273-16: Acquisition of Property at 32 S. Providence Road from Roth Properties, LLP for Flat Branch Park Expansion, Public transportation and streetscape improvements. https://gocolumbiamo.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2848812&GUID=F18A796E-B9A5-4231-A4B0-67EC603A5DEB&Options=&Search=
02/07/2011	REP26-11 Report from Downtown Leadership Council requesting work session to review recommendations from 2010 Charrette Report. Link to Council Minutes: http://www.como.gov/Council/Commissions/downloadfile.php?id=378&bcid=56 Link to Council Memo: http://www.como.gov/Council/Commissions/downloadfile.php?id=591
10/17/2010	REP108-10 Report to City Council on 2010 Charrette Report. Link to Council Minutes: https://www.como.gov/Council/Minutes/documents/cm10_oct18_000.pdf Link to 2010 Charrette Report: https://www.como.gov/wp-content/uploads/COMO_FinalReport_Standard.pdf

Suggested Council Action

Approve the resolution to set a public hearing for the Flat Branch Park Expansion Master Plan.