

BEMIDJI CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Agenda

Monday, June 13, 2011

**City Hall
Council Chambers
5:30 p.m.**



1. CALL TO ORDER

2. REVIEW BEMIDJI PARKS, OPEN SPACE & TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN UPDATE
(BRAUER & ASSOCIATES, INC.)

3. CONSIDER MEMBERS FOR AD HOC RENTAL COMMITTEE

4. ADJOURNMENT

Bemidji—Regional Center Amenities with Small Town Character



BRAUER & ASSOCIATES, LTD.
LAND USE PLANNING AND DESIGN

10417 Excelsior Boulevard - Suite One - Hopkins, Minnesota 55343

Public Open House Meeting Summary

Date: May 16th, 2011
Project: Bemidji Parks, Open Space & Trail System Plan Update
From: Amanda Prosser

General Comments:

1. Algoma Park is to be annexed by the City in 2012 and is currently heavily used by the surrounding neighborhood. This park is in need of major updating and at a minimum needs the safety issues addressed. This brings up the issue of level of service for neighborhood parks – how much can be afforded?
2. It is projected that in the upcoming years the population of Bemidji will continue to age and it is important there are activities and amenities available for this demographic group, especially accessible trails and rest stops along the trails.
3. A major concern for residents is that Beltrami County has the highest percentage of obese children and also one of the coldest climates. An indoor park or playground is highly desired to provide the opportunity for kids to be active in the winter months. The vision for this park is not a large community center. A few residents currently use the McDonalds play space to fill this void.
4. The main concern with athletic facilities is to make sure that everyone is reasonably provided for and the groups are talking to each other about needs and concerns.
5. Veterans memorial/veterans park idea needs more consideration, perhaps west of history center (132.5 and MN Street)
6. Amenities installed in public spaces such as picnic tables, benches, trash receptacles, etc. should be designed by local artists.
7. The City needs to have a solid affordable plan for upkeep of new parks and trails
8. Currently, fireworks on the 4th of July are set off from Nymore Beach. With the development of the southshore happening in the next few years this venue will likely have to change. It is important for the City to keep space available for this event.
9. Public education / campaign is about “stop for pedestrians” is needed
10. Visual cues that make crossing safer is needed in downtown area
11. Hwy 197 should be rerouted to Irvine from the south shore to 15th.
12. A dog park should be considered for Brinkman Park.

Trail Related Items:

1. Connections between the Middle School and High School need to be looked at
2. Additional signage, rest stops with sun protection, etc. are needed along trails
3. Wayfinding was a big issue, including maps showing where trailhead and public parking is available

4. A pedestrian bridge over Highway 197 at 1st Street South is still being looked at – need to consider viability
5. There is an opportunity to make a trail connection under the existing Hwy 197 bridge over the Mississippi River (south of Pamida). This will be explored further in the planning process.
6. Connections (trails and sidewalks) need to be cleared and cleaned for use.

Library / Paul Bunyan Park:

1. The Jaycees (contact: Char Blashll (218) 766-4258) has a number of large annual events at the Library / Paul Bunyan Park, all of which require some type of large tent structure (60 x 100') and electrical hookups. A permanent structure in lieu of a temporary tent setup is preferred or at least a more suitable surface for where the tents are usually setup. The current electrical capacity is also inadequate for these events. The Jaycees is in the process of having an assessment done of to determine their electrical needs.
2. Dragon Boat Festival is also a big event – use space from Library Park up to river and parking lot
3. Kraus Anderson Fishing festival is third biggest event of the summer
4. Lots of smaller, almost weekly, events take place in lakefront park area
5. Art in Park is staged behind Carnegie Library and also has electrical service issues
6. Some residents would like to have boat slips available at the park to allow docking for a couple of hours to go eat lunch downtown or take in a park event. These slips could be metered. This should not be a marina or too big in size.
7. The idea of a bike rental or canoe rental facility is desired at the park. The City envisions doing something like 'Nice Ride' in where there would be bike kiosks at multiple locations throughout the City and a rider could pick up the bike at one place and drop it off at another kiosk in a different part of the City.
8. A bandshell is desired with grass seating for 200 people, but needs to allow for 700-1000 on occasion. The lakefront area makes sense for the location, but traffic noise is an issue.
9. The hill sloped toward the lake at Library Park is used as a sledding hill in the winter and should continue to serve this activity.
10. A splash pad and a play area for older kids is desired along with tiered parental seating if possible. The splash pad equipment could be public artwork?
11. Chief Bemidji Statue – need to find the right place for this as part of a larger design.
12. There is unanimous consensus that a safer and more direct connection from Downtown across Hwy 197 to the park is critical. Major intersections that could be more easily enhanced / improved are 3rd and 5th street where there are already traffic lights. Need to work with MN/DOT on adding in some green space/refuge islands in downtown area



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Interest Group Interview Summaries

Date: May 11th, 2011

Interview Dates: May 9-10, and 16

Project: Bemidji Parks, Open Space & Trail System Plan Update
From: Amanda Prosser

Performing Arts Group

Sandy (co-chair, Chief Bemidji Statue Committee) (subcommittee to PTR Committee)

Major issues and focus: A 15 member committee who's purpose is to get a new statue to replace the existing one, which will be placed at the Historical Center. The preferred location for the new statue would be in Library Park, facing NE and the Mississippi River, on an overlook along the lake.

Pat (Beltrami County Arts Council, Bemidji County Theater)

General Comments

1. The Bemidji Community Orchestra could use an outdoor performance space for at least 100 people. (Concerned with potential location in Library Park because of adjacent roadway and noise)
2. A portable stage for Mascin Rose Womens Theater is needed (they currently use pavilion in courthouse square)
3. There should be additional places for permanent public art with benches and gathering space.
4. Carnegie Library is not accessible and is too small for current art group.
5. Need outdoor gathering spaces with roofs and benches to draw more people.
6. Chamber of Commerce, Visit Bemidji, Parks and the City need to collaborate to promote the arts and the various events that are held within the City.
7. The arts community is growing and they need to collaborate to market the arts and be more organized.
8. Programming:
 - a. See need for focus on future generations, especially teens and elevate program offerings.
 - b. Need for higher quality programming beyond the "arts and crafts"
 - c. Community Parks and Rec do not get involved with arts and there is a need to develop a relationship. P & R should contact Arts group. The Arts groups should form an "Art Association"

School District (middle school, high school, BSU)

BSU – Outdoor Program – small watercraft, bike rental open 7 days a week.

Middle School – 11-14 year old students

General Comments

1. The recent improvements enjoyed most include the waterfront improvements, the covered pavilion structure and playground at Diamond Point Park and trail connections
2. Nymore Beach needs to be developed.
1. A rock wall, splash pad, public tent / pavilion, and open green space are features desired in Library / Paul Bunyan Park.
2. A dog park is desired somewhere in the City.
3. Additional lighting along the trails for safety reasons is desired.
4. There should be a fishing pier by the boat ramp at Diamond Point Park
5. Coordinate trail maintenance between different agencies, particularly in the spring and fall months
6. Trailhead signs / wayfinding throughout the City
7. Potential for a BMX Park at Movul Maze, a Mountain bike trail

8. If the BSU track was updated and artificial turf was used BSU might be open to allowing public use of the facility.
9. Develop the 11 acres next to the Boys and Girls Club (currently an open mowed space next to BSU campus)
10. Birchmont Trail connection around lake, including better signs and lane markings
11. Pedestrian crossings over Paul Bunyan Drive
12. A splash pad or indoor swimming pool (Possible location: old High School site)
13. City Park to Middle School safe trail connection (sidewalk or trail that is visible and lighted)

Bemidji Youth Advisory Committee

Major focus: 14 person committee funded by the City & Evergreen, applicants interview annually and are appointed. The City council asks for their input on kid issues throughout the year)

General Comments

1. The park improvements that are most enjoyed include: covered shelter at Diamond Point Park , Frisbee golf, and Skate park.
2. There needs to be a trail system that connects all parks
3. Library Park needs improvements (e.g. enclosed gathering space with picnic tables)
4. Indoor pool
5. Kids like to bridge jump. Can a diving platform be installed somewhere?
6. Wi-Fi in select parks would be a draw for kids to do homework and hangout.
7. The BYC hold an annual youth rally at Library Park which attracts 400-800 kids every summer. Can this park be more conducive to large gatherings?

Active Living

Matthew Dyrdaahl... HRDC

Major issues and focus: safe routes to school, physical activity, local connections.

5 year project, BC/BS funding

Land Use and Transportation Plan incorporates complete streets philosophy to some degree, Matthew will get us a copy.

Active Living Report covers most of the issues and is current.

Key Routes:

1. Irvine Avenue
2. Park Avenue – some success with adding ped/bike facilities, but did not include sidewalk
3. Connections to High School & Middle School

General Comments:

1. Complete streets idea starting to emerge at planning and political level; Active Living can provide examples of what's needed for Complete Streets (in addition to what is provided by planning team)
2. Likes idea of plans complementing each other, and start with select projects and build from there over time
3. Loop around lake idea is still of interest, but little action taken; barriers are money, competing interests, physical barriers, and political will
4. Wayfinding – coordinated effort is needed between city, county and townships; Waterfront is first example where wayfinding information will be provided – this is near Chamber building. Active Living can lead up the biking wayfinding effort
5. Some solutions are simple, such as adding benches in select areas for seniors to rest
6. Senior population is growing in city
7. Focusing in partnership approach is important, and not fully evolved
8. Working together to position for Transportation Enhancement and/or Legacy-type funding programs

Non-Profit Groups

See below for attendees.

Community Education – open up School District facilities for public use, youth program does use some city facilities.

Boys/Girls Club – Would like to dovetail more with City and SD; have their own facilities; suggest creating best practices for green space, parks, etc.; being mindful of how parks are designed – balance between passive and active spaces, greenspaces; 6-18 year olds is their focus.

United Way – help youth with social well-being; seek outdoor free spaces; need more learning opportunities – environmental, educational, physical activity (more creative approach needed); address concerns of disabled populations

Evergreen – kids up to 22 years old; outdoor free program focus; provide counseling; skate park big success

Early Childhood – 0-5 year olds; need age-appropriate equipment

General Comments:

1. Bike riding is important
2. Swimming at DP very popular
3. Skate park successful, but some behavior issues
4. Age-appropriate play areas (0-5) – such as sand box with exploration features in it – i.e., dinosaurs. Etc.
5. Disability appropriate facilities needed
6. Connections to parks and schools big issue
7. Improvements help in recruiting new residents and professionals to region – hospital example
8. Family child care at affordable cost is lacking
9. Transportation is a barrier
10. Lack of connectivity is a barrier
11. Low income households access to recreation is an issue
12. City financial capacity will be stretched
13. Demands will define what the role of government /private-public, etc is.
14. Real need for an indoor winter facility for playground – preschool age in particular
15. Family friendly design – so kids can't slip away from parent, etc.
16. Restrooms are always needed
17. More programming is needed – need to shift from development to programming
18. Day care facility is needed
19. Affordability is big issue
20. Need to foster more tourism
21. Safe walking opportunities for families
22. Need to foster more collaboration between city, sd, and non-profits

Bemidji Athletic Association

Youth Soccer, Senior Softball, Tennis, Football, Youth Baseball were represented

Youth Football perspective:

1. Program is just getting started, not yet established in terms of number of interested participants, etc.
2. Expect to need fields for younger age groups
3. Need basic green space with goal posts
4. 50 yard fields would be nice to have – such as at North Country Park (by hospital) and Northern Park (located in Northern Township on Algoma) now have an arrangement to use old high school site (BSU)
5. Possibility to partner with private landowners in the future

Senior Softball perspective:

1. Lack facilities, but also do not have a strong level of participation

Figure Skaters:

1. Ice fees are biggest issue -- \$100/hr is considered expensive
2. Need space for lockers, etc.
3. Want to make sure ice stays open in summer as Bemidji is the only town in region with summer ice

Youth Soccer:

1. Pretty good shape over all with respect to meeting field needs, with adding one more field desirable
2. Biggest issue is whether or not county land will be sold and what that means in terms of replacing their field with similar or better fields
3. Possibility to share some field use with football, but concern would be overlap of seasons and avoiding overuse issues
4. Adding some "open green" space would be helpful, which would be used for informal play and practice

Tennis Association:

1. Seems as though there are adequate outdoor courts as long as they are kept in good playable form with respect to maintenance
2. Would like indoor facility – can likely support two, with four being ideal in the long-term

Youth Baseball:

1. OK on meeting the needs for little fields
2. A little short of meeting needs for bigger fields
3. If County land is lost, may have option to build fields by high school

General Comments:

1. Missing open green space for practice and pickup games
2. Soccer fields are considered best in Northwest MN
3. If county land is sold, great opportunity to replace with a well-designed sports complex for soccer, football, baseball, etc.
4. Adding a dome field for winter use is thought needed, possibly at old BSU arena (John Glass?)
5. Youth groups admittedly have not collaborated very well in the past, and need to do better
6. Idea of establishing an "Athletic Council" to bring groups together three or four times a years was thought to be a great idea
7. Facilities are not well connected with trails, sidewalks, bikeways – end up always having to drive
8. Currently the parking facilities at fields is inadequate
9. Lit fields are very important

County Parks and Trails Group

General Comments:

1. County is working on implementing their trails plan in phases – ski, snowmobile trail development going well
2. SOO Line trail development starting – for ATVs
3. Road in the forests are open unless posted closed
4. Key opportunities include implementing a uniform wayfinding system throughout the region – kiosks, trailheads, parking areas, etc. – and a "common language" is needed in terms of signage
5. HRDC leadership in region has been great
6. Middle School to City Park trail is needed
7. County and City need to better collaborate in the future, at all levels
8. Marketing and information is lacking, such as providing good information for resorts to pass along – i.e. trailheads, parking locations, swimming locations, mapping, winter uses, and so forth
9. Chamber is missing opportunity to promote broader recreational opportunities
10. Someone needs to take the lead in bringing regional pieces together – trails and parks bigger picture

11. Potential for tourism has not been exploited as much as it could be -- kind of lacking right now
12. Opportunities include outdoor concerts, art-in-the-parks, summer programs at Sanford Center, "Northern Mardi Gras" (but last idea kind of fell by the wayside in the past)

City Staff

General Comments:

1. Focusing on connectivity and wayfinding is important -- with filling in gaps a priority
2. Reality is that funding will be much more curtailed for development, and partnerships will be important
3. How the entire southern lakeshore is ultimately developed is a point of focus with this plan update; what should relationship between various park units be?
4. Being able to maintain what is built is a big concern
5. More focus needs to be given to programming the use of the parks that have been upgraded
6. Trail around the lake remains a desire that will take across-the-board collaboration to actually achieve; and past decisions on recently upgraded roadways and trails will affect outcomes; still, possibilities to expand trails and improve experience/safety should be pursued
7. Right-of-way issues on north end of lake will continue to be a challenge, but city might have opportunity if/when services are extended out further
8. The extent to which lighting is provided in Diamond Point Park and, especially, the trail through the BSU campus needs to be looked into again
9. Open to idea of Complete Streets, but need to be careful to not go too far too fast on implementation; take a phased approach to implementation
10. Need to define the best corridors for pedestrian-level improvements -- access to Elementary School, Middle School to City Park
11. Trail issues along 1st Street need to be figured out -- doesn't work too well now; same with 5th St in town to the H.S. (extend East / West Trail to Hwy 11 and pave)
12. Opus is the developer that may buy the county land that is currently used for fields. Re-location of ball fields is viewed as a school issue; City's role is viewed in terms of connectivity
13. AlGoma park is being annexed -- how should it be used?
14. City Engineer expects planning effort to yield maps that can be used to address specific implementation issues; not just concepts
15. Want guidelines for when to put in a trail vs. a bike lane vs. a sidewalk
16. Want recommendations on how to get users to specific destinations
17. Prioritize Trail Connections for Funding
18. No Council support for Athletic Fields -- How do we pay for maintenance? -- The school should continue to provide and facilitate this

Destinations by Bike / Walk (as supplied by City)

Central Elementary School
J.W. Smith Elementary School
Lincoln Elementary School
Bemidji Middle School
City Park
Paul & Babe at waterfront
P.B. State Trail Trailheads
BHS tennis courts on 5th Street
Bemidji Library
Youth baseball fields
Youth soccer fields
Nymore Beach
Cameron Park
Diamond Point
BSU
East - West trail on 5th Street.

Joint Planning Board

General Comments and Perspectives:

1. Established in 2007, with 2008 office formally established
2. Land use plan completed in 2007
3. Orderly annexation agreement/plan completed in 2005, with scheduled annexation occurring every 5 years pending council approval
4. Joint planning area is 72 square miles
5. 8,120 acres of public land within joint planning area
6. Anticipate undertaking “part 2” study for larger region to complement city updated plan; we should work to set the stage for that
7. Biggest concern – connections to destinations: Southshore, downtown, parks along lake, City Park, schools, etc.; need to address connection of trails within city to larger regional system
8. Complete streets is idea worth pursuing, in both an urban and rural context
9. “Greater Bemidji Area” map – shows acreages of public land – need to get a copy
10. Very open to idea of thinking broadly and into the future, on issues such as greenway planning, conservation development, collaboration, etc.; Lino Lakes model came up during discussion
11. Handout entitled “Discussion: Parklands of the future Bemidji” by Lewis Crenshaw on JP Commission defines some objectives of the commission
12. Understand the importance of collaboration in the future

Downtown Development Authority

General Comments and Perspectives:

1. RDG Downtown Plan adopted and current; provides steps in the plan to guide action
2. Starting implementation: working on wayfinding kiosk for downtown area near visitor center
3. Starting to create wayfinding theme, but not too far along on that
4. Downtown plan is considered ambitious, but also achievable in many ways
5. Lakefront park and southshore area is a key point of focus:
 - a. Needs development, but also don’t over develop either; just not enough “people spaces” to hangout and enjoy waterfront, and keep people in downtown area a bit longer
 - b. Natural character appropriate in some areas
 - c. Need rental opportunities for bikes, paddleboats, canoes, etc. near downtown: open to idea about public rental bikes like Minneapolis example
 - d. Marina-sized facility not appropriate near Lakefront Park; this is considered more of a private endeavor
 - e. Enhancing children’s activities at Lakefront – splash pool, play structures, easy drop-off
 - f. Event space is vitally important and gets used a lot; needs to be flexible; more resilient surface needed; family activities typically
 - g. Hillside behind library is a natural sitting area
 - h. Need to consider adding 3-season shelter like Diamond Point for family rental
 - i. Uncertain what will happen with Library building; if removed, need to figure out how to best use this space – such as gathering area, weddings, visually attractive park space, possible shelter; if not removed, possible rehab with restrooms and improve access to water
6. Need for a bandshell – now kind of using area near 6th and Beltrami
7. Skate park in City Park very popular
8. Diamond Point – very popular
9. Vacant buildings downtown is an issue; missing retail elements; need more residential living in downtown area, which requires park support amenities
10. Big issue is crossing Highway from downtown to lakefront parks
 - a. Improvement in wayfinding needed
 - b. Crossing from 2nd through 6th Streets need improvement, with 3rd and 5th most important
 - c. Need more visual cues to enhance appeal and sense of safety

11. Trail connectivity is again an issue – need to look at area behind Pamida along river for connection to east-west trail, etc.
12. Need an accessible connection to lake.
13. The lakefront park should have activities that can provide revenue for the City.



City Clerk's Office

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor, City Council and John Chattin
FROM: Kay M. Murphy, City Clerk *Kay*
DATE: June 9, 2011
RE: Ad Hoc Rental Committee

At the Council's regular meeting on June 6, 2011, the Council directed staff to form an ad hoc rental committee made up of 3 council members, 3 landlords, 3 tenants and staff. Since that meeting I (or a Council member) have had several people express interest in serving on this committee. They are (in no particular order):

Landlords

- Tad Sonneman (owner Northview Manor)
- Duane Sea
- Dave Lalone
- Harry Aylesworth
- Andrew Erholtz
- Laura Straw (Director HRA)
- Judy Davig
- Lorrie Richardson

Tenants

- Brandon Eddy

In addition, at that meeting it was suggested that Johnson, Waldhausen and Hellquist be the Council reps.

Please let me know your wishes so I can arrange a meeting this month and one in early July.

km