



Update - Sandpoint City Parks Master Plan

October 2019 Presentations - by Greenplay, LLC

Recently the City's Planning consultants, Greenplay, LLC returned for their third visit to gather additional community input and present progress to date on the overall Parks Plan along with specific ideas for 4 of our parks - Memorial Field, The Downtown Waterfront, The Sports Complex (Traverse & Great Northern Fields) and The City Beach. They held 2 sessions of focus groups, a public presentation at the Panida theatre, and a public presentation to the City Council at their chambers; The Carousel was represented at all.

These plans are still a work in process, and have been a close collaboration between Greenplay, the City Administrator, our Parks Department, along with the (greater) Sandpoint community who have participated and responded. The next visit by Greenplay (expected in December) should be the final presentation of the suggested plan. Keep in mind, even the final plan will still be a high altitude vision, and more (local) work will need to be done for any of the specific recommendations to be approved and enacted.

With some knowledge of what goes into these plans, and having participated in all of the earlier focus groups and presentations, we can attest that Sandpoint is getting a well thought out plan. (In the early 90's, Clay was in Czechoslovakia as a tourism consultant, and one project was spearheading a master development and zoning plan for the Slovak town of Strba and its ski area resort in the Tatra Mountain region, similar in geographic scope of Sandpoint to Schweitzer. Jan Griffiths, one of our board members, spent many years as a Tourism and Economic Development Consultant working on a variety of projects in the Northwest.)

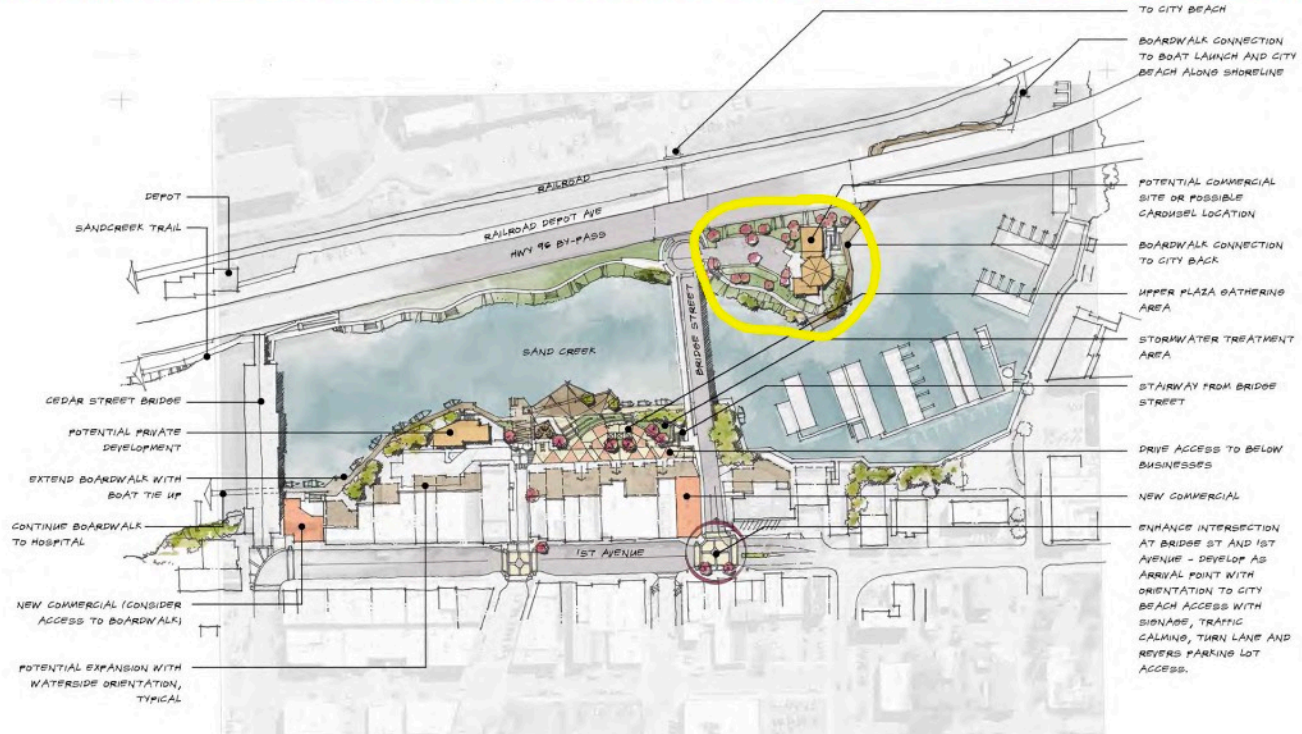
The analysis of our parks existing conditions/amenities/usage; data collection; and overall objectives for our park system have been clearly researched, analyzed and presented. Most importantly, the community has been listened to, and it is evident that ideas & desires expressed have been incorporated into the specific plans presented. This is an involved process, especially when considering and incorporating ideas suggested by our diverse interest groups, many of whom are singularity focused.

Greenplay's presented recommendations were supported by reasonable rational, and it was emphasized that the plan is still in process and reactions and additional input from the community is desired. (To review the entire preliminary plan and the powerpoint that was presented, and to leave feedback: GO TO https://www.opentownhall.com/portals/287/Issue_7920)

With respect to The Carousel, we are one of those singularly focused groups, and we feel we are where we need to be in this planning process. A possible location for The Carousel and ancillary event center can be found in two locations, one in the Downtown Waterfront Plan, and one in The City Beach Plan. (We resisted asking if this was an indication the City wanted us to find a second carousel to bring to Sandpoint - our volunteers are ready!).

The Downtown Waterfront (“Farmin’s Landing”)

Sandpoint Downtown Waterfront Preliminary Concept



Redevelopment of the whole Downtown Sand Creek waterfront has been on the radar for quite some time. To really enact this plan, the City would need to “pave the way” and encourage the private businesses to also focus their structures to the waterfront as well as the street. The possible location for The Carousel is where the old Lakeview Hotel was, now a parking lot. If not The Carousel, then it is suggested that some other amenity or public facing business should go in this location, based on the idea that this waterfront parcel is too valuable to be used as a parking lot.

The Carousel in this location would relate to the core downtown and the redevelopment of Sandcreek area: and though this has some merit, we feel the better location is in the actual City Beach Park in order to create year round synergy and be a catalyst for other potential activities enabling The Beach to truly shine as The Gem of Sandpoint - year round.

The City Beach.

There are many ideas in this plan, with supporting rationale behind them. Following (paraphrased) are just a few of the highlights.

Greenplay opened the discussion of this plan with a picture from the 50s showing it as an undeveloped blank slate, highlighting the observation that our parks, and The Beach in particular, have developed in a piecemeal fashion dropping in amenities over time without any cohesive functionality. Currently there is a lot of “green” at the beach, but in reality there is no longer really much open “greenspace”.

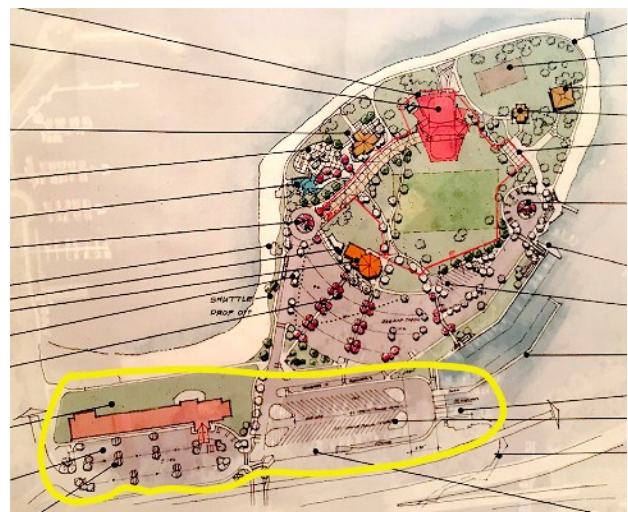


City Beach Preliminary Concept

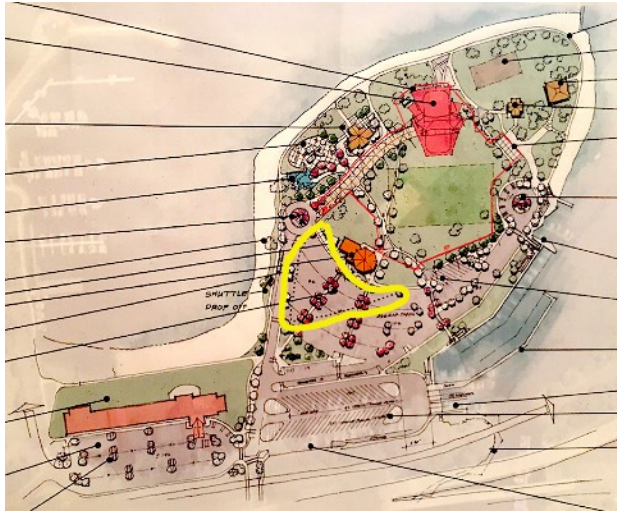


The new plan creates functionality; improves parking and traffic flow, relocates some amenities such as the tennis courts to the more appropriate Sports Complex (and the parks dept maintenance building, reiterating that the waterfront is too valuable a space for that kind of use), and creates a much larger useable open green space. There is sizable hardscape blank space to accommodate any number of envisioned event ideas that would need temporary infrastructure, such as a Winter use skating surface, and there is also an identified location for The Carousel with a modest attached event center.

Highlighted in yellow, is the current area of the Edgewater Hotel and RV Park, owned by the Cox Family. Discussions/negotiations between the Family and City have been underway for some time (spearheaded by City Administrator Jennifer Stapleton and now backed by the Greenplay Consultants) with the idea of swapping the RV park for the City owned grassy area in front of the existing hotel structure. There is optimism this swap will be accomplished, which would be a huge boost for the functionality of the park, allowing for the boat ramps and parking to be better located and dramatically improving the overall parking and functionality.



Should this swap be accomplished, major kudos to all of the parties involved, and it would be shining example of public/private cooperation.



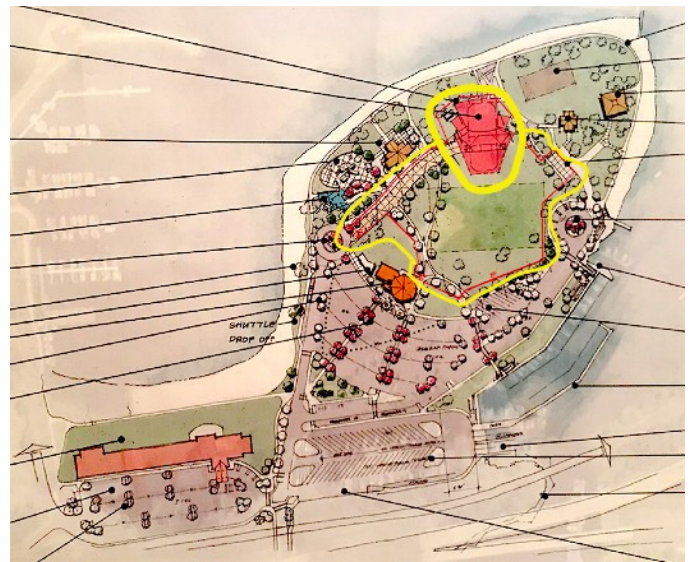
Highlighted in yellow, is an area currently in grass, that is suggested to be converted to parking. Though it is “green” it is not a particularly used part of the park, and just kind of exists.

We all know parking is a challenge: this redesigned consolidates the existing parking areas, adds significant additional cars parking spaces (100+), thus keeping cars from penetrating as deep into park, where the true recreational use occurs.

“More” greenspace is not better if the functionality is irrelevant or compromised.

Highlighted in yellow and drawn in red, is an area envisioned to be hardscape, available for any number of uses. It is larger in size than an NHL hockey rink, and described in the plan as: “Hardscape/Event Space/Stage area; Festival Tent Area; Community Events; Gathering Space; Ice Skating; Movies in the Park; Basketball”. The red line (also highlighted in yellow) is a representation of where temporary fencing could go if an event needed to be ticket/access controlled. The darker green area in the middle, is the size of a football field.

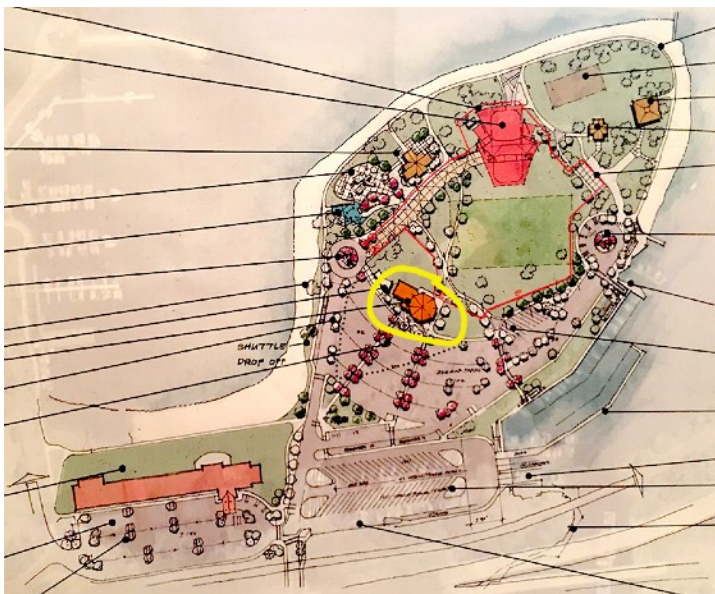
Though The Festival located in this area is likely to receive considerable pushback, the overall concept opens up tremendous and flexible ideas for events, and creates a large contiguous and usable greenspace.



The Carousel

A principle rational for this specific location is it creates a true entrance (and entrance statement) to the park and its recreational amenities beyond. Visible from the bypass, it relates to other areas for that “synergy” we talk about, and is also able to be separated from any temporarily fenced in event that might occur.

As presented here, the facility is a stand alone carousel structure with a modest event area, without any City shared spaces. This concept is quite workable, and provides a great point to really begin discussions with the City on specifics and the all important operational plan, and how best to integrate a carousel into the future of The City Beach and Sandpoint.



We very much look forward to these discussions, and creating a true public private partnership between the City and *The Carousel of Smiles*.