

COOLIDGE & McCLAIN PARK MASTER PLAN

City of Silverton

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In February of 2007, the City of Silverton began a public process for a new master plan for Coolidge & McClaine Park, a ten-acre park located at 300 Coolidge Street. The purpose of the master plan was to provide public input on renovating existing park features and to address issues related to maintaining the natural beauty of the park. The intent of the master plan was not to introduce new activities or park elements that would draw more visitors to the park, but to simply renovate the existing park features that would be better utilized by the citizens of Silverton.

CONTEXT

Coolidge & McClaine Park is one of five parks within the City of Silverton. By classification, Coolidge & McClaine Park is considered a community park that draws people from throughout the community for its scenic qualities, amenities and festivals that occur during the summer months. Access to the park is primarily through residential streets and adjacent trails. From the north, access to the park is from Coolidge Street and Jerome Avenue from West Main Street. Charles Avenue fronts the northern portion with adjacent residences. To the east, Silver Creek forms the border of the park with Library Park and the Silverton Swim Center located immediately east of the creek. Pathways from Library Park and the swim center parking lot lead visitors to a pedestrian bridge across the creek into Coolidge & McClaine Park. From the south, an existing trail provides pedestrian access from a local favorite spot called "Salamander Island" to the park. The western border of the park is a steep embankment covered with ivy. The City has recently acquired additional property to the south of the park. Although this area was not included in the park master planning process, issues related to connectivity were raised by neighbors during the public meetings.

There is a mature stand of douglas fir trees and oak trees that provide a substantial green canopy throughout the park. The design team hired an arborist to examine the general health of the existing trees and to make recommendations the protection of this wonderful park resource. The arborist found that the trees were generally healthy with few exceptions. A closer examination of the trees should be performed during the next phase of the park development.

PARK AMENITIES

Within the park there are a number of structures that serve a variety of uses in the park. Across from the parking area, there are two buildings that were purchased by the City of Silverton; the Art Center and Art Gallery. There is also a large shelter with a kitchen that is rented out during the summer months for reunions, weddings, and family events. This structure is also heavily used during the park's summer festivals. A restroom is located near the embankment along with two structures that serve as storage buildings.

The park currently has a parking lot with a turnaround and parking along Charles Street. There are 23 parking spaces located within the park and 12 angled spaces along Charles Street. These parking areas fill to capacity during the summer months.

Throughout the park, there are a number of play areas that include swing sets, slides and other play apparatus. The play equipment and surfacing for these areas currently do not meet standards for accessibility and safety standards as determined by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) Handbook for Public Playground Safety and the American Society for Testing and Materials' (ASTM) F1487 and the Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use.

The park also contains pathways, a small wading pool, lighting, benches, barbecue pits, a horseshoe pit and trash receptacles.

PUBLIC PROCESS

There were a total of three meetings held over a three month period with interested neighbors and citizens for the development of the Coolidge & McClaine Park Master Plan. Prior to the first meeting, the design consultants met with the local festival organizers to discuss the current festival layout and any future needs or desires. The festivals include the Silverton Arts Festival, the Strawberry Festival, Homer Davenport Days, and the Community Picnic. Also, the shelter is rented out throughout the summer months for high-school reunions, wedding receptions, and family picnics.

The first public meeting was an opportunity for citizens and neighbors to express their goals, visions, and specific ideas for the concept master plan. After a brief introduction and description of the schedule and park issues, the meeting participants separated into small groups. At each table, members wrote their goals and ideas on how to improve Coolidge & McClaine Park. Although, there were a variety of ideas and concepts, a number of similarities emerged from each group. They were:

- Protect the existing trees and keep the park natural
- Remove the unsafe play equipment and provide new play areas
- Remove the ivy and other nuisance plants in the park
- Look at providing more active uses in the southern portion of the park
- Renovate or relocate the existing restroom
- Provide a better connection from the park to the grass area that is between the art center buildings
- Provide a loop trail with new pedestrian bridges that crosses Silver Creek

One group suggested eliminating parking within the park while other participants left the parking alone.

From this meeting, the design consultants created three options that were presented at the second public meeting. Although each option had a number of variations, there were common themes throughout the concepts.

For each of the options, the future plans protected the existing Douglas fir and oak trees. In general, the existing path alignment remained the same due to the proximity to the existing trees and the major site elements present in the park. Each of the concept options suggested replacing the existing asphalt pathways with a new hard surface material. The removal of the ivy along the steep embankment and the removal of the blackberries along the southern portion of the park were suggested. These areas would

be planted with native plants over time. All of the options showed providing erosion control for the banks along Silver Creek that had been recently scoured and to continue to remove non-native species and the planting of native vegetation along the banks.

The design team received specific feedback on the play area design, pathways and pedestrian bridges, and parking within the park. The meeting participants generally liked the idea of keeping the large play area in its present location with the possibility of an additional play area nearby. The restroom should be relocated near the play area and the existing restroom used as a storage structure. Many people liked the idea of extending several of the pathways in southern portion of the park and approved the idea of having a pedestrian bridge that would cross Silver Creek near the southern end of Coolidge & McClaine Park. The idea of a small seating area or amphitheater was suggested on the eastern side of Silver Creek facing the park. Participants also liked the idea of a small permanent stage and seating just south of the existing pedestrian bridge.

There was discussion on the parking options that were presented. The design team shared several ideas that included raising the parking area to the level of the adjacent walkways to create a driveway and parking area without curbs. Bollards would be used to prevent cars from entering the park and would give this area a "pedestrian" character when cars were not present. A material such as a concrete unit paver could be used to further distinguish between the asphalt street and the parking area within the park. Many of the participants liked the idea but also questioned the amount of parking that is required in the park. Several members felt that the parking lot create safety issues for kids that play in the adjacent play areas and that the parking should be removed entirely. Others felt that the parking and vehicular access into the park was important for the police and community members that needed access to the Arts Center and drop-off for the picnic shelter.

The third public meeting presented the refinements to the master plan that were discussed at the previous meeting and three options for parking within the park. Much of the meeting centered around the parking issue with a discussion of the three concepts. Many of the park neighbors attended the meeting and expressed concern with eliminating or reducing the amount of cars that could park within Coolidge & McClaine Park. During the summer months, both parking lots are filled on a daily basis and particularly on the weekends. Reducing the number of parking spots would force people to park in the neighborhood. After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that an option that kept the same number of parking spaces with the opportunity to add more parking spaces in the future if needed would be desired. With this option, the parking stalls on Charles Street are restriped to gain 5 parking spaces. Within the park, the parking area is narrowed to eliminate the angled parking and is replaced with all parallel parking. This reduces the number of parking spaces within the park by 5. Additional parking within the open grass area between the two art buildings could be designed at a future date that would add another 14 parking spaces. The paving material in this area could be a "grass-crete" that utilizes a concrete block with an open cell that grass is planted in.

The meeting participants also wanted two play areas in addition to a swing-set area. A subcommittee will be formed to further develop the specific types of play equipment for the park. The design team will also make an effort to get local children involved in providing input on the type of play equipment selected.

The meeting ended with a discussion of priorities. The meeting attendants participated in a activity to identify the top priorities when funding becomes available for the park improvements. The top three priorities were the replacement of the play areas, address the parking issues and the pathways and pedestrian bridge.

PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The final park master plan was a result of an interactive public process over a three-month period that involved goal setting, discussions of park options, and setting priorities for the future renovation of specific park features. The master plan itself is a concept document and meant to be a springboard for grant writing, volunteer efforts and City funded projects. As funding becomes available, additional public outreach will be addressed during that time. The improvements listed below describe each of the major park features and a brief description of the improvement.

1. Protection of the Existing Trees
Prior to any future improvement, the first step should be to hire a professional surveyor to provide a topographic survey of the park. This should include the exact location of each tree, structures, hard surface areas and contour information at a minimum 1-foot interval. The City should also continue to work with an arborist to further evaluate the trees on-site and construction remediation measures for any of the improvements.

2. Play Area
A subcommittee has been formed to further refine the type of play equipment for Coolidge & McClaine Park. Outreach with local children is also planned in the summer of 2007. When deciding on the specific play equipment, consideration should be given to providing equal accessibility, an ADA approved surface material, a variety of challenge levels and type of equipment that fits into the natural character of the park. There are three areas identified in the master plan for play equipment. The large existing play area will be redesigned with a play area for children 5 to 12 years old and a smaller tot lot for kids 2 to 5. Immediately to the west of this play area, a swing set is proposed. The third structure will replace the existing play equipment north of the shelter. This play area could be developed with play apparatus for teens.

3. Access and Parking
The master plan for Coolidge & McClaine Park does not propose any new activities that would increase the attendance to the park or attract a significant amount of new visitors. Most of the improvements are to replace aging park features or address park issues that have been neglected over the years due to a lack of budget for park maintenance. With the proposed master plan, an equal amount of parking spaces will remain with the ability to add 14 spaces in the future. Currently, there are 12 parking spaces along Charles Street. By moving the existing curb 2 to 4-feet into the park and changing the striping of the angled spaces, an additional 5 parking spaces can be added. Within the existing parking area in the park, the parking area will be narrowed to eliminate the angled spaces that will reduce the number of parking spaces by 5 to 18. Providing an ADA accessible space to the Art Center will be designed as part of the parking plan. Within this area, the pavement level will be raised and replaced with a sturdy concrete unit paver to create a flush condition at the driveway and parking area. Steel bollards will be used to demarcate the edge of the parking area and to prevent cars from entering the park. Additional parking

can be gained by using the grass area between the two art buildings. A special concrete paver that allows grass to grow through voids in the paver is suggested that still allows vehicular parking and a grass-like appearance from a distance.

4. Pathways

Many of the existing asphalt paths are cracking or uplifting due to the age of the pavement and adjacent trees and need to be replaced. The existing width should be maintained wherever possible and special care given to construction adjacent to any tree. During the public process, there was preference given to using a concrete unit paver that allows for water infiltration and is a flexible pavement system that tends to do better next to large trees. During the next phase of refinement and depending upon the available funding, the City may need to develop a hierarchy of pathway systems with varying levels of surface treatment.

In addition to the paved pathways, there are several trails in the southern portion of the park that are proposed to be a crushed gravel surface or compacted earth. These trails should be 4-feet in width that lead visitors down to the southern portion of the park including the new pedestrian bridge that crosses Silver Creek. The placement of the pedestrian bridge should be further studied to avoid impacts to the surrounding vegetation and proximity to the pathway system on the east side of the creek. On the east side of the river near the Swim Center, a new cantilevered walkway is proposed that provides a direct route to the existing trail and existing pedestrian bridge into Coolidge & McClaine Park.

With the acquisition of the new property to the south of the park, trail connections in this area will help improve connectivity to the adjoining neighborhood. Further study should be given to providing a pathway from Anderson Drive to the existing park trail system.

5. Ivy Removal

The ivy removal along the steep embankment should continue through volunteer efforts and City-funded projects. Care should be given to removing the ivy to avoid erosion issues or bank degradation. After the removal of the ivy, the bank should be replanting with native plant species and a jute mesh where necessary to help control erosion.

6. Creek Restoration

Silver Creek currently has several erosion areas along the bank due to floods and human activity. A professional hydrologist should be retained to further examine methods to reduce the erosion of the banks and propose options for the City to consider. The current concrete stair access down to the creek shows signs of scouring on both sides of the structure and remedial measures should be taken to either replace the stairs or provide additional erosion protection. Additional hard surface areas near the creek's edge are proposed as part of the master plan to allow for concentrated activity while protecting more sensitive habitat areas. The removal of non-native and nuisance plant species along Silver Creek should also be undertaken. A plan should be developed with a hydrologist and environmental habitat consultant to address these issues.

7. Site Furnishings

As funds become available, the City should consider developing a family of furnishings that are appropriate for the park's natural setting. This would include new light standards, benches, trash receptacles, bollards and bike racks. These furnishings can be installed during different phases of the project and are ideal "donor" items for people interested in contributing to the renovation of the park.

8. Park Features

There are a number of existing park features that should be protected or renovated as part of the future improvements. The stone gateway should be preserved and the stone may need to be remortared at a future date. The stone memorial located south of the main play area should be preserved in its present location. The wading pool that is located south of the play area currently utilizes potable water and drains directly into the creek. The condition does not meet current codes and the City should consider installing a mechanical pump system with a filtration device.

As part of the master plan, there are several new park features that are proposed. A small stage and seating area is proposed south of the wading pool. This area is used by musical groups during the Homer Davenport Days and will provide a permanent area for this use and a pleasant seating area for visitors throughout the year. On the east side of Silver Creek in Library Park, a larger seating area is proposed. This area could be utilized during the Homer Davenport Days or during other festival events as a place to stage musical events. Further study of this amphitheater would need to be undertaken to determine its feasibility.

9. Restroom

The master plan calls for a new restroom to be located just west of the play area where an existing storage structure currently sits in the park. The existing restroom would then be converted to storage. Water, electricity, and a sanitary sewer line will need to be extended to the new restroom location. The design of the restroom should include natural materials and fit in with the character of the park.

Coolidge & McClaine Park is Silverton's living room. It is a place for people to gather during summer festivals, a park to meet a friend and watch your children play, and a place to simply walk your dog along Silver Creek. The master plan improvements respect the natural beauty of the park while selectively renovating existing park features and addressing park issues in need of maintenance. As the park master plan is implemented over the next 10 years, it will continue to function as a cherished resource for the citizens of Silverton.



Curbless Parking Area, All Parallel (-5 spaces)

Restriped Parking, (+5 spaces)

New Restroom

Convert Restroom to Storage

New Play Area

New Asphalt Pathway

Remove Ivy/Restore

Amphitheatre

Overlook (Potential 14 future Parking Spaces)

Small Stone Wall

Restore Banks/Control Erosion

Safe Pedestrian Route

New Stairs and Landing/Riverwalk

Restore Fountain

Stone Seating With Stage

Asphalt Walk

Gravel/Dirt Walk

Remove Blackberries/Restore

Pedestrian Bridge

Include new benches, lighting, drinking fountain
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REFINED MASTER PLAN 
 Lango Hansen Landscape Architects