

## MEMO

**DATE:** March 5, 2010  
**TO:** Mariel Platt, Planner  
**FROM:** Hailey Parks & Lands Board  
**RE:** **Hailey Rodeo Park Landscaping Design Review**

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The Hailey Rodeo Park, a name given to the improvements proposed for the Hailey Rodeo Grounds, is a project of the City of Hailey, who owns the property and the existing skatepark, and who will own, manage and maintain the proposed facilities and improvements. Management details of the proposed facilities have not been worked out yet, but in general, the city will own the facilities and when not in use by Hailey Ice or the Rangers, the facilities will be available for other uses managed by the city.

Funding for the project, estimated to cost \$6 million, has not yet been secured. A fundraising campaign is underway, and the City Council has pledged to match up to \$3 million with capital funds and/or voter-approved funding. Should funding be secured, construction will need to start immediately following the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Rodeo in order to be able to use the Hailey Ice Rink starting November 2010, and complete the arena in time for the Rodeo in 2011.

The Hailey Parks & Lands Board began working on a redesign of the rodeo grounds in early 2008. Their goals were to:

- a. Find a permanent home for Hailey Ice and start construction in a relatively short timeframe.
- b. Remodel or replace the existing rodeo arena so that it could be used for other events.
- c. Expand the skatepark with a skate plaza that incorporates street skate elements with grassy areas for spectators and community green space.
- d. Improve the overall appearance of the property, providing a sense of place within Hailey.

Since 2008, the P&L Board has been working with Hailey Ice, the Sawtooth Rangers, and local skateboarding enthusiasts to develop a plan that would meet everyone's goals. In May 2009, the P&L Board helped select the firm of Ruscitto/Latham/Blanton to develop the plan further, and in October 2009, the Hailey City Council approved a contract with R/L/B to develop construction plans. On February 22, 2010 the Hailey City Council authorized formal review of the project through the Planning & Zoning Commission, which includes reviews by city staff and various city committees, such as the Parks & Lands Board.

The Parks & Lands Board reviewed the plans at their regular meeting on March 2, 2010, and had the following comments:

**1. Street Trees and Plantings**

The Board felt that the street trees framing the entrance and the skatepark and proposed skate plaza should be considered as one component, and not as separate components of the overall plan. As the design of the skate plaza is conceptual at this point, the Board chose to defer their comments to such time as the actual design and layout of the skate plaza is known.

**2. Skatepark Trees and Plantings**

When developing the plan for improvements at this site, the Parks & Lands Board felt that improvements to the existing skatepark that would be attractive to a more diverse group of skaters with a broader range of abilities would bring more parents to the skatepark, which would in turn minimize some of the unacceptable behavior sometimes present at the skate park. The skate plaza design depicted on this plan was developed by Gene Fairbrother for his high school Senior Project. Gene did extensive research on the various skate elements, conducted a survey of local skaters, and his results are shown in the resulting conceptual plan. As funding is unsecured at this point, the design of the skate plaza is simply conceptual. The actual design of the skate plaza will be part of the contract for construction of the skate plaza, and subject to future P&L Board and P&Z review.

However, several mitigating factors will need to be incorporated into the final design of the skate plaza and its landscaping, including: drought-tolerant plantings that require little maintenance; trees that will provide some shade without dropping sap, fruit, needles or other debris onto skating surfaces; no bark planting beds (bark bits get onto skating surfaces and create skating hazards); trees planted where their roots will not damage concrete pedestrian and skating surfaces; and, grass or lawn that will not need to be mowed more than once a season (grass clippings on the skating surfaces also present a hazard).

**3. Ice Rink Screenings**

The Board did not support the use of lodgepole pines to screen the rink from the parking lot. In their opinion, this species is not conducive to thriving in that location and will tend to drop sap. The board would prefer to see deciduous trees, even though they would be bare in the winter, as deciduous trees would allow seasonal light in through the windows on that side.

The Board was generally comfortable with the plantings proposed on the west side of the rink and strongly supported the use of shrubs to prevent or deter access to the west side of the building.

#### **4. Arena Plantings**

Minimal plantings are added to the corners of the arena, generally in front of the entrance to the Interpretive Center (it may be the Chamber of Commerce's Visitor Center, but that use is as yet unconfirmed). The Interpretive Center is an indoor gallery to display museum-quality exhibits of the history of the arena and rodeo.

The Board was unsure of the reason for the planting beds depicted on the north side of the Interpretive Center, and because of the shady location felt that a limited number of plantings would actually grow well.

The parking lot would normally have some planting strips or islands to break up the expanse of paving. However, the parking has been carefully designed to accommodate the trucks and trailers of the rodeo contestants, and islands would interfere with the travel lanes and maneuvering of the trucks and large horse trailers.

At the City Council's review of the plans on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, they voiced concerns with the south-facing aspect of the arena. The current arena with its white board walls is unique to Hailey and is clearly a rodeo arena. However, with the metal bleachers of the proposed arena clearly visible, the Council had concerns that this arena could be mistaken for a high school football field; it lacked defining details that would identify it as a multi-use event arena used for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Rodeo.

The P&L Board suggests a climbing vine, such as silver lace or Virginia creeper, to screen the entire south wall from the parking lot up to the top of the bleachers (35 – 38 feet) using structural cables for the vines to climb.

#### **5. Public Art**

The Board recommends that the Hailey Arts Commission review and select a number of the panels painted on the boards of the current arena to be installed on the back of the bleachers, as depicted on the current elevations. These panels could help identify this as the new home of the rodeo, and would help integrate the old arena into the new facilities. (The fundraising committee would like to auction off some of the painted panels, and plans to auction off pieces of the white boards, as well.) However, any panels mounted on the exterior will need constant annual maintenance, and the Board would prefer to see them displayed in a manner that required far less maintenance.

The Board also suggested that some art or a mural on the west side of the ice rink would break up the scale of the wall.

As this is a municipal public works project, it is subject to the Public Art Ordinance requiring 1.5% of the costs to be used for public art. The P&L Board requests a future review with the Arts Commission of the public art components of the project when they are available.

## **6. Lighting**

The P&L Board assumes that all proposed lighting meets Hailey's Dark Sky Ordinance, and was only concerned with the hours that the lights would be used. The Board strongly supports the current operating hours of city parks, which is dawn to dusk. While they are aware that skaters would like lights at the skatepark and hockey skaters need parking lot lights, the Board requests that hours of operation for the exterior lights be kept to a minimum. (This will also help contain operating costs.) The Board recommends that no lighting be provided for the skatepark; the park closes at dusk.

In regards to the arena lighting, the P&L Board assumes that the proposed lights are similar in height to the current arena lights. The lights will be on only for special events, which are regulated through the city's Special Event Permits and hours of operation for each event will be regulated by the city.

## **7. Signs**

The P&L Board requests future review of signage associated with this project. There is a Hailey Parks & Public Facility Naming Policy, and the names of the facilities haven't even been determined. (The "Hailey Rodeo Park" was a name chosen to represent the project for fundraising purposes.)

## **8. Transportation**

Very early in their planning process, the P&L Board recognized that this site is the geographical center of the city and is located perfectly as a transit hub. The Board notes that the front porch of the interpretive center will serve as a transit shelter, and assumes that the travel lanes as shown will easily accommodate transit busses.

Because parking on site is so limited, spectators or attendees of special events, including the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Rodeo spectators, will need to park offsite, use special event shuttles, or find other means to get to the event. For the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Rodeo, parking has been provided for contestants and organizers only, onsite and offsite courtesy of the Blaine County School District.