

Questions & Answers from June 27 Riverfront Parks and Trails Public Presentation

Will other areas along the riverfront be cleared out for viewing areas?

Multiple riverfront viewing areas are planned along the Riverwalk although exact locations are not determined. Ideally you'll be able to view the river and wildlife in suitable river windows in frequent nature along the entire river walk. In some areas, the riverbank is privately owned and the city would need to collaborate with property owners to clear out those spaces.

Does the city get use of out of the hydroelectric turbine being installed by the University of Notre Dame?

The City of South Bend has sought to develop hydropower at the South Bend Dam since the 1980's; however, multiple feasibility studies, as recently as 2014, showed large investment required and poor financial payback. Studies showed that electricity rates in South Bend are some of the lowest in the Midwest, grants and incentives are not commonly available for hydropower, and cities cannot benefit from renewable energy tax credit. All energy generated would need to be used on-site. This also made the use of hydroelectricity prohibitive because Seitz Park usage was too small. Utility laws prohibit the City from generating and selling or donating power to another entity. Utility policies also prohibit the City from generating power at one City location and receiving a credit at a different City location. The City also pursued private development - companies that would generate and sell to the utility or companies with adjacent facilities. The investment was too great and the payback too slow. Notre Dame emerged as the only potential partner willing and able to overcome the restrictions and limitations of developing hydropower at Seitz park.

What are the plans for keeping mosquitos and geese out of the planned rain garden areas within Howard Park?

As plans develop landscape architects will consider native plant life and other natural techniques to manage nuisance insects and wildlife.

What were the outcomes of conversations with AM General?

The city has been in conversations with AM General about sharing parking areas within the immediate vicinity of the East Race and Seitz Park. AM General is amenable to such an arrangement. Final designs and programmatic considerations will be developed in the design and engineering phases of Seitz Park.

When is the anticipated completion date of the construction process at Howard Park?

Alliance Architecture has been hired to develop construction documents for the project and is currently working on the initial steps. Demolition of existing features is expected to begin in the fall of 2017. The recreation building and ice/water feature is anticipated to open in the first part of 2019.

How was the 2014 Parks Master Plan looked at in the planning process for Riverfront Parks and Trails?

In 2014, the department reviewed the entire parks system and took an in depth look at what the community wanted in their neighborhoods which became the 2014 Parks Master Plan. This riverfront Parks and Trails Framework will help us address a majority of the capital needs and community desires

described in the plan. Additional plans are being developed to address the remained of the priorities from the Master Plan.

What, if anything, is different now from what was presented at the last public meeting? Was there input that meant anything in this process?

There have been no major changes since the third Community Forum, however, additional layers of details have been applied. The proposed frameworks for Pinhook Park, Leeper Park, and Stiver-Pier-Island Parks were further developed, providing more detail on the proposed improvements. In addition, the presentation introduced an overview on wayfinding & signage and other amenities, such as lighting, seating and bike facilities.

Yes, each of the comments and visions shared for our Riverfront Parks & Trails were critical to shaping the collective vision. Hundreds of individuals participated in the public process - attending meetings and providing feedback; completing an online survey; and/or using online feedback tools. In total, there were 4 public meetings with nearly 600 participants, 34 neighborhood and stakeholder meetings, and nearly 2,000 pieces of feedback collected. All input was considered, balanced, and integrated to the extent possible during the design process and assisted in guiding the conceptual framework.