Inspiration Point Park
Discovery, Outreach and Concept Design

Summary Memorandum
November 19, 2018
INSPIRATION POINT

Inspiration Point Park is a 25.5 acre community park in northwest Denver. The park offers primarily passive uses within a unique landscape of bluegrass upland forest and native mixed-grass prairie. The park serves a Denver neighborhood bounded by US I-70, Sheridan Boulevard and US I-76 with few park and recreation options within walking distance. The surrounding community contains a mix of ages and recreational needs that vary from walking, picnicking, special events, and appreciation of the park landscape to young families with children who desire play options.

Inspiration Point was designed by landscape architect George Kessler and civil engineer Henry C. Wright. It was built in 1910 as the culmination of the Denver parks, parkways and boulevard system, is listed in National Register of Historic Places. Designed as a linear park set high on a bluff, it offers a view of nearly 200-miles of the Rocky Mountain Front Range and downtown Denver. The park's main features include the simple concrete wall provides a visual edge to the park, a level bluff with a forest of pines, and 5-acres of Designated Natural Area on steep hillsides.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The November 2017 GO Bond allocated $2,135,000 for Inspiration Point Park improvements to include play experiences, picnicking, shade, and repair of the historic concrete wall. Phase 1–Discovery, Outreach, and Concept Design is documented in this memorandum. Phase 1 solicited community input on GO Bond improvements and created a vision plan for the park's long-term improvement. The preferred concept plan will be used to support selection of the project for the 2nd GO Bond Issuance anticipated for mid-2019.

This phase included an existing condition inventory / site analysis, and development of goals, objectives, a park program, conceptual alternatives, preferred concept and vision plans, and an estimate of construction for the Elevate Denver Bond. Background date included aerial imagery, tree inventory, 2014 contours, DEH Limited Environmental Screen, a kick-off questionnaire, 2018 ADA Noncompliance list and a 2018 structural assessment of the historic wall.
PLANNING PROCESS

Community outreach, community feedback, and site analysis to generate the preferred concept plan for Elevate Denver Bond funding at Inspiration Point Park. This first phase is a critical step as the scope of improvements will bring new functions and program uses to the Park.

The planning process actively engaged the community through park events and surveys to identify needs and preferences. Outreach events included a neighborhood ambassador walk in the park and participation in the RNO’s annual neighborhood BBQ. Two open houses were held to review existing conditions, preliminary concepts and the preferred concept. Two community surveys, posted on the city’s website and distributed on-site and at open houses, informed concept development and the preferred Elevate Denver Bond concept plan.

Outreach Events

- Aug 7, 2018 - Neighborhood Ambassador Site Walk
- Aug 11, 2018 - Outreach Event: RNO Annual BBQ
- Sept 19, 2018 - Open House 1: Findings and Concept Alternatives
- Oct 9, 2018 - Open House 2: Preferred Concept at RNO Meeting

Community Surveys

- Aug 11, 2018 - Open House: “I Wish...” Cards
- Aug 11 to 27, 2018 - Needs and Desires: Survey #1
- Oct 10 to Nov 5, 2018 - Concept Preferences Survey: #2
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Preserve and improve the park’s natural attributes and features.
- Reinforce natural and scenic character
- Improve ecology of natural areas

Preserve layers of history including:
- 1909 historic walls and the park’s historic design composition
- 1938 forest of pines and trees
- ca 1940s picnic area and stone walls

Reinforce the original design intent of Inspiration Point as a place of scenic leisure.
- Celebrate Inspiration Point as one of the city’s best vista points
- Enhance the East Terrace and the High Plains view
- Enhance the Mountain Vista at the historic concrete wall
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Improve Pedestrian Circulation and Experiences
- Create a cohesive pedestrian trail system
- Improve ADA access and provide equitable experiences
- Connect the park with nearby open spaces and designated bicycle routes for improved pedestrian and bicycle access

Address needs of all age groups through programming and improvements

Improve the aesthetics, experience and seating at Inspiration Point

Provide park amenities—playground aesthetics that align with the natural and historic setting

Design for longevity, durability and ease of maintenance

Repair existing site features

Improve Vehicular Circulation
- Reduce isolation of parking lot
- Investigate new approaches to vehicular ingress/egress at Sheridan Boulevard
- Provide turn-around or another solution on Inspiration Point Drive before Ames Way
- Enable parking access to park amenities
**Vision Concept Plan**

The long-term vision for Inspiration Point Park is to preserve historic character and natural qualities while improving existing park amenities and providing compatible uses.

- **Enhance play** with new play nodes on the upper bluff surrounding a central open lawn connected by ADA accessible trails. Ensure play activities and equipment are compatible with the natural setting. Consider incorporating swings, slides, rope and log climber, custom themed pieces that reflect the park’s natural attributes, climbing rock, pump track, and monkey bars.

- **Enhance picnicking park-wide** with a shade pavilion (approximately 20’ x 30’), picnic tables, a small native grass lawn, and nearby play area for toddlers and young children in the middle of the upper bluff. Provide picnicking on the south lawn interspersed with the mature tree grove.

- **Restore the historic concrete wall and enhance the Mountain Vista** with a new a soft-surfaced terrace, long linear benches, and narrow-canopied deciduous shade trees.

- **Improve park vegetation** especially the native grasses/forbes, and through removal of invasive and undesirable species. Preserve the floral garden and add pollinator species.

- **Improve the East Terrace and High Plains Vista** by adding deciduous shade trees, accessible site furnishings, and soft-surface paving, and by thinning trees.

- **Improve vehicular circulation.** Realign the Sheridan Boulevard and Ames Street intersection. Modify the south parking by reducing it in size or converting it to a drop-off. Reestablish the area as meadow with an overlook. Redesign the northeast parking to provide adequate vehicular turn-around. Improve parking to be ADA compliant and to allow for better loading.

- **Improve pedestrian circulation** by repairing existing concrete trails and by adding narrow soft surfaced trails to connect to play, picnicking, the surrounding neighborhood, and to create a larger loop around the park.

- **Improve visibility with lighting** at the Mountain Vista, East Terrace and parking.

**Elevate Denver Bond Plan**

The improvements funded by the Elevate Denver Bond Plan include repair of park features and addition of new features to fulfill the project goals and objectives. These are in compliance with the identified project components and allocation of the November 2017 GO Bond.

- **Enhance play** with the addition of an open lawn surrounded by new play nodes on the upper bluff. Include a trail system to connect play activities and to connect to ADA accessible routes. Integrate walks and play nodes within the existing forest landscape and native grasses. Potential play activities include swings, slides, rope and log climber, custom themed pieces that reflect the park’s natural attributes, climbing rock, sand box, pump track, and monkey bars. Ensure play activities and equipment are compatible with the natural attributes and features of the park.

- **Enhance the Mountain Vista as a gathering space** by repairing the historic wall and providing a soft-surfaced terrace with long linear benches, and narrow-canopied deciduous shade trees.

- **Improve the East Terrace** with the addition of deciduous shade trees, soft-surface paving, and accessible site furnishings.

- **Improve pedestrian circulation** with trails connecting play and picnic areas to the existing circulation system.

- **Improve visibility with lighting** at the Mountain Vista, East Terrace and parking.
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VISION CONCEPT PLAN

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VISION CONCEPT PLANW - PROGRAM AND PARK ACTIVITIES

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Legend:
- PLAY
- PICNICS
- NATIVE LANDSCAPE
- TERRACE
- GARDEN
- DESIGNATED NATURAL AREA
- OPEN LAWN
- LAWN
- PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE
- HARD SURFACE TRAIL
- SOFT SURFACE TRAIL
- DESIGNATED BIKE ROUTE D-2
- EX CONC WALK
- EX SOFT SURFACE TRAIL
- EX TREE
- NEW TREE
- LIGHTING

Notes:
- Trail Improvements
- Terrace with Shade Trees and Seating
- Concrete Paving Replacement
- Wall Stabilization
- Planting and Slope Stabilization
- Picnicking
- Dispersion Play with Open Lawn and Soft Surface Trails
- Lighting

Elevate Denver Bond Concept