



Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska
Parks & Recreation Department
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MEMORANDUM

Date: June 13, 2019

To: Parks & Recreation Commission

Cc: Josh Durand, Parks Superintendent

From: Steve Rafuse, Senior Park Planner

Project: **PRC 19-08:** Town Square Park Master Plan

INTRODUCTION

Town Square Park is downtown Anchorage's premier park and civic space. At just over two acres, the park features a mix of plazas, greenspaces and flower displays, and is home to popular citywide events. Town Square Park was created in 1984 through a citizen led initiative. At the time, the park was envisioned as an urban oasis in the heart of Alaska's largest city. Over the years, use of the park has evolved as have public preferences for what Town Square Park should be. Today, Anchorage residents envision a Town Square Park that is not only a green oasis but also an active and vibrant public space where all residents and visitors feel welcome.

The *Town Square Park Master Plan* provides a guiding vision for the next 20 years at Town Square Park. It identifies current and future needs, addresses issues and concerns, and establishes a framework for the future management, design, public safety and programming of Town Square Park. Recommendations provided in the *Master Plan* are intended to guide future planners and policy makers in the decision making process.

The *Town Square Park Master Plan* is a reflection of community identified priorities and a vision for positive change. The *Master Plan* recognizes and honors the past while bringing forth the community's vision for a vibrant Town Square Park of tomorrow.

BACKGROUND

In recent years, there has been renewed public interest in upgrading Town Square Park. Concerns over disorder and illegal activity have kept many people away and have impacted the image, use and function of Town Square Park. In 2014, UAA and a group of concerned citizens organized a "Re-imagining Town Square Park" event that drew over 100 people who were interested in making the park a safer and more inviting place. The result was a call for the Municipality to take action; and to make new investments that activate the park with positive use.

One of the main goals of the *Town Square Park Master Plan* is to address issues impacting visitors experience at the park. While safety and security are a high priority, this master plan also takes a comprehensive look at the physical design, programming, and management of the park to identify strategies to improve park user's experience.

GOALS OF THE MASTER PLAN

The *Town Square Park Master Plan* seeks to create a Town Square Park that is safe, attractive, and well-used. More specifically, this master plan aims to achieve the following six goals:

1. Develop strategies to address public safety concerns in Town Square Park
2. Develop a community vision for the future of Town Square Park
3. Identify and prioritize future improvements consistent with the community vision for the park
4. Improve access to the park for all residents and visitors to Anchorage
5. Identify and develop strategic partnerships with public and private organizations to better manage, program, and invest in Town Square Park
6. Create a tool for future fundraising

PLANNING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement in the planning process is essential to the long-term success of the *Town Square Park Master Plan*. Meaningful public involvement ensures that the future management and development of Town Square Park is consistent with the desires of the community. The *Town Square Park Master Plan* is the product of a comprehensive and collaborative year long process driven by public engagement and stakeholder input at each stage. Public involvement in the creation of the *Town Square Park Master Plan* included:

- Outreach, Social Media, Media
- 7 Stakeholder Interviews
- 2 Roundtable Meetings
- 2 Online Surveys
- 7 Advisory Group Meetings
- 4 Public Workshops
- Intercept Surveys

Outreach, Social Media, Media: The planning team conducted outreach throughout the planning process to engage stakeholders and encourage participation. Social media as well as targeted and direct outreach were used to promote workshops, advertise surveys, and solicit input. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor, and the Parks and Recreation webpage were used to reach a large cross-section of Anchorage residents. Television interviews were also common during the public involvement phase which enabled the planning team to reach a larger viewing audience. The planning team also targeted outreach to downtown stakeholders with presentations at the Anchorage Downtown Partnership monthly membership meeting and door-to-door visits to local businesses ahead of public workshops.

Stakeholder Interviews: Interviews were conducted with stakeholders having historic and practical knowledge of Town Square Park. Interviews were held with three groups; the first, with Anchorage residents with historic knowledge of the park; the second, with past Town Square Park designers and landscape architects; and the third, with local stakeholders including the Performing Arts Center, the Kobuk, and the Anchorage Downtown Partnership.

Roundtable Meetings: The planning team facilitated roundtable meetings with public safety professionals, social service providers, and downtown businesses to better understand the perspectives of key stakeholder groups. These meetings had two goals. The first, to understand the social and safety issues impacting Town Square Park and what efforts are currently underway to address those issues. And second, to engage local businesses in finding solutions to issues related to Town Square Park and to identify opportunities for positive change, particularly related to economic and community development.

Online Surveys: Online surveys were administered to better understand perceptions of the park and to gather information on preferences for future management, programming, and development of Town Square Park. These surveys provided valuable feedback to the project team and were used to inform the development of the master plan.

Online Survey 1: User Perception Survey

The first online survey was administered early in the planning process to better understand people's perception of Town Square Park. Survey questions were open-ended and asked:

- What do you like about Town Square Park?
- What issues or concerns should be addressed in the master plan?
- What types of changes or new activities would encourage you to visit Town Square Park more often?

Between April 5th and May 5th, 2017, 635 survey responses were submitted. The results were summarized into common themes and shared with the advisory groups and public at future workshops.

Online Survey 2: Design Concept Survey

The second survey was administered at the concept development stage to solicit feedback on design concept alternatives. This information was used to revise concepts into a preferred concept alternative. Between September 25th and October 25th, 2017, 80 survey responses were submitted.

Advisory Group Meetings: Two advisory groups were formed to help guide the development of the *Town Square Park Master Plan*. Advisory group members were selected from submitted applications and assigned to an advisory group based on interest and expertise. A total of seven meetings were held with the advisory groups during the master planning process.

The Citizen's Advisory Group (CAG) acted in the capacity of a steering committee to assist the planning team as a sounding board and to ensure that development of the master plan aligns with the interest of the community.

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was comprised of a small group of designers, landscape architects, engineers, developers, and professionals to provide technical assistance and expertise to the CAG and planning team.

Public Workshops: Public workshops were hosted at key project milestones to inform the development of the master plan.

Workshop 1: Visioning & Positive Change

Goals and Objectives: To identify issues as well as opportunities for positive change, and to begin the process of developing a vision for the future of Town Square Park.

Workshop 2: Place Audit

Goals and Objectives: To better understand how the physical attributes of Town Square Park and surrounding areas influence park user's overall experience, use, and level of comfort.

Workshop 3: Design Workshop

Goals and Objectives: To develop programmatic and design solutions utilizing identified elements such as amenities, uses and activities to inform the development of concept design alternatives

Workshop 4: Concept Design Review

Goals and Objectives: To share concept alternatives and solicit feedback needed to refine and advance a preferred concept alternative.

Intercept Surveys: The planning team worked with a student intern from the University of Alaska Anchorage to conduct informal intercept surveys at the park. Surveys were administered at various times of day and during programmed events. The informal nature of these surveys provided a range of perspectives in real time from people who might otherwise not attend a public workshop or complete an online survey.

THE MASTER PLAN

Town Square Park was originally envisioned in the 1980s to be an urban oasis. Since then, Anchorage as a city has grown and preferences for the park have evolved. Residents today envision a more dynamic Town Square Park that is a hub for activity and is safe and family friendly. Looking to the next 20 years, the vision for Town Square Park builds upon the elements that continue to make Town Square Park special. Flowers and open space are maintained and enhanced, new desired amenities are added, and flexible spaces that can support a variety of activities are incorporated.

The *Town Square Park Master Plan* provides a vision for the future founded on the community's desire for positive change. It envisions a Town Square Park that is attractive and well-used; a centerpiece of downtown that is safe, welcoming, and a source of community pride.

Vision Statement: *"Town Square Park is a safe and welcoming destination in the heart of downtown Anchorage where residents and visitors gather year-round for celebration, socializing, cultural exchange and community building."*

Guiding Principles: The planning process revealed a number of themes in which there was general agreement regarding the qualities that make Town Square Park special. These qualities reflect the core values of Town Square Park users and were developed into a series of guiding principles. These guiding principles establish the main issues this master plan seeks to address as well as the desired outcomes, providing the foundation of this *Master Plan* and informing recommendations.

1. Improve the Relationship of the Park to Surroundings "and Surroundings to the Park"
2. Activate Town Square Park with Programming and Events
3. Create a Park for All Seasons
4. Manage the Park as an Important Asset
5. Provide Amenities to Support Use
6. Incorporate an Iconic Feature
7. Improve Access, Circulation and Connectivity
8. Improve Safety and Security
9. Flowers and Green Space are a Valued Asset
10. Promote a Strong Identity and Sense of Purpose

The *Town Square Park Master Plan* recommends a combination of policies, design improvements, programming and management actions. Recommendations are informed by best practices, guiding principles, and the original design criteria; and are organized into four categories: 1) Public Safety, 2) Programming, 3) Design, 4) Management

1) PUBLIC SAFETY

A safe and secure environment is essential to the continued use and long-term success of Town Square Park. The master plan recognizes that addressing the issue of safety is a complex task that requires a comprehensive strategy. The master plan recommends a multipronged approach to public safety involving design, programming, management, and security. The combination of these elements provide a range of tools to ensure that the park is safe for all users.

Safety through Design: Addressing safety through design is one of several strategies to improving security in Town Square Park. The preferred concept illustrates a more open and welcoming park layout that is intended to improve visitor's sense of security in the park. The master plan identifies design solutions to reduce hiding spaces and improve visibility into the park. The master plan also calls for the addition of lighting, signage, and amenities to support positive use of the park throughout the seasons.

Safety through Management: A well-managed and maintained park demonstrates stewardship and community ownership and is likely to be a safer public space. The master plan recommends a

comprehensive and sustainable management structure that is proactive in addressing issues yet has sufficient resources to manage assets and program activities.

Safety through Programming: Programming and events generate activity and has been shown to increase positive use of Town Square Park. Programming generally refers to anything that can be considered an activity generator. This includes everything from large annual events such as the holiday tree lighting, weekly activities like Zumba and Live after Five, as well as daily food trucks and flower tours. The master plan identifies strategies to support programming of the park as a generator of positive activity.

Safety through Security: The presence of regular police patrols, downtown ambassadors, and park staff provides a sense of security and oversight that helps to re-enforce positive use of the park. The master plan recommends continued coordination with the Anchorage Police Department and the Downtown Partnership to regularly monitor and patrol the park and address concerns as they arise.

2) PROGRAMMING

The master plan recommends the continuation of successful events and the addition of new programming in Town Square Park. Programming and events have been shown to be successful in reducing disorder and increasing economic and social activity. The Anchorage Downtown Partnership (ADP) is currently the main sponsor of events in Town Square Park. The master plan recommends that the Municipality continue to work with community partners to bring more consistent programming into the park. To support programming and events in Town Square Park, the master plan recommends the following:

- Develop an annual calendar of events to promote activities in Town Square Park
- Support the Anchorage Downtown Partnership efforts to program events in Town Square Park
- Develop partnerships with local non-profits and other organizations to sponsor signature events at Town Square Park
- Encourage and support small-scale activities, such as entertainers, retail carts, and food trucks, to provide day-to-day programming of the park
- Provide resources to guide organizations and individuals through the permitting process to support community-driven events
- Encourage events that activate the park in shoulder seasons and winter
- Support public art and seasonal displays in the park
- Install amenities to support programming and events in the park

3) DESIGN

The physical layout and design of Town Square Park influences the overall use, function, and security of the park. The master plan proposes design changes that both addresses issues and works to achieve the community's vision for a welcoming, safe, and attractive park. These design changes are illustrated in the preferred concept graphic.

The preferred design concept provides a graphic representation of the community's vision for Town Square Park. Time honored elements such as flowers and green space are enhanced and expanded while new features and amenities generate positive activity in the park.

The preferred concept maintains the general layout of the park as it exists today, with flowers and green spaces located along the edges of the park and hardscaped flexible areas located within the interior of the park. Features and elements illustrated in the preferred concept are based on public preferences for the management, programming, and development of the park.

4) MANAGEMENT

A comprehensive and sustainable management approach is needed to ensure the long-term success of Town Square Park. Residents and businesses alike recognize that Town Square Park is more than just a

park, it is an important civic and cultural institution with the potential to be a catalyst for economic development downtown.

The need for a long-term funding and management approach was cited throughout the planning process as critical to the success of Town Square Park. The original planning of Town Square Park focused primarily on design considerations and the importance of various elements such as color, sunlight, physical form, and relationships to surrounding institutions. However, a lasting management structure has not been established leaving management and maintenance of the park dependent upon fluctuations in municipal budgeting and administration priorities.

Future management of Town Square Park should include the following elements to ensure longevity, continuity, and success:

- Sustainable funding for maintenance and operations
- Resources for programming and events
- Resources for security and public safety
- A 2-3 year operational plan
- Outline of organizational roles and responsibilities
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement
- Public-private and community partnerships

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department recommends approval of *Town Square Park Master Plan*. The *Town Square Park Master Plan* is the product of a comprehensive and collaborative process driven by public engagement and stakeholder input at each stage. The Master Plan attempts to balance the diverse perspectives of residents and stakeholders, bringing forth a common vision and desire for positive change.

The Department recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission pass the proposed resolution in support of the *Town Square Park Master Plan*.



Preferred Concept Master Plan Graphic

COMMENTS

A public review draft of the *Town Square Park Master Plan* was available for public comment ahead of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. The following pages include submitted comments to the Commission. Many comments focus on the need to resolve ADA access to the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts (PAC), which is beyond the scope of this master plan and is addressed on page 72 of the document. However, the Municipality of Anchorage recognizes the community's concerns regarding ADA access to the PAC and has dedicated funds to the Project Management and Engineering Department (PM&E) to work with a consultant to evaluate options related to ADA access at Performing Arts Center, which is currently underway.

From: John Blaine [<mailto:jblaine16@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 29, 2019 3:42 PM

To: Van Le

Cc: Dianne Holmes

Subject: Town Square Plan

Thank you for sending us all the copy of the magnificent draft you have prepared for the public hearings regarding making Town Square over.

In general, I agree with the remarks that Dianne has sent you. I don't see where restrooms are provided for, however, and I would be in favor of having restrooms available. There was one drawing that showed restrooms being placed under an atrium over by the southeast entrance to the PAC. Is that where restrooms are being recommended?

I would appreciate it if you would change the header regarding the southeast entry area to Town Square so that it is The Ruth Moulton Plaza, aka East Entry instead of it being vice versa.

And it would make more sense perhaps if you were to draw attention to the Ruth Moulton Plaque than to the Ruth Moulton Rock...

Seeing Town Square used more has been a delight. And with more people making use of the park, it appears that most of the folks who used to hang out there so much have moved on to somewhere else. That's good. I agree very much with Dianne where she points out that because of these changes that have come about with the new and increased usage of the Park for public events, cutting down the berms seems to be no longer necessary or needed in order to "keep the peace," as it were. I also agree that as much grass as possible be maintained and that evergreens be predominate.

What is your take on the fact that the State will be asked to contribute an enormous amount of money for necessary repairs to the Port of Anchorage? And there appear to be significant funds needed to deal with the aftermath of the November earthquake, not to mention all of these disturbing aftershocks. It appears the Municipality will have even less money from property taxes to deal with our needs because of reevaluation of market values on some properties. And it furthermore appears that the governor plans to cut State funds for education, from pre-school to UA. Will these new critical demands on available municipal funds, and a state administration that is intent on a so-called "balanced budget" along with the restoration of PFD dollars and a total lack of interest in statewide taxes have any impact on implementation of plans for re-doing Town Square? I think it's wonderful that the mayor is proposing an alcohol tax to help the homeless, but will the changes being proposed for Town Square fit within municipal priorities now?

Thank you again for sharing your report with us.

John

From: Elise Huggins [<mailto:ehuggins@earthscapealaska.com>]

Sent: Thursday, January 31, 2019 4:53 PM

To: Van Le

Subject: RE: Town Square Park Master Plan - 95% DRAFT

Hi Van,

I have been out all month with not great access to the internet. Quick review – beautiful document, photos and layout are very nice, easy to read and understand. Content is good, looking forward to reading and getting details. Proposed design for the park is good and reflects the public concerns and ideas. Only slight disappointment is the lack of interaction between the PAC and the park. And “interaction” is probably not the best word. Seems like the PAC is a separate entity and really it should be the iconic element that makes the park, gives it some identity and basis.

Thanks for all your efforts and congratulate the team on my behalf for a job well done.

Elise

Town Square Park / Public Hearing Draft
November 2018

To: Van Le, Planner
From: Ken Pendleton, Landscape Architect
Subject: 95% Review Comments

Van:

First off, good work on this controversial and issue driven project. Town Square has and continues to be a community-involved project, as appropriate, given its history and early beginnings.

These comments are intended to be constructive in nature and are listed by page number as follows:

Page 19

Under section “evolution of town square park”

- 1) Remove phrase “people have sought. . . .” And replace with ***“homeless and illegal uses have taken over”*** Town Square Park.
- 2) Last sentence after word “is” insert - ***re-newed / revised and can once again become the centerpiece of out downtown for visitors and the community as well, and is home . . .***

Page 37

Diagram showing ‘Good and Bad comfort’ synthesis needs more clarification: too simplistic and open to conclusions about park modifications and re-design implications. If really true both vertical ground forms and ‘hiding’ places should be mentioned and any other components used in this analysis.

Page 68 Preferred Concept Plan

A question is where and should any “existing trees” be shown on this concept plan? Maybe too soon to really determine; BUT it will become a very critical topic as this plan moves forward in the future. This might be more a CYA than truly ‘where existing trees will remain’

Page 80

I personally believe restrooms should be considered in the future. Don't know that there are any changes to this page. Option 'B' reflects inclusion of restrooms. So maybe that is sufficient.

Page 82

Under Memorial Areas

An existing plaque placed in TSP in 1999 (on concrete wall in central area)

1989-1999 ASLA Centennial Medallion
“Recognition as a National Landmark for outstanding Landscape Architecture”

Page 98

What is goal #4?

Page 101

Consider adding: “***A pedestrian Core Area*** (traffic free) around TSP / PAC
4th – 5th ave. and ‘G’ to ‘E’ Streets

Submitted by:
Ken Pendleton

Comments from Dianne Holmes

Received via email 6/5/19 (11:20AM)

Dear Commissioners:

As a member of the Citizens' Advisory Group, I've always advocated for keeping Town Square green and maintaining the berms. While the purpose of the park was touched on during our meetings, it is clear to me that the focus is now on events rather than simply being an urban oasis.

However, I believe the park can serve both goals, if some of my following concerns are resolved.

1. With the increase in summer 'events,' the undesirable 'behavior' has been reduced; this fact should be considered before drastically redesigning the park (at a great cost) because these problems may not exist tomorrow.
2. Maintaining the berms keeps traffic noise out and helps contain music/speakers inside the park. They also help discourage kids from running out into the streets. And kids love to roll around on the berms.
3. The consultant reported to me that a sound engineer said the berms did not really matter in regards to keeping noise in/out. I seriously question that assumption, because even DOT puts up sound fences and other noise-reducing features.
4. The east side of the master plan design does not really work well--the play area and stage should be switched. Any kids' area should be closer to where parents might be seated at the Kobuk. The stage could be placed against the Kobuk's west wall on the elevated area that currently exists. That would help focus sound across the park and away from the Kobuk (who apparently has concerns about noise).
5. The Anchorage Charter states that Town Square Park shall not contain any permanent structures. This should be considered before putting up a stage.
6. The stage, as currently shown in the draft MP, impedes 'viewing' the park from E St--and seeing inside the park has been a complaint by some of the public. The area seems congested with the stage and adjacent picnic tables. The E street area would be more welcoming if the stage was elsewhere. Perhaps the park is trying to be too many things in such a small space.
7. Keep the E Street berm so that eating lunch at the picnic tables will be more pleasant with less noise from the street.
8. The 'knoll' appears to be unconnected to any geographic feature. It would be more natural to tie it to the NE corner where the area is already elevated. If the stage were also in the NE corner,

the knoll could provide grassy seating for people attending performances and could also help channel sound across the park, rather than out to 5th Ave.

9. It is good that the concrete steps/seating will be reduced. The central seasonal circle is a nice touch, but will we end up with less area for sitting? Has that been calculated?

10. Flowers were a big topic of discussion at our meetings. The MP has many flower plots. Please tell us if there will be more or less space to sit with the redesign of the flowers?

11. The allee on 6th Ave is a good idea and could be very special if it will be screened from the street with trees and a berm.

12. Question--how many trees are planned for the new design in comparison to what is currently there? And how many will be evergreens?

Comments for PRC on Town Square Park, Master Plan, PH Draft Nov, 2018

From: Dianne Holmes, Jan, '2019

As a member of the Town Square (TS) Citizen Advisory Group, I appreciate that this master plan (MP) lists the municipal codes and policies that apply to the park and I sincerely hope future administrations will honor them (especially *AO 85-173*).

I welcome the recognition of the citizen effort that went into creating the park. The enormity of the endeavor can't easily be captured, however.

My comments dwell mainly on the Preferred Concept (below), but first there are some assumptions used in the MP's development (commerce and social behavior).

The undesirable social behavior that prompted the MP review has been reduced significantly due to changes at the transit station and an increase in the number of summer events. Given that the behavior has lessened, some assumptions that have driven certain design changes, are no longer needed, nor applicable. Monies could be saved by adjusting the design accordingly.

Throughout the MP, commercialization is a dominate theme. For example, 52/56 P. 97-98 “. . . events that generate city revenue and spark more interest in Downtown . . .” It's no secret that the Downtown Partnership wants events that draw people to town and they have done a good job of scheduling events to that end, while also moderating undesirable behavior.

However, the goal to turn E Street into a Festival Street during the E Street remodel (without a public process) is an example of how easily commerce can overshadow the purpose of a park. The comment on 15/56, P 23 regarding low traffic volumes on E may hint that this plan is not dead. That would be a bad idea given that E is unique in connecting 9th Ave to 2nd. F Street is a better location for a Festival Street.

Preferred Concept, Design: 37/56, P 67-82

38/56, P 70. Market Space. It is a fine line between commercial ventures and maintaining park solitude. Without the E Street berm, that area is simply an extension of the sidewalk with traffic noise and nothing to remind people they are in a park. It's not necessary to remove all the berm to link vendors and seating.

39/56, P 71. Play Area. TS is about an acre, yet this design tries to include something for everyone. IF the Play Area is included, it should be out in the open (not hidden). Move it southward where parents can observe if they happen to be sitting at the Kobuk. Switch the Stage and Knoll locations.

39/56, P 71. The Knoll is incongruent—it isn't anchored to anything geographically. It seems to impede views to the stage. Better would be to move the Knoll to the NE corner nestled next to the re-located Stage.

40/56, P 73. Stage. The Charter does not allow for permanent structures. The performance space should not be permanent and the location should not impede views into and across the park—which it does now by being at the E Street entrance. Move it to the NE corner with berms around

it to focus the sound across the park. The Kobuk west wall could also re-focus sound; otherwise the noise from the Stage (in the Preferred Concept) would likely impact the Kobuk. Or consider the SE corner.

41/56, P 75. Berms. Reducing the size of the berms will impact noise into and out of the park—despite what sound engineers have told the consultants. Even DOT has fences along highways. Do not reduce the berms because the undesirable social behavior, that appears to frighten some people, has been modified due to frequent events and the closure of the Transit Center.

42/56, P 78. Lighting. Do not clutter the interior of TS with light poles; they would interfere with events.

43/56 P. 80. Restrooms. Do not amend the charter to allow for permanent structures in TS such as restrooms. Find areas off-site for restrooms (but they are needed).

44/56,P 81. Trees. Evergreens should be the dominate tree species. They provide year-round landscaping and beauty; whereas deciduous trees have leaves for only 3-4 months and give us no pleasure the other 9 months.

44/56 P 82. Memorial Areas. AR 2007-216 created the Ruth Mouton plaza , but that appears to have been forgotten in the MP. The Rock that is just outside the SE corner of the park (and may not even be technically in TS) does not mention the plaza. Do not neglect Moulton in the goal to recognize Brundage/Cupples

Management

47/56, P 87. Do not relinquish control of the park to any group, especially one that may have a vested interest that could be in conflict with park goals. The MOA needs to remain the primary manager of the park. It is a fine line between management for economics and management for a park for everyone.

Beyond the Preferred Concept, Management:

P 16/56. P 26. The Built Environment: . . . Lawn “. . .Park’s greenspaces are mostly used for viewing events and are not well suited for other activities”

This statement is not logical because it has pretty much been determined that one prime purpose of the park is for events. People prefer to sit on grass. If the statement was meant to imply that with less grass there would be more area for commercial enterprises, then that raises the question of the purpose(s) of the park. See above on commercialization. Keep grass and lots of rolling hills for seating.

34/56, P 61. Guiding Principles. The principle of connecting the park with surrounding businesses does not fit with the uniqueness of the park. It isn’t a commercial venture. People can’t escape the fact that the park is in the middle of downtown, so there is no need to further emphasize it.

36/56, P 65. Public Safety. Safety appears to have driven many design changes in the park because some people didn’t feel safe. TS is a very small park with many wide open spaces. With future lighting and continuation of frequent events, safety is no longer a reason to destroy the character of the park that makes it unique in an urban setting. “Isolation” isn’t a bad thing when

it comes to being a park. No one wants to feel like the event they are attending is simply an extension of a commercial area.

Summary:

- 1) Re-evaluate the need (and cost) for all TS changes given that perceived safety issues have been moderated with more events and closure of the Transit Center.
- 2) Specify limits on commerce and how design might compliment commerce without becoming the dominate purpose of the park. Keep the park for respite and events.
- 3) Revise locations for Play Area, Knoll, and Stage. If safety is such a concern in the MP, then a Play Area should not be hidden.
- 4) The Stage should not block the E Street entrance. Move it to the NE or SE corner.
- 5) Create a Knoll that fits geographically with the rest of the park—not an anomaly.
- 6) Do not reduce the berms to a mere 3 ft. Keep them higher for seating and to maintain TS's unique urban character.
- 7) Keep light poles on the edges of the park.
- 8) Do not locate restrooms in TS as it already too small to accommodate all that is in the MP; the Charter does not allow for permanent structures—do not attempt to revise it.
- 9) Keep evergreens as the dominate tree species in the park.
- 10) Ruth Moulton should be considered for the Memorial Areas.
- 11) Management of TS should be kept within the MOA. Conflicts of interest should be examined carefully if contracts are granted for maintenance/management.
- 12) Keep as much grass as possible for people to sit on. Consider if the west lawn should be mostly grass and move flowers to the edge.
- 13) The guiding principle of connecting TS with businesses should not be prime consideration. Connecting commerce and TS does not enhance the value of the park.
- 14) Re-evaluate the need to drastically re-design TS for perceived 'safety' issues given that many of the problems have diminished with recent changes.

#1

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, May 18, 2019 7:52:16 AM
Last Modified: Saturday, May 18, 2019 7:55:09 AM
Time Spent: 00:02:53
IP Address: 107.77.205.17

Page 1: Public Review Draft - Comment Form

Q1 Please submit your comments below.

Since the state is in a budget crisis maybe a 5.4 m project on a one square block of land shouldnt be a priority? Maybe invest that money on the schools that shut down because you didnt take care of them in the first place.

Q2 Contact Information

Name	Mike Kruse
Address	Qbc
City/Town	Palmer
State/Province	Ak
ZIP/Postal Code	99645
Country	Usa
Email Address	mike@gmail

#2

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, May 18, 2019 4:32:03 PM
Last Modified: Saturday, May 18, 2019 4:37:55 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:52
IP Address: 216.67.28.107

Page 1: Public Review Draft - Comment Form

Q1 Please submit your comments below.

Would like to see as much open space alongside greenery for safety. LED lighting. Trendy lighting would look nice. String lighting across walkways looks sharp and trendy. Pavers should be something unique and extend to the edge of 5th, 6th, and onto E St as it currently does. Signage linking F St together and maintaining the line of sight for that will help encourage more pedestrian traffic.

Q2 Contact Information

Name	Randy Brown
Company or Organization	People Mover
Address	3600 Martin Luther King Jr Ave
City/Town	Anc
State/Province	Ak
ZIP/Postal Code	99501
Country	Usa
Email Address	randystevenbrown@yahoo.com

#3

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, May 24, 2019 1:23:52 PM
Last Modified: Friday, May 24, 2019 1:30:19 PM
Time Spent: 00:06:27
IP Address: 66.58.192.19

Page 1: Public Review Draft - Comment Form

Q1 Please submit your comments below.

You are right to attempt to get families comfortable using the square. However, first the issue of people sleeping, tents, sleeping bags, garbage must be addressed, It isn't compassionate to enable people to live destructive lifestyles. Sleeping/taking drugs/panhandling isn't OK. It's clear police aren't responding. Businesses are suffering. I shouldn't enter a public restaurant and smell urine. Where are people using the restroom? this is a public health issue. If you have food trucks, you must have a place where people can wash and use the restroom.

Q2 Contact Information

Name	elaine pfeiffer
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Email Address	pfeifferelaines@hotmail.com

#4

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, May 25, 2019 8:29:57 AM
Last Modified: Saturday, May 25, 2019 8:38:36 AM
Time Spent: 00:08:39
IP Address: 69.178.17.52

Page 1: Public Review Draft - Comment Form

Q1 Please submit your comments below.

There is still no way to safely drop off incapacitated patrons to the PAC. Two curbcuts, a movable barrier and a slightly expanded pathway along the front of the building would make it possible to drop off PWD's during events at the door instead in the middle of the street or a block away. Volunteer ushers are always present at events already.

Q2 Contact Information

Name	Ed Brewer
Address	2001 Alder Drive
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State/Province	AK
ZIP/Postal Code	99508-3571
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#5

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, May 25, 2019 11:05:07 AM
Last Modified: Saturday, May 25, 2019 11:09:34 AM
Time Spent: 00:04:27
IP Address: 69.178.51.120

Page 1: Public Review Draft - Comment Form

Q1 Please submit your comments below.

I think the most critical piece of the design for me would be a wrap-around fence surrounding the play space with one gap for entrance and exit on the west side. There are many parks in Anchorage that would benefit from a fence (Campbell Park comes to mind), but this one in particular will be far more frequented by families with young children if we knew we could be sure our children wouldn't have access to the street without our knowledge. Without that security, I can't imagine choosing to take my children to play there.

Thank you!

Q2 Contact Information

Name	Anne Ooms
Address	4629 E 9th Ave
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Country	United States
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#6

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, June 05, 2019 1:44:34 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, June 05, 2019 1:47:00 PM
Time Spent: 00:02:26
IP Address: 206.174.34.37

Page 1: Public Review Draft - Comment Form

Q1 Please submit your comments below.

We have also provided these comments via email to Ms. Le with attachment of esplanade concept, as we are unable to upload an attachment via this survey form.

Wednesday, June 5, 2019

TO: Van Le, R&M Consultants
vle@rmconsult.com
907.646.9659

Dear Ms. Le,

The team at Alaska Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., (ACPA, Inc.) the nonprofit that manages the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts (the PAC) facility owned by the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), is very supportive of the efforts being made to activate Town Square Park. We work closely with the MOA and Anchorage Downtown Partnership (ADP) to support events in Town Square Park which, by nature of its location, also serves as our front yard.

We would like to contribute a strong suggestion to the Town Square Park Master Plan (TSPMP), to support the needs of many PAC patrons requiring accessible entry to the PAC and in response to feedback from many citizens and visitors with a wide spectrum of reasons for needing safe access, from experiencing disabilities to navigating downtown with small children. With the TSPMP, we see an opportunity to solve a 30-year-old issue related to ADA compliance and safe, accessible drop off to the PAC. We feel this solution can be accomplished in a very complementary fashion to the current TSPMP design direction, honoring the hard work that the citizen and technical groups have done to date.

It is well-known that passenger drop-offs/pick-ups for PAC events require either the passenger to exit/enter the vehicle through an active traffic lane or use a sidewalk on the opposite side of the street from the PAC. These requirements pose safety and convenience issues for users, resulting in some staying away from downtown entirely. There has been strong public support for a solution since the PAC opened its doors over 30 years ago.

The recommendation:

An esplanade design, similar in nature to the brick portion of "F" street south of the PAC, coming off of 5th Avenue, passing in front of the PAC (East Side of facility) and coming out onto 6th and/or F Street, would be a cost effective and enhancing solution to both the park and the PAC. Creating a temporary pass through, without curb and gutter to ensure flexibility in use, that would be activated as a drop off zone during events would create a safe zone for patrons to enter/exit the facility.

We've attached an esplanade design drawing that was created shortly after the PAC opened in 1988, and we feel could easily be updated as needed to fit with the TSPMP.

Town Square Park Master Plan

With our volunteer usher corps of approximately 380 citizen volunteers, ACPA, Inc. can develop a highly effective operations plan including, but not limited to ideas like, staff opening/closing the drop off pass through and volunteers greeting patrons as they safely enter the PAC utilizing the esplanade before and after performances.

The esplanade would be closed when events are not happening at the PAC and could be used in various ways for park visitors when not being used for drop off. For example, the TSPMP's Preferred Alternative proposes that food trucks be staged in parking lanes on E Street. An esplanade would allow these trucks to be staged off-street and preserve critical on-street parking spaces for downtown visitors.

We welcome dialogue and partnership, and appreciate strong consideration of this solution. We believe it will impact less than a small percentage of the existing TSPMP design, requiring minimal adjustments to include an esplanade. The ability to align with the AWARE vision for Anchorage and finally create a welcoming, inclusive and safe solution for its citizens to enter and exit the PAC, an iconic community asset, is an incredible opportunity that is 30 years overdue. We would like to work collaboratively with the TSPMP team to proactively avoid any future complaints, lawsuits or injuries related to visitor access.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nancy Harbour, President & COO
nharbour@alaskapac.org, 907.263.2913

Cindy Hamilton, VP Operations,
chamilton@alaskapac.org, 907.263.2919

Codie Costello, VP Strategic Development & Communications
ccostello@alaskapac.org, 907.263.2923

Henry Penney, Board Member
hpenney@aol.com, 907.223.6639

Kimberly Pace, Board Member / Mayor Berkowitz Appointee
kjpace@alaskan.com, 907.333.6282

Q2 Contact Information

Name	Codie Costello
Company or Organization	Alaska Center for the Performing Arts
Address	621 W. 6th Avenue
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State/Province	Alaska
ZIP/Postal Code	99501
Country	United States
Email Address	ccostello@alaskapac.org

5th AVENUE

G STREET

TYPICAL CROSS SECTION

6th AVENUE

Municipal Hill Building

- 1 PLANTER WALL
- 25 WITH BENCH
- 2 COOPERLINE (TYP)
- 2 EXPANSION JCT (TYP)
- 2 M.O.A. STANDARD HANDICAP ACCESS PAVEMENT
- 2 EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL POLE

6th Ave. Outfitters

Stephen Art Gallery

- 2 NEW STREETLIGHT
- 2 4" P.C. SIDEWALK
- 24 WITH EXPOSED AGG. FIN.
- 1 PLANTER WALL
- 25 WITH BENCH
- 2 DECORATIVE BARS
- 24 W/ BRICK FIN.
- 2 TRASH RECEPTACLE
- 25 (TYP)

- 11 BOLLARD
- 24 (TYP)
- 2 EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL POLE
- 2 HANDICAP ACCESS PAVEMENT

Covenant House

- 2 EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL POLE
- 2 CUMP
- 25 10' X 10'
- 2 HANDICAP ACCESS
- 25 PAVEMENT
- 11 BOLLARD
- 24 (TYP)
- 2 TRASH
- 25 RECEPTACLE

MOA

- 2 TREEWELL
- 24 (TYP)
- 2 BICYCLE
- 25 PAVEMENT
- 2 SIDEWALK
- 25 SECTION

O'Neill Investigations

Woodworks

5th Ave. Records

NEW STREETLIGHT

20 COTTONWOODS

ACUTIFOLIA @ 2'-0" OC

AK Title Guaranty

E STREET

#7

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, June 06, 2019 2:04:28 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, June 06, 2019 2:07:55 PM
Time Spent: 00:03:27
IP Address: 69.178.97.49

Page 1: Public Review Draft - Comment Form

Q1 Please submit your comments below.

My concern is the lack of any off street accessibility for those of us who have limited mobility not only limiting access for us but puts us in danger of serious harm or death.

Q2 Contact Information

Name	Robert Churchill
Company or Organization	Alaska Resources Consulting
Address	3415 Wentworth Street
City/Town	Anchorage
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#8

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, June 06, 2019 2:22:35 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, June 06, 2019 3:02:31 PM
Time Spent: 00:39:56
IP Address: 24.237.203.149

Page 1: Public Review Draft - Comment Form

Q1 Please submit your comments below.

I have been attending the focus group sessions for the planning for the TSPMP for the past few years, advocating for the TSPMP to include improving accessibility to Town Square and the PAC, for people with disabilities, the elderly and people with young children, as well as all other patrons.

I am a frequent visitor to the PAC, as I am a season ticket holder for the Anchorage Symphony, Opera and the Concert Association. And I also attend performances by Perserverance Theater, the Alaska Junior Theater, Concert Chorus, Alaska Sound Celebration, and many other events. And I experience mobility disabilities and medical issues. I use a wheelchair, and a ventilator and other medical equipment. For me, the PAC houses most of the events that I attend during their season (i.e. Fall, Winter Spring and some of the Summer). It provides me with opportunities for getting out in the community and enjoying the arts. I have also been on the ice skating rink in Town Square. I implore you to reconsider the absence of a pull-through, drop off area that would allow for passengers to be dropped off, out of the way of traffic, and in a location that they would not have to cross the street on foot, crutches, walkers, wheels (wheelchairs). During the dark, snowy months, getting across the street and into the PAC can be treacherous. Passengers are dropped off next to the PAC, having to step into active automobile traffic. And people who use a wheelchair lift on the passenger side of their vehicle really cannot safely be dropped off in front of the PAC. We must park and cross the busy street (either Fifth or Sixth Ave.) And often, the curb cutout is blocked with snow/ice/slush making it very difficult to get out of the street and up on the sidewalk before the traffic light changes, allowing traffic through. It is unnerving and several times, my care providers, PAC employees, and patrons of the PAC dressed in their nice clothing, have had to rush to push the snow/ice/slush away in order to free the front wheels of my wheelchair. And I see people walking with crutches and walkers or gait difficulties, trying to negotiate the same path.

The PAC and its next-door-neighbor are the heart of Downtown Anchorage, and should be accessible to all. Removing concrete, omitting a pull-through/drop off and failing to remove other physical barriers negatively impacts accessibility for the elderly, disabled, and families of young children. Those are the very people who would benefit greatly from accessible green spaces in the 2 months of Summer, and accessible Arts programming during the 10 months of the main season at the PAC. Please reconsider addressing the health and safety of all the visitors to the TSP and PAC, by including a pull-through/drop off area between TSP and the PAC. It is my understanding that the PAC has submitted plans for a proposed esplanade designed to provide a temporary/seasonal pull-through/drop off and partnering to manage it during the PAC's main season. Right now, the TSPMP does not appear to address the accessibility/safety concerns, despite improved ADA access being identified by all of the subgroups at the many focus group meetings held throughout the past 2 - 3 years.

Thank you for considering these comments and concerns.

Q2 Contact Information

Name	Patrick Regan
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State/Province	Alaska
ZIP/Postal Code	99507
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#9

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, June 06, 2019 4:14:17 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, June 06, 2019 4:45:02 PM
Time Spent: 00:30:45
IP Address: 69.162.213.66

Page 1: Public Review Draft - Comment Form

Q1 Please submit your comments below.

Please refer to Resolution sent to Ms. Van Le on June 6, 2019.

Q2 Contact Information

Name	Michelle Klouda
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ANCHORAGE DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Anchorage, Alaska

RESOLUTION

TOWN SQUARE PARK MASTER PLAN

JUNE 06, 2019

WHEREAS, the Downtown Community Council recognizes the efforts made towards the Town Square Park Master Plan (TSPMP).

WHEREAS, the Downtown Community Council considers assessible access to the adjacent Performing Arts Center a safety priority for this area of Downtown Anchorage.

WHEREAS, the Downtown Community Council recognizes that the TSPMP dedicates a page in the report for Performing Arts Center access and associated difficulties, the design does not address a resolution for access to the Performing Arts Center.

WHEREAS, the Downtown Community Council sees the need for better day to day activation of Downtown during the winter months.

WHEREAS, the Downtown Community Council recognizes that the Master Plan highlights winter as a major part of Anchorage's identity; the design does not address the functional daily use of Town Square Park in the winter.

WHEREAS, the Downtown Community Council would like to see future funding invested in areas outside of Town Square Park for better lighting and safer pedestrian access.

Now therefore, *BE IT RESOLVED*, by the Downtown Community Council:

1. That the Downtown Community Council will only support a portion of design in Town Square Park towards the creation of an assessible and flexible space for a traffic zone providing ADA access to the Performing Arts Center.

This resolution was unanimously adopted by the Downtown Community Council on the 6th day of June, 2019.

Michelle Klouda
President, Downtown Community Council

Andrew Baker
Secretary, Downtown Community Council

#10

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, June 06, 2019 5:22:12 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, June 06, 2019 5:28:01 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:49
IP Address: 66.58.201.154

Page 1: Public Review Draft - Comment Form

Q1 Please submit your comments below.

Cost is ridiculously high and should/would never happen. Spend \$1/2 million or less RIGHT NOW to do the 30 year's overdue handicapped access loop through TownSquare for PAC patrons. Do not link that to this big project.

Q2 Contact Information

Name	Ray Kreig
Company or Organization	RA Kreig & Associates
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City/Town	Anchorage
State/Province	AK
ZIP/Postal Code	99501
Country	US
Email Address	ray@kreig.com

#11

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, June 06, 2019 5:35:04 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, June 06, 2019 5:44:57 PM
Time Spent: 00:09:53
IP Address: 206.174.3.202

Page 1: Public Review Draft - Comment Form

Q1 Please submit your comments below.

A drive through handicapped drop-off should be the main priority for any changes to the Town Square Park.

Q2 Contact Information

Name	Chris and Beverly Beheim
Company or Organization	Anchorage Fine Arts Society
Address	6910 Catine Circle
City/Town	Anchorage
State/Province	Alaska
ZIP/Postal Code	99507
Email Address	cbeheim@gmail.com



Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska
Parks & Recreation Commission

632 W. 6th Avenue, Suite 630
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519



PRC RES NO. 2019-07
TOWN SQUARE PARK MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to both the Mayor and the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission has the responsibility and duty to provide for the long term vision of our park system by ensuring that a balance of parks, natural resources, and recreation facilities provides for the health, welfare, and safety of all residents of the Anchorage Bowl; and

WHEREAS, Town Square Park is an important park and civic space located in the heart of downtown Anchorage; and

WHEREAS, Town Square Park has a long history of citizen engagement and advocacy; and

WHEREAS, the *Town Square Park Master Plan* was initiated to address ongoing public safety concerns as well as the community's desire for positive change; and

WHEREAS, the *Town Square Park Master Plan* is the product of a comprehensive and collaborative process driven by public engagement and stakeholder input; and

WHEREAS, the *Town Square Park Master Plan* identifies community priorities and provides vision for the next 20 years at Town Square Park; and

WHEREAS, the *Town Square Park Master Plan* establishes guiding principles and recommendations for the future management, design, programming, and public safety of Town Square Park;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the Town Square Park Master Plan as submitted by the Parks and Recreation Department.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 13th day of June, 2019.

Chair
Parks and Recreation Commission

ATTEST:

John Rodda, Director
Parks & Recreation Department