



Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska
Parks & Recreation Department

632 W. 6th Avenue, Suite 630
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519
Tel 907-343-4355

URL www.muni.org/departments/parks



MEMORANDUM

Date: April 14, 2016

To: Parks & Recreation Commission

Cc: Joshua Durand, Parks Superintendent

From: Maeve Nevins, Park Planner

Project: **PRC 16-11 Action Item:** Russian Jack Springs Park: Skate Park

INTRODUCTION

The Russian Jack Springs Park is classified as a Special Use Area park. The project proposes construction of a new skate park to be located in the northwest quadrant of the park, near the intersection of Pine Street and 8th Avenue.

The project was brought forward with strong community support and a \$250,000 State grant awarded to the Anchorage Park Foundation. Working closely with the community, the Park and Recreation Staff has identified a site and performed preliminary engineering studies that have confirmed its suitability.

At approximately 3,000 square feet in area, the park will be in mid-range of size for a neighborhood skate park. It can be expected to support dozens of users with four or more skating simultaneously, depending upon the final design. The skate park's surfacing and primary construction material will be Portland cement concrete, installed as flatwork, pre-cast and poured-in-place features. The contoured concrete surfaces will be complemented with stainless steel rails and other elements. The park will provide a diverse range of terrain, obstacles, and features, and reflect extensive input from community residents and Anchorage skaters during the design process.

The skate park will be adjacent to a playground that was designed and constructed with a "polar bear" theme. The skate park will complement and expand upon this concept through its choices of shape and color. An aesthetic highlight will be working the concrete as it is poured to embed bear "footprints" across the skate park plaza.

A principal goal of the project is to create a facility that will become the hub of the Russian Jack community's thriving action sports community. In this park, action sports enthusiasts of all styles and backgrounds will feel comfortable learning new tricks and progressing, while making new friends and gaining a sense that they are a part of a unique collective of individuals. The project team's design philosophy has a strong emphasis on creating endless possibilities within the park.

Located adjacent to a popular playground and a paved and lighted parking area, lighted off-street parking area that also has trash bins and bathrooms. The site is adjacent to public roadway, is served by Anchorage's public transportation service, and has a separated pedestrian/bicycle path that connects to the park's continuous neighborhoods.

Russian Jack Springs Park supports a wide variety of recreational, cultural, and social activities, including walking, running, cycling, Nordic skiing, soccer, softball, tennis, golf, gardening, and community meetings/events. The skate park will complement the many family oriented recreational activities already available in the park.

PROJECT BENEFITS

Skateboarding has emerged as a popular sport in the United States, with an estimated 10 million participants. It is recognized as our most popular “action” or “extreme” sport, with millions more participants than alpine skiing, snowboarding, and in-line skating. Skating has significant physical and mental health benefits and appeals to wide range of ages. Although the majority of skaters (70 percent) are 6 to 17 years old, almost 10 percent of skaters are over 35 years old. Thus, the park is expected to attract both youth and adult participants.

Skate parks are now understood to reduce illicit behavior. Studies have demonstrated that skate parks promote positive activities and curb unlawful behavior. Skate parks provide a safe environment for skateboarding. Studies have concluded that most skateboard injuries occur outside skate parks. The elimination of conflicts with automobiles, pedestrians, and cyclists is an important benefit that parks provide. Skate parks reduce vandalism and damage to private and public property. The parks draw skateboarders away from trespassing on and damaging stairs, planting boxes, benches, walls and other street furniture.

The North Russian Jack Springs Skate Park will be designed with the community in mind, employing the principles of *universal design* to make the park accessible to people of all ages and abilities. While labeled as a “skate park”, this project can be more accurately described as a “Wheel Friendly Environment”. A key design objective is to develop a facility that accommodates everyone from skateboarders and BMXers to scooters and roller-bladers, including adaptive action-sport athletes. With a park of this size we want to ensure all disciplines are thought of and accounted for as we work through the design process. The park should strike the perfect balance between street and transition features so there is something for everyone regardless of the preferred style of design. Additionally we want to have enough open space for the more advanced users to move about freely while beginners can simply roll around and find a level of comfort in their new surroundings.

Taking things one step further, we want to find a way for the average person (someone who does not skate, BMX, rollerblade or ride scooters) to appreciate this park. We feel the best way to accomplish this would be from an aesthetic point of view, so most of the features will have architectural twists on them to be more pleasing to the eye. The Park’s Staff has learned that incorporation of color is a vital component of a park’s design. Adding color transforms a skate park from a plain, minimally-inviting space into a vibrant, eye-catching attraction that truly feels alive. Our approach will be to strategically incorporate colored concrete into the heart of the skate-able terrain, utilizing it for subtle accents, as well as visual focal points. A color pattern made up of several complementary tones will be artfully incorporated into the conceptual design and adjusted based on feedback received as the design moves through multiple review stages. As discussed, the “polar bear” color themes at the adjacent playground will be a starting point for our inspiration. Enhancing the skating experience and aesthetic appeal of the park, our vision for a quality skate plaza also includes the use of progressive materials uncommon to conventional skate parks. A diversity of unique textures will keep the park continually fresh and exciting.

The Park’s Staff will also incorporate *sustainable planning/building methods* and environmental and social responsibility. We will preserve as much natural topography as possible, balancing cuts and fills and capitalizing on natural elevation changes. Existing trees will be preserved where possible and any that are removed will be replaced in kind. Appropriate materials, such as fly-ash in the concrete mix design, will be specified as preferred and more environmentally-friendly cement. Our drainage design will provide for onsite retention and treatment of storm water.

PLANNING, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND FUNDING

Significant support for this project and for a previously submitted HUD Grant application comes from multiple community and legislative sources. Attached are letters of support from Alaska State Senator Bill Wielechowski; Lisa McGuire, the Secretary of the Russian Jack Community Council; and Jason Borgstede, owner of Anchorage’s Blue and Gold Boardshop. Alaska State Senator Bill Wielechowski first proposed this project in 2012 upon realizing that there is a considerable demand for skateboarding facilities in northeast Anchorage.

In 2012, the Anchorage Park Foundation was awarded a \$250,000 State Legislative Grant to help solve this issue. Following award of the grant, the Anchorage Park Foundation worked with residents of northeast Anchorage in order to learn which site they wished to have the project located. Northern Russian Jack Springs Park was then decided as the location for the incoming stake park. Following the determination of the project site, the Russian Jack Community Council voted unanimously in favor for the development of this project on December 11, 2013. The Council continues to be enthusiastic supporters of the project, voicing that residents are excited for the community asset improvements this project will bring to their underserved community. The Russian Jack Community Council is also thrilled with the opportunity to welcome their neighbors from outside of the Russian Jack community to visit their neighborhood once the park is opened.

Local Anchorage business owner, Jason Borgstede of Blue & Gold Boardshop, has also voiced support of this project. In addition to being an active proponent of for the development of new skateboarding facilities in Anchorage, Jason has voiced feedback from the skateboarding community to the Anchorage Park Foundation that existing skate facilities have the potential to be far greater than what is currently offered. Jason and his staff are eager for the opportunity to help serve as the voice of the skateboarding community throughout the design of the project.

Milestones Accomplished

- | <u>DATE</u> | <u>MILESTONES</u> |
|--------------------|--|
| • 2012 | • Alaska State Senator Bill Wielechowski identifies strong constituent demand in northeast Anchorage for a skate park. He begins work on including a grant in the State's Capital Budget. |
| • | • Construction begins in North Russian Jack Springs Park on a new off-street parking area with onsite storm water treatment. |
| • | • Construction also begins a new playground in North Russian Jack Springs Park that includes a custom "polar bear" slide. |
| • 2013 | • North Russian Jack Spring Park's playground and parking lot are completed and opened to the public. |
| • 2012 | • Anchorage Park Foundation is awarded a State grant for \$250,000 to be used to develop a skate park in northeast Anchorage. |
| • | • Anchorage Park Foundation engages with northeast Anchorage residents in a skate park site selection process. North Russian Jack Springs Park is selected as the preferred alternative. |
| • | • Russian Jack Community Council votes unanimously in favor siting the skate park in North Russian Jack Springs Park. |
| • 2014 | • Loretta French Skate Park is designed and constructed in Chugiak, providing valuable experience in local skate park construction and development costs. The skate park proves immensely popular and is used year-round, including during winter snow and darkness. |
| • 2015 | • Preliminary engineering for a North Russian Jack Springs Park skate park is performed, including topographic survey and soils investigation. Analysis validates feasibility of the site for development. |
| • 2016 | • Concept design approved by a vote of support at Russian Jack Community Council on March 9, 2016. April 6, 2016, Blue and Gold Skate Shop staff weighs in on final design concept, Option 2: Bowl concept is selected. |

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Department believes that the Russian Jack Springs Skate Park project will adhere to the priorities as identified in the Russian Jack Springs updated Master Plan. Public process has been undertaken to develop the design and support has been documented throughout the process. The Department recommends that the Parks & Recreation Commission pass the proposed resolution to support this project.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Session

State Capitol, Rm. 419
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-2435
Fax: (907) 465-6615

Interim

716 W. 4th Ave, Ste. 409
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 269-0120
Fax: (907) 269-0122



Resources Committee

State Affairs Committee

Joint Armed Services Committee

Judiciary Committee

Senator.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI

October 28, 2015

Municipality of Anchorage
Department of Health and Human Services
Public Health Initiatives and Partnerships Division
Community Safety and Development (CSD)
825 L Street, Room 506
Anchorage, AK 99501

To Whom It May Concern:

I write this letter in strong support of the Anchorage Park Foundation's HUD grant application for the establishment of a Skate Park in East Anchorage.

Russian Jack Springs Park is one of the few green spaces in East Anchorage and is centrally located for local community access. For years, constituents have been voicing a need not only for additional green space on our side of town, but also for healthy recreational opportunities for our young people. The proposed Skate Park will provide a much-needed and greatly desired recreational outlet for teens in East Anchorage, encouraging them to engage with fellow community members in a positive way.

While skate parks are often viewed as potentially problematic, constituents in my district have expressed a different outlook. Providing a safe location for youth to engage in outdoor activity has the potential to diminish negative behaviors, reduce damage to private property and increase the physical health of our kids at a time when Alaska faces an adult obesity rate of 29.7%.

Park Deficiency: As confirmed by the Anchorage Parks Plan, East Anchorage is especially deficient in parks and recreational facilities. Adding a Skate Park amenity in the Russian Jack area will satisfy the needs of families the park's immediate vicinity, as well as East Anchorage as a whole.

Population Density: When the Anchorage 2020 Plan was being debated years ago, many East Anchorage residents and community councils were very concerned that it packed an inordinate amount of high density housing into neighborhoods on the East side of town.

With the addition of this high density housing came large numbers of new residents and apartment-style homes, many without yards or areas for families to recreate. Such development, compounded by

projected population growth in the district, has only intensified the need for designated outdoor recreation areas in East Anchorage, which this proposed Skate Park would help to provide.

Neighborhood Support: Area Community Councils and individual constituents have continually expressed support for a neighborhood skate park. These are families who live, work and play in the area and have a vested interest in ensuring their children grow up in a positive and active environment. Respectfully, their opinion should be given great weight.

Community Gathering: The Skate Park will provide a much-needed place for outdoor gathering in East Anchorage, while meeting a need often overlooked: space for teen recreation. As is evidenced by the massive success of the recently-opened Muldoon Farmers Market, East Anchorage residents are long overdue for centralized, family-friendly gathering places to congregate and build community.

For these reasons, I strongly support the Anchorage Park Foundation's valuable work to procure additional funds for this essential community project.

I thank you for your consideration of this issue and for the opportunity to comment. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Wielechowski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot above the letter 'i' in "Wielechowski".

Senator Bill Wielechowski

October 29, 2015

Municipality of Anchorage
Department of Health and Human Services
Public Health Initiatives and Partnerships Division
Community Safety and Development (CSD)
825 L Street, Room 506
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Municipality of Anchorage,

This letter is to voice the support of the Russian Jack Community Council for the incoming skate park at North Russian Jack Springs Park.

The council first passed a motion of support for this project on December 11th, 2013. During the motion, all council members voted in favor of the project and there were no objections. At that time the skate park was proposed to be located at 6th and Pine. The Russian Jack Community Council recognizes the value that this project will have on the neighborhood and supports the Anchorage Park Foundation in their pursuit of the 2016 CDBG Capital Improvement grant. We would like to further discuss the exact proposed location of the skate park at the Community Council meeting on November 11th as the location has slightly changed from the time when the motion was approved by the Council.

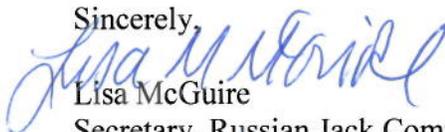
The CDBG grant would elevate this incoming project to new heights and add \$250,000 in community asset improvements to our underserved neighborhood. The incoming addition of a skate park at North Russian Jack Springs Park will inspire local youth to safely skateboard in a new, dedicated venue for their interests.

This skate park will create a greater sense of community not only for the Russian Jack neighborhood, but also Anchorage as a whole. Residents from other neighborhoods will feel motivated to visit our community once word spreads of a new skate venue and will quickly understand the asset that the skate park is to the neighborhood as well as the park in general in promoting healthy activities and lifestyle for residents.

The Russian Jack Community Council values what the Anchorage Park Foundation brings to our community. In 2013, APF renovated North Russian Jack Springs Park with a new playground that our residents have come to affectionately call the "Polar Bear Park". This playground has grown to become a neighborhood point of pride that continues to engage children and families in safe, creative, positive play.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lisa McGuire

Secretary, Russian Jack Community Council

Blue & Gold Boardshop
11124 Old Seward Hwy #700
Anchorage, AK. 99515

October 29, 2015

Municipality of Anchorage
Department of Health and Human Services
Public Health Initiatives and Partnership Division
Community Safety and Development (CSD)
825 L Street, Room 506
Anchorage, AK. 99501

To Whom it May Concern,

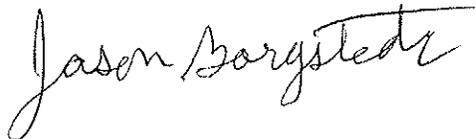
I am writing to you in reference to the 2016 CDBG Capital Improvement Grant of \$250,000 being considered for the Skate Park at North Russian Jack Springs Park. I have lived in Alaska since 1988 and have been skateboarding even longer. I grew up in Eagle River, riding a skateboard when ever possible. For more than a quarter of a century that little wooden toy has been a part of my life. The reason skateboarding has been so integral in my life is because it's more than an activity; it's a lifestyle. Skateboarding is a lifestyle that helped me develop as a person, teaching me principals I needed to be a confident and successful adult. Skateboarding taught me that it's ok to fail, over and over, and how to persevere. Skateboarding isn't easy. It takes repetition, determination, and can never be mastered as even the greatest skateboarders have room to learn new tricks. Decade after decade I put my energy and focus into the accomplishments attained by continual practice and self-analysis. Skateboarding kept me focused on goals rather than distractions. Skateboarding gave me a supportive community that allowed me the freedom to be myself and follow my dreams without judgment or ridicule. I share these personal affections for skateboarding to illustrate how amazing the sport is and how it changes lives. I share these points to help others understand the positive impact skateboarding has on youth culture.

Anchorage has a very supportive community that wants to look out for each other. We support local businesses, we create events that celebrate our unique lifestyle, and we encourage outdoor activity. Through all of our great accomplishments as Alaskans, we have neglected the skateboard community. We have outdoor facilities for every sport imaginable, across the city, and those facilities are permanent. We have yet to provide a sizeable, modern, permanent skateboard park for our youth. Skateboarding is exploding in popularity and skateboarders need a suitable facility to follow their passion. This grant would provide a monumental leap towards creating greater skateboarding facilities than what are currently available in

Anchorage. This grant will help provide a facility that will let the youth of Anchorage know that the city supports them and what they care about.

I write to you today, not only as a lifelong skateboarder and Alaskan, but also as an Anchorage small business owner. I know this skateboard park will be an incredible improvement over the current facilities as well as an improvement in the lives of our city's youth. Your grant will save lives.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Borgstede". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the top of the 'J'.

Jason Borgstede
Owner of Blue & Gold Boardshop
9076440907



Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska
Parks & Recreation Department

632 W. 6th Avenue, Suite 630
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519
Tel 907-343-4355

URL www.muni.org/departments/parks



PRC RES NO. 2016-10
Russian Jack Springs Park Skate Park

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, the *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan* recommends development of skate park facilities in order to increase the level of service, as Anchorage is currently less than half way to meeting our recommended facility needs (pg 32); and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department partnered with the Anchorage Park Foundation, the Russian Jack Community Council, stakeholders and skate boarders to assist in locating the skate park site and selecting a preferred concept design; and

WHEREAS, significant support for this project comes from multiple community and legislative sources including letters of support from Alaska State Senator Bill Wielechowski; Lisa McGuire, the Secretary of the Russian Jack Community Council; and Jason Borgstede, owner of Anchorage's Blue and Gold Boardshop; and

WHEREAS, on March 8th, 2016 the skate park site and conceptual design was approved by an unanimous vote of 12 to 0 in-favor for the Russian Jack Community Council; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the proposed design for the Russian Jack Springs Park skate park.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 14th day of April, 2016.

Chair
Parks and Recreation Commission

ATTEST:

John Rodda, Director
Parks & Recreation Department



PRIORITIES:

- *SAFETY
- *ACCESS
- *FUN

THESE PLANS PRESENT A GRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PRELIMINARY TECHNICAL INFORMATION TO HELP GUIDE THE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT OF THIS NEIGHBORHOOD PARK.



**EXAMPLE PROJECT:
Loretta French Skate
Park, Eagle River**





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SKATEPARKS**
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RUSSIAN JACK SKATEPARK
OPTION 2: BOWL FEATURE



SPOHN RANCH
SKATEPARKS

Russian Jack - Skatepark
conceptual design



SPOHN RANCH
SKATEPARKS

Russian Jack - Skatepark
conceptual design

Russian Jack Community Council

Meeting Highlights

March 9, 2016

21 present, including presenters

(important news and information is highlighted in yellow for your convenience)

Legislative Report

Senator Wielechowski:

- Gov. appointed Ivey Spohnholtz as Rep Gruenberg's replacement. Will start soon.
- Public input sessions regarding the force reduction of JBER
- Budget- House is voting on operating budget tomorrow, in Senate this Sat. and Monday. Both budgets have deep cut proposals.
- Voting on Medicaid reform bill on Friday – would save about 24 million then 100 million per year and possibly more. Sen. Wielechowski supports the bill and implements telehealth methods and efficiencies. Also includes several provisions on opioid restrictions which aims to decrease drug addiction.
- Crime bill is the other major piece of legislation legislature is working on right now. Estimated to save 440 million over 10 years. 65% of people incarcerated are non-violent offenders – this bill aims to address alternatives for these folks rather than continued incarceration.

Seng Hur for Rep. Tarr

- Tarr working on food waste bill and will participate in hosting the 2nd annual food security awareness week in partnership with many local organizations. On March 22, 2016 7pm-9pm at Anchorage Museum there will be a free and open to the public showing of a documentary of a couple who lived off of discarded food for 6 months.
- Oil and gas tax credit bill which could possibly save the state \$500 million dollars on an annual basis
- March 12, 2016 – neighborhood meeting, open to the public at boys and girls club in Mt. View. Free pizza!

Assembly Report, Pete Peterson

- Assembly introduced school district budget and public testimony will be during next assembly meeting
- Passed 2 marijuana ordinances regarding permitting and land use.
- Muni's new operating system SAP is up and running. Just got a contractor for \$650,000 to help bring the system to completion. Total project will end up costing \$71 million or so.
- Will be a tax cap initiative on municipal ballot next month which means the muni will need to somehow make up the difference.
- Cell tower ordinance presentation and public hearing will be at next assembly meeting.

Wonder Park

- End of third quarter already. Wonder park is growing in numbers of staff and students.

School Board Report

Kathleen Plunkett

- CIP is being submitted to Assembly soon, budget work to come
- The recent 7.1 earthquake resulted in some damage to some schools and the bonds that are on the ballot next month will include damage repair

School Bonds presentation

- Focus on maintenance and repair of what the ASD currently has, no new buildings or equipment
- Opportunity to vote on April 5th on the school bonds

Anchorage Tomorrow, Holly Stoke-Torez

- Promoting municipal bonds in April – Prop 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Total bond package is \$48 million dollars
- Includes road improvements, trails, fire services, and police services.

East Northern lights water line replacement- AWWU

- Two projects through CIP that are in design phase and will be completed within next few years; Rosemary/Arca street, and Northern lights project. AWWU is loan funded. Rosemary/Arca will begin in August and will continue into next year. Northern Lights project will be during summer.

Parks and Recreation- Maeve

- RJ skateboard park through park foundation and grants. Presented two options – street type and a bowl type
- Motion to support the development of a skateboard park in RJ park introduced by K. Plunkett, 2nd by Tammy/ 12 in favor, 0 opposed

Mt. View community plan

- Resolution to support the neighborhood community plan that was created by residents
- Fred moved to support, Sherry seconded it. 12 in favor, 0 opposed

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.