

AN EVALUATION OF AN URBAN RIVERFRONT PARK
RIVERFRONT PARK, SPOKANE, WASHINGTON
EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS FOR DESIGNERS

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Abstract

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The purpose of this thesis is through an evaluation of Spokane's Riverfront Park to learn how urban riverfront parks function, which should contribute to the improvement of design of future urban riverfront parks.

The thesis will include a literature review to build an understanding of the role and evolution of waterfronts, urban parks and the combination of waterfront parks in their surrounding cities. Further through a review of case studies of successful waterfront parks, the research will explore the general design experiences of waterfront parks.

Then the thesis will use Spokane's Riverfront Park as a case study to explore the changing roles of the riverfront in Spokane urban development, determining why it changed in order to find the cultural meanings of the riverfront to Spokane residents.

According to the knowledge gained from the literature review, review of case studies and the historical research of Spokane Riverfront, this research will identify the major factors related to the success of a riverfront park: cultural meaning, urban context, park layout and usage. This part of the research will concentrate on how these three aspects

can be applied to an analysis of the characteristics of the current Spokane's Riverfront Park.

Through analysis of the above features of the Spokane's Riverfront Park, this research endeavors to find the successful points of the present park design and identify the problems that need to improve or change. Design suggestions were given for the improvement of the park and its connection with downtown. General guidelines were also developed for designers working on riverfront projects.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Water is an innate and timeless attraction for mankind. People like to be close to water and to play with water. Also, people primarily rely on water for transportation and power. Early human settlements were directly tied to the location of navigable waters. As settlements were established and immigrants arrived, shoreline cities came into being. With technological innovations affecting air, land, water transportation and power generating, many cities' waterfronts deteriorated. Suburban development, which dominated the whole country during World War II, caused many central cities to decline. This accelerated the downtown waterfronts' desolation.

Over time waterfronts have been rediscovered, stemming mainly from urban renewal programs following World War II. Along with this rediscovery, public parks have played an important role in urbanization. Like the waterfront, the role of parks in urban life and the park usage, have changed with time.

People have found that parks at the waterfront function as an ideal recreational combination. The new trend is the reclamation of historical waterfronts from years of dereliction to mixed used development, including waterfront parks. Many cities have already successfully made this transition. The city of Spokane is one such example.

The scale and type of redevelopment of the waterfront varies from city to city due to the patterns of original development. Even so, the basic physical configuration and urban form of each waterfront should continue to respond to new and changing demands, while

attempting to maintain its heritage and preserve its natural features. Through studying established waterfront parks, we can learn basic design experiences and lessons.

My thesis studies Spokane's Riverfront Park to show the changing character of the waterfront and learn more about how the urban riverfront park functions. By studying the park, I conclude with suggestions regarding the best approach to improve Spokane's Riverfront Park in the future. The suggestions will be translated into guidelines for the renewal of Spokane Riverfront Park in particular, and urban riverfront park design in general.

Chapter 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The initial phase of the mythology was a literature review and a review of case studies of some successful waterfront parks. This was done to explore the history of waterfronts and public parks in general. The goal of this phase is to gain an understanding of the role of waterfronts, urban parks, and the combination of waterfront parks in the cities, and to draw the general design experiences from the waterfront park. The next step involved historic research exploring the history of the Spokane's Riverfront Park in particular and its relationship with the city.

The literature review, case studies, and the historical research of Spokane riverfront provided me with enough information to develop several criteria for evaluation of the Spokane's Riverfront Park. I applied this understanding to evaluate the current Riverfront Park in order to identify its successful points and explore problems that need to be improved or changed.

In evaluating the park, four methods of data collection were used. The methods were reviewing related documents, site visits, interviews with related city personnel, and surveys of users and non-users.

▪ *Reviewing Related Documents*

Sources found in the Spokane Parks Department and the city libraries included project files, newspaper articles, and public records. In the government web site www.spokanecity.org, there were also a lot of resources and data about the Spokane Riverfront Park. The data found included the histories of Spokane and the falls area,

citizens' responses and opinions about the 1974 proposal for a riverfront park, the master plan of the current park, a survey of current Spokane citizens about the park by the Spokane Parks Department, and the proposal for the future Park master plan and North Bank development. All these provided a foundation for better understanding the design goals and the uses of the park.

- *Site Visits*

Site visits provided a directly personal and subjective evaluation of the park. As a user of the park, I recorded what I felt when I was in the park. Is it easy to get to the park, which area of the park is more attractive or boring? Does the park have enough benches for people to rest and talk? Are the benches comfortable for sitting? I am sure that not everyone shares the same park experiences as I did, particularly if they are unlike in age, gender, and cultural background. Even so, my reaction to the park may explain the behaviors of others and help me better understand the park. My personal observations and experiences gave me clues to later detailed and objective data gathering methods, such as users' behaviors observations, interviews and questionnaires.

Site visits also provided good opportunities for observing the behaviors of the park users, such as what age group and gender used the park the most often? What are they doing in the park? Which areas are used often by visitors, and which areas almost have no people in them?

In order to gather the comprehensive data, I visited the park at least 10 times. My visits were at different seasons, autumn, winter and spring, and at different times of day, morning, lunch time, evening, night, weekday and weekend. On each visit I spent at least one hour observing.

- *Interviewing Related City Departments' Personnel*

Learning about the history of Spokane and the riverfront area, reviewing case studies of successful waterfront projects and my site visits to the Riverfront Park, helped me set the foundation for later more objective evaluation of the park in the form of interviews and a questionnaire. The background work helped identify what aspects and questions related to the park I wanted to ask and survey.

In order to get a broad overview of the park, I chose five Spokane City Departments to visit. I visited the Parks Department because it deals with the Riverfront Park directly, the City Planning Office because its work includes the whole city planning and especially the downtown area, the Centennial Trail Organization, a public not-for-profit organization that is very familiar with the river corridor and the Spokane Riverfront Park, the Downtown Spokane Partnership (business interests) and the Chamber of Commerce (business and tourism). People in each of these offices and organizations were asked the same set of open-ended questions, such as how would you characterize Spokane, how does Spokane Riverfront Park embody these characteristics, and specific questions related to each department (see Appendix A).

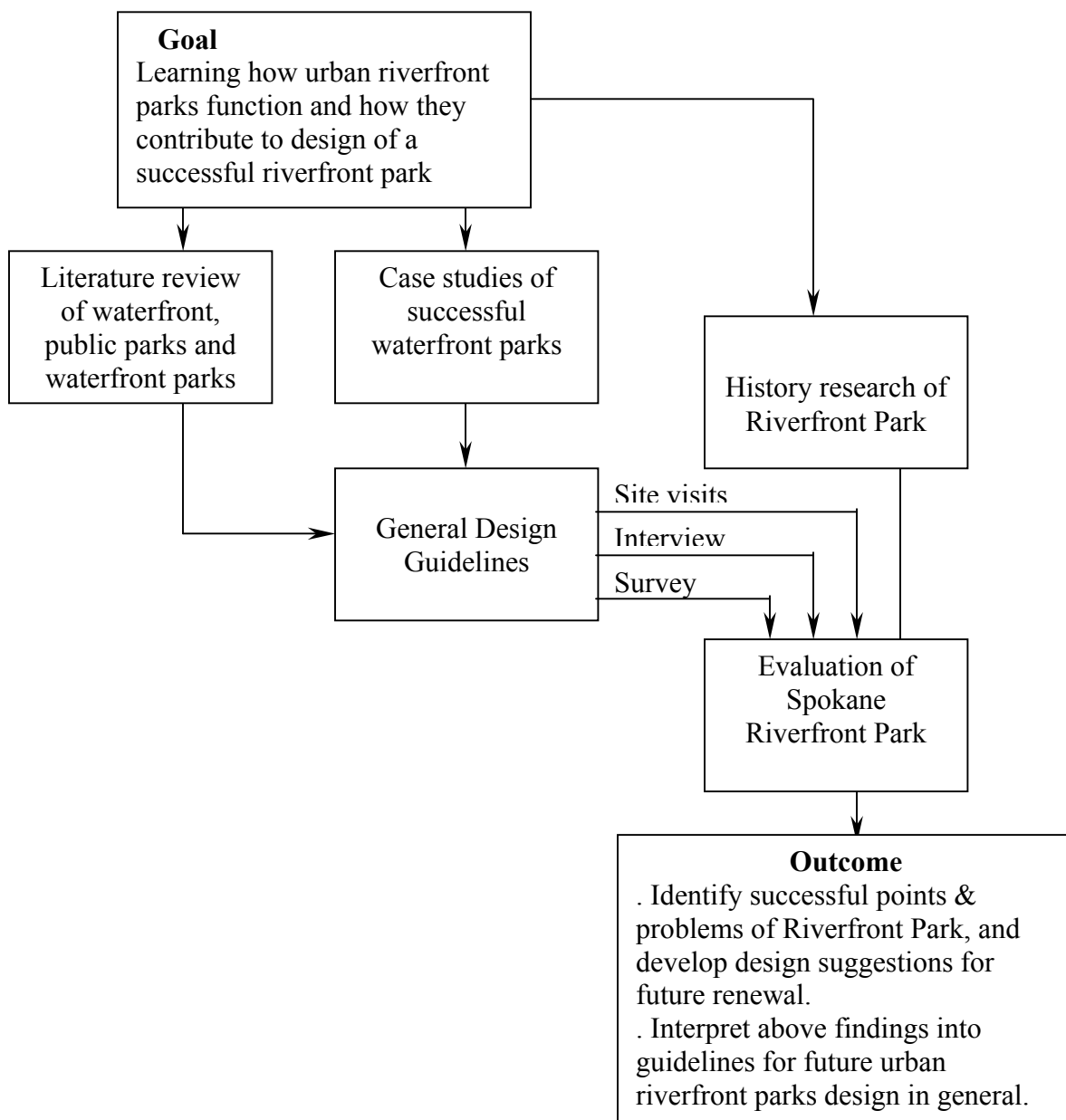
- *Questionnaires*

Responses from the various planning and business personnel were developed into a set of questions to be asked of park users and non-users. The survey of park users was implemented within the park area during two visits; one third of the questionnaires were on a weekday afternoon, and the others were on the weekend. The survey of non-users was implemented outside the park.; one third of the questionnaires were given to people in downtown, working or downtown for other purposes. The others were given to the

people shopping at Northtown Mall, who may not go to the park, or even the downtown very often. In all, 19 park users and 20 non-users were surveyed.

Lastly, according to the knowledge I received from all previous analysis, I will make suggestions of how to better use the Spokane’s Riverfront Park. I will also draw some design guidelines for similar riverfront park designs.

Diagrams of Methodology



Chapter 3

LITERATURE REVIEW AND

CASE STUDIES OF CURRENT SUCCESSFUL WATERFRONT PARKS

1. The Relationship of People and Waterfront
2. The Relationship of City and Waterfront
3. Public Parks
4. Current Waterfront Parks
5. Case Studies

1. THE RELATIONSHIP OF PEOPLE AND WATERFRONT

Water has an important place in people's lives. Water is the major constituent of living matter. From 50 to 90 percent of the weight of living organisms is water. It is also widely connected with public religious ceremonies. From ancient times to the present, the ceremonial use of water is found in many religions around the world. For example, water is blessed by a bishop or priest and prescribed for use in the liturgies of some Christian churches. Water, as one of nature's most essential resources is widely used by people to enliven places, offering people tranquil respite, diverting entertainment, or profound experiences.

Waterfront, the place connecting land with water, is an innate and timeless attraction for people. There are several dominant types of water features that are most attractive to human settlement: the seashore and riverfront. In most countries the land along the shoreline or river delta is developed earlier than the inland area.

The importance of water is found in various research projects. In Cultural And Developmental Comparisons of Landscape Perceptions And Preferences, Thomas R. Herzog divided the landscape into six perceptual categories: vegetation, open smooth, open coarse, rivers, agrarian and structure. The author compared several Australian subgroups (primary school students, secondary school students, college students, and adults) and American college students as test samples. By showing each group the slides of the six landscape categories, he found that both the Australian and American samples preferred rivers. It is evident from these findings that human are attracted to waterfronts.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP OF CITY AND WATERFRONT

The Role of Waterfronts in Cities

In many countries, such as China, England, Italy, and America, a great many cities or towns are built on water, along rivers or at their confluences, or on the edge of lakes and seas. The uniqueness of the sitting determines the waterfront's role. One characteristic of waterfront cities is that when arriving by boat, one enters "not on their periphery but in their center" (Kostof, 39). In most cases, the waterfront city growth has radiated from the waterfront. And the particularities of the site and the way the settlement meets the water, determined the form of the city. Aligning growth with a river is a common response. Also the landmarks on the skyline immediately behind the edge of the water form the most striking picture of a city.

The Evolution of American Urban Waterfront

Seventy percent of the 415 cities in the United States with a population over 50,000 and at least 30% of the 520 cities with a population between 25,000 and 50,000 are located on the edge of a river, lake, or ocean (Grist, 23: 215).

Historically waterfronts have changed in response to dynamic economic, technological influences and people's demands. It is important to know not only the role waterfront played in American cities, but also the evolution of the waterfront. The effective reuse of waterfront requires understanding the historical evolution of the waterfront in urban development. "It is significant because many of the incentives and constraints associated with contemporary development opportunities stems from changes occurring in the past" (Wrenn, 9).

In Urban Waterfront Development, Wrenn described a vivid typical pattern of American port development and identified them into four phases.

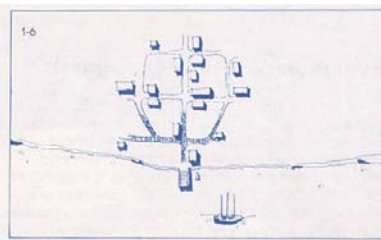


Fig. 1. Typical Pattern of Port Development, Phase one (Wrenn, 10).

▪ *Emergence of Waterfront Cities*

The early American settlement was directly tied to the location and accessibility of navigable waters.

Rivers, bays and the sea provided plenty. Also, the

movement of materials, products and people was primarily dependent on water transportation. As

settlements were established and European immigrants arrived, the colonial waterfronts were the doors to opportunity. A settlement's waterfront served to link the necessities of Europe with a familiar and predictable environment (Wrenn, 3).

The first prerequisite to establishing a port was the existence of a safe harbor suitable for cargo and passenger ships. At that point in its development, the waterfront was nothing more than a few trails converging at a jetty. The inhabitants had direct contact with the natural shoreline with few physical obstacles.

Initial development was followed by rapid growth. A larger pier was usually installed at this stage. Due to the limited transportation capability at that time, the settlement still clung to the waterfront with a shoreline road providing primary access.

▪ *Growth of Waterfronts*

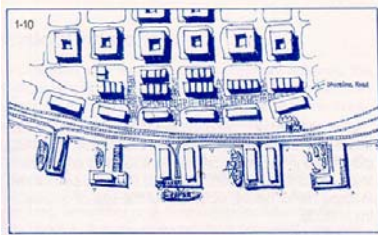


Fig. 2. Typical Pattern of Port Development, Phase two (Wrenn, 10).

Later, the settlement became a city and its waterfront emerged as a port. Maritime commerce stimulated urban development. The shoreline road became a busy street providing services, supplies, and office space. Typically, rows of warehouses blocked the water's edge from the

street. By spilling out into the water to expand docking and storage areas, the distance from the city's center to its shoreline was significantly extended.

The port continued to thrive and then the railroad appeared. More space was used to accommodate the need for the railroad. This change effectively severed the central city from the waterfront. As the process of expansion continued, the waterfront became increasingly congested and difficult to maneuver. As a result, the central city was further detached from the shoreline. Since 1930s, elevated highways and interstate freeways appeared. They were built near the shoreline, which limited people's access to the city. The original offices and stores along the old shoreline road were consequently converted to warehouses, which reduced the number of people working at the waterfront.

At this time, with the sacrifice of other land uses, transportation and industry become the only use of the waterfront. Waterfront thrived as the economic heart of the city. In the meantime, the waterfront environment deteriorated due to the industrial pollution. The water became dirty and the waterfront began to lose its natural attraction to many urban residents.

- *Deterioration of Waterfronts*

Containerization revolutionized the loading, offloading and transportation of cargo. The old port areas were too constricted for modern container ships and equipment to maneuver easily. With new ports developed outside the city, the old ports lost the role as

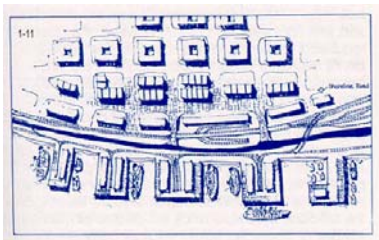


Fig. 3. Typical Pattern of Port Development, Phase three (Wrenn, 10).

the transportation and industry center. The construction of highways also largely changed the transportation patterns. People preferred the highways to railroads because of their freedom of choice. With fewer people took railroad traffic, the waterfront became even deteriorated.

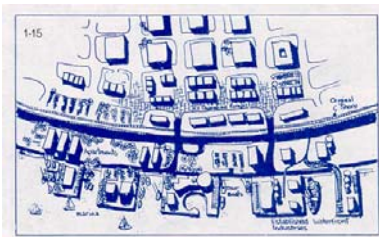


Fig. 4. Typical Pattern of Port Development, Phase four (Wrenn, 11).

Another factor that contributed to the waterfronts' demise was growing public concern over pollution. With the introduction of stricter air and water pollution controls, manufacturers began to leave the city. As a result, many ports fell into disuse and the railroads suffered. Railroad yards on the waterfront were neglected. The waterfront virtually became a dead, inaccessible and unsafe area, further separating the urban core from the water.

- *Rediscovery of Waterfronts*

Due to commercial failure of many ports, private developers and city governments discovered a relatively inexpensive supply of downtown waterfront land ripe for redevelopment. City officials saw the opportunity to earn more tax for the city. Private developers also saw the chance to increase the value of surrounding estates.

At the same time, people became more concerned about environmental and city health. In the 1960s, many Americans participated the environmental movement, which fought to change the conditions of man-made pollution, unchecked population growth, and the exploitation of natural resources. Locals wanted to recover the aesthetic scenery of the waterfront which had become polluted over the years. There came a chance to reconnect waterfront to the downtown area for public use. A blend of recreational, residential, and commercial uses was developed. In the meanwhile a new container port was established outside the city where space was plentiful (Wrenn 12).

It is obvious that each waterfront's character, scale and pace of change were uniquely tied to the character of each city, of course with some variance in the typical waterfront evolution pattern. One fact is common though, urban waterfronts dramatically changed due to the influence of social and technology factors. As a consequence, much more land has been returned to public use. One popular use for the waterfront was changing it into a public park for public use.

2. PUBLIC PARKS

As cities' waterfronts developed, so did their public parks. The public park is “an open space belonging to the public as of a right and provided with a variety of facilities

for the enjoyment of leisure” (Kostof, 165). This is a story linked to the industrial era. In America, extensive public park systems were first developed in New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, and elsewhere across the country by landscape architects such as Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), the Anglo-American Calvert Vaux (1824-1895) and later by the Olmsted Brothers-- John Charles (1852 – 1920) and Frederick, Jr. (1870 – 1957).

Following the ideal of the pastoral landscape with buildings subordinate to the overall landscape, the first model of a public park was usually located on the edge of a city. This large landscaped park was supposed to simulate nature or the countryside. But it was not supposed to be as wildly stimulating as nature. This pastoral landscape was conceptually between the wildness of pure nature and the finite and civilized nature of a city. Although the park allowed for both active and passive recreation, these parks were primarily appreciated for their beauty and serenity

However, because most of these parks were located on the edges of cities, the working class never got to use them. They were too far away, requiring an expensive transit ride to get there. These parks became a showplace and playground for rich people who liked to race their carriages.

Since 1858, Olmsted was commissioned to lay out Central Park, New York, public parks became moving toward the center of cities. With the provision of more easily accessed public parks, more people were able to pursue healthy activities for their limited leisure time contrasting greatly with the poor conditions of their working and home environments.

Today the need of parks is even more pertinent. The fast paced lifestyles of today create even more stressful situations than before. Today people feel the urgent need for parks to serve as places of beauty, recreation, relaxation and health.



Fig. 5 Freeway Park, Seattle, is a Roof Garden over Highway 5 (Tate, 17).

Unlike the old parks, which were mainly at the edge of city, today's parks and open spaces are located closer to where people live or work. Even in situations where open space is scarce – small spaces has been developed into parks: rooftop gardens of a building, under or over a freeway. With more parks in closer proximity to

residential houses or places of work, the public had easier access to the park than ever before. In urban areas with scarce land resources, the abandoned waterfront becomes a perfect place for parks. The waterfront, at the water's edge, usually has a rich visual texture, beautiful natural scenery, which is ideal and attractive for people to rest, socialize, and recreate. Also, because it is near the downtown, people who work in the downtown or spend time there can easily walk to the waterfront. Due to its central location in the city, the abandoned waterfront has the potential of becoming a centrally located stage for activities and programs. As a waterfront park, the renovated industrial site can become a place for celebration, a symbol of the city, a magnet -- attracting visitors living even far from the park or the city.

3. CURRENT WATERFRONT PARKS

Since the late 20th century, many American cities suffered from heavy pollution, poor services, and deteriorating housing, which caused many people moved out of the city to suburbs. This in turn accelerated the city's decentralization. After World War Two, people began to see the need to draw people back to the city core, a place for people communication and a civil pride. Revitalization of urban waterfront has emerged from a serial of program of revitalization that attracted tourists and gave new life to the downtown area.

Currently through out the United States, revitalization of urban waterfront in large or small cities is occurring. There is much literature describing waterfront development. In Waterfronts, Cities Reclaim Their Edge, Ann Breen and Dick Rigby described and analyzed prototypical examples of the wide variety of current urban waterfront transformations. In Urban Waterfront Development, Wrenn attempted to define the issues that have led to waterfront revitalization, and to recognize the legitimacy of conflicting interests, and to provide examples of waterfront developments that have been favorably received in their communities and the marketplace. In Urban Parks and Open Spaces, Alexander Garvin strengthened understanding of the value – economic, social, communal, environmental, and aesthetic – that urban parks and open spaces add to the cities and neighbors by analyzing 15 case studies. No single factor can be attributed to causing urban waterfront revitalization. It is “a combination of factors – shifts in use of waterfronts by industry and growth in demand for urban recreation, inner-city rejuvenation, and the development of shoreline management policies” (Muretta, 2).

In Waterfront Revitalization for Small Cities, Muretta defined seven elements needed to consider in waterfront planning.

- Land and Water Use. The land and water use element is a central element that will be used and managed in the future. It is closely tied to other elements – especially economic development, recreation, public access and circulation and parking. It determines the demands placed on the streets, utilities, parks, trails, and other public services the city provides.

- Urban Design and Aesthetics. Due to people’s fascination with water, waterfront areas give us a special pleasure. It is important to create a waterfront that is a unique built environment, where its image is attractive and memorable to visitors.

- Recreation. The waterfront is expected to provide recreation for everyone. It is important to decide inventory items to cover the present and future recreational demands, and resolve conflicts among various recreational user groups.

- Public Access. Easy public access is an important element. Without it, people cannot enjoy themselves and the landscape no matter how aesthetically the waterfront is designed. There are three interrelated aspects of access we need to consider: physical access to and along the water’s edge; visual access to the water from different viewpoints to help connect the community to its waterfront; and interpretive access, through programs and signs to create an understanding of and appreciation for the waterfront, its history, folklore, and its natural environment.

- Circulation and Parking. A well-used waterfront will intensify the surrounding streets, trails and parking facilities. The challenge is to create

pedestrian links across arterial auto streets to reconnect the waterfront with the downtown.

- **Historic and Cultural.** The meaning of waterfront is not only in landscaping or artwork; it is more in the mental and emotional associations that people have about the places. The historic buildings, vessels, places and events are all opportunities to conserve the area's heritage.

- **Environmental Quality.** Good environmental quality is the basis of economic development and recreation on the waterfront. We need not only safeguard the existing healthy environmental resources, but also restore the once degraded ones. (38-45).

4. CASE STUDIES

One of the most valuable results of the development of waterfront parks across America is the experience and lessons learned from these works.

The cases were selected through a set of criteria developed to meet the objective of my study. First, the sites are close to downtown areas and play important roles in the functioning of the city. Second, the study areas are big enough to form a city-scale park. Third, the waterfront areas mainly contain public open space providing potential of outdoor recreational uses. Last, each of the cases is considered successful waterfront development both by their users and design professionals.

An additional benefit of the selected case studies is the diversity of insights they provides this study. The Louisville, Kentucky Riverfront Park shows us how a good modern park contrasts with the old picturesque park, how to organize the park layout

according to its physical conditions, and what kinds of activities in the park are welcomed by both the local citizens and tourists. It is also a good example of how to increase both visual and physical access of the downtown to the riverfront. The case of St. Louis, Missouri riverfront is a good example of what riverfront parks need in order to be considered an integral part of the downtown area planning, how the waterfront park is a contiguous part of a thriving downtown and how to attract people's visual attention and then provide easy access to the riverfront park. The Toronto waterfront shows how a waterfront bolsters a city's image and economy, preserves the place's history, reflects the local culture and blends a mixture of land uses.

Louisville, Kentucky

Historically, Louisville owed its foundation and livelihood to the Ohio River. The city was founded at the falls of the Ohio. Over the years, as in many other waterfronts in America, the riverfront was severed from downtown by the railroad, industrial uses, and finally in 1972 the construction of the elevated Interstate Highway 64. To revitalize the riverfront, and reconnect it with the city, Hargreaves Associates was invited to design a dynamic park that flowed under the freeway.

The Hargreaves Associates design first solved the rift between downtown and water by sliding the sloping planes of lawns under the freeway, opening views from downtown to the river. By carving into the riverbank and giving the lawns a slope, the view from the city to the river is open, and one visually slides right under the freeway to the water.

Then an extensive program for the park was developed from public forums. Program elements included large gathering spaces for festivals, concerts, the docking of large

commercial riverboats, and children’s play and picnic areas. A very important element was a path along the river – just above water level, running the entire length of the park. It would connect to Louisville’s larger waterfront path system planned to extend through downtown and west of the city for seven miles.



Fig. 6 Overview of Louisville Riverfront Park (Calkins, 76).



Fig. 7 Louisville Riverfront Park (Calkins, 79).

The form of the park reveals the site’s natural and cultural processes. The river’s flood and drainage processes have been revealed by almost every space and form of the park, and they give the user a strong visual and perceptual relationship with the river. Also, the sloping planes and hard river edge reference the industrial occupation of the place, creating a strong contrast to the “natural” edge of the abutting areas.

Today, the programs in public parks are significantly different than what gave rise to the 19th century parks. Contrasting with the picturesque parks which were designed mainly in response to a passive program promoting “nature” and fresh air for health, the new park is heavily programmed for much more active space. The Great Lawn is the centerpiece of the park and is intended to be a symbolic reenactment of settlement on the Ohio’s shore. The lawn is well used by multiple groups as a major play space and an informal amphitheater. Stadium lights were placed around the lawn, extending the use into late evening.

The Wharf, designed as a wide open space for the landing of commercial riverboats and large events, is also an inclined plane sloping down to the water, giving people easy recreational access to the river.

The Festival Plaza, a gently sloping plane connecting the city to the wharf, is designed to be the most urban part of the park as it defines the westernmost edge adjacent to downtown. In order to accommodate huge events or festivals, the plaza is paved in decomposed granite, an appropriately soft and cool material, which helps mediate the plaza's vast size. Located between the Great Lawn and the Festival Plaza, the fountain creates a strong north-south axis from the city to the water, further reinforcing the connection to the river (Calkins, 74-83).



Gateway Mall and Arch Grounds, St. Louis

The success of downtown and the waterfront park are closely related in a symbiotic relationship. The design of the waterfront should be considered as part of the downtown area planning.

St. Louis city planning department recently created the Central Business District plan. It recommends streetscape improvements to support a connected walkable, safe public environment on downtown streets; to reuse historic buildings for office and retail; to infill residential units and other initiatives that would create a setting for living, working and playing at both downtown and the riverfront park.

A comprehensive Street and Streetscape Program is a primary program focus for the City of St. Louis Downtown Development Action Plan. This program will help create a vibrant urban streetscape where pedestrians are encouraged to gather and interact, providing street level activity.

The Gateway Mall and Arch Grounds district serve as the primary axis for the downtown. It acts as a pedestrian artery to provide a comfortable visual and physical walking environment connecting the riverfront to diversified downtown activity places – opera house, commercial area, transit center, and other parks.

The Gateway Arch, the landmark of the city, catches peoples’

Fig. 8. Gateway Mall is the Pedestrian Axis from Downtown to Riverfront (Boyd, 74).

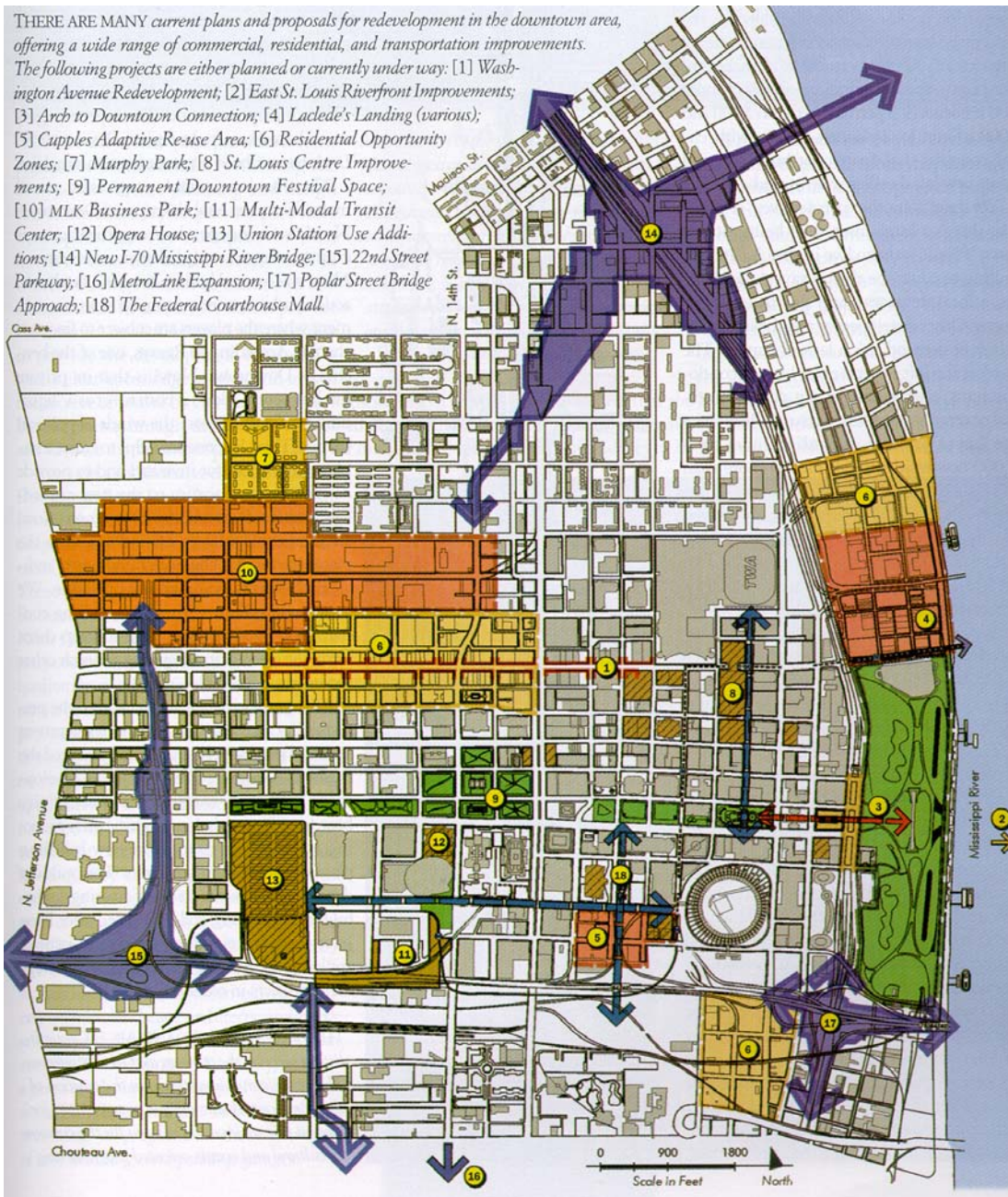


Fig. 9 St. Louis' Center Business District Planning (Boyd, 73).

eyes from all the corners of the city to attract and direct them to the river.

The key revitalization goals established for the Gateway Mall and Arch Grounds District build upon the prominence of this grand open space as the spine of Downtown St.

Louis from which the major streets, districts, and events are connected. The development programs are included:

- Physical improvements to the Gateway Mall are to include public art, comprehensive landscaping, regulating of the block edges on the entire length of the Gateway Mall, and increasing pedestrian amenities.
- 72 high-end residential units.
- A new cultural institution within the District.
- Daily programmed special events (Boyd, 72-75).

Toronto, Ontario

“Great cities dream great dreams. Great waterfronts make dreams come true” (Our Toronto Waterfront, 1). As Canada’s largest city, Toronto acts as a gateway to the nation for commerce, culture and tourism. In today’s global economy, the same cities are competing with each other to attract investment, source of employment and tourism dollars. Under this competition, Toronto’s 46-kilometer shoreline and adjacent lands are thriving with revitalization. The bidding for the 2008 Olympic Games has served as a catalyst for Toronto’s waterfront revitalization.

In Making Waves: Principles for Building Toronto's Waterfront, the report to be approved by City Council, four core principles will act as a framework for the renewal of the Central Waterfront:



Fig. 10. The Master Plan of Toronto Waterfront (Making Waves).

- *Easy Access.* The first objective of the revitalization is “Easy to get to, easy to get around.” Tourism is one of Toronto’s largest and most important industries. Tourist attractions help shape the city’s image to the world and boost economic development. Toronto as a world destination should link up with international transit connections. Travelers arriving from airports, Union Station or elsewhere will be able to easily find and make their way to the waterfront. Once at the waterfront, visitors will be able to get around easily and quickly. Visitors also need easy access to information to schedule their agendas. “Waterfront Welcome” will be a network of flexible and interactive computer-linked information kiosks that will be programmed to let the tourists and residents find out about the waterfront and what’s going on on any given day.

- *Culture Preservation.* The Toronto waterfront holds an important part of Toronto history. The renewal of the waterfront will ensure that tourists and local people alike learn about the important history of this area. This objective will be implemented by: interpretive display centers showing historic exhibition; plaques and signs marking heritage trails and sites; protecting and recognizing the heritage buildings and sites;

historical boat tours; expanding the heritage mural programs, and commemorating the historic route that the first settlers took into Toronto by bringing back streetcar, etc.

- *Recreation Activities.* “Animating the Waterfront” is also important. “Capitalizing on the marine location, recreation activities will include: swimming, fishing, boating, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, rowing, and beach activities. Winter activities will include skating, cross-country skiing and tobogganing. There will be recreational celebration; ice sculpture contests, ice gardens, fountains, a marathon bike race, kite-flying, golf and a craft market will all find homes on the waterfront. Band shells and open theatres will create new venues for the arts” (On Toronto Waterfront, 17). A lot of other cultural and art facilities, like Gibraltar Point Center for the Arts, the restored Lakeshore Assembly Hall, will also open on the waterfront. A new festival square in the central waterfront, with a capacity of up to 200,000 people, will serve as a venue for major festivals.

- *Mixed Use.* To make the waterfront alive, more people will be encouraged to live, work and play at the waterfront. The Toronto waterfront will create more local communities that offer a full range of affordable housing choices. Furthermore new accommodation for tourists, including hotels and inns will be located within easy walking distance of the waterfront.

The Toronto waterfront plan provides an example of how a big international city can re-energize its waterfront, build a spectacular gateway to the city and increase the city’s economy while still preserving its unique cultural history.

Chapter 4

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF SPOKANE'S RIVERFRONT PARK

We can learn a lot from successful waterfront projects. Each waterfront and its city has a unique history. How the park came to exist, how it grew, and what is included in it cannot be duplicated, but the sequence and results can guide the design or rehabilitation of existing waterfront parks. The case studies show that the ultimate success of any waterfront project is based on how responsive development is to the unique qualities that define that specific waterfront. From the literature review and case studies, three important categories were found that related to the unique characteristics of waterfront. They are the waterfront's history and culture, urban context, natural features and park layout.

A site's history reflects the cultural meaning of the waterfront and introduces ways the place evokes people's spiritual connection with it. Urban context guides the functions to be planned into the waterfront that take advantage of, or build upon the waterfronts' energies and activities, and acts as economic and social foundations of a successful waterfront. Natural features are the waterfront's physical and natural attributes that help to determine the waterfront park's layout and influence the activities that build on those in the greater local urban context.

Analysis of successful waterfront parks helps to identify the planning and design guidelines of new waterfront parks or the rehabilitation of existing urban waterfront parks. The guidelines help us identify appropriate detailed qualities, determine their values, and interpret our findings to the design. As shown above, the various aspects of a

waterfront's history, urban context, and natural features provide guidance to the design and layout of successful waterfront parks.

History & Culture

The urban waterfront is usually the birthplace of the city and has played an important role in the city's early development and prosperity. Over time the waterfront continues to hold a lot of the histories of its city. Through close review of the waterfront, we can learn about a city's beginning, growth, discontinuity, and flourish. Furthermore, the culture of the city and many local people's habits and memories originated from or are influenced by the waterfront. Though it is impossible to recreate the boom era of a city's waterfront, the implication of the rich history and culture generates memories from that era and provides interesting educational opportunities. Furthermore, the waterfront is an excellent place to show the city's unique historical and cultural moments which distinguish it from other cities.

Restoration and Adaptive Re-use A waterfront's historic and cultural resources vary depending on the location and age of the city. Fortunately some heritages are preserved at the waterfront. Vacant and underutilized structures provide a variety of redevelopment opportunities, such as restoration and adaptive re-use. This type of preservation aims not to just imitate the past, but to borrow from it and relate the past to the present. For example, the restoration of Pike Place Market in Seattle, Washington not only became a favorite attraction of the Seattle waterfront, but also gives the waterfront a unique composition of cultural characters. Another good example can be found at Union Wharf,

Boston, a granite warehouse built in the 1840s which has been converted to office condominiums.

Weaving Cultural Meanings into Landscape Details The waterfront that lacks physical evidence of its heritage, which could be used as restored, or adaptive re-use, still holds its promise to maintain its heritage. Often the local distinctive cultural characters can be found by carefully researching into the history of the waterfront. Findings are then woven into a creative and informative design. When Sasaki Associates was selected to design the Charleston, North Carolina’s waterfront, the city’s mayor took the design team on a five-hour “forced march” of the historic city. His purpose was to immerse them in the cultural fabric of Charleston – iron fences, cupolas, dormers, front doors, formal plantings of trees and intimate gardens (Landscape Architecture, 91: 41).

There are a lot of ways to illuminate a place’s history and culture through creative



Fig. 11 Iron Fence Reflecting Indian Tradition (Marcus, 59).

design. A few include running the waterfront trolley on underused tracks, choosing materials to reflect its historic settings, getting ideas from the local culture set back from the water and using them in landscape details, such as signs and fences. In Chase Palm Park on Santa Barbara’s waterfront, the artist used the traditional willow twig fences of the Chumash Indians, who once occupied this site, as the inspiration in creating the iron fence of a bridge (Marcus, 59).

Historic Related Programs The site design program phase of a project provides an excellent opportunity to recognize a place's history and culture. Toronto's waterfront planning program included: interpretive display centers showing historic exhibition; plaques and signs marking heritage trails and sites; protecting and recognizing the heritage buildings and sites; historical boat tours; expanding the heritage murals, and commemorating the historic route that the first settlers took into Toronto (Making Waves).

Interpretation of the local culture in the waterfront not only extends a place's history, but also demonstrates the city's connection to the waterfront, a link from the past to the present and then into the future. A city's waterfront is a place to show the city's exclusive image.

Urban Context

The urban waterfront and its city are closely related. A strong connection between the two areas builds upon and benefits the other.

Relating Waterfront Design to Downtown Planning The design of an urban waterfront must first be considered as a part of downtown planning. An example of this coordinated effort is found in St. Louis Central Business District (CBD) plan. The CBD plan of a city should clearly define the land uses and functions of the waterfront. Should the waterfront be recreational, commercial or historical in character or should it emphasize ecological preservation or a combination of one or more of them?

Establishing Waterfront Image Successful waterfronts build on a singular, easily identifiable image. It is noted that that image is drawn out of aspects of the places' historical, natural, or urban characters. The identification of one appropriate waterfront image helps to lead the direction of waterfront development. A strong dominant image also helps the users to more easily understand the waterfront's meaning, which in turn makes their visits comfortable, less confusing, and they are less likely to become lost. A successful waterfront image, such as that of the Toronto waterfront, also acts as a landmark of the city to attract tourists, investments and employment, which is a catalyst in developing the city's economy.

Public Access Public access to the park is a crucial element that needs much attention. Public access includes two aspects: visual access and physical access. It is important for people to see the waterfront from downtown. Views down the streets can inform people that there is a special place. A high landmark in the waterfront and night lighting are good ways to attract people and draw them to the park. It also services to orient people. The Gateway Arch at the St. Louis riverfront is a city landmark familiar to people across the nation, but also a landmark for people in all the corners of the city.

Seeing the waterfront needs to be complimented by being able to access it. Clear walking routes from the downtown area, from the adjacent neighborhoods, and from existing park systems to the waterfront all contribute to a good connection between the waterfront and its surroundings. Consideration should be given to enhancing public walking routes, bicycles, roller blades, and public transit systems. In St. Louis, the Multi-modal Transit Center is within a walkable distance of the waterfront and connects to it by

a friendly pedestrian environment. The Gateway Mall and Arch Grounds district serve as the primary axis of the downtown. It acts as a pedestrian artery to provide a comfortable visual and physical walking environment connecting the riverfront to diversified downtown activity places – opera house, commercial area, transit center, and other parks.

Though walking to the waterfront is encouraged, it is still necessary to include a convenient automobile connection and easy parking. Many Americans still prefer driving to walking.

Natural Features & Park Layout

There are two aspects that distinguish one urban waterfront from another: social aspect and natural features. The social aspect includes the history, culture, urban text, etc. The natural features of the waterfront includes multiple environmental characters of the waterfront, such as, water –river, sea, or lake, topography, climates, plantings, etc.

A successful park design relies on ingenious uses of the natural features. In this way, disturbance of the natural environment is minimized and the design creates a unique character of the waterfront while adding interest to it. In the Louisville Riverfront Park, many parts of the park reveal the flood and drainage processes and evidence of the power of the river gives the users a strong visual and perceptual relationship with the water.

Water Access People are fascinated with water and like to be intimate with it. Public access to the river takes advantage of these two traits. River access should accommodate different viewpoints both from outside the park and from within the park for people to appreciate the water. Bridges, boardwalks, lookouts along stairways are a few ways to

incorporate viewing platforms. Once people are by the water, they should find ways to access it directly. Natural banks or steps inclining into the water give people the chance to play with the water directly. Incorporation of a promenade or trail along the water attracts many people for walking, jogging and skating. Promenades and trails also encourage movement through the park and add action interest.

Water-related Activities “A waterfront that is alive with water-dependent activities is the basis for authenticity and an enjoyable experience. Adjacent industrial functions can offer interest and education to the visitors” (Torres, 37). Creating water-related and water-involved activities connect people to the water. Marinas, fishing activities, and restored historic factories bring interest to the waterfront. They are each unique to water and not likely found in other places.

Aesthetics Aesthetics, particularly the aesthetics of water, attract people. Take advantage of the waterfront’s water, greenery, and floral colors, to aid in experiences of excitement and of restfulness. The incorporation of art in the park design will also increase the park’s aesthetics. Well-designed fountains, sculptures, and murals that build on the place’s heritage contribute to a lively atmosphere. Artistic landscape elements, inspired from the local culture, can create a sense of community identity and ownership. There are many things that can be accomplished by the park logo, such as identification of the park’s boundaries, entrances, gateways, official features, and unifying graphic. A logo related to the park’s theme throughout the park could serve as an identifier of the park and be woven into the park details.

Wayfinding “Being lost can be terrifying. When people feel oriented and confident that they can find their way around, their eagerness to explore an area is increased” (Kaplan, 49). Wayfinding is made easier with having distinctive yet different elements. Such elements can be a specific object or place that serves as a landmark. Wayfinding features can be regions with clear functions (Kaplan, 50). A well-designed sign and map system will also help people remain oriented. Signs and maps punctuated with art enhance the park’s aesthetic image.

Diversified Activities and Experiences People’s urban life patterns have changed a lot with technological development, and so has their need for parks. People are no longer content with a picturesque park. Today parks should include diversified recreational activities and experiences. These activities and experiences should be varied depending on the waterfront park’s history, culture, land uses, functions and natural features. For example, in the Louisville Riverfront Park, which is mainly for recreational use, the activities included: large festivals, concerts, commercial riverboats, and a children’s play and picnic area. The Toronto waterfront, which is built on a mixed-used theme, provides recreational activities that are more diversified, such as swimming, fishing, boating, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, rowing, and beach activities. Winter activities include skating, cross-country skiing and tobogganing. The waterfront is celebrated with ice sculpture contests, ice gardens, fountains, a marathon bike race, kite-flying, golf and a craft market. Band shells and open theatres create new venues for the arts. Interpretive

display centers show historic exhibition. Historic boat tours will expand the heritage program (On Toronto Waterfront, 17).

Chapter 5

HISTORY OF THE STUDY AREA:

SPOKANE FALLS, AND THE PAST PLANNING PRACTICE

1. Native American
2. Industrial Period
3. Urban Renewal
4. Riverfront Park

1. NATIVE AMERICAN

Without the Spokane River, there would never have been the city of Spokane. The city was built on the river, and originally named after its most attractive feature — the falls. “Spokane” according to the language of the native America tribe who lived along Spokane River, means Children of the Sun.

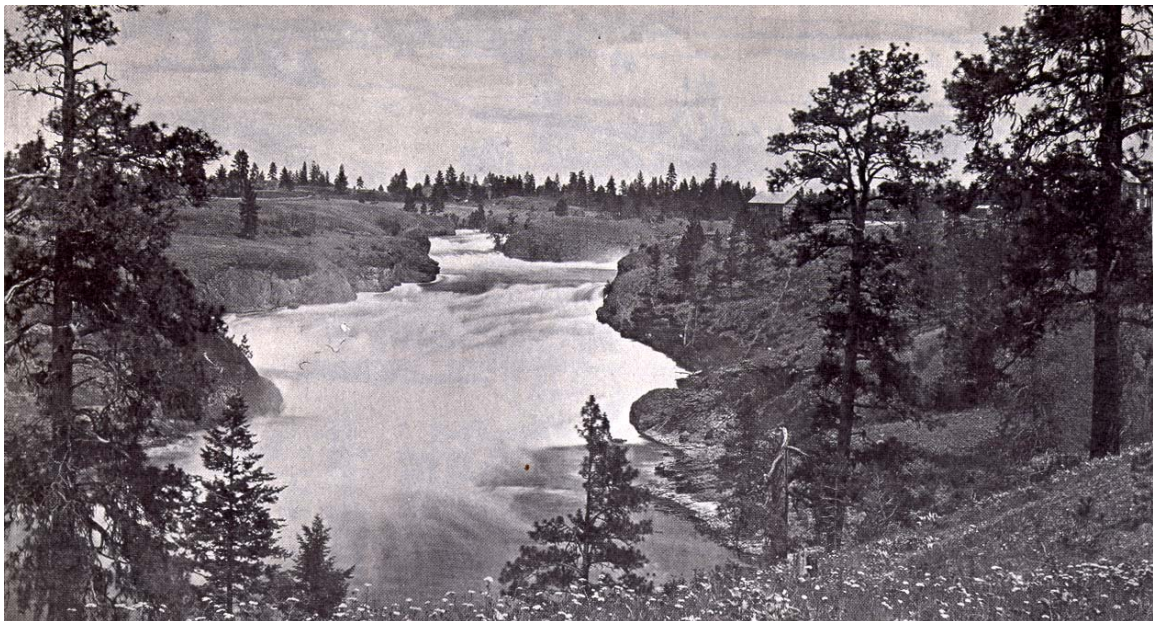


Fig. 12. Spokane River's Natural Falls in 1873 (Kalez, 10).

We can still learn about the beauty of the Spokane River and Spokane Falls from cherished pictures or memoirs. James Glover, who is known as the “Father of Spokane,” says of the river, “I gave myself completely over to admiration and wonder at the beautiful, clear stream that was pouring into the kettle and over the falls” (Youngs, 3). Carrie Adell Strahore, who wrote the classic account of the western frontier Fifteen Thousand Miles by Stage, recalled her reaction to the Spokane River: “We stood on the banks of the beautiful river and saw its wonderful falls with the magnificent valley, its rich bunchgrass carpet then yellow as gold in its autumn garb.” “The park-like openings among the pines impressed us as one of the most picturesque in America” (Youngs, 30).

It was the Native Americans who first discovered Spokane Falls. The turbulent waters were a source of life. Each year thousands of salmon, headed inland from the Pacific Ocean, up the Columbia River and then into the Spokane. At the falls they could go no further. It was there that Spokane Indians reaped an annual harvest.

The life of the Spokane Indians relied on the rich resources from the river. In spring, the Indians would go into their traditional fields to harvest the spring plants. In summer, they gathered by the river to fish for the salmon. In autumn they once again scattered to the hills to pick berries. In winter, they hunted deer, bear, and other game.

The Indians cared about the river and the natural resources near its banks. They lived on the land for thousands of years without destroying the natural systems. The Indians never over-harvested and they employed many techniques for keeping the natural resources productive. As we look back at the human history with nature, we will wonder whether this is the only way that humans can be harmonious with nature.

2. INDUSTRIAL PERIOD

A Town Growing Up

In Spokane, according to Carrie Strahore, “the vast grainland empire stretching to the southeast and southwest, the wonderful mines opening up nearby on the east, the ample forest, and the possibilities for power, the majesty of the situation made Pard, her husband, declare, ‘Here will be the greatest inland city of the whole Northwest’” (Youngs, 30). After missionaries first discovered the inland northwest near the end of the Civil War, tens of thousands of people – in the eastern part of America, or other European countries – were hearing about the American West. Attracted by the rich natural resources, they began to try their fates in this land.

People naturally settled around Spokane Falls. The reason was simple. The waterfalls meant waterpower; power meant manufacturing; and manufacturing meant money. In 1877, the first flourmill was built on the bank of Spokane Falls. Soon came many more sizable mills. Unlike the Indians who preceded them, European settlers brought along a culture that viewed the land as a resource to be used. They tended to transform nature into discrete bundles of commodities. The Spokane Falls Chronicle expressed a widely held belief when it predicted that harnessing the river would lead the city to greatness: “We have a magnificent waterpower; the only kind of power that is exactly suitable for grinding flour... Spokane Falls is destined to be one of the greatest milling cities in America.” By the mid-1880s, farmers, driving big freight wagons drawn by four or six horses, came from as far as Waterville, near the Cascade Mountains, to grind their grain in Spokane. And during the mid-1890s their production rose to two thousand barrels per

day (Youngs, 33). Beside the mills, dams were also built across the Spokane Falls to generate electricity. Soon electric lamps illuminated Spokane nights.

The farmers who came to the mills to buy or process flour also came for wood and bought other products from the local stores. The men who made money in these transactions would need a secure place to deposit their money, hence came the bank. And of course, contract and dispute involving these pioneers would provide work for the lawyers. Finally, a small village rose as a town, and the town became a city.

With the new city growing up, tracks reached Spokane Falls from the west in June of 1881. Suddenly the town was linked to the modern world. The railroad encouraged the rapid settlement of Spokane Falls. Also the town received another boost with the development of mining in the nearby Coeur d'Alene region. Thousands of miners bought supplies in the city, worked in the mines, and returned to Spokane for entertainment and winter lodging. New railroad lines connected the mines to Spokane. By 1890, Spokane Falls was a major railroad center. In order to extend the rail lines, land in and around Spokane Falls was contoured to meet the needs of trains. Forest and rock formations were removed, and the low land was filled (Youngs, 36).

At this time, Spokane was growing at an amazing speed. In 1878, Spokane boasted 100 citizens; in 1880 that figure had risen to 350. By 1883 when the railroad arrived, the population was 1,500. It rose to 20,000 in 1889, and 104,000 in 1910. With more people attracted to Spokane, its natural environment quickly gave way to an urban landscape (Youngs, 45).

In 1890, Spokane Falls was a new world, totally different from what the Indians had known long before the settlers came to Spokane: bridges spanned the river; tracks ran

right beside the falls; flumes pushed into the current, diverting the water into flour mills; sawmills, and hydro-electric plants; trees were cut back to make ways for building; fill dirt had eliminated at least one of the river channels; piles of lumber lay along the shore. Spokane people at that time were celebrating this change. They thought the essence of the falls was neither food nor grandeur, but power to drive mills and illuminate lamps; they thought the change was a proof of “man’s triumph over nature” (Youngs, 67).

The City Thrived

Downtown and the railroad were the most alive in the 1930s and 1940s. The downtown at that time was the center of the people’s lives. The city was tied together with an extensive web of trolley lines, ending at downtown. Memories of Spokane during the 1930s and 1940s reveal a multitude of activities, all centered on downtown. A Spokane family living in Browne’s Addition or on South Hill would ride the trolley downtown to buy food. Along Main Street there were fruit and vegetable stands, bakeries, meat markets, and seafood stores. The Farmer’s Market was on Wall Street, between Main and Trent, across from old city hall. Downtown was also a place to dance, drink and play. A sense of safety added to the appeal of going downtown. People were not afraid of downtown at night. They often came home at midnight (Youngs, 97).

The transportation center of downtown was by the tracks on Havermale Island and along Trent Avenue where the train halted to load and unload passengers and freight. The old railroad station is still in the memory of many elder Spokane residents. According to Tom Foley, one Spokane elder, “In those days I wanted to get down to the station as early as possible.” The Great Northern Station had “high ceilings and oak benches”(Youngs,

97). It was a big experience for a kid to watch the train coming. The rail station was a big part of people's lives. The railroad transported Spokane people to the outside world, and also to the resort places around Spokane. For example, on Sundays and holidays through the summer as many as twenty trains a day were scheduled for the Liberty Lake run (Kalez, 105).

With the city growing, the position of the Spokane River in the city had also changed. In the early days, the city and the river were closely connected. Downtown was along the Spokane Falls. The city's first big hotel, the California, actually overlooked the river. But decades later, the downtown core stood several blocks away from the river. Spokane's premier hotel, the Davenport, was located four blocks from the falls. Even on Trent



Avenue, you could forget the falls. You only saw a forest of iron girders – hundreds of them – supporting the Union Pacific tracks and “sheltering” the polluted Spokane River. The tracks separated the city from the river (Youngs, 106).

Fig. 13. Havermale Island in 1961 (Bowers, 16).

City Declining

After the Second World War, downtown Spokane slowly lost its exclusive position. Automobiles and better roads prompted people to live in the suburbs and shop at shopping centers outside the central city. With fewer people visiting downtown, city businesses also went down, which contributed to even less foot traffic. People felt that a downtown with fewer people was no longer safe. Around the Spokane Falls, the flourmills or lumber factories also disappeared with changes in industry. The once flourishing railroad, with only ten or twenty passengers a day, soon became obsolete. The riverfront area was essentially deserted by people, leaving the huge remaining unused tracks to sever the city from the river.

“City Beautiful” Movement

During the rapid urbanization of many American cities, there were a few people with foresight who saw the flaws of the maxim, “man’s triumph over nature.” They tried to improve the living conditions in cities. After the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which featured a planned “White City” that stood in vivid contrast to the dirt and mess of most urban settlement, a new movement came across the American cities -- City Beautiful. This movement emphasized municipal grandeur and handsome new public buildings, park systems, and main thoroughfares. Influenced by the movement, New York built the first public park-- Central Park. Chicago then implemented its city plan and preserved the lakeshore as public parks. By 1990 cities across America were

exploring a variety of ways to create more attractive streets and parks. Spokane was one of those cities.

The Spokane park board was established in 1907. The board's goal was to establish a park within ten or fifteen minutes' walk of every home in Spokane. They bought as much park land as they could and invited the renowned Olmsted Brothers of Boston to help design Spokane's park system (Youngs, 89). In the Olmsted Brothers' report, they recommended establishing four large parks, including "Gorge Park" centered on Spokane Falls. They also suggested that the city should build ornamental squares, plant trees beside streets, and create better street lighting. "The passenger and freight train, once so beloved by the city, was a nuisance, according to Olmsteds. Freight cars should be routed around the city, not straight through the middle, and freight yards should be moved out of the center of town" (Young, 90).

The Olmsteds were especially enthusiastic about the Spokane's falls. In their report, they wrote: "Nothing is so firmly impressed on the mind of the visitor to Spokane, as regards its appearance, as the great gorge into which the river falls near the center of the city. It is a tremendous feature of the landscape and one which is rarer in a large city than river, lake, bay, or mountain. Any city should prize and preserve its great landscape features, inasmuch as they give it individuality" (Youngs, 90).

Certainly the Olmsteds' plan of the park along the Spokane Falls went too advance from the people's sights at that time. The commercial value of the land around the falls overwhelmed the plan. Though the plan of the "Gorge Park" was not realized at that time, it ignited the idea of open space and paved the foundation for future park development.

3. URBAN RENEWAL

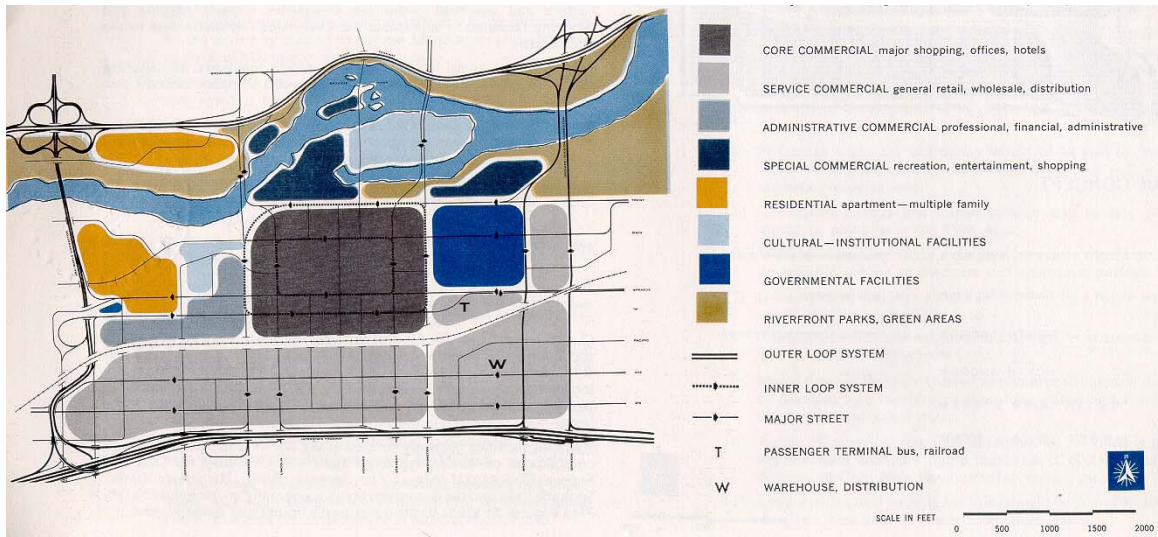


Fig. 14. Spokane Center Business District Planning, 1961 (10).

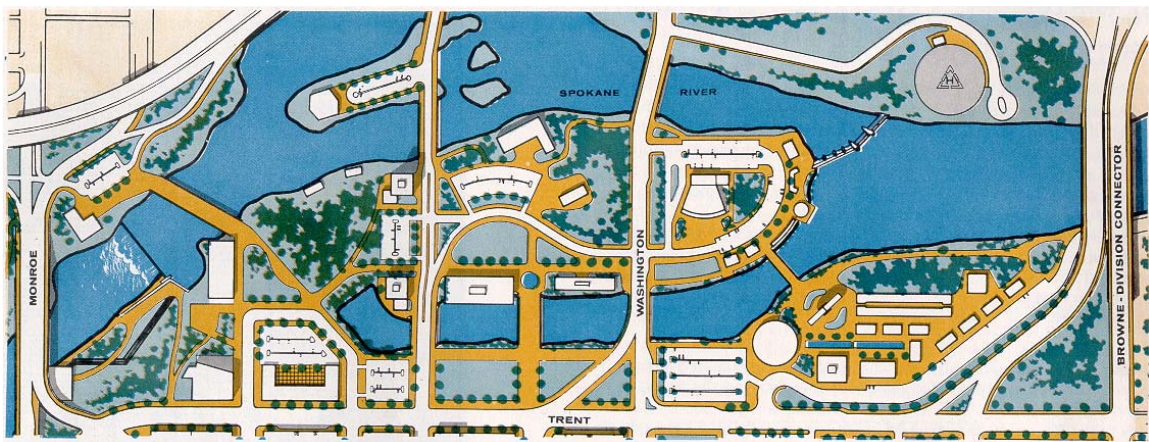


Fig. 15. The Riverfront Master Plan in 1961 Report (23).

A city’s vitality depends upon its heart functioning efficiently. The heart of a city is its downtown. After more and more companies and retailers moved out of downtown Spokane, city officials felt the urgent need to renew the downtown area. A comprehensive report Spokane, A Summary Report On A Plan For Central Business District Development was completed in June 1961, providing an analysis of the downtown condition. “The Central Business District (CBD) occupies an area of

approximately 400 acres. About 40 percent of this total is devoted to buildings. A similar amount is used for streets. Railroad facilities occupy over 10 percent of the area, while the remaining 10 percent is divided about equally between off-street parking use and vacant land. The CBD's core consists of 75 acres and contains downtown Spokane's major shopping, office and hotel facilities (8). "Approximately 60 percent of all automotive trips in Spokane travel to, from, or through the CBD. Five of a total of six major north-south crossings of the Spokane River are located in the CBD." "About 25 percent of all trips passing through the CBD have no specific purpose for being in the downtown area. This is a major reasons for CBD traffic congestion." "Four major transcontinental railroads and their affiliates serve Spokane. All these lines operate through the CBD on three separate right-of-ways." "Daily passenger train traffic through Spokane has declined from 32 in 1948 to 22 in 1958. Recent changes and requests for discontinuance of service will reduce this further" (9). The report specified the Spokane planning objectives including the following:

- To recapture the beauty which is inherent in downtown Spokane's setting by making its natural advantages an integral part of the CBD Development Plan design.
- To provide convenient and attractive open space and walkways in areas where pedestrian traffic predominates.
- To encourage consolidation of railroad facilities on a single right-of-way within the CBD and return land presently used by these facilities to uses more compatible with the long-range development of the district (10).

The first planning principle was: “The Spokane River, Havermale Island, Spokane Falls and the topography of the downtown area should be recognized as special CBD development features” (10).

From the 1961 report, we can see that Spokane’s attitude towards the Spokane River had changed completely. The commercial value still played a key factor in the change, but the Spokane Falls area had no value as an industrial or transportation land use. They realized that returning the river to its natural conditions would improve the downtown physical environment, then attract more customers to the downtown and increase the surrounding land values. If the Spokane Falls area could still earn a lot of money as industrial land, would the city still decide to recover the natural amenities of the river? Nevertheless, it was time that Spokane people envisioned the river connected with the downtown areas again.

The 1961 report had also expressed concern about the influence of the automobile. People missed the pedestrian environment and public transportation of the 1930s when downtown thrived. One of the proposed planning principles proposed “convenient central bus transit pick-up and loading points should be provided in the Core Area” (10).

In the report’s design concept, the CBD was divided into five areas. “The Core Area will contain major retail, office, hotel, entertainment and restaurant facilities more oriented to the pedestrian shopper and business man than to the driver” (11). And four anchor areas were around the Core Area: an Apartment-Administrative Center for high-density downtown apartment and low-rise office development; a Governmental Center providing space for City, County, State, and Federal offices; a Service Commercial Area for city center service, wholesale, thoroughfare commercial and driver oriented shops and

business; a culture center for downtown cultural and institutional facilities on Havermale Island (11).

The riverfront area was designed as a cultural center that could be seen and appreciated by large numbers of people. A lot of public and semi-public buildings, facilities and activity areas were designed in the area. The plan allowed the public to access and appreciate the river easily and added a lot of recreational and cultural uses for different age groups. But the buildings occupied a larger area than open green space. Cars could still cross Havermale Island. There were still a greater number of the manmade elements as compared to its natural elements. Each one of these facilities was a good idea individually, but when they were combined, the riverfront ended up being covered by buildings. As the name of the report implied, it was more a cultural center than a park. This did not take full advantage of the natural features.

The report proposed a lot of good ideas within the downtown renewal plan. Most of its objectives and principles are still applicable today, especially the ideas of curtailing the railroad and joining the Riverfront Area with the CBD. This was a major proposal in Spokane's city plan, yet it also had some shortcomings. One of the main problems was in how the resulting plan would separate land uses. For each parcel of land there was only one land use. Even in the cultural area, there were a lot of single use buildings such as a recreation-craft building, a Senior Citizen's building area and a Children's Center building and facilities.

The report in 1961 was imaginative. But the translation from vision to reality would be difficult. Early efforts to secure public funding failed; a few proposals came to fruition, but others lagged behind (Youngs, 120). Still, it gave people a good vision of the

potential beauty of downtown and encouraged people to work toward it. Many of its ideas eventually came into being.

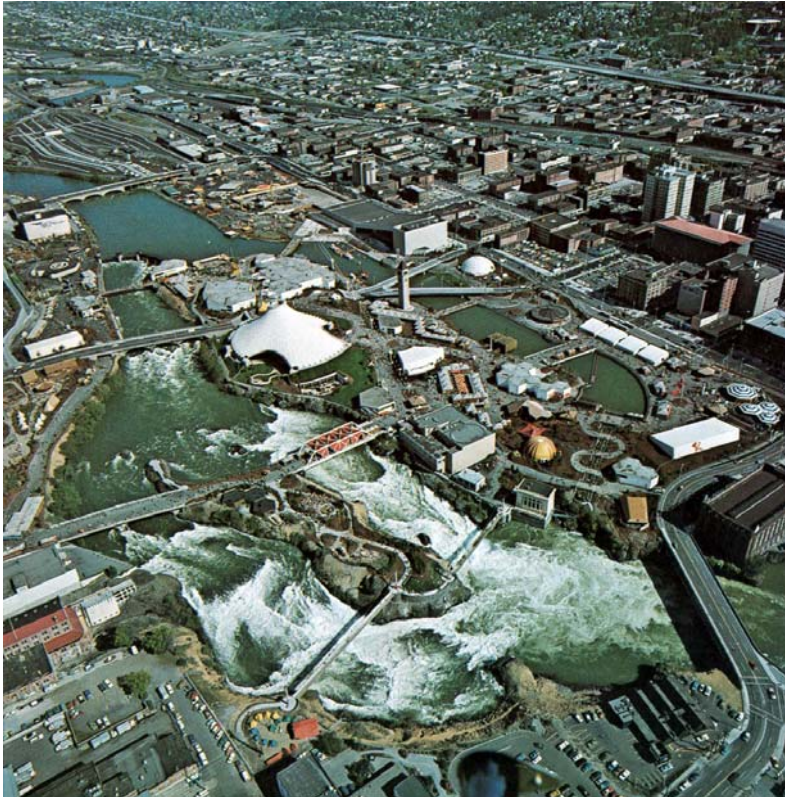


Fig. 16. Spokane's Expo' 74 (Bowers, 32).

World Exposition, 1974

By the mid-1960s, the banks of the falls were a massive accumulation of bridges, trestles, buildings, and parking lots. The river was like an open sewer passing through the city center. The idea of restoring Spokane's downtown and especially the riverfront was strongly

held by the city's residents. But how to implement the idea was a big problem. What Spokane needed was a dramatic change in downtown, something to stimulate outside funding.

The opportunity for that funding came in the form of The World Exposition 1974, the year Spokane would celebrate its 100th birthday. The theme of this Expo is Environmental. They chose the riverfront as the Expo's site, because it was the place that embodied its Environmental theme. It also was the place that was in most need of a

change and most difficult to implement the change. The city officials wanted to use Expo as a stimulus to accelerate downtown renewal.

Four dams were immediately removed on the Spokane River, leaving the river in a natural state (Youngs, 278). Also procedures to clean up the river's pollution were implemented (Youngs, 285). As for the exposition site, the riverfront, the objective was to design an exposition that would revert to a park after the fair. The new fair site would serve "as a foundation for others to build upon for the next fifty years" (Youngs, 298).

Another big question in the Expo's construction process was how to treat the historical buildings and tracks along the river. One historical landmark by the falls, an old mill – "The Flour Mill"-- the only survivor of the many mills that had once flanked the river, survived the changes of the Expo. The building was transformed into modern offices, restaurants, and shops.

The railroad station met another fate. "The Great Northern Depot was described as one of the finest examples of railroad architecture in the United States" (Youngs, 304). Though most citizens were enthusiastic about the new park, many still wanted to keep the depot. A debate began over the fate of the station. Albert Culverwell, the director of Cheney Cowles Museum, expressed another view against retaining the station. He thought that the river itself was important esthetically and historically. The Falls attracted the first people here. The railroads came afterward and brought an increase in city population. It is very important to recognize what brought many people here in the first place. In losing the railroad depot, the city gained fuller access to its essential resource -- the river (Youngs, 305). At last, the depot ballot measure resulted in a defeat for the

station's preservation. As a concession to history, only the old Great Northern clock tower remained.

The city's residents had withstood the messy and desolated riverfront too long. They were enthusiastic about a change that would improve the degraded riverfront and welcome a new look. When looking at this period, it is a pity that Spokane lost its cherished building. The station was not just an "old" building. It was a landmark that reminded people of good times downtown and reflected a part of Spokane's history. If the ballot happened a few years later, when historical preservation was getting greater support in Spokane and throughout America, the delicate depot might have been preserved (Youngs, 309).

Expo '74 was a great a success in Spokane. During that summer, Expo drew roughly 35,000 visitors per day (Youngs, 503). One Spokane citizen who had worked in the Australian Pavilion remembered that "You could walk around downtown and there were things to do. And the stores would be open, and people would be shopping and coming in and out of the park, and it was all well lit, bright, and just – you know – fun. I went down there to take the bus when I got off at night, and I had no qualms about being down there because there were so many people, and it was always like a big party" (Youngs, 527).

4. RIVERFRONT PARK

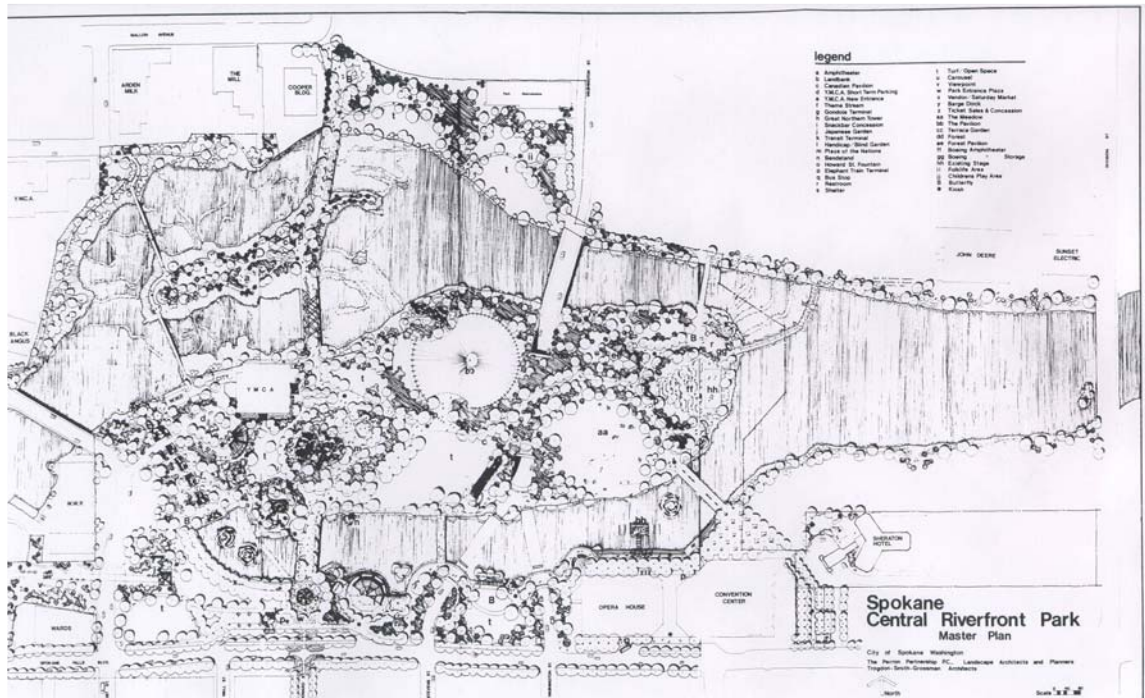


Fig. 17. Spokane Riverfront Park Master Plan in 1975 (Spokane Central Riverfront Park).

Citizens' Attitude

After the Expo, Spokane citizens were busy transforming the Expo site into Riverfront Park. They actively expressed their thoughts and participated in the park plan. We can learn a lot about the citizens' attitude toward the park through the local newspapers at that time, like the Spokesman Review.

- *Activities Center of Spokane.* People wanted the park to keep the heart of the city pulsating. With the ingredients of land, water and location, the park was expected to be an activities center for the city. People did not need another Manito Park downtown. They had used the site as an activity center for Expo, and they wanted their future park to keep this function, a place where all ages could get together, meet friends, participate.

Also, the city needed to regain the convention and tourist attraction that Expo had been. The planners saw that the park could continue in this role.

- *Blend of Uses.* People felt the perfect park would be a blend of passive and active uses. They wanted a person to be able to stand and look at the falls and feed the ducks. There should also be areas of cultural and physical activities to let people have fun.

- *Combination Favored.* People thought that the park should be a combination of commercial and open-space center, with the city controlling the development by concessionaires under lease. They did not want the park to be an added tax burden on Spokane residents.

- *Housing Inadequate.* People also felt that the downtown housing for all income levels was weak – there was not enough both in number and in quality.

Park Layout

Riverfront Park was officially opened on June 3, 1978. Some of the Expo facilities were retained, such as the U.S. Pavilion, the gondola ride, two decoration butterflies, the amphitheatres, existing bridges, and a number of other items. The new park focused a concentration of activities in the U.S. Pavilion and along Spokane Falls Boulevard in the vicinity of the Carrousel Building. The remainder of the park was more picturesque in appearance. The 100 acres of park with its meadows and bowls, gently rolling hills, lush lawns and greenery, footpaths, natural amphitheatres, flowing river and cascading waterfalls provided a beautiful natural environment. Other entertainment facilities included:

- The Spokane Opera House and Convention Center are sites for many consumer shows, performances and events throughout the year. The Opera House today is proud to present its annual "Best of Broadway" series, the Spokane Symphony Orchestra and a host of internationally acclaimed performers. The Convention Center and Ag Trade Center is often the site of exhibitions and trade shows.

- The park's Boeing Amphitheatre, which accommodates audiences of 3000-plus, was the scene of choral and symphony concerts, plays, music and dance. Similar attractions were also accommodated on the Floating Stage. The large concrete steps and lawn area across the river can accommodate over five thousand people.

- Lunchtime concerts at the Clock tower, a unique showcase for soloists and small ensembles would be a regular and popular feature during warm weather.

- The city's prized possession, the Loeff Carrousel, was completely restored and moved from the closed Spokane Natatorium Park to Riverfront Park. This 1909 antique, comprised of 54 hand-carved horses, is included on the National Historic Registry, and is a joyful piece of Spokane's past that continues to delight people of all ages.

- Ride Over The Falls, a breathtaking aerial ride over the river, provided one of the most spectacular views in the area.

- Model boats and canoe races on the river offered other pleasant and exciting diversions.

- The Spokane Story, Imax Theatre, Ice Palace, Pet Palace, Galleria and Gunsmoke Gallery, were all located in the Pavilion.

- The YMCA was built before Expo '74 and served as the administration center for Expo during its run. It then resumed its YMCA function after Expo.

Another attribute of this park design that successfully solved the traffic problem was the channeling of the main traffic to the two sides of the park on Division and Monroe Street. The only auto-oriented street running across the park, Washington Street, goes under the park by way of a tunnel. The plan changed Howard Street into a pedestrian street at the park section. With these solutions, the park was integrated together as a whole. People could enjoy the pedestrian oriented park without the interruption of cars.

Surrounding Municipal Facilities

Years after the opening of the park, new features were added. Spokane River Centennial Trail was constructed along the Spokane River. People could appreciate the river scenery and animal life while running, walking, and cycling. The trail, which is still being constructed, is a 39-mile long path, up to 12 feet wide. It is closed to all motorized traffic and begins at the confluence of the Spokane and Little Spokane Rivers and ends in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Also, there were some city-scale projects built around the park. By 1961, the Spokane Public Library had outgrown the downtown Carnegie Building. A Spokane foundation purchased a store that occupied the site of the current downtown library, which is next to the southwest corner of the Spokane Riverfront Park, and donated it to the City of Spokane for use as a main library ([Library History and Administration](#)).

After 1975, the Spokane City Hall relocated from the south side of the park to the west side of the park in what used to be the Montgomery Wards, a retail store.

The Spokane Arena which opened in September 1995, provides a magnificent new facility for sports and entertainment in the Spokane area. Set on 20 acres adjacent to downtown Spokane's Riverfront Park, the Arena offers up to 12,500 seats for a galaxy of all-star entertainment (Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena).

Spokane River Park Square, which opened in 1999, including an AMC theatre, Nordstrom store and other “name” retail shops and cafeterias, was erected as a downtown center. It is a place where the whole community and visitors can meet friends, buy something, enjoy a meal, see a movie, or simply be a part of something special. It helped to anchor the retail developers in the downtown area while providing at least thousand-job opportunities and millions in tax revenues.

Chapter 6

AN EVALUATION OF SPOKANE RIVERFRONT PARK TODAY

1. Regional Context
2. Park Location and Current Park Layout
3. Findings from Data Collection
4. Three Evaluation Aspects

1. REGIONAL CONTEXT

“Spokane is located on the banks of the Spokane River in Eastern Washington, 18 miles west of Idaho state line and 110 miles south of British Columbia, Canada. As the largest city between Seattle and the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area, the City of Spokane is the hub of the Inland Northwest. The Inland Northwest encompasses 36 counties, including parts of Washington, Montana, Oregon and Idaho, as well as southern portions of British Columbia and Alberta, Canada. Spokane is an active financial, technology, research, trade and service center with a wide range of industries, entertainment and cultural venues, retail shopping opportunities, and several colleges and universities” (Spokane, 4).

2. PARK LOCATION AND CURRENT PARK LAYOUT

The study area, Spokane Riverfront Park, comprises 100-acre open space. It is operated and maintained by the Spokane Parks and Recreation Department. Riverfront Park is located in the heart of downtown Spokane, bounded by the Spokane River’s riverbank to the north, Spokane Falls Boulevard to the south, Division Street to the east,

and Monroe Street to the west. The department of Parks and Recreation owns a large portion of the north bank of the Spokane River. Currently, the city of Spokane is developing a North Bank Master Plan for the North Bank development. This will help to create a vital, attractive and sustainable use corridor which links the North Bank to Downtown Spokane through the Riverfront Park.



Fig. 18 Map of Spokane and Park Location (Spokane).

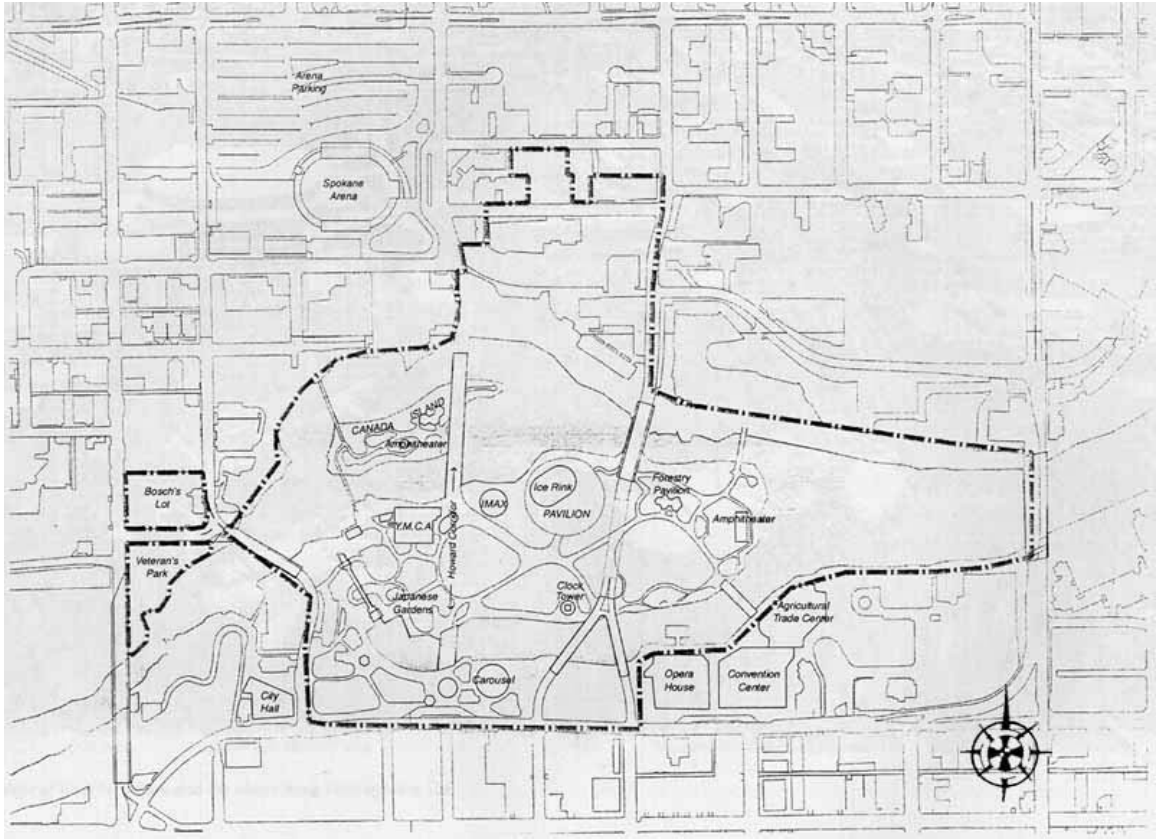


Fig. 19 Riverfront Park Boundary (Spokane, 2).

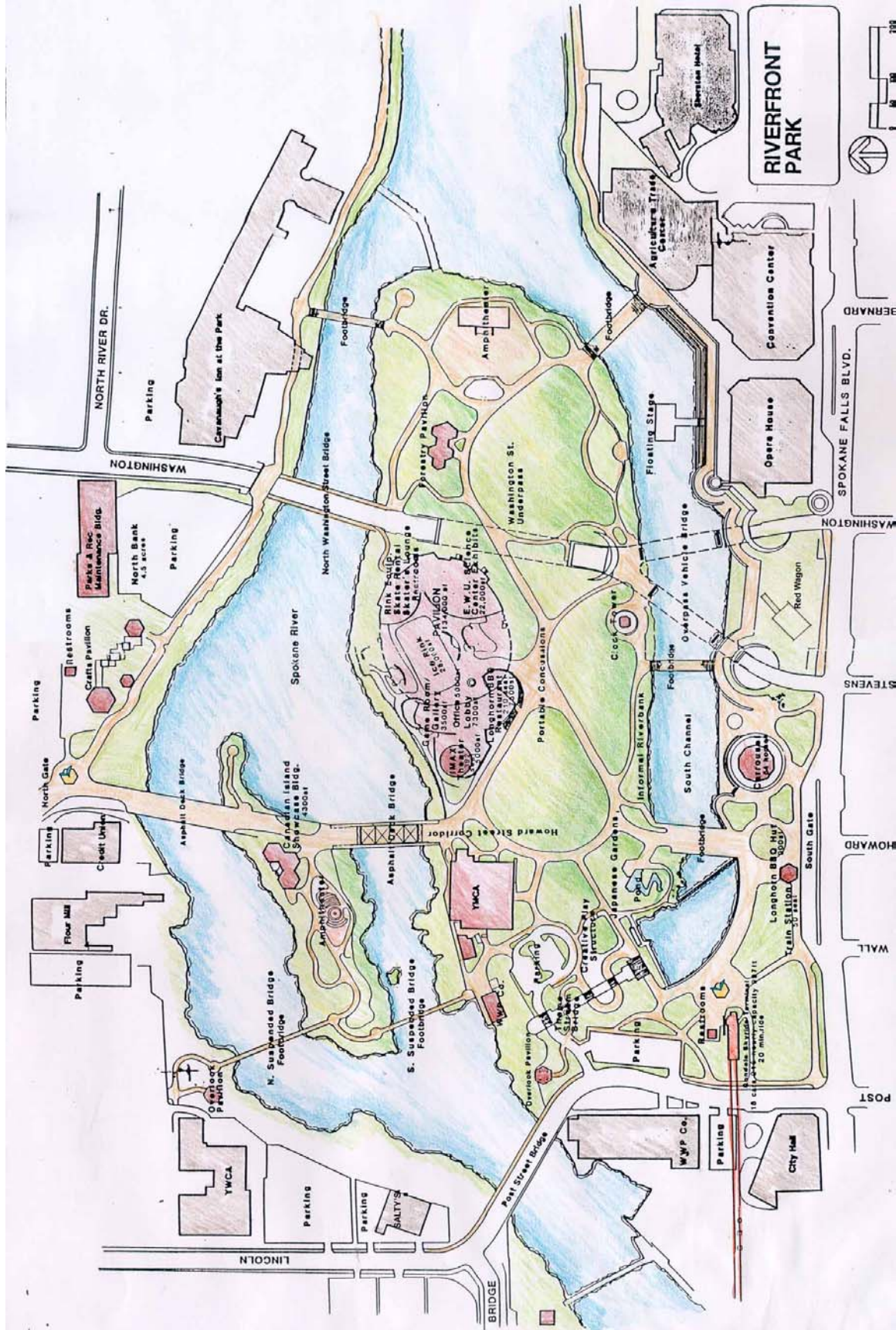


Fig 20. Spokane Riverfront Park Master Plan in 1988 (Riverfront Park).

3. FINDINGS FROM DATA COLLECTION

The literature review and general understanding of riverfront parks cannot provide me with enough information regarding the local context of Spokane's Riverfront Park. To offset this limitation, site visits, interviews with personnel in related city departments and a statistical questionnaire survey were developed to augment the evaluation of Riverfront Park. The interviews and survey concentrated on the people's attitude about the current park and the kind of changes those individuals would like to see in the future within the park.

Findings from Site Visit

From the site visits, I found that young people are the group visiting the park less often. The Centennial trail and the areas near downtown used often by people walking, jogging, biking, skating and feeding the ducks. The Red Wagon attracts a lot of children and parents. The steps in front of the Convention Center are also an attractive place. It is common to see people sit on the steps and eat lunch or talk with each other. Other park areas seem to attract fewer people since, as they stated in the survey, they don't feel safe. Even the Pavilion, except on the weekend when there are children and teenagers skating in it, is often desolated. The Imax attracted only about twenty people when I visited on a weekend night and that was for a popular movie.

Findings from Interview

- Interview with personnel in Park Department

Use—Who uses it? Who does not use it?

60% are residents. And people who working downtown, passing by the park, draw by events held by opera house, arena etc.

Teenagers use less. Nothing draws them to the park.

Maintenances and management—What are the problems of management and maintenances? What is the maintenance cost? How do space managers perceive the park?

Lack of money and resources.

How would local people characterize Spokane? Does Spokane Riverfront Park embody these characteristics? How?

Heart of Inland Northwest. Vibrant, growing community, small town, friendly, personable, warm.

What historical remnants to the people of Spokane want to preserve or pay tribute to? Do you feel that this is reflected in Riverfront Park?

Yes. Like the clock tower, pavilion, Canadian showcase, Japanese garden etc.

Riverfront was designed around an “Environmental” theme that was popular 25 years ago. Is that still appropriate today? Does Riverfront have a dynamic quality that has allowed it to change with the passage of time, reflecting different community interests and needs? How?

Keep environment theme. Protect the river. But could add more activities.

To what degree does the park attract a variety of users? From where? County? E.

WA? W. MT? Idaho?

From Inland Northwest and India people.

Does the Riverfront Park help to attract people to the downtown area? In what way?

People eat lunch, watch people, watch river, lunch out, stroll around, draw people from downtown.

How do you feel about the linkages between Riverfront Park and the downtown area?

Improve view access. Get rid of the entrance flowerbed and add a fountain. Technical center, plaza on the north bank entrance. Reduce Spokane Fall Boulevard into two lanes.

Does the park provide easy access from different direction? Is there ample parking?

Parking is not a big problem. Enough space. Just people do not want to walk for a little distance.

What's your attitude toward mix-use of riverfront, like add more residential land use around the park?

Agree. Add commercial and residential in the north bank. But cannot add the commercial activities in the park without the vote of people. People do not want to commercialize the park. They want to maintain the green space.

How does the park make good use of the river? Could more water involved activities be added to the park and what they are?

The park department does not own the river. Avista Utility manages the river. Also it has a viability issue. It is against city code. The current in the river makes people in the river danger.

Gondola is a good experience of feel the river, feel the spray and fall. And add the fountain at the entrance is also a good solution.

How the park provides a diversity of experience and activities? For different age groups? Need more activities add to the park and what they are?

Technical center on the north bank, new ride etc on the weekend. New Imax—school show, educational show; draw school group in the morning, educational role.

How you feel about the aesthetes of the park? What aspects need to improve? (i.e. landscape details)

New bridge, new pathway. They are too old, but this need money.

Art works are very nice, but hard to maintain. It has a vandalize issue. A student stole one of the runners. It should put artworks in the park and also get money to maintain them.

How is way finding provided within the park (i.e. signs, maps)?

Signs and maps are too old, from the 1974 expo. And vandalized seriously.

Which parts of the park are used most often, while which parts are less used? Why?

Attraction: Carrousel (one reason is near the park edge), gondola ride, green area (like the gondola meadow), Howard Bridge (people parking the car and cross the park to get to the downtown), Lilac bowl meadow.

Less use: Boeing amphitheater, only used for fire works in the park.

How does Riverfront provide for the handicapped? (i.e., Access)

The park was designed for Expo. Not much consideration for the handicapped. Grade in the park is not easy for the handicapped.

- Interview with personnel in City Planning Department

How would you characterize Spokane? Does Spokane Riverfront Park embody these characteristics? How?

Park is the high light of the city. The most is the river and the fall. They are the unique features of the city, the center of the whole city and the region.

What kind of programs or design details could add in the park to help embody Spokane characters? What historical remnants to the people of Spokane want to preserve or pay tribute to? Do you feel that this is reflected in Riverfront Park? What's your attitude toward the tear down of the old train depot?

History of this area is the river, culture of Native American. The clock tower stand there signifying part of the history. But it should add more in preserving the water in terms of history, Native American, like the proposal of Gorge Park from Monroe Bridge down. The fall is the tribe's gathering place, catching the salmon. A lot of history can be preserved here. We can preserve and provide information. Like at the building Sauties, a beautiful view to the fall, could be turned into an interpretive center.

Riverfront was designed around an "Environmental" theme that was popular 25 years ago. Is that still appropriate today? Does Riverfront have a dynamic quality that has allowed it to change with the passage of time, reflecting different community interests and needs? How?

In 1974, the park has a lot people and more like a Disney park. Now it is more natural and environmental condition. I like the current conditions more. But more activities certainly will be good.

Add more commercial and restaurants, but should be sensitive of the environment and take advantage of the river.

. How do you feel about the linkages between Riverfront Park and the downtown area?

Link of the downtown: Park is a gathering and public space for major events, bring a lot people to downtown form the region, enhance the economy of downtown.

But some of the architectures abutted the park, like the Riverfront Square, are more destructive than anything we could imaging.

More pedestrian to SFB.

Wall street is one of the first pedestrian streets. Several downtown streets should be change from one-way streets to two-way and add bump out.

But the most problem is the short of money. Most money is given to solve transportation, safety, and congestion, not much for pedestrian, bike lanes, sidewalks.

Does the park provide easy access from different direction? Is there ample parking?

Bus traffic is not very efficient. There are many places that the bus does not go.

Increase the public transportation, encourage walk. Trail is great.

What's your attitude toward mix-use of riverfront, like add more residential land use around the park?

Add more people living downtown, 24 hour downtown. This need add the basic service in the downtown, like the grocery store. More people in the downtown will add more security and more urban feel.

More development on the north bank. Off the park site there are several ugly hotels. Beside Arena, add more use, like residential, and things that can bring traffic back and forth, without block the river.

- Interview with personnel in Chamber of Commerce

How would you characterize Spokane? How does the park reflect on the image of Spokane?

Vibrant and growing. The park represent diversity, represent natural beauty, represent energy, a place everybody come ad gather. A place to share friends. Spokane is the heart of the region. The park is the heart of Spokane.

What is the economic and social health of the downtown area relative to other comparably sized cities?

Many other cities' downtown is dying. Spokane downtown needs to be like a neighborhood, need people live in downtown. It need be a place to work and also a place to have fun. The families come down shop together, eat, go to the park, and relax.

How do you think of Spokane's infrastructures, like transportation, parking, etc?

Need more parking opportunities: more garages options and more meter options.

Add trees, light, two-ways, create more pedestrian atmosphere.

What role the park played to promote the downtown business? Could it be improved?

People go to the park and then go to shopping and eating. Park is a critical element of Spokane economical development.

- Interview with personnel in Downtown Spokane Partnership

How would you characterize Spokane? Does Spokane Riverfront Park embody these characteristics? How?

Earthy and surrounded by beauty. Riverfront Park reflects that, but does not connect Spokane to the River – no connection except visual.

What is the economic and social health of the downtown area relative to other comparably sized cities?

Downtown Spokane is pretty dynamic really compared to cities of the same size and many larger than Spokane. The lack of sprawl has kept Downtown as the office address and until recently the premier shopping center. Shopping has declined due to the explosion of suburban/big box development. Downtown still acts as the center of a large region 1.7 million folks, similar to Buffalo New York – a city of twice the size.

How do you feel about the linkages between Riverfront Park and the downtown area? Any suggestions for improvement?

Downtown and the City almost do not relate at all. Spokane Falls Boulevard is a pretty hard edge. The Park causes there to be no sense of place Downtown. Improvement – higher density of use and investment north of the river, better entrances, two-way traffic on SFB, more green linkages into Downtown.

What's your attitude toward mix-use of riverfront, like adding more commercial and residential land use around the park?

Agreed. Land around the park should be some of the most expensive in the county. Riverfront Park could and should act as a “central park” for Spokane.

- Interview with personnel in Centennial Trail

A lot of Spokane history and culture are related with the Spokane River. How can it be reflected through the trail and park? Are they clearly marked?

Not clearly marked. Need more work to interpret the park.

What special considerations are taken into design when the trail comes into the Riverfront Park section, or downtown area?

Made the trail wider, more facilities. Mark the trail, for it's safer for all the users – bike, walk.

What role the park played to promote the use of centennial trail? Could it be improved?

Mark the trail, made the people knows it is centennial trail. Even a logo along the trail to make people know it is a trail.

Does the centennial trail is accessible by handicapped people?

Most area is. Restrooms, drink fountains are handicapped accessible. Grade of trail 70% is ok for wheelchair. It is not handicapped accessible, but also useable.

What are the problems of management and maintenances? What is the maintenance cost?

Lack of budget.

Findings from Survey

Survey outside the park

		<18 (4)	19- 29 (7)	30-60 (7)	>60 (2)	Total (20)
How often will you come to Spokane Riverfront Park this year?	Once a year		2			2
	Less than once a month	2	3	1 *	1	7 *
	More than once a month	2	2	5	1	10
	Other			1 *		1 *
How often will you come to Spokane downtown area this year?	Once a year					
	Less than once a month	1		1 *		2 *
	More than once a month	3	7	5	2	17
	Other			4year*		1 *
What season(s) are you most likely to visit the Riverfront Park?	Spring	2	3	1		6
	Summer	4	6	5	2	17
	Autumn		1		1	2
	Winter	1		1		2
How did you get to the park usually?	Drive	3	6	3	1	13
	Walk		2	1		3
	Bus	1	1	3	1	6
	Bicycle					
What is your primary reason for being downtown usually?	Visit the park	2		2	1	5
	Shopping	1	2	2	1	6
	Working downtown		2	2		4
	Restaurant/Entertainment		2	1	1	4
	Other	Library, hanging out with friends.				
Where do you live?	A surrounding neighborhood		1	1	1	3
	Spokane city	4	5	1	1	11
	Spokane county		2	2		4
	Outside of Spokane area			2		2

Survey inside the park

		<18 (5)	19-29 (4)	30-60 (7)	>60 (3)	Total (19)
How often will you come to Spokane Riverfront Park this year?	Once a year	1 *			1 *	2 **
	Less than once a month	3 **	1	1 *		5 ***
	More than once a month	1	2	5	2	10
	Other		3year*	1 *		2 **
Did anyone else come here with you today?	No		1	1	1	3
	Family	2	2	4	2	10
	Friends	3	1	4		8
	Other					
What season(s) are you most likely to visit the Riverfront Park?	Spring	2	3	5	1	11
	Summer	4	4	5	3	16
	Autumn	1	1	1	2	5
	Winter			2	1	3
How did you get to the park usually?	Drive	2	2	2	2	8
	Walk		2	5	1	8
	Bus	3				3
	Bicycle					
What is your primary reason for being downtown today?	Visit the park	1	2	5	2	10
	Shopping			1		1
	Working downtown					
	Restaurant/Entertainment	1	1	2	2	6
	Other	Field trip, skip school, library (2), relax				
Where else will you be going in the downtown today?	Visit the park	2	2	1		5
	Shopping	2	2	1	3	8
	Working downtown			1		1
	Restaurant/Entertainment	1	1	3		5
	Other					
Where do you live?	A surrounding neighborhood		1	2		3
	Spokane city	2	2	3	2	9
	Spokane county					
	Outside of Spokane area	3	1	2	1	7

- *Does the Riverfront Park embody the characteristics of Spokane? How?*

Yes.

Riverfront Park is a family gathering place.

Relationship of nature to city life.

The beautiful waterfall.

Environmental.

Spokane is a medium sized community with many people interested in family places and activities, and the park offers that.

The park is the center of Spokane.

Spokane seems to be a people oriented town.

It's a lot better since the World Fair was here.

Friendliness (4).

Indians.

Falls, River (2).

It's pretty, beautiful (3).

It's a unique city to begin with and the park just adds more beauty to the overall scene.

It shows the life and beauty of the city.

It has many good restaurants and shopping opportunities.

It is only one area where walking is possible.

Open area.

No.

It seems like Spokane is putting on a mask.

Not really. The park can be peaceful and relaxing. Spokane seems to be somewhat dirty and crowded.

Not sure.

▪ *What kind of activities do you do at the park?*

Walk and watch people (10).

Hanging with friends (3).

Football, Volleyball (2).

Picnic (2)

Let kid play.

Bike.

Martial Arts Training.

Ice-skating.

Take pictures.

Feed animals.

Performances, Events.

IMAX

▪ *What do you like best about the park?*

The river (10).

Lot of grass/ landscape, natural beauty (6).

People in the park (5).

Cleanness (3).

Birds, ducks (3).

Place to walk, jog or ride bike (3).

It is big (2).

Waterfall (2).

Close to downtown, easy to get to
(2).

Centennial trail.

A pretty place to eat lunch.

The red wagon.

Entertainment.

Always an activity going on.

Maintained good.

A place for the kids to run around.

Family atmosphere.

Peaceful atmosphere.

Not so many people.

Variety.

Ice-skating.

Fire works.

▪ *What do you like least about the park?*

Garbage, little dirty, low maintenance (7).

Homeless people, strange people, drug dealers (6).

Pesky seagulls (3).

Careless riders, roller-blades (2).

Security (2).

The birds shit (2).

Not enough parking.

Paying for parking.

Not big enough as an only park in downtown.

Needs more to make it stand out.

Pavilion.

Not enough restrooms.

Vandalism.

Nighttime is cool and all.

The big soft drink machine advertising coke.

▪ *What kinds of improvement would you like to see in the park?*

More facilities (bench /lighting /sign /restroom) (16)

Parking (free) (13)

More water-involved activities (12)

More open space for relaxation area (9)

More artworks (fountain /sculpture /other __) (9)

More recreation activities (such as ___ bumper boats, volleyball___) (8)

More areas to look out across the park (7)

Coffee shop /restaurants /retail nearby (7)

More open space for activity area (6)

More direct access to the river (5)

Access to the park (0)

Other: things to do; security (2)

Note:

* Represent the number of people living outside Spokane area.

(4) Represent the number of people.

4. THREE EVALUATION ASPECTS

Research on the history of the falls area and downtown Spokane makes it clear that the formation of Spokane's Riverfront Park was integrated into the downtown revitalization. History shows the interplay of three main foci in the development of Riverfront Park. The first is the abundant cultural meaning people associated with the park's location. The city of Spokane was founded and thrived around the falls. The park's location reminds the residents of the city's roots. The second is the relationship of the riverfront and the city, especially its downtown. The downtown's prosperity is closely related with the riverfront while the life of the riverfront also comes from an active downtown. The third focus is the river's splendid natural qualities -- flourishing plants, tumbling waterfalls and seasonal wildlife. Based on the general guidelines which I learned from the literature review and the case studies of successful waterfront parks, my evaluation of the current Spokane Riverfront Park centers on the following three aspects: cultural meaning, urban context, and park layout and usage.

History and Cultural Meaning

Does Riverfront Park embody the character of Spokane? According to the interview and questionnaire responses, almost all the respondents characterize Spokane as a friendly small community but vibrant and growing. Spokane is believed to be an earthy place surrounded by natural beauty.

In the 5 interviews and 39 questionnaire respondents, except two disagreements and one not sure, almost all agree that the Riverfront Park embodies the character of Spokane.

The park is beautiful, friendly, connecting nature to city life, a place for everybody to come and to gather. Spokane is the heart of the Inland Northwest Region, and the park is the most distinctive feature of downtown Spokane.

Does the Spokane Riverfront Park fully embody the history and culture of the Spokane? According to both the park planner and city planner, most local people think the primary history and the culture of this area should be related to the river, the falls, the culture of the Native Americans. According to the history, the Spokane Indians, after whom the city and river were named, fished on the banks and considered the falls to be their sacred place. Later, lured by the scenic beauty of the river and the abundance of natural resources, missionaries, miners and farmers began to migrate to this region. As the arriving Europeans realized the abundant waterpower, Spokane grew. Along the bank, there were numerous mills. The Flour Mill is the only one left today. During World War II, the Spokane Riverfront area became a sprawling rail yard.

Among these rich histories of this area, only the Clocktower and an electric generation plant remind people of the history of the Spokane River. The preserved Flour Mill is now a restaurant and shopping place with a few old photos hanging on the walls to remind people of the history of the place. As for the Indian Culture, except at the Spokane Falls Northwest Indian Encampment & Pow Wow, a three day annual event which features traditional dance and song by this areas' Native American tribes held in Riverfront Park in August, it is hard to find anything that reminds people of the rich Native Spokane culture and their stories.

Spokane Riverfront Park was designed around an environmental theme that was popular 25 years ago. When asked, whether that theme is still appropriate today? In the five interviews, all agreed that it is important to remember why the park is here. When asked, does Riverfront Park have a dynamic quality that has allowed it to change with the passage of time, reflecting different community interests and needs? All the interview and survey respondents said they would like the park to remain as it is now, and preserve the current natural environment as a relaxed gathering place, an amenity of the downtown. They also mention that they would like to have more activities in the park, but the activities should not interfere with the park natural beauty.

Restoration and Adaptive Re-use Recalling the history of this area, there are two important periods in Spokane's growth. One is the railroad period of 1881 to Expo '74; the other, the World Expo'74. In the current park, remnants of these two outstanding periods are found in the Burlington Northern Clocktower, The U.S. Pavilion, and two butterfly landmarks depicting the entrances to Expo' 74. Among these, the Clocktower and U.S. Pavilion have become the symbol or image of not only the Spokane Riverfront Park, but also the city of Spokane. Whether in the park or outside the park, people see signs designed with the symbol of the Clocktower and the Pavilion. Books and postcards introducing Spokane typically include these popular images of the city, the Clocktower together with the Pavilion. Preserving these two structures, keeping the symbols of the park and Spokane was agreed upon by most citizens according to the interview with the personnel in the Park Department and City Planning Office.

There is some disagreement as to the future of the U.S. Pavilion. Current environmental laws would not have buildings within 200 feet of the Spokane River. The Pavilion is one of them, even though it is an icon of the park and Spokane. The pavilion is too close to the river. The size of the structure and the thick concrete walls screen people's view to the river. Located at the center of the park area, the Pavilion area includes the IMAX Theater, a gift shop, and a full size ice rink. Except for the ice rink which has a lot of attraction and the IMAX which has some degree of attraction, other activities in the Pavilion do not. Compared to other park activities, the attraction of the ice rink and IMAX is still relatively low. Each had only one response when 39 respondents were asked about what kind of activities they do in the park (See Appendix



Fig. 21 Concrete Walls Blocks Views to Spokane River.

B). Being the center area of the park and right along the river, this area should be the most attractive center place. But now, it is not. According to both the park planner and city planner, the Pavilion will be kept in its current location and as an icon of the park, but improvements should be added. When asked most of

the 39 questionnaire respondents agreed to keep and update the pavilion. And one citizen even suggested totally removing the pavilion, because it is in the wrong location. That person suggested treating the center of the park as a natural area.

Summary

The Spokane Riverfront Park is a natural area in which people relax and gather. The park embodies the characteristics of Spokane – friendly, vibrant and surrounded by beauty. The Clocktower and U.S. Pavilion give the park special qualities and are the symbols of Spokane. But the location of the Pavilion is poor according to current park use conditions. As for reflecting the history and the Native American culture along the Spokane River, there is still a lot to be done.

Design Suggestions



Fig. 22 Build Connections between Spokane Riverfront Park and Great Gorge Park.

The skeleton of the U.S. Pavilion, one of the icons of Spokane, should be kept. The concrete walls of the Pavilion, which obscures people’s visual access to the river, should be removed. Changes in programming of activities under the tent are needed to attract more people here. It is also important to improve the access to the Pavilion, and the

access from the Pavilion to the river. Also, comfortable places are needed for people to rest and enjoy the view of the river.

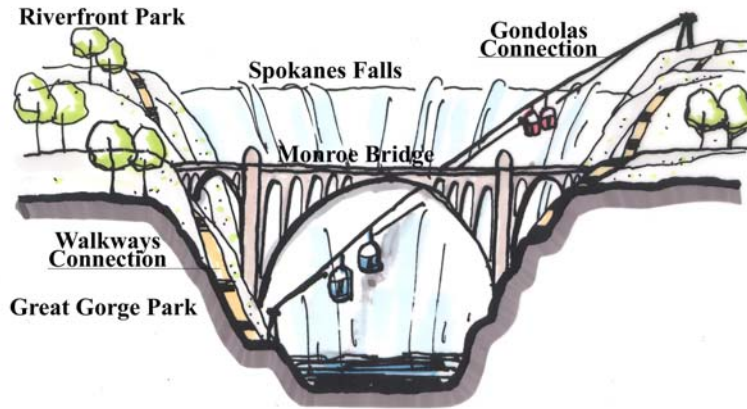


Fig 23. Cross Section of Proposed Great Gorge Park Entry Area, Connected to Riverfront Park with Gondolas and Walkways.

There are a lot of ways to reflect the history and culture of this area within the park. Spokane Falls is the tribes gathering place. Catching salmon and feeding their families is their heritage.

According to my interview with personnel of the City Planning Office, Spokane is proposing Great Gorge Park, a project west of the Monroe Street Bridge. This is an ideal place to reveal the history and culture of local Native American tribes. The Spokane Riverfront Park should provide a direct linkage downriver to Great Gorge Park to enhance local familiarity with the early Native American history. The connection between Riverfront Park and Great Gorge Park could be pedestrian walkways and gondolas.

A building along the river could also be changed into an historical and cultural interpretation center to share more local Native American culture. According to the interview with the personnel in city planning department, the city has proposed the reuse the Salty's, a building at the north bank of the river, as a history and culture interpretive center. Salty's has a great view of the Spokane Falls.



Fig. 24 Flour Mill.



Fig. 25 Upper Falls Power Plant.

There is also some improvement that can be done to the Flour Mill, the only preserved mill. Besides the current restaurants and shops in it, we can recover or restore some of the old mill facilities to exhibit how the mill used to work. This can be a good educational exhibition and special experience for visitors. Educational programs can also be added to the old electric generation plant and the dams along the river.

Not only the social aspects, such as the human history/ culture could be added into the park, the location's unique geological characteristics are also important and could be incorporated into the park design. The Spokane River is among the remains of a gigantic geologic event, the Missoula Floods. It still shows special geological features and how Lake Missoula's glacial floods formed it. Interpretive expressions of this will add more experience to the park, and also allow people to learn more about the Spokane River, and the Northwest Bioregion.

Urban Context

Urban context refers to the unique relationships that exist between the city and Riverfront Park. How does Spokane's Riverfront Park relate to the downtown? What are the park's functions in the city? How do people gain access to the park? Are there visual cues to attract people to the park? Has the city provided an attractive and safe pedestrian

environment for people to access the park? Are people from outside the downtown area provided with ample parking or mass transit access?

Relating Riverfront Park Design With Downtown Planning According to my interview, most people agree that downtown Spokane is pretty dynamic compared to cities of equal or larger size. The lack of sprawl has kept the downtown as the office center and until recently the premier shopping center. Though shopping has declined due to the explosion of suburban/big box development, downtown Spokane still acts as the center of a large region of 1.7 million people. Most people characterize Spokane as a big small town, which is large enough to support variety of employment, educational, culture and recreational opportunities; yet not so large that it is impersonal. The mix of natural scenery and the bustle of city life play a big role in giving the downtown a dynamic energy.

After World War II, the nationwide movement towards the suburbs was on. Spokane was no exception. Thus, in the late 1950's, city officials and Spokane Unlimited worked together for new solutions to stir the pulse of the tired city center again with activities. With Expo '74, the city finally turned a decaying industrial area into a sparkling Riverfront Park. Along with the park came the Cultural Center-- Convention Center, the Opera House, Spokane Arena, Public Library, and the educational institutions at the east side of the park, all of which bring even more visitors to the city's downtown center.

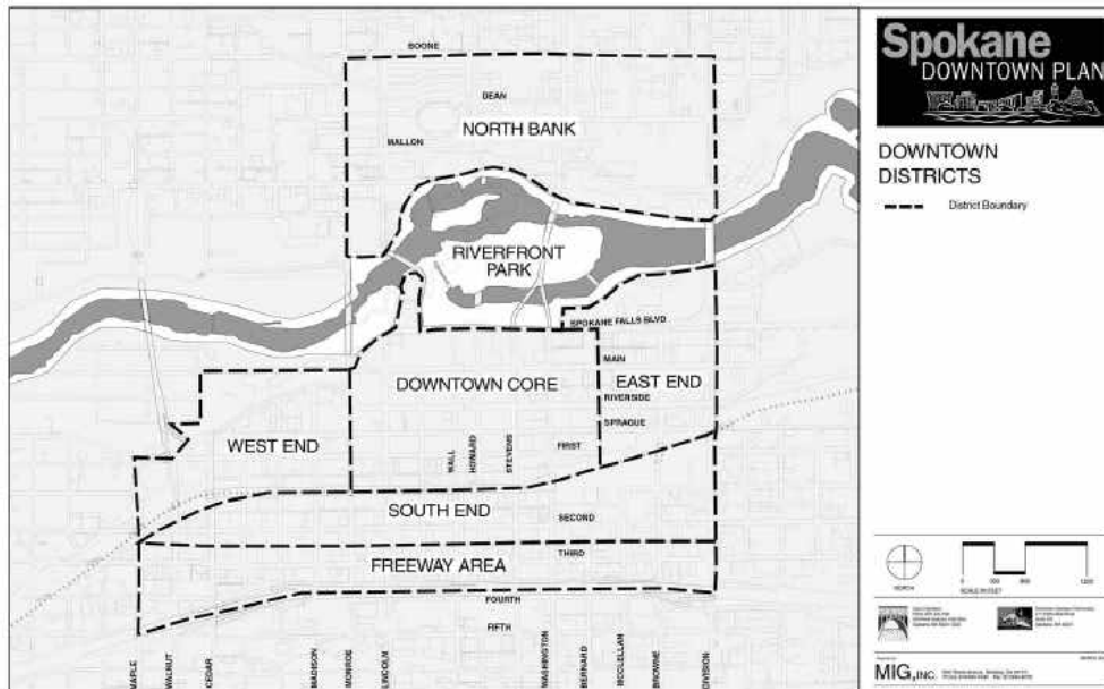


Fig. 26 Spokane Downtown Plan (City of Spokane Downtown Design Guidelines, 3).

In the City of Spokane Downtown Design Guidelines, which were approved by Spokane City on October 10, 2000, the CBD Zone is intended to be “a mix of residential, commercial, office, light industrial, and recreational uses” (3). The Spokane Riverfront Park is close to the downtown core, the high-intensity, pedestrian-oriented center of the city, with many offices and street level commercial activities. The north side of the park will be the North Bank Zone, a mixed-use area of residential, commercial, recreation, and entertainment uses. As a natural green space close to the Downtown Core, Riverfront Park will be an amenity and attract more people to the Downtown Core. The North Bank Zone development’s recreation and entertainment uses will offset what the park is missing. Also the residential development on the North Bank will undoubtedly attract more people to the park.

What role does the park play in downtown life? According to the interview results, a lot of people who go to the park then go downtown to shop and eat or find other recreation. The Park is a critical element of Spokane's economical development. A lot of workers in the downtown move in the other direction. Many people, working or shopping downtown, will like to go into the Park to eat lunch, watch people, enjoy the river or stroll and exercise. Of the 19 respondents to the park users' survey, 10 of them chose the park as their primary reason for being downtown and 14 of them will go into downtown after visiting the park. 13 of the 14 persons who would go into the downtown said they would go shopping or to restaurants/entertainment. According to the survey of people outside the park, 5 of 20 respondents said their primary reason for being downtown was to visit the park.

Summary

Park users and downtown shoppers' main reasons for being downtown agree with representatives of city and business interests. Riverfront Park is attracting people to the downtown area and contributing to people coming to and spending time and money in downtown. The treatment of the land use of the Spokane riverfront as a city park, an amenity of the downtown, is very successful. Riverfront Park, the river and its falls are recognized as a critical focal point of the downtown area. This natural, open area provides a natural relief that complements the man-made structures of the downtown business district.

Establishing Riverfront Park's Image A successful urban waterfront strengthens its city's culture, urban character, and number of people who use and visit the downtown.

By enhancing the waterfront's natural amenities, people will be attracted to the area, and if the waterfront meets recreational expectations by providing diverse activities, visitors, workers, shoppers, and residents will experience more of the natural and cultural heritage of the place. The total experience of a successful waterfront park heightens people's sense of belonging, their appreciation for the place's history and their pride in their city.

A successful waterfront image will act as a landmark in the city that attracts tourists, investments, and employment. According to my interview with the Chamber of Commerce representative, a big part of the reason that many people choose to work and live in Spokane is Spokane's beauty and friendly atmosphere. Riverfront Park plays an important role in shaping this character of Spokane.

The park is a central factor in attracting people from the surrounding regions. According to the survey in the park, of 19 randomly chosen respondents, 7 lived outside of the Spokane area. Most of them were from the Inland Northwest region, but according to the Northtown Mall survey, almost 5 percent of the respondents did not know about Spokane's Riverfront Park.



Fig. 27 Logo of Spokane Riverfront Park.

Within the park, the park logos are easy to see on the trashcans and banners. The park logo should reflect the park image. Repeating the logos in the park helps people understand and remember the character of the park. According to the surveys and interviews, most people agree that the Spokane Riverfront Park has a dominant

image – the Spokane River and Falls, a natural setting within an urban environment. The

current logo stresses three main characters of the park: the Pavilion, the Clocktower, and the river. But the Pavilion is dominant in the logo, while the river, the essence of the park, only has a small portion in the logo and is easily to be overlooked.

Summary

Spokane Riverfront Park has an outstanding image – a natural environment with the Spokane River as its center. This image helps attract people to the park and Spokane, even people from the surrounding regions. But there is room for improvement.

The park does a good job in using the logo to elevate the park image. But the current logo does not truly reflect the image of the park.

Design Suggestions

Create an impressive logo of the park to reveal the essence of the park. As the name is Riverfront Park, the Spokane River should be emphasized more in the logo.

Establish a park image which attracts more people to the park. This could be accomplished by using the media, mail, Internet, and other methods to spread the park logo and promote the programs in the park. It would let people know what is happening in the park. The other way is to add more regional scale activities or programs in the park. Spokane Riverfront Park already hosts some regional programs every year, such as Bloomsday, Spokane Lilac Festival, Hoopfest etc. These programs attract people not only from the surrounding region, but also from around the nation. If more of such regional programs were added to the park activities, especially the ones related to the Spokane River, Falls, or the culture of this area, it would not only improve the image and fame of the Spokane Riverfront Park, but also attract a lot of people to downtown to spend money, which in turn accelerates the economy.

Public Access With the Spokane Riverfront Park adjacent to downtown, the connection of the park with the downtown and the region is very important.

- *Visual Access*

It is important for people to see the park from a variety of downtown perspectives and from local arteries, such as Division Street, Monroe Street, or Spokane Fall Boulevard (SFB).

Having a high structure in the park as the landmark is effective in attracting attention to the park. The Clocktower and Pavilion play this role in Riverfront Park. The height of the buildings surrounding the park also needs to be considered. The City of Spokane Downtown Design Guidelines, states that “building heights shall be reduced closest to the Spokane River to provide views of Riverfront Park from buildings farther from the



Fig. 28 Building Height Reduced closest to Spokane River (9).

River’s edge”(9). In this way, it can increase people’s opportunities to see the park’s landmarks, the Clocktower and Pavilion.

At the street level, the buildings, streetscape needs to be designed to increase people’s view of the park from within downtown. The building’s facades should not create a formidable wall to block visual access to the river. A study should be done to select ideal viewsheds. But looking around at the buildings along the river, except for a few good complimentary architecture, a lot of buildings block or detract from the view. Some of



Fig. 29 View from Riverfront Park to Downtown.



Fig. 30 “Cold” Façade of River Park Square facing Riverfront Park.



Fig. 31 Buildings turn their Backdoors to Riverfront Park.



Fig. 32 Big Parking Lot facing Riverfront Park.

the hotels on the north bank not only have long walls that screen the view, they also have box-like building façades that do not harmonize with the river at all.

At the end of the streets that lead into the park, there should be a focal point. It should mark the entrance for the park, and be the cue for the downtown pedestrian to know that there is a park, and a river in the park. But now when people stand at the street and look towards the park, except for some trees that can hint that there is a park, it is hard for people to imagine there is also a great river right though the park.

Summary

The Clocktower and the U.S. Pavilion play important roles as the visual landmarks to attract people’s view. And the regulation of the surrounding buildings’ heights will also help increase the visual access. But some existing architecture along the river block much of the visual access to the river. The entrance of the park is also not attractive enough to draw people’s attention.

Design Suggestions

According to my interview, the Parks Department is proposing an active fountain at the south entry of the

park at the terminus of Howard Street. The fountain will not only be an outstanding landscape element to attract people on the street, playing with the water will also add the connection to the river.

Another way to improve visual access could be creating a sequence of views as someone moves from inside downtown to the river. The view changes from only seeing the top of the Clocktower to more trees coming into sight and indicating there is a natural place ahead, to finally the park entrance, the river coming before your eyes.

- *Physical Access*

- . *Pedestrian System*

The vibrancy of a downtown can be seen from its street activities. A dynamic downtown is full of people participating in indoor and outdoors activities. In support of that user-friendly downtown, is a well-designed walking environment. Completion of the park's design goal to attract more people to the downtown area depends on the park's pedestrian connection with the downtown. People in the park tend to visit downtown if they can easily and comfortably walk to it and visa versa.

Currently when people start to move from the park to the downtown core, Spokane Falls Boulevard (SFB) is like a hard edge separating the park from the downtown. With its four lanes of high-speed, one-way traffic, it is a fierce barrier. Also from SFB to downtown, the natural environment of trees and grass found in the park, suddenly almost disappear. With fewer trees the downtown seems harsh and barren. As some respondents wrote in their questionnaires: "The park can be peaceful and relaxing. Spokane seems to

be somewhat dirty and crowded,” or “It seems like Spokane is putting on a mask.” The mask is the Spokane Riverfront Park. What we need to do is to weave the park into the adjacent downtown core. One way is to create a well-planted comfortable pedestrian linkage between the downtown and the park.

Reducing or eliminating the SFB barrier would contribute to a stronger connection between downtown and the park. Adding more activities along the park’s edge is also an effective way to connect the park to the downtown. Pedestrian areas of the downtown should tie intimately with Riverfront Park. Retail shopping, restaurants and office buildings could be brought close to the park with their doors opening on the park. As one of the most attractive shopping and recreation centers, Spokane River Park Square seems to turn its back to the park. The large façade facing Riverfront Park feels cold and the entrance is mainly for the cars parking. The south side of the SFB has few shops or restaurants that provide cues for a vibrant downtown life. People are not attracted from the park across SFB and into the downtown.

A better pedestrian access to the park needs to improve linkage between the park and the downtown and downtown’s entire pedestrian environment. Without a personable downtown walking system, people choose other ways to get to the downtown and the park. Currently with the one-way high-speed traffic in downtown, cars seemingly dominate the downtown. Shops open their main doors onto the skywalks and few people shop or walk on the street even on weekend days. All of this makes the streets feel unsafe and discourages people walking.

Summary

As a wonderful amenity, the park is not being taken advantage of by the downtown business. The park seems an isolated concentration of green set in concrete surroundings. The pedestrian linkage between the downtown and the park definitely needs improvement.

Design Suggestions



Fig 33. Concept Diagram of Design Suggestions regarding Improving Park's Pedestrian Access.

Riverfront Park should be improved as an integral element of the entire downtown. The edge of both the park and the downtown should be more strongly interconnected. The easiest solution would be an improvement on both sides of SFB to enhance the visual connection.

The entrance of the park should be improved. A more prominent park entrance will help to attract people from downtown. The south side of SFB should also increase

Fig 34. Plan View of the Recommendations for Spokane Falls Boulevard.

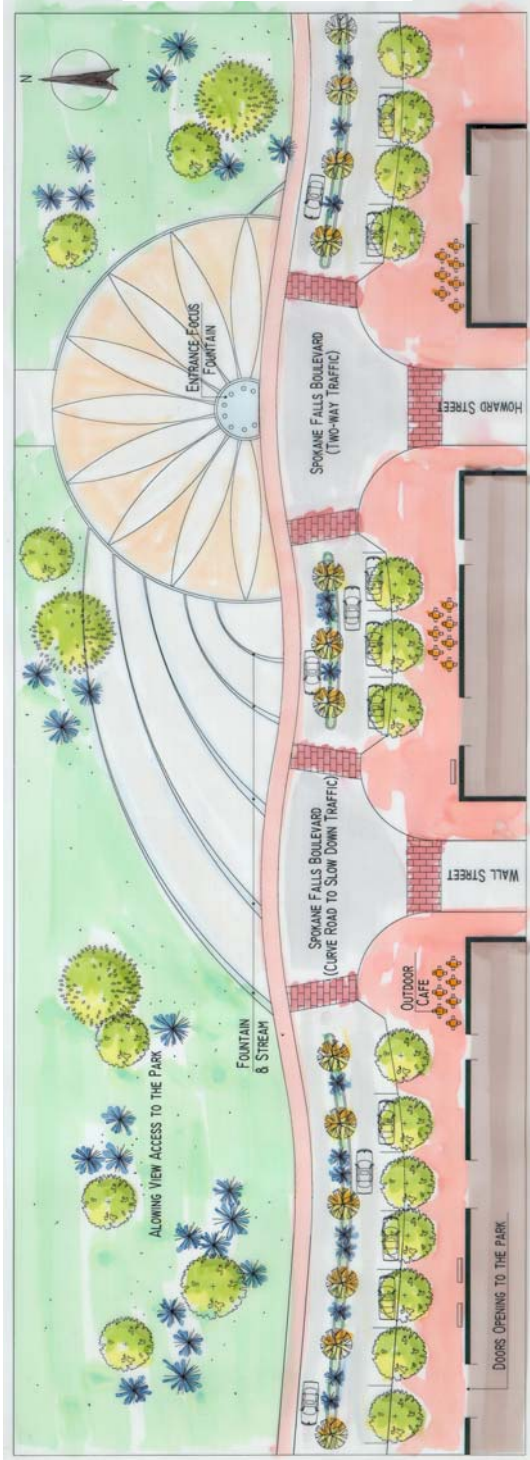


Fig 35. Perspectives of the Recommendations for Spokane Falls Boulevard.



evidence of shopping, restaurants, and recreation, adding doors that open to the park. Spokane Falls Boulevard should be made more personal; slowing down automobile traffic and improve ways to cross the street. In addition to the park's edge, attention should also be given the downtown area. Examples of ways to improve physical access could be:

Landscape and other elements included in the park, such as the trees and planters could be extended along the streets into the downtown area. The addition of pocket parks, small urban squares in vacant free space and linking them with green streets to Riverfront Park would contribute to a larger "downtown park" system including Riverfront Park.

Slower downtown traffic will not only make walking safer, but also allow the driver in the car to engage in the downtown scenery. According to my interview, the city of Spokane is planning to change some one-way traffic into two-way traffic. Two-way traffic will help slow down the car speed. Drivers can pay more attention to the street life, not the one-way traffic signs. Diverse street-level activities would put more people in a better relationship to the park. Widening sidewalks will allow for sidewalk cafes or outdoor seating, shops selling goods outside and kiosks. All these will add to the pedestrian urban life by creating a feeling that the streets are safe. Attracting more people downtown means people will spend more money downtown, which in turn attracts more retail shops or restaurants, adding more activities into the downtown.



Fig 36. Proposed Street Character of Howard Street: Pedestrian and Green Link to Riverfront Park.

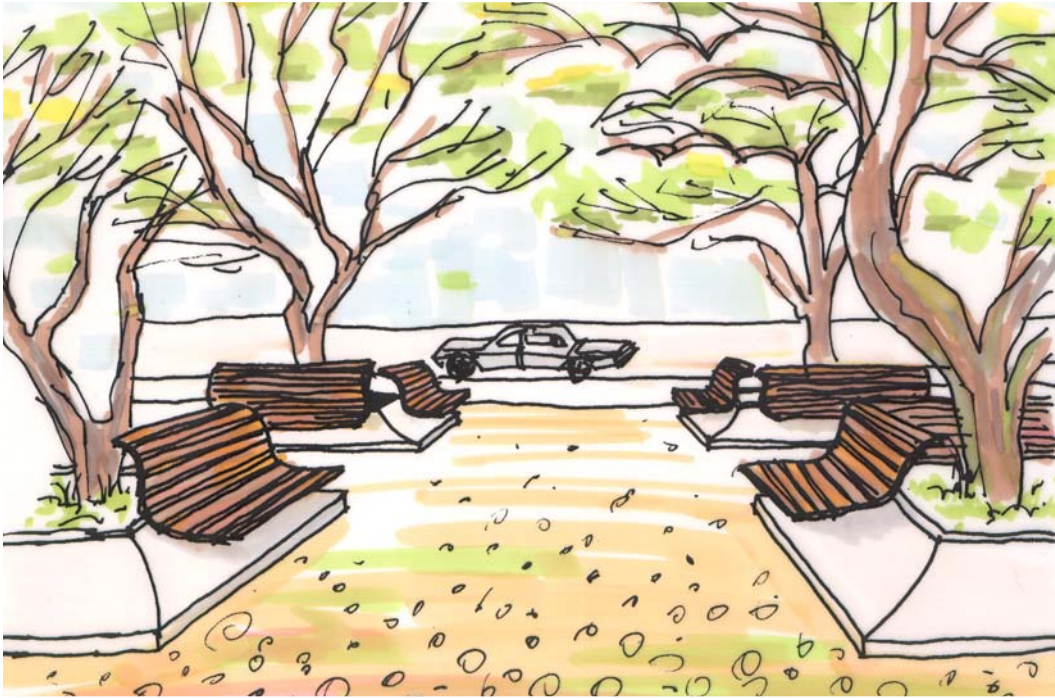


Fig 37. Proposed Character of Small Downtown Urban Square: A Green Space for resting.

. *Centennial Trail*



Fig 38. Map of the Section of Centennial Trail, which Crosses Riverfront Park.

Another attractive characteristic of the Spokane Riverfront Park is the Centennial Trail passing through the park – 37 miles of natural beauty that follows the Spokane River from Coeur d’Alene to the Spokane House at Nine Mile Falls.

In the park, you can see that the Centennial Trail is a well-used area. Closely paralleling the river on the south bank, the Centennial Trail provides a good place for people to view the river. According to interviews with the Centennial Trail Department, the grade of almost 70 percent of the trail is adequate for wheelchair use. Most of the trail is both handicapped accessible and useable. People walk, run, bike or skate on the trail.

Completely separated from automobile traffic, the Centennial Trail accommodates a great pedestrian connection of the park to the east and west.

The trail plays a big role in bringing people into the park, but what role does the park play in promoting the use of Centennial Trail? The trail in the park area is wider than other areas along the trail. The trail is marked with bike and walking areas to help make it safer. But in the park area, there is no difference between the paving of the Centennial Trail and other parkways. No outstanding signs mark the Centennial Trail or provide information about the trail. According to interviews, many people do not know which walkway in the park is the Centennial Trail, especially when the trail comes by the Convention Center area. Some people do not know the Centennial trail at all when visiting the park.

Summary

The Centennial Trail provides a good opportunity for people to access the park and view the river. But the park needs to provide more signs or information to let people know about the centennial trail.

Design Suggestions

Making the trail different from other pathways by adding signs, trail logos along the trail or making the pavement different from other walkways. It would be helpful to provide information and maps about the Centennial Trail at some intervals along its way.

. Public Transit System and Parking

A successful downtown waterfront relies on more than what is in and around the park. Access from more distant places is needed. Public transportation gives people more choices to go to downtown and helps solve the parking problems downtown.

According to my survey, 9 out of the 39 respondents may choose to go to the downtown or park by bus. Also, when asked, “What kinds of improvement would you like to see in the park,” 13 of 39 mentioned a parking problem. Some suggested free parking. That would be up to the City and Parks Department to decide. However, improved public transportation would encourage more people to take the bus and ease the parking problem.

Parks Department personnel said that there are enough parking spaces around the park area. The reason why people still perceive a parking problem is that most people want to park their cars near the park so they do not have to walk far.

Summary

Only a small number of people may choose the public transit system to the downtown and park while quite a few people think the parking system need improving. People do not seem satisfied with the current proximity of parking to the park.

Design Suggestions

Improving the public transit system is needed, such as adding more bus routes and shortening bus-waiting intervals to make the bus system more convenient to bus users, or building a number of parking lots outside downtown and providing more shuttle bus service to the park, shopping areas and cultural events in and outside the downtown.

People who arrive at the park by car will usually take the same route back to their car at the end of their visit. This distance may prevent them from taking time in the park. But if a shuttle bus stopped at different park entrances and connected them to other places, people could more easily visit a number of downtown locations and explore more of the park. They could come and go from different park entrances.

Since people want to park close to where they will be, and since there is not sufficient nearby parking, a lot of people do not take advantage of the park. If we could make a comfortable pedestrian environment connecting parking lots to the park, people might like to walk for a longer distance to take use of the parking lot. Use of the park could be enhanced if visual connections were strengthened between the park and the River Park Square parking garage, Opera House parking, and more distant lots.

Park Layout and Usage

With today's fast paced lifestyles, what kind of activities do people desire in the park? Does the park layout fit and take the best advantage of its natural features? Can opportunities be increased for people to directly engage in the water? How do we make people feel comfortable and willing to stay in the park through enhancement of the beautiful scenery and amenities, providing visual signs to direct visitors, and addressing the safety issues?

Water Access The Spokane River is the centerpiece of Riverfront Park. Along the south bank of the south channel of the river is the Centennial Trail. Along the north bank of the Spokane River is another pedestrian trail. Standing on these trails, people can enjoy beautiful views of the river. The pedestrian bridges crossing the river also accommodate good view of the river. In the park, there are nine pedestrian bridges. Each provides different experiences of the river.

According to my observations, only the Centennial Trail, which is on the south bank of the river, is used often by the visitors. People walk, jog, bike or feed ducks while they appreciate the view of the water. The other river-view places seem less used, such as the Suspended Footbridge, which has a good view of the falls. The question is how to attract people to these places deeper into the park.

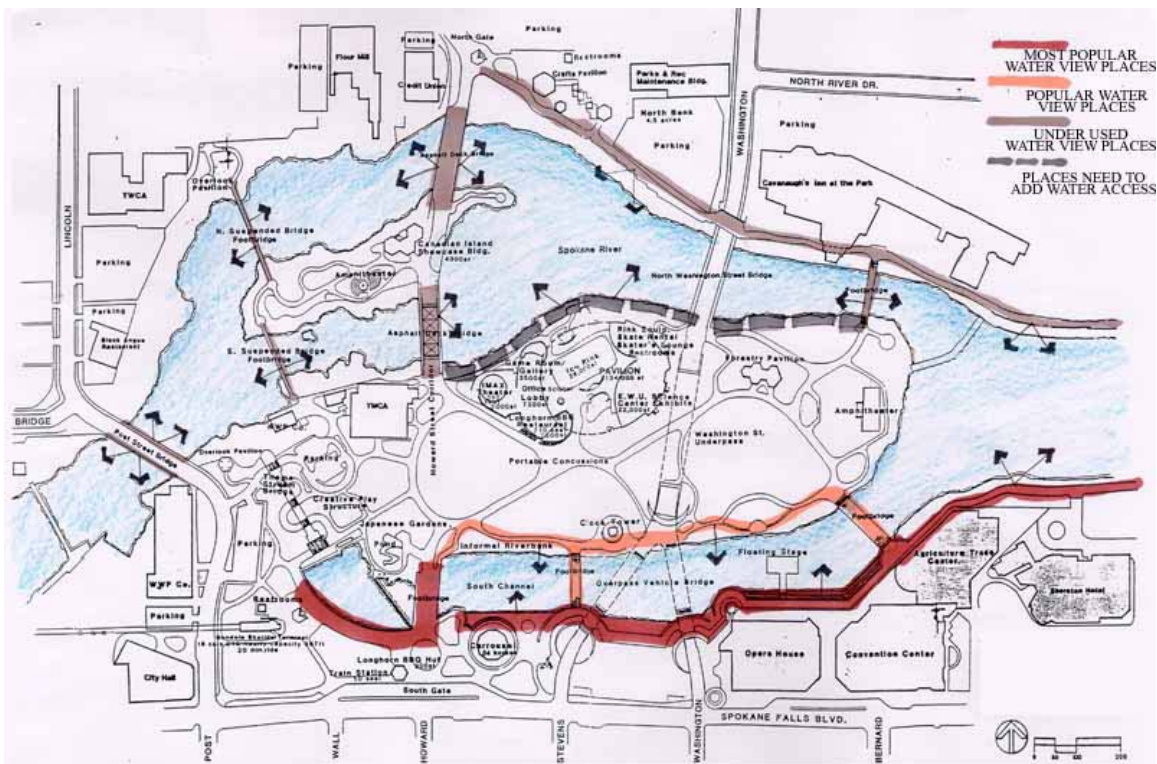


Fig 39. Water View Access Condition and improvement suggestions.

The wide steps between the Opera House and the Convention Center and the river are another often used area from which to see the river. The steps not only give people the opportunity to directly access the water to touch the water, but also to sit and contemplate the water. When I visited the park there were always people sitting together on the steps, talking, or eating lunch.

One problem, according to the survey, is a lack of seating. Park benches were frequently mentioned as a problem when asked about what kind of improvements people wanted to see. There are too few seating facilities along the trails or on the bridges. Most visitors I observed and surveyed were standing and looking at the water. Some visitors, especially the elderly, complained there are no place to sit. With the introduction of more seating along the river, people would feel welcomed to stay and appreciate the view, talk, eat, or just watch the river.



Fig. 40 Gondolas above Spokane falls.

The gondola, which is the remnant of the Expo '74, is another means by which one can experience the river. The gondola carries people right above the Spokane Falls so that they can look down at the falls and feel the spray of the water. According to Parks

Department personnel, the gondola ride is one of the most welcomed facilities in the park, yet according to the survey, when asked, “What kind of activities do you do at the park and what do you like best about the park,” no one mentioned the gondola ride. The gondola’s limited operation may be the reason. The opportunity to ride the gondola over the falls is therefore limited.

Summary

The park does a good job in providing different ways to access the water, such as the trails along the banks, bridges, gondola, and the Opera House steps extending to the river. However each feature could be improved to better serve visitors.

Design Suggestions

Different kinds of seating from which to view the river and other places of the park could be added. Seating could take different forms. People's needs call for seating that accommodates being alone, in small or large groups.

The gondola's hours of operation need to be extended. The most spectacular views of the park are in the spring when the water is at its highest. This is the best season to view the Spokane Falls with its high volume of water.

As to how to attract people deeper into the park, I will talk about that in the following section -- wayfinding.

Water-Related Activities According to the interview with the personnel in the Parks Department, Avista Utility manages the river. Also there is a viability issue to add river related activities in the park. City code forbids people swimming in the river. The river's

current is too dangerous. So the question is how to create water-related activities also safe for its users.

Currently in the river, there are a lot of ducks, geese, and seagulls. This provides a good opportunity for people to connect with the river and the animals.



Fig. 41 Birds around Spokane River.

In the park, the areas nearest the ducks are always the

popular places. Watching and feeding the birds was the fourth most frequently mentioned activity when I asked people what they like best in the park. But this cannot be the only water-related activity. Almost one third, 12 of the 39 survey respondents, mentioned that they would like to have more water-involved activities in the park.

Design Suggestions

One approach would be to add educational programs related to the old electric generation plant and the dams along the river. Parts of the old mill facilities in the Flour Mill could be restored and there could be exhibits of how the mill used to work. “A waterfront that is alive with water-dependent activities is the basis for authenticity and an enjoyable experience. Adjacent industrial functions can offer interest and education to the visitors” (Torres, 37). In this way we have not only added water-related activities, but



Fig. 42 Man-made pool for people playing with water (Breen, 231).

also the park retains more of its unique cultural character.

Water-involved activities within the park, but not necessary in the river, could take the form of an interactive fountain. A constructed pool with natural forms such as in Figure 36, perhaps with a connection to the river, can provide water-related experiences.

Aesthetics The park's natural beauty is the most attractive asset of the park. There are also numerous pieces of public art that add to visitor's aesthetic experiences. There is the Centennial Sculpture, the four-story tall blue butterflies, the giant red wagon, the sculpture of 40 Bloomsday runners, and the actual and sculptural totem poles. These artworks help to keep the park lively and visually interesting, reminding people of the important historic events and programs that happened in the park. The "Joy of Running Together", the sculpture of 40 Bloomsday runners, celebrates a Spokane tradition – Bloomsday, the largest timed road-running race in the world.

Beside these artworks, well-designed park furniture and features would also add to the aesthetics of the park and the total identity of the park. Currently, most of these amenities, such as rubbish cans, signs, benches, lightings, and pavement patterns, were introduced for Expo '74. They are worn and old and do not satisfy current use demand. The trash cans, worn pavement, and old walls not only have no aesthetic appeal, but also give an impression of low maintenance. When asked what people liked least about the park, survey respondents mentioned most about the "low maintenance and garbage."

The need for improved and well-designed park facilities was also noted by the Parks Department. As stated in my interview with the Parks Department personnel, they felt an urgent need for new facilities, such as a pathway system and new benches.

Summary

The park's natural beauty and artworks increase the park's aesthetics. The facilities in the park need to be improved.



Fig. 43 Multiple-use artwork.

Design Suggestions

According to my observation, the giant red wagon and the sculpture of the 40-person Bloomsday runners are more attractive than other art works. The “Red Wagon” sculpture is not only a landmark, but also a favorite with children of all ages as they slide down the handle of this giant-sized wagon. Kids also climb on the Bloomsday runners and people pose to have their pictures taken with the runners. Artworks that provide both visual interest and opportunities to get involved with them do a lot to enliven people’s excitement.

Wayfinding There is a big difference in the usage frequency of different parts of Riverfront Park. Most people gather around the park’s edge near the downtown core. Not many people visit the places deeper into the park along the north side, such as Canadian Island and the Amphitheater. As mentioned before, the bridges which connect the center island to the North Bank provide good viewpoints from which to appreciate the river, but I did not see many people using these bridges. So the question is how to attract people to use the whole park, not just an area close to downtown?

In the park there are not many signs to direct people. According to the survey, 4 out of the 39 respondents mentioned the need for restrooms. There are three locations with restrooms in the park, one at the Pavilion area, one at the Carrousel, and one at the southwest corner of the park. The number of restrooms could be enough, but there are no signs to tell people where they are. That is one reason why people still feel the lack of restrooms.

The park's map system is also outdated. It is difficult to find a map in the park. According to the Parks Department interviews, the maps in the park were those used during Expo '74. Those that are there are difficult to read and find the directions people want. There are also no information boards that tell people what activities the park provides, or what programs will be held. "When people feel oriented and confident that they can find their way around, their eagerness to explore an area is increased" (Kaplan, 49). Kaplan's work (1998) indicates a need for people to be able to see most if not the park's entire layout. Since little overview is provided, people tend to stay at the places they are familiar with.

Summary

The most used area of the park is along the south edge, adjacent to downtown. Other areas receive relatively low use. There are also not enough signs and maps to help with people's wayfinding.

Design Suggestions

One reason that people gather around the downtown park's edge is that many of these visitors are passing by the park on their way, for example from the west side of the park to the downtown. The indication is that when they pass by the park, they are attracted to it and cross the street to visit it. They stay along the edge because of a lack of efficient way-finding information system. The difference between riverfront parks and other waterfront parks near the sea or a lake is that there are developments along both sides of the river. One of the park's roles is to create connections between the two riverbanks. Creating a connection between the north and south bank of Spokane River will increase people's passing through the park, not just entering and gathering along its southern edge.

Getting people to crisscross the park will depend on whether there are enough attractions on the north bank to attract people from south to the north. The connection itself should also be interesting enough along the route that people stay in the park for a while.

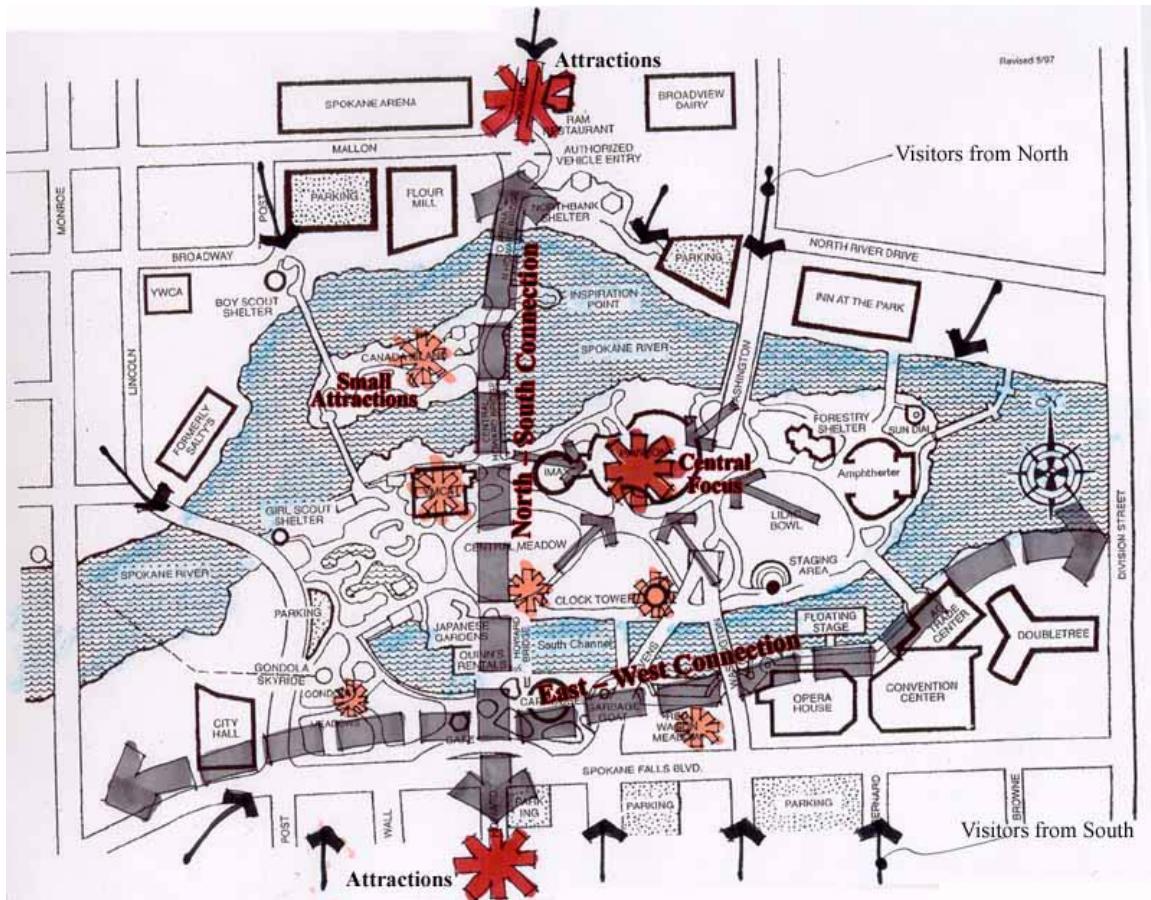


Fig. 44 Concept Diagram of design suggestions regarding how to encourage people to use the whole park area.

Another reason that people gather around the park's southern edge is that most visitors are coming from the downtown. If more people could be attracted from the north bank to downtown, when they pass the Canadian Island or the north part of the park, they would add more life to these areas. Developing residential land uses on the north bank would be one solution to provide more people coming from the north direction.

The center of the park should have the most eye-catching activity to attract people into the center from every direction. The current uses at that location are IMAX and the

Pavilion. As mentioned in earlier section, they should be reconsidered, or at least the activities they provide.

Adding the necessary signs and maps at the intersections of the pathways will help people orient themselves in the park. The maps should not only tell the directions within the park, but also what is available in the surrounding areas. For example, which direction to a nice restaurant, or which direction to Gorge Park? In this way, it can help connect the park to its surrounding areas, and encourage people to pass through the park to different destinations than they came from. Information boards announcing activities in the park at the locations where people often pass by, such as the park entrances, will also promote people exploring the park further.

Diversified Activities and Experiences Interviewed park visitors most often described the quiet and relaxing aspects of Riverfront Park. When asked about what kind of activities they do at the park, and what they like best about the park, most said relatively passive activities. Ten out of the 39 survey respondents (25%) mentioned walking and watching people. According to the site visit and the survey, young people visit the park less frequently. The reason is partly because the park does not satisfy the recreational demands of young people with its passive activities. Especially compared with the activities provided by the downtown, such as the movie theaters, cafes, and retail shops, the park has fewer attractions. This fact was also verified when I asked the Parks Department personnel who used the park least. The parks personnel said that the teenagers use the park less because they feel there is nothing to do in the park.

Summary

The park provides opportunities for passive activities which are generally more appealing to adults, while not enough active activities for younger people.

Design Suggestions

Both the interview and survey results indicated that people wanted more activities added in the park, yet they also wanted to keep the park a natural environment. So the question is how can the park be a downtown activity center that attracts young people and still be a quiet place for adults to escape city pressures? This depends on the separation of different activity areas and the buffers between them. Especially how to protect the quiet areas from the intrusion of loud noises and the flow of people.

From the interview, the City Parks Department is proposing to develop the North Bank as a unique entertainment and activity district to complement the existing park facilities. A Science Technology Center/3-D IMAX and related amenities and facilities at the north bank will be unique to the region and anchor a fun and distinctive entertainment district. With the river as a buffer influence to the quiet existing park area, this development will also become a regional activity area that draws people from downtown and promotes their passing through the park.

Chapter 7

EVALUATION CONCLUSION AND DESIGN SUGGESTIONS

1. Evaluation Conclusions
2. Design Suggestions
3. Implication for Future Research

1. EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS

Through the evaluation of Spokane Riverfront Park, I learned that the park is somewhat successful in meeting people's needs and the city's development, but there are areas where improvements could be made.

History Preservation and Culture Meaning

The park reflects Spokane's character well. Spokane is most often described as a friendly, personable small community but vibrant and growing, an earthy place surrounded by beauty. The Riverfront Park with its character as beautiful, friendly, connecting nature to city life, a place for everybody to come and gather, embodies and emphasizes Spokane's general nature. Preserving the Burlington Northern Clocktower and U.S. Pavilion, the park reflects a time when the riverfront was a railroad yard, and Expo '74, one of the most important events in Spokane. Both the Clocktower and Pavilion give the park a unique cultural character.

Spokane in a sense grew from the Spokane River. Native Americans fished in the river. The industrial period saw the river used for energy. As the primary source of history and center of culture of this area, the park does not reflect much of this richness.

Urban Context

Using the river's edge for Expo '74, made for a smooth transition into a successful urban park. As a natural green area in the Central Business District, the riverfront remains a city gathering place, an amenity that draws people downtown.

With the river and its natural beauty, the park does establish an image that attracts people from the surrounding region. But the park's image can be strengthened by holding more programs in the park and improving the community information system. The park logo does not reflect the park image as closely as it could.

The Clocktower and Pavilion are tall enough as landmarks to attract people's view at a far distance, but what the park needs are more eye-catching entrances to draw people in when they are close to the park. The physical connection to the park also needs to be improved. The park seems isolated. Few park elements, such as trees and planters, extend into downtown. The park is also separated from the downtown by Spokane Falls Boulevard.

The Centennial Trail gives good pedestrian access to the park from the east and west. Providing a comfortable downtown pedestrian environment and convenient public transportation systems will improve the physical access to the park and enhance the downtown area better.

Park Layout and Usage

Riverfront Park provides different ways to access the water, such as the trails along the riverbanks, bridges, gondola, and the steps extending to the river. But a lack of adequate seating at these places discourages people from spending more time there.

Because of safety issues, the river does not provide many river-related activities. The ducks and birds in the river work well in connecting people to the river. The Flour Mill and power plant could be used for educational programs to enrich people's experiences with the river. And other water related activities out of the river could be brought into the park.

The park has many works of art, which enhance the park's aesthetics. The welcomed artwork are the ones that have multiple functions, such as a big toy wagon. The park's facilities such as the rubbish cans, signs, benches, lightings, pavement are too worn down to increase the park's aesthetics. They need to be improved.

Although it is a one-hundred acre park, only the small portion facing downtown is often used. The other places feel unsafe because of the lack of people. There are also not enough signs, maps and information systems to direct people in the park. This raises the question of how to attract people to use the whole park area.

The park does a good job as a restful area in the downtown. Due to lack of diverse activities, it does not draw in many young people.

2. DESIGN SUGGESTIONS

One goal of this study is to draw experiences and lessons for designers of urban riverfront parks through an evaluation of Riverfront Park. The design suggestions specifically regarding Riverfront Park have been described in Chapter 5. The following suggestions apply to similar downtown riverfront parks in general.

This study suggested that a successful riverfront park design should consider the local assets both within and outside the park, recall the history and culture related to this area and build these into any future changes.

History and Culture Research

According to the historical evolution of urban waterfronts, water-related parks are usually located at the center of cities. As a city park, it plays a big role in forming the city's image. Designers cannot treat it like a neighborhood park. Each waterfront city park should build on its unique features to represent the character of its city. To accomplish this design goal, designers should investigate the history and culture of the waterfront area. Talking with short and long-time local residents can provide valuable information about what the citizens feel comprises their city's character and what is important to them.

After identifying the history and culture of this area, designers would benefit from doing an inventory of historic remnants to be preserved. They should be identified in terms of re-use, and what kind of landscape features, and what programs could be added to improve the park's cultural character.

Urban Context Analysis

The park alone cannot solve a rift between the city and its riverfront. Designers need to go beyond the site boundary and consider the important regional characteristics and relationships which affect the purpose and functions of the park, such as public access, land uses, commercial activities, other surrounding recreational facilities. Talking with local government and business people can help designers get this kind of information. The following things need to be considered:

1. What is the local Central Business District planning?
2. What role does the park play relative to downtown?
3. What affect do the park's surrounding areas have on the park?
4. If it is a riverfront park, then added considerations need to be given to increase connections between the two riverbanks.

Public views and access are important to all parks. Distant and in-close visual images need to be used to attract people coming toward the park, such as a tall landmark in the park to attract people from far distance and appealing entrance features to draw people in when they get closer. The streets bordering the park should be designed so they are easy to cross. Shops on the downtown side of the streets should open their doors to the park and the sidewalks should be full of urban activities.

The downtown should also provide a comfortable pedestrian environment, diversified outdoor activities, and green street systems connecting to the park. A park logo could be used on banners that line the streets connecting downtown with the park. Public transportation can give people more choices to go downtown and park, ease parking problems and encourage people to visit deeper into the park.

User Analysis

Parks should be created for people. Designers should know how the park is used by the public. They should also know how the public likes to use the park. Talking with park managers, park users and non-users, and implementing behavioral observation in the park help designers identify the park users' population, behavioral patterns and preferences.

A river, as the most attractive asset, makes riverfront parks different from other parks. People who go to riverfront parks like to access the river and join the activities related to the river. The park should provide different ways that people can access the water, from visual enjoyment at a distance to physically feeling the water. When there are not many people at the water's edge or at other viewpoints, the designer needs to investigate if it is because of a lack of seating or other reasons.

Designers should notice whether people use the whole park or just part of it. Especially when people often use the areas facing downtown, designers should create attractions at the opposite side and suggest the city develop more land uses near that side, such as residential to increase population coming from that direction. Putting a major activity site in the park center and sufficient signs or map system could also help people use the whole park area.

Artwork and good maintenance helps to increase the park's aesthetic image. But the artworks should not be only for showing; some art needs to be interactive.

When the park does not attract young people, the designers need to check whether the park has sufficiently diversified activities. When adding more activity areas for young

people, the designers need to consider their locations and buffer any loud noises and traffic flows from the quieter areas.

Overall Values of a Successful Riverfront Park to Downtown and Citizens

A successful riverfront park will provide a restful natural area and a city activity center for residents and visitors. It will enhance the city image and attract more tourists and employment to city. A successful downtown riverfront park will bring in people to spend money downtown, which boosts the downtown economy and diversifies downtown activities. In turn, a thriving downtown will bring more people to the park. Both downtown and park will benefit each other.

3. IMPLICATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The evaluation of Spokane Riverfront Park was limited to the three aspects: history and cultural meaning, urban context, park layout and usage, which I concluded from the previous literature review and case studies. Through the evaluation process, new insights related to the park came out. One was the maintenance and safety issue. According to the survey, when asking what people liked least about this park, they most often mentioned things such as garbage, dirt, homeless people, drug dealers, security, and vandalism. The other aspect, that came out of the evaluation was the shortage of money. According to the interview with the Parks Department, the city has already done their best to maintain the park, but without sufficient money many plans cannot be turned into reality. It is the same according to the interview with the City Planning Office and Centennial Trail

Organization. It is the designers' responsibility to design a park that is easily maintained and create opportunities for a park to earn revenue for later maintenance. Future studies could be on parks' maintenance, safety, and commercial aspects.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRES

Spokane Riverfront Park Evaluation (Survey outside the Park)

(Please circle one or more choices)

1. How often will you come to Spokane Riverfront Park this year?
 - a. Once a year
 - b. Less than once a month
 - c. More than once a month
 - d. Other _____

2. How often will you come to Spokane downtown area this year?
 - a. Once a year
 - b. Less than once a month
 - c. More than once a month
 - d. Other _____

3. What season(s) are you most likely to visit the Riverfront Park?
 - a. Spring
 - b. Summer
 - c. Autumn
 - d. Winter

4. How did you get the park usually?
 - a. Drive
 - b. Walk
 - c. Bus

- d. Bicycle
 - e. Other _____
5. What is your primary reason for being downtown usually?
- a. Visit the park
 - b. Shopping
 - c. Working downtown
 - d. Restaurant/Entertainment
 - e. Other _____
6. Does the Riverfront Park embody the characteristics of Spokane? How?
- _____
7. What kind of activities do you do at the park?
- _____
8. What do you like best about the park?
- _____
9. What do you like least about the park?
- _____
10. What kinds of improvement would you like to see in the park?
- a. More open space for relaxation area
 - b. More open space for activity area
 - c. More facilities (bench /lighting /sign /restroom)
 - d. More artworks (fountain /sculpture /other _____)
 - e. More areas to look out across the park
 - f. More water-involved activities

- g. More direct access to the river
- h. More recreation activities (such as _____)
- i. Access to the park
- j. Parking
- k. Coffee shop /restaurants /retail nearby
- l. Other _____

11. You are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| a. Under 18 years old | a. Female |
| b. 19-29 yeas old | b. Male |
| c. 30-60 years old | |
| d. Over 60 years old | |

12. Where do you live?

- a. A surrounding neighborhood
- b. Spokane city
- c. Spokane county
- d. Outside of Spokane area

Spokane Riverfront Park Evaluation (Survey in the Park)

(Please circle one or more choices)

1. 1. How often will you come to Spokane Riverfront Park this year?
 - a. Once a year
 - b. Less than once a month
 - c. More than once a month
 - d. Other _____
2. Did anyone else come here with you today?
 - a. No
 - b. Family
 - c. Friends
 - d. Other _____
3. What season(s) are you most likely to visit the park?
 - a. Spring
 - b. Summer
 - c. Autumn
 - d. Winter
4. How did you get here?
 - a. Drive
 - b. Walk
 - c. Bus
 - d. Bicycle

- e. Other _____
5. What is your primary reasons for being downtown today?
- a. Visit the park
 - b. Shopping
 - c. Working downtown
 - d. Restaurant/Entertainment
 - e. Other _____
6. Where else will you be going in the downtown area today?
- a. Staying in the park
 - b. Shopping
 - c. Working downtown
 - d. Restaurant/Entertainment
 - e. Other _____
7. Does the Riverfront Park embody the characteristics of Spokane? How?
- _____
8. What do you like best about the park?
- _____
9. What do you like least about the park?
- _____
10. What kinds of improvement would you like to see in the park?
- a. More open space for relaxation area
 - b. More open space for activity area
 - c. More facilities (bench /lighting /sign /restroom)

- d. More artworks (fountain /sculpture /other _____)
- e. More areas to look out across the park
- f. More water-involved activities
- g. More direct access to the river
- h. More recreation activities (such as _____)
- i. Access to the park
- j. Parking
- k. Coffee shop /restaurants /retail nearby
- l. Other _____

11. You are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| a. Under 18 years old | a. Female |
| b. 19-29 yeas old | b. Male |
| c. 30-60 years old | |
| d. Over 60 years old | |

12. Where do you live?

- a. A surrounding neighborhood
- b. Spokane city
- c. Spokane county
- d. Outside of Spokane area