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THE MISSOULA RIVERFRONT CORRIDOR: PLANS,
PROGRESS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

By

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Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

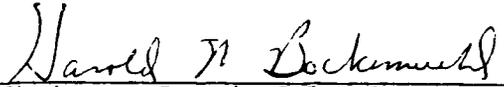
Master of Science

in Rural, Town, and Regional Planning

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

1983

Approved by:


Chairman, Board of Examiners


Dean, Graduate School

6-7-83
Date

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CHAPTER I

CLARK FORK RIVER CORRIDOR

Introduction

Today, waterfront development is a complex issue involving utilization of waterfront areas, the redevelopment and planning of city waterfronts, the interests of conservation, and urban pressure for additional recreation space. While interest focuses upon the shoreline, the problem also involves other considerations, such as the importance of land away from the river's edge and political pressure for multiuse of a finite resource. In addition, attention must be given to economic costs, property rights, aesthetics, and local interests.

Almost all of America's large cities are located on the shores of rivers, lakes, bays, or oceans. For many of these cities the waterfront was their economic center at the turn of the century. However, in more recent years, some frontage areas have been abandoned by commercial enterprises and made unfit even for residences. Lately there has been a general renewal of interest in these urban lands due to their recreational potential. People in the United States consider it very important to have parks and other outdoor recreation within walking distance.¹

Americans are rediscovering the social and economic value of the waterfront. Almost every major urban river, bayfront, harbor, lakeshore or seacoast is undergoing redevelopment representing substantial public and private investment.²

The City of Missoula and other public and private agencies have been able to purchase various portions of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad (hereinafter referred to as "the Milwaukee Railroad") right-of-way. South of the river, the University of Montana owns land consisting mainly of open space. McCormick, Kiwanis, Caras, and Jacobs' Island parks located along the river add more land available for public enjoyment. These various entities are presently being considered for a contiguous park system to fringe both Missoula's north and south shores of the Clark Fork River.

Methodology

Numerous studies have been written over the past several years on the development of the Clark Fork River Corridor as a cultural and recreational area. Each of these studies has presented ideas and made recommendations on how this development should be accomplished. These numerous, and at times disjointed, efforts are reduced by including only three of the best documented studies for review here.

The Missoula County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan written in 1976 covers the whole of Missoula County and comments on the development of a river corridor park for Missoula. The Urban Renewal Plan: Downtown Missoula Redevelopment Program, done in 1978, provides further insights into the use of the river corridor for recreational purposes. Finally, the Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (RUDAT) study focuses directly on riverfront development.

A synthesis of these three studies, plus a review of actions taken to date to acquire and develop riverfront land through Missoula for

cultural and recreational activities, and a presentation of current information on the overall status of this park system is presented.

Study Objectives

The purpose of this research is threefold: (1) to summarize the content and recommendations of the three recent studies on the development of Missoula's Clark Fork River corridor, (2) to provide information as to what actions have been completed in establishing the waterfront park system, and (3) to review future requirements needed to be accomplished in order to complete this park system.

CHAPTER II

RIVER CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The City's Past

The City of Missoula was founded on the Clark Fork River in 1864. It started with the construction of several lumber and flour mills along the river near the present-day Higgins Bridge. The community thus expanded from that area to include most of the Missoula Valley.

Over the years the course of the Clark Fork River flowing through Missoula has been changed by land fills, junk yards, and various industrial uses. In the Central Business District, residential structures were built near the floodplain, which further reduced access to the river edge. More recently the corridor has been channelized, thus decreasing the flooding danger while further isolating the river from the surrounding community. Although several parks have been developed near the shoreline, the channelization of the river corridor and the private holdings greatly restrict recreational opportunities along the north shore of the Clark Fork River.

Area Topography

The south shore of the corridor consists of a pronounced river bench which separates the river from heavily developed areas further south. The berm constructed along the Milwaukee Railroad right-of-way

in 1906 also isolates the public from most of the river's south shore. Jacobs' Island and McCormick parks provide areas for recreation, but Jacobs' Island Park is next to the right-of-way berm and McCormick Park is separated from the river by extensive flood control and irrigation ditches (Figure 1).

The existence of flood control devices, the Milwaukee Railroad berm, irrigation ditches, and parcels of land in private ownership prevent public access to the riverfront. Even though a portion of the north shore has been developed as recreation area, flood control devices prevent public access in many places. The south shore, in spite of the barrier formed by the right-of-way berm, provides numerous recreational opportunities.

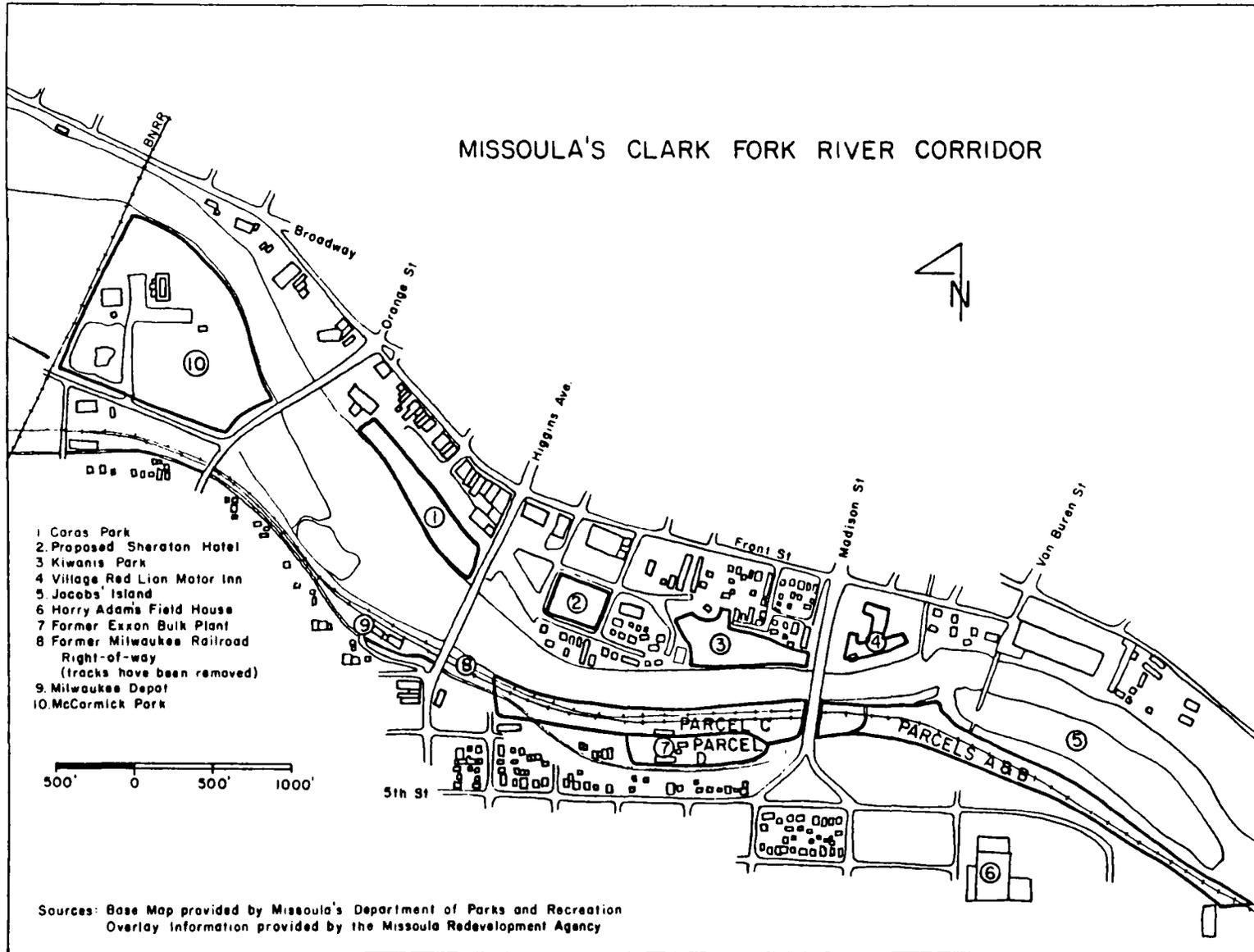
Corridor Park Plans

In December 1971, a group of Missoula citizens formed the Community Improvement Commission (CIC) to develop aesthetic consciousness in Missoula. The CIC adopted the establishment of a riverfront park system as a project and developed the proposal for the Five Valleys River Park System.

The linear park concept continued in 1972 with the formation of the Missoula's Facilities Steering Committee. This group, funded from a grant by the National Endowment of the Arts City Spirit Program, inventoried local facilities which could be made available for cultural activities.

From this project, space requirements for the performing arts was determined. In addition, the riverfront corridor was defined as a

Figure 1.



possible site for such things as a theater, performing arts/convention/conference center, and an athletic/recreation center. All of these facilities could then be connected together by a linear park system along both the north and south shores.

In October 1980, another phase of the riverfront planning process began through the National Endowment of the Arts Design Demonstration Program which, in conjunction with other private local donations, financed a Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (RUDAT). This very intensive effort provided a second plan of the riverfront corridor as a site for cultural and recreational facilities, with each facility to be connected to the others through the use of the "corridor" concept. This effort generated strong public support and comment. Various individuals, groups, and organizations looked into numerous opportunities in this area. At the same time, a group of local businessmen started negotiations with the Milwaukee Railroad in order to acquire the railroad's right-of-way through Missoula. In addition, local investors purchased the Milwaukee Depot to be used as offices and a restaurant. Missoula Hotel Development Associates received a federal grant to partially support construction of a Sheraton Hotel, to be located on the north shore east of Higgins Bridge. Final purchase of the key segments of the Milwaukee Railroad right-of-way was made by a trust of Missoula's citizens in July 1981.

The committee and the National Endowment of the Arts sponsored a national design competition as a follow-up to the RUDAT report. This competition developed plans for the river corridor park between the Bitterroot Branch Line of the Burlington Northern Railroad, which crosses

West Broadway, to Van Buren on the east. The final design linked the various river parks into corridors on both the south and north shores. The community actively participated in this design process.

Steps have been taken by the City of Missoula to permit the construction of the riverfront park system. The city has purchased property and public access rights. One of these was the procurement of a recreational easement from the Milwaukee Depot Associates in April 1981; another was inclusion of an extension to Caras Park to be incorporated with the construction of the Sheraton Hotel.

Also, the city began pursuing purchase or easements for additional property. In November 1981, the city acquired Parcel "C" from the private trust (Figure 1). Missoula County High School District bond issue purchased the Exxon bulk plant located in Parcel "D". An additional 2.8 miles of railroad right-of-way in Hellgate Canyon on the eastern boundary of the river corridor was purchased by the city. The Montana State Legislature approved funds in 1983 for purchase by the University of Montana of parcels "A" and "B" from the trust.³

Present Land Use

Present land use within the study area is high diversified. Public ownership takes in a large portion of the land and contains mostly parks. Other uses, to include industrial, residential, and commercial, are scattered throughout the river corridor. McCormick, Kiwanis, Caras, and Jacobs' Island parks are scattered along the shores. Also, the University of Montana owns land on the south side of the river which is available for public use. The former Milwaukee Railroad right-of-way forms the largest open space in the corridor. The Intermountain

Lumber Company owns 60 acres on the south shore near the study area's west end. Commercial activities spread through the area represent neighborhood, community, and regional shopping and service facilities. Residential housing varies from older single-family structures to more modern multifamily dwellings.

CHAPTER III

PREVIOUS STUDIES ON MISSOULA'S RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The potential of urban rivers comes from their ability to serve so many people. Both social and economic gains are possible whenever the resources of urban rivers are redirected from waste containers to places of beauty, repose, and of utility.⁴

Since most urban rivers have been used for many purposes, today's recreational use generally requires redevelopment. This is no easy task. It is complicated by the differences between physical settings, historic backgrounds, financial capabilities, etc. As an example, of 107 major cities that had water resources suitable for redevelopment in 1974, 68 had developed proposals, 59 had proposals that had reached the planning stage, 28 were in the process of implementing plans, and 14 had completed some kind of waterfront development project. The project initiators were about equally divided between government and nongovernment organizations. The majority of projects that have resulted in development, however, were initiated by nongovernment. These nongovernment groups consisted of downtown businessmen, historical societies, service clubs, Chambers of Commerce, environmental groups, and professional planners.⁵

Successful projects, or those projects that were completed and that were considered worthwhile by the involved persons, in various

communities throughout the United States appear to share the following factors:

1. specific segments of the community are identified with the undertaking;
2. community involvement was included in the decision-making;
3. public support, as well as opposition, was generally known by project implementors;
4. citizen input and thorough site analysis were given adequate time;
5. projects were normally associated with a major event, such as an urban renewal project or other important event;
6. city leaders were generally in support of the project; and
7. planners took into consideration the probability of inflated construction costs and land prices.⁶

The following three plans provide an insight into park and recreational activities from Missoula County's needs to those specific requirements for a downtown corridor park along the Clark Fork River.

Missoula County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan

The first of these studies in time is the Missoula County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The plan was written in 1976 and includes the entire Missoula County. The recreation and open space plan had two major parts: an overview plan and a plan for development.

The overview plan identifies present and future needs and recommends policies, programs and priorities. Working within the framework of the overview plan, the plan of development will identify sites that should be incorporated into the recreation system along with relevant types of development.⁷

The purpose of the plan is to:

1. Record existing recreation areas and facilities and evaluate the opportunities and services they provide for specific clientele groups.
2. Determine present and future needs for indoor and outdoor recreation areas and facilities.
3. Identify for preservation those critical natural resource areas, historic sites, and open space lands that contribute significantly to the aesthetic, cultural, and physical character of the area.
4. Design a comprehensive, orderly, efficient, and achievable system of parks and open spaces to serve all City and County residents.
5. Recommend policies, programs, priorities, and administrative arrangements for the implementation of the plan.⁸

The primary aim of the plan is to identify the county's responsibilities in providing recreational opportunities. The plan also shows sites that the county should develop and recommends policies and guidelines for the creation of a county program for recreation.

Some of the recreational objectives are to:

1. develop a system of recreational trails and bikeways that link parks, schools, residential areas, and commercial areas;
2. provide access for recreational use of rivers, lakes, and streams, while protecting environmental quality and private property rights; and to
3. design facilities and manage areas to minimize conflicts between recreation user groups and between recreation and other land uses.⁹

Some of the open space objectives are to:

1. protect all rivers and streams, especially the Clark Fork, Bitterroot and Blackfoot rivers; and to
2. restore and preserve open space through zoning, acquisition, easements, grants, donations, and other available means to prevent undesirable land uses in critical areas.¹⁰

Residents of Missoula and nearby counties indicated through a survey that next to pleasure driving, the most popular activity was walking, followed by sightseeing. Fishing was determined to be fourth, followed by playing outdoor games and other less popular activities.¹¹

The study goes on to state that major recreational assets within the Missoula Urban Area are the Clark Fork River and Bitterroot River. These rivers, along with others, provide a great possibility to create a river park system. The rivers offer many sites that are easily accessible for public use.¹²

Within this proposed river park system would be the formation of a river park corridor through Missoula. This corridor could connect McCormick Park, Greenough Park, Caras Park, Kiwanis Park, and Jacobs' Island Park together. Providing footpath and bikeways along the corridor would greatly improve public access. In addition, the study states that these parks, along with a green belt through the river corridor, could be important for community welfare and could help downtown rehabilitation.¹³

The study concludes with the recommendation, among others, that "critical resources such as historic sites, river corridors, natural areas, and natural resource lands should be protected."¹⁴

The Missoula County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan provides the basis for all park development within Missoula County. There can be no logical future park construction without this key document.

Urban Renewal Plan: Downtown Missoula
Redevelopment Program

The Urban Renewal Plan: Downtown Missoula Redevelopment Program was prepared by the Missoula City-County Planning Board Staff in 1978. The study concentrates on the condition of the Central Business District and discusses the problems found there. Revitalization of the area is important because it is necessary to the well-being of the community as a whole.¹⁵ Under land use, the study recommends that open space should be expanded and integrated with the downtown area.¹⁶ Since the Clark Fork River has significant scenic value, it needs to be melded into the city. However, it was noted that the riverbank retaining wall on the north shore, constructed for flood protection, and the electric power substation remain negative visual elements.¹⁷ Recommendation is made that the public take action to protect, enhance, and integrate existing open space and acquire additional land to connect the park system.¹⁸

The general goal, as the plan states, is to preserve the public investment in downtown Missoula by ensuring that it is the center for consumer services, finance, professional services, and government within western Montana. One of the goals related to riverfront development is to "undertake a study of downtown's assets and needs, with the idea of attracting new businesses which would match these needs."¹⁹ Goals for downtown redevelopment are put together over a period of years and with the public involved in the review process.

The Urban Renewal Plan narrows the planning focus to downtown Missoula and provides necessary guidance on further development of contiguous areas adjacent to the Clark Fork River.

Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (RUDAT) Study

The Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (RUDAT) Study focused directly on riverfront development. During the latter part of 1977, the Missoula City Spirit Program was formed as part of the National Endowment for the Arts City Spirit Program. The Missoula City Spirit Committee found that there was a shortage of facilities and space for Missoula's performing arts groups. Thus, a Facility Steering Committee was formed, and it determined space needs and facility types.²⁰ The steering committee then applied to the National Endowment for the Arts for a grant through their Design Arts Program to pay for a feasibility study and design competition. With the grant, plus matching contributions from the community, the American Institute of Architects was contacted to provide a Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team, which was in Missoula during October, 1980.²¹ The design team was composed of nationally recognized experts in such fields as urban design, transportation, facilities management, and architecture. This design team offered Missoula a unique opportunity in acquiring outstanding planning expertise.

The objectives of the RUDAT program were:

1. to improve the regional/urban condition in the nation;
2. to support local American Institute of Architects (A.I.A.) chapters and their efforts to improve the physical design of their communities;
3. to illustrate the importance of the urban design framework for community development and regional planning; and
4. to stimulate public awareness and action and focus efforts toward improving communities through citizen involvement in urban and planning issues.²²

After several days of public hearings and after the review of written material provided the team, it was determined that the accumulated wants of Missoula's citizens far exceeded the local community's ability to pay for the required facilities.²³ Thus, the team looked at various alternatives and attempted to develop an affordable compromise which would meet the basic needs of the town but could be supported without destroying the local funding base.

The second phase of RUDAT provided for a Missoula riverfront design competition which had nationally recognized architectural firms compete and each present detailed site design drawings. The firm which presented the winning design effort was awarded \$10,000 and invited to provide final plans for development of the river corridor.

These three park and recreational space planning documents provide the basis for Missoula riverfront development from an overall county plan to detailed park requirements and design.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The development of parkways next to rivers cannot be a simple, piecemeal effort. It must involve long range goals and have solid government and citizen support. If people respond to the challenge of developing water-oriented parks, they will realize numerous benefits.²⁴

The river is usually an underdeveloped resource for city recreation. It can be as important as any lake or other body of water that people drive miles to use and admire.²⁵

Where the land meets the water, man's imagination has always stirred. Even today . . . waters remain a mystery, an enigmatic lure, a visual escape. Almost any city by the water is privileged by its nearness to this doubly reassuring weight of nature, its people can look up now and then from the almost inevitable pettiness of the environment and find release.²⁶

However, prior to the construction or development of these amenities, certain basic questions must be answered. What do we have? What does what we have mean to us? And what can we do about it? Since the selected studies and plans mentioned in the previous chapter attempt to answer these questions, each must be looked at to determine its informational input toward the river corridor development.

Inventory

The Missoula County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan provides an inventory and identifies specific sites to serve certain

functions in an overall county recreation system. Design, capital budgeting, and program scheduling are not being considered. The study states that a river park system would be the center of future urban recreational development. This park system, if properly designed and managed, could meet most of the recreational needs in the future. The waterways corridors would provide easy access for other types of parks. A wide range of activities could be provided by the river system to include play areas, natural areas, historic sites, trails, and boating ramps. The study recommended that, generally, the perimeter boundary would follow the 100-year floodplain for the entire county. As to specific sites, the study mentions the Milwaukee Railroad right-of-way and the present downtown parks as management units that will serve a particular function in the overall county park system.²⁷ The downtown parks would be expanded by the river corridor concept and, in certain cases, linked together. Joining the parks with footpaths and bikeways along the riverfront would increase use through better access. The parks, along with a green belt on the riverbanks, could be used for community activities and as a starting point for downtown rehabilitation.²⁸

The value of land next to bodies of water has increased much more than the value of regular residential or commercial land located away from water.²⁹ In addition, urban parks improve the quality of a neighborhood and thus increase the recreational services available to each housing unit. The improvement in quality adds income to the community and should also increase the market value of property within the area.³⁰

The above study also mentions the attempt to work out an arrangement with the Milwaukee Railroad and the Burlington Northern Railroad to allow the Milwaukee Railroad to use Burlington Northern tracks. However, the need for this effort was cancelled by the demise of the Milwaukee Railroad in Montana and the sale of its right-of-way for public use.

Problem Identification

The Urban Renewal Plan: Downtown Missoula Redevelopment Program identifies the problem by stating that "revitalization of the downtown is critical because of the undisputed importance of the Central Business District to the well-being of the community."³¹ The plan also states that one of the key problems in the downtown area is land use and the amenities tied to that use. The Urban Renewal Plan attempts to identify community attitudes, problems, and opportunities in the downtown area, and it provides direction for redevelopment within the urban core. As to specific problems, the plan considers a partial development of the riverfront corridor through the acquisition of certain land and the improvement of existing parks.

The following goals are established by the Urban Renewal Plan for parks and other locations within the downtown area adjacent to the Clark Fork River and the Rattlesnake River complex.

University Riverfront

Fairly large amounts of land are available with the removal of the Milwaukee Railroad tracks. The irrigation canal and riverfront would become part of walking and biking trails connecting McCormick Park and

the University of Montana. Residential development should be encouraged, but the heights of buildings need to be restricted to retain the vistas along the Clark Fork River.³²

McCormick Park

Redevelopment here should focus on residential orientation toward the river. Residences should be linked to the walkway and bikeway for easy access to other points between this park and the University area. The land east of the Orange Street Bridge is recommended for residential usage.

Caras Park

This area is recommended to be used to combine the amenities of open space and downtown activities. Redevelopment goals for this area are to encourage residential usage on the riverfront and retail uses along Front Street. These two different uses could share common parking facilities within the park area. Some of the existing park would remain in riverfront open space.³³

West Broadway

St. Patrick Hospital would provide an anchor for this riverfront area. A pedestrian and bicycle pathway is needed along the riverbanks to provide and extend access to the riverfront corridor system. Construction along the riverfront should be a mixture of various uses such as residential, office, and commercial buildings.³⁴

Rattlesnake

A pathway is recommended to connect Greenough Park to the riverfront corridor. Construction in this area should provide for student housing during the school year and as motel accommodations during the summer months. A pathway connecting the Kiwanis Park pathway with the Van Buren Street Bridge should be built.³⁵

Kiwanis Park

The riverfront area along Levasseur Street was recommended as the center for additional residential development. Orientation for this development needs to be toward the river and Kiwanis Park. The pathway system needs to be connected to Caras Park.³⁶ Implementation of these plans would be accomplished by an Urban Renewal Agency to be formed and funded during 1979.

Coordinated Approach

The Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team report is a coordinated approach and is based on citizen participation as a key part of urban design planning. Team members from areas outside of Missoula would never have been able to understand local problems and needs without this help. Part of this understanding was provided by residents and representatives of various organizations. Missoula's people were given the opportunity to present their problems and ideas to the team during open meetings. Testimony was gathered from all elements of the society--local leaders, recreationalists, environmentalists, realtors, city government, other interested citizens, and is reflected in the RUDAT report.³⁷

Some of the suggestions of the report are to place indoor recreational facilities within the riverfront corridor and to use this corridor for outdoor recreation. Concern is expressed that the corridor's vegetation, wildlife, and scenic views should be protected. Much interest is shown in increasing the access to the Clark Fork River while retaining the river's natural setting.³⁸

The highest priority in the study is given to river development. It recommends continuous access for bicycles and pedestrians on both riverbanks from Hellgate Canyon to McCormick Park. One end of the linear park system would contain the Major Events Facility located to the north-west of the University's Adams Field House. Near the other end of the linear park would be a Missoula Musical Events Center, housed in the present Fox Theater Building. The owners of the Fox Theater have offered to donate the building to the City of Missoula.³⁹ The Wilma Theater would become a Dramatic Arts Center. On the south side of Front Street would be refurbished space in what is now Caras Park for outdoor events.⁴⁰ This study also envisioned the construction of a Sheraton Hotel south-east of the First National Montana Bank. A new convention facility, which could be built in or near Kiwanis Park, would be centrally located between the new Sheraton Hotel and the present Village Red Lion Motor Inn. Also, power lines throughout this area would be consolidated and placed in conduits under the present bridges.⁴¹

Some of the study's specific recommendations follow:

Design Guides

Buildings along the river corridor need to be limited to 60 feet in height. Breaks between buildings should be wide enough to keep open

vistas from the city toward the river. Massive buildings should not be constructed in residential areas. The events arena needs to be sited to provide a low profile. The dome height should not exceed the height of mature trees within the area. Simple materials could be used that will blend into the surroundings. Utility lines must either be removed from the site or placed underground.⁴² Urban sprawl should be controlled as much as possible.

Siting

The study mentions that views from many points along the Clark Fork River, to include the bridges, are excellent both upstream and downstream. They stressed that development near the river edges must be controlled to maintain these vistas.⁴³

Vegetation

Concerning the vegetation along the park corridor, the study recommends limiting additional plantings and depending primarily on the present natural vegetation.⁴⁴

Transportation

The study determined that the new stadium next to the Adams Field House would generate enough traffic during major events to cause significant traffic problems. This impact could be reduced if the following recommendations were followed:

1. develop hotel facilities as near as possible to the stadium to encourage walking to and from major events;
2. design and maintain the river corridor in a manner which will enhance the walking experience;

3. encourage the use of public transportation;
4. improve and expand present parking spaces at the north end of the University campus; and
5. manage the parking space during major events to maximize use of available space and optimize a profit from parking fees.⁴⁵

Recommendations as to what should be built or purchased are not made, but estimates of costs and profits are provided.

CHAPTER V

OTHER RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

After discussing, in detail, Missoula's riverfront development, it seems appropriate to consider other selected cities with similar riverfront problems. Some of their actions and solutions may provide greater insight into Missoula's corridor park and recreational needs.

Many cities in America have in their midst a river which can be a source of contrast and recreational space. City planners are looking now at these waterfronts. Efforts are being put forth to make them a source of recreation, enjoyment, and relaxation.⁴⁶ In addition, attractive riverside parks cause neighboring private land to increase in value.⁴⁷

Most cities involved in waterfront renewal during the 1960s and 1970s depended on federal funds to finance the major portion of the projects. This may no longer be true today, as there are less federal funds available and thus more local money is needed if similar projects are to be completed in the 1980s.

When one considers the word "waterfront", it can evoke an image of a dirty, tough area with few redeeming qualities. Many urban waterfronts have been neglected in recent years. They have been allowed to become the junk yards and dumping areas for sewer effluent and garbage.⁴⁸

Missoula is fortunate to have a waterfront that is in fairly good condition. There is little that needs to be done in the way of removing

piling and bulkheads from the watercourse, cleaning up water pollution, or closing off or relocating sewer discharges into the river.

For people to fully enjoy the water, they must have access to it. A key to waterfront planning is the provision of physical access to the river.⁴⁹ The problem which has been critical to most riverfront park development is the interference from highways or railroads. These linear obstacles not only limit access to the riverbank, but many also limit the room available for the riverfront park development. This is not a factor in much of the Missoula corridor development since the Milwaukee Railroad tracks have been removed.

The design of pedestrian walkways can be a complex undertaking. Some planners have thought the placement of walks along the waterfront will get people to use them. Pedestrian walkways will be used only if they are accompanied by other attractions. The paths may be used by some people to walk from their home to place of business; but, in general, people do not go out of their way to use walkways unless there is something(s) along the way that attracts them.⁵⁰

In addition to walkways, a pier built parallel to the shore may provide improved vistas and assist in bypassing areas which have been built up to the shoreline. The Penn's Landing project on Philadelphia's waterfront includes this type of pier. It allows pedestrians a view both of the river and land based activities.

Residents in some Wisconsin cities were surveyed to determine their interest in water. Sixty percent of those questioned responded that just to be able to view the water was important.⁵¹ Thus, any successful waterfront park development must not only provide physical

access to the shoreline, but provide for interesting water vistas as well. One way to accomplish this is to retain a wide strip of cleared land along the river shore. This open space could provide the needed access and contrast with the adjacent built-up areas. Provision of the open space may be difficult or impossible to achieve, so the answer may be to limit both the height and size of buildings near the shore. An urban renewal project on the Thames River in London allowed one tall building and limited the height of the remaining structures.⁵²

Another key design requirement is to remember that any waterfront park is a part of the overall city. A waterfront corridor park system could be enhanced by tying parts of it to such things as a cultural center or centers. This center could contain a theater, concert hall, and exhibition rooms as London's Thames project.⁵³

Selected waterfront development projects are reviewed with particular attention to those aspects which could relate to Missoula's waterfront.

Spokane Riverfront

One of the more interesting developments, and one which is fairly close to Missoula, is in Spokane. Long-range planning was necessary to make this riverside park a reality. Starting in 1900, the Spokane Park Board acquired riverfront land. The Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts studied the park potential and planned several parks from 1911 to 1913. In 1958 the City Plan Commission prepared a major study of the central river area, and in 1961 the City Council created a cultural center on the site of EXPO '74.⁵⁴ The real key to making EXPO '74 possible was the agreement for Spokane railroads to relocate

their tracks. This is a task that would have had to be done in Missoula if the Milwaukee Railroad had not ceased operations here. Rail traffic was consolidated south of the business district. Land was donated by the railroad and the Washington Water Power Company. Where additional land was needed, it was purchased. The EXPO '74 site was developed from \$5,700,000 pledged by the city. This pledge was backed by a Business and Occupation Tax. Construction of buildings for the exposition was financed by the State of Washington, the U.S. Government, and foreign governments. More than \$1,000,000 was spent on landscaping.⁵⁵

The Riverfront Plan, conceived by the Spokane Riverfront Development Program, is part of the Spokane Comprehensive Plan which was adopted by the city council. The Riverfront Plan's objectives are to concentrate attention on the river; ensure uniform development of adjacent public and private lands; maximize recreational, aesthetic, and economic return; clean up the river; and bring the greatest possible benefit to the citizens.⁵⁶

The planning process was divided into three stages. The first stage considered all feasible concepts for park development. The second stage provided a design plan based on the selected concept. The third stage produced a final plan and report to include financing. Citizen participation through the use of public meetings was encouraged throughout the planning process. Work started on the overall project and the railroad tracts were removed from the site prior to approval of the final planning documents.⁵⁷ A major thrust of the plan was to ensure that work on the site progressed rapidly and was not sidetracked by unnecessary bureaucratic reviews or excessive public discussion.

Riverdesign Springfield

Another development, located on the east coast, has much in common with Missoula. The plan was for Springfield, Massachusetts riverfront revitalization. The Connecticut River flowing through Springfield has been of little value to the city. By the 1950s, the river was so polluted with sewage that riverside land was of little value for almost any use. In 1979, the city prepared a redevelopment plan for its riverfront. The objectives of this plan were to enhance the image of Springfield's riverfront, provide recreational opportunities, reduce the impact of building along the riverfront, provide access to the river, and improve tourism. Also, the proposals made had to be financially feasible and funding sources had to be identified. Springfield had two major problems, which are common to many riverfront settings: poor access and lack of space. The plan was based on the establishment of three primary points of access to the linear park system. Activities would be concentrated at these points to help attract people to the park. These groups of activities would be linked to each other by a series of walkways. The downtown group of activities would provide a fair-like atmosphere with restaurants, a pavilion, and a floating band shell. A series of small parks at points would connect the riverside park system with interior open area. This redevelopment plan appears to have been conceived from work done in Spokane for the EXPO '74. Financing for Springfield's plan required Urban Development Action Grants in addition to city funds.⁵⁸ At this time, implementation of the plan is moving slowly with work progressing as funds can be acquired from the city and federal government.

Burlington

The people of Burlington, New York, located midway between Trenton and Philadelphia on the Delaware River, rebuilt their riverfront over a six-year period. The riverbanks over the years had become unsightly due to abandoned warehouses and garbage dumps. Previous efforts had failed, so it was determined by the city council that the land should be acquired by the city and transformed into riverside parks. Since its opening in 1974, the riverfront corridor has offered an open area running the length of the city's shore with a park at each end. The walkways are designed in various patterns and colors. In addition, there are play equipment, sitting areas, flower beds, and various trees and shrubs throughout the system. The cost for the construction and landscaping was \$260,000 plus much volunteer help.⁵⁹

San Antonio River Walk

The San Antonio River Walk project has been highly successful and demonstrates the value of the water's edge in providing economic as well as other benefits. Some of the initial goals of the river corridor study were not only to help revitalize downtown San Antonio, but to upgrade the river's water quality and improve flood control measures.⁶⁰ During the time the study was in progress (prior to 1975), a new planned community was being considered outside of San Antonio. This new community, along with additional subdivisions within San Antonio, would have diluted public support for downtown redevelopment. However, the river corridor study helped focus interest on the downtown, and plans for a new community outside and several subdivisions within San Antonio were not approved.

Some of the conclusions from the redevelopment of the study area were: (1) the river walk has added both economically and esthetically to the well-being of San Antonio; (2) visitors are attracted by a well-balanced mixture of park and business uses; (3) the river walk tends to tie together the downtown area of San Antonio by providing a cohesive ribbon connecting former isolated areas; and (4) the walk contains diversity and is unique to the San Antonio area. The river walk study area is fairly well redeveloped today and has vitally changed whole areas of downtown San Antonio for the better.

Riverfront Parks

These four examples of riverfront park planning all have something in common with what Missoula's planners are attempting with Missoula's Clark Fork River Corridor. Spokane's riverfront had a long history of planning, but EXPO '74 provided the stimulus to complete land acquisition and build a park system. The effort was much larger than that envisioned for Missoula--land had to be acquired, railroad tracks had to be removed, and major construction was required. The key importance of this particular project was ensuring funding sources so that site work could progress without lengthy delays. The Springfield plan provided alternatives to poor park access and an overall lack of space, which are two problems facing Missoula's corridor park. The Burlington plan demonstrates what can be done when funds are limited and the public wants a completed linear park--a reduced funding schedule with maximum use of volunteer labor. Missoula's riverfront development funds are limited, and to complete a decent park system will require equipment and

labor. The San Antonio riverwalk demonstrates the importance to a community of a solidifying factor for both overall social and economic improvement within an older downtown core.

CHAPTER VI

MISSOULA'S RIVERFRONT PROJECT--WHAT NOW?

Present Situation

Much of the riverfront land on the north shore is in private ownership. The major portion of publicly owned land consists of Caras Park and Kiwanis Park. The situation is better on the south shore. Pedestrian and bicycle path easements have been procured on both sides of the Higgins Avenue Bridge. A linear park is possible on the south side of the river with the combination of these easements and existing public land.⁶¹ The Clark Fork Riverfront Master Plan is presently being prepared and then will require approval by the city council. This plan will set standards for development and use within the river corridor.⁶²

However, writers of past studies and planning documents generally agree on concepts for the development of a corridor park system. These general concepts are: establish a park-like atmosphere, develop recreational facilities, increase public access, and develop trails for bicycles and pedestrians connecting the parks with existing transportation routes. These concepts, which are recognized as important by the public as well, will be implemented into the future master plan.⁶³

Clark Fork River Corridor intensity of use must also be considered in the master plan. City planners have tentatively developed three levels of use and development--low, medium, and high. Low

intensity use and development would leave the linear park system much as it is today with unimproved trails and undeveloped activity sites. The area would be preserved in a more or less natural state. Development would await future public involvement and funding. Medium intensity use and development would add recreational opportunities, thus significantly increasing public use. Improvements would be restricted to those that could be made without undue alteration of natural areas. Trails would be improved along with access to the riverfront. High intensity use and development would encourage the construction of numerous recreational facilities and access trails. The total riverfront corridor would be subjected to intensive development-in anticipation of intensive use.⁶⁴

What Needs to be Done

The title of this portion of the paper probably should be "what really needs to be done". There has been much discussion in the news of riverfront development funds from one government source or another. Some of this money may be forthcoming; but, probably due to the general reduction of federal money for social uses, most of the anticipated funding will not be available. Federal funding may become more plentiful in the future years for these types of projects, but immediate funding appears limited. A "last resort" source of funds is from increased property taxes. It would appear that local property owners consider property taxes to be overly burdensome at the present time. Any requested increase for the Clark Fork River Corridor development and maintenance might not receive voter approval. Therefore, any park development programs along this corridor at the present time should be limited.

Conclusion

Outside funding for purchase of additional riverfront land and development of the corridor as a park is limited. As stated previously, raising property taxes to provide revenue seems to be unacceptable to most property owners due to the perceived high level of taxes at the present time. In addition, the park department is unable to develop and maintain the city's presently dedicated park land. Thus, another approach would seem to be more appropriate. The first step would be to prepare and have approved a master plan for the Clark Fork River Corridor that would phase riverfront development. The first phase would provide for a level of use, and thus a corresponding development, just above the low intensity level. This level would require minor construction and path development. Later phases could provide for higher intensity levels as funding becomes available. However, even at this reduced development level, certain improvements and changes are necessary to provide a usable park system.

The recommendations contained in the RUDAT report and in the design work done as Phase Two of the report are valid and need to be implemented as soon as sufficient funding is available to complete the various stages of the final design. Until this funding is forthcoming, the following actions are provided as a minimum interim measure only.

South Shore

1. A general cleanup is needed along the entire riverfront to include the shoreline, railroad berm, and areas to the south of the river.

2. Paths throughout the area need to be cleared of weeds and brush. The major path for pedestrians and bicycle riders atop the railroad berm needs to be graded and surfaced with bark or gravel.

3. Unused power poles along the railroad berm need to be removed. The railroad rails, ties, and overhead electrical wiring have been removed, but the power poles were left.

4. Removal and relocation of the power lines throughout the park corridor is required. These lines and poles are unsightly and need to be consolidated within the planned utility corridor.

5. Selected high visibility areas need to be planted with healthy, drought resistant vegetation. Providing irrigation for these sites would not be included in this first phase.⁶⁵

North Shore

1. Remove and relocate power lines to the south utility corridor. These poles and power lines are unsightly and interrupt scenic vistas in many directions.

2. Provide access to the pedestrian and bicycle path beneath the Madison Street Bridge. An agreement with the Village Red Lion Motor Inn to allow access to this path should be possible.

How Accomplished

This would encompass the major tasks required in the first phase of the recommended master plan. These tasks would be accomplished primarily using volunteer labor and donated materials. Some examples are provided:

1. Possibly Montana Power Company would be willing to furnish the labor and materials to relocate the power lines and poles. This would be an expensive operation, but the company just might do it as a civic duty if sufficient publicity and recognition were provided.

2. The cleanup of the riverfront could be accomplished by civic organizations. The mayor could proclaim a riverfront cleanup day and various organizations could be assigned areas of responsibility. The cleanup might be followed by a city-wide picnic and park corridor "open-house". This would be an ideal time to show interested citizens what was planned for the park.

3. Clearing, grading, and resurfacing of paths could be accomplished by equipment operator students from the Missoula Vocational Technical Center and personnel from engineer units of the Army Reserves and Montana National Guard. Materials could be donated by local construction and supply companies.

4. Trees and shrubs might be planted by Missoula's garden clubs, with the plants to be donated by local nurseries.

The first phase of the Clark Fork River Corridor master plan, as envisioned here, would not provide an elaborate, big city park; but it would be a starting point for later improvement and expansion based on the RUDAT study and later designs.

Viewpoints for this corridor development may be at variance with each other, but all will work to some extent since the waterfront is an area of great diversity.⁶⁶

Perhaps the best approach for any urban area would be to tend its waterfront selectively, like a garden. You carefully weed out the dead and decaying plants and replace them with new ones rather than tearing everything down.⁶⁷

Missoula still has much to do before the citizens will have an attractive, well-landscaped, and useful riverfront park; but much time and money have already been expended by many people and organizations to bring this dream about. The community must continue to work together to first, complete the project; and second, to provide the continuing effort needed to maintain the park system once it is functioning.

FOOTNOTES

¹"All Work, Little Play for 150 Million: Urban Recreation Study," National Parks and Conservation Magazine, June 1978, p. 24.

²David J. Reed, "The San Antonio River Walk: A User and Environmental Analysis," Journal of Soil Water Conservation 31 (1976): 28.

³Clark Fork Riverfront Project (Draft Letter Report), by Missoula Redevelopment Agency, (Missoula, Montana: 1983), p. 7.

⁴Proceedings: River Recreation Management and Research Symposium, USDA Forest Service General Technical Report NC-28, (St. Paul, Minnesota, 1977), p. 19.

⁵Ibid., p. 25.

⁶J. W. Hanna, S. F. Phillip, and G. W. Mullins, "Decision Making in the Development of Urban Waterfronts for Park Business Use," Water Resources Bulletin 14, 1 (February 1978): 186.

⁷Missoula County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, by Missoula Planning Board, (Missoula, Montana: 1976), p. 3.

⁸Ibid., p. 3

⁹Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 7.

¹²Ibid., p. 40

¹³Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁵Urban Renewal Plan: Downtown Missoula Redevelopment Program, by Missoula Planning Board Staff, (Missoula, Montana: 1978), p. 3.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 11

¹⁷Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 9.

²⁰Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (RUDAT), by the Assistance Team, (Missoula, Montana: 1980), p. 1.

²¹Ibid., p. 2.

²²Ibid., p. 3.

²³Ibid., p. 11.

²⁴H. Deardorff, "Recall for Greenways; Excerpt from the Public Benefits of Cleared Water: Emerging Greenway Opportunities," Parks and Recreation 12 (February 1977):39a.

²⁵Theodore Sudia, "The River and the City," Trends, July/August/September 1976, p. 48.

²⁶Walter McQuade, "The Suffering Shoreline: Water Blight in Blocking Visual Escape from the City," Architectural Forum 114, 6 (June 1961):91.

²⁷Missoula County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, p. 41.

²⁸Ibid., p. 43.

²⁹E. J. L. David, "The Exploding Demand for Recreation Property," Land Economics 54, 2 (May 1976):206

³⁰Arthur H. Darling, "Measuring Benefits Generated by Urban Water Parks," Land Economics 49 (February 1973):23.

³¹Urban Renewal Plan: Downtown Missoula Redevelopment Program, p. 3.

³²Ibid., p. 30.

³³Ibid., p. 29.

³⁴Ibid., p. 30.

³⁵Ibid., p. 31.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (RUDAT), p. 7.

³⁸Ibid., p. 45.

³⁹"Owners Offer Fox Theater as Donation to Missoula," Missoulian, 7 May 1983, p. 1.

⁴⁰Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (RUDAT), p. 47.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 48.

⁴²Ibid., p. 54.

⁴³Ibid., p. 63.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 66.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 79.

⁴⁶Richard A. Lehmann, "The Principles of Waterfront Renewal: A Summary of Experiences in Fifty American Cities," Landscape Architecture 56, 4 (July 1966):286.

⁴⁷Melville McMillan, "Measuring Benefits Generated by Urban Water Parks: Comment," Land Economics 51, 3 (July 1975):379.

⁴⁸Lehmann, "The Principles of Waterfront Renewal: A Summary of Experiences in Fifty American Cities, p. 67.

⁴⁹Donald F. Wood, "Reviewing Urban Waterfronts," Land Economics 41, 2 (May 1965):146.

⁵⁰Lehmann, "The Principles of Waterfront Renewal: A Summary of Experience in Fifty American Cities, p. 288.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 281.

⁵²Ibid., p. 289.

⁵³Ibid., p. 290.

⁵⁴Robert L. Woerner, "Revival of the River: Spokane," Landscape Architecture 65, 2 (April 1975):188.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 190.

⁵⁶Spokane Riverfront Development Program, by Spokane City Plan Commission, (Spokane, Washington: 1974), p. 28.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 30.

⁵⁸Riverdesign Springfield, by Moore Grover Harper, P.C., (Essex, Connecticut: 1979), p. 1.

⁵⁹Martin Lasker, "Riverfront Rebirth," Parks and Recreation 11 (May 1976):25.

⁶⁰"Urban Waterfronts: Design and Planning," Progressive Architecture 56, 6 (June 1975):43.

⁶¹Special Flood Hazard Information, Clark Fork River, by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, (Seattle, Washington: 1973), p. 21.

⁶²Clark Fork Riverfront Project (Draft Letter Report), p. 75.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 77.

⁶⁵L. Eisenman and George E. Graves, "Reclaiming a Riverfront," Progressive Architecture 53, 3 (March 1972):92.

⁶⁶James B. Kenyon, "Land Use Mixture in the Built-up Waterfront: Extent and Implications," Economic Geography 44 (April 1968):157.

⁶⁷S. J. Makler, "Washington's Waterfront Lesson," Water Spectrum, Issues, Choices, Actions 6, 4 (Winter 1974-1975):26.

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