

**SUBJECT: Iditapark Master Plan Approval**

REQUESTED BY: Public Works

PREPARED BY: Public Works

DATE: November 29, 1999

FOR AGENDA OF: January 10, 2000

**SUMMARY:**

The Iditapark Master Plan was approved by the Wasilla Parks and Recreation Commission on October 28, 1999 and by the Planning Commission on November 22, 1999.

The next step is to present it before the Wasilla City Council for adoption as part of the City Comprehensive Plan. Both commissions approved additions to the proposed plan by Group Three Design to include a BMX facility, a children's story telling area, phased development and to review alternative approaches to irrigation.

It should be noted that the phasing recommendations are not absolute and that development of the park is dependent upon a variety of factors including budget constraints, availability of landscape and other materials, weather and most important, volunteer labor and the types of projects on which volunteers want to work. Although the Parks and Recreation Commission phasing recommendations are somewhat at odds with the Iditapark Master Plan, an effort will be made to accommodate them as much as possible.

Additional funds will be requested in the Year 2000 CIP to continue funding improvements at Iditapark.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**  x  No   Yes, amount requested: \$ Fund:

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Council is requested to acknowledge the proposed September, 1999 Iditapark Master Plan, have Administration use it as a guide for future improvements in Iditapark and include the September 1999 Iditapark Master Plan in the next comprehensive Plan update.

  
Reviewed by: SARAH PALIN, Mayor

Presented to council on  11/10/00   
Action taken:  Approved  Denied  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
Verified by  [Signature]

Attachments: Iditapark Master Plan



# CITY OF WASILLA

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## WASILLA PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 99-24

A RESOLUTION OF THE WASILLA PLANNING COMMISSION (WPC) OF WASILLA, ALASKA RECOMMENDING TO THE WASILLA CITY COUNCIL THE APPROVAL OF THE MASTER PLAN FOR IDITAPARK.

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska in 1996 quitclaim the Old Wasilla Airstrip to the City of Wasilla with restriction that it be used for public purposes; and

WHEREAS, January 1996, Wasilla City Council designated the Old Wasilla Airstrip for park use by the adoption of the 1996 Wasilla Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, in the summer of 1996 Jonathan Schilk was contracted to prepare a plan to guide the development for the site; and

WHEREAS, on August 25, 1997, Wasilla City Council adopted Action Memorandum No. 97-69 for the Iditapark Site Concept Diagram; and

WHEREAS, in March of 1999 the City Administration authorized a complete survey and composition of a Master Plan for Iditapark; and

WHEREAS, Group Three Design and subconsultant F. Don Vogan and Associates were retained as landscape architectural consultants to prepare the new Master Plan; and

WHEREAS; on October 28, 1999, the Wasilla Parks and Recreation Commission passed a motion approving the Iditapark Master Plan, prepared by Group Three Design and F. Don Vogan with the recommendation that it be forwarded to the Wasilla Planning Commission and then on to Wasilla City Council for final approval.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Wasilla Planning Commission recommends the following conditions for inclusion to the Iditapark Master Plan:

- lighting for the Wonderland Playground and the Skateboard facility will be a priority in the 2000 summer season phased development for security and safety purposes; and
- hydroseeding be done through out the park during the first phase to reduce erosion; and
- the permanent restroom be built during the first phase (as funding allows), to reduce expenditures for rented facilities incurred by extensive use and repair due to vandalism; and
- the Chief of Police be contacted to acquire his recommendations for guide lines for plantings that will maintain security in the park.

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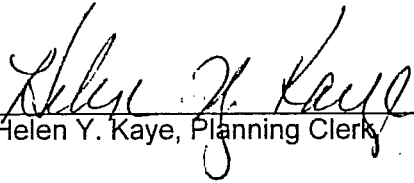
PUBLIC WORKS  
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NOW, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wasilla Planning Commission recommends the adoption of Wasilla Planning Commission Resolution No. R99-24, supporting the adoption of the Iditapark Master Plan and that said resolution be forwarded to the Wasilla City Council for final approval.

I certify that a resolution in substantially the above form was passed by a majority of those voting at a duly called and conducted meeting of Wasilla Planning Commission this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of November 1999.

ATTESTED:

APPROVED:

  
Helen Y. Kaye, Planning Clerk

  
Verne E. Rupright, Chair

**DATE:** November 18, 1999  
**TO:** Wasilla Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Verdie Bowen, Chairperson  
Wasilla Parks & Recreation Commission  
**RE:** Iditapark Master Plan

At its regularly scheduled meeting on October 28, 1999, the Wasilla Parks and Recreation Commission passed the following motion:

We approve the Iditapark Master Plan, presented tonight by Mr. Burt Lent, for adoption, and recommend that it be forwarded to the Planning Commission for their approval and adoption, and then presented to the City Council for approval and adoption as part of the City Comprehensive Plan.

This motion was also passed:

To recommend that the Planning Commission review the addition of a BMX facility, the children's story telling area, phased development, and review alternative approaches to irrigation.

Mr. Lent will be presenting the plan to your Commission on November 22, 1999. Please feel free to call any of our Commission members if you have any questions.

**D R A F T**

**MASTER PLAN**

**FOR**

**IDITAPARK**

**FOR THE**

**CITY OF WASILLA  
290 EAST HERNING AVENUE  
WASILLA, AK. 99654**

**PREPARED BY**

**GROUP THREE DESIGN  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
374 SARAHS WAY  
WASILLA, AK. 99654**

**AND**

**F. DON VOGAN & ASSOC.  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
4723 KERSHNER AVENUE  
ANCHORAGE, AK. 99517**

**DATE OF PLAN: SEPTEMBER, 1999  
DATE OF PLAN NARRATIVE: NOVEMBER 1999**

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## Introduction

The City of Wasilla's downtown area is greatly enhanced by frontage on two beautiful lakes. As if that were not enough, Wasilla is extremely fortunate to have been granted a 30-acre parcel of land in its downtown core. This parcel was a former airstrip for small airplanes. It was originally donated by the Snider Family in the 1930s for that purpose. When it became inadequate as an airstrip, a new airport was planned west of town and the old airstrip was closed in 1993. Wasilla designated the old airstrip land for park use in their Comprehensive Plan in January, 1996. The State of Alaska then quitclaimed this parcel to Wasilla in 1996. The only deed restriction was that it be used for public purposes.

With this event, Wasilla became the recipient of an extremely important open space in its downtown core area. The significance of this space to Wasilla is very great. It is not unlike the way that Central Park is so significant to midtown Manhattan. As Wasilla continues to grow, this 30-acre greenbelt will provide more and more benefits to its citizens – not only as an open space in the heart of the city, but also as a prized recreational asset. Already, since this site was acquired, intensive interest and participation on the part of Wasilla's citizens has resulted in the development of Wonderland. This fantastic facility is loved by everyone and Wasilla should take great pride in it. It is a great start for the development of the park.

In the summer of 1996, the City retained the services of Landscape Architect Jonathan A. Schilk to prepare a Plan to guide the development of the balance of the site. In August, 1996, a plan titled "Iditapark Site Concept Diagram", with accompanying narrative, was completed by Schilk and submitted to the city for review. This Concept Plan was then approved by the City Council in Action Memorandum No. 97-69 on August 25, 1997. It has been utilized between 1996 and the present time to guide the development of new facilities. Mr. Schilk was not authorized by the city to further his work beyond this Concept Plan.

In the spring of 1999, the new city administration authorized preparation of a more definitive survey and master plan for the park. This work was intended to better define the Concept Diagram that had already been prepared. The firm of Group Three Design, with F. Don Vogan and Associates, subconsultant, was retained as landscape architectural consultants to prepare the new Master Plan. Landscape Architect Jonathan Schilk was utilized as a part of the design team, as a resource person, to take advantage of his previous experience on the project and to provide continuity.

After the planning work commenced, and during the summer construction period of 1999, Group Three Design's Contract was amended. The new work included the simultaneous preparation of construction drawings and specifications and location assistance for basketball courts, parking lots and trail construction on the north side of the park. This construction work was completed in the summer and fall of 1999 and generally reflected the planning work that had been completed up to the time of construction.

## **Purpose of Master Plan**

Since an "Iditapark Site Concept Design" had already been prepared, reviewed and accepted by the city, one purpose of preparing the new Master Plan was essentially to complete the work already commenced in 1996. The city administration determined that a more detailed plan, beyond a "Concept Diagram" was needed to guide construction of facilities. In preparation for this master planning work, the city authorized an updated survey of the park site to be prepared by the surveying firm of Denali North of Palmer. Group Three Design coordinated with Denali North and Jonathan Schilk to help minimize the cost of that survey and to make sure that all available data was utilized. An electronic copy of that survey has been submitted to Public Works for their use.

The new Master Plan was to be prepared utilizing this new survey to better reflect the current conditions, grades and utilities at the site. The main purpose in preparing the Master Plan was to provide an updated and more accurate guide for the design and development of new facilities at the park.

## **Description of the Site**

The Iditapark site consists of 30 acres of land in downtown Wasilla. This land was originally part of the Snider family homestead. Because it was cleared and donated to the State of Alaska as a landing strip field in the 1930s, it was essentially devoid of topsoil and vegetation at the time of conveyance to Wasilla in 1996. Exposed sands and gravels predominate and water percolates rapidly through these materials. High winds from the north and east blow sands, silts and dust to the south and west. The site measures 600' wide x 2,950' in length, reflecting the shape of the former landing strip, and is oriented east west along its long dimension. The site has very little slope along its long axis and is almost level, sloping only a little from east to west.

Iditapark is bounded on the east by Lucille Street, on the south by Tommy Moe Drive and commercial lots, on the west by Weber Drive and on the north by Nelson Avenue. Surrounding lands are all zoned for commercial use. Some residential structures exist on the north side of the park, across Nelson Avenue. Valley Performing Arts exists on the south side of the park. A new public safety building is planned adjacent to the southeast corner of the park site. For additional site information, refer to Jonathan Schilk's descriptions on topography, soils, views, etc., in the Appendix of this Report.

## **Existing Facilities**

At the time of preparation of this Report, the following facilities existed in Iditapark: Wasilla Wonderland, 1 picnic pavilion, 2 parking lots, 4 basketball courts, 2 tennis courts, the skateboard area, 1 public telephone near the skateboard park, the east-west bicycle/pedestrian trail and some tree and shrub plantings. All of these facilities have been constructed since 1996 and follow the original Concept Plan with some minor exceptions. They have all been well received and are heavily used.



## Reference to the Comprehensive Plan

Wasilla's Comprehensive Plan recommends that providing opportunities for parks and recreation facilities and programs are an essential part of the community's "quality of life". It further recommends year-around activities for youth and their families.

Facilities recommendations that specifically address the Iditapark site include: open spaces for outdoor events, sledding hill, ice skating pond, cross country and looped trails, warm-up shelter, lighting, picnic areas, peripheral parking, volleyball, horseshoe pits, comfort stations, Veteran's Memorial and "greening up" through landscaping.

## Updated Goals for this Plan

1. Develop a Master Plan for Iditapark that shows the vision for the park and serves as a guide for future development.
2. Establish the theme of the Iditarod Race as a unifying "connecting thread", or historical theme, for the park.
3. Create a design that works well for all of the age groups in Wasilla.
4. Make the park a fun place to be by providing a variety of recreational opportunities.
5. Make the park beautiful with landscaping.
6. Include facilities that balance costs vs. long term benefits of high quality design.
7. Address the needs and rights of adjacent land owners and residents.
8. Provide an internal trail system separated from vehicular ways and parking lots.
9. Make the park safe, minimizing hiding places and conflicts between uses.
10. Make the park popular year-around by providing facilities for all-year use.

## Meeting Results

Numerous public involvement meetings have been held for providing input to the planning process for Iditapark since 1992. For the results from those meetings prior to 1999, please refer to "Issues" in the Schilk Report titled "Iditapark Site Concept Diagram Narrative" in the Appendix of this report.

Following, in chronological order, are the meetings that were held during 1999 with the Administration and the Parks and Recreation and the Planning Commissions for the purpose of preparing this Master Plan. Included are the results of those meetings. For minutes of the Commission meetings, please refer to the Appendix in the back of this report. The Notice-to-Proceed with the planning work of this Master Plan was May 12, 1999:

1. May 13, 1999 – Initial meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission to acquire input:
  - a. The already prepared and approved "Site Concept Diagram" prepared by Schilk in 1996 was to be utilized as a base to start designing the new Master Plan.
  - b. Suggestions for phasing of construction and irrigation were requested to be included in the plan.
  - c. Figure skating ponds, a Veteran's Memorial and a pedestrian promenade were requested to be included in the plan.

2. May 17, 1999 – A special meeting with the Administration to was held to acquire input. Those attending were: Mayor Palin, Deputy Mayor Cramer, Public Works Director Don Shiesl and Burt Lent of Group Three Design.
  - a. Hedges, as “living fences”, lawn topsoiling and seeding and general “greening up” of the park to be given top priority. Attempt to minimize parking, keeping it on the perimeter of the park. Address drainage in the plan.
  - b. As an addendum to the master planning work, Group Three Design was asked to negotiate with Public Works for additional compensation to immediately prepare plans and specifications for basketball courts, landscaping and parking on the north side of the park for construction in 1999. (This was accomplished and an east-west bicycle trail and more parking lot expansion were also built in the fall of 1999).
3. May 25, 1999 – Initial “walk-through” meeting with Public Works:
  - a. Re-orient and re-shape the swale at Weber Drive to result in a form appropriate for the Master Plan.
  - b. Provide landscaping as a windbreak along Weber Drive.
  - c. Community gardens are to be located in the small, separated parcel west of Weber Drive.
  - d. Existing chain link fences in the park were placed to discourage ATV's, are not sacred and should be eliminated as barriers when the living fence hedges mature and as other more attractive barriers are installed.
  - e. Some contaminated soil was revealed at a location off Weber Drive.
  - f. “Green-up” west end of the park first. (Later, the east end became the higher priority because of the prevailing winds blowing dust).
4. July 8, 1999 – Research and Analysis and Concept Plans Meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission. After discussions, two motions were unanimously passed:
  - a. Recommend utilizing “Concept Plan A” (the one without large ponds), with the following changes:
    - 1) Add a parking lot between the volleyball and basketball courts (This was eliminated later as unnecessary).
    - 2) Move the Amphitheater/sledding hill west, further away from the skate board area.
    - 3) Add parking stalls to the east parking lot in the unused, vacated portion of the Tommy Moe Drive right-of-way.
  - b. Along the north side of the park, fronting on Nelson, provide a space of 10' south of the right-of-way line to allow for an east-west bicycle trail outside of the living fence.
5. July 13, 1999 – Research and Analysis and Concept Plans Meeting with the Planning Commission. Under Persons to be heard, the Commission was informed of the progress of the planning work on the updating of the Master Plan for Iditapark. The Concept Plans were described and the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendations were explained to the Planning Commissioners. After some discussion, the Planning Commission passed a motion recommending “Concept Plan B”, the one with large ponds, NOT “Concept Plan A”, as the Parks and Recreation had recommended.

6. July 21, 1999 – A special meeting with the Administration was held to discuss the different recommendations of the two Commissions. Those attending were: Mayor Palin, Deputy Mayor Cramer, Public Works Director Don Shiesl and Burt Lent of Group Three Design. The advantages of the ponds in Plan B were described. These included storage for irrigation water and related economies, improving grading design, availability of the ponds for ice skating, as had been asked for, and for bio-remediation and sedimentation. The result was that we were instructed to pursue developing Plan B, but to eliminate any streams connecting the ponds. A third alternate "Concept Plan C" was then prepared for the next Commission meeting.

7. July 27, 1999 – A joint meeting of the Parks and Recreation and the Planning Commissions was held for presenting Alternative "Concept Plan C" for approval. After some discussion, a motion to recommend utilizing Concept C was unanimously passed by the Planning Commission. The chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission concurred and was to report back to the Parks and Recreation.

8. September 2, 1999 – A progress meeting with was held with Public Works regarding elements of the plan. Because of space constraints, it was agreed to shift the east west bicycle trail to the north of the volleyball courts and to move the horse shoe courts elsewhere. Also corrections were made in the alignment of the trail so that it conformed to the Master Plan.

9. September 14, 1999 – A second meeting with Public Works was held regarding construction and the Master Plan. A correction was made to the Master Plan moving the east parking lot southerly so that the south side of the lot was on the old right-of-way line of the vacated portion of Tommy Moe Drive. Other refinements were made in items under construction.

NOTE: During the summer, the Administration was approached about the need for a special bicycle, or "BMX" (bicycle-moto-cross) area for riding, jumping and stunts to be added to the park. Conflicts had arisen between skate-boarders and cyclists in the skate board area and the cyclists were told to get out. As a result, a special "BMX" area was added to the Master Plan near the skate board area to accommodate cyclists.

10, and 11. October 14 and 28, 1999 – Both meetings were at the Parks and Recreation Commission for purpose of presenting the final Master Plan Layout at 1" = 50' scale. On October 14, a quorum was lacking, but a general discussion about the Plan took place. On October 28, a quorum was present.

During this meeting 3 representatives of the BMX bicyclists presented a video and a scale model to the Commission and they were well received. Discussion about the BMX area, the young children's play/story-telling area, phasing and irrigation took place. Two motions were unanimously passed:

- a. Endorse the current Master Plan and forward it to the Planning Commission and Council for their approvals.
- b. Request that the Planning Commission review the following:
  - 1) addition of the BMX area
  - 2) small children's play/story telling area
  - 3) phasing of construction
  - 4) alternative approaches to irrigating the park

**(This page is reserved for final Planning Commission and Council Meetings)**

## Updated Needs Assessment and Recommendations

Following, in a listing, is a recommended updated Statement of Needs for the facilities that should be developed in *the balance of the park*. This list is based on Community input from 1996 through 1999, Commission and Administration input from 1999 and our own research:

1. "Green-up" the eastern end of the park, including topsoil, seed and plantings to help reduce wind erosion and blowing sand and silt.
2. Jogging/walking/bicycle trails with physical fitness stations along the route.
3. Ponds for sedimentation, irrigation water storage, ice skating in winter, wading in summer with a small warm-up shelter/teen center on the central pond.
4. Veteran's Memorial monument, flagpole and gardens in the eastern part of the park.
5. Sledding hill, combined with an amphitheater on the opposite side of the hill.
6. Two permanent rest room buildings with vandal-proof construction and park-complimentary design.
7. Bike trails *on the outer perimeter of the park*, with bike racks, connecting to the Nelson, Weber and Lucille trail (constructed in 1999).
8. Two additional small parking lots in the park proper and one in the garden area. The ones in the park would be in the northwest, near to Wonderland and in the southeast, near the skateboard area.
9. A special area for small children, or "toddlers" near to Wonderland, and containing lawn area, play equipment and a story telling area.
10. Community gardens in the small parcel west of Weber Drive.
11. **A Joe Reddington Memorial Sculpture and Fountain** at the pond in the center of the park, basically where the re-start used to occur.
12. An allowance of open spaces for both public gatherings and, possibly, the Iditarod re-start.
13. Extensive landscaping throughout the park for windbreaks, sound attenuation, view framing and spatial definition, and including "living fences". Provide irrigation for all vegetation.
14. A "BMX" bicycle riding area near to the existing skate board area to eliminate conflicts with the skate board users.

## Current Influences and Relationships to the Community

Three important events have occurred since the preparation and approval of Schilk's "Site Concept Diagram" in 1996 that directly affect the park's relationship to the community. They are: the construction of Weber Drive, the moving of the Iditarod Re-start to the new airport and the adoption of an adjacent parcel of land for a public safety building (re-subdivision is pending) with the change of Tommy Moe Drive to a cul-de-sac.

Weber Drive, although cutting through park land, was seen as a need to improve traffic circulation in the community, especially given the length of the park site. It does separate a northwest corner of the park from the rest of the park, but it also improves access to the park along the west side. It also helps relieve pressure for access points along Nelson Avenue. A community "green-thumb" garden area has been proposed as an appropriate

use for the small isolated parcel of the park. Such a use seems appropriate. It will reinforce the landscaping efforts in the rest of the park because gardeners can grow flowers for use in the park. The gardeners would be responsible for maintaining their own plots under an agreement with the City Parks and Recreation Division.

By moving the Iditarod Re-start to the new airport, congestion at Iditapark will be relieved and mushers will have more needed space for staging. At this writing, there is some concern about the interference with airport operations, but it is our understanding that these are being addressed. Until this is completely resolved, some space should continue to be allocated for staging the re-start at the park. This is accommodated in the large "meadows" shown on the Plan.

The new public safety building should actually complement the park. It is also a public use and having it nearby to the skateboard and BMX areas will afford a greater degree of safety for users. By introducing a cul-de-sac near the end of Tommy Moe Drive, the east end of the park will have moving traffic on only two sides, providing a somewhat quieter setting there.

*One clarification* is necessary regarding the statement made in Mr. Schilk's Report about residential use on the other side of Nelson Avenue. These lands appear as commercial in the Comprehensive Plan and on the Zoning Map. This classification allows for residential development through Use Permits. It also allows for commercial uses without a use permit. It can not be assumed, therefore, that residential uses will continue to be the predominant use north of the park. As a suggestion for future development, Planning should encourage mixed-use applications, such as "Shop Houses", or high-end condominiums with commercial uses on the ground floor. The commercial uses could feature sidewalk cafes and boutiques that would complement the park across the Avenue.

Similarly, such park-friendly cafes and shops should be encouraged along the south side of the park where presently there are only the ugly blank walls of the backs of the stores. Some real opportunities that will result from the park improvements need to be communicated to the property owners by the Planning Department. This, in turn, should spur economic development.

One helpful finding during the research activities has to do with utilities. Rogers Cable informed us that they have abandoned plans to run a fiber-optic cable through the middle of the park. They will be utilizing the Summit Avenue right-of-way instead. This gives relief from potential problems and conflicts with park development.

### **Description of Proposed Facilities**

- A. Facilities that have been removed to date: Some perimeter chain link fencing and the horse shoe courts.
- B. Existing Facilities that have been installed to date:
  - 1. "Wonderland", completed in 1996 with community volunteer efforts – an imaginative and fanciful, fenced, wood, children's play area, complete with castle towers, designed by Leathers and Associates of Ithaca, NY

2. A picnic shelter, completed in 1997 as a volunteer effort by Boy Scout \_\_\_\_\_ . This receives very heavy use and another shelter is needed.
  3. A large, paved parking lot for about 85 cars, not yet striped. Paving was added to in the fall of 1999.
  4. Four basketball courts, paved and goals installed in the fall of 1999, but not yet striped.
  5. Three sand volley ball courts constructed in 1997.
  6. Two paved, fenced tennis courts constructed in 1998.
  7. A second, smaller parking lot for about 20 cars, paved in 1999, but not striped.
  8. The skate board area, constructed in 1998.
  9. An east-west bicycle/pedestrian trail meandering along the north side of the park, paved in the fall of 1999. Crossings have not yet been striped or signed.
  10. One pay telephone near to the skate board area. This currently is not functioning.
  11. Electrical and water connections near Wonderland.
  12. Some security chain link fencing. Some of this was originally airport fencing and some is new fencing that was installed to control ATV traffic.
  13. Numerous trees and shrubs that were installed along the north side of the park.
  14. Topsoil and seeded area at Wonderland.
- C. Proposed Facilities (please refer to the Master Plan in the back of this Report):
1. Veteran's Memorial on a raised platform, complete with engraved monument and large flagpole to accommodate a garrison-size flag. A rose garden would be installed around the base of the flagpole and the entire memorial would be backed up with a crescent of flowering Crab Apple Trees. The memorial would be near Lucille Street in the area of the park that is the most visible to the greatest number of people passing by. Additional room for gatherings, including bands, is provided in an adjacent "meadow" planted to lawn grasses.

2. "BMX", or bicycle-moto-cross area, near the skate board area to accommodate bicycle riding and jumping. This facility would provide a compacted, earthen surface, with reinforced jumps to provide opportunities for stunt riding. It would also eliminate present conflicts with the skate board users. High berms with heavy screen plantings would be placed at the east and west sides of the area to reduce wind velocity and blowing of the track materials.
3. Small children's (tots and toddlers) play area with play toys, cushioned play surfaces, lawn areas and a story telling area. The toddler's area would be located just west of Wonderland in the west end of the park where vehicular traffic volumes are lowest.
4. A second picnic shelter, similar to the existing shelter, and picnic area, would be built on the west side of Wonderland, complementing the toddler's play area.
5. Large water reservoir/reflecting pond/model boat pond/ice skating pond near the center of the park and near the Valley Performing Arts Buildings. Trails for strollers, under flowering trees, would surround this pond.

(Space for another sketch)

6. *Joe Reddington-Iditarod Race* memorial fountain and sculpture on the west end of the pond described above. This would be a design that showed Joe and his sled team rounding a sharp curve with accompanying interpretive exhibits about the history of the serum run, the race, and Joe, who was the founder of the race. In the summer, fine spray nozzles would imitate snow in winter. The memorial would be framed with a semi-circle of flowering Cherry Trees with red fall color. In winter, steam could be ejected from the same nozzles to cover these trees with ice crystals. The trees, in turn, could be floodlit, creating a magical setting for ice skaters nearby.

(Space for another sketch)

7. A second water reservoir/sedimentation pond/ice skating pond with riparian environment plantings and interpretive exhibits would be located in the lowest area, in the western part of the park. Overlooks and a footbridge would be part of this pond. This area could be made into a project for the newly formed "Runoff Rangers" who are studying storm water runoff pollution at Colony Middle School. They could help in the planting of the aquatic environment species in the percolation portions around the edges of the pond.



8. Large, "meadow" areas, seeded to sturdy lawn grasses, in east-west patterns in the middle of the park. These areas would be utilized for frisbee throwing, large gatherings or just simply as large open spaces providing relief and elbow room in Wasilla's urban core area. They would be framed with mass plantings of trees on the perimeters of the areas to define the outdoor spaces, or "rooms".
9. Amphitheater, in a high, sculpted mound, shaped in a semi-circle, with a stage at the base of the slope. This would be located in a quiet area, near to the center of the park across from the largest parking area and a rest room building. It would be utilized for outdoor plays and concerts in the summer. The top rim of would have a semi-circle of flowering trees to emphasize the form of the half-moon shape of the amphitheater. Heavy plantings of trees, including evergreens, would enclose the amphitheater from commercial areas outside the park and help to attenuate sounds that might interfere with performances.

(Space for another Sketch)

10. High, steep, wildflower- planted slope on the back of the amphitheater for sledding, tobogganing, inner tube and down hill skiing fun in the winter.
11. Lighted, looped, paved, interior trail system, serving pedestrians and cyclists in the summer and cross-country skiers in the winter.
12. Quality, vandal-resistant benches, with contoured seats, backs and arm rests, placed along the trails, and with particular attention paid to views. These benches should be similar to the sturdy benches utilized in the tennis courts as they utilize recycled materials and are hard to damage.
13. Picnic tables, bar-b-ques and trash receptacles placed at and near to the two picnic shelters and between the skateboard and BMX areas.
14. Art-and-sculpture-in-the-park exhibit area at the large pond near to the Performing Arts Center.
15. Warm-up shelter for skaters and cross-country skiers at the large pond, with a deck, steps and ramp leading down to the water's edge. This structure, artistically designed, and backed up with flowering trees, would reflect in the pond. It could double as a teen center.
16. New, small parking lot for about 24 cars in the northwest corner of the park, near Wonderland and the small children's play area.
17. New, medium size parking lot for about 35 cars in the east end of the park between the Veteran's Memorial and the BMX area. This is the lot that would make use of the vacated right-of-way left by building the cul-de-sac on Tommy Moe Drive.
18. "Green Thumb" garden area and small parking lot, with small plots for use by local residents, in the separated parcel west of Weber Drive. The plots would be rented to gardening enthusiasts for a nominal annual fee. They, in turn, could grow flowers for use in the park.

19. Two, sturdy, heated, lighted, masonry rest room buildings, one at the large parking lot near Wonderland, and the other between the skate board and BMX areas. Allow for electrical controls and irrigation controllers in locked, vandal-proof cabinets. Provide drinking fountains for use year around.
20. Horse Shoe Courts – replace the four courts that were removed to accommodate the bicycle trail. These can be located in a line down the slope from the volleyball and basketball courts.
21. Irrigation System – a system to keep the park green during dry summer periods is strongly recommended. The parks sub soils are so permeable that water just percolates through them immediately. By applying water, it helps make the park attractive and usable.
22. Lighting System – the park should be well lighted to enable plenty of use in the winter. Trails should have lower level ornamental fixtures for cross-country skiers, with taller fixtures in the parking lots. The Veteran's Memorial and Flagpole, the Wonderland Flagpole, the Iditarod sculpture area, and the castle turrets at Wonderland should all have special –effect flood lighting with up lights. The skating pond areas should have bright, multi-colored lantern-type lighting to create a festive atmosphere. And, of course, the Wonderland Christmas tree is already an institution. A really nice, large, specimen Spruce tree, *planted*, would be nice to have here. It would continue to get larger every year if properly planted in a large pit with good topsoil and soil amendments.
23. Topsoil and Seeding – because of the porous nature of the existing soils, the entire park needs a minimum 6" lift of high quality topsoil, fine graded and rolled, after the rough grading has been completed. The areas designated as "meadow" or "lawn" would then be hydromulched with a mixture of water, seed, limestone, fertilizer, mulch, dye and *tackifying agent*. Areas in steep slopes, such as the sledding hill, would receive the hydromulching also, but would have wildflowers in the mix. The wildflower areas would not be mowed.
24. Tree, Shrub and Flower Plantings – The Plan shows where trees would ideally be planted. Some adjustments for security purposes, to give additional "windows" for viewing by police, may be necessary. Otherwise, the trees and mounds shown on the Plan have been carefully located to define the open spaces, to provide continuity in a central green belt, to frame views and to reduce wind velocity. Shrubs would be utilized for the "living fence" around the perimeter of the park and for ornamental purposes. The perimeter plantings would be combined with other security devices to allow for visibility. Flowers would be planted at the entrances to the two ends of park, especially the Veteran's Memorial, at the entrances to the parking lots and at the sculpture fountain and the art display areas.
25. Security Barriers – To restrict access into the park by ATVs and other motorized vehicles, an attractive combination of "living fence" hedges, heavy-duty rustic cedar rail fences, heavily planted berms, wood bollards, boulders and signing should be used. Chain link fencing should be avoided since it is not in keeping with the rustic, historic theme of the park.

## Irrigation Alternatives

Alternative approaches to irrigation, in order from highest cost to lowest cost, include automatic, quick-coupler and abbreviated systems.

An automatic system includes pop-up, rotor driven sprinklers heads that are flush with the ground when not in use, underground remote-control valves and electronic controllers that regulate those valves by turning the water on and off. There is no labor involved to apply water except to check to see if the system is operating properly. The controllers would ideally be in a locked cabinet with the electronic controls at the rest room buildings.

A quick-coupler system would have water available at underground valves throughout the park. These require that L-shaped pipes, hoses and sprinkler heads be brought to the areas to be watered by maintenance personnel. The L-shaped pipe is inserted into the underground quick-coupler valve and then water flows to the sprinkler head at the end of the hose.

An abbreviated system could include either automatic or quick coupler systems for lawn areas, but there would be no irrigation provided for tree and shrub planting areas. These would have to be served by stand pipes and hoses.

*A general rule of thumb to use in selecting a type of system is that the more that is spent on the initial installation, the less cost that you have in labor to apply the water later on.*

The first consideration should be general appearance of lawn areas and the expense needed to repair those lawn areas. When water is not applied regularly, when needed, the turf dries out, becomes more susceptible to traffic and then needs repair. Importing of more topsoil and seed, and spreading it is labor intensive and costly. It also limits use of areas of the park while the new seeding becomes established. Properly programmed automatic systems keep lawn areas in good condition with dense stands of grass.

A second consideration is the comparative expense to apply water. Anchorage uses quick-coupler systems for their sports fields. Maintenance crews come out with hoses and sprinklers and insert the L-shaped keys into the valves to water the fields. This requires expense for a number of crews to run around town doing the watering.

Iditapark, however is not a sports field type of a park. It is an urban park in the heart of a rapidly growing city. It is important to keep the park in good condition and green. An automatic system would assure a better appearance because it does not rely upon crews to water. It has to be analyzed whether Wasilla's crews have the time to water during dry periods or not. If not, the park could look bad very quickly – after having invested a lot of funds to topsoil and seed the park. Automatic systems would eliminate these uncertainties and probably save money in the long run.

A third consideration is usability. The daylight hours are long during the summer and people use the park when it is light out. Ideally, sprinkling would not limit this use. With an automatic system, different areas can be watered simultaneously, quickly, during the short nighttime hours. You do not need to have crews come out during peak-use daylight hours telling people to move or get wet.

Following, in descending order of preference, are the relative "ball-park" costs per square foot for initial installation of the sprinkler systems discussed above:

1. Automatic systems: \$1.00 per square foot
2. Quick coupler systems: .50 per square foot
3. Abbreviated systems: because this involves reduction in area for shrubs and trees that would not be watered, the overall expense would be reduced by the amount of the area eliminated times the cost per square foot of either 1, or 2 above.

### **Fulfillment of Goals for the Community**

The above listed facilities, both existing and proposed, represent a very ambitious project for a small city the size of Wasilla. There has been a great deal of community input over the years as the Master Plan has evolved. This Plan certainly represents the will of the people and the records verify that fact. This park will offer a great variety of year-round recreational opportunities that are not only exciting, but that are also appropriate for serving all age groups. Following is a summary relating to the Goals for the park:

1. The Master Plan, along with the recommended Phasing, below, is designed to function as a guide for future ongoing development over the years. The Plan is also "the vision" for Iditapark. Its adoption fulfills the first goal for the park.

*Other goals* will also be fulfilled through the implementation of this Plan:

2. With the adoption of the name "Iditapark", and by including a memorial sculpture honoring the Race and Joe Reddington, the goal of an historical theme will be fulfilled.
3. By including recreational opportunities for toddlers all the way to senior citizens, as shown on the Plan, this will fulfill the goal of providing for all age groups.
4. Open spaces, skating ponds, play areas, court games, strolling, bicycling, cross-country skiing trails, sledding hills, picnic areas, skate boarding, BMX riding, frisbee throwing, group games, band concerts and plays are all enjoyable pastimes and will fulfill the goal of making the park a fun place to be.
5. Through extensive landscaping with trees, shrubs, flowers, boulders, furnishings, fountains, sculpture, ponds and meadows, the goal of making the park beautiful will be fulfilled.
6. By including quality, vandal resistant furnishings and equipment, the goal of balancing costs vs. long-term benefits will be fulfilled. NOTE: This is important in choosing what type of irrigation system to use in the park.

7. Simply by its change in land use from a constricted landing strip to a park, surrounding residents will benefit from reduced noise, dust and increased safety that the park offers. As the park develops, commercial properties surrounding the park that view into the open space should increase in value. The east-west bicycle trail was moved away from the north boundary of the park at the request of Commissioner Rupright. That, along with the extensive landscaping and screening requested by the Mayor and the Public Works Director, fulfills the goal of addressing the needs and rights of adjacent residential landowners.
8. The internal trail system shown on the Plan will fulfill the goal of providing a pleasant multi-purpose trail system in a beautiful park environment.
9. By providing sufficient space between uses and through preserving vistas for observation into active recreation areas, the goal of developing a safe park will be fulfilled.
10. Skating, cross-country skiing, sledding in winter and lawn games, court games, play areas and attending concerts in the summer fulfills the goal of providing all-year-round recreational opportunities.

### **Phasing Recommendations**

Following, in a year-by-year outline format, is a suggested schedule for developing the park in an orderly, phased manner. Because of the extent of the facilities and the complexities of construction, a time period of five years for actual construction was utilized:

#### **Year 2000 (the first year):**

1. Make a decision on what type of irrigation system to use (this actually needs to be done as soon as possible).
2. Contract for an update of the topographical survey to get current grades on items that were constructed in 1999.
3. Prepare a mass Grading Plan / Ponds Plan for use in grading the entire park site.
4. Prepare an Irrigation Plan and Specifications including Details of Construction, Wells, Water level Controls, Main Lines, Remote Control Valves, Lateral Lines, Sprinkler Heads, Moisture Sensors and Controllers.
5. Prepare an Electrical Plan and Specifications for the lighting and sprinkler systems in the park. Review Rest Room Building Plans so that these can be bid.
6. Prepare Plans, Specifications for the next area to be completed: the Veteran's Memorial and the east end of the park including the east meadow, the east parking lot, the BMX area and landscaping and fencing.
7. Stripe the trail crossings, place mounded islands and landscape the enlarged parking lot and stripe and landscape the parking lot next to the tennis courts and stripe the basketball courts.
8. Do the mass grading of the park to finished sub grade including installation of the wells, the ponds, water lines to the ponds and pond lining and back fill. Install irrigation main lines in the whole park, and valves, laterals and heads in the eastern end of the park. Install electrical conduit, lamp bases, and J boxes in the whole park.
9. Construct items in number 6, above, and topsoil and seed the eastern end of the park. Install lighting fixtures in the east end of the park.

10. Landscape and fence the eastern end of the park including trees, shrubs, flowers and light fixtures.
11. Prepare the toddler area / northwest parking lot layout plan and site for the second picnic shelter.
12. Construct the second picnic shelter (By volunteers ?).

**Year 2001 (The second year):**

1. Finish the parking lot and toddler area plans for the northwest corner of the park.
2. Prepare skating warm-up shelter, deck, steps ramp and landscaping for the north side of the east pond.
3. Do a fountain / sculpture sketch plan.
4. Retain a sculptor to develop detail plans, specifications and estimate for the Iditarod Memorial sculpture, including plumbing, electrical and lighting fittings and fixtures.
5. Complete plans, specifications and estimates for the 2 rest room buildings.
6. Prepare plans and specifications for the arts display area, and the landscaping of the south and west sides of the east pond.
7. By May 30, complete all construction items left over from 2000 on the east end of the park and have a formal dedication of the Veteran's Memorial on Memorial Day, 2001.
8. Construct items in number 2, above.
9. Complete sculptor's plans and award a contract for building the sculpture and fixtures.
10. Install trails, landscaping, lighting and fencing for 2 and 6 above.
11. Construct the first rest room building at Wonderland.
12. Install the parking lot, toddler's play/reading areas and landscaping and lighting in the northwest corner of the park. Install the Iditarod Sculpture and Fountain.

**Year 2002 (The third year):**

1. Complete construction items that are left over from 2001 and have a formal dedication of the Iditarod Memorial Sculpture and Fountain on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002.
2. Prepare landscape plans for the meadow areas, the horse shoe courts, and the amphitheater / sledding hill.
3. Construct the second rest room building in the eastern end of the park.
4. Install trails, landscaping and lighting for the items in number 2, above.

**Year 2003 (the fourth year):**

1. Prepare sedimentation pond and garden plot area landscape plans for the rest of the park, including bridge and viewing deck.
2. Install remaining park facilities from number 1, above, including all landscaping and lighting. Volunteers from Colony Middle School could help with some of the planting at the sedimentation pond. This was discussed above.

**Year 2004 (the fifth year):**

1. Finish all miscellaneous construction items in the park left over from 2003 by Memorial Day, 2004.
2. Stage a major "Party-in-the-Park" to formally dedicate the entire park to the Wasilla Community on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

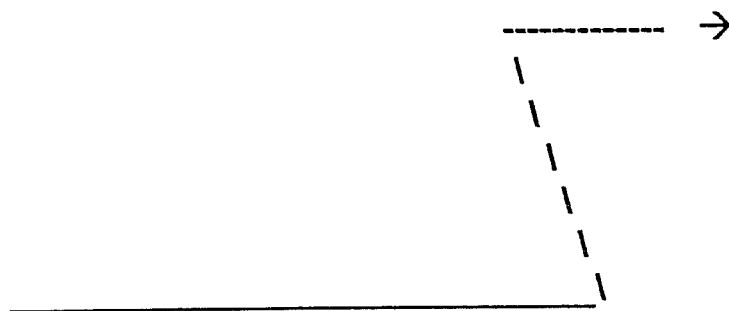
**Year 2006 (the seventh year):**

Conduct the last warranty inspection of plant materials. The city takes responsibility for all maintenance on these plant materials after this point in time.

## MASTER PLAN FOLD-OUT

(SEE 11" x 17" PLAN ON FOLLOWING PAGE)

The Master Plan is at an approximate scale of 1" = 200'





# **APPENDIX**

## **Site Analysis Maps and Alternative Concepts**

**“Site Concept Diagram Narrative” by Jonathan Schilk, August 1996**

**Minutes for 1999 Meetings with the Parks and Recreation & Planning  
Commissions**

**DATE:** November 18, 1999  
**TO:** Wasilla Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Verdie Bowen, Chairperson  
Wasilla Parks & Recreation Commission  
**RE:** Iditapark Master Plan

At its regularly scheduled meeting on October 28, 1999, the Wasilla Parks and Recreation Commission passed the following motion:

We approve the Iditapark Master Plan, presented tonight by Mr. Burt Lent, for adoption, and recommend that it be forwarded to the Planning Commission for their approval and adoption, and then presented to the City Council for approval and adoption as part of the City Comprehensive Plan.

This motion was also passed:

To recommend that the Planning Commission review the addition of a BMX facility, the children's story telling area, phased development, and review alternative approaches to irrigation.

Mr. Lent will be presenting the plan to your Commission on November 22, 1999. Please feel free to call any of our Commission members if you have any questions.