

DR 72-3 - NIMS STREET/RIVERSIDE
PARK

ACTION

COMMITTEE _____

M.A.P.C. _____

B.C.C./B. CO. C. _____

M E E T I N G

RIVERSIDE PARK REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

Date: Friday, February 25, 1972 - 1:30 p.m.
Place: Planning Commission Conference Room
4th Floor - City Building Annex

ATTENDEES:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Department/Agency</u>
Ralph Wulz	City Manager
Tom Allen	Park
Bill Atherly	Park
Troy Barton	MTA
Ray Bruggeman	Public Works
John Firsching	Park
Paul B. Graves	Traffic Engineering
Robert H. Hess	Water
Robert A. Lakin	MAPD
Dick Linn	Engr. Div. - Public Works
M. S. Mitchell	City/County Flood Control Office
Joe Roedeil	Park
R. L. Richcreek	MTA
H. Jay Setter	Park
Frank Smith	Oblinger - Smith Corp.
Jack Galloway	Oblinger - Smith Corp.
John Seeman	Oblinger - Smith Corp.



ALLEN opened the meeting and requested that Jack Galloway of Oblinger - Smith Corporation proceed with a slide presentation and a report on the Master Plan developed by Oblinger - Smith concerning proposed redevelopment of the Riverside Park area - including Central, North and South Riverside Parks, the Park Shops area, etc.

GALLOWAY gave a slide presentation lasting approximately one hour and 15 minutes, which was interspersed with comments and questions from the audience. During the course of the presentation, proposals were presented showing various relocations for existing facilities, phasing out of certain present facilities, and potential redevelopment projects to be carried out within the area. Also included in the report were proposals to close various streets and trafficways presently leading into the park - i.e., Nims and Murdock Streets; and the development of bicycle trails throughout the park area.

GRAVES inquired whether the various documents alluded to in the presentation have received sanction by the Governing Bodies of the City of Wichita and/or Sedgwick County. ALLEN replied affirmatively.

SETTER stated that the Park Board staff plans to recommend to the Board that the Bandstand in Central Riverside Park be dismantled and removed.

ALLEN stated that the Park Board is contemplating phasing out of the Zoo in Central Riverside, now that the new Sedgwick County Zoo is in operation, and that a limited animal exhibit - i.e., a few birds, possibly a monkey island, etc., will be the only remaining zoo-type facilities remaining.

ALLEN commented that the Park Board staff anticipates immediately phasing out of the Bandstand in order to solve various neighborhood problems in the area - i.e., parking, noise, congestion, etc.; and that the study being conducted by Oblinger - Smith will include various other possible uses for the area. In addition, the staff is attempting to find other possible locations suitable for scheduling musical concerts, rallies, and other related public gatherings.

GALLOWAY presented proposals closing various streets - Nims, Murdock, etc., and subsequent re-routing of vehicular traffic through and around the Riverside Park area, and plans for increasing the bicycle/pedestrian traffic and safety within the park.

LAKIN inquired what would happen to the planned redevelopment program if approval is not received for closing Nims Street, and commented that different plans would have to be made for use of streets on the perimeter of the park. He also inquired as to what would happen to the present boat ramp and related facilities.

ALLEN replied that the boat ramp, dock, etc., would be relocated to another area, and greatly expanded facilities provided.

LAKIN inquired if the use of the Riverside Park area by young people holding rock music concerts would be prohibited.

ALLEN replied that removal of the bandstand would displace them from the area. He noted that the area is not suitable for this type activity, and attempts are being made to provide alternative sites more suitable for this type concert, where sufficient parking, buffering of sound, etc., is available.

SETTER commented that it is a matter of designating in the ordinance the areas which are to be used for such purposes.

ALLEN again pointed out that a facility such as the bandstand is not feasible in the Riverside Park area, and would probably be better accepted in other areas of the City.

A Remark by LAKIN regarding bus transportation prompted a brief discussion of bus routes to serve the area. RICHCREEK replied that there would be no difficulty in serving the area with bus transportation, as the buses would merely be re-routed on streets such as Faulkner, Franklin, Central, Murdock, etc., if certain of the streets presently in use should be closed to vehicular traffic. RICHCREEK noted that the buses would have no problem as long as some of the bridges in the area are kept open.

ALLEN noted that it was the general consensus during previous meetings that there would be no problem with fire and other emergency traffic getting into the area if the need arose.

LAKIN stated that he was not convinced that closing the streets to vehicular traffic in certain areas would solve the problem, but merely make the problem go elsewhere.

LAKIN noted that those staff members who were familiar with the problems and criticism during the time when the Bitting Street Bridge was closed were aware that re-routing of the traffic did not solve the problem, and that there was much public consternation and public outcry. He felt that if the public became aware of the proposal to close these streets permanently, they would be against such action.

SETTER stated that there must be a balancing of activities, and that this proposal - although not doing away with the problems, would substantially cut down on the size.

LINN pointed out that replacement of the Nims Street Bridge is scheduled in the 1972 Capital Improvement Program.

GRAVES remarked that if the traffic flow from Murdock is interrupted, the traffic would go elsewhere, creating problems, not necessarily taking the routes proposed in the report.

LAKIN stated he was not sure the same result could not be achieved by centralizing activities in the park, with the concept of drives, cutouts, moving underneath the bridge and thus having separation. LAKIN noted that many people use the park drives as their normal route to various sections of the city, and not limited strictly to park purposes.

GRAVES commented that this route is physically pleasing and enjoyable and a most pleasant route.

GALLOWAY remarked that as much as possible, this has been retained, and still attempt to alleviate the problem of congestion.

A discussion ensued regarding jurisdiction of park boulevards versus City streets, and the rights of the Board of Park Commissioners to close them to traffic.

LAKIN remarked that the Park Board can close any park street they want to, but if it is a public street, the matter has to come before the City Commission and the County Commission for approval.

LAKIN remarked that if the report was proposing to close any of the public streets, the issue might as well be raised and allow the hue and cry which was certain to come, and get the public opinion. He felt that the neighborhood would be strongly against such a proposal.

GRAVES stated that the Park Board has authority to close park boulevards or park drives.

SETTER noted that no public body wants to get into a confrontation of that aspect of the problem, but as a general rule, park streets and park areas which are not designated public streets could be closed by the Board.

GRAVES inquired what portion of Nims Street is designated as a park boulevard.

SETTER replied that he would have to check; however, the question is being researched at this time.

GRAVES stated he believed that from about the River Bridge on north to about Murdock is designated a park boulevard, and not necessarily a platted street.

A discussion ensued regarding a traffic count taken by the Traffic Engineering Department.

GRAVES pointed out that a recent traffic count taken during the busiest part of the day shows 7,000 cars.

ALLEN remarked that this drops to 4,000 from a point north of the park.

GRAVES noted that with the closing of the bridge, traffic will go on over and come up on Faulkner or one of the other streets and thus there will be extra traffic in other areas.

ALLEN pointed out that Murdock or Waco would also be possibilities for use.

MITCHELL inquired if Franklin was a major street.

LAKIN commented that it was money wasted relocating the bridge.

LAKIN stated he was concerned about West River Boulevard, as there was no place to expand, and continuing to close streets in other areas, would put pressure on this area.

ALLEN pointed out this proposal will help solve the problem.

It was pointed out that most of Franklin was reconstructed about ten years ago.

SETTER inquired what would be the hazard if the street were closed for two months, as a temporary measure.

ALLEN stated that this would not give the total effect, unless the proposal was followed completely, all proposed streets closed and parking restricted, as in the complete proposal, and the proposed off-street parking areas provided.

SETTER remarked that the proposal could be released in the newspaper in order to get neighborhood reaction.

ALLEN stated that the concept addresses itself to minimizing vehicular traffic; that he would prefer not having any through traffic through the park. He noted that it is obvious and inevitable that there must be some

through traffic; however, the proposal minimizes through traffic, and as such would give total utilization of the park area to the people, which is as it should be.

ALLEN stated some residents north of Riverside would like to see the park for pedestrians only.

ALLEN inquired whether BRUGGEMAN could foresee any specific problems with the report from the standpoint of the Public Works Department. Bruggeman answered negatively.

ALLEN stated that primarily, the purpose of this meeting was to get various reactions to the report, in order to proceed with finalization of the study and development of a redevelopment plan, which would be getting underway soon. He stated that if there are any points with which those present did not agree, they should feel free to speak up. Also to bring up any points which they did not feel had been covered satisfactorily in the report.

HESS stated that he had some reservations about the proposal for parking on top of the reservoir, as he felt this might possibly not be a good idea.

ALLEN stated that this point was not particularly critical to the overall concept of the project.

WULZ stated that some solution must be found to problems in the parks. He stated that he had another petition from residents in the College Hill area regarding the problems in that park. He noted that recent action taken by the Commission did move the problem, but that the problem did not go away. He queried as to what is done in other areas of the country where such problems exist, and what action is taken by others faced with similar problems. He suggested that possibly some thought might be given to planning a park to attract this group, providing facilities specifically for their needs and in accordance with their desires, and separate them from other activities.

ALLEN stated that much thought has been given to the problems; however, no definite solutions have evolved. He stated that other suitable facilities are available at the present, and that possibly these people should be redirected to Linwood Park assembly area, as there would be somewhat lesser ramifications and conflicts with residents in the area.

ALLEN pointed out that the majority of the problems in the College Hill Park area are problems in the streets, rather than in the park.

WULZ felt that the problem in Riverside Park was due to the availability of facilities such as the Bandstand and the desire of these young people to utilize them. He stated that the residents of the neighborhood are insistent that some action be taken to relieve the situation, and he felt this could be done by relocating this activity elsewhere.

GALLOWAY stated that originally they had considered the possibility of using the Municipal Beach area for musical concerts; however, the area is

not large enough to accommodate the crowds, and there is not sufficient parking available. Also the traffic system was inadequate.

ALLEN stated that with regard to the problems in College Hill Park, this is the nite-time gathering place on the eastern terminal for those youths dragging Douglas. And that redirecting them to Linwood Park simply would not work, as they would either refuse to go, or congregate elsewhere.

WULZ stated that the problems have been around for years; and that the ordinances passed have merely forced the youth from private property back on the streets. He felt that the officials have simply never addressed themselves to the real problem.

ALLEN stated that the ideal situation would be to develop activities which would be attractive to youth and make it desirable for them to rechannel their activities from dragging Douglas to more appealing activities. He felt that the redevelopment of Riverside Park might possibly be one method of accomplishing this.

SETTER stated that the time has long passed when consideration should be given to the other 95 percent of the taxpaying public furnishing facilities and quit bowing to the minimum that claims as their rights those things which are in fact privileges.

LAKIN pointed out that if Riverside is to be converted, other facilities must be made available. He conceded, however, that the Riverside residents have two legitimate complaints - the noise level and the congestion of the area by the vast crowds.

ALLEN stated that some thought is being given to holding some concerts in the waterfront amphitheater in the Century II area.

LAKIN indicated interest in pursuing the question of temporarily closing Nims in order to get public reaction.

SETTER stated the Park Board staff would have no objection to closing it permanently.

GRAVES stated he was not against the proposal; however, his concern was what to tell the public, where traffic is concerned, as Faulkner is already heavily traveled, with 8,000-10,000 cars per day; and that residents along Murdock would also be unhappy if traffic is channeled through that area. He stated that the staff should be prepared to answer all the questions and objections which will undoubtedly be raised before such action is taken to close any streets, even on a temporary basis.

ALLEN stated that the traffic could be redirected, possibly to use Waco.

LAKIN stated he would object to any permanent closing without doing so first on a trial basis to see what happens.

SETTER stated he was not discounting temporary closing.

MITCHELL stated that the answer might be in the closing of Nims alone; however, it would not give the total picture unless the entire plan were implemented.

LINN proposed that all streets which would ultimately be closed be closed on a temporary basis in order to get reactions.

ALLEN stated there is still a parking problem.

ALLEN stated that one problem is that the report by Oblinger - Smith is now due; and that the Park Board is being requested to grant a 45-day extension for completion of the contract, in order for the Planning Consultants to develop their final plan and prepare their Master Plan report.

GRAVES stated he would want to make traffic counts before agreeing to close any of the streets in the area.

WULZ stated that he would propose that Oblinger - Smith go ahead and come out with their Master Plan Report. Go ahead with the concept of the plan as outlined. He stated that he did not see anything wrong with it. The staff would then deal with the problems as they come up at the time of implementation. It is possible, he pointed out, that if presented in the correct manner, the neighborhood would support the plan for closing the streets in order to alleviate the problems in the area.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

WICHITA-SEDGWICK COUNTY

DATE

February 18, 1972

METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING DEPARTMENT

TO Robert A. Lakin, Director of Planning
FROM Erik H. East, Senior Planner, Advance Plans Division *EHE*
SUBJECT Proposal to Close Nims Bridge

I have gathered together pertinent background information to evaluate the proposal to close Nims Bridge and have listed the following advantages and disadvantages of such action.

Advantages

1. Would reduce pedestrian-auto conflict within the park.
2. Would reduce auto-auto conflict within the park.
3. Would allow more advantageous development of park facilities.
4. Would save the city most of the cost of rebuilding the bridge. (Rebuilding Nims Bridge is included in the 1972 CIP for \$262,000 in general obligation bonding, \$88,000 for Urban Renewal funds for a total of \$350,000.)
5. Reconstruction of the bridge would require that it be closed for several months anyway.
6. Neighborhood opposition can be expected in either case. (But it will be especially bad when the time comes to widen Nims between the new North Bridge and the Park. Traffic volumes may not be large enough to justify four lanes all the way from 13th Avenue to Central.)

Disadvantages

1. Would require rerouting of nearly 7,000 vehicles per day (1970 ADT counts: 6,777). See map.
2. Would require rerouting of bus lines and all that that would imply.
3. Rerouting of traffic would increase congestion on Seneca, Central and Murdock Bridges which may all need improvements in the next few years.
4. Traffic volumes would increase on other streets. (On the regional scale the following streets would be affected: McLean, Stackman, Faulkner, West River Boulevard, Back Bay Murdock and Waco (70-71 traffic counts are shown in red on the map.)
5. The city would have to cul-de-sac Nims just south of the old bridge.

6. Pedestrian conflict problems occur only during warm weather months and on weekends while auto traffic is a 24-hour a day, 365 days a year problem.
7. The School Facilities Plan calls for a consolidated River Park Elementary School in the Riverside Park site by 1986 which would have an attendance area spanning the river.

Closing of Murdock and Wiley

The closing of Murdock and/or Wiley Streets through the Park does not appear to be as objectionable as closing Nims, however Murdock does carry 2,500 vehicles per day. The Murdock-West River Boulevard intersection is hazardous and closing Murdock through the Park would be advantageous in that it would simplify traffic movements a great deal, but it would also divert traffic onto West River Boulevard. With West River Boulevard carrying more of the load and Nims carrying less, the intersection of these two streets would have to be modified.

Fire Service

None of the proposed closures would have much effect on fire equipment response time since the new fire station is to be located on Murdock at Main.

Park Circulation

Cruising traffic should be contained entirely within the park to avoid conflict with nearby residences. A one-way peripheral roadway system should be completed for this purpose (i.e., City Park in Denver).

EHE:bh

cc TOM ALLEN
FALL GRAVES

February 18, 1972

Robert A. Lakin, Director of Planning

Erik H. East, Senior Planner, Advance Plans Division

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MT. CARMEL ACADEMY

SACRED HEART ACADEMY

COUNTY HOSPITAL PARK

MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

DOUGLAS

MARTINSON

ELIZABETH

FERN

MILWOOD

VINE

CHARLES

CLARENCE

ATHERIAN

CLAIR

DONGLAS

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