



## Legislation Text

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**Arts & Culture Commission Meeting Date:** May 8, 2023

**To:** Arts and Culture Commission Members

**From:** Natalie Draper, Library Director

Discuss Bridge Square Design Development

**Action Requested:**

The ACC is asked to discuss and provide input on the Bridge Square Design Development prior to moving into final design.

**Summary Report:**

The City Council approved the final concept plan for Bridge Square on June 21, 2022. The City has pulled together a project design team for this project. Damon Farber will lead the project team of:

Prime Consultant / Landscape Architect - Damon Farber Landscape Architects

Subconsultant / Design oversight - Bob Close and Bruce Jacobsen

Subconsultant / Civil Engineer - Bolton & Menk

Subconsultant / Electrical Engineer - Nelson Rudie Associates

Subconsultant / Lighting Design - Schuler & Shook

The City has been working with the project team and representatives from Damon Farber will be present to share the preliminary design development building off the concept plan that was approved by City Council. Throughout the month of May the City will be seeking input from project stakeholders and other boards and commissions.

The presentation is attached.

Background on the Council Approved Concept Plan

Phase 1 final design will include the following features from the final concept plan:

- 1. The Square:** Located on the east side of Water Street, The Square is a “right-sized” paved area, surrounded by green, that contains the existing fountain, Civil War Memorial and a new vertical element (Gateway icon) to draw visitors into the space. Walks from the plaza connect to existing crosswalks, facilitating good circulation into and through the square. Additional benches provide places for sitting, reflecting and interpreting.
- 2. Water Street:** Water Street retains its place as a significant historic feature bisecting the central lawn

area while maximizing flexibility for a variety of daily uses and larger special events. Pedestrian circulation patterns are similar to current routes, with additional connections and amenities to engage surrounding businesses on all sides.

3. **The Park (and The Terrace):** Located west of Water Street, this multiuse space along the riverfront will provide the flexibility to accommodate both large festivals and casual daily use. Terraced seating facing the river (near the existing planter), connected with a shaded courtyard (further south) that includes movable tables and chairs, create inviting outdoor rooms along the river's edge as a primary park feature.

Note: portion of the park will be built in Phase 1.

4. **The Terrace:** A multiuse space along the riverfront, The Terrace will provide an area for large festivals as well as movable tables and chairs for casual daily use. At the edge of the riverbank, a pedestrian promenade will connect Bridge Square to the Fifth Street bridgehead. A "slow" bike lane will parallel the pedestrian path through the space.

Note: portion of the terrace will be built in Phase 1.

5. **The Riverwalk:** Expanded to accommodate pedestrians and slow-moving bikes, The Riverwalk will provide space for jogging, strolling, eating, viewing the river, people watching, fishing and more. Subtle accent lighting will help create a beautiful nighttime experience without over-lighting the area.
  - a. The existing circulation of the Riverwalk will be preserved and expanded for a better pedestrian and bicyclist experience.

Note: a small portion of the Riverwalk will be rebuilt with phase 1 of this project.

6. **Not included in Phase 1 - The Landing:** Currently underutilized with limited accessibility, The Landing will be upgraded to allow all users to enjoy the water. Safe ramps and a possible cantilevered deck will allow users to get better views of the Cannon River, and take out or put in canoes and kayaks. Integrated, "natural" seating will encourage people to relax and enjoy the view.
  - a. Improving accessibility is important, and staff will work to identify the most appropriate solution that will have the least impact on character-defining features of Riverside Park.
7. **The Woonerf:** The one-way street in front of the Post Office will be raised to the park elevation and paved to indicate that the space is primarily a "people space," where cars are allowed but considered "guests". The street will be convertible, to be closed for large events. This idea is not new: it has been mentioned in previous studies.
  - a. The existing circulation patterns will be retained; however, pedestrian access will be expanded with less vehicle access.

Note: the Woonerf will be built in Phase 1.

8. **The Frame:** To provide additional event space around Bridge Square and better engage with surrounding businesses, The Frame is an important part of the Concept Plan. Like the Woonerf, it could be raised to park level and include special paving to identify it as a "shared space", where slow speeds and regular pedestrian and bike activity make it a distinctive part of the downtown experience. The use

of bollards can create a safe separation between the road and the park. This segment of Water Street will be closed to vehicle traffic except for events.

Note: the frame will be built in Phase 1.

**9. Not included in Phase 1 - The Bridge:** A unique place to appreciate the river and the historic buildings of downtown, The Bridge will continue to improve on its current role as host to a variety of festival and special event users. Widened sidewalks will provide more safe space to observe events and promote safe passage on a daily basis. Like the Woonerf, the bridge will be a convertible street, creating a seamless fit with other Bridge Square amenities, enhancing the overall charm of this beloved gathering space.

**10. Lighting Design:** Bridge Square has maintained a striking winter presence for many years. Expanding on this delightful history, the concept plan recommends a combination of lighting strategies, with care taken to keep it elegant and understated. Safe passage in all seasons remains a primary goal, with accent lighting added to further reinforce this unique signature downtown space. The creative use of “dark sky” and “twinkle” fixtures will enhance the subtle ambience of the space; to that end it is suggested that the local arts community become actively involved with new lighting ideas, including the Gateway icon at the east end of the square.

Note: Lighting design/new lighting will be built in Phase 1.

#### **Alternative Options:**

NA

#### **Financial Impacts:**

#### **Tentative Timelines:**

- ✓ August 8, 2017 Council adoption of Strategic Plan Summary (2018-2020)
- ✓ October 9, 2018 and November 13, 2018 Council approved Resolution Establishing Riverfront Enhancement Committee and Mayoral Appointments
- ✓ December 1, 2020 - Council resolution approving Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan
- ✓ June 15, 2021 - Council approved Strategic Plan (2021-2024)
- ✓ June 15, 2021 - Council approved motion to support park priorities within the Riverfront Action Plan to include Years 1 through 5.
- ✓ October 12, 2021 - Council Update/Input on Draft Bridge Plan
- ✓ October 12 - Nov 23, 2021 - Public Input on Bridge Square Plan
- ✓ December 14, 2021 - Council - Collaborate and Refine Bridge Square Plan with Council
- ✓ December 2021 - June 2022 - Board/Commission Input on Bridge Square and State Historic Preservation Office
- ✓ June 14, 2022 - City Review of Final Concept Plan
- ✓ June 21, 2022 - Adopt Final Concept Plan
- ✓ November 1, 2022 - City Council approved professional Service Agreement for Phase 1 Final Design.
- May 2024 - Board and commission and stakeholder input