



# PIONEER PARK Master Plan Update

NEWSLETTER

November 2009

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The Land Group, Inc.

## A Legacy of Pioneers

A debt of gratitude is due to those determined individuals who lived before us. The sacrifice of ordinary people driven by dreams for a more abundant life has laid the foundation for our quality of life today. This assemblage of courageous and hearty folks found great benefit in a mutual approach of interaction here in the Yellowstone Valley.

The new City of Billings seemed to grow like magic lending to its nickname, "The Magic City". These early pioneers, from varied backgrounds, found prosperity as they worked together for the common good. The diversity of their backgrounds and interactions between themselves brought diversity and rich abundance.

The real magic wasn't the growth of Billings itself, but rather the cooperative nature of the new community. The legacy of this mutualism is evident today as most residents feel safe in their neighborhoods and think Billings is a great place to live and raise children.

A legacy of these early city founders, key in the Billings quality of life, is the establishment of city parks. As early as 1902 some of Billings's original parks were developed and have influenced the lives of many. Pioneer Park is one such park. In 1932, decades after its establishment, Pioneer Park was officially named after and dedicated to those early Pioneers of Billings. Their visionary leadership left a "community jewel" for generations to enjoy.



*Monument in Pioneer Park dedicating the park to the Pioneers of Billings, Montana.*

Today, Pioneer Park is the most widely used park in the Billings Park system. It has been referred to as the "Central Park" of Billings. Many things have led to its popularity, with reasons as diverse as its users. The popularity of the park and the growth of Billings have placed great demands on its resources. The responsibility to ensure that this legacy of pioneers past remains healthy and viable for future generations rest on the shoulders of pioneers present.

We must build on the foundation laid by those before. That same pioneering spirit of mutualism must drive our community efforts in addressing our recreational needs and continued use of Pioneer Park. We need visionary leaders to assure a true community spirit permeates these efforts ensuring the pioneers will live through all generations as the legacy of Pioneer Park continues to be enjoyed in perpetuity.

# Pioneer Park Update Needed



Autumn Gold in Pioneer Park

Pioneer Park is well loved. This gem of Billings has hosted generations of families, friends, and community gatherings upon her hospitable rolling turf. She is in her prime and her loveliness continues to beckon all to partake of the goodness she offers.

Yet this great popularity takes a toll. Continued

growth of the community, and increasing use and recreational needs are placing greater demands upon the park.

The health and capacity of the park needs to be assessed and a plan prescribed to assure the long term health and viability of the grounds and to guard against mismanaged use and degradation. To this

end the City of Billings Department of Parks, Recreation and Public Lands has begun the process of updating the *Pioneer Park Master Plan*.

The public will have opportunity to participate in this process. Please See "Planning Process" on Page 3.

"...her loveliness continues to beckon all to partake of the goodness she offers."

## The Planning Team



The Planning Team for the Master Plan Update is lead by Billings Park and Recreation staff members Mike Whitaker-Director, Mark Jarvis-Park Planner, Joe Fedin-Recreation Superintendent, and Jon Thompson-Parks Superintendent, members of the Park Board, and the consultants.

The prime consultant is The Land Group, Inc. based in Eagle, Idaho (Boise), with offices in Coeur d'Alene and Twin Falls, Idaho. Sub-consultants are Planet Dynamics of Boise, Bardwell Consulting/Corona Research of Denver, and Milestone Surveying of Lewistown.

The Land Group is a multi-discipline firm of land-

scape architects, civil engineers, planners, surveyors, and graphic designers, founded in 1988 by David Koga and Phil Hull.

The project manager for the Master Plan Update is Stan Griswold of The Land Group's Coeur d'Alene office. Mr. Griswold, a former Billings resident, has twenty years of experience as a landscape architect and project manager, with expertise in planning, site design and development. His experience includes the planning and design of over 80 parks and recreational use projects located throughout the intermountain and Pacific Northwest.

David Selvage, principal

of Planet Dynamics is the lead Planner for the project. Mr. Selvage has over twenty years experience in Parks and Urban Planning for the cities of Snohomish and Everett, Washington, and Boise Idaho, with eleven years as Director of Planning Design & Development of Boise Parks & Recreation. Boise is nationally recognized for its Boise River Greenbelt and city parks system.

Bardwell Consulting/Corona Research are performing the statistical survey (See Page 3), and Milestone Surveying is performing the topographic survey mapping.

An Invitation to stroll in the park...



# Planning Process

**The Planning Process** for the *Pioneer Park Master Plan Update* will result in a master plan that responds to both the needs of the community and the capacity of the park providing the opportunity for both to thrive.

**Phase One—Project Startup:** The framework of the team and the tasks are defined and dialogues are opened with stakeholders, user groups, and governing agencies.

**Phase Two—Research:** Data is collected to provide a basis for study and analysis. A statistical survey is implemented randomly to Billings households to identify community needs. A detailed site inventory of the park is completed

including a topographic survey, inventory of the park's natural resources, recreational uses, facilities, and maintenance. Dialogue continues with stakeholders and user groups. (At this point disc golf in the park is assessed specifically as well as other alternative disc golf locations throughout Billings).

**Phase Three—Analysis:** Data gathered in Phase Two are analyzed and park opportunities and constraints are synthesized into development recommendations. A public meeting is held to present the inventory and analysis findings, development recommendations and to seek public input.

## **Phase Four—Design Development:**

Three Schematic Concepts for Pioneer Park are developed based on the information determined through Phases One, Two, and Three. A public meeting is held for input on Schematic Plans. A final Schematic Plan Concept is selected and a Final Master Plan and Draft Report Completed.

**Phase Five—Final Plan Completion:** A Final Master Plan, Cost Estimates and Report are completed and adopted by the City Council.



“...a master plan that responds to both the needs of the community and the capacity of the park....”

## Project Schedule

Starting early October 2009, the work of Phases One and Two are underway and will continue to early January 2010. Phase Three will begin in December 2009 with the first public meeting in January 2010. Phase Four will be completed in March with a second public meeting. The Final Master Plan of Phase Five will be presented to the City Council for approval April 2010.

See Project Website for a Detailed Project Schedule

[www.prpl.info/](http://www.prpl.info/)

## Billings Community Survey

The Consultant Team has issued a statistical survey to Billings residents to identify and assess community needs and issues pertaining to Pioneer Park.

Questionnaires were randomly mailed to approximately 2,700 Billings house-

holds the second week of November 2009. Surveys will be returned by December 9, 2009.

The Consultants will analyze the data returns from the Questionnaire and utilize the findings as a framework for the design stages of the Mas-

ter Plan Update.

The use of this survey information will help assure plans for Pioneer Park will reflect the current and future needs in Pioneer Park.



Pioneer Park serves many recreational needs.

# A Community Park

Did you know there is a classification system for Billings parks? Billings parks are classified descriptively similar to nationally recognized standards of parkland classifications and trends. The Billings standards are patterned after the national classification system by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) publication titled, Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines (1996).

The Billings park standards were adopted by the city January 27, 1997 in the document titled Parks2020 Billings Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. Based on this plan, Pioneer Park is classified as a "Community Park".

The following are descriptions of selected park classifications.



"This is the duty of our generation as we enter the twenty-first century—solidarity ... It is expressed by the desire to give a noble and humanizing meaning to a community in which all members will define themselves not by their own identity but by that of others." - Elie Wiesel

One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade.  
Chinese Proverb

## Community Park:

A Community Park serves broader community-based recreation needs as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. They allow for group activities and offer other recreational opportunities both active and passive on a city wide scale. The location of these parks are determined by quality and suitability of the site. These parks are appropriate sites for special use facilities such as aquatic facilities and activity centers. They have a service area of from 1/2 to 3 miles in distance. The size of a Community Park varies but should accommodate the desired uses and range from 30 to 50 acres.

## Neighborhood Park:

The Neighborhood Park is the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Their main function is for informal active and

passive recreation. The main feature in this type of park is "programmable open space". This means that among other features, the park contains open space in sufficient size for a variety of recreational programs and activities; it does not have a single programmed use (i.e. a baseball field). A Neighborhood Park is a minimum of 5 acres in size with 5 to 10 acres considered as optimal. This type of park should be centrally located within its service radius which encompasses a 1/4 to 1/2 mile distance uninterrupted by nonresidential roads and other physical barriers. Ease of access and walking distance are critical factors in locating this park.

## Other Park Classifications

include Mini-Parks, School-Parks, Large Urban Parks, Sports Complex, Special Use Parks, and Private Parks.



## For More Information:

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Parks and Recreation  
390 North 23rd Street  
Billings, MT 59101

Phone: 406-657-8371  
<http://www.prpl.info/>

"We create community through people,  
parks and programs"