

## **APPLICATION TO THE SEATTLE PARK DISTRICT MAJOR PROJECTS CHALLENGE FUND FOR SUPPORT OF PROJECTS TO REALIZE THE POTENTIAL OF I-5 COLONNADE OPEN SPACE**

**[Submitted by the Eastlake Community Council (info@eastlakeseattle.org, 117 E. Louisa St. #1, Seattle, WA 98102-3278, 206-322-5463). For drawings and background, see the web site of the Colonnade planning and design project: [http://eastlakeseattle.org/?page=colonnade.](http://eastlakeseattle.org/?page=colonnade)]**

**Project description.** ECC invites Seattle Parks and Recreation and the Park District Citizens Oversight Committee to fund a package of needed improvements for SPR's I-5 Colonnade Open Space ("Colonnade") from the 16 proposed here. The opportunity for dialogue on the best combination of to meet the criteria of the Major Projects Challenge Fund would be deeply appreciated.

Colonnade is 7.5 acres of land very close to the geographic center and population center of Seattle—between Downtown, South Lake Union, Eastlake, the University District, and Capitol Hill. It is ranked by the internationally regarded CityLab web site as among the world's nine "cool parks under freeway overpasses." But the additional funds would make possible so much more.

**The amounts to be funded and the matches that would be leveraged.** The table on page 3 presents alphabetically the 16 needed Colonnade projects along with estimates of base cost and adjusted cost (60 percent additional for contingencies and project management) and the major sources of contemplated match. Examples of non-SPR funding sources: (1) With no wheelchair accessibility at the Howe, Blaine, and Garfield street gateways to and from Colonnade's west side, the City's ADA fund is likely to pay SPR for the ADA pathway proposed for the E. Blaine St. gateway. (2) Enthusiastic user groups are already gearing up to help fund the proposed bouldering/climbing, mountain bike, parkour, and skate park features. (3) Major businesses and nonprofits in nearby Lake Union and downtown are likely to donate for pathways, stairs, and other features (such as the walking labyrinth requested by Fred Hutch) that would benefit their employees, customers, patients or their families. And (4) Recreation and exercise in Colonnade and by and on Lake Union for growing thousands of people makes crowdfunding a promising source for several of the proposals, including the restroom.

**Criterion A: SPR owned property and/or facility.** The I-5 Colonnade Open Space is an official part of the Seattle Park system. With a lease from the Washington State Department of Transportation, SPR builds and owns the improvements.

**Criterion B: Significant capital need that would provide long term value to the greater community.** The \$1.82 million that SPR spend in planning and constructing Colonnade for its 2005 opening was well spent, but nowhere near enough to realize the area's full potential. No other plot of public land this large and close to downtown would yield the large recreational, pedestrian, and bicycle opportunities from doubling that investment today at Colonnade. The line items in the attached table merit individual analysis but can be aggregated logically as the following three \$1-2 million funding categories: (1) multiuse north-south pathways; (2) east-west stairways; and (3) recreational attractions (bouldering/climbing; community garden; mountain bike area; off-leash area; outdoor gym; parkour; skate park; and walking labyrinth).

**Criterion C. Leveraging of resources from other agencies, non-profit and private donors, and volunteers.** This menu of Colonnade improvements embodies an unusually wide range of leveraging opportunities to bring in funds from other City agencies; King County; WSDOT; and major corporations and foundations (REI is already interested, as is a skateboard-related foundation). User groups like mountain bikers, skateboarders, dog owners, and parkour, outdoor gym, and bouldering/climbing devotees are all eager to contribute sweat equity and fundraising to realize their desired improvements. The planning process has uncovered a remarkable range and depth of users from throughout the Seattle metropolitan area whose enthusiasm is an invaluable resource.

**Criterion D. High degree of community support and consistency with planning.** Colonnade originated with proposals in the 1998 Eastlake Neighborhood Plan and earned strong support from the Mayor and City Council. The recent public planning process (supported by the Neighborhood Matching Fund) established extensive public buy-in from agencies, businesses, and the public regarding the schematic long range plan (in draft on the Colonnade planning and design project web site listed above) being finalized in April by J.A. Brennan and Associates. Essential input were subarea proposals (also on the web site) donated by design professionals from five user groups. Eleven public events in a variety of formats attracted 299 registered participants. An on-line survey yielded another 117 respondents, of whom in the past year 42 had made between 1 and 9 visits each to Colonnade; 29 with between 10 and 99 visits each; and 12 with over 100 visits each, including one with 500!

**Criterion E. Benefits to underserved communities.** A significant discovery of the recent planning process was that Colonnade area users include substantial numbers of Latinos and people of color, some of who come travel other parts of Seattle. Notable also: some of the nearby homeless population participated in the planning process (they particularly endorsed the proposed restroom).

**Criterion F. Extends the life of a current park and facility.** Because funds were limited for its original construction, Colonnade does not yet live up to its incredible potential (in rainy Seattle what other park is sheltered from the rain?). Colonnade is close to huge and growing numbers of residents who crave the recreational opportunities it can offer, but it also is attractive to many others from much farther away. There is no doubt that investment of Major Projects Challenge funds will dramatically expand Colonnade's visitation.

**Criterion G. Controls maintenance and operating costs.** The lack of rain under I-5 will continue to minimize SPR costs for weeding and pruning. Mountain biking and off-leash volunteers have contributed greatly to maintenance of their facilities and to litter control, and the user groups to be served by the proposed new recreational features are committed to equivalent care. SPR maintenance and operating costs will continue to be remarkably low per acre

**Criterion H. Benefits a large number and wide variety of people.** In both the on-line survey and public meetings and open houses, most of the respondents had home addresses well beyond Eastlake and North Capitol Hill, with most from all over Seattle and many even from outside Seattle and some even from outside Washington state. Challenge Fund support for packages like (1) multiuse north-south pathways; (2) east-west stairways; and (3) recreational attractions (or parts thereof) will a cost-effective step to helping Colonnade realize its potential as a versatile urban park.