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FUNDING REQUEST FOR A SKATESPOT IN THE I-5 COLONNADE OPEN SPACE

To the Mayor, City Council, Parks Superintendent, and Challenge Fund Coordinator:

Joined by a wide range of community and recreational organizations and advocates, the Eastlake Community Council requests that the City of Seattle fund and construct a skatespot in the I-5 Colonnade Open Space, a Seattle Parks and Recreation Department facility. City funding would be supplemented by donations from many individuals and groups, including the Eastlake Community Council.

In coordination with the Parks Department and other agencies and supported by the Neighborhood Matching Fund, a two-year planning and public involvement project culminated in 2016 in a schematic long-range plan by J.A. Brennan and Associates for the entire Colonnade area. The plan lays out many improvements including ADA-accessible pedestrian and bicycle connections to and from Capitol Hill, downtown, South Lake Union, the Lake Union bicycle and pedestrian loop, and Eastlake. A key feature of the schematic long-range plan is a skatespot (a medium-sized skatepark of about 12,000 square feet) in the I-5 Colonnade Open Space. In Eastlake and beyond, the planning and design study found widespread support and no opposition for this improvement.

The Colonnade planning and design study. The I-5 Colonnade Open Space originated in proposals in the 1998 [Eastlake Neighborhood Plan](#), was funded with \$1.75 million from the 2000 Seattle parks levy, and opened in 2005. As the neighborhood plan steward and the neighborhood association for the area in which the I-5 Colonnade Open Space is located and with Colonnade celebrating its tenth anniversary, the Eastlake Community Council received a \$24,525 planning

and design grant from the Seattle Neighborhood Matching Fund to engage user groups, residents, businesses, nonprofits, and public agencies on possible improvements for Colonnade. That study was completed in 2016 and is posted, along with extensive background, at <http://eastlakeseattle.org/?page=colonnade>.

Pledges of donated volunteer time from dozens of skateboarders were crucial to ECC in qualifying for the matching funds for the Colonnade planning and design study, and skateboarders participated in large numbers in the many public meetings as well as a large workshop specifically on skatepark location and design. The public events enabled dialogue between skateboarders and local residents, from whom no opposition to a lighted skatepark in Colonnade has been found.

Not only are there many skateboarders who care about this project in our Eastlake neighborhood and nearby, but there are many more who live everywhere in Seattle and indeed throughout the multicounty region and who will benefit from the new skatespot. Hundreds of them participated in the planning process through messages of support, attendance at meetings, and in other ways.

In addition to skateboarders, other users who are on wheels will enjoy the Colonnade skatespot. Among them are people with nonmotorized scooters, BMX bikes, and skates. The skateboarders who are advocating for a skate feature at Colonnade are committed to making these other users feel welcome there.

Skateboarder involvement and the search for site. Advocates for a skatespot at Colonnade include children and their parents, girls and women (such as via the organization Skate Like a Girl), and other skateboarders of every race, ethnicity, and income level. Skateboarding is a particularly affordable sport which is easily entered at any age or skill level. The strong motivation of skateboarders to help realize a skatespot at Colonnade comes because they are truly an underserved community.

Young skateboarders and their parents (most from elsewhere in Seattle) worked closely with the Eastlake Community Council in ensuring that the Mayor and City Council included Colonnade in the 2000 parks levy. Unfortunately, the actual design of the I-5 Colonnade Open Space upon its opening in 2005 lacked any features specifically for skateboarding.

The Seattle Park and Recreation Department's 2007 [Citywide Skatepark Plan](#) found a great unmet need for a skate feature in this general area of Seattle, so close to the city's geographic and population center and to the City's largest concentration of renters. ("Skatespot" is the Citywide Skatepark Plan's term for a middle-sized skate feature on the scale of what is proposed for Colonnade.) An almost unique feature of this site which the Citywide Skatepark Plan did not even dream of is that it is protected from the rain and will be lighted at night.

Very early in the process of developing the 2007 Citywide Skatepark Plan, Colonnade was ruled out as a possible location for a skate feature on the grounds that the I-5 Colonnade Open Space was "fully programmed." The Park Department had just opened Colonnade in 2005, and it is understandable that this assumption was made.

However, note that the 7.5 acres of Colonnade received only \$1.75 million in levy funds, and with only another \$74,000 in other Parks funds spent during construction, a total of \$1.824 million went

to plan, design and build Colonnade as it opened in 2005. That amounted to \$243,316 per acre, probably one of the lower costs per acre for producing any unit of the Seattle parks system. Not surprisingly, the 2015-16 Colonnade planning and design process found the I-5 Colonnade Open Space to be rather thinly programmed, and set forth dozens of improvements. The schematic long-range plan identified a vacant site near the Lakeview Blvd. underpass as the best place for the proposed skatespot.

The skatespot design and the designers. Key donors of professional skills were two of the region's most prominent members of the skateboard community—civil engineer Micah Shapiro of Grindline Concrete Skatepark Design and Construction; and architect and construction management specialist Sean Kelly of SHKS Architects. With input from many others and after wide discussion of the site among the public, stakeholders, and agencies, they beautifully designed a proposed 12,000 square foot skatespot for a previously un-programmed gently sloped site near the northeast corner of Colonnade along the Lakeview Blvd. underpass under I-5. Their design is posted [here](#) on the Colonnade planning and design web site. (It is fully understood that if the Park Department decides to fund a skatespot at this site, the Park Department will want to do some of its own design and outreach toward reaching closure on the skatespot design.)

The skatespot design envisions two bowls, two ledges, a hip (two ramps at a 90 degree angle from each other rising to a shared deck), a “manny pad” (a long low platform allowing skateboarders to make a small jumps where the level changes), and flatground. The design takes advantage of how the southwest wall drops off down the hillside, proposing that the wall include bouldering (climbing) features. Toward the southwest there will also be stairs.

The I-5 freeway will shelter the skatespot from precipitation. Lighting (much of it recessed beneath the stairs and benches to create a striated appearance similar to the freeway I-beams above) will enable nighttime use—at present not an option for skateboarders unless at an expensive private skatepark. Various site furnishings are proposed outside the skatespot proper—among them, bollards to lean against, benches, and climbing hand-holds.

Cost estimates. Along with their design, Sean Kelly and Micah Shapiro have donated some careful cost estimates. There are structural complexities in the site, such as the proximity to I-5 columns and the need for elevated flatwork in constructing the cantilevered bouldering wall. They suggest unit costs of \$50/square foot for general construction, \$12/square foot for lighting (includes a variety of LED fixtures, controllers, conduit, etc.) and \$1.50/square foot for site furnishings. Their suggested estimate is \$600,000 for constructing the skatespot and \$162,000 for lighting and furnishings. An escalation cost of 3 percent per year would bring the total to \$807,720 if the construction were in an outer year. With an additional 60 percent added for contingencies and project management (fees for project management, design services, project permitting, taxes, etc.), the total cost comes to \$1,292,352.

Great potential for raising outside funds. Of the many worthy projects needed to bring the I-5 Colonnade Open Space to its full potential, the Eastlake Community Council believes that the proposed skatespot has the greatest potential for leveraging funds from outside the Park Department budget. Largely this is because of the size and enthusiasm of the skateboard community, which has shown a growing interest in Colonnade since first helping ECC to convince

the Mayor and City Council to fund and establish the I-5 Colonnade Open Space through the 2000 parks levy.

The skateboard community includes not only skateboarders of all ages, but also parents and businesses. Many are highly motivated to contribute funds and also to help raise more funds from others. The Eastlake Community Council is committed to donating and helping to raise additional funds, and most importantly to work closely with skateboard community members on identifying and approaching business and nonprofit donors, which include at least one foundation that specifically funds skateboard parks.

As the Park Department has discovered at its existing skate features, the skateboard community has an excellent record of self-policing in discouraging vandalism and in maintaining these facilities, thus minimizing the Park Department's maintenance expense. The high degree of interest in this project from a wide range of skate advocates makes fundraising promising, just as we hope that it will help convince the City to spend the necessary funds to fulfill the need identified in the 2007 Citywide Skatepark Plan for a skate feature in this part of Seattle.

Conclusion. The Eastlake Community Council is confident that the proposed skatespot for the I-5 Colonnade Open Space will realize important Park Department priorities and that City funding will unleash substantial outside matching funds from individuals, businesses, and non-profits. ECC welcomes any further inquiries from the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation regarding this application. Please direct your inquires to our intake address at info@eastlakeseattle.org and to our representative on this project, Chris Leman (206) 322-5463.

Founded in 1971, the Eastlake Community Council represents those who live, work, or own property in Eastlake, a unique mixed-use neighborhood which includes about 5000 residents and 5000 employees. We are proud of our partnership with many other community and recreational groups that join us in requesting City of Seattle funding for a skatespot at Colonnade. Whatever the source of City funds, we and our partner groups will be contributing and raising money to assist in the cost.

Sincerely,



Ann Prezyna, President
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