



2834 Jackson Blvd.

Rapid City, SD 57702

<http://friendsofreparks.com/>

Dear Jerry and Ted,

Thank you for the opportunity to review preliminary plans for Founders Park with you and the team from CETEC Engineering last week. We appreciate the chance to offer constructive suggestions at this stage of the project.

First, we want to reiterate that Friends is a supporter of the Founders Park project and of the expansion of the bike and pedestrian paths. As we related in the meeting, our main concern is addition of hard surface in the greenway. We remain concerned about the expanded parking and the additional roadway to accommodate the entrance/exit opposite Cross Street.

If the additional ingress is sited across from Cross Street, an enormous amount of greenway would be paved over to connect to and expand the existing paved lot—a distance of 500 - 600 feet from Cross to the current parking. Even with the use of pervious concrete and addition of the bioswale to reduce and treat stormwater runoff into Rapid Creek, this is yet another case of expanding hard surface on what was intended to remain undeveloped parkland.

We understand from your presentation that a traffic engineering study has recommended the second entrance/exit from the parking for congestion and safety reasons. Nevertheless, we must question the additional parking and request that you consider some alternatives that we raised in the meeting.

1. Have you considered using parking in the Founders Park development on the north side of Rapid Creek? With the exception of Farmer's Market mornings, much of the activity related to the park and the bike path are in non-business hours, private parking related to the office park complex would be available, and the new bike path bridge would provide access. As pointed out during the meeting, the owners of the parking and office buildings on the north side of Rapid Creek may open to negotiating a joint use agreement similar to those the city has reached in other parts of the greenway where public access parking for use of the park and private use of parking to access buildings share space.
2. Even during business hours, parking on the north side would be available. As we noted in the discussion, the current office buildings are occupied, one has underground parking, and at current full occupancy have considerable excess parking available for users of the trail system.
3. We do not accept the undocumented assertion that users of the Hanson-Larson Memorial Park trails would prefer parking at Founders Park over parking on the north side of Rapid Creek at the trail head. Have you discussed the plans with the Hanson-Larson Foundation?
4. Finally, it seems counter-intuitive to justify expanded parking lots to accommodate cyclists. If Rapid City is trying to foster cycling for commuting, recreational and fitness purposes, it would seem we should provide incentives for people to ride their bikes to the trail, not drive there.

Again, we appreciate that you and your team took the time to brief us on the planning project and listen to our concerns. We will continue to participate in the process and look forward to hearing whether the team is able to incorporate any of these proposed ideas into their planning.

Sincerely,

Steve McCarthy, President