DENVER'S PARKS PLANNING PROCESS:

HISTORY, PRACTICE, THEORY,

AND A PROPOSED PROCESS MODEL

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EILEEN A. TAYLOR

DECEMBER, 1986
DENVER'S PARKS PLANNING PROCESS: HISTORY, PRACTICE, THEORY, AND A PROPOSED PROCESS MODEL

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTERS OF PLANNING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING

BY
ELAINE A. TAYLOR

DECEMBER 1986
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Far more than perfunctory thanks must be given to my thesis advisor, David R. Hill, who never failed to be helpful, accommodating, and supportive to me during what must have been an extremely difficult period in his own life. His guidance and suggestions have made doing a thesis one of the best learning experiences I've had at UCD.

Dan Schler, Bernie Jones, and Sandy Drew, the members of my thesis committee, have also provided advice, encouragement, excellent resource materials, and suggestions for approaching the thesis problem.

Thanks are also due to the people who provided so much of the information for this paper, especially Pat Gallavan, former head of Denver's Department of Parks and Recreation's Parks Division; Rod Wiberg, John Delavou, Mike Flaherty, and Ron McKitrick, of Denver's Department of Parks and Recreation; Maggie Sperling and Wayland Walker, of the Denver Planning Office; Maggie Dunlap, in the City Attorney's Office; Liz Orr, of Denver's Office of Budget and Management; Kaaren Patterson, of the Colorado Historical Society; Jeff Johnson, attorney; and Karen Kaehny and Tom Morris, of City Park Neighbors.

I am especially grateful to Charlie Nugaris, who has loaned me computer equipment, given good advice, and come running to the rescue repeatedly as I've battled with my first home computer.

Finally, I would like to thank Lorraine Chappel and Richard Sanderson, good friends who are still talking to me.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Planning, from a generalist standpoint, is usually concerned with the big picture, the major issues. A city's quality of life, however, is shaped by the large and small, day-to-day, public and private decisions that gradually change its appearance and function. Public satisfaction with overall quality of life is closely linked with attitudes toward parks and public spaces, and a city's parks and public spaces are subject to the effects of this day-to-day decision-making. This thesis was suggested by a sequence of events that may indicate a need for bringing the tools and techniques of general planning down to "where the action is," at the level of specific projects, under the control of operating departments.

The Incidents

During the past year, many neighbors of City Park have become concerned over the continuing loss of green space to the Zoo and the Museum of Natural History. Additional issues have been the architectural character of recent expansions and modifications at the park, paving over of green space for parking and tennis, and traffic in and around the park. In trying to obtain information from the Department of Parks and Recreation, these citizens became frustrated, feeling excluded from the parks planning process. This frustration resulted in a resolution urging the Denver City Council Recreation and Culture Committee "to amend the Revised Municipal Code, by adding a new article
pertaining to public notification and Council's approval by ordinance of any alteration or improvements to city owned open space under the management of the Department of Parks and Recreation" (City Park Neighbors, Letter, January 24, 1986; see Appendix 1). While the resolution did not pass as drafted, it clearly expressed dissatisfaction with what residents perceived as the closed, autonomous processes of the Department of Parks and Recreation. These neighbors had watched trees being removed, green areas paved for parking, and a mountain view obliterated by a huge tan museum structure (Tom Morris and other speakers, Public Meeting, January 8, 1986, Park Hill Congregational Church). The concern expressed in the resolution proposed by the neighborhood group was acknowledged by City Council in their passage of a modified resolution, directing the Department of Parks and Recreation to establish a procedure which would provide for public notification of alterations or improvements to city owned green space under the management of the Department (Denver City Council, Resolution No. 11, Series 1986; see Appendix 1).

The difficult situation which developed in City Park points to a number of related problems, many of which may prove to be rooted in the historical and institutional framework of the City's parks planning process.

A lack of timely notification and opportunity for participation in the planning process has created feelings of helplessness and frustration among neighborhood residents and

The City's lack of oversight on the Museum's expenditure of $20 million in bond proceeds was a missed opportunity for the community and City to exercise control over the new construction (Steve Kaplan, City Attorney, at City Park Task Force Meeting, November 18, 1986). The size, siting and design of the resulting structure angered park neighbors (Various speakers, Public Meeting, January 8, 1986), especially since one of the new wings closed off the westward view from Montview Boulevard, and increased parking requirements. The construction project itself opened the City up to a law suit arising out of a prevailing wage dispute, with the Museum claiming that its construction projects are not required to meet city requirements as General Public Improvements (Kaplan, November 18, 1986).

Both the Zoo and the Museum of Natural History have developed according to their own long range plans, without sufficient analysis of the cumulative impact of their growth on the park and its surrounding area. This has resulted in incremental encroachments on the park's green space, and a parking demand which already exceeds supply, with the solutions all unattractive: taking of additional green space for parking; construction of a parking garage; or continued and increasing overflow into surrounding neighborhoods (City Park Task Force Meeting, August 7, 1986).
Conversion of the Pavillion to a Science Museum was a response to a request from an organized group of citizens, and was completed without reference to a park master plan or citywide parks master plan. The project apparently went through with a minimum of planning, design control or oversight from the city. In this author's opinion, the resulting design detracted, rather than added, to the aesthetic appeal and function of the park (see also author's suggestions in The Urban Design Forum's The Great Ideas 1984). Since a private group was providing the funds, the project was not required to go through the city's capital improvements planning and budgeting process.

Recently, however, both elected officials and administrative staff have acknowledged that some changes are needed in the city's parks planning process. The administration has committed to renegotiating its contracts with the cultural institutions to include "greater accountability between the city and the culturals, a role for neighborhood representatives in future planning, plus safeguards on land use and capital improvement projects." (Sandy Drew, Administrative Assistant, Letter, February 11, 1986) The draft Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, in its "Strategies for Improving the System," stated that an "ongoing process for gathering citizen comment should be established. Citizen input is vital in periodically reviewing the plan and in providing commentary on specific projects and programs." The draft Plan also stated that the city should support the expansion and development of special attractions;
that "it is important that development of special attractions be consistent with other objectives of the proposed Master Plan and adequately address neighborhood considerations"; and that "spending requests for parks and recreation will be evaluated to make sure they are consistent with the priorities of the plan." (Department of Parks and Recreation, Denver Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan [Draft], 1986). The plan makes several suggestions for gathering public input, and states that "the importance of public participation in deciding the future of Denver's parks, recreation and open space program cannot be overstated."

At the City Park Task Force Meeting on November 18, 1986, Ruth Rodriguez, Director of Parks and Recreation, announced that a new position had been created: a Deputy Manager of Parks and Recreation to be responsible for design, with the objective of assuring high quality in all of the department's design efforts.

In short, Denver is at a critical moment in determining how its parks will be planned, and is ready to take action to solve some of the problems.
I. Problem Statement

The specific problems cited for City Park are symptoms of a larger problem. Denver’s existing parks planning process fails to provide adequate public input, project evaluation, design and project control, and long-range planning for park projects, particularly those which are independently funded.

Park neighbors sometimes have received too little information, too late, on proposed park projects. According to Karen Kaehny, President of City Park Neighbors, "Highest among neighbors' concerns has been the right to be notified of plans for significant park development." Angry, frustrated citizens are difficult to deal with, and can delay projects and create bad publicity for the administration.

Dudley Griggs, a member of City Park Neighbors, was quoted by the Urban Design Forum as saying that "City Park is the most serious illustration of the need to preserve green space against the intrusion of special interests... The manner in which the city allocates park space -- by approval from the Director of Parks and Recreation -- is inadequate." (Chris Ford 1986, Citizens and City Park, The Urban Design Forum, No. XVIV (August/September).

Individual projects have not been evaluated in the context of a citywide parks master plan, and their impacts have not always been fully considered. No such plan was available to help defend City Park in 1983, when South City Park Neighbors heard
rumors of plans for fire station in the park, on East 17th Avenue, and appealed to the City to get the plans changed.

Current contracts between the City and the cultural institutions fail to make clear their respective responsibilities and powers in regards to project management, and are therefore open to dispute. In turning park projects over to organizations outside of the Department, the city is removing itself from a day-to-day involvement in an evolving design, and evading the controls that the city has established to assure citizen involvement, affirmative action, MBE participation, fair labor practices, liability protections, etc. According to a recent article in Urban Design Forum,

During the McNichols administration, City Council voted against oversight authority for the bond issue which has funded the museum's 35,000 square foot expansion. To address city control of institutional growth in City Park specifically, the Pena administration is beginning what [Sandy] Drew terms "framework talks" with zoo and museum officials.

Contracts with city cultural institutions have not been significantly renegotiated in many years. Drew stated that preliminary talks are needed to reach agreements on issues, including the impact of capitol projects on their setting. (Chris Ford 1986, 5)

It should be pointed out that the 35,000 square foot expansion may be low. According to the Museum of Natural History, recent expansions have increased area from 263,000 sq. ft. in 1969 to 463,000 sq. ft. in 1986 (personal communication, November 1986).

The existing park planning process does not provide for a systematic evaluation of all proposed projects, with the result that poorly conceived or executed projects may sometimes slip
through. As Ruth Rodriguez, Manager of Parks and Recreation, put it, "There just hasn't been a philosophy of, 'Let's do it right and cost-effectively, but let's make sure we do it right.'" (Denver Post, August 24, 1986, p. 7A)

Lack of adequate design and project control has resulted in the application of plywood covered with texturized paint to close off what were originally designed as open stucco arches, to convert the City Park Pavilion to a Science Museum. According to Karen Kaehny, President of City Park Neighbors, "Lovely acres of public accessible green space were cut from park lawns and a massive concrete building now blocks the east park edge. Zoning, funding controls and City permits did not preserve park lands." (Letter to Donald E. Hunt, Principal, BRW, a firm proposing on City Park landscape design, 2 December 1986).

Finally, the Department has suffered from a lack of vision, direction, and focus. Because the last parks master plan was done in 1929, the City has been operating for a number of years virtually without reference to a parks master plan (Mike Flaherty, personal communication, July 1986). George Girvin, a principal in the consulting firm that prepared the new master plan (Royston Hanamoto Alley & Abey), was quoted by the Denver Post (August 24, 1986, p. 7A) as saying that he had not "come across another major city that has gone through this length of time without doing any master planning," and that parks planning in Denver had been "just sort of hit-and-miss planning. They never asked themselves, 'Where do we go from here?'" Phil
Flores, one of Denver's leading landscape architects, echoed this thought, saying that "We're not doing anything progressive with our parks. At best, it's just maintenance, and we're not doing that great a job with that." (Denver Post, 24 August 24 1986, 7A)

II. Thesis Statement

A parks planning process can be developed for Denver which will significantly improve upon the present situation, and hopefully, avoid recurrence of the types of problems described in the problem statement above. The intention of this paper is to research, develop, and propose strategies for implementation of such a process.

III. Organization of the Research and Argument

The argument starts from a description and evaluation of the existing park planning situation in Denver; defines general concepts and makes value judgments; then uses this understanding of the proper parks planning process to develop objectives, criteria, and implementation strategies for improving the parks planning process in Denver. The following is a chapter by chapter description of the process that leads from the problem to its solution.
Chapter 1. Introduction

After discussing a specific situation, the Introduction states the problem, proposes a solution, then goes on to explain the organization of the rest of the paper, describing the approach, information sources and methods, and the scope and limits of the study.

Chapter 2. Parks Planning in Denver

Historical

Since the history of parks and parks planning in Denver is closely associated with a limited number of dominant figures, the first half of this chapter gives a brief overview of the history of Denver's parks by focusing on the parks planning work of Sopris, Speer, DeBoer, and Stapleton. For the reader's reference, a strictly chronological history is also provided in the appendices. Specific incidents in Denver's past are then presented as case studies, and analyzed to determine the sort of planning that took place, the problems presented, and the outcome. Brief analyses of these and additional case studies are also provided in the appendices.

Present Parks Planning Process

The second half of Chapter 2 describes the present existing institutional framework for parks planning, and how the formal parks planning process is supposed to work, followed by a
description of how the informal process actually works in practice.

Chapter 3. Alternative Parks Planning Processes

Chapter 3 explores a traditional view of park planning, general planning process theory, and alternative parks planning processes, then proposes criteria for evaluating a parks planning process.

Chapter 4. Objectives for Denver

After reviewing some of the unique features of Denver that require special consideration in developing a parks planning process, Chapter 4 assigns values to the criteria according to the relative importance of various criteria for Denver, evaluates and ranks the parks planning process alternatives that were previously described, and proposes (and evaluates) a proper parks planning process for Denver.

Chapter 5. Implementation Strategies

Chapter 5 considers the various resources that are available to Denver to improve the existing situation, in terms of finances, agencies, attitudes, political realities, special interest groups, private agencies and organizations, consultants, legal tools, and public interest; reviews what has been done in the very recent past to bring about improvements; and describes
what still needs to be done to achieve a proper parks planning process, assigning priorities and dates.

Chapter 6. Summary and Conclusions

The final chapter summarizes the approach, findings, and recommendations, and identifies needs for further research.

IV. Methods and Data

The following is a chapter by chapter description of the information sources to be used and the use that will be made of them.

Chapter 2. Parks Planning in Denver

Collections of historical documents, such as newspaper clipping and microfilm files, Denver Municipal Facts, and the DeBoer Collection at the Western History Department of the Denver Public Library, will provide historical examples. The Denver City Charter and other documents will be used to establish the legal framework within which parks planning takes place. Interviews with planners and others in the Denver Planning Office, the Denver Department of Parks and Recreation, and other agencies will be used to assess the political realities behind the institutional framework, and to review analyses and recommendations. Finally, personal observation and experience
will be used to provide examples and to describe and evaluate both the existing parks planning process and its results.

Chapter 3. Alternative Parks Planning Processes

The professional literature of planning, community development, landscape architecture, and public administration will be used to develop definitions and understandings about parks planning, general planning process theories, and the parks planning process. The definitions and understandings of what constitutes a parks planning and the general planning process will be used, in conjunction with the literature of parks planning administration, to develop objectives for a parks planning process. These objectives, in turn, form the basis for developing a number of criteria for measuring the success of a parks planning process.

Chapter 4. Objectives for Denver

When the criteria for evaluating a parks planning process have been identified, the unique institutional, environmental, political, social, and demographic features of Denver will be analyzed to arrive at properly weighted criteria for evaluating a parks planning process in Denver. Denver's existing parks planning process and each of the parks planning process alternatives described in Chapter 3 will then be rated and ranked according to these criteria.
Chapter 5. Implementation Strategies

Information sources for this chapter will include the professional literature, the City Charter and other public documents, interviews with public officials and others concerned with the City's parks, comments by public officials in the press and at meetings, and personal experience and observation. With this information, the identified process objectives will be translated into specific strategies for implementation in Denver. Resources for change will be discussed, and actions required will be identified by the agency, office, or official that needs to initiate the action. Fiscal and political impacts will be considered.

Chapter 6. Summary and Conclusions

V. Scope and Limits

The following is a guide to the scope of this thesis, providing some working definitions of key terms, limiting the area of concern, and stating the constraints on its depth and breadth.

Definitions of Terms

Park

In a broad sense, a park can be any land set aside for a special function, including such diverse land uses as industrial parks, air parks, memorial parks, amusement parks, and historical
parks. When most people think of a park, however, they think of an open, grassy, landscaped area, usually with amenities appropriate to the enjoyment of leisure.

What, exactly, is a park? For the purpose of this thesis, a park is publicly owned urban open space. Although this thesis is concerned with the parks planning process in general, and therefore with all of the city's parks, including its parkways and mountain parks, the focus is on the urban parks, since most of the problems that Denver has experienced in the parks planning process are related to parks in urban neighborhoods.

Parks Planning

Parks planning has traditionally been considered a first step in the landscape design process. According to Charles Doell and Louis Twardzik, "A park plan may be considered a declaration of intent to do something at some future time. That something must be a part of the total purpose of providing that kind of recreation service which that particular public agency in that particular level of government is organized to provide." (1973, 129) Even if funds are not available in the near future, a declaration of intent is needed to assure that even minor and "free" projects are consistent with goals. Park planning requires policy analysis, coordination with experts in various disciplines, integration with overall city plans, and involvement of the general public (Doell and Twardzik 1973, 129-131).
Definitions of "planning" abound in the literature. Herb Smith, in The Citizen's Guide to Planning (Smith 1979), includes several possibilities from the literature, such as:

"The broad object of planning is to further the welfare of the people in the community by helping to create an increasingly better, more healthful, convenient, efficient and attractive community environment. The physical, as well as the social and economic community is a single organism, all features and activities of which are related and interdependent. These facts must be supplemented by the application of intelligent foresight and planned administrative and legal coordination if balance, harmony and order are to be insured. It is the task of planning to supply this foresight and this over-all coordination." (from Local Planning Administration)

"Planning may be considered the conscious organization of human activities to serve human needs." (from Thomas F. Saarinen's Environmental Planning; Perception and Behavior, 1976)

Parks Planning Process

The parks planning process refers to an organized sequence of events that takes a park feature, an entire park, or all of a city's parks from concept to construction. Doing a master plan for the city's parks or a plan for a particular park are first steps in a park planning process. One of the main objectives of this paper will be to arrive at a detailed description of the proper method or procedures for assuring that what actually gets built in parks is consistent with plans, stated objectives, and the desires of the community.
Constraints

My objectivity in this thesis may be affected by my role as a participant/observer in neighborhood organizations concerned with land use issues in City Park. This experience has been invaluable in terms of clarifying issues, gaining an understanding of existing city structures and processes, and suggesting action alternatives. At the same time, my knowledge of park issues in other areas of the city is limited to occasional observation and conversations with planners, historic preservation specialists, and friends. Therefore, despite efforts to be objective, my analysis of the present situation and the solutions proposed are greatly influenced by incidents at City Park.

Constraints on time and budget have limited analysis of case studies to those from Denver's past, since adequate information from other cities proved difficult to locate in Denver. Information is available on general planning, such as Anthony Catanese and W. Paul Farmer's *Personality, politics, and planning* (1978), or the excellent case studies in the IPP's *Citizen Participation* (1978), to address that aspect of the parks planning process, but little on parks planning per se. Even where such information was available, it was generally filtered through the bias of the writer, making it difficult to get to the facts of the situation.

Lack of access to the day-to-day decision-making process in
the Department of Parks and Recreation made it necessary to limit study of the project selection process to information from interviews. To do this process justice would probably require an in-depth management analysis, with the full cooperation of the department.

Current litigation involving the city and the Museum of Natural History has made it difficult to obtain information, such as interpretations of City Charter provisions dealing with oversight of general public improvements, from either the City Attorney's Office or the Museum. Lacking a legal background, I have limited myself to what appeared most obvious.

Scope

Since the Denver park system encompasses many types of parks, from miniparks to large mountain tracts, all park types represented in the Denver park system will be considered. However, the emphasis in this thesis is on the urban parks planning process itself, specifically as it applies to Denver, Colorado.

The scope of this thesis includes all the levels of parks planning, from the Parks and Recreation component of the citywide Comprehensive Plan down to planning for individual small projects in specific parks. While this study necessarily raises issues related to park design, and may make assumptions and value judgements about park design objectives, its focus is on planning issues (e.g., process, public involvement, interagency
coordination), rather than the specifics of landscape architecture, architecture, applied recreation theory, or public administration.
CHAPTER 2. PARKS PLANNING IN DENVER

"Planning has never been in the psyche of the Parks Department. I think we will change that."
-- Ruth Rodriguez, Manager, Department of Parks and Recreation, quoted in Denver Post, August 24, 1986

"It isn't true that there hasn't been parks planning since 1929...a Parks and Recreation planner did the Parks and Recreation component of the last comprehensive plan."
-- Pat Gallavan, former Acting Manager, Department of Parks and Recreation, interviewed by author, September 30, 1986

As a first step in developing a proper parks planning process for Denver, this chapter will examine the historical and institutional context of Denver's existing parks planning efforts, and attempt to describe current practice.

I. History

This overview of the history of Denver's parks and parks planning efforts has two purposes: 1) to provide a background for understanding how the present facilities, institutions, and planning processes came about; and 2) to provide case studies of how the planning process has functioned for specific projects in Denver's past.

Denver's early parks planning was dominated by forceful men of vision: Mayors Sopris, Speer, and Stapleton, and Landscape Architect/Planner S.R. DeBoer. The first part of this discussion is organized around these four men, since Denver's parks and its approach to parks planning have been shaped in large part by their ideas and personalities.
The second part of the historical discussion is an examination of selected parks planning projects in Denver's past. These are analyzed as case studies, to point out certain tendencies in Denver's approach to parks planning, problems that have arisen, and resultant outcomes.

The historical overview concludes with an evaluation of how successful the parks planning process has been in planning the parks system and specific facilities.

For reference, the appendices include a chronology of significant events in the history of Denver's parks, and summaries of parks planning projects from Denver's past, using a standard format. Each case study briefly lists the major participants in the planning process; the degree and type of public input, both formal and informal; and how interagency coordination was handled. The analysis that concludes each case study tries to relate process to project outcome.
The Personalities

The development of Denver's parks was dominated by powerful, energetic personalities, for whom city planning was virtually synonymous with parks planning. Four men stand out: Sopris, Speer, DeBoer, and Stapleton.

SOPRIS: Promoter of City Park

In 1868, land developers Francis Case and Frederick Ebert gave Denver its first public park, Curtis Park. When Mayor Joseph E. Bates, in his 1872 inaugural address, identified the city's need for parks, he was able to prompt Horace Fuller to donate a block at 28th and Gilpin, Fuller Park. It was Mayor Richard E. Sopris, however, who pushed for Denver's first major park acquisition, a 320-acre parcel which was to become City Park.

As Denver's mayor from 1878 to 1881, Sopris, no doubt influenced by Frederick Law Olmstead, provided the city with a vision of two 640-acre parks, one on the east side of Denver and one on the west, linked by Colfax Avenue as a parkway. In 1878, Henry Lee, Denver's State Representative, and Jacob Downing, a real estate developer, introduced a bill in the state legislature to permit Denver to purchase available state owned school land for the purpose of developing these parks. Although passage of this bill made the purchase possible at a bargain price, the City Council, after much controversy, reduced the acquisition of the
east side parcel to 320 acres and eliminated the west side parcel, saying that the money would be better spent on sewers, streets, lights, and police and fire protection. The Rocky Mountain News sided with Sopris, saying that while many people may think that 320 acres is a lot of land for a city the size of Denver, "when properly understood it is not a very large strip of ground." (News, September 7, 1881, p. 4, c. 1).

In 1881, Sopris went on to become the city's first park commissioner, and during the ten years that followed, he supervised the planning and development of Denver's first parks. He engaged Henry F. Meryweather, a civil engineer, to conduct the first survey of City Park, and to prepare its first roadway and landscape gardening plan. In Denver's City Park, Bette Peters describes this plan as follows:

The plan was typical of the era: pastoral, picturesque, naturalistic, and democratic. The design allowed for the flow of horses and foot traffic through the park, future installation of formal gardens, statues, fountains, and other park amenities similar to those either already installed in Central Park or published in the Olmsted/Vaux plans submitted to the New York City Council. (Peters 1986, 7)

The Rocky Mountain News (7 September 1981, 4) praised the preliminary planting plans, acknowledging that it would probably be some time before most of the park could be developed.

From owners of adjacent property, Sopris collected $500 for the purchase of the park's first trees, a row of cottonwoods. Sopris paid for other trees out of his own pocket.

During the Sopris years, an annual appropriation of $10,000 was established for parks, and control of Denver parks passed
from the City Council to the new Board of Public Works. Free nightly concerts, sponsored by the cable car companies, were started in 1890. By the time Sopris retired, in 1891, City Park was firmly established, with hundreds of trees, irrigation from both City Ditch and an arterial well, three miles of driveways, a bridge, and a small lake (Duck Lake).

Two years after Sopris retired, the office of Park Commissioner was abolished, and a 3-man Board of Park Commissioners was established to oversee construction and maintenance in all of Denver's parks.

SPEER: Powerful Politician, Translating Vision into Reality

As head of Public Works from 1901 to 1904, and as Mayor from 1904 to 1912 and again from 1916 to 1918, Robert Walter Speer worked to create his vision of the City Beautiful. As head of Public Works, which included the parks, Speer had control of almost 50 per cent of the city budget. As mayor, he was strong and unyielding, the first mayor elected under a home rule charter, and the father of the "Speer Amendment," which greatly increased the powers of the mayor, giving Speer power over all appointments except auditor, and power to elect 4 of the 9 members of city council (greater authority than that of any other American mayor). This period has been characterized as "probably as close to oligarchic form of government as Denver was ever to experience." (DeBoer 1972, Green Thumb, 151).

As S.R. DeBoer later recalled,
...I soon learned that all you needed to get along with him was to put out a good day’s work each day. He was a great big fellow and he was stubborn. What he said, by God, you had better do! We park men all liked Mayor Speer.” (DeBoer 1972, *Green Thumb*, 150).

Charles A. Johnson’s book, *Denver’s Mayor Speer* (1969), says that Speer “…was impatient with slovenly or dilatory endeavor. He drove his subordinates hard, but gave his loyalty in return.” (quoted in DeBoer 1972, *Green Thumb*, 151) S.R. DeBoer related an incident that substantiates this:

On the planting of Cherry Creek parkway I was under the eye of the mayor all the time. We were filling in on the south side of the creek at Logan and had one man leveling with a team and a little bucket we called a slip, going around slowly to place the soil. Speer walked by there every morning on his way to the office. One morning, after he had gone by, the mayor sent for me. I was trembling. When I was inside his office, he said, "You have one team working there, going around in circles. It’ll take him a hundred years to level off that boulevard." I said, "Mayor, we don’t have much money." "Who told you to worry about money? I do that. Now get out of here and get that thing done."

It was really Steinhauer’s business, so I told him. The next day we had more teams there than we had room for. (DeBoer 1972, *Green Thumb*, 176)

Speer had a vision of Denver, and he knew how to achieve it.

According to Bette Peters,

Not only would there be street lighting, it was to be ornamental… The Mayor pushed for paved streets, buried utility lines, park and boulevard construction, the beautification of Cherry Creek, and even a billboard ban and height ordinance to preserve the mountain view. (Peters 1986, 39-40)

While Speer had many ideas of his own for Denver, greatly influenced by his 1911 tour of European cities, he also hired
professional urban planners: Charles Mumford Robinson, for the civic center plan, and George E. Kessler, for the parks, parkways and boulevards plan. The joint planning of parks, parkways, and boulevards may have been facilitated by having all of these under the same department.

The plans developed by Kessler for Denver's Parkways were to guide the development of the city's parkways and boulevards for the next 40 years. Denver's debt to Speer and Kessler was acknowledged recently, when sixteen Denver parkways and 15 parks were added to the National Register of Historic Places (Denver Post, 24 November 1986, B-1).

According to DeBoer, the park work from 1910 to 1920 was largely the carrying out of the Speer plans. The parks created by Speer were the Civic Center, the Cherry Creek Parkway system (a big job), Berkeley Park, Rocky Mountain Lake Park, and some small ones like Rosedale Park. There was much work to be done in City and Washington Parks. Cheesman Park had been established. (DeBoer 1972, Green Thumb, 150)

The legacy of the Speer years included these and other specific parks projects which were developed under Speer, but it also included a vision for the shape and appearance of the city, with plans for its implementation.

DE BOER: Parks Planning Professional, Providing Continuity

"High-flying imaginative dreamers, both Cranmer and DeBoer, but possessed of canny practicality and political acumen that seem rare today."

--Joanne Ditmer, Denver Post, 23 April 1972, p. 36
In 1910, Saco Rienk DeBoer was a well educated but recently arrived Dutch immigrant, who had come to Denver in 1908 seeking to cure his tuberculosis. As DeBoer later recalled, "I was the foreign immigrant who appeared in the midst of a big development." (DeBoer 1972, Green Thumb, 150) At that time, the parks were being designed by George Kessler from Kansas City; Reinhard Scheutze, the local landscape architect; and Frederick Law Olmsted, son of the famous Architect in Chief of New York's Central Park. Although he had a degree from the Royal Imperial School of Horticulture in Germany, DeBoer was doing menial work in the Parks Department when the Superintendent of Parks asked him to do a plan for the Sunken Gardens on Speer Boulevard. The plans went to Mayor Speer, who liked them. Thus began a long and productive association.

S.R. Boer did his greatest work under Speer and Stapleton. Among his many projects were choosing the location of City Hall, planning for the Civic Center, selecting the site for Stapleton Airport, and planning the development and landscaping of corridors such as Monaco, E. 17th Avenue, and Speer Boulevard. (Rocky Mountain News, 17 August 1974, 21)

DeBoer did much of the planning and planting of City Park and Washington Park, as well as the new parks Speer had ordered: Civic Center, Cherry Creek Parkway, Berkeley Park, Rocky Mountain Park, Cheesman Park, and Rosedale Park (Pasquale Marranzino, January 6, 1973; Denver Public Library, Western History clipping file, no source or page cited).
S.R. DeBoer provided a rare continuity of planning thought for Denver's parks, serving the city either as an employee or as a consultant from 1910 until he retired in 1967 (Rocky Mountain News, August 17, 1974, p. 21). As the years went on, his career included what has come to be called "urban planning." In the mid-1920's he was one of the three consultant planners retained by a planning commission to develop a blueprint for Denver's land use patterns, traffic and streets, parks and parkways, civic center development, transit, storm drainage, and regional development (Denver Post, 13 November 1960, 2aa). After several preliminary studies of traffic and parks were made and presented, this effort culminated in the final "Denver Plan No. 1" on December 27, 1929 (DeBoer 1972, Green Thumb, 181).

STAPLETON - Speer's Successor for Expanded Parks and Parkways

According to S.R. DeBoer,

The two men who were responsible for Denver's parks and parkways were Speer and Stapleton. When Benjamin Stapleton became mayor in 1923 Denver could not have had a better man for the continued development of its park system. He was the logical successor to Robert Speer. He had followed our work closely during the Speer years and when, after eight years of being postmaster, he became mayor, his program was ready. He appointed Charles Vail his Manager of Public Works and Parks.

Much of the Speer plan had been carried out, and Stapleton began to purchase land for more parks. His purchase of Red Rocks Park was severely criticized. One daily paper referred to it as Stapleton's Rattlesnake Park. It was one of the best investments any city ever made. (DeBoer 1972, Green Thumb, 176)

Stapleton went on to purchase Manhattan Beach at Sloan Lake for a boat harbor, and the land north of Berkely Park for a golf
Stapleton offered $15,000 for Roxborough Park, but the seller wanted $17,000, and the deal fell through (DeBoer 1972, Green Thumb, 176).

Under Stapleton, Denver developed Alamo Placita and Arlington Park, along Cherry Creek; connected Sloan and Cooper lakes to make Sloan Lake big enough to accommodate power and sailboats, and built the boat harbor and boat house; and continued development of roads and facilities in the mountain parks. Between 1923 and 1930, the city more than doubled its mountain park area (4419 acres to 10978 acres, at a cost of $65,330), acquiring the Mt. Evans territory and Red Rocks. It constructed a seven mile stretch of highway in Deer Creek; the Mt. Evans highway (except for the final section to the summit, which was built by the state); Echo Lake Lodge; Evergreen Dam and Lake Evergreen; the Evergreen Golf Club; and a five mile scenic roadway through the park of the Red Rocks. By 1930, Denver was maintaining about 100 miles of mountain highways, including year round snow removal for the lower part of the highway system (from the entrance to the Lookout Mountain Road to the entrance of the Bear Creek Road) (Denver Municipal Facts, January-February 1930, 4).

Under Stapleton, the city's planning efforts expanded tremendously. The city's first zoning commission was appointed (by the mayor) in 1925, and the first planning commission was appointed (by City Council) in 1926. This planning commission
worked to produce the "Denver Plan No. 1" in December 1929, which included plans for both streets and parks.

When Stapleton returned in 1935, after a period out of office, he appointed George Cranmer Manager of Parks and Improvements, and Stapleton and Cranmer were able to use WPA labor to build the Red Rocks Theater and the roads and parking areas for it, and Alameda Avenue Parkway, from Denver to Red Rocks.
Examples of Past Planning for Denver's Parks

The historical case studies that follow are provided as examples of how the parks planning process has functioned in Denver in the past. These projects were selected not because of their significance in the development of Denver's parks, but because each illustrates some principle or potential problem in parks planning. Additional historical case studies appear in the appendices.

Purchase of land for City Park

The acquisition of land for City Park (also described in the first part of this chapter, under Mayor Sopris) was the first significant parks planning activity by the city. For some time, the need for parks development had been identified by the press, the business community, and political leaders. In 1878, Henry Lee, a Denver State Representative, and Jacob Downing, a real estate developer, introduced a bill in the state legislature to permit Denver to purchase 1280 acres of state owned school land, hoping that Denver would purchase two 640-acre parcels, one several miles west of Denver and the other several miles east. Mayor Richard Sopris urged City Council to complete the entire purchase, and to think of Colfax Avenue as a parkway linking Sloan Lake in West Denver with City Park in East Denver. City Council, however, reduced the acquisition to only 320 acres on the east side, and eliminated the west side park, citing needs
for sewers, streets, lights, police and fire protection. The Rocky Mountain News sided with the mayor, saying that while many people may think that 320 acres is a lot of land for a city the size of Denver, "when properly understood it is not a very large strip of ground." (Peters 1986, 3-4)

This project marks the first time that public officials in Denver set out to obtain a specific property for park purposes, and at least partially accomplished that objective. In identifying an existing need, anticipating future needs, and choosing specific locations for meeting those needs, city officials were engaged in a parks planning process. Prior to 1889, when control of Denver parks passed from City Council to the new Board of Public Works (Peters 1986, 9), the City Council had the responsibility for balancing the city's long-range need for park lands against other priorities which they considered more pressing. The city eventually did acquire the west side park (Edgewater Park; Sloan Lake Park by 1906), and while a larger City Park is certainly needed in 1986, the City Council of a city that in 1881 was surrounded by nothing but open space can hardly be faulted for choosing the priorities it did for the frontier city, where fire, violence, and sewage-borne disease were more immediate and life-threatening concerns.

Redesign of City Park

In the 1880s, neighbors had contributed $500 to purchase cottonwood trees for City Park, and groups of school children and
other citizens had made excursions to the park to plant trees. When DeBoer tried to redesign the park to improve traffic flow, utility, and aesthetics, private citizens objected to cutting of the trees. Work proceeded in spite of objections, with city crews forced to remove the elm and maple trees during snowstorms to avoid criticism, according to S.R. DeBoer, who later recalled "I sure caught hell when we cut down those trees." However, "[c]riticism stopped when the big sloping laws became apparent. Large groups of people began to use them." (DeBoer 1972, Green Thumb, 158-9)

When DeBoer decided to realign the roads and get rid of some of the trees, some of the school children who had planted the trees (and even a few of the neighbors who had contributed for the cottonwoods) were no doubt still alive, and they would have had a high degree of involvement with "their" park. In a city where virtually all the trees have had to be planted, it would have seemed almost sacrilege to remove established trees.

DeBoer, however, had confidence in his professional judgement, and was able and willing to wait out the criticisms until the realization of his plan could speak for itself. As Speer advised, "If the writings in the papers disturb you, put them aside, and have your wife read them next summer." (Daily Journal, 21 July 1972)

In this case, the an approach based on technical expertise triumphed over citizens who were involved and concerned, but less knowledgeable, and less able to control the outcome.
Harness racing track at City Park

The harness racing track project came about in 1893 when the Mayor banned harness racing on city streets. A number adventurous young men requested a half-mile track in City Park. They installed the track, polo grounds, and grandstand for $10,000, and turned it over to the city for public use and maintenance. The Gentlemen's Driving and Riding Club was established, with annual dues, gate receipts, and subscriptions to help with the financial burden.

In this case, a group of private citizens took the lead in determining the land use for a significant area of City Park (roughly, what is now the athletic field at the northeast corner of the park), with the city merely giving its blessing to the group (Peters 1986, 20-3). The process the city went through in deciding to accept and assume responsibility for maintaining this facility is not clear. By 1903, the track was also being used as an auto speedway. Harness racing continued on the site until it lost popularity. By 1949, the facilities required major repairs, the city had better uses for the site, and the Club was forced to vacate (Peters 1986, 22-3).

The collapse of the track's grandstand in 1898 points up one of the problems in the city's approach to this project. If a similar situation were to arise today, in the current legal climate, and spectators were injured in the collapse of a facility designed and constructed under the auspices of a group
functioning with the consent of the city but without ongoing control and supervision by the city, the lawsuits could on forever, with the injured parties suing the city, the volunteer group, the architect, and the construction firm.

Establishment of the Denver Zoological Gardens

In 1896, a bear cub given to Mayor Thomas S. McMurray became a popular feature in City Park. City expenditures for a cage, bear house, and bathing pool marked the beginnings of a zoo, and forty acres were reserved for that purpose. Like Topsy, City Park Zoo "just grewed" in its early years, as additional bears and other animals were added (Peters 1986, 18-9).

The development of the zoo points up both the advantages and disadvantages of incremental planning. Responding to a situation, the city took action, which resulted in a benefit to the public. As the demand for a zoo was established, the facility was increased by increments, with attendance justifying the expansion. Funds were expended at a pace consistent with available revenues and public interest. This was poignantly demonstrated when Victor Borcher, in 1917, built the artificial mountain in the bear pens, the first barless cage area in a western zoo. According to DeBoer, Borcher had other plans for the zoo, "but when interest at City Hall died down, we went to St. Louis and built similar structures there. In St. Louis the same thing happened, and after two years he came back to Denver
and the discouraged designer subsequently shot himself (DeBoer 1972, Green Thumb, 159-60).

The incremental approach makes some sense in the planning of expenditures for parks, since major improvements in parks may more readily be deferred than new bridges, sewer replacements, or street widenings. What parks planners have sometimes failed to distinguish, however, is the difference between the planning of expenditures and the planning of parks. Parks, like other facilities, need to be planned, whether or not funds are available.

The negative side of the incremental approach is apparent from the fact that the Denver Zoo and the Museum of Natural History had their origins at almost exactly the same time, and that both have grown, at times almost imperceptibly and at times by major additions, with virtually no coordination with each other or the city (various speakers, City Park Task Force Meetings, 7 August 1986 and 10 July 1986), until both are now firmly committed to their current locations in City Park, and constitute major land uses to an extent that was not necessarily intended by anyone with responsibility for parks planning. As Ruth Rodriguez told the City Park Task Force, shortly after taking over as Manager of Parks and Recreation (10 July 1986), "Nobody is managing City Park."
Establishment of Museum of Natural History

In 1899, the city accepted a proposal prepared by Edwin Carter, naturalist and taxidermist, and several prominent citizens to establish the Colorado Museum of Natural History, based primarily on Carter's collection, on the highest elevation in City Park (Peters 1986, 32-6).

The beginnings of the Museum of Natural History reflect an elitist orientation. Edwin Carter sold his collection to the city for $10,000 with the provisos that the city would erect a fire-proof building to house it, form a corporation to oversee it, and appoint him curator for life at $150 per month. Therefore, from its very founding, the museum has been a separate entity, occupying city land and contracting with the city, but reporting only to the mayor, and not responsible to the administrative department responsible for parks. Also, in bringing the museum about, several prominent citizens met with Carter to consider site, construction, and funding. The city accepted the organization's proposal in December 1899, and the Museum was incorporated in 1900. The site that this group selected was the one that Sopris had considered the most beautiful portion of the park (Peters 1986, 9), the area that is now museum hill. As time went on, other collections were donated by leading promoters of the museum, and the facility went from its original 8559 sq ft to 69,168 sq ft in 1928, to 263,000 sq ft in 1969, and 463,000 sq ft today. As in the past, the Museum is controlled by a Board of prominent citizens, who tend to be the
major contributors to the institution. This Board and this institution have been perceived by neighboring residents and even some city administrative staff (two separate confidential personal communications, 1986) as aloof, uncooperative, and condescending. The unique status of this institution has isolated it from other elements of the parks system, and virtually excluded it from the parks planning process. The problems that this has created are discussed in Chapter 1, and in the discussion of the establishment of City Park Zoo.

Parkways and Boulevards Plan

George Kessler, urban planner/landscape architect from Kansas City, was engaged by Denver to prepare plans for the city’s parks, parkways, and boulevards (1904). Policy, direction, and support for the plans were provided by Robert W. Speer, appointed head of Public Works (including parks) in 1901, and elected Mayor in 1904. The ordinances required to implement the plan were approved by City Council (Denver Planning Office, The parkway plan, Comprehensive Plan Bulletin No. 10-3, 15-22).

Speer Boulevard and Cherry Creek Drive were developed by the Highways and Parks Departments together, with plantings keeping pace with the highway builders. The Mayor personally reviewed progress and intervened as necessary to expedite the project.

Prior to 1956, streets and parks were under the jurisdiction of the Department of Improvements and Parks, so that one city official had control of both the city’s streets and the parks
that interfaced with them. This was changed, effective January 1, 1956, to create the Department of Public Works and the Department of Parks and Recreation. From the standpoint of planning efficiency, the earlier form was ideal, since it permitted a centralized planning and design function, with urban planners (who were landscape architects by training) working under the same authority as the highway engineers. Kessler was charged with coming up with an urban design plan that encompassed streets, parkways, and parks, and had the advantage of working with a city department that had the authority over all of these. The rational, top-down approach to planning was appropriate to the managerial style of Mayor Speer, who was "aggressively determined to put his ideas into practice," according to S.R. DeBoer (1972, _Green Thumb_, 150).

When a tough, trusted, and respected mayor knows what direction he wants the city to take, and has the city well under control; when visible progress is being made in enhancing the appearance as well as the functioning infrastructure of the city; when the good of the public as a whole is being well looked after by a benevolent dictator; and when local opposition is infrequent, unorganized, and ineffective: no planning process is more efficient in getting the job done in minimum time with minimum expense than the rational, top-down approach.
Barnum Boulevard/North Speer Parkway

In this project, local opposition to a proposed parkway plan was both organized and effective. S.R. DeBoer, many years later, gave a vivid account of the effect of public input in implementing this part of the parkway program:

"The parkway program had mostly covered East Denver where the well-to-do citizens lived, and North Denver had gotten very little of it. To correct this we worked out a plan which served the whole northern district and fitted into the plan of the city.... It would give Denver a tree-lined boulevard around the whole city. We also planned an extension of Speer Boulevard to Berkeley Lake, Arvada, and Coal Creek Canyon.

I still think it was a valuable plan, but did we get criticized! At a public meeting in the Berkeley School I caught it. The chairman gave the gavel to the vice-chairman so he could talk with freedom. And he did! It was the days of the Ku Klux Klan, and his complaint was that we had connected Regis College campus to our parkway -- a religious move to give more power to the church. I pointed out that the plan also connected with Denver University, Colorado Women's College, a Baptist school, and with Barnum and Sloan Lake Parks. I got out alive, but they stopped the program right there. The next meeting was in Barnum and we expected an attack. Mr. Vail [Department Manager] went along, bringing his chauffeur who was a plain-clothes policeman. The chauffeur told me that "the boss thought you might need some protection." Nothing happened. But our ambitious parkway plan never became a reality. (DeBoer 1972, Green Thumb, 177-8)

At the time, parks and streets were under a single management, in the Department of Improvements and Parks. Other coordination is not known.

The planning here at first appears to use a democratic, citizen-oriented process, but a closer look reveals a rational, elitist orientation. The planners had assumed that the residents
of North Denver wanted the same type of tree-lined boulevards enjoyed by the affluent East Side, and didn't bother to find out from the residents what their real values were, which in this case had more to do with religion than with aesthetics or convenience. The planners paid for this assumption and so did the whole city, in the loss of this interconnected network of parkways. Right or wrong, reasonable or unreasonable, the real values of local residents must be considered, and it can be very dangerous for an outsider to assume he knows what those values are.

The rational plan, in this case, was absolutely wrong, because it failed to take into account what later generations might consider an irrational consideration. If the planners had been more aware of the neighborhood concerns, they might have developed a slightly different plan, one that provided the desired connecting parkways, but avoided the religious connotations.

Cheesman Park: Proposed Redesign

S.R. DeBoer described the incident as follows:

I tried my darndest to take away the monotony of all plain lawns in these big parks. There is variety in the north and south ends of Cheesman.

Some wealthy homeowners, next to Cheesman Park, wanted the planting removed so that their homes would face on an open park. I explained to Otto Thum, the commissioner in charge of parks, that we should leave it alone. "We have finally," I said, "with a lot of work, gotten a park on the go." "All right," he said. He was a good man. Later on, we compromised. I made some openings in the planting so that the neighbors could look in and their homes appeared to be part of the park. (DeBoer 1972, Green Thumb, 161)
Several very good things took place in this process. First, the concern of the neighbors was taken seriously, not ignored. Second, the parks commissioner supported the professional staff. Third, a compromise was reached that satisfied the neighbors without destroying the park aesthetics. In this case, it would have been wrong to cater to the desires of these homeowners at the expense of other park users, yet to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the park plan, their desires ultimately were satisfied. This demonstrates a strong stance by the administration that is consistent with a rational approach to planning, yet a willingness to compromise to accommodate the desires of the park neighbors.

City Plan for "Denver Big" and 1929 Parks Master Plan

In 1923, "a group of the most progressive and far-seeing business men of Denver" recognized the problems that would accompany growth, and identified the need for a plan for 1970 and a population of 1,000,000. Of special concern was downtown traffic congestion leading to business stagnation. Mayor Stapleton joined the group, as a planning advocate. Pressing problems were identified, to be addressed within the "complete plan covering all phases of the physical city development." These included an arterial street scheme; "centers" of business, transportation, government, etc.; and a park, parkway, and
boulevard system, linked with flood control along rivers (Denver Municipal Facts, January-February, 1930).

In 1926, Mayor Benjamin F. Stapleton appointed 40 leading public-spirited citizens to Denver's City Planning Commission, which was created by a City Council resolution.

Up to this date the work of Denver's City planning and beautification had been directed by Mayor Stapleton and Manager of Improvements and Parks C.D. Vail with the able assistance of S.R. DeBoer, city landscape architect, who has been connected with this work in Denver, since its inception in 1910.

With the creation of the commission, Irving J. McCrary of McCrary, Culley and Carhart, was added to the city planning staff to co-operate with Mr. De Boer in bringing to completion a definite plan outlining the growth of Denver for the next fifty years." (Denver, Denver Municipal Facts 1930, January-February)

In 1928, a preliminary street plan was published, with a request for criticisms from the citizens of Denver. Many suggestions were received, worked over, and all found practical were embodied in the final Major Street Plan (Denver, Denver Municipal Facts 1930, January-February).

In the spring of 1929, the recreational study was published, and was sent out to the people of Denver and to out-of-town experts for constructive criticism. Suggestions that were received were worked over and used wherever practical (Denver Municipal Facts 1930, January-February). According to Denver Municipal Facts, "The park plans have been discussed in various districts at many meetings. C.D. Vail, Manager of Parks and Improvements, and Arthur Carhart, at one time Secretary of the

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Commission, have spent a great deal of time in explaining these proposed park changes at district meetings." (1930, January-February, 6)

In 1930, the street plan and recreational study, together with studies of park extension, were incorporated in a larger report to be submitted to the Mayor and City Council (Denver Municipal Facts, 1930, January-February, 6).

The plan prepared by the Denver Planning Commission tries to extend the park system so park service will be within reach of every citizen. It tries to extend the playground service in the same way. Further studies will touch on transportation and on the connection between the city and the surrounding country, especially the mountain parks. A City Plan tries to visualize the city as a whole and with an eye on the future and the city's growth tries to forecast its problems. Many difficulties in city building can be prevented by careful planning. It is inexpensive to plot a street of great width on open land, but to widen a built-up street to greater width is costly. The same holds for the purchase of park lands, or for anything that deals with city land." The City Plan's motto: "To Prevent. (DeBoer 1930, 6)

While this planning effort is still a rationalist approach, it was begun in the business community, it involved a large number of lay civic leaders, and it opened up the planning process to the city as a whole.
Evaluation of Historical Parks Planning Process

The design quality of the parks planned under Sopris, Speer and Stapleton, and with the guidance of DeBoer, is generally acknowledged to be excellent. This opinion is substantiated in the recent listing of the historic park and parkway system in the National Register of Historic Places (the only park and parkway system to be so honored to date) (Denver Post, 24 November 1986, B-1). Also, one of the concepts on which the new (draft) master plan is founded is to continue "the historic legacy of a quality system:"

Past planning efforts left us with great parks such as City Park, Sloan Lake and Observatory Park, pavilions such as that in Washington Park, parkways like Montview and East Eighth Avenue. The same sense of quality should be the standard for how we develop and maintain our parks in the future. (Denver 1986, Master Plan (Draft), 6)

Denver's past parks planning efforts have obviously been successful in creating a high quality parks system. This achievement was brought about through the efforts of powerful mayors who had a clear vision of what they wanted for the city, with the assistance of competent, dedicated, and equally visionary landscape architects and planners. Decisions were made at the top, and major planning efforts were brought before the community for citizen input. Except for occasional brushes with angry local residents, the process went smoothly, and planned projects were constructed.

The most striking feature of Denver's historical parks planning is its dependence on key personalities to plan with vision and implement with power. Denver was fortunate in that
these leaders possessed taste and good judgment, and only very occasionally allowed politics or patronage to distract them from their goals. If these leaders had proven to be lacking in taste, judgment, or integrity, however, the possibilities are frightening, given the strong mayor system and the rational, top-down approach to planning.

Denver's institutional structures and traditional approaches to planning have evolved in the context of a well guided, rational, elitist approach that obviously was successful in producing attractive, well designed parks. The second half of this chapter will discuss these institutional structures and approaches as they exist today.
II. Present Situation

With the historical framework established, the second half of this chapter describes the present formal and informal processes for parks planning in Denver. The discussion of the formal process (how the laws, regulations, and formal procedures say that parks should be planned) begins with a summary of the responsibilities established by City Charter for the institutions most involved in parks planning. It then goes on to describe the city's official processes for planning, budgeting, contracting, and construction for capital improvements. The discussion of the informal process (how the parks planning process actually works in practice) describes how projects are identified and priorities determined within the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the various ways that projects are planned, financed, and carried out. As a case study, a current project, the Washington Park Boathouse restoration, is traced from conception to its projected completion. The section and chapter conclude with a brief analysis of the relationship between the formal and informal processes, and a look at some of the problem areas.

Available documentation

No one document completely describes the formal parks planning process in Denver. The City Charter describes the powers and responsibilities of the agencies involved, most important of which are the Department of Parks and Recreation,
the Board of Parks and Recreation, and the Denver Planning Office. The 1986-1991 Report for the Capital Improvements Program Plan (CIPP) describes a process that begins with a list of projects selected and prioritized by Department staff. The City’s budget process and organization chart appear in the annual budget (proposed 1987). Executive Order No. 8 of December 5, 1983, describes the process for executing contracts which represent or create a legally enforceable obligation or duty of Denver, financial or otherwise. The City’s construction permitting process is described in the Denver Planning Office’s Urban Design Sourcebook (1982).

Institutions with major parks planning responsibilities

While many departments, agencies, and organizations are involved in the parks planning process to some extent, the following have major parks planning responsibilities.

Department of Parks and Recreation

Under Article IV of the Denver City Charter, the Department of Parks and Recreation is exclusively given the duties and powers for 1) management, operation and control of all facilities owned by the City and County for park and recreational purposes, including the right to make reasonable charges, subject to ordinance approval, for the use of any special facility or activity, and management and control of the operation, care, repair and maintenance of all structures in which and all land on
which those facilities are located and operated (Section A.4-1); 2) establishing building line restrictions around parks and parkways (Section A4.4-2); 3) granting or refusing the privilege of operating concessions in parks and recreation facilities, and on streets and sidewalks within 300 feet of the boundary of any park or recreation facility (Section A4.4-3); 4) landscaping of public thoroughfares, as determined by agreement with the Department of Public Works (Section A4.4-4); 5) management and control of gifts to the City for creation, improvement or ornamentation of parks, parkways, recreational facilities, or for the establishment or maintenance of museums, zoological or other gardens, collections of natural history, observatories or recreational facilities, provided that no such gifts shall be accepted without prior approval of the Mayor and Council (Section A4.4-5); 6) conducting negotiations for cooperative agreements with School District No. 1 and other public and private agencies for the development of park and recreational facilities, programs and activities and for the establishment and maintenance of the museums, zoological or other gardens, collections of natural history and observatories (Section A4.4-6); and 7) expending all funds appropriated for the Department from the general revenues (Section A4.4-7). The Manager of Parks and Recreation, the officer in full charge and control of the Department, is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Mayor, and is a member of the Mayor's Cabinet (Article IV, A4.2). Figures 1 and
Figure 1.
DENVER DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
REORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

MANAGER

SAFETY

MARKETING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION
(CSA POSITION)
Gary Oppliger

Budget

Human Resources

RECREATION
(appointed)
Theresa Rash
(Acting)

Programming of Facilities

Special Events

Preventive Maintenance (tentative)

PARKS OPERATIONS
(appointed)
Ron McKirick (Acting)

Maintenance

Preventive Maintenance

Mountain Parks

Buffalo Bill Museum

Extension Agent

City Forester

FACILITIES
(CSA position)
Mike Flaherty

Stadium

Golf Courses

Zoological Gardens
Clayton Freihheit

DESIGN PLANNING & CONSTRUCTION
(appointed)

Landscaping

Revolving Fund

Botanic Gardens
Merle Moore

Figure 2. Denver Department of Parks and Recreation Reorganization Structure
show the organization of the City and County of Denver and the Department of Parks and Recreation. It should be noted that the Zoological Gardens and Botanic Gardens are under the direct control of the Manager of Parks and Recreation, and are also listed on the city’s organization chart as independent agencies. The Buffalo Bill Museum is managed through Parks Operations. The Museum of Natural History, however, reports only to the mayor, as do the library and art museum.

Board of Parks and Recreation

The City Charter also provides for a seven member Board of Parks and Recreation, consisting of a member of City Council, a member of the Board of School District No. 1, and five members appointed by the Mayor for five years each (staggered terms). Members appointed by the Mayor may be removed only for cause upon written charges and after public hearing. Members serve without pay (Article IV, Section A4.3). The Board has a strictly advisory function to the Department of Parks and Recreation, to "advise the Manager with respect to the policy and operation of the Department" and to "review and comment on the proposed annual budget for the Department." (Article IV, Section A4.3-1)

Denver Planning Office

The Denver Planning Office, an agency under the mayor, was created by ordinance in 1950 and has its basis in Chapter 41 of the Revised Municipal Code. While the Denver Planning Office
(DPO) is not assigned specific responsibilities with regard to parks planning, it may become involved in parks issues through citywide planning, central area planning, neighborhood planning, and so on. Some of its duties and powers include preparing and maintaining the comprehensive plan (which has a parks and recreation component), advising the Mayor on the capital improvements program (approximately $33 million for Parks and Recreation over the next six years), being the official body of the general planning phases involved in the construction of public buildings, and recommending to the Mayor the acquisition or disposal of land (Denver, Final reports of the Mayor's management review committees 1984, Planning section, 13). These functions have obvious impact on parks planning.

Office of Project Management

The Office of Project Management is an interdisciplinary office responsible to the Mayor, created for the management of interagency programs (City Park Fact Sheets, Attachment of Letter of 3 February 1986, Mayor Pena to concerned citizens). It does not appear as a separate agency on the City's organization chart (Denver 1987 proposed budget). As the coordination point for the efforts of the City Park Task Force, it has assumed a large role in the planning of this particular park. The 1986-1991 Capital Improvements Program Plan (1985, 4) concluded that "Agencies involved in specific geographic areas need to develop greater coordination in terms of capital projects and program operations,
as well as in neighborhood and small area planning." It cited City Park, the zoo and the Museum of Natural History as one example of such a geographic area, and the Civic Center Park, the Art Museum, and the Library as another. The Office of Project Management provides the resources for this coordination to take place.

Department of Public Works

In 1955, the City Charter was amended to divide the functions of the Department of Improvements and Parks into two new departments, the Department of Public Works and the Department of Parks and Recreation. The City Charter (Article II and Article IV) specifies the Department of Public Works and Department of Parks and Recreation are to work with each other in the planning, design and construction of landscaped parkways.

The Department of Public Works has exclusive duties and powers for the following:

Management and control of the designing, planning, construction and reconstruction of all general public improvements, including such remodeling thereof as requires designing or structural changes, for the City and County and for all departments, agencies, boards, commissions and authorities therefore except the Board of Water Commissioners.

The Department of Public Works can either perform the work itself, under contracts let by the Department, or with the Manager's permission "and to the extent and in the manner provided by ordinance by any person, firm, or corporation.
entirely as his, their, or its expense," subject to certain limitations:

No general public improvement shall be designed, planned, constructed, reconstructed or remodeled without the prior approval of the department, agency, board, commission or authority charged with the operation of such general public improvement; also, no public thoroughfares shall be established, changed, or vacated, and no site shall be accepted for any public purpose until first approved by ordinance. However, the Mayor may assign the design, planning, construction, reconstruction, or remodeling of a specific general public improvement to another department, agency, board, commission or authority, in which case that organization would be governed by the limitations and provisions imposed on the Department of Public Works.

This could be interpreted to mean that any parks project which is considered a general public improvement would need to be planned, designed, and constructed under the control of the Department of Public Works, unless specifically assigned to another organization by the Mayor. Regardless of the organization in control of the project, however, the limitations and provisions imposed for any general public improvement would apply. Also, both the Manager of the Department of Public Works and the Manager of the Department responsible for the operation (in this case, Parks and Recreation) would need to approve the transfer of control from Public Works to Parks and Recreation or to some other organization.
Parks planning processes

While there is no one document that describes the process by which all types of parks projects are planned, there are several formal procedures that govern major parts of the process: policies, objectives, and a general direction, as set out in the Master Plan; 6-year planning, through the CIPP; project selection, through the annual budget exercise; contracting, in accordance with Executive Order No. 8; and construction permitting, as described by the Denver Planning Office. This process is shown in Figure 3, "Denver’s Formal Planning Process."

Policy: The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

According to Mike Flaherty, Deputy Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation and the person responsible for the department capital improvements budget, two questions have to be asked in deciding whether to place an item on the list of projects to be funded in the budget:

1. Does the capital improvement request fit the master plan?
2. Is it scheduled for capital improvements funding in the six-year plan? (Telephone Interview, 14 July 1986)

In theory, that master plan would be the 1929 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, or possibly the Parks and Recreation component of the citywide 1978 comprehensive plan (Denver Planning Office, Planning toward the future: A comprehensive plan for Denver).
## Denver's Formal Parks Planning Process

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*Not always applicable

Figure 3.
In July of 1985, Mayor Pena commissioned the first Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan in over fifty years (Patrick Gallavan, Acting Manager, Department of Parks and Recreation; Letter to Denver Residents, 4-17-86). The parks consulting firm of Royston, Hanamoto, Alley and Abey was asked to prepare a new Parks Master Plan that will provide, according to Sandy Drew (Assistant to Mayor Pena), "a vision for parks, parkways, trails, and open spaces." It will include a very specific capital improvement program linked to parks in a very practical combination of Planning Board and Park and Recreation Programs." (Drew, Urban Design Forum Symposium, 5-19-86) The draft plan was first presented to the public on November 20, 1986, too late to be evaluated as part of this thesis.

Project Planning: The Capital Improvements Program Plan (CIPP)

According to the CIPP Report for 1986-1991,

A Capital Improvements Program Plan (CIPP) is a package of information on capital projects aimed at giving the City a view of its future needs for short and long range capital acquisition and development. It links a community's master plan and fiscal plan to physical development. A fully-developed CIPP provides a mechanism for estimating capital requirements in advance, scheduling projects over a fixed period, budgeting high priority projects, developing a revenue policy for proposed improvements, and monitoring and evaluating the progress of capital projects. (Denver, CIPP, 1]

The capital improvements process itself is consistent for all departments in the City. The allocation Process for the 1986 Capital Improvements Fund (CIF) was as follows:
Each agency requesting funds for 1986 from the CIF presented its proposals to the Denver Planning Board in conjunction with its Six-Year Capital Plan. No request was considered for funding which was not included in an agency plan. Each agency assigned rank order priorities to its requests.

...Finance and Planning Office staffs met with agencies to discuss their requests and identify areas where projects might be phased, funded through other sources, reduced in cost, etc. As a result of these discussions, agencies revised their requests and, in some cases, reordered their priorities. (Denver, CIPP, 60).

The Planning Board, with assistance from staffs in the Planning and Finance Offices reviewed all final requests. In developing its recommendations, the Board primarily utilized agency priorities for intra-agency project rankings. Exceptions to agency priorities and cross-agency recommendations were based principally on the Capital Improvements Program Policy Guidelines... The Mayor's goals, the City's Financial Policies, and the comprehensive plan and neighborhood plans served as additional evaluation criteria. (Denver, CIPP, 62)

Although Denver has planned for capital improvements in the past, the current six-year agency plan goes beyond previous efforts in that

This is the first time that detailed information on potential future capital projects, regardless of funding source, has been assembled. As such, the plans provide a basis for better planning, coordination, and priority setting on a City-wide basis. (Denver, CIPP, 1)

Budgeting: The Annual Budget Process

The Denver City Charter describes the annual budget process and sets certain deadlines (Article VI, Sections A6.8 through A6.10). Each year, on or before May 1, the Mayor must prepare a budget preparation calendar and guidelines for all spending
agencies. On or before July 1, all spending agencies must prepare, for the Mayor and City Council, their estimates of expenditures and revenues for the next fiscal year. On or before September 15, the Mayor must brief City Council on proposed revenues, expenditures, and major program changes. On or before the third Monday in October, the Mayor submit his Proposed Budget to City Council. On or before the fourth Monday in October, the Council must hold a public hearing on the proposed budget. On or before the second Monday in November, the council must adopt by motion a budget. A two-third vote of Council members is required to revise, alter, increase, or decrease any item in the Mayor's proposed budget. If Council fails to adopt a budget by the required date, the proposed budget, as amended by Council, becomes the Official Budget.

What this means, for parks planning, is that in theory, any park projects constructed with Capital Projects Funds or any other budgeted fund accounts would appear in the proposed budget, and would be subject to review at the public hearing on the proposed budget.

Contracting: Contract Administration Process

Executive Order No. 8, dated December 5, 1983, provides procedures for "initiating, preparing, executing and administering contracts and other written instruments." (Denver, Executive Order No. 8, Memorandum A, 5 December 1983). The process is fairly complicated (see flow chart, Appendix B).
Several features of this process are of special interest to parks planning. All proposed contracts must be justified by the initiating authority (such as Manager of Parks and Recreation or designated employee), using Form 42 (Contract Justification, Contract Request). Among other requirements, justification must include a brief description of the proposed undertaking, must state the necessity or desirability of the undertaking, and must indicate whether City Council will need to approve or authorize the contract, and whether the Mayor requests City Council review of the contract.

The initiating authority must assure that the proposed undertaking conforms with the Mayor's policy. If the Mayor requests the initiating authority to seek City Council advice, the Initiating authority schedules a review with the appropriate City Council Committee (in the case of parks, the Recreation and Culture Committee). If the proposed contract requires City Council approval, Budget and Management sends a copy of Form 42 to the Secretary of City Council, the City Attorney prepares the Bill for an Ordinance, and the City Attorney assures that a copy of the proposed agreement has been given to the Initiating Authority and another to the Clerk and Recorder.

Construction: Permit Process

The City's Permit Process for Major Residential, New Commercial or Industrial Construction was summarized in 1982 in the Denver Planning Office's Denver Urban Design Sourcebook.
While the process may have changed to some extent since then, the
flow chart provided in that document is still generally valid.
Organizations involved include Traffic Engineering, the State
Highway Department (if on a State Highway), the City's Wastewater
Management Division, Zoning Administration, the Building
Inspection Division, the Water Department, Mountain Bell, Public
Service, and various other agencies, depending on the project.
If landscaping on a public right-of-way is involved, for example,
the City Forester needs to review a landscape plan. If air or
water pollution potential exists, the State Air Pollution Control
Division or State Water Quality Control Division would need to
review and issue the appropriate emission or discharge permits.
In the building inspection process, the Fire Prevention Bureau
must approve the plans submitted to Building Inspection, and
special reviews are required if the project is in a historic
district, if a restaurant or swimming pool is included, if the
project is a potential X-ray or air pollution source, or if it is
a retail food establishment.

Summary: Formal Parks Planning Process

This view of the formal parks planning process presents a
system already burdened with procedures and paperwork. A
relatively simple project could require dozens of reviews,
especially if a building were involved, if the project were to be
funded through Capital Improvement Funds, and if contracts were
required for design and construction.
The Informal Parks Planning Process

The formal parks planning process described in the previous section provides for long-range policies planning, 6-year projects planning, selection of priority projects through the budgeting process, control of design and construction contracts through a contract administration process, oversight for all general public improvements by the Department of Public Works, and an assortment of permitting and review requirements, such as zoning, access and traffic impact, building codes, historic preservation, and so on.

This section will examine current practices in the context of these formal structures. Figure 4 depicts the informal process in the context of the formal process.

Policies and long-range planning

This chapter began by quoting Ruth Rodiguez and Pat Gallavan on Denver's past parks planning efforts, and both are correct in some way. Denver has been doing parks planning. While the last officially ratified, free-standing parks master plan was completed in 1929, the city's comprehensive plans have addressed parks and recreation, and people within the department have produced 5-year capital improvement plans in conjunction with the annual budget process. It may also be correct, however, that in recent history, planning has not been in the "psyche" of the Parks and Recreation Department in the sense of aggressively
DENVER'S INFORMAL PARKS PLANNING PROCESS

Figure 4.
striving toward a vision, and measuring every opportunity, every potential project, whatever its source of support or funding, in terms of whether it enhances or impedes progress toward that vision. In the years when Denver was regularly transferring funds from the capital improvements fund to the general fund, it would have been difficult to plan needed capital improvements, much less attempt to pursue a dream. The normal tendency in such a situation would be to resort to a reactive, allocative planning mode, in an attempt to stretch severely limited resources.

In the Final Reports of the Mayor's Management Review Committees (1984), the Parks and Recreation Review Committee noted a "strongly expressed concern that the quality of maintenance has been declining over recent years," and recommended developing policy regarding "whether future park dollars will be spent: (a) to improve maintenance or rehabilitation of existing parks, (b) to develop parks on land already owned by the city, and/or (c) to acquire new land." Policy questions such as this are usually answered in a master plan. As Ruth Rodriguez said, "There hasn't been a master plan in the department to really give any conceptual guidance since 1929. That's one of the programs that's been under way for the last couple of years, to try to define that direction for the department and get the public and other entities that can buy into that." (Denver Post, 24 August 1986, 6A)

When the draft Master Plan is approved and procedures are established to assure compliance with it, Denver will have the
tools for policies and long-range planning. At present, however, Ruth Rodriguez is probably still right.

**Project planning and budgeting**

Capital improvement projects are planned when the Parks Department develops a sense that a problem exists. Initiative or impetus can come from neighbors, citizens, parks maintenance, the gut feelings of the department's staff, or the recognition that raw land needs to be developed. Often, other departments initiate projects which have landscaping requirements. Volunteer groups and other organizations also initiate projects, and can provide independent fund-raising. This is encouraged, especially since projects go easier when the city is not involved (Rod Wiberg, Director of Park Planning, Interview, 9 October 1986). In that case, the Department provides the group with design support, and can do construction and then bill back to the sponsoring group. For small projects, such as donations of trees, the process is informal (Wiberg, 9 October 1986).

In preparing the CIPP 5-year Project Plan, the Department draws up a wish list, which forecasts needs and includes preventive maintenance items. Costs are attached, but the list is made without regard to budget. In preparing the budget request for the coming year, priorities are affected by decisions made in other departments. Examples include the Speer Boulevard project ($400,000), Cherry Creek development ($1.5 million total,
$500,000 this year), and the Sloan Lake projects (Wiberg, 9 October 1986).

As discussed under the formal process, the Denver Planning Office has attempted recently to take a comprehensive approach to capital improvements planning, and has asked that all projects, regardless of funding source, appear on the 6-year CIPP. However, the process controlling development of projects not requiring City funds is still not completely addressed in the six-year program plan. For example, the CIPP Report states that "The Denver Museum of Natural History has identified three major capital projects for implementation in the near future," and goes on to describe them, but four projects appear on the facilities list in the 6-year capital improvements plan, all in the highest priority class, all with capital improvement funds listed as the primary funding source. The reflecting pool project is not described. No cost estimates are provided for the repaving project or the reflecting pool project (although existing bond funds were shown as a secondary funding source for the reflecting pool project). There is no mention of night lighting or "outdoor exhibits and displays, public art and public information systems" for the Natural History Museum, items which were included in the Request for Proposal issued November 1986 for the Urban Design/Landscape Plan for the Natural History Museum. Apparently, funds are available for these projects (Sandy Drew, City Park Task Force, 18 November 1986), but they were not listed
in the 1986-1991 CIPP (unless these are considered to be part of the reflecting pool project).

All of the park projects listed in the 1987 list of Capital Improvement Funds Projects were described as rehabilitation and improvement projects, and all were under $500,000, for a total of $1,714,400 (down from $2,183,500 in 1986 and $2,274,000 in 1985). Under State Conservation Trust Fund Projects, the Department showed $2,266,000, with the largest item ($1,100,000) listed simply as "parks improvements." The next largest item was Speer Boulevard, a project initiated outside of the Department, with Parks responsible for landscaping.

While the planning and budgeting process provides useful management and budget information to the Mayor and City Council, these examples indicate that it cannot be relied upon as a source of information for identifying specific projects in specific parks, at least in its present form. In selecting projects for the capital improvements budget, a major consideration is whether or not the project appears in the CIPP, but there is no firm commitment to the 6-year capital improvements program plan, and projects can slip in. The largest single item there is a catch-all, "parks improvements," with no break-out of projects. While this provides needed flexibility, it can also be used to quickly fund projects that may or may not be in the city's long term best interests, if they have the right backing. In general, on a day-to-day basis, the parks planning and budgeting process appears to
be reactive and allocative, with the squeaky wheel getting the grease.

Project Design

The Park Planning Division has six landscape architects on staff; the department does not have its own architect. While the Department of Parks and Recreation has most of the expertise required for park planning, consultants are occasionally contracted for specific projects requiring specialized expertise, a fresh look, or a level of effort that goes beyond the normal resources of the Department. Examples have included BRW's study of traffic flow in and around City Park; Cambridge 7's aquarium feasibility study; and various architectural and engineering studies and design projects, such as the structural evaluation of the damaged City Park bandshell, a hydraulic study on the feasibility of renovating City Park fountain, and design of free-standing restroom facilities (author's personal knowledge).

Parks and Recreation usually has a major role in consultant selection for park projects, although other organizations may sometimes take the lead, as the Office of Project Management did recently for the selection of landscape architects for the Natural History Museum landscaping project.

The Department of Parks and Recreation does not have authority to contract directly with architects and engineers, and instead works with the Department of Public Works, which monitors the contracts. However, Parks and Recreation has input to the contract, and writes the architectural program.
When a private organization takes on a park project, it is free to select its own architect, using its own criteria. While the Parks and Recreation Department may work with the group and its architect, it is not the client.

Construction and Permitting

While Parks and Recreation has to comply with most of the same permitting requirements as any residential or commercial developer (Wiberg, 9 October 1986), it does not have the same restrictions on traffic and parking, since facilities are typically within park boundaries. Internal traffic is usually handled either by the Public Works Department or a consultant, and traffic around the park is generally not a concern. A certain amount of parking might be provided, but there are no specific requirements (Rod Wiberg, telephone interview, 2 May 1986). Zoning and the Building Department require a certain percentage of the zoned lot to be parking, but parks are exempted from the requirements, to some extent. According to Rod Wiberg, parks can be in virtually any type of zoning, and virtually any use can occur in a park (Wiberg, 1 May 1986). Most of Denver's parks, however, are zoned R-1, since they are an integral part of the community, and are for the use of the public, rather than business (Bob Roberts, Denver Zoning Administration, telephone call, 26 November 1986). Zoning laws do apply to the parks and their structures, however. In the case of the Museum of Natural History, the City erred in granting a permit for the expansion.
project without posting notice, since the structure exceeded the height limitation for an R-1 zone by 22 feet (Steve Kaplan, Denver City Attorney, City Park Task Force Meeting, 18 November 1986).


The Washington Park Boathouse Renovation Project was generated by the Parks People. An individual in that group had an interest, and got the group to undertake the project. The Department has no formal agreement with the Parks People; agreement takes the form of a letter of understanding, at most. The Parks Department is an ad hoc member of the Parks People's Board. The Parks People does not have to go through the City contracting process, and is therefore free from competitive bidding, prevailing wage requirements, etc.

The Parks People came to the Parks Department with the idea, and worked to develop it. The Parks People selected the architect, came back to the Department with a cost figure, and asked what the Department could contribute. The Parks Department had money for a new roof, and agreed to fund that. The roof project went through the bidding process with other roof projects. The Parks People's architect worked with the Parks Department to develop specifications for the roof construction contract. The roof is complete, and the Parks People are trying to raise funds to do the exterior, which will cost about $80,000. So far, they have raised about $60,000 or so. When they are
ready, they will let a contract for the remainder. The Parks Department will work with them to assure that it meets all its requirements.

After the exterior is restored, the City will have to figure out what to do with the interior. Depending on what uses the Department decides on for the structure, it can then go back to the Parks People for support, or do it as a city project. Or, the City could issue an RFQ for a concession, with a long term lease and a formal concession agreement, with the concessionaire providing the improvements. This would involve the Buildings Department, Health and Hospitals (if a restaurant), Zoning, and possibly the Planning Department (vending, rentals in parks have not been permitted). Before the RFQ went out, the Parks Department would circulate it in draft form for neighborhood review. This would be done by contacting the neighborhood organizations (Washington Park East and West). (Example provided by Rod Wiberg, interview, 9 October 1986) Figure 5 is a flow chart tracing this example.

Denver's Present Parks Planning Process: A Summary

Denver has a number of charter requirements, ordinances, rules and procedures which govern various aspects of the parks planning process. Projects which pass through the Park Planning Division of the Department of Parks and Recreation have numerous controls: the CIPP and budget process, contracting requirements, oversight by the Department of Public Works, and numerous
BOATHOUSE EXAMPLE

Figure 5. Example: Denver Parks Planning Process
permitting requirements. These projects have had to compete for their funding, and the Department staff has collectively agreed that they are needed. While many of these projects are relatively small and not particularly controversial, others have the potential for controversy due to their nature, location, or design requirements. The category of "park improvements" in the CIPP and budget does not break out specific projects, so it is impossible to tell from the CIPP and budget what is planned for a specific park, only when it is planned and how much it will cost.

The projects to be funded by Capital Improvement Funds or the lottery funds have numerous controls through the City's General Public Improvements process. Projects sponsored by other organizations, however, are less tightly controlled, and can bypass much of the city's bureaucracy, for better or worse. While projects can be expedited this way, and completed at a fraction of the cost, they also raise concerns about liability, employment practices, and so on.

1. Through a misprint, the CIPP shows ten projects for the Museum of Natural History; actually, only the first three of these are Museum of Natural History projects, while the rest are Art Museum projects, according to Wayland Walker (personal communication, 1 December 1986).
CHAPTER 3. ALTERNATIVE PARKS PLANNING PROCESSES

Given the historical and structural framework established in Chapter 2, what process would prove most successful for planning Denver's future parks projects? To answer this question requires an examination of the traditional view of parks planning in the context of general planning process theory, and the evaluation of various parks planning process alternatives. This chapter will describe four of the most common alternatives, and propose criteria for evaluating a parks planning process. In Chapter 4, the alternatives will be evaluated using these criteria, which will be weighted specifically for Denver.

I. Process Options

The following discussion of parks planning in the context of general planning theory leads into a description of some of the more common approaches to planning, and how they might apply to parks planning.

Parks Planning

What is parks planning, and what does it encompass? From a survey of the literature dealing with parks planning, as well as from discussions with past and present Denver Parks and Recreation Department planning and management staff, a very broad definition of parks planning emerges. Parks planning includes everything from long-range policy decision-making to project-
specific landscape design, and its scope ranges from national parks to individual flower beds.

Traditionally, parks planning has been considered to be the exclusive province of landscape architects, although decisions affecting parks are often shaped by politicians, administrators, and urban planners. In the wake of the City Beautiful movement, with its focus on aesthetics, the landscape architect was able to evolve into an urban planning generalist, as DeBoer did, when city planning consisted largely of the design of the street network and public spaces. With Parks and Improvements as one city department, a citywide parkway and boulevard plan could be planned as a single public improvement, under the guiding hand of a single individual. Today, however, the parks planner is more likely to be a designer of public spaces, while the transportation planning engineers in public works concern themselves with the street network and traffic flow, and the planning generalists in the Planning Office try to figure out how it all fits together.

Objectives of the Parks Planning Process

Parks planning, like other planning efforts, attempts to attain "some future objective or objectives by a rational determination in the presence of the requisite resources, personnel, and procedures needed to achieve that objective or those goals." (Twardzik 1966, 27) At the scale of the individual park, this may mean to create a useable, attractive, easily
maintained public space that satisfies certain public recreation needs. At the scale of the parks system master plan, the objectives of parks planning are linked to the objectives of the comprehensive plan for the city.

Parks planning objectives

In his Park Planning Handbook, Monty Christiansen defines park planning as "a type of management planning applied to ensure the necessary means, including human and physical resources and support services, to provide recreational experiences." It includes financial planning, physical planning, program planning, and functional planning (Christiansen 1977, 6-7). According to Christiansen,

If park planning is viewed as an ongoing dynamic process of conceiving, directing, and providing park experiences, it cannot be limited to facility design and development. Park planners should be experience directed, not development directed. The development of park facilities provides only the setting for recreational experiences. This complete role should be reflected in the park planning process. (Christiansen 1977, 9)

Park planning procedures

For Christiansen, park planning is an essential function of overall park administration, and is too complex to be delegated to a division or branch of the park department (Christiansen, p. 7), as it might be if it were merely concerned with the physical design of facilities. Christiansen identifies four major phases of park planning: predesign, design, development, and actualization, each involving a number of disciplines.
Predesign

In the predesign phase, according to Christiansen, park planners "determine the activities to be offered in the park and identify their essential qualities that are to be provided in physical, programmatic, functional, and operational terms." A comprehensive activity analysis is conducted for every recreational activity to be provided in the park (Christiansen 1977, 41). During the "pre-resource allocation activity determination," Christiansen notes,

To aid the planner, many agencies utilize survey and sampling techniques to determine the people's needs, desires, and expressed and latent wants and preferences. In some park planning situations, the activities that must be offered at the parksite are known. They may have been specified in a well prepared comprehensive communitywide recreation plan or state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. Other agencies obtain quite satisfactory results by accepting expert opinion. (1977, 17)

In addition, "the offer of special interest groups to instruct, program, or maintain facilities provided for certain activities is a factor that is important in activity selection (1977, 18).

Design

The second phase of the park planning process, design, is the basis for all development in the park. In the past, this phase has been the focus of park planning, since this phase results in "a tangible, visible entity easily noticed, appreciated, or criticized by the public." (1977, 44) During this phase, the park designer, usually a landscape architect, coordinates the design process.
The physical plan of the park is evolved through an open process of park component analysis and problem solving. It is possible for the park designer to do all this alone for projects of limited complexity if they are within his professional field. Usually the designer becomes the leader of a design group composed of design and non-design specialists. The team contributions are made in the form of design objectives, data input, recommendation, critiques, and evaluations. (1977, 45)

While the design process does not always proceed according to logical steps, it generally includes six stages: 1) establishing design objectives; 2) site analysis; 3) developing alternative concept plans; 4) evaluation of alternatives/recommendation of primary concept plan; 5) refinement of concept; 6) preparation of general development plan. Stages 1, 2 and 3 are developed by professional staff or consultants with specialized training in the requirements of various recreational activities. For Stage 4, Christiansen believes that

> It is not practical to have everyone that has an interest in the project review and evaluate the alternative concept plans. All their interest however must be considered. The decision-making authority, whether a board or a park administrative executive, should decide which concept plan is to be refined and developed into a final design. For large agencies this decision is usually delegated to a professional in charge of park planning. In small agencies the director makes the choice. (1977, 49-50)

Stage 5, preparation of the general development plan, results in "a scaled representation of the park project showing the location, form, size, and orientation of all significant activity and support areas and facilities." Staff park designers and consulting experts work together in this stage to review the work, and give all functional divisions the opportunity to
evaluate and critique the plan (1977, 50). The designer incorporates recommended changes to prepare a final general development plan, including a cost estimate (1977, 52).

Development

The development phase that follows design includes preconstruction documentation, contracting for the development, and the actual project construction.

Actualization

What Christiansen calls the "actualization" phase of parks planning actually occurs throughout the park planning process. While previously, the construction of physical facilities was considered the extent of the park department's obligation to park users,

Today, however, most park agencies recognize that their real responsibility is to provide opportunities for quality recreational experiences, not just the facilities. This responsibilities requires that the various plans and controls necessary to provide the proposed recreation experiences be carefully prepared, coordinated, implemented, evaluated, and revised as needed. This is actualization of the park planning process. (1977, 83)

Actualization is defined as "making sure that all experience determinants, nonphysical as well as physical, are appropriate for the proposed recreation activity." Actualization includes the use of control documents, evaluation instruments, and consideration of the quality determinants of the recreational experience.

At no point in his discussion of park planning does Christiansen discuss formal procedures for coordination with
other city agencies, or requirements for involving the public in the park planning process. In fact, at the points where one would most expect to find community involvement, such as the predesign determination of activities to be offered, the evaluation of alternative concept plans, and the presentation of the preliminary general concept plan, Christiansen either assigns a very small role to public input (predesign) or specifically advises against it (evaluation of alternatives).

General Planning Processes

Whether one uses a very general definition of planning, such as:

"Planning may be considered the conscious organization of human activities to serve human needs." (from Thomas F. Saarinen's Environmental Planning; Perception and Behavior, 1976; cited by Herb Smith 1979, The citizen's guide to planning)

or a more definition more specifically directed toward urban and regional planning, such as

"The broad object of planning is to further the welfare of the people in the community by helping to create an increasingly better, more healthful, convenient, efficient and attractive community environment. The physical, as well as the social and economic community is a single organism, all features and activities of which are related and interdependent. These facts must be supplemented by the application of intelligent foresight and planned administrative and legal coordination if balance, harmony and order are to be insured. It is the task of planning to supply this foresight and this over-all coordination." (from Local Planning Administration; cited by Herb Smith 1979, The citizen's guide to planning)

it is apparent that the planning process involves far more than the design of specific facilities.
Actors and roles in the planning process

While planners may generally agree on the story line of the planning process, both practicing planners and planning theorists vary widely on who the actors should be, and what roles they should play. Consequently, there is considerable variation in actual practice from time to time, and from place to place. John Friedman identified four levels of control over the planning process: 1) command planning, which features strong central control, and is therefore information intensive; 2) policies planning, which is used in weakly centralized systems, where it allows for considerable flexibility; 3) corporate planning, which is process oriented, conservative, and controlled from the top, with participation limited to groups or organizations; and 4) participant planning, which is dispersed and democratic. Most planners would at least pay lip service to the concept of "community involvement," but how this sentiment translates into actual practice varies greatly, both in the quantity and quality of participation.

Level of Detail

The level of detail found in the planning process also varies enormously. Gallion and Eisner (1980, 202) recognized this variety in their discussion of the difference between "comprehensive planning" and a "comprehensive plan":

"The difference between 'comprehensive planning' and a comprehensive plan should not be confused. Comprehensive planning may range from the preparation of a series of highly specialized studies to an
intensive study of a development plan for an entire area. The comprehensive plan, however, must include a review of the physical structure of a city or planning area, a measurement of development trends, a definition of goals and objectives for future growth and change, and specific recommendations in the form of maps and charts which delineate the plan and establish standards of density and building intensity in support of the plan." (Gallion and Eisner 1980, 202)

Whether the officially adopted plan itself is specific or general, it still addresses some fairly specific situations.

Section 9 of the 1928 Standard City Planning Enabling Act states:

> Whenever the commission shall have adopted a master plan, no street, square, park, or other public way, ground, or open space, or public building or structure, or public utility, whether publicly or privately owned, shall be constructed or authorized until the location, character, and extent thereof shall have been submitted to and approved by the commission. In case of disapproval [the submitting body may proceed anyway by] vote of not less than two-thirds of its entire membership. (Hagman, Urban and Land Development 1980, 355)

In California, general plans are mandatory for cities and counties, and actions implementing plans must be consistent with those plans. Sec. 65401 states,

> If a general plan has been adopted, each county or city officer, department, board, or commission, and each governmental body, commission, or board, including the governing body of any special district or school district, whose jurisdiction lies wholly or partially within the county or city, whose functions include recommending, preparing plans for, or constructing, major public works, shall submit to the official agency, as designated by the respective county board of supervisors or city council, a list of the proposed public works recommended for planning, initiation or construction during the ensuing fiscal year. The official agency receiving the list of proposed public works shall list and classify all such recommendations and shall prepare a coordinated program of proposed public works for the ensuing fiscal year. Such coordinated program shall be submitted to the county or city planning agency for review and report to said
official agency as to conformity with the adopted general plan or part thereof. (Hagman 1980, 378)

Sec. 65402 (a) continues:

If a general plan has been adopted, no real property shall be acquired by dedication or otherwise for street, square, part or other public purposes, and no real property shall be disposed of, no street shall be vacated or abandoned, and no public building or structure shall be constructed or authorized, if the adopted general plan or part thereof applies thereto, until the location, purpose and extent of such acquisition or disposition, such street vacation or abandonment, or such public building or structure shall have been submitted to and reported upon by the planning agency as to conformity with said adopted general plan or part thereof. (Hagman 1980, 378)

Objectives

When Catanese and Farmer asked the planning directors of seven U.S. cities for the overriding goal for planning in their cities, they received the following answers:

"to make the city tolerable to live in... the basic common denominator there is to design a city where you can raise a child... and to help guide the decisions... toward a common goal..."  

"promoting a wider range of choice for those Cleveland residents who have few if any choices."

"input into the goals-setting process... [and] budget-making process..."

"The overriding goal of the department is to help the city as a whole and each subarea... work toward performing to the potential that exists..."

"We decided that fiscal balance would be our overall goal and the cornerstone of our comprehensive planning and programming efforts."

"Less is enough is really where it is at."

"The overriding goal... has two perspectives: Neighborhood stability and economic viability." (Catanese and Farmer 1980, 189)
Parks Planning Process

In what ways, and to what extent should planning process theory be applied to parks planning? Looked at from the planning generalist standpoint, rather than that of the landscape architect or parks and recreation administrator, what is required of the parks planning process; who should participate in it; what level of detail should it address; and what should its objectives be?

Requirements

A parks planning process must take the overall goals and policies of the city’s comprehensive plan, especially the parks and recreation component of that plan; expand those general guidelines into a master plan that provides specific objectives, both geographically and programmatically, for guiding future development; and provide the mechanisms for translating those policies, guidelines, and objectives into specific projects and activities.

Participants

While the participants in the parks planning process will vary considerably depending on the nature of the project, certain individuals and groups will almost always need to be involved in some degree. The examples in each category below are taken from the potential participants in Denver.
Political leadership

Elected officials have received their power directly from the people, and therefore have both the greatest power and the greatest responsibility for all the actions of municipal government. Political leaders are in a unique position to generate enthusiasm, create a common vision, encourage cooperation, provide legitimacy, and determine priorities. In the parks planning process, their public positions and decisions carry enormous weight. Without their support, nothing is possible. Conversely, no one needs to be more sensitive to the needs and desires of all other participants in the parks planning process than the elected officials who depend on the good will of the voters, the financial and political support of the business community and influential individuals, and the morale, integrity, and dedication to duty of the administrative, technical, and support staff.

Administrative and professional staff

Once the overall direction has been set by the political leadership, and the elected officials have appointed administrators that they can trust to carry out that direction, it becomes the responsibility of the administrative and professional staff to carry out the program of the elected officials. The Parks Department supplies the process with a unique combination of practical experience, which includes the management of activities, programs, and maintenance activities,
and the highly trained creative talent needed to plan and design high quality public spaces. The staff also assembles and prioritizes the projects to be considered in the capital improvements planning and budgeting process, and therefore should be able to provide any needed information in regard to project description, justification, costs, and timing.

Other affected departments and agencies

Depending on the nature of the project, various divisions within Public Works (such as the City Architect, Traffic Engineering, etc.) may need to be involved. In Denver, the City Charter specifically states that the Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for landscaping and beautification "of suitable portions of any public ways, thoroughfares, pleasure driveways and similar facilities as determined by agreement with the Department of Public Works." One effect of this stipulation is that a major portion of the capital improvement funds allocated to Parks and Recreation is in fact committed "off the top" to specific projects designated by another department.

The Department of Public Works should also be consulted, however, whenever a change is contemplated in a park or open space which would significantly affect traffic flow into or out of the park, or the traffic and parking requirements on nearby streets.

The city's Landmark Preservation Commission must be consulted for projects affecting structures or districts which
have been designated as landmarks of historical, architectural, or geographic importance, and should be advised if the structures or districts have the potential for such designation. Likewise, the Colorado Historical Society should be consulted regarding any projects affecting historic structures or districts.

The Planning Office should be apprised of any projects significantly altering land use, traffic flow, neighborhood values, or aesthetics; any variance from or change in the goals and objectives set out in the Parks Master Plan; or any realignment of the priorities set forth in the department's 6-year capital improvements plan.

Organized community groups

The groups included for any particular project will vary according to the nature of the project and its location. In many cases, these would include groups concerned with parks, such as the Parks People, the Greenway Foundation, and Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado; groups involved in organized recreation activities, such as softball, tennis, and soccer leagues, and running, bicycle racing, and dance clubs; groups concerned with the quality of the urban environment, such as the Urban Design Forum; and organized neighborhood groups in the area of the project, such as Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods and Greater Park Hill Community Incorporated. In addition, cultural institutions in the immediate vicinity of the project need to be involved. These would include the Botanical Gardens, the
Zoological Gardens, the Museum of Natural History, and in the case of the Civic Center, all of the institutions and public agencies that have the public space as their "front yard." These groups should be made aware of and invited to share their perspective on proposed changes affecting the park system.

General public

Ironically, the general public can be both the hardest group to involve in projects, and the hardest group to uninvolve. Enough angry people can kill a project, and enough angry people can demand one. To avoid the sort of controversy that delays and sometimes even destroys projects, wrecking political and professional careers along the way, the general public should be advised of any proposed projects that the parks department is planning. Normally, this would include the entire list of projects on the 5-year plan. As projects surface to the Capital Improvements Budget, any major items should again be publicized, giving the estimated project scope, cost and schedule. If alternative plans or designs are produced, these should be presented at a public meeting for comment, and public comments, both those at the meeting and those during a specified period following, should be weighed in the selection of the preferred alternative and incorporated as much as feasible in the selected plan or design. Preliminary plans for the selected alternative should be presented prior to final design. At all times, the public should be made aware that their comments are being heard.
and carefully considered, even though the final decision may not completely reflect their wishes, since it needs to be based on other factors as well.

**Level of Detail**

The parks planning process needs to deal with large scale master plans that relate to citywide comprehensive plans, yet it also must address the specifics of each project. Perhaps the most important thing that a parks planning process can do is to bridge the gap between the large scale, policies oriented "comprehensive planning" of the urban planning process, and the programmatic design of small areas in specific parks, and the details of their plantings, buildings, and monuments.

**Objectives**

The parks planning process must assure that decisions affecting the city's parks are far-sighted, representative of community values, economical of time and money, politically well managed, and instrumental in achieving a physical and social urban environment that provides maximum enjoyment and personal satisfaction for as much of the citizenry as possible.
Parks Planning Process Alternatives

Discussions of planning theory distinguish the types of planning processes in various ways. Terms such as "rational/elitist," "democratic/populist" and "disjointed incrementalism" are actually constellations of certain characteristics of the planning process. For example, "rational/elitist" indicates a process more concerned with ends than means, where power is centralized, and where decisions are rooted in long-range plans based on technical expertise and careful analysis. Specific characteristics may be visualized as points along several continua, which are shown in Figure 6. A planning process, then, can be described in terms of these dimensions:

PURPOSE: Is it more concerned with tangible results, or with the process itself?

FLEXIBILITY: Does it ask for an approved blueprint spelling out every detail of every project for the next 40 years, or does it look at each situation as it comes up, on its own merits?

SCOPE: Is it designed to produce a general policy statement for a whole city or region, or to develop specific plans for one particular project in a limited geographical area?

OPENNESS: How many or how few people are involved? Is it elitist or democratic?

POWER: How concentrated is the power of the authorizing agency: centralized in one person or agency, or dispersed through various city agencies, groups, neighborhoods, and individual citizens?

AUTONOMY: Are the main participants in the process able to act freely as independent agents, or are they tightly controlled by some outside agency (such as a Community Development Agency under the guidelines of a state or federal program).
Figure 6. Dimensions that characterize planning processes and their extreme positions.
OBJECTIVITY: Is there an attempt to base decisions on reasoning from the available facts and technical expertise, or are decisions likely to be greatly influenced by personal, subjective, or political preferences?

LEADERSHIP: Is there an innovative vision and the will and energy to promote it, or is there planning by exigency, with a bureaucratic allocation of available resources to the most pressing needs?

Figure 6 shows where each of several process alternatives falls along each continuum. All of these alternatives can be adapted to parks planning. Briefly, these process alternatives can be characterized as follows:

Rational/Elitist

The rational/elitist believes that rational, systematic planning produces a better environment and develops a better society. An active society articulates its objectives, and guides its development by employing a scientific-technical intelligence. Political leaders, professional administrators and their technical staff are in the best position to control the process. The process entails gathering and evaluating vast quantities of data, which are considered to be necessary to produce a coordinated, comprehensive plan which can be used to guide the long-range development of the city. Proponents include Edward Banfield ("Ends and means in planning," in Faludi 1973, 139) and most urban planners prior to the community development movement in the 1960s. Christiansen's view of park planning is essentially rational/elitist (see Chapter 3, Parks Planning).
This is also the understanding of planning put forward in *Personality, Politics, and Planning*, where Anthony Catanese and Paul Farmer state that

...planning is a basic process of analysis, which can be described as a series of steps or actions. In its broadest sense, the process of planning could be described as a way of thinking that is inherently regular and discernible. (1978, 181)

Catanese and Farmer, after talking with a number of practicing planners, were able to describe a planning process that included the following steps:
1. Define the basic goals and objectives
2. Ascertain problems that impede attaining same
3. Formulate and articulate alternative courses of action
4. Evaluate these alternatives for priority making
5. Make recommendations to decision makers
6. Assist in the implementation of the alternative selected
7. Monitor progress and provide feedback

Catanese and Farmer go on to say that this basic planning process is observed most frequently in the current city planning literature, and may even be considered "classical" city planning theory. (Catanese and Farmer 1978, 182)

Louis Twardzik is also in the rationalist camp. According to Twardzik,

No individual recreation and park proposal should be considered for approval unless it conforms to a comprehensive plan and meets requirements and standards. In other words, a recreation and park master plan is fundamental and is a framework for future recreation development in relation to the city plan as prepared by the city planning commission.
Planners do not consider themselves experts in recreation and parks and should therefore have the constant advice and counsel of the commission and departmental staff. (Twardzik 1966, 27)

The rational/elitist model, applied to parks planning in Denver, would start with a parks, recreation and open space master plan. Parks planning staff, with direction from the department manager and the mayor, would initiate projects to implement the plan. Any gifts or projects initiated by others would have to be evaluated by the Department to determine whether they were consistent with the plan. Figure 7 indicates how this might work, using the Washington Park Boathouse example from Chapter 2.

Democratic/Popular

In this process, the objective is full participation of the governed, leading to a redistribution of power. This empowerment process is of major importance to the human growth of the individual and the society, and the process itself is what matters. Peace Corps efforts in developing countries, rural community development programs, and attempts to restore order to the cities following the riots in the 1960s have all been based on this process. Regardless of qualifications, all members of the community are solicited equally for their input to and eventual control of the community development process.

Sherry Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation" (in Yin 1972, City in the 70's) first categorized the spectrum of levels
**RATIONAL/ELITIST MODEL**

*Figure 7.*
of citizen participation possible. Arnstein identified and characterized eight "rungs" or levels of citizen participation, ranging from manipulation and therapy, which are really nonparticipation, to partnership, delegated power, and citizen control, which are degrees of citizen power (see Figure 8). After discussing the arguments against community control, Arnstein concludes:

> These arguments are not to be taken lightly. But neither can we take lightly the arguments of embittered advocates of community control -- that every other means of trying to end their victimization has failed! (Arnstein, in Yin 1972, 119)

Figure 9 shows how the democratic/popular model might handle the boathouse project. In this case, citizen participation is encouraged even before the specific project is initiated, and there is park user input from the earliest stages of project planning.

Corporate/Representative

While "Corporate/Representative" is not a standard term in the planning literature, it addresses what Friedman called the "corporate" level of control, which is process oriented, controlled from the top, generally conservative, with participation limited to groups or organizations. In this case, the rational/elitist approach is extended down to include representatives of affected organizations, as in a corporate staff meeting. Desmond Connor's "New Ladder of Citizen Participation" (Connor 1986, 3) is an example of this approach to
EIGHT RUNGS ON A LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION


**Figure 8. Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation**
PROJECT INITIATIVE
Parks
People

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Parks Planning Staff
Parks Maintenance Staff
selected Community Advisors

SOLICIT AND
ASSESS PUBLIC
OPINION

ARE PUBLIC
FUNDS USED?
YES

NO

BOND ISSUE
IF NECESSARY

CIPP PLANNING
PROCESS

BUDGET
PROCESS

CONSTRUCTION
SCHEDULING

OPEN
CONSULTANT
SELECTION
PROCESS

SOLICIT
PUBLIC
INPUT

PRELIMINARY
DESIGN
REVIEW

DESIGN
REVIEW
COMMITTEE

PUBLIC
HEARING

PUBLIC
HEARING

FINAL DESIGN REVIEW

VARIABLES
PUBLIC INFORMATION
TECHNIQUES

CITY COUNCIL

FINAL BUDGET

BIDDING
PROCESS

CONSTRUCTION
COORDINATION

DEMONCRATIC / POPULAR MODEL

Figure 9.
citizen participation, since its objective is "to provide a systematic approach to preventing and resolving public controversy about specific policies, programs, and projects..."

In Connor's process, the general public is only included at the lowest levels: education, information feedback, and consultation. The "leaders" retain the power through the higher rungs of the ladder: joint planning, mediation, litigation, and resolution/prevention (see Figure 10).

As applied to parks planning in Denver, this model would require the involvement of key departments, agencies, and organizations, and would be characterized by committee meetings and sign-off memos. Representatives of community organizations would be involved from the earliest project stages, and the project would be announced in the press, but mass meetings would be avoided, if possible. This process is sketched for the boathouse example in Figure 11.

Disjointed Incremental

This position accepts the fact that in the real world, rational comprehensive planning is not possible due to complexity of issues and constraints on time and budget. To try to do or to pretend to be doing rational comprehensive planning is therefore misleading or dishonest. Since the complexities of the present and the needs of the future are unknowable, administrators are better off making decisions as they usually do, by the seat of the pants, with checks and balances from various constituencies
A NEW LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

RESOLUTION/PREVENTION

LITIGATION

MEDIATION

JOINT PLANNING

CONSULTATION

INFORMATION FEEDBACK

EDUCATION


Figure 10. Desmond Connor's New Ladder of Citizen Participation
C O R P O R A T E / R E P R E S E N T A T I V E M O D E L

Figure 11.
and agencies (disjointed), committing resources only as much as necessary (incremental), at the time it becomes necessary. Administrators would do well to work to improve this process, rather than fighting against it. This is the position articulated by Lindblom in "Muddling Through" (in Faludi, Reader).

Denver's approach to the boathouse project actually comes fairly close to disjointed incrementalism, although it would need a more formal process for assuring that various constituences and agencies. The phased construction, with the roof project preceeding the exterior work, and leaving decisions on the future use of the interior for the future, is definitely incremental. Figure 12 shows how this process would ideally work for the boathouse project.

In Chapter 4, each of these process options will be evaluated as an appropriate parks planning process for Denver.
**DISJOINTED INCREMENTAL MODEL**

Figure 12.
II. Criteria for a Proper Parks Planning Process

Political goals and values will largely determine the criteria for evaluating a parks planning process. What should a proper parks planning process do? In the opinion of this writer (as stated in previous "Objectives" section in this chapter), the parks planning process must assure that decisions affecting the city's parks are far-sighted, representative of community values, economical of time and money, politically well managed, and instrumental in achieving a physical and social urban environment that provides maximum enjoyment and personal satisfaction for as much of the citizenry as possible. The following criteria are organized around these objectives:

Economical of Time and Money

- Make maximum use of available funds
- Minimize administrative costs
- Minimize delay between the identification of project desirability and project completion
- Adapt process complexity according to nature, scope and potential impact of project

Representative of Community Values

- Operate, as a process, in a manner consistent with the social, political, and economic values of the community
- Adequately represent the interests of all sectors of the community, including the unaffiliated and inarticulate
- Promote the expression of, and assure due
consideration of, local and minority interests, values, and opinions

- Prevent local and minority interests, values and opinions from dominating parks planning decision-making at the expense of the larger community

Provide Opportunities for Self Realization

- Provide opportunities for individuals to participate in determining the shape of their own environment
- Provide an outlet for the enthusiasm, interest, goodwill, special talents, and skills available in the community, including the paid professional staff of city agencies, consultants and contractors, organizations and institutions, businesses, and private individuals

Provide a Satisfying, Pleasurable, Safe, Nonfrustrating Urban Environment

- Consider the effects of the project on the total recreation program for the city
- Assure compatibility with citywide comprehensive plans, giving special attention to neighboring land use and zoning designations
- Consider the effects of the project on other park features and uses, park sociology, overall aesthetics, neighboring land uses, traffic, accessibility, safety and law enforcement, the natural environment, vistas, connections to the past, etc.

Assure High Quality in Parks Planning, Design, and Execution

- Assure that projects is consistent with design objectives and policies spelled out in the parks master plan, and with design guidelines previously approved by the department for specific parks and facilities
- Maintain parks department control and close supervision over all projects occurring in public parks, regardless of the funding source or the organization initiating the project
o Assure that project work program reflects user requirements

o Include procedures for selection of consultants and contractors that give all interested and qualified firms an equal opportunity to be considered for the project, and that are most likely to select the best firm for the specific project

o Include mechanisms for independent design review of architectural, landscape, and engineering projects at key points in the design process (program plan and project schedule, preliminary design, final design)

o Require parks department review of preliminary and final design, and sign-off on completed construction

o Require adequate control by design professionals over all construction projects

**Politically Well Managed**

o Promote cooperation, rather than conflict, among various interests (minimize controversy, maximize consensus)

o From earliest project stages, make clear to all parties the roles and level of involvement of all participants in the parks planning process

o Provide fair and consistent policies and procedures, and communicate that fact to the community

**Far-sighted**

o Provide safeguards to assure that well thought out parks master plans and city comprehensive plans are followed

o Allow flexibility for emergency actions and carefully considered response to changing conditions

A parks planning process that meets these criteria can be expected to have a number of results: public officials are re-elected, and professional staff are allowed to exercise their
skills; taxpayers receive maximum benefit for their tax dollars; high quality urban park design helps create a pleasing urban environment, and leaves a legacy for future generations; citizens are happier, more in touch with their surroundings, each other, and themselves, resulting in less alienation and frustration, and hopefully less urban unrest.

Alternative Parks Planning Processes: A Summary

This chapter started out with a narrow, traditionalist view of parks planning as a preliminary step in a rational landscape design process. This view was compared with a broader view of planning as understood in general planning process theory, to arrive at some understandings about the nature of a proper parks planning process.

Using the parameters or "dimensions" addressed by various planning theoreticians to cut through variations in terminology, four major planning process alternatives were identified and described: rational/elitist, democratic/popular, corporate/representative, and disjointed/incremental.

Finally, criteria were developed for evaluating a parks planning process, based on previously stated objectives. In the next chapter, the four process alternatives will be applied to parks planning in Denver, and will be evaluated using these criteria, as weighted for existing local conditions.
CHAPTER 4. OBJECTIVES FOR DENVER

I. Criteria for a Parks Planning Process in Denver

Appropriate Criteria for Denver's Situation

While most of the criteria for a parks planning process (discussed in Chapter 3) apply to Denver, their relative importance is affected by the city's historical, environmental, institutional, and demographic peculiarities.

Historical

As discussed in Chapter 2, Denver today is the beneficiary of the far-sighted parks and parkways planning accomplished under mayors Sopris, Speer, and Stapleton in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The city has developed both relatively large parks, such as City Park, Washington Park, and Sloan Lake, and a scattering of neighborhood parks and miniparks, with a tree-lined system of connecting parkways. The parkways plan developed shortly after the turn of the century has been nominated for historical preservation status, and individual buildings in the parks have been specified as potentially having historical value. Any planning process for Denver's parks will need to acknowledge that a parks system already exists, and "projects" subject to that process must therefore include not
only new land acquisitions and new facilities, but any changes or "improvements" in the existing parks system.

Environmental

Denver's parks have been established with considerable effort, acre by acre and tree by tree, in a high altitude, semiarid climate, with a very short growing season, subject to heavy snows in early fall and late spring. Due to these difficult growing conditions and limited availability of supplemental water supplies, the selection of appropriate plant materials for Denver's parks and parkways requires the careful attention of competent, professional landscape architects who have experience in this part of the country. In addition, the need to conserve water may lead to a greater use of xeriscaping in private gardens in the future, so that the public parks may become true oases, where lush green foliage and water features can be enjoyed by all. Given these difficult environmental conditions, the advice and professional judgement of staff and consultant park planners must be trusted in the selection of plantings, unless there is strong evidence to the contrary.

At the same time, Denver's location at the base of the Rocky Mountains gives the city a safety valve of recreational open space. Denver is not totally dependent on its public parks for meeting all of its recreation needs, and may tend to use its parks in different ways than some other cities do.
Legal and Institutional

Several legal and institutional characteristics significantly affect the criteria for a proper parks planning process in Denver: the strong mayor/elected council form of government; the combined city and county government offices; and the restrictions imposed by the Poundstone Amendment.

The strong mayor form of government places administrative responsibility almost exclusively with the mayor. As his appointee, the Manager of the Department of Parks and Recreation serves at his pleasure, and does not answer to any outside commission or board, being "in full charge and control of the Department." The Board of Parks and Recreation is strictly advisory, and 5 of the 7 members are appointed by the mayor, (although the 5 year term of office allows some overlap from one administration to the next). The elected City Council must approve all leases and subleases of parks and recreation facilities, and must pass an ordinance to designate new park lands. City Charter prohibits sale of park land (except to the state to avoid condemnation), as well as leases except for concessions, nonprofit organizations, and other governmental jurisdictions. Since the city and county are coterminus, there is no county commission involved in parks and recreation decision-making.

What this means for the parks planning process is that what happens in the city's parks reflects directly and immediately on the mayor and his administration. Major decisions affecting land
in specific areas of the city, such as leases and acquisitions, are brought before the city council, where council members have a tendency to respect the wishes of the council member whose district is affected. Therefore, it is in the interest of those in power to anticipate and avoid situations which create controversy and dissension, since their political careers are tied closely to public opinion. Likewise, the public has given tremendous powers to the mayor and his appointees. While the powers given to Speer when he returned to office have been tempered somewhat, Denver is still definitely a strong mayor city. When decisions are made that will affect the urban environment for many years to come, the public may choose to provide some oversight, to assure that its interests are protected.

The Poundstone Amendment to the Colorado constitution, by limiting Denver's ability to annex new areas, has meant that the city must compete with other interests for diminishing raw land resources. This also means that parks are in competition with other public uses of city-owned land. As Twardzik (1966, 28) pointed out, the most frequent and powerful encroachments on park lands are often made by other public agencies, for use as school sites, hospitals, armories, highways and the like. A parks planning process needs provisions for protecting park lands against encroachments for other public uses.
Demographics

Denver has a socially, economically, and ethnically diverse population. In comparison with its suburban neighbors, it has larger numbers of young adults and senior citizens, higher percentages of minorities, and a more liberal, more Democratic voting record. Certain areas of the city, such as Capital Hill, Cheesman Park, and Washington Park, have proven particularly attractive to well educated professional single and/or childless young adults. Similarly, the Park Hill area has tended to attract liberal minded professionals with young families, who are looking for housing bargains in an attractive, established yet diverse urban community. Over the years, an articulate and involved citizenry in these neighborhoods has demonstrated its interest in maintaining the nearby parks that are part of their lifestyle. While other neighborhoods have certainly shown an interest in their parks and problems related to the parks, few neighborhood organizations have been as active, articulate, and well organized as those serving Capitol Hill, Park Hill, and Washington Park.

A parks planning process for Denver, therefore, must be able to deal with the well-articulated concerns of well organized groups in a way that equitably resolves issues without escalating into major controversy. At the same time, the less vocal areas of the city must be assured equitable treatment, and their needs and desires must be considered in any actions affecting the parks, even if they do not come forward to make their interests
known. Finally, the parks planning process must defend the interests of the city as a whole against the special interests of local neighborhoods, preferably in a way that satisfies local desires and mitigates local impacts as much as possible.

Weighting the Criteria

Obviously, not all criteria for evaluating a parks planning process should receive equal weight, especially when applied to the specific situation in Denver. Considerations in assigning values to the criteria have included whether or not a related concern was addressed in another criterion; past experience in Denver, especially problems created when the criterion was not met; and other circumstances of special importance to Denver (see Chapter 4, "Appropriate Criteria for Denver’s Situation").

**Economical of Time and Money (Total: 10 points)**

2 Make maximum use of available funds

2 Minimize administrative costs

2 Minimize delay between the identification of project desirability and project completion

4 Adapt process complexity according to nature, scope, and potential impact of project

**Representative of Community Values (Total: 10 points)**

3 Operate, as a process, in a manner consistent with the social, political, and economic values of the community

3 Adequately represent the interests of all sectors of the community, including the unaffiliated and inarticulate
2 Promote the expression of, and assure due consideration of, local and minority interests, values, and opinions

2 Prevent local and minority interests, values and opinions from dominating parks planning decision-making at the expense of the larger community

Provide Opportunities for Self Realization (Total: 5 points)

3 Provide opportunities for individuals to participate in determining the shape of their own environment

2 Provide an outlet for the enthusiasm, interest, goodwill, special talents, and skills available in the community, including the paid professional staff of city agencies, consultants and contractors, organizations and institutions, businesses, and private individuals

Provide a Satisfying, Pleasurable, Safe, Nonfrustrating Urban Environment (Total: 30 points)

5 Consider the effects of the project on the total recreation program for the city

5 Assure compatibility with citywide comprehensive plans, giving special attention to neighboring land use and zoning designations

20 Consider the effects of the project on other park features and uses, park sociology, overall aesthetics, vistas, neighboring land uses, traffic, accessibility, safety and law enforcement, the natural environment, connections to the past, etc.

Assure High Quality in Parks Planning, Design, and Execution (Total: 30 points)

5 Assure that project is consistent with design policies and objectives spelled out in the parks master plan, and with design guidelines previously approved by the department for specific parks and facilities

10 Maintain parks department control and close supervision over all projects occurring in public
parks, regardless of the funding source or the organization initiating the project

3 Assure that project work program reflects user requirements

3 Include procedures for selection of consultants and contractors that give all interested and qualified firms an equal opportunity to be considered for the project, and that are most likely to select the best firm for the specific project

5 Include mechanisms for independent design review of architectural, landscape, and engineering projects at key points in the design process (program plan and project schedule, preliminary design, final design)

3 Require parks department review of preliminary and final design, and sign-off on completed construction

1 Require adequate control by design professionals over all construction projects

Politically Well Managed (Total: 5 points)

2 Promote cooperation, rather than conflict, among various interests (minimize controversy, maximize consensus)

2 From earliest project stages, make clear to all parties the roles and level of involvement of all participants in the parks planning process

1 Provide fair and consistent policies and procedures, and communicate that fact to the community

Far-sighted (Total: 10 points)

7 Provide safeguards to assure that well thought out parks master plans and city comprehensive plans are followed

3 Allow flexibility for emergency actions and carefully considered response to changing conditions
Denver informal parks planning process - Rating and comment

When these weighted criteria are applied to the parks planning process currently in use in Denver, the following is the result:

**Economical of Time and Money (Total: 10 points)**

1. Make maximum use of available funds
2. Minimize administrative costs
3. Minimize delay between the identification of project desirability and project completion
4. Adapt process complexity according to nature, scope, and potential impact of project

Comment: Current approach minimizes expense and delay, except when problems arise. When conflict occurs, costs and delays escalate. The city tends to adapt process complexity to the project on an "as needed" basis, as in the Incremental model, but has sometimes done too little, too late, and taken too long when they finally did enlarge the process.

**Representative of Community Values (Total: 10 points)**

1. Operate, as a process, in a manner consistent with the social, political, and economic values of the community
2. Adequately represent the interests of all sectors of the community, including the unaffiliated and inarticulate
3. Promote the expression of, and assure due consideration of, local and minority interests, values, and opinions
4. Prevent local and minority interests, values and opinions from dominating parks planning decision-making at the expense of the larger community
Comment: All of these criteria are met on a hit-or-miss basis, with no consistency.

Provide Opportunities for Self Realization (Total: 5 points)

1 Provide opportunities for individuals to participate in determining the shape of their own environment

2 Provide an outlet for the enthusiasm, interest, goodwill, special talents, and skills available in the community, including the paid professional staff of city agencies, consultants and contractors, organizations and institutions, businesses, and private individuals

Comment: When forced to, the city does provide opportunities for individuals to participate in decision-making. Many opportunities exist, however, for people who wish to put their energy into promoting or opposing specific projects. The city has given considerable latitude to groups such as Outdoor Colorado, the Parks People, and the Greenway Foundation, and has supported their efforts for specific park projects.

Provide a Satisfying, Pleasurable, Safe, Nonfrustrating Urban Environment (Total: 30 points)

4 Consider the effects of the project on the total recreation program for the city

3 Assure compatibility with citywide comprehensive plans, giving special attention to neighboring land use and zoning designations

5 Consider the effects of the project on other park features and uses, park sociology, overall aesthetics, vistas, neighboring land uses, traffic, accessibility, safety and law enforcement, the natural environment, connections to the past, etc.

Comment: I am not aware that the city consistently meets the first of these criteria in any systematic way, and have seen evidence to the contrary on the other two criteria.
Assure High Quality in Parks Planning, Design, and Execution (Total: 30 points)

0 Assure that project is consistent with design policies and objectives spelled out in the parks master plan, and with design guidelines previously approved by the department for specific parks and facilities

2 Maintain parks department control and close supervision over all projects occurring in public parks, regardless of the funding source or the organization initiating the project

0 Assure that project work program reflects user requirements

2 Include procedures for selection of consultants and contractors that give all interested and qualified firms an equal opportunity to be considered for the project, and that are most likely to select the best firm for the specific project

2 Include mechanisms for independent design review of architectural, landscape, and engineering projects at key points in the design process (program plan and project schedule, preliminary design, final design)

3 Require parks department review of preliminary and final design, and sign-off on completed construction

1 Require adequate control by design professionals over all construction projects

Comment: For the first three of these criteria, there is evidence to the contrary. Consultant selection has improved significantly under the Pena administration, but is still less than totally objective and equitable. Design review of architectural projects in parks is minimal, with the City Engineer checking plans for code compliance, but without significant oversight from an urban design standpoint.

Politically Well Managed (Total: 5 points)

1 Promote cooperation, rather than conflict, among various interests (minimize controversy, maximize consensus)
From earliest project stages, make clear to all parties the roles and level of involvement of all participants in the parks planning process.

Provide fair and consistent policies and procedures, and communicate that fact to the community.

Comment: Denver has tended to wait until a problem develops before considering how projects should be handled from a political and public relations standpoint, and lack of an effective citizen information and participation program in the early stages of projects often results in difficult situations later on. The current administration appears to be very image-conscious, however, and the situation may be improving.

Far-sighted (Total: 10 points)

Provide safeguards to assure that well thought out parks master plans and city comprehensive plans are followed.

Allow flexibility for emergency actions and carefully considered response to changing conditions.

Current: Denver's current parks planning process is nothing if not flexible. Since the department has not been operating under a master plan, there is only a general, policies type of comprehensive plan to guide parks development. Some coordination of city projects takes place through the Planning Department's review of the capital improvements budget and the 5-year capital improvements program plan.

Maximum Possible Score: 100 points

TOTAL DENVER SCORE: 44 POINTS
II. Evaluation of Process Options

On the following pages, the four process options considered are rated according to the weighted evaluation criteria listed in the previous section.

The Rational/Elitist Model - Rating and Comment

**Economical of Time and Money (Total: 10 points)**

- 2 Make maximum use of available funds
- 2 Minimize administrative costs
- 2 Minimize delay between the identification of project desirability and project completion
- 0 Adapt process complexity according to nature, scope, and potential impact of project

**Comment:** This process typically is highly dependent on fixed procedures for evaluation of projects against a Master Plan and fixed criteria, and in its purist form would require no greater involvement for a large, complex project than for a small, simple one. On the other hand, it is highly efficient of time and money, in that planning and design are done in-house, proceeding to construction with a minimum of delay or expenditure. Costs start to increase and projects are delayed only when controversy arises.

**Representative of Community Values (Total: 10 points)**

- 1 Operate, as a process, in a manner consistent with the social, political, and economic values of the community
- 1 Adequately represent the interests of all sectors of the community, including the unaffiliated and inarticulate
- 0 Promote the expression of, and assure due consideration of, local and minority interests, values, and opinions
2 Prevent local and minority interests, values and opinions from dominating parks planning decision-making at the expense of the larger community

Comment: Since planning decisions are made by the political, administrative, and professional elite, without benefit of significant citizen participation, the process is only as representative of community values as the decision makers are aware of community values. Since the process provides minimal opportunities for assessing those values, it provides a less than perfect reflection of the community. The process itself is more appropriate to a benign, enlightened dictatorship than to a representative democracy, and is therefore not totally consistent with the social, political, and economic values of the community.

Provide Opportunities for Self Realization (Total: 5 points)

0 Provide opportunities for individuals to participate in determining the shape of their own environment

0 Provide an outlet for the enthusiasm, interest, goodwill, special talents, and skills available in the community, including the paid professional staff of city agencies, consultants and contractors, organizations and institutions, businesses, and private individuals

Comment: In this process, only the political leaders, administrators, and professional staff are able to enjoy the satisfaction of using their abilities to determine the shape of their environment.

Provide a Satisfying, Pleasurable, Safe, Nonfrustrating Urban Environment (Total: 30 points)

3 Consider the effects of the project on the total recreation program for the city

5 Assure compatibility with citywide comprehensive plans, giving special attention to neighboring land use and zoning designations

10 Consider the effects of the project on other park features and uses, park sociology, overall
aesthetics, vistas, neighboring land uses, traffic, accessibility, safety and law enforcement, the natural environment, connections to the past, etc.

Comment: With limited feedback from users of facilities, the decision makers will consider the potential effects of the project on the city's total recreation program as well as they can, using data on current usage of similar facilities. Theoretically, the elitist planner would be able to consider all the project effects, but limited resources generally make it impossible for even the most conscientious planner to be aware of all potential impacts.

Assure High Quality in Parks Planning, Design, and Execution (Total: 30 points)

5  Assure that project is consistent with design policies and objectives spelled out in the parks master plan, and with design guidelines previously approved by the department for specific parks and facilities

10 Maintain parks department control and close supervision over all projects occurring in public parks, regardless of the funding source or the organization initiating the project

1  Assure that project work program reflects user requirements

3  Include procedures for selection of consultants and contractors that give all interested and qualified firms an equal opportunity to be considered for the project, and that are most likely to select the best firm for the specific project

0  Include mechanisms for independent design review of architectural, landscape, and engineering projects at key points in the design process (program plan and project schedule, preliminary design, final design)

3  Require parks department review of preliminary and final design, and sign-off on completed construction

1  Require adequate control by design professionals over all construction projects
Comment: While the project work program can be expected to meet generalized user requirements, such as adequate area for athletic fields, the specific requirements of the present and potential park user population may not be addressed in any meaningful way. Also, the rational/elitist process typically does not provide for oversight mechanisms. Other criteria are consistent with the top down management approach.

Politically Well Managed (Total: 5 points)

0 Promote cooperation, rather than conflict, among various interests (minimize controversy, maximize consensus)

2 From earliest project stages, make clear to all parties the roles and level of involvement of all participants in the parks planning process

1 Provide fair and consistent policies and procedures, and communicate that fact to the community

Comment: The rational/elitist approach generally avoids conflict by avoiding contact with the public as much as possible, generally doing a competent, credible job. When controversy does occur, however, it lacks the tools to deal with it in a timely manner, and has to smooth over conflict with public relations efforts.

Far-sighted (Total: 10 points)

7 Provide safeguards to assure that well thought out parks master plans and city comprehensive plans are followed

0 Allow flexibility for emergency actions and carefully considered response to changing conditions

Comment: In its pure form, rational planning is based on the preparation, implementation, and adherence to fixed, rigid master plans.

The Democratic/Popular Model - Rating and Comment

Economical of Time and Money (Total: 10 points)
0 Make maximum use of available funds
0 Minimize administrative costs
0 Minimize delay between the identification of project desirability and project completion
4 Adapt process complexity according to nature, scope, and potential impact of project

Comment: While the democratic/popular process assures that the most desired projects are funded, it tends to study projects to death and draw out the planning process over months and years, increasing administrative costs with evening meetings and adding to total project costs through inflation. Ideally, the process uses the quantity and type of citizen participation appropriate to each situation. The level of citizen participation is generally determined subjectively.

Representative of Community Values (Total: 10 points)

3 Operate, as a process, in a manner consistent with the social, political, and economic values of the community

3 Adequately represent the interests of all sectors of the community, including the unaffiliated and inarticulate

2 Promote the expression of, and assure due consideration of, local and minority interests, values, and opinions

1 Prevent local and minority interests, values and opinions from dominating parks planning decision-making at the expense of the larger community

Comment: The risk of involving the community is that those with the greatest interest in the project will be the most active and vocal, even though their interests may run contrary to those of the larger community. To compensate for this tendency, surveys are sometimes used to document the will of the majority of the residents in an area.
Provide Opportunities for Self Realization (Total: 5 points)

3 Provide opportunities for individuals to participate in determining the shape of their own environment

2 Provide an outlet for the enthusiasm, interest, goodwill, special talents, and skills available in the community, including the paid professional staff of city agencies, consultants and contractors, organizations and institutions, businesses, and private individuals

Comment: This is the area in which the democratic/popular model excels.

Provide a Satisfying, Pleasurable, Safe, Nonfrustrating Urban Environment (Total: 30 points)

2 Consider the effects of the project on the total recreation program for the city

3 Assure compatibility with citywide comprehensive plans, giving special attention to neighboring land use and zoning designations

15 Consider the effects of the project on other park features and uses, park sociology, overall aesthetics, vistas, neighboring land uses, traffic, accessibility, safety and law enforcement, the natural environment, connections to the past, etc.

Comment: The democratic/popular approach is susceptible to special interests as opposed to the recreation program for the city as a whole. The presence of even two or three softball teams at a public meeting easily stacks the deck toward their interests, even though softball players may represent only a small percentage of park users. Likewise, there is nothing in this process that assures compatibility with citywide comprehensive plans; in fact, local interests may run counter to citywide plans, as S.R. DeBoer found out when he proposed extending Speer Boulevard to the north, and was opposed by local citizens who complained that the city had connected Regis College campus to the parkway, which they believed was a religious move to give more power to the Catholic church. The project was killed.
While citizen participation does not assure that all effects of a project will be considered, 50 or 60 heads may well be better than one, and with proper guidance, the input of park users and neighbors can be extremely valuable.

Assure High Quality in Parks Planning, Design, and Execution (Total: 30 points)

3 Assure that project is consistent with design policies and objectives spelled out in the parks master plan, and with design guidelines previously approved by the department for specific parks and facilities.

8 Maintain parks department control and close supervision over all projects occurring in public parks, regardless of the funding source or the organization initiating the project.

3 Assure that project work program reflects user requirements.

3 Include procedures for selection of consultants and contractors that give all interested and qualified firms an equal opportunity to be considered for the project, and that are most likely to select the best firm for the specific project.

5 Include mechanisms for independent design review of architectural, landscape, and engineering projects at key points in the design process (program plan and project schedule, preliminary design, final design).

3 Require parks department review of preliminary and final design, and sign-off on completed construction.

1 Require adequate control by design professionals over all construction projects.

Comment: The democratic/popular process does not specifically require that projects conform to the design policies and objectives in the master plan; in fact, the involved citizenry may prefer something completely different, in which case the plan may need to be changed or ignored. While this provides flexibility, it works against continuity of vision. Also, citizen involvement, carried to the extreme of
citizen power, may tap some of the power that the parks department would normally reserve to itself to control all parks projects. In a sense, this has occurred in the case of cultural institutions whose lay boards make decisions that affect park planning on a large scale. Other criteria in this section are not so much requirements of the process itself as the probable consequences of extensive citizen participation leading to public demands for such surveillance.

Politically Well Managed (Total: 5 points)

2 Promote cooperation, rather than conflict, among various interests (minimize controversy, maximize consensus)

1 From earliest project stages, make clear to all parties the roles and level of involvement of all participants in the parks planning process

1 Provide fair and consistent policies and procedures, and communicate that fact to the community

Comment: When well done, the democratic/popular process is the best managed, politically, of all models. When it goes wrong, however, no process is more volatile. Frequently, those in charge of the process and the various participants have differing ideas of the roles that each should play, and the misunderstandings that result can produce mistrust and bad feeling, negating the positive results of the process. This process virtually guarantees the use of fair and consistent policies and procedures, however; if the public is involved in a project to any degree, they won't tolerate less.

Far-sighted (Total: 10 points)

3 Provide safeguards to assure that well thought out parks master plans and city comprehensive plans are followed

2 Allow flexibility for emergency actions and carefully considered response to changing conditions

Comment: This process is not especially concerned with adherence to master plans or comprehensive plans except in a very informal way; in fact, it may result in
recommendations that conflict with existing plans. Because it is slow and cumbersome, the democratic/popular process lacks the flexibility to respond quickly in an emergency, but it can respond to changing conditions, as expressed by a concerned citizenry.

The Corporate/Representative Model - Rating and Comment

Economical of Time and Money (Total: 10 points)

2 Make maximum use of available funds
1 Minimize administrative costs
1 Minimize delay between the identification of project desirability and project completion
3 Adapt process complexity according to nature, scope, and potential impact of project

Comment: Numerous meetings with staff of various agencies and organizations add to the expense and schedule in this process. The process adjusts to project complexity according to the people who need to be involved in each project type, but certain key representatives would be ex officio members of the project review team.

Representative of Community Values (Total: 10 points)

2 Operate, as a process, in a manner consistent with the social, political, and economic values of the community
1 Adequately represent the interests of all sectors of the community, including the unaffiliated and inarticulate
2 Promote the expression of, and assure due consideration of, local and minority interests, values, and opinions
1 Prevent local and minority interests, values and opinions from dominating parks planning decision-making at the expense of the larger community

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Comment: This process reflects a representative government, but for the most part, the representatives in this process are not elected by any constituency. The danger in this process lies in the assumptions that may be made by various leaders regarding the interests of certain sectors of the community, especially those who are unwilling or unable to represent themselves. An additional danger lies in the power it gives to the highly vocal leaders of well organized special interest groups, including neighborhood organizations.

Provide Opportunities for Self Realization (Total: 5 points)

1 Provide opportunities for individuals to participate in determining the shape of their own environment

1 Provide an outlet for the enthusiasm, interest, goodwill, special talents, and skills available in the community, including the paid professional staff of city agencies, consultants and contractors, organizations and institutions, businesses, and private individuals

Comment: Opportunities to participate in this process are open to the most active community leaders, limiting the number of participants.

Provide a Satisfying, Pleasurable, Safe, Nonfrustrating Urban Environment (Total: 30 points)

4 Consider the effects of the project on the total recreation program for the city

5 Assure compatibility with citywide comprehensive plans, giving special attention to neighboring land use and zoning designations

18 Consider the effects of the project on other park features and uses, park sociology, overall aesthetics, vistas, neighboring land uses, traffic, accessibility, safety and law enforcement, the natural environment, connections to the past, etc.

Comment: While this approach will assure that the effects on the city's recreation program are considered, planners should be aware of biases due to unequal representation of park activities. For
example, softball league is likely to be better represented than lawn bowling, Frisbee throwing, or pigeon feeding. Still, if planners persist in meeting with enough groups, including neighborhood organizations, most of the effects which need to be considered will eventually surface.

Assure High Quality in Parks Planning, Design, and Execution (Total: 30 points)

5 Assure that project is consistent with design policies and objectives spelled out in the parks master plan, and with design guidelines previously approved by the department for specific parks and facilities

10 Maintain parks department control and close supervision over all projects occurring in public parks, regardless of the funding source or the organization initiating the project

2 Assure that project work program reflects user requirements

3 Include procedures for selection of consultants and contractors that give all interested and qualified firms an equal opportunity to be considered for the project, and that are most likely to select the best firm for the specific project

5 Include mechanisms for independent design review of architectural, landscape, and engineering projects at key points in the design process (program plan and project schedule, preliminary design, final design)

3 Require parks department review of preliminary and final design, and sign-off on completed construction

1 Require adequate control by design professionals over all construction projects

Comment: The extensive involvement of appropriate city agencies and other organizations, combined with the rational/elitist concern for conforming to a master plan and following procedures, should go a long way toward assuring high quality planning, design, and construction. The only deficiency would be in the identification of user requirements, since unaffiliated
users (transients, Frisbee throwers, bongo players, duck feeders, lunch hour picnickers, etc.) would not have a spokesperson.

**Politically Well Managed** (Total: 5 points)

2 Promote cooperation, rather than conflict, among various interests (minimize controversy, maximize consensus)

1 From earliest project stages, make clear to all parties the roles and level of involvement of all participants in the parks planning process

1 Provide fair and consistent policies and procedures, and communicate that fact to the community

Comment: Like the democratic/popular process, the corporate/representative process is prone to misunderstandings regarding who has how much power.

**Far-sighted** (Total: 10 points)

7 Provide safeguards to assure that well thought out parks master plans and city comprehensive plans are followed

0 Allow flexibility for emergency actions and carefully considered response to changing conditions

Comment: Like the rational/elitist process, the corporate/representative process is very procedural, and therefore slow-moving; also, it involves too many people to provide much flexibility.

**The Disjointed Incrementalism Model - Rating and Comment**

**Economical of Time and Money** (Total: 10 points)

0 Make maximum use of available funds

2 Minimize administrative costs

4 Minimize delay between the identification of project desirability and project completion
3 Adapt process complexity according to nature, scope, and potential impact of project

Comment: The disjointed incrementalist process is too fragmented to determine whether or not funds are well used. Administrative costs are unpredictable, since unexpected problems can arise at any time. Delay between project identification and completion is minimal, and can proceed as soon as funds are available, from whatever source. Ideally, this process makes use of a system of checks and balances, which can be time-consuming, but this seldom happens in practice. While this process allows the administrator to adapt the process to the nature, scope and potential impact of the project, the tendency in practice is to involve too few people, too late.

Representative of Community Values (Total: 10 points)

1 Operate, as a process, in a manner consistent with the social, political, and economic values of the community

1 Adequately represent the interests of all sectors of the community, including the unaffiliated and inarticulate

1 Promote the expression of, and assure due consideration of, local and minority interests, values, and opinions

1 Prevent local and minority interests, values and opinions from dominating parks planning decision-making at the expense of the larger community

Comment: By relying on input from various agencies and organizations to point out difficulties in proposed projects, this process partially represents community values, as reflected in its public officials, their appointees, and other community leaders.

Provide Opportunities for Self Realization (Total: 5 points)

2 Provide opportunities for individuals to participate in determining the shape of their own environment
2 Provide an outlet for the enthusiasm, interest, goodwill, special talents, and skills available in the community, including the paid professional staff of city agencies, consultants and contractors, organizations and institutions, businesses, and private individuals.

Comment: In this process, whether or not you get to participate depends mainly on who you are and who you know. However, it provides virtually unlimited opportunities for people who enjoy spending their time and money in promoting or opposing various projects, since projects can go through quickly if properly presented, and ill-conceived projects are inevitable.

Provide a Satisfying, Pleasurable, Safe, Nonfrustrating Urban Environment (Total: 30 points)

1 Consider the effects of the project on the total recreation program for the city

1 Assure compatibility with citywide comprehensive plans, giving special attention to neighboring land use and zoning designations

5 Consider the effects of the project on other park features and uses, park sociology, overall aesthetics, vistas, neighboring land uses, traffic, accessibility, safety and law enforcement, the natural environment, connections to the past, etc.

Comment: These considerations are handled subjectively, if at all, on a hit or miss basis.

Assure High Quality in Parks Planning, Design, and Execution (Total: 30 points)

0 Assure that project is consistent with design policies and objectives spelled out in the parks master plan, and with design guidelines previously approved by the department for specific parks and facilities

0 Maintain parks department control and close supervision over all projects occurring in public parks, regardless of the funding source or the organization initiating the project
0 Assure that project work program reflects user requirements

1 Include procedures for selection of consultants and contractors that give all interested and qualified firms an equal opportunity to be considered for the project, and that are most likely to select the best firm for the specific project

0 Include mechanisms for independent design review of architectural, landscape, and engineering projects at key points in the design process (program plan and project schedule, preliminary design, final design)

0 Require parks department review of preliminary and final design, and sign-off on completed construction

0 Require adequate control by design professionals over all construction projects

Comment: First, there is no master plan in this process. Second, laissez faire is the rule for projects funded and promoted by organizations outside the parks department. Third, no effort is made to research user requirements or even develop a formal program for the project. Fourth, political patronage and personal acquaintance frequently are associated with this approach to management. Fifth, an independent design review requirement reflects a concern with procedures that is foreign to this process type. Sixth and Seventh, while design control and sign-off on construction may happen, there is nothing in this process that would require or even encourage that.

Politically Well Managed (Total: 5 points)

0 Promote cooperation, rather than conflict, among various interests (minimize controversy, maximize consensus)

0 From earliest project stages, make clear to all parties the roles and level of involvement of all participants in the parks planning process

0 Provide fair and consistent policies and procedures, and communicate that fact to the community
Comment: Last minute problems create frequent conflict and allow controversy to escalate. Roles of the various participants vary from project to project, with no set rules. Fair and consistent policies and procedures are lacking.

Far-sighted (Total: 10 points)

0 Provide safeguards to assure that well thought out parks master plans and city comprehensive plans are followed

3 Allow flexibility for emergency actions and carefully considered response to changing conditions

Comment: There are no safeguards for a master plan, since none exists in this process. However, the major advantage of this process is its total flexibility.
Results of Evaluation of Process Options

Based on these ratings, the four processes are ranked as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Process</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Corporate/Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Democratic/Popular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Rational/Elitist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Disjointed Incrementalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total possible raw score: 100 points

The Corporate/Representative model lost relatively few points, since it incorporates the planning and design controls of the Rational/Elitist model with representative citizen participation. Disjointed Incrementalism fared least well, since many of the criteria referred to a master plan, and this type of planning typically does not make reference to a master plan, or does so only in a very loose, general way. While Disjointed Incrementalism may occasionally do many of the things mentioned in the criteria, points were not awarded, since there is no assurance that required actions will be taken.
III. Recommended Denver Parks Planning Process Model

While Denver's current parks planning process has a number of excellent features, and has improved considerably in the past three years, there is still room for improvement. Denver's process currently most closely resembles "Disjointed Incrementalism," with decisions being made on the basis of who is pushing for a project, and where the funds are coming from. Oversight comes from opposing groups and individuals, if they receive timely notice. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case, and this is where Disjointed Incrementalism breaks down in Denver. Without radically changing Denver's form of government, the city can institute a parks planning process that satisfies more of the criteria set out in the first part of this chapter.

In discussions of additional controls on parks planning, including citizen notification and participation requirements, Parks and Recreation Department administrators have expressed concern that the Department will become so burdened with procedures and paperwork that nothing gets done (Ruth Rodríguez, City Park Task Force Meeting, November 18, 1986). This is a legitimate concern. It is not practical to notify citizens, hold meetings, post notices, etc., every time that the Department wants to remove a tree or redesign a flower bed. How is it possible, then, to assure that the thoroughness of the process will be in proportion to the size, complexity, and nature of the
project? This thesis proposes a three-tiered approach to the parks planning process that attempts to answer that question.

Three project categories are identified, and process requirements are established for each: projects which are relatively small and not likely to generate controversy are handled with a minimum of paperwork and procedure (Category "A"); substantial projects which have the potential to stir community concern, which require significant oversight protections, or which are not included in the Department's normal planning and budgeting processes are handled through certain routine procedures which require involvement of various organizations and agencies, as well as specific, minimal requirements for public notification and input (Category "B"); and major projects which are likely to be highly controversial are handled through a "custom tailored" process which is planned, by persons with special training in community development, to use whatever techniques are appropriate to the project and the concerned community to solicit and use the community's input, keep the project moving forward if that continues to appear desirable, and achieve as much agreement among concerned parties as the situation will permit (Category "C").

Criteria for Selecting an Appropriate Process Model

The following are suggested criteria for making the determination of which level of process to use.

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Category "A"

If planning or design are contracted, will the fee be less than $10,000?

Will the total construction cost be less than $50,000?

Can the project be planned, designed, and constructed without requiring contracted labor?

Does the project or generic project type appear in the CIPP?

Is this project to be totally funded through capital improvement funds or lottery funds?

Will the function of the structure or project area remain the same?

Will the project conform to existing zoning and other permit requirements?

Will the project be free of troublesome "externalities" that could affect surrounding neighborhoods or impede the enjoyment of other park features (e.g., floodlights, speaker systems, noisy or unruly outdoor crowds, engine or equipment noise, increased traffic or creation of a hazard, increased parking requirements, diminution of vistas, attraction for undesirable persons, potential for vandalism and other crime, undesirable odors, litter, etc.)?

Is the project free of controversy? (That is, no groups or individuals have expressed concerns about this project or similar projects, and no groups or individuals are already sensitized with respect to any change in this particular park)

Will building heights and footprints remain the same?

Is the project located outside of historic structures or districts?

Can the project be completed without entailing any of the concerns listed in Category "B"?

If all of the questions above were answered "yes," the project can follow the Category "A" process model. If any of these questions were answered "no," go on to questions for Category "B" or
justify exception and obtain written approval from Department Manager.

Category "B"

Includes all projects not meeting the criteria for Category "A."

Does the project entail any of the following?

- bond issue proceeds
- major identified impacts on the community, neighborhood, environment, or the nature of the park itself
- strong expressed or organized opposition
- obvious potential for "externalities"
- planning or design fees greater than or equal to $50,000
- estimated construction cost greater than or equal to $500,000
- a totally new building, or expansion by 50,000 sq ft or more
- new paving for parking or roads, facilities construction, or other taking of green space
- conflict with parks, recreation and open space master plan

Projects which do not entail any of these considerations may use the process for Category "B." If the project entails any of the above, the project must follow the process for Category "C." Any exceptions must be justified by the Department Manager and approved by City Council.

CATEGORY "C"

Includes all projects not meeting the criteria for Categories "A" and "B."

PROCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECT CATEGORIES

ALL PROJECTS: Parks and Recreation Department will provide the Advisory Board, all registered neighborhood organizations and
the press with an annual list of CIPP and budget projects. Parks Department staff will review both the capital improvements budget for the coming year and the plan in detail with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will then determine the appropriate category for each project listed in the CIPP, and for each specific improvement project broken out in the budget. The Advisory Board will consider and determine categories for projects that arise between the annual reviews on a case-by-case basis.

Process Requirements for Each Project Category

CATEGORY "A":

CIPP. Director of Parks Planning will assign a parks planner for every project listed in the CIPP, including the general item, "park improvements."

Design. Independent Design Review: A design professional (architect, landscape architect, engineer, planner) other than the responsible parks planner will sign off on each specific project conceptually, before design is begun. When final design has been completed, this person or another design professional will approve any plans and specifications. The person conducting the review should be knowledgeable in the type of project under consideration, but should not be someone who has been involved in the design. If no one is available within the Department for
MASTER PLAN FOR PARKS AND RECREATION
Citywide master plan receives extensive public input prior to City Council approval

Detailed plans of specific parks are reviewed by neighborhood organizations and other interested parties (possible basis for park PUD)

PARKS DEPARTMENT Selects projects, sets priorities

BASIC NOTIFICATION
Parks and Recreation Department provides Board of Parks and Recreation, neighborhood groups and press with list of proposed CIPP and budget projects

"TRIAGE"
Board of Parks and Recreation assigns categories to all projects listed

"back door" projects, projects by other agencies, other projects not on CIPP or budget must be assigned a category at the Board of Parks and Recreation's monthly meeting

PROPOSED PARKS PLANNING PROCESS

CATEGORY "A"
Each CIPP item assigned a parks planner

Independent Design Review

Construction, Permitting and Inspection

CATEGORY "B"
In addition to requirements for Category "A"

Brief description in CIPP

Leaders of all affected groups contacted, potential problems discussed prior to public presentation of project program; reach agreement on program

BOND ISSUES: Manager prepares full project description for Council

Public presentation of design program; comments noted and included in RFP or memo to in-house designer

CONSTRUCTION: Parks planner assures all city requirements have been met; coordination with Public Works

Post sign at construction site 30 days prior to construction

CATEGORY "C"
Meet all requirements for "A" and "B" and also:

Provide a full, detailed description of the project in CIPP before sending CIPP to Planning Office

Programmer, planner, or facilitator develops and implements "custom tailored" approach to project, using techniques appropriate to project issues, sensitivity, size, complexity, location

Figure 13. Proposed Denver Parks Planning Process
this purpose, the Department of Public Works or an outside firm may be contracted, either for the specific project or as part of a term contract.

**Construction.** The assigned parks planner will assure that all permitting requirements have been met. Following construction, this individual will inspect the site, identify any needed corrections, and sign off on the construction.

**CATEGORY "B":**

In addition to all requirements for Category "A":

**Project Planning.** Parks and Recreation Department will provide a brief description of each project in this category when preparing the list of CIPP projects for the Advisory Board, neighborhood groups and the press.

**Bond Issues.** Before approving any bond issue affecting parks, the Department Manager will require a full, detailed project description of how the funds will be expended, including, as a minimum, a justification of need, the physical dimensions of any structures, square footage affected, construction timing, etc. This information will be forwarded to City Council prior to their deliberations on the bond issue, and to the Advisory Board, registered neighborhood groups, and the press at least 45 days prior to the bond issue election. Misrepresentations in the information provided, or failure to follow the specified program will be grounds for withholding remaining bond issue monies.
Design. Leaders of all affected organizations (neighborhood, affected recreation interests, park supporters, etc.) will be identified and contacted prior to beginning in-house design work or issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) or a Request for Proposal (RFP). If these leaders raise issues or voice concerns, a project kick-off meeting will be held to reach agreement on the project program. After agreement is reached, the project program will be presented to the public and interested consultants, and comments will be invited. The project program will then be revised as necessary, and a record of the comments will be included in the Request for Qualifications.

Construction. The responsible parks planner will assure that the project meets all city requirements for construction projects. Normally, the Department of Public Works would check plans and specifications and provide construction oversight, at the request of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

A sign of minimum size 20 in. by 30 in. must be posted at the construction site for a minimum of 60 days prior to construction or any disturbance of existing conditions that would precede construction.

CATEGORY "C":

In addition to all requirements for Categories "A" and "B", a full, detailed project description must be provided in the CIPP for each project in this category, regardless of funding source.
A programmer, planner, or other person with skills in design and administration of citizen participation programs will be selected, in cooperation with the responsible parks planner, to develop a project approach that is custom tailored to project requirements, using whatever techniques are appropriate to the issues, level of interest, size, and complexity of the project.

Role of Board of Parks and Recreation

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Board of Parks and Recreation consists of a City Councilperson, a representative of the School District, and five mayoral appointees. The City Charter requires the Board to "advise the Manager with respect to the policy and operation of the Department" and "review and comment on the proposed annual budget for the Department." This thesis proposes that the Board's comments on the proposed budget and 6-year CIPP include a determination regarding how much process is required.

With the approval of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (now expected some time in 1987), Denver will have a powerful tool for evaluating potential park projects. Public meetings were held throughout the city prior to the preparation of the draft Master Plan, and an extensive citizen participation process is already planned to gain input into the Final Parks Master Plan. Unfortunately, the draft plan was made available to the public too late to be addressed here. The plan is expected to contain both specific direction for future parks development,
and procedural guidance for administration of parks projects, including a significant citizen participation process.

The following is an example of how Denver might have handled a recent project, using the "Denver Parks Planning Process Model" proposed in this thesis.

Project Initiative

The Parks People, a community organization concerned with the city's parks, proposed a historically accurate restoration of the Washington Park Boathouse, with their organization contributing funds. The Parks Department had already budgeted funds for reroofing the structure, but had not made a high priority of restoring the exterior, and had not determined the proper use for the building.

Project Evaluation and Acceptance

A parks planner is assigned to evaluate the feasibility of the proposal. Referring to the Parks Master Plan, the CIPP, and the capital improvements budget for the coming year, he determines that the project is consistent with the goals set out in the master plan; that it is something the city would want to do anyway if the money were available; and that the city has already budgeted for roof repair, but has no plans for additional exterior work. He also determines, through discussions with the Colorado Historical Society, that it is a structure that the department needs to preserve, even though its future use in the
city's recreation program has not been determined. Since the project is merely a historical restoration, he determines that the project would have no negative effects, but rather positive effects on the park environment. The group proposing the project has a good reputation for following through and raising funds to get park projects completed.

The parks planner documents all of these considerations on a project evaluation checklist memo, which he submits to his superiors. Since the exterior renovation does not appear on the CIPP, the Board of Parks and Recreation is asked to consider whether the project should be done at this time, and determine which of the three levels of process is appropriate. At its monthly meeting, the Board approves the project, since it conforms with the stated goals of the Department, and assigns it to Category B. The responsible parks planner recommends that the department enter into a formal agreement with The Parks People, agreeing to take on the project if the group can raise the $80,000 their architect estimates the project would require before a certain date. The agreement will also give The Parks People a voice in preparing the work program for the project, and in selecting an architect with historical restoration experience, who will provide guidance for the city's reroofing project as well as the rest of the exterior work. As the funding source, the Parks People is also given the opportunity to review and sign off on the architect's preliminary and final designs for the structure. The city, however, will retain control over the
project, with the Department of Public Works and the Parks and Recreation Department reviewing and signing off on all design work.

**Project Planning and Management**

Because the project, in its current form, has circumvented the CIPP process, and except for the reroofing, does not appear on any department long-range plans, copies of the recommending memo and the Board's Categorization Checklist are sent to the Planning Office. Copies are also sent to the Colorado Historical Society and Denver Landmark Preservation Commission (even though at that point the building has not yet been officially declared to be of historic importance). The City Engineer is also informed by memo of the plans to renovate the exterior of the structure. Leaders of registered neighborhood organizations are notified. All of these parties are asked to comment on the proposal. If no fatal flaws are found, a staff-only project kick-off meeting is held, a preliminary work program agreed upon in cooperation with The Parks People, the agreement with The Parks People is prepared and signed, and a press release is prepared, for release to the citywide and local area press, as well as to neighborhood organizations and other groups concerned with Denver history, parks, and the potential future recreational or commercial use of the building. Comments received as a result of contacts with other agencies, and as a result of the press release, are considered in refining the preliminary work program.
Representatives of both the Department and The Parks People approve the program.

Announcements are placed in the usual newspapers soliciting qualifications of architectural firms with historic restoration experience, and firms known to have such experience are sent invitations to submit their qualifications. As agreed, a Parks People representative is on the selection committee. The most qualified firms are invited to submit proposals, followed by interviews with the top three or four firms. All of these are evaluated by the same committee.

When preliminary design is completed, reviewed by an independent architect (under one of several term contracts to the city for urban design review only), and signed off by both the Parks Department and The Parks People, the plans are presented at a well publicized public meeting. If any hint of controversy has arisen in the course of the project, however, individuals and groups are contacted prior to the meeting, in an attempt to work out problems. Concerns arising either in this way or at the meeting itself are addressed as much as feasible. The project continues to final design, and again is signed off by the same parties, plus the Department of Public Works. At least 30 days prior to beginning of construction, a notice is posted on the building, announcing when work will commence. The architect in charge of the project is retained for construction surveillance until all work is completed and accepted by Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and the Parks People.
Follow Through

Following construction, all parties who participated in the process (including the press) are invited to a social function to review the completed work, and are thanked for their participation. Appropriate thanks and acknowledgement are given to The Parks People for their support of the project. Press releases are provided for attending press, and are mailed, with a photo of the completed project, to those who do not attend. A plaque is placed on the structure acknowledging the participation of The Parks People in the restoration.

Recommended Denver Process Model - Rating and Comment

The process described in this example meets most of the criteria for evaluating a parks planning process:

**Economical of Time and Money** (Total: 10 points)

2 Make maximum use of available funds
0 Minimize administrative costs
1 Minimize delay between the identification of project desirability and project completion
4 Adapt process complexity according to nature, scope, and potential impact of project

Comment: A close relationship between Parks and Recreation and the Planning Office, Public Works, and other city departments and agencies, as well as a close link between parks planning and the CIPP, helps assure that available funds are allocated efficiently. The major weaknesses in this model are the increased administrative costs and delays resulting from requirements to inform and consult with numerous groups and individuals, at various points in the planning
process. The bright spot in the picture is that while the process entails many hoops and hurdles, the chances are lessened of running into unexpected brick walls far down the line.

**Representative of Community Values (Total: 10 points)**

3 Operate, as a process, in a manner consistent with the social, political, and economic values of the community

3 Adequately represent the interests of all sectors of the community, including the unaffiliated and inarticulate

2 Promote the expression of, and assure due consideration of, local and minority interests, values, and opinions

2 Prevent local and minority interests, values and opinions from dominating parks planning decision-making at the expense of the larger community

**Comment:** Without being unduly cumbersome, the process allows both direct and indirect expression of local and minority interests without compromising those of the larger community. This is accomplished by meeting the minimum notification and participation requirements for all substantial projects, and by preparing (and documenting) a customized program for interagency coordination and citizen participation for those projects which have the potential for controversy.

**Provide Opportunities for Self Realization (Total: 5 points)**

3 Provide opportunities for individuals to participate in determining the shape of their own environment

2 Provide an outlet for the enthusiasm, interest, goodwill, special talents, and skills available in the community, including the paid professional staff of city agencies, consultants and contractors, organizations and institutions, businesses, and private individuals

**Comment:** By providing a meaningful citizen participation process, this process model provides opportunities to participate in determining the shape
of their environment. It does not hand over the control of that environment to special interest groups of any type, including park neighbors. It does provide settings in which all of the people in the city who share a concern for the city's parks, whether professionally involved with the parks or not, can contribute their time, energy, and ideas in a way that makes a difference to the physical form of their city.

Provide a Satisfying, Pleasurable, Safe, Nonfrustrating Urban Environment (Total: 30 points)

5 Consider the effects of the project on the total recreation program for the city.

5 Assure compatibility with citywide comprehensive plans, giving special attention to neighboring land use and zoning designations.

20 Consider the effects of the project on other park features and uses, park sociology, overall aesthetics, vistas, neighboring land uses, traffic, accessibility, safety and law enforcement, the natural environment, connections to the past, etc.

Comment: While the professional parks planner has the primary responsibility to review a proposed project for all potential impacts, he also has the responsibility to consult with experts in other disciplines (such as traffic engineering, historic preservation, architecture, public safety, and planning) whenever the nature of the project indicates that it would be advisable to do so. What the experts miss, in this process, the concerned public may be able to point out, if given timely notification and opportunities for input.

Assure High Quality in Parks Planning, Design, and Execution (Total: 30 points)

5 Assure that project is consistent with design policies and objectives spelled out in the parks master plan, and with design guidelines previously approved by the department for specific parks and facilities.

10 Maintain parks department control and close supervision over all projects occurring in public
parks, regardless of the funding source or the organization initiating the project.

3 Assure that project work program reflects user requirements.

3 Include procedures for selection of consultants and contractors that give all interested and qualified firms an equal opportunity to be considered for the project, and that are most likely to select the best firm for the specific project.

4 Include mechanisms for independent design review of architectural, landscape, and engineering projects at key points in the design process (program plan and project schedule, preliminary design, final design).

3 Require parks department review of preliminary and final design, and sign-off on completed construction.

1 Require adequate control by design professionals over all construction projects.

Comment: This process as described does not include independent design review at the program plan and project schedule stage. To do so would add cost and delay to the process, but may be justified for certain major projects, or for projects in which the Parks Department has had limited involvement in developing the program plan and schedule. All other criteria in this group were given the maximum rating for reasons similar to those of the last section.

Politically Well Managed (Total: 5 points)

2 Promote cooperation, rather than conflict, among various interests (minimize controversy, maximize consensus).

2 From earliest project stages, make clear to all parties the roles and level of involvement of all participants in the parks planning process.

1 Provide fair and consistent policies and procedures, and communicate that fact to the community.
Comment: Through early intervention in potentially controversial situations, attempts to defuse and de-escalate prior to official meetings, and adherence to clear and consistent policies and procedures, some of the rough edges can be removed from the handling of situations where conflict is inevitable.

Far-sighted (Total: 10 points)

5 Provide safeguards to assure that well thought out parks master plans and city comprehensive plans are followed

2 Allow flexibility for emergency actions and carefully considered response to changing conditions

Comment: While the proposed process makes the bureaucratic machinery more ponderous, it does allow the Parks Department discretion in handling minor projects. Also, a Master Plan approved by City Council can be amended by City Council. Two points were taken off for failure to assure consistency with a city comprehensive plan, although presumably, when the parks master plan is approved, either it will be consistent with the city’s comprehensive plan, or, more likely, the new city comprehensive plan will incorporate most of the parks master plan in its parks and recreation component.

TOTAL SCORE: 93
CHAPTER 5. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

What resources are available for bringing about the process described in Chapter 4, how can they be mobilized, who will take the lead in effecting the recommended changes, and what should these actions take place?

Resources Available for Change

The city has substantial resources for implementing the process described in Chapter 4, especially at this time.

Legal

Legal resources include the City Charter, ordinances, plans, rules and regulations (including departmental procedures), and stated policies.

Changes in Parks and Recreation Department procedures

Internal procedures within the Department of Parks and Recreation can require public notifications at specific stages in the development of certain types of projects, can make the planning process more formal, and can require better documentation of decision-making. The city council, by resolution, has already directed the Parks and Recreation Department to establish such a procedure for the taking of green space.

Renegotiation of Contracts with Cultural Institutions
The City's current agreement with the Museum of Natural History must be renegotiated as soon as possible. This "contract," from 1933, has no termination date or conditions of performance. Current litigation over a prevailing wage dispute arising out of the Museum's recent construction projects may provide an opportunity to force a new contract. Contracts can be used to clarify the relationship between the City and the various cultural institutions.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

On November 20, 1986, the long-awaited draft of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan was released for public review and input. Before the Plan reaches its final form, improved administrative policies and the beginnings of a citizen participation process can be outlined in the master plan document, clarifying current confusions about the role of neighborhood organizations in parks decision-making.

Capital Improvements Planning

The city's capital improvements planning procedures have changed significantly under Mayor Pena, with each department required to produce a carefully thought-out and well justified 5-year capital improvements program that includes all proposed projects, regardless of funding source. (CIPP, p. 1) The Report on Denver's Capital Improvements Program Planning Process (CIPP) for 1986-1991 noted that during the Planning Board's review of
the Parks and Recreation capital improvements projects budget for 1986,

...staff worked with Parks and Recreation on their project requests. As a result, several projects were eliminated and a single priority list for Lottery and CIF funding was developed.

In our opinion, the final requests all warrant funding at some level. Therefore, we did not eliminate any projects in our recommendations. We did, however, reduce requested amounts for some projects based on past spending patterns, projects in process, and our position that expanded initiatives should await the results of the Department's master plan.

As was the case with Public Works, we strongly urge that neighborhood concerns, and especially completed neighborhood plans be given a high priority in determining where projects will be undertaken. Procedures for considering projects recommended by the City's Community Development Agency also should be developed. (CIPP, 73)

For projects which are funded through the capital improvements planning and budgeting process, the CIPP provides an excellent planning tool. The current administration has also made a first step at getting all projects out on the table, for planning and discussion. If the current level of funding for the Planning Office continues, it may be hoped that this process will also continue, and will become even more effective. Unfortunately, the CIPP planning procedures are highly dependent on the policies and priorities of the administration in power, and could change significantly if an administration takes over that lacks a planning orientation.
Financial Resources

The cost of the additional personnel time and paperwork needed to implement the recommended process is difficult to estimate, since it will depend to some extent on the number of projects in each category that must be considered. With budgets already tight, the additional staff needed to do independent design review on architectural projects could be a major expense. This person, however, could be billed out to other departments as needed, saving the city some of the design fees it currently pays to architectural consulting firms on term contracts for small projects.

While city funds in general are stretched as tight as ever, the Colorado Lottery has significantly increased the funds available for capital improvements in parks. The Pena administration has seen to it that capital improvement funds generated by Denver's head tax are not diverted to the general fund. While the capital improvements budget is still modest, it does provide enough capital to plan wisely, if not to dream. According to the Capital Improvements Program Plan,

In the 1986 CIP recommendations, Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Projects accounted for 22.2% of the total $15,471,400, second only to Public Works (43.5%). [CIPP, 78]

Political

Mayor Pena is up for election in Spring of 1987, and will need to point to his accomplishments and propose programs for further improvements.
The Pena administration has been criticized (mostly by the business community) and praised (mostly by neighborhood organizations) for involving many people in decision-making. Pena's critics say he flip-flops on tough decisions when faced with public opposition, which he claims is merely being responsive to public concerns. The Denver Post quoted the mayor as responding to this criticism by saying, "I think it's a question of listening to people. I'd rather try to come up with creative approaches than take the easy way out and sit back and do nothing." (Robert Kowalski, "Mayor's credibility questioned when hard decisions reversed," Denver Post, 30 November 1986, 1B) At the same time, Marty Amble, of the neighborhood group Colfax on the Hill Inc., saw the Pena administration as being "very, very supportive of neighborhood organizations," although it may have done adequate research before launching some far-reaching city policies (Kowalski, 8B).

If Pena is re-elected, one would expect him to continue to be responsive to the public, to continue to involve many people in decision-making, and to retain the procedural and structural changes he has already implemented in the city's contracting and bidding processes, and in the existing staff and structure of the Department of Parks and Recreation. Other candidates present unknown quantities. A new administration is likely to bring with it a certain amount of shuffling and fumbling, yet presents an opportunity for implementing major changes.
Public Support

The master plan review process has generated public interest, and this year Denver's Urban Design Forum chose "Parks and Public Spaces" as its symposium topic.

Public interest in parks is running especially high in East Denver, due to neighborhood response to recent developments at the Museum of Natural History, Zoo, and Science Museum, as well as the proposals for a fire station on East 17th Avenue, a major aquarium to be located between the zoo and the museum, and additional parking for the cultural facilities. These projects and proposals have led to creation of the City Park Task Force, a coalition which was established by the Mayor's Office to assure that all concerned parties would be represented in land use planning for City Park.

City Park Neighbors, an association representing neighbors on all four sides of the park, has been concerned with the taking of green space in what it considers a neighborhood park, and what the Parks Department considers a regional park. Incensed by the handling of the museum and zoo expansions, this group has been very concerned with process. On February 3, 1986, it prepared the following resolution for City Council consideration:

A RESOLUTION

URGING THE DENVER CITY COUNCIL RECREATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE TO AMEND THE REVISED MUNICIPAL CODE, BY ADDING A NEW ARTICLE PERTAINING TO PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND COUNCIL'S APPROVAL BY ORDINANCE OF ANY ALTERATION OR IMPROVEMENTS TO CITY OWNED OPEN GREEN SPACE UNDER
WHEREAS, green space is an irreplaceable city asset; and

WHEREAS, present city policy does not provide for adequate public notification of changes proposed for this green space; and

WHEREAS, recent public actions have resulted in serious negative impacts on existing green space; and

WHEREAS, use of green space is land use concern; and

WHEREAS, City Charter sections define land uses as a City Council responsibility;

NOW, THEREFORE,
BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:

Section 1. That the City Council Recreation and Culture Committee is hereby directed to:

A. Establish by ordinance an orderly system by which green space may be improved, altered, developed or impacted.

B. Include in such system a means of public notification of effected [sic] citizens, neighborhoods, and organizations.

Section 2. That the Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall attest and affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this resolution, and that copies hereof be transmitted to the Mayor of the City and County of Denver, the Chairman of the City Council Recreation and Culture Committee, and the Manager of the Department of Parks and Recreation of the City and County of Denver.

At the City Council meeting, this resolution was modified significantly. Councilmen from parts of the city distant from City Park did not acknowledge a general problem with the parks planning process, and considered the proposed resolution an overly broad response to a specific local situation. The City
Attorney also questioned the legality of the requested ordinance. Consequently, the resolution was amended to urge the "Department of Parks and Recreation to adopt a procedure providing for public notification of alterations or improvements to city owned open green space under the management of the department of parks and recreation." The rest of the resolution was unchanged, except that Section 1 was changed to state that the Manager of Parks and Recreation, rather than the City Council Recreation and Culture Committee, was directed to establish the system and the notification requirements, and the words "by ordinance" were deleted. Obviously, these are significant changes. In its amended form, the resolution was sponsored by Councilpersons Hiawatha Davis, Cathy Reynolds, and Bill Roberts. Davis and Roberts represent districts bordering City Park, and Reynolds, Councilmember-at-large, has a history of concern with process issues. As of November 18, 1986, the Parks and Recreation Department was still developing the procedures (Ruth Rodriguez, City Park Task Force Meeting).

Administrative Support

Directives and Informal Pressure from the Mayor

By official policy directives and less formal communications, the Mayor can let it be known that any department, agency, or contracted cultural institution that expects to receive capital improvement funds (or operating funds,
for that matter) needs to submit a carefully thought-out 5-year plan for capital improvements, with sufficient documentation and detail to allow the Planning Office to evaluate what is being proposed.

**Tighter Control over Bond Funds**

Any project using city bond funds, regardless of the institution receiving the funds, should meet all of the requirements of General Public Improvement construction projects.

**Enforcement of Zoning**

Projects in parks are not exempt from zoning ordinances.

**Specific Actions Possible for Implementation**

The parks planning process described in Chapter 4 can be implemented in various ways. In general, the easiest actions for implementation are also the least effective, and easiest to change or ignore. Some possibilities include:

**Changes in Zoning Ordinance**

The same zoning that applies to parks currently applies to a wide variety of other "uses by right." Many of Denver's parks are zoned R-0 or R-1. Parks may also be classified as 0-1, the zoning which includes airports, correctional institutions, cemeteries, fire stations, libraries, electric substations, gas
regulator stations, newspaper distribution stations, parking lots, police stations, railway right-of-way, telephone exchanges, water filtration plants, utility pumping stations, the U.S. Mint, and a number of other uses. All of these uses are permitted without necessitating a change in zoning. If the 0-1 District zoning could be broken out into separate categories for parks and other public uses, the existing zoning process could be invoked for any project that was not a use by right, use by temporary permit, or accessory use of a park. Narrow definitions of "use by right" in a park could give the city better control of other uses. Alternately, parks could be rezoned as PUDs, so that even fairly minor changes would require a substantial review and approval process.

Adoption of Master Plan with Implementing Ordinances

Following an extensive round of community input, the Parks and Recreation Department plans to prepare a Final Parks Master Plan and present it for City Council approval. This official adoption of the Master Plan provides an excellent opportunity to give it some "teeth" through implementing ordinances. A certain amount of process can be spelled out in the Master Plan itself: notifications, interagency coordination, and citizen participation requirements can be required for projects meeting certain criteria (project type, physical or financial size, complexity, environmental sensitivity, evidence of opposition). In officially adopting the Master Plan, the City Council can also
pass ordinances requiring 1) that no building permit may be issued for any structure on city property unless the proposed construction is consistent with the approved Parks Master Plan; 2) that timely public notifications for certain types of park projects, as specified in the approved Parks Master Plan; and 3) requiring City Council approval of any alterations or improvements to city owned open green space under the Management of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

The process described in Chapter 4 requires no changes in the City Charter, although the increased responsibilities of the Parks and Recreation Board could be added. If this process were to be implemented, it would need to be evaluated after a reasonable period (e.g., 5 years); if it had failed to meet its objectives, stronger measures would need to be proposed. During that time, public notification of proposed changes could result in grass roots demands for a better process. At present, however, there does not appear to be widespread support in the community for a Charter change.

Steps in the Right Direction

The Pena administration has taken several positive steps toward improving Denver's parks planning process. These include the Planning Office's initiative in the preparation of a new citywide Comprehensive Plan; the Parks and Recreation Master Plan effort; the creation of the City Park Task Force by the Mayor's
office, to deal with the controversial issues surrounding land use in City Park; the change in the City Charter, requiring City Council approval of any contract in excess of $500,000 (effective July 1, 1983); and the resolution by City Council, directing the Parks and Recreation Department to establish procedures for projects affecting green space, including public notification.

Nothing happens quickly or easily in municipal government; still, all of these actions are positive efforts by the current administration that show tendencies in the right direction.

Remaining Implementation Requirements

Priorities

The following, in descending order of importance, are the remaining requirements for implementation of the parks planning process described in Chapter 4:

1. **Office of Project Management.** Coordinate implementation efforts.

2. **City Council.** Approve ordinances requiring notification for significant parks projects.

3. **Citizen Groups.** Demand notification and participation process requirement policies in the Final Parks Master Plan.

4. **City Attorney.** Renegotiate contracts with cultural institutions to delegate less authority and retain more control in the Department of Parks and Recreation. Set a
specific contract expiration date, and define performance requirements for the institution, such as type of activities permitted, planning and reporting requirements, coordination with other agencies and institutions, etc.

5. **Mayor's Office.** Send directive from Mayor's office to all departments and agencies, including cultural institutions, requiring cooperation with CIPP data and justification requirements. Lack of adequate data or project justification in the 5-year plan would be grounds for reducing or withholding both capital improvement and operating funds in the current budget, and cause for terminating a contract with a cultural institution.

6. **City Council.** On the anniversary of the City Council request for a Parks and Recreation Department procedure for notification and proper process for changes to public green space, request a report from Parks and Recreation.

7. **Parks and Recreation Department.** Prepare internal procedures needed to assure coordination with other agencies and appropriate design reviews.

8. **Parks and Recreation Department.** Draft ordinance for City Council approval requiring notifications for projects meeting certain criteria.

9. **Planning Office, with support from Mayor.** Resolve some of the areas of concern identified in the 1986-1991 CIPP cover letter, especially:
- Pursue greater coordination among capital funding sources.
- More carefully correlate agency programmatic goals with capital needs.
- Provide clear, more well-defined, City-wide priority definitions, to produce information needed for City-wide prioritization of projects.
- Agencies involved in specific geographic areas need to develop greater coordination in terms of capital projects and program operations, as well as in neighborhood and small area planning. Examples: Civic Center Park, Art Museum and Library; also City Park, Zoo, and Museum of Natural History.
- Improve the ability to understand and forecast the operating cost, revenue impacts, and return on investment of capital projects and improve ability to manage resources.
- Give high priority to addressing the problem of dispersed management of the City's physical assets without any centralized program for identifying and managing these assets to assure they are utilized as productively as possible.
- Develop policy to delineate responsibility for capital improvements and rehabilitation of city buildings.
- Planning Board and staff: Review the Capital Improvements Program process to seek future improvements.

Implementation Strategy

City Park Neighbors is a coalition of neighborhood organizations that was formed to protect green space in City Park from encroachments by the Zoo, Museum of Natural History, and other city agencies. This group is very concerned with process, particularly notification of neighborhood residents of proposed
changes in parks. This group is in a position to apply pressure to bring about at least that part of the process. Before the City Park Task Force disbands, this group will have the opportunity to state its position of what it feels to be the most important issues in City Park. Process is one of the continuing concerns of this group. As a minimum, this organization can ask its City Councilmembers to request a report from the Department of Parks and Recreation on the procedures that have been instituted in the Parks and Recreation Department to assure public notification prior to taking of green space. This group appears to have the energy to do much more than this, however, and may be able to bring pressure, directly or indirectly, on the city agencies and departments that are in a position to effect a change.

Timing

While it would be unrealistic to set out a detailed schedule for implementing this proposal, certain dates need to be noted.

Master Plan

The Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space received its first public exposure on November 20, 1986. Ruth Rodriguez, Manager of the Department of Parks and Recreation, estimates that 6 to 9 months will be required for discussion of the draft and preparation of a final plan (City Park Task Force Meeting, November 18, 1986). This could take the process beyond
the Mayoral election in Spring 1987. If the Pena administration is not returned to office, or if the membership of the City Council changes significantly, the plan could be delayed even longer, or approved in a form that indicates less concern for notification and participation. On the other hand, this could be a time, prior to Plan approval, when various interests try to sneak projects through under the wire, especially if those projects are not consistent with the proposed Plan.

Contracts with Cultural Institutions

As a condition of settling the current litigation, the City should insist that a new contract be drawn up with the Museum of Natural History, with a fixed term and performance requirements. If the Museum does not meet performance requirements, the facilities could then be opened up to any interested group that can meet the city's terms, or run by the Department of Parks and Recreation. It appears unlikely, however, that the contract will be redrawn until the litigation is resolved, and the case may go all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Jeff Johnson, an attorney representing the Museum of Natural History, has indicated that this could take from one to five years.

Agreements between the city and the Zoo, the Botanic Gardens, and any other organizations that are involved with construction on city parks and open space should be reviewed and if necessary revised as soon as possible, preferably before the next election.
Capital Improvements Program Plan

In April 1986, when the new planning cycle (1987-1992) begins, all city agencies should receive a directive from the Mayor to comply with the data and justification requirements of the Planning Office in preparing their 5-year plans, and informing them that failure to comply will result in reduced appropriations.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

Many organizations must take action to implement the proposal stated in Chapter 4. Those with most at stake, the neighborhood organizations, are in the best position to apply the pressure needed to bring about change. The Office of Project Management, through its knowledge of the situation, experience in working with neighborhood organizations, and placement as an agency under the mayor, is in a unique position to assist these neighborhood organizations in achieving their goals.
CHAPTER 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Approach

This thesis has looked at the nature and results of Denver parks planning efforts, past and present; explored the nature of parks planning, alternative planning theories, and the alternative process options that result when those theories are applied to parks planning; developed objectives and criteria for evaluating a parks planning process, and weighted those criteria to take into account the specific conditions in Denver; subjected the alternative planning process options to the evaluation criteria; outlined a preferred planning process for Denver that satisfies as many of the criteria as possible; and recommended strategies for implementing the preferred process.

Findings

Lessons from the Past

For most of its history, Denver has been blessed with visionary, far-sighted, conscientious leaders who rationally planned what they thought was best for the city, then proceeded to turn their plans into reality. Opposition to those plans was handled in various ways, with organized neighborhood groups occasionally winning battles on the basis of the strength of their opposition.
Lessons from the Present

During the last 20 years, the rational planning process has given way to a disjointed incrementalism of sorts, in which projects are selected according to what is most pressing (such as leaky roofs), has the right backing (such as Parks People projects), and/or comes with its own funding (such as the Marine Mammal House at the Zoo). However, the Denver process lacks one essential for good disjointed incrementalism: notification of affected and interested parties, so that they can impact or even stop the project, if necessary. No formal process exists to require such notification, and the result has been angry park neighbors joining together to commiserate with each other after construction has started, or forced to track down every rumor of a project and mobilize to address it. The projects completed in this way in City Park, such as conversion of the Pavillion to a Science Museum and the expansion of the Museum of Natural History, have left much to be desired from an urban design standpoint, in the opinion of many park neighbors and design professionals.

Planning Theory and Parks Planning Practice

Parks planning literature makes mention of "user input" in the programmatic design of parks and playfields, but generally
does not address parks planning as a process requiring systematic interagency coordination or citizen participation.

Parks Planning Process Alternatives
Planning literature discusses planning process by using various labels to describe certain configurations of the dimensions or attributes of planning processes. Four of the most widely recognized configurations are 1) the rational/elitist approach; 2) the corporate/representative approach; 3) disjointed incrementalism; and 4) the democratic/popular approach.

Criteria for a Parks Planning Process in Denver
Taking into account the legacy of Denver's existing park system, the need for professional expertise in meeting the demands of a difficult natural environment, the powers and responsibilities given by the City Charter to the mayor and the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the diversity and special concerns of the population, criteria for a proper parks planning process for Denver were developed and weighted resulting in specific criteria to address seven areas of concern. The parks planning process should 1) be economical of time and money; 2) be representative of community values; 3) provide opportunities for self realization; 4) provide a satisfying, pleasurable, safe, nonfrustrating urban environment; 5) assure high quality in parks planning, design, and execution; 6) be well managed from a political standpoint; and 7) be far-sighted by providing for
compliance with master plans and city comprehensive plans, yet allow for needed flexibility.

Evaluation of Process Options

When these criteria are applied to the four process options, these alternatives are ranked as follows (perfect score = 100 points):

1. Corporate/Representative 82 points
2. Democratic/Popular 73 points
3. Rational/Elitist 61 points
4. Disjointed Incrementalism 28 points

Proposal for Change

The heart of this thesis is the application of planning process theory to the parks planning effort. While the planning department may have the personnel most knowledgeable in planning process and community development theory, other city departments are making many of the day-to-day decisions that determine the urban landscape. When Denver had a Department of Parks and Improvements (prior to 1955), the in-house city planner was largely concerned with parks and public works. As the city has grown, the functions of planning, parks and recreation, and infrastructure development have been fragmented. What is needed is a re-integration of these functions through increased
interagency coordination, and the oversight protection of an effective citizen participation process.

Obviously, not all projects require the same degree of coordination and citizen participation. Therefore, what is proposed is a three-track system, with criteria for identifying projects that require 1) routine planning, budgeting, scheduling, and construction; 2) notification, coordination and participation at specified milestones in the process; and 3) custom tailored programs for extensive coordination and citizen participation, in addition to the basic notification, coordination and participation requirements.

Implementation

Due to the difficulty and low probability of success in changing the City Charter, less drastic actions are recommended. These include incorporating the process described above in the Final Parks Master Plan and its implementing ordinances; directives from the Mayor requiring agencies to provide requested data and justification for the projects on their 5-year plans; and follow-up by City Council on the resolution passed last February (1986), directing the Department of Parks and Recreation to implement an orderly system for handling proposed alterations to green space, including public notification of affected citizens, neighborhoods, and organizations. The Office of Project Management, under the auspices of the Mayor's Office, may
well be in the best position to assure that a sound parks planning process is implemented.

Identified Needs for Further Research

Experience of Other Cities

Additional examination of how the parks planning process has been implemented in other cities might prove helpful in developing an appropriate process for Denver. Specific questions regarding their experience would include how effective the process has been in assuring high quality urban design; how long the process requires, from project inception to completion; what the political costs and benefits have been; and what they would like to change. To get the answers to these questions would require research outside the time and budgetary limitations of this thesis.

The Big Picture

This thesis has been concerned with the parks planning process, rather than how capital improvements are implemented in general. Surely, the problems encountered in planning for capital improvements in parks are not unique to the Department of Parks and Recreation. Also, capital improvements need to be
planned and coordinated on a citywide basis. The 1986-1991 CIPP pointed out this need:

The central issue emerging from the [Planning] Board’s review [of the CIPP] is the critical need for the City to develop a comprehensive plan to provide a framework for guiding and integrating individual agency planning efforts. In addition to the capital planning process, master plans are underway in many agencies and neighborhood planning is proceeding; yet no overall context exists to direct these efforts and provide a City-wide, inter-departmental focus and set of priorities. We see this as imperative and recommend that the highest-level executive officers in the City participate in developing a mission statement to guide the comprehensive plan effort. [CIPP, 3]

As part of the development of a citywide comprehensive plan, each city department and agency that has responsibility for a capital improvements program should examine its planning process in much the same way that this thesis has done for the Department of Parks and Recreation, and submit a proposed approach to capital improvements planning to the Planning Office, which would then compare the various processes and work with the individual departments to arrive at rational, documented, reasonably consistent procedures for capital improvements planning and development, with provisions for interagency coordination and appropriate oversight by affected or concerned organizations and the community at large.

Other areas where further research could prove beneficial include the following:

0 A detailed comparison of the Department’s stated programmatic goals with the projects completed in parks
during a specified period, by all organizations and from all funding sources.

- In-depth management analysis of the project selection process in the Parks and Recreation Department
- Research into how Denver changed from generally rational/elitist to incremental parks planning
- Studies of the historical land use patterns within parks in major American cities, and the factors have brought about or resisted changes.
- Consider the application of a process similar to the one proposed, applied to the entire parks system, including mountain parks and recreation centers.
- Research park zoning as a public land use control, and the general issue of citizen use of zoning as a control over their government.
- Research the legal relationship of the Parks and Recreation Department with the cultural institutions, Department of Public Works, Denver Planning Office, and Office of Project Management; compare with practice.
- Explore opportunities for additional cooperation between the Denver Planning Office and Parks and Recreation.
- Develop criteria for evaluating good park design.
- Develop specific techniques for handling citizen in the three process categories, including a guide for preparing customized community development programs in controversial park projects.
Repeat the management analysis of Denver government that was completed shortly after Pena took office.
APPENDIX A
Examples of Past Planning for Denver's Parks

The historical case studies that follow are provided as examples of how the parks planning process has functioned in Denver in the past. Each case study includes a brief project description, the participants in the parks planning process, nature of public input (if known), interagency coordination that took place (if known), and an analysis of the parks planning that took place. Many of these case studies also appear in Chapter 2. Information was obtained from Denver's City Park, by Bette Peters (1986); "Plans, Parks, and People," an article by S.R. DeBoer published in the December 1972 issue of The Green Thumb, a publication of the Denver Botanic Society; The Parkway Plan, a document produced in 1965 by the Denver Planning Office and intended as one element in a larger Comprehensive Plan for Denver; and Denver Municipal Facts, a periodical published by the City and County of Denver which appears to have evolved from a reporting of official actions into a glossy public relations piece.

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PROJECT:
Beer gardens and saloons providing outdoor recreational facilities (1860's and 1870's)

PARTICIPANTS:
Business community
PUBLIC INPUT:
Informal; paying customers patronized the facilities of their choice, "voting" their choices with their spending habits

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:
None, so long as no laws were violated

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

ANALYSIS:
Since these facilities were privately owned and operated, their planning was entirely in the hands of the private sector, with each of them offering what its owner thought would attract the public. Offerings included collections of live and stuffed animals, picnic facilities, a freak museum, a mineral exhibit, a ballroom, skating facilities, and formal gardens. As long as no public nuisance was created, and other laws respected, they were outside the control of public officials, and their proprietors were free to plan them any way they chose: by impulse, intuition, business sense, or careful analysis, with whatever technical assistance the owner felt was required.

***********************************************************************

PROJECT:
Establishment of Curtis Park, Denver's first public park, 1868

PARTICIPANTS:
Land developers: Francis M. Case and Frederick J. Ebert donate the park to the city

PUBLIC INPUT:
None

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:
None

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

ANALYSIS:
In accepting Curtis Park, the city assumed responsibility for its maintenance, and since there was no parks plan to follow, the first parks planning that the city did was in committing itself to having a park of this size in this location.

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PROJECT:
Development of Fuller Park, 1872

PARTICIPANTS:
Business community, the press, and politicians stir up interest; Mayor establishes need; prominent citizen responds with land donation.

PUBLIC INPUT:
Unknown

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:
Unknown

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

ANALYSIS:
A certain amount of planning went into Fuller Park, in that Mayor Joseph E. Bates, in his inaugural address, had suggested that Denver needed parks, and Horace Fuller's donation of a block for park purposes at 28th and Gilpin was in response to an identified need.

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PROJECT:
Public open space in two cottonwood groves at confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte; available free for public use, but not owned by the City, and not maintained through taxation. The two groves were used for the celebration of Colorado statehood, other events (1876).

PARTICIPANTS:
Unknown; possibly City and state officials, private parties

PUBLIC INPUT:
Unknown; probably none

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:
Unknown: probably minimal

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

ANALYSIS: Existing vacant land was used for public purposes, with no control by any public authority. This use might be considered taking advantage of an existing resource, rather than any sort of planning.

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PROJECT:
Purchase of land for City Park (1882)

PARTICIPANTS:
Local press identified need; real estate developer and state representative drafted state enabling legislation; Mayor pushed for project, City Council cut back appropriation to purchase one fourth of the land area requested.

PUBLIC INPUT:
Unknown; probably through public opinion expressed in response to news articles and editorials.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:
State legislature, Mayor, City Council.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

ANALYSIS:
The acquisition of land for City Park was the first significant parks planning activity by the city. For some time, the need for parks development had been identified by the press, the business community, and political leaders. In 1878, Henry Lee, a Denver State Representative, and Jacob Downing, a real estate developer, introduced a bill in the state legislature to permit Denver to purchase 1280 acres of state owned school land, hoping that Denver would purchase two 640-acre parcels, one several miles west of Denver and the other several miles east. Mayor Richard Sopris urged City Council to complete the entire purchase, and to think of Colfax Avenue as a parkway linking Sloan Lake in West Denver with City Park in East Denver. City Council, however, reduced the acquisition to only 320
acres on the east side, and eliminated the west side park, citing needs for sewers, streets, lights, police and fire protection. The Rocky Mountain News sided with the mayor, saying that while many people may think that 320 acres is a lot of land for a city the size of Denver, "when properly understood it is not a very large strip of ground." This project marks the first time that public officials in Denver set out to obtain a specific property for park purposes, and at least partially accomplished that objective. In identifying an existing need, anticipating future needs, and choosing specific locations for meeting those needs, city officials were engaged in a parks planning process.

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PROJECT:
Design and Early Development of City Park (1910-1920)

PARTICIPANTS:
Professional engineers, landscape architects, individuals and groups of citizens, neighbors, school children, public spirited citizens, Mayor, City Council, Park Commissioners, Department of Public Works

PUBLIC INPUT:
In the 1880s, neighbors had contributed $500 to purchase cottonwood trees for the park, and groups of school children and other citizens had made excursions to the park to plant trees. When DeBoer tried to redesign the park to improve traffic flow, utility, and aesthetics, private citizens objected to cutting of the trees. Work proceeded in spite of objections, with city crews forced to remove the elm and maple trees during snowstorms to avoid criticism, according to S.R. DeBoer, who later recalled "I sure caught hell when we cut down those trees." However, "Criticism stopped when the big sloping laws became apparent. Large groups of people began to use them."

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:
Unknown

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

ANALYSIS:
When DeBoer decided to realign the roads and get rid of some of the trees, some of the school children who had planted the trees (and even a few of the neighbors who had contributed for the cottonwoods) were no doubt still alive, and they would have had a high degree of involvement with "their" park. In a city where virtually all the trees have had to be planted, it would have seemed almost sacrilege to remove established trees.

DeBoer, however, had confidence in his professional judgement, and was able and willing to wait out the criticisms until the realization of his plan could speak for itself. As Speer advised, "If the writings in the papers disturb you, put them aside, and have your wife read them next summer."

(Daily Journal, July 21, 1972)

In this case, the rationalist/elitist approach based on technical expertise triumphed over citizens who were involved and concerned, but less knowledgeable.

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PROJECT:
Development of harness racing track at City Park (1893)

PARTICIPANTS:
Wealthy/influential citizens, Mayor, public officials

PUBLIC INPUT:
None documented, except for individuals involved

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:
Unknown

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

ANALYSIS:
The harness racing track project came about in 1893 when the Mayor banned harness racing on city streets. The adventurous young men requested a half-mile track in City Park. They installed the track, polo grounds, and grandstand for $10,000, and turned it over to the city for public use and maintenance. The Gentlemen's Driving and Riding Club was established, with annual dues, gate receipts, and subscriptions to help with the financial burden. In this case, a group of private citizens took the lead in determining the land use for
a significant area of City Park (roughly, what is now the soccer fields at the northeast corner of the park), with the city merely giving its blessing to the group. The process the city went through in deciding to accept and assume responsibility for maintaining this facility is not clear.

The collapse of the track's grandstand in 1898 points up one of the problems in the city's approach to this project. If a similar situation were to arise today, in the current legal climate, and spectators were injured in the collapse of a facility designed and constructed under the auspices of a group functioning with the consent of the city but without ongoing control and supervision by the city, the lawsuits could on forever, with the injured parties suing the city, the volunteer group, the architect, and the construction firm.

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PROJECT: Establishment of Denver Zoological Gardens

In 1896, a bear cub given to Mayor Thomas S. McMurray became a popular feature in City Park. City expenditures for a cage, bear house, and bathing pool marked the beginnings of a zoo, and forty acres were reserved for that purpose.

PARTICIPANTS: Private citizen, Mayor, city employee, general public

PUBLIC INPUT: Public response to bear establishes demand for a zoo.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION: Unknown


ANALYSIS: Like Topsy, City Park Zoo "just growed" in its early years, as additional bears and other animals were added. The development of the zoo points up both the advantages and disadvantages of disjointed incrementalism. Responding to a situation, the city
took action, which resulted in a benefit to the public. As the demand for a zoo was established, the facility was increased by increments, with attendance justifying the expansion. Funds were expended at a pace consistent with available revenues and public interest. This was poignantly demonstrated when Victor Borcher, in 1917, built the artificial mountain in the bear pens, the first barless cage area in a western zoo. Borcher had other plans for the zoo, "but when interest at City Hall died down, we went to St. Louis and built similar structures there. In St. Louis the same thing happened, and after two years he came back to Denver," and the discouraged designer subsequently shot himself.

The incremental approach makes some sense in the planning of expenditures for parks, since major improvements in parks may more readily be deferred than new bridges, sewer replacements, or street widenings. What parks planners have sometimes failed to distinguish, however, is the difference between the planning of expenditures and the planning of parks. Parks, like other facilities, need to be planned, whether or not funds are available.

The negative side of the incremental approach is apparent from the fact that the zoo and the Museum of Natural History had their origins at almost exactly the same time, and that both have grown, at times almost imperceptibly and at times by major additions, with virtually no coordination with each other or the city, until both are now firmly committed to their current locations in City Park, and constitute major land uses to an extent that was not necessarily intended by anyone with responsibility for parks planning.

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PROJECT:
Establishment of Museum of Natural History

In 1899, the city accepted a proposal prepared by Edwin Carter, naturalist and taxidermist, and several prominent citizens to establish the Colorado Museum of Natural History, based primarily on Carter’s collection, on the highest elevation in City Park.

PARTICIPANTS:
Private individual, influential citizens

PUBLIC INPUT:
None documented except for individuals involved
The beginnings of the Museum of Natural History reflect an elitist orientation that may even persist today. Edwin Carter sold his collection to the city for $10,000 with the provisos that the city would erect a fire-proof building to house it, form a corporation to oversee it, and appoint him curator for life at $150 per month. Therefore, from its very founding, the museum has been a separate entity, occupying city land and contracting with the city, but reporting only to the mayor, and not responsible to the administrative department responsible for parks. Also, in bringing the museum about, several prominent citizens met with Carter to consider site, construction, and funding. The city accepted the organization's proposal in December 1899, and the Museum was incorporated in 1900. The site that this group selected was the one that Sopris had considered the most beautiful portion of the park (Denver's City Park), the area that is now museum hill. As time went on, other collections were donated by leading promoters of the museum, and the facility went from its original 8559 sq. ft. to 69,168 sq. ft. in 1928, to 263,000 sq. ft. in 1969, and 463,000 sq. ft. today. As in the past, the Museum is controlled by a Board of prominent citizens, who tend to be the major contributors to the institution. This Board and this institution have been perceived by neighboring residents and even some city administrative staff as aloof, uncooperative, and condescending. The unique status of this institution has isolated it from other elements of the parks system, and virtually excluded it from the parks planning process.

(See also analysis for City Park Zoo, above.)

PROJECT:
Parkways and Boulevard Plan (1904)

PARTICIPANTS:
George Kessler, urban planner/landscape architect from Kansas City, engaged to prepare plans for the city's parks, parkways, and boulevards (1904); Robert W.
Speer, appointed head of Public Works (including parks) in 1901, and elected Mayor in 1904, providing policy, direction, and support; City Council, to approve the various ordinances required to implement the plan.

PUBLIC INPUT:
Unknown

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:
Speer Boulevard and Cherry Creek Drive were developed by the Highways and Parks Departments together, with plantings keeping pace with the highway builders. The Mayor personally reviewed progress and intervened as necessary to expedite the project.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

ANALYSIS:
Prior to 1956, streets and parks were under the jurisdiction of the Department of Improvements and Parks, so that one city official had control of both the city's streets and the parks that interfaced with them. This was changed, effective January 1, 1956, to create the Department of Public Works and the Department of Parks and Recreation. From a rationalist/elitist standpoint, the earlier form was ideal, since it permitted a centralized planning and design function, with urban planners (who were landscape architects by training) working under the same authority as the highway engineers. Kessler was charged with coming up with an urban design plan that encompassed streets, parkways, and parks, and had the advantage of working with a city department that had the authority over all of these.

The rationalist/elitist process also was appropriate to the managerial style of Mayor Speer, who was "aggressively determined to put his ideas into practice," according to S.R. DeBoer (Green Thumb, 150). "He was a great big fellow and he was stubborn. What he said, by God, you had better do! We park men all liked Mayor Speer."

In 1911, Speer was voted out of office under criticism by reformers, and made a tour of European cities, gathering new ideas for Denver and reconfirming his commitment to the parkways plan. According to DeBoer (1972, 167), the mayors who served while Speer was out
of office "were nothing, and only showed that the city needed a firm hand to direct it." When Speer was returned to office in 1915, he was elected by a vote of 2-1/2 to one. Speer sought and voters approved the "Speer Amendment" to the City Charter, which gave him power over all appointments except that of auditor, and power to appoint 4 out of the 9 members of City Council.

When a tough, trusted, and respected mayor knows what direction he wants the city to take, and has the city well under control; when visible progress is being made in enhancing the appearance as well as the functioning infrastructure of the city; and when the good of the public as a whole is being well looked after by a benevolent dictator: no planning process is more efficient in getting the job done in minimum time with minimum expense than the rationalist/elitist approach.

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PROJECT:
Barnum Boulevard/North Speer Parkway (1923-1930)

PARTICIPANTS:
S.R. DeBoer, Landscape Architect; Manager of Improvements and Parks (Vail); private citizens

PUBLIC INPUT:
Public meetings in affected neighborhoods

S.R. DeBoer, many years later, gave a vivid account of the effect of public input on the parkway program:

"The parkway program had mostly covered East Denver where the well-to-do citizens lived, and North Denver had gotten very little of it. To correct this we worked out a plan which served the whole northern district and fitted into the plan of the city.... It would give Denver a tree-lined boulevard around the whole city. We also planned an extension of Speer Boulevard to Berkeley Lake, Arvada, and Coal Creek Canyon.

I still think it was a valuable plan, but did we get criticized! At a public meeting in the Berkeley School I caught it. The chairman gave the gavel to the vice-chairman so he could talk with freedom. And he did! It was the days of the Ku Klux Klan, and his complaint was that we had connected Regis College campus to our parkway -- a religious move to give more power to the church. I pointed out that the plan also connected with
Denver University, Colorado Women's College, a Baptist school, and with Barnum and Sloan Lake Parks. I got out alive, but they stopped the program right there. The next meeting was in Barnum and we expected an attack. Mr. Vail [Department Manager] went along, bringing his chauffeur who was a plain-clothes policeman. The chauffeur told me that "the boss thought you might need some protection." Nothing happened. But our ambitious parkway plan never became a reality.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:
At the time, parks and streets were under a single management, in the Department of Improvements and Parks. Other coordination is not known.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

ANALYSIS:
The type of planning here at first appears to be Popular/Democratic, but a closer look reveals a Rational/Elitist orientation. The planners had assumed that the residents of North Denver wanted the same type of tree-lined boulevards enjoyed by the affluent East Side, and didn't bother to find out from the residents what their real values were, which in this case had more to do with religion than with tree-lined connecting parkways. The planners paid for this Rational/Elitist assumption and so did the whole city. Right or wrong, reasonable or unreasonable, the real values of local residents must be considered, and it can be very dangerous for an outsider to assume he knows what those values are.

The rational plan, in this case, was absolutely wrong, because it failed to take into account what later generations would probably consider a totally irrational consideration. If the planners had been more aware of the neighborhood concerns, they might have developed a slightly different plan that provided the desired connecting parkways, but avoided the religious connotations.

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PROJECT:
Planning and Early Development at Washington Park (1912-1917)
PARTICIPANTS:
Parks Commissioner, Commission Secretary, City
Landscape Architect, City engineers, mayor, parks
department staff

PUBLIC INPUT:
None

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:
Parks Department and Engineering, Parks Commission

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

ANALYSIS:
S.R. DeBoer, many years later, described the planning
process, such as it was, that went into the continuing
development of Washington Park:

During the interval between Speer's administrations the parks were under a
commissioner. City Hall complained about the expense of putting in the big lawn in Washington
Park and stopped the work. Both the south and north ends remained in prairie. A swimming beach
and bath house went in but no more park lawn.

Planting trees at the north end of the park was a problem. The commissioner said, "No, leave
this alone. We've got parks enough." Harry Raymond, the secretary of the commission, who
lived near the park, said, "Go ahead and plant it." I had a plan and the plant material, so we
planted it. The trees were collected and carried by hand from the trucks. The commissioner never
noticed what we were doing. Evergreen Hill is there today, the only nice planting of evergreens
the park has.

When Speer came back into office, we were still working on the north end of Washington Park.
The engineers had figured out a curving road there mathematically, with degrees, and had staked it
that way. It looked like heck; no flowing curves. So, one day, after five o'clock, John Duninger,
who was helping me, and I, pulled out the engineers' stakes and flattened out the road
curves to a nice flowing line. The mayor approved it." (DeBoer 1972, 160-161)

Here again is the rationalist/elitist approach, but with the direction set by the official in charge
overruled by the insubordination of those under him.
In this case, the top-down approach to planning was moderated by the individuals who were actually out doing the work, who were willing to take the responsibility for defying authority, and who were willing to spend their own time to see that the job was done right. Since DeBoer had earned Speer's confidence, he was able to follow the dictates of his professional judgement in moving the stakes.

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PROJECT:
Cheesman Park: Potential Redesign (1910-1918)

PARTICIPANTS: Parks Commissioner, City Landscape Architect, neighbors

PUBLIC INPUT: Neighbors wanted plantings removed; parks commissioner supported city landscape architect; later, a compromise plan was negotiated.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:
Unknown

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

ANALYSIS:
S.R. DeBoer described the incident as follows:

I tried my darndest to take away the monotony of all plain lawns in these big parks. There is variety in the north and south ends of Cheesman. Some wealthy homeowners, next to Cheesman Park, wanted the planting removed so that their homes would face on an open park. I explained to Otto Thum, the commissioner in charge of parks, that we should leave it alone. "We have finally," I said, "with a lot of work, gotten a park on the go." "All right," he said. He was a good man. Later on, we compromised. I made some openings in the planting so that the neighbors could look in and their homes appeared to be part of the park. (DeBoer 1972, 161)

Several very good things took place in this process. First, the concern of the neighbors was taken seriously, not ignored. Second, the parks commissioner supported the professional staff. Third, a compromise was reached that satisfied the neighbors without destroying the park aesthetics. In this case, it would
have been wrong to cater to the desires of these homeowners at the expense of other park users, yet to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the park plan, their desires ultimately were satisfied. This demonstrates a strong stance by the administration that is consistent with the rational/elitist approach, yet a willingness to compromise, as is necessary in the democratic/populist approach.

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PROJECT:
Mountain Parks and Mountain Recreation Planning (1922-1930)

TYPE OF PLANNING:
Corporate/Representative

PARTICIPANTS:
Mayor, Civic and Commercial Association (Mountain Park Group), Chamber of Commerce, the Real Estate Exchange, the Denver Motor Club, Mountain Parks Advisory Committee, Superintendent of Parks

PUBLIC INPUT:
Impetus for mountain parks came from the business community's civic associations. When a proposal for mountain parks improvements came from the Mountain Park Group of the Civic Association, it was to be submitted to "improvement associations, club and various civic bodies, and candidates for mayor" who were to be "asked to state their attitude toward this program that the people may be advised." (Denver Municipal Facts, March-April, 1923, p. 10)

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:
In 1922, Albion K. Vickery took over as City Engineer, retaining his title as Superintendent of City and Mountain Parks, which was under the Manager of Improvements and Parks. Since highways and structures were so important to development of the mountain park system, having Vickery wear these two hats may have facilitated mountain park planning and development.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:
ANALYSIS:
According to Denver Municipal Facts, May 1923, "Denver is the first American City to have municipal parks, lying in another county. Created under authority of an amendment to the State Constitution. There are nineteen Mountain Parks, aggregating 4,000 acres in three adjoining counties, scattered over a region of 100 square miles, interspersed with boulevard roads." (Denver Municipal Facts, May 1923, p. 29)

Looking back from a 1986 perspective, it's hard to understand why the City of Denver would have wanted to own and maintain distant mountain parks, which today have become a drain on the city, and are generally conceded to be poorly maintained. These problems were reflected in the draft master plan recommendations to "restore mountain parks to their former prominence within the park system," "improve maintenance," and "reduce costs." The plan also recommended not buying additional mountain park land at this time (Denver, Master Plan 1986, 14). The mountain parks idea makes more sense, however, when one considers that Denver considered itself virtually synonymous with Colorado during the 1910s and 1920s. Denver Municipal Facts, which appears to have started out as a public relations and public information tool for Denver municipal government, seemed to evolve during the 1920s into a marketing piece for Colorado, with many articles on the scenic wonders of the entire Rocky Mountain area, and letters to the editor from all parts of the country. At that time, Denver had few suburbs, and was not locked in by the Poundstone Amendment. Therefore, whatever brought business or tourist dollars to Colorado could be assumed to bring most of them to Denver. During the 1920s, Denver was operating a major tourist camp at Overland Park, which accommodated 11076 cars with 39854 passengers in 1921, and provided such amenities to the traveling public as city water and electric lighting, sanitary sewer, club house, free showers and laundry tubs with hot and cold water, a large dance hall, refreshment stands, an auto repair shop and a gas station. The city had spent $45,000 for improvements at Overland Park, but the maintenance costs of about $8,000 per year were more than covered by income from the various concessions. In short, the Denver business community had good reason to do everything possible to maintain the desirability of Denver as a tourist destination, and that included the desirability of the nearby mountains.

According to S.R. DeBoer,
The original idea for a Denver-owned mountain preserve came from Robert Speer, I believe, but it was promoted into a reality by two committees: one from the Real Estate Exchange with K.A. Pence as Chairman, and one from the Chamber of Commerce with Warwick Downing as chairman. The two committees worked together for several years. (Green Thumb, 162)

Protection and improved accessibility for the nearby mountain areas appear to have been the major considerations in the parks acquisitions.

The Denver "recreation" plan, presented in the September-October 1922 issue of Denver Municipal Facts, was designed to provide recreational zoning in the mountain areas. "If the unplanned method of growth were allowed the tendency would be to develop this region for every type of outdoor play. Unthinkingly, promoters would transplant city conditions to this mountain stronghold. Without expert planning auto roads would pierce its heart, great city type hotels would be established all over the region and the charm of the alpine play ruined. Man, endeavoring to subdue sublime nature, would not accomplish his objective, but simply mess up the landscape with his incongruous efforts." (Denver Municipal Facts 1922, September-October)

The motivation in this plan was clearly to protect the mountain environment, for the benefit of all users, both visitors and local residents.

The city officials of Denver believe that what will help these towns will help Denver and what will bring tourists to Denver will do likewise for her sister towns. It did not enter into the project of screening Colorado's unrivalled scenic attractions with a selfish motive, but did so for the good of Colorado. (Denver Municipal Facts 1922, September-October)

In 1923, Denver Municipal Facts announced an "Improvement Program Urged for Mountain Parks."

The last few weeks has seen launched a comprehensive general plan for Mountain Park betterment, calling for the expenditure by the city of $125,000 for the next five years for improvements in these parks. The
mountain Park idea was originally fathered by the Civic and Commercial Association, the Real Estate Exchange and the Denver Motor Club, so very properly the plan was endorsed by these bodies first, and has been put forth by the Mountain Park Group of the Civic Association.

In 1923, Denver Municipal Facts (March-April, p 10) published a letter from Superintendent of Mountain Parks, A.K. Vickery, in response to a report containing suggestions by the Civic Association's Mountain Park Group:

The Mountain Park report printed on this page was referred by Mayor Bailey to Superintendent of Parks A.K. Vickery for his advice, and Mr. Vickery returned the following comments upon it:

"To my mind one of the most important things to be done with our Mountain Park System is for the City to obtain control, as far as possible, of property that abuts on our roads, in order that we may control the kinds of buildings erected and the class of business carried on along these roadways."

The letter then takes a somewhat defensive tone, citing lack of funds, need to spend on maintenance, prohibitive cost of some of the group's proposals, and concludes as follows:

"In closing, I would suggest that the Civic and Commercial Association present their recommendations to the Mountain Parks Board, and I feel sure that the Board will be glad to seriously consider any recommendations made by our civic bodies." (Denver Municipal Facts 1923, March-April, 10)

PROJECT:
City Plan for "Denver Big" -- 1970, 1,000,000 population (1923-1930)

PARTICIPANTS:
Business community; mayor; newly formed appointed Planning Commission; Manager of Improvements and Parks; City Landscape Architect; planner/consultant; concerned citizens
PUBLIC INPUT:
Major; the public was asked to review and provide criticism on both the street plan and the parks plan

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:
City and County of Denver, Denver Municipal Facts, 1930, January-February.

ANALYSIS:
In 1923, "a group of the most progressive and far-seeing business men of Denver" recognized the problems that would accompany growth, and identified the need for a plan for 1970 and a population of 1,000,000. Of special concern was downtown traffic congestion leading to business stagnation. Mayor Stapleton joined the group, as a planning advocate. Pressing problems were identified, to be addressed within the "complete plan covering all phases of the physical city development." These included an arterial street scheme; "centers" of business, transportation, government, etc.; and a park, parkway, and boulevard system, linked with flood control along rivers. (Denver Municipal Facts, January-February, 1930)

In 1926, Mayor Benjamin F. Stapleton appointed 40 leading public-spirited citizens to Denver's City Planning Commission, which was created by a City Council resolution.

Up to this date the work of Denver's City planning and beautification had been directed by Mayor Stapleton and Manager of Improvements and Parks C.D. Vail with the able assistance of S.R. DeBoer, city landscape architect, who has been connected with this work in Denver, since its inception in 1910.

With the creation of the commission, Irving J. McCrary of McCrary, Culley and Carhart, was added to the city planning staff to co-operate with Mr. DeBoer in bringing to completion a definite plan outlining the growth of Denver for the next fifty years." (Denver, Denver Municipal Facts, 1930, January-February)

In 1928, a preliminary street plan was published, with a request for criticisms from the citizens of Denver. Many suggestions were received, worked over, and all found practical were embodied in the final Major Street
Plan (Denver, Denver Municipal Facts 1930, January-February).

In the spring of 1929, the recreational study was published, and was sent out to the people of Denver and to out-of-town experts for constructive criticism. Suggestions that were received were worked over and used wherever practicable (Denver, Denver Municipal Facts 1930, January-February). According to Denver Municipal Facts, "The park plans have been discussed in various districts at many meetings. C.D. Vail, Manager of Parks and Improvements, and Arthur Carhart, at one time Secretary of the Commission, have spent a great deal of time in explaining these proposed park changes at district meetings." (1930, January-February, 6)

In 1930, the street plan and recreational study, together with studies of park extension, were incorporated in a larger report to be submitted to the Mayor and City Council (Denver, Denver Municipal Facts, 1930, January-February, 6).

The plan prepared by the Denver Planning Commission "tries to extend the park system so park service will be within reach of every citizen. It tries to extend the playground service in the same way. Further studies will touch on transportation and on the connection between the city and the surrounding country, especially the mountain parks. A City Plan tries to visualize the city as a whole and with an eye on the future and the city's growth tries to forecast its problems. Many difficulties in city building can be prevented by careful planning. It is inexpensive to plot a street of great width on open land, but to widen a built-up street to greater width is costly. The same holds for the purchase of park lands, or for anything that deals with city land." The City Plan's motto: "To Prevent." (S.R. DeBoer, "City Planning in Denver," in Denver Municipal Facts 1930, January-February, 6)

While this planning effort is still a rationalist approach, it was begun in the business community, it involved a large number of lay civic leaders, and it opened up the planning process to the city as a whole.
DEVELOPMENT OF DENVER'S PARKS:
HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

SOURCES OF INFORMATION: Bette Peters, Denver's City Park; Denver Municipal Facts; DeBoer Collection, Denver Public Library

1858: Gold prospectors arrive at confluence of Cherry Creek and South Platte; founding of Denver; "paper parks" that never materialized are included on initial platting

Beer gardens and saloons, such as the Olympic Garden, National Park, and the Atlantic Gardens, serve as parks, providing outdoor recreational facilities such as collections of live and stuffed animals, picnic facilities, a freak museum, a mineral exhibit, a ballroom, skating facilities, and formal gardens. All these are for paying customers only.

1868: Developers Francis M. Case and Frederick J. Ebert donate Curtis Park to the City

1872: Mayor Joseph E. Bates, in his inaugural address, suggests the town needs parks. Horace Fuller, a prominent Denver pioneer, responds by donating a block for park purposes at 28th and Gilpin (Fuller Park).

1874: Rocky Mountain News criticizes Denver's lack of parks, saying Denver would not be the perfect city until "a public park is provided like Central Park on Manhattan Island."

1876: Colorado statehood is celebrated in the open space of one of the two cottonwood groves at the confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte. Groves were not owned by the City, and not maintained through taxation, but were free to the public.

1878: Henry Lee, Denver State Representative, and Jacob Downing, real estate developer, introduce a bill in the state legislature to permit Denver to purchase 1280 acres of state owned school land. They hoped Denver would purchase two 640-acre parcels, one several miles west of Denver and the other several miles east.

1881: Mayor Richard Sopris pushes for acquisition of both parcels, and urges City Council of think of Colfax Avenue as a parkway linking Sloan Lake in West Denver with City Park in East Denver (Olmstedian influence). City Council reduces the acquisition of the land east of Denver to 320 acres and eliminates the west side park, saying City money would be better spent on sewers, streets, lights, police and fire fighting services.
Rocky Mountain News sides with the Mayor, saying that while many people may think that 320 acres is a lot of land for a city the size of Denver, "when properly understood it is not a very large strip of ground."

Sopris becomes Denver's first park commissioner, and remains in that office until he retires in 1891. With limited funds, he "created the first parks Denver ever had." Sopris calls upon Henry F. Meryweather, a civil engineer, to draw the first plans for City Park. Plan is typical of its time, similar to New York's Central Park: pastoral, picturesque, naturalistic, democratic. Development is slow due to lack of funds and manpower, and the presence of squatters. The park's first trees, a row of cottonwoods, is purchased with $500 Sopris had collected from owners of adjacent property. Sopris pays for others out of his own pocket, and arranges for a gardener to live there to protect it for $10 per month plus rent.

1887-1889: Administration of Mayor William Scott Lee. Lee establishes an annual appropriation of around $10,000 for parks, most of which is for City Park.

1889: Control of Denver parks passes from City Council to the new Board of Public Works.

1889-1891: Administration of Mayor Wolfe Londoner. Sopris, now Park Commissioner, reports in 1890 that he has set out 600 additional shade trees, and seeded 4 more acres of lawn in City Park. Many new homes are built in the streetcar suburbs surrounding City Park. Improved cable car service brings more park visitors.

1890: Denver cable car companies announce they intend to place a good band in City Park every evening in the summer, and Sopris plans to erect a large pavilion. Thus begins a long history of free concerts in City Park.

1891: Sopris retires as Park Commissioner; replaced by Judge W. Austin, a gardener.

1893: Columbian Exposition in Chicago. While Daniel H. Burnham initiates City Beautiful movement with the architecture, Olmsted does the plan for the layout of the grounds (which became Jackson Park).

Office of Park Commissioner abolished. A 3-man Board of Park Commissioners is established to oversee construction and maintenance in all of Denver's parks.

Silver Panic of 1893; depression. Loss of private donations, public funds stretched out thin.
Banned from harness racing on city streets by the Mayor, a group of adventurous young men request a half-mile track in City Park. The men install the track, polo grounds, and grandstand for $10,000, and turn it over to the city for public use and maintenance. Grandstand collapses in 1898. Gentlemen's Driving and Riding Club is established, with annual dues, gate receipts, and subscriptions to help with the financial burden.

1894: Reinhard Schuetze, a landscape architect from Germany, is responsible for Denver park development until his death in 1910. Developed Washington Park, Congress (Cheesman) Park, additional areas of City Park, and landscaping of the Capitol grounds.

1895: Parks Commission Arranges for the first city funding of park music when Denver Tramway Company begins to sponsor Sunday afternoon concerts in City Park. Cost are shared by the city, the Tramway Company, and the park's concessionaires.

1896: Mayor Thomas S. McMurray is given a bear cub, which he entrusts to a park teamster farming a small acreage in the southeast corner of City park. People come to City Park to see the bear. When the bear gets into the teamster's chickens, he calls the Mayor, and the city pays for a cage, bear house, and bathing pool. Two more bears come, other animals are added, and the zoo's popularity demands continuing development. The city determines to build a larger "habitat" zoo that would be an innovation in philosophy and design. Forty acres are reserved for the zoo.

1897: Edwin Carter, naturalist and taxidermist, decides to sell his collection of wildlife specimens to the city for $10,000, providing that a fire-proof building is erected and a corporation formed to oversee the facility, with him as curator for life at $150 per month. Several prominent citizens meet with him to consider site, construction, and funding; a proposal is accepted in December 1899, and the Colorado Museum of Natural History is incorporated in 1900. In 1901, the highest elevation in City Park is chosen as the site; museum is officially opened in 1908. Other collections are donated by leading promoters of the museum, now 8559 sq. ft.; by 1928, 69,168 sq. ft.

1932: art museum spun off.
1969: four major additions bring it to 263,000 sq. ft.
1986: bond issue construction; increase to 463,000 sq. ft.

1897: First city boat landing contract awarded for City Park. Phaetons are engaged to carry park visitors from entrances around the park and to the bandstand and lake for $.30 per hour.

1898: Tramway Company begins sponsoring "Biographs" (early form of motion pictures) in the park.
1899: Fewer concerts in City Park due to lack of funds, although Tramway Company pays for 2/3 cost.

1900: Denver has 12 parks.

1901: Arc lights are placed in City Park. Crime is a problem: five "mashers" tip their hats to passing maidens, and are hauled into jail. For a time, vehicular traffic is prohibited after sundown due to accidents.

1901: Robert Walter Speer is appointed head of Public Works, which includes parks.
1901-1904: kept an eye on construction of museum
1901: approved the commission of Will R. Hughes to install a portable electric fountain in City Park; later same year, the city announces plans to erect its own fountain.

1902: First pony rides contract signed.

1904: Speer is elected mayor; pushes for practical as well as ornamental improvements in the city. Organizes a master plan for Denver, assisted by two urban planners: Charles Robinson (civic center plan) and George Kessler (plans for the parks, parkways, and boulevards).

The Speer Years: 1904-1911

The "City Beautification" movement comes to Denver, and this planning theme stays until World War I.

During Speer's first administration (1904-1911), the city adds the prismatic colored electric fountain and a new bandstand in City Park, also statues for the new Esplanade at the Colfax entrance. Launches a campaign aimed at wealthy civic benefactors to make gifts such as a museum, art gallery, botanical garden, pavilions, fountains, and statues. Gifts are received, including gateways, fountains, statues. Parks are expanded and improved, a parkway and boulevard system is created, and the number of shade trees in the city is increased 25 per cent.

Speer Boulevard and Cherry Creek Drive are developed by the Highway and Parks Departments together, with plantings keeping pace with the highway builders. By 1912, 12 miles of the parkway and boulevard system have been completed, with plans to complete 24 more miles.

1910: Saco Rienk DeBoer begins his career in Denver as a landscape architect and planner. Speer's power and strength of personality support DeBoer's talent and technical competence to produce one of the city's most productive periods in parks development, in spite of a depressed local economy and lack of funding.
1911: Speer tours European cities, brings back many ideas for Denver. Begins to fulfill plans to connect parks with parkways and boulevards.

1912: Speer trying to get wealthy citizens to make contributions to the parks, tells them that "Men will be judged more by their disbursements than by their accumulation." By 1916, Speer is saying "Give while you live." Speer had expected to receive a museum, art gallery, botanical garden, pavilions, fountains, and statues; did get the four gateways to City Park and the Joseph Addison Thatcher Memorial Fountain, presented to Denver in 1918, by Thatcher, a banker.

1914: World War I: little activity until 1923 in City Park. Focus on mountain park system. Maintenance only until Benjamin F. Stapleton takes office as mayor in 1923.

1916: Speer returns as mayor in landslide election. "Speer Amendment" is then passed, giving the mayor even greater powers. Speer predicts and is the first to advocate general legislation against civic ugliness.

1917: Victor Borcher builds the artificial mountain in the bear pens, the first barless cage area in western zoos. Had other plans for the zoo, not completed due to loss of interest at City Hall.

1918: Death of Speer

1922: Cody Memorial, shelter houses, observation shelter tower, and lodge are constructed in mountain parks. Improvements to city parks consist largely of planting operations, water systems. The Mount Evans area is opened up through acquisition of Echo Lake, doubling Denver's mountaineering area. Dixie Park, between Turkey and Bear Creeks, is to be made available by the new Parmalee Gulch Road.

City Engineer J.B. (Jack) Hunter resigns after 43 years due to ill health. Succeeded by Albion K. Vickery, for the previous three years superintendent of city and mountain parks, who retains his title of superintendent of parks.

1922: 3rd year of operation for Overland Park tourist camp. In 1921, accommodates 11076 cars with 39854 passengers. Has city water and electric lighting, sanitary sewer, club house, free showers and laundry tubs with hot and cold water, a large dance hall, refreshment stands, auto repair shop and gas station. Approximately $45,000 has been spent by the city in improvements. Maintenance is about $8,000, which is more than covered by the income from the concessions.
1922: The Denver "recreation" plan, presented in the September-October Municipal Facts, is put forward, designed to provide recreational zoning in the mountain areas. "If the unplanned method of growth were allowed the tendency would be to develop this region for every type of outdoor play. Unthinkingly, promoters would transplant city conditions to this mountain stronghold. Without expert planning auto roads would pierce its heart, great city type hotels would be established all over the region and the charm of the alpine play ruined. Man, endeavoring to subdue sublime nature, would not accomplish his objective, but simply mess up the landscape with his incongruous efforts."

(Denver Municipal Facts, 1922)

"City Engineer A.K. Vickery has advised the city officials that the amount of public improvement work to be inaugurated this year will be greater than that of any year since the incorporation of Denver as a city." Work includes paving projects, viaducts, bridges, sewer districts. City plans to expend $1,545,898.84 on public improvement work during 1923.

(Denver Municipal Facts, 1922)

Mountain park improvement is not extensive, falling behind previous years. Completion of the South Denver Park District's bond issue, voted by the people of that district in 1921.

1923: Recently issued 1921 Report of Financial Statistics of Cities by U.S. Census Bureau shows that in a group of 10 cities with a population of 100,000 to 300,000, Denver is highest in cost of recreation per capita, yet fifth in cost of all general departments.

1923: "The enlargement of the City Park Golf House by order of Manager of Improvements and Parks Walter B. Lowry, will be made upon the plans and specifications prepared by City Engineer A.K. Vickery. At the present time there are 700 members to the City Park Golf Course and locker room for about 150. The Golf Club has grown to such an extent that it is necessary to double the locker room in order to accommodate the crowds." (Denver Municipal Facts, January-February 1923)

During the 1920s, the city organization chart shows the Manager of Improvements reporting to the Mayor. Under Improvements and Parks are the Improvement Department and the Park Department. Under the Park Department are the Mountain Parks Advisory Committee, City Parks Advisory Committee, and the Superintendent of City and Mountain Parks. The Art Commission and Municipal Music Commission report to the Mayor. There is no reference to a zoo or museum of natural history.

"The park system of Denver is divided into two divisions: 1. City Parks and Boulevards. 2. Mountain Parks and Highways. In the first division there are forty-one parks, not including seventeen
supervised children’s playgrounds. There are eighteen miles of improved parkways. The total area of parks within the city limits is 1,674.33 acres." (Denver Municipal Facts, May 1923)

"Denver is the first American City to have municipal parks, lying in another county. Created under authority of an amendment to the State Constitution. There are nineteen Mountain Parks, aggregating 4,000 acres in three adjoining counties, scattered over a region of 100 square miles, interspersed with boulevard roads." (Denver Municipal Facts, May 1923)

"The road is now being extended to the summit of Mount Evans, the final elevation to be 14,250 feet." (Denver Municipal Facts, May 1923)

"Improvement Program Urged for Mountain Parks"
"The last few weeks has seen launched a comprehensive general plan for mountain park betterment, calling for the expenditure by the city of $125,000 for the next five years for improvements in these parks. The mountain park idea was originally fathered by the Civic and Commercial Association, the Real Estate Exchange and the Denver Motor Club, so very properly the plan was endorsed by these bodies first, and has been put forth by the Mountain Park Group of the Civic Association." (Denver Municipal Facts, May 1923)

Work commences on a club house for the Municipal Trap Club at Sloan Lake.

"A group of the most progressive and far-seeing business men of Denver" recognize problems that will accompany growth, and identify the need for a plan for 1970 and a population of 1,000,000. (Denver Municipal Facts, May 1923)

Especially concerned with downtown traffic congestion leading to stagnation; Mayor Stapleton joins group, pro-planning. Pressing problems identified, to be addressed within the "complete plan covering all phases of the physical city development." Plan is to include arterial street scheme; "centers" of business, transportation, government, etc.; park, parkway, and boulevard system, linked with flood control along rivers.

1925: Zoning is initiated in Denver.

1926: Mayor Benjamin F. Stapleton appoints 40 leading public-spirited citizens on Denver’s City Planning Commission, created by a City Council resolution. "Up to this date the work of Denver’s City planning and beautification had been directed by Mayor Stapleton and Manager of Improvements and Parks C.D. Vail with the able assistance of S.R. DeBoer, city landscape architect, who has been connected with this work in Denver, since its inception in 1910." (Denver Municipal Facts, January-February 1930)
"With the creation of the commission, Irving J. McCrary of McCrary, Culley and Carhart, was added to the city planning staff to co-operate with Mr. De Boer in bringing to completion a definite plan outlining the growth of Denver for the next fifty years." (Denver Municipal Facts, January-February 1930)

1928: Preliminary street plan is published, with a request for criticisms from the citizens of Denver; many suggestions are received, worked over, and all that are found practical are embodied in the final Major Street Plan.

1929: Recreational study is published in spring of 1929. Sent out to the people of Denver and to out-of-town experts for constructive criticism. Suggestions received are worked over and used wherever practicable.

An attempt is made to prepare a City plan with S.R. DeBoer and the firm of McCrary, Culley and Carhart as consultants. "Part of this Comprehensive Plan is designed to meet the recreation needs of the City, by providing for a distribution of parks, playgrounds, and community centers based on population density. As a part of the major street plan segment of the Comprehensive Plan, additional parkways are suggested and incorporated to provide a system of connections..." (Denver Municipal Facts, January-February, 1930)

1930: Street plan and recreational study, together with studies of park extension, are to be published in a larger report to be submitted to the Mayor and City Council.

"The park plans have been discussed in various districts at many meetings. C.D. Vail, Manager of Parks and Improvements, and Arthur Carhart, at one time Secretary of the Commission, have spent a great deal of time in explaining these proposed park changes at district meetings." ("The History of Denver's Beautification," Denver Municipal Facts, January-February, 1930, p 6)

The plan prepared by the Denver Planning Commission "tries to extend the park system so park service will be within reach of every citizen. It tries to extend the playground service in the same way. Further studies will touch on transportation and on the connection between the city and the surrounding country, especially the mountain parks. A City Plan tries to visualize the city as a whole and with an eye on the future and the city's growth tries to forecast its problems. Many difficulties in city building can be prevented by careful planning. It is inexpensive to plot a street of great width on open land, but to widen a built-up street to greater width is costly. The same hold for the purchase of park lands, or for anything that deals with city land." The City Plan's motto: "To Prevent." (S.R. DeBoer, "City
Planning in Denver," (Denver Municipal Facts, January-February 1930, p 6)

1930: "Renowned the country over for the beauty of her parks, Denver has the problem of keeping up her parks and parked boulevard areas..." 35 improved parks scattered throughout the city, miles and miles of parkways. Attempting to complete the Berkeley Park golf course and build a club house.

1925-1930: Mountain parks acquisitions. Acquired Mt. Evans territory, built Mt. Evans highway, Echo Lake Lodge, Evergreen Dam and Lake Evergreen, acquired Red Rocks and a scenic roadway through the Park of the Red Rocks. "Within the past five years Denver has more than doubled her mountain park area. While she could have no more valuable possession-- at the same time this area must be maintained. At the present time the city maintains about 100 miles of mountain highways--and from gate to gate--that is from the entrance to the Lookout Mountain road to the entrance of the Bear Creek road-- the lower part of this highway system is kept open--the whole year around--with a crew on the job with each and every storm." (Denver Municipal Facts, 1930)

World War II: DeBoer "Community Planning Notes" -- "Certainly new problems are springing up in many sections which are primarily of importance to limited areas. The placing of large war industries, of airports, and similar things are bound to influence the livability as well as the real estate values of residential and business areas nearby. A planning committee without any technical assistance is usually hardly more than a debating group, but even that is better than no thinking about these problems at all. Such neighborhoods would benefit greatly by an analysis of their common problems." (DeBoer Manuscript Collection, Western History Department, Denver Public Library)

1943-1947: Denver in 1942 was spending $1.63 per capita for parks (exclusive of other recreation and golf), which at that time was the highest per capita expenditure in the county, and total recreation expense was exceeded only by Kansas City and San Francisco.

1949: DeBoer prepares a new master plan for Denver's parks, but it is never officially adopted.

1955: Denver voters approve a $2 million bond issue which includes some funds for parkway development.

1964: Bond program includes no funds for the development of new parkways, but funds are approved for the installation of watering systems.

1965: A Parkway Plan, completed as part of a comprehensive plan, states that "More of the system, officially designated, but not
developed, will be completed in the next few years... Improvement of these designated ways and initiation of the proposals set forth in the chapter dealing with the Parkway Plan will contribute to the beautification and maintenance of Denver as Mayor Speer envisioned it over 60 years ago." (Parkway Plan, Denver Planning Office)

1985: Denver contracts with an out-of-state parks planning consultant for a Parks and Recreation master plan.
Permit Process for Major Residential, New Commercial or Industrial Construction

[Diagram of permit process flowchart with decision points and departments involved]
# City and State Agencies to Contact for New Commercial, Major Residential or New Industrial Construction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY AGENCIES</th>
<th>LOCATION/PHONE</th>
<th>PERMITS OR APPROVAL</th>
<th>SUBMITTALS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BUILDING INSPECTION</td>
<td>3840-H York St. Denver 80205 575-5186</td>
<td>Construction Permit, General Permit, Electrical Permit, Plumbing or Domestic Appl. Permit, Sign Permit, Elevator Permit, Steam Heating, Hot Water, Heating Permit, Refrigeration, Cooling Tower Permit, Incinerator Permit, Fire Protection Permit, Warm Air Htg., Ventilation Permit, Water Heater, Gas Fitting Permit, Certificate of Occupancy</td>
<td>Application for Construction permit, Street address assignment, Three complete sets of plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITY FORESTER</td>
<td>1805 Bryant St. Denver 80204 575-3053</td>
<td>Permit to Plant Trees on Public Right-of-way</td>
<td>Landscape plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEPT. OF PARKS AND RECREATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING DIVISION</td>
<td>5440 Roslyn St., Rm. 200 Denver 80216 575-3821</td>
<td>Construction Permit for Public Right-of-way</td>
<td>Street Development Agreement, Application for permission to design, plan, construct, reconstruct or remodel a Public Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESIGN ENGINEERING DIVISION</td>
<td>5440 Roslyn, Rm. 340 Denver 80216 575-3761</td>
<td>Street address assignment, Revocable Permit, Approve plan &amp; profile drawings when required on Street Development Agreement</td>
<td>Legal description of property, One set of plans: Letter to Manager of Public Works; Fee: 3 sets of plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU</td>
<td>3840-H York St. (Building Inspection Div.) Denver 80205 575-5522</td>
<td>Plan approval</td>
<td>Plans already submitted to Building Inspection Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENVER PLANNING OFFICE</td>
<td>1445 Cleveland Place, Room 400 Denver 80202 575-2796</td>
<td>Pre-application conferences for zoning - PUD, Planning Board approval for zoning - PUD, plan approval for PUD, PBG and Subdivisions, predesign consultation</td>
<td>The developer should consult with the Planning Office for technical advice, information about PUD/PG, and other policies, plans or municipal plans deemed relevant to the development in question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES</td>
<td>605 Bannock Denver 80204 893-7885</td>
<td>Plan approval for restaurants, swimming pools</td>
<td>One set of complete plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH ENGINEERING</td>
<td>605 Bannock Denver 80204 893-6241</td>
<td>Plan approval for air pollution sources, X-ray equipment</td>
<td>One set of complete plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITY AGENCIES</td>
<td>LOCATION/PHONE</td>
<td>PERMITS OR APPROVAL</td>
<td>SUBMITTALS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION</strong></td>
<td>1445 Cleveland Pl., Rm. 400</td>
<td>Plan Approval for Historic Districts, Buildings</td>
<td>One complete set of plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Planning Office)</strong></td>
<td>Denver 80202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>575-2736</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRAFFIC ENGINEERING DIVISION</strong></td>
<td>5440 Roslyn, Rm. 210</td>
<td>Street Development Agreement</td>
<td>Show street address assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denver 80216</td>
<td>Street Occupancy</td>
<td>One set of plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>575-5781</td>
<td>Oversize</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Public Property Occupancy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Revocable</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emergency Service Truck</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Special Parking - Annual</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parking Meter Covering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT</strong></td>
<td>605 Bannock</td>
<td>Plan approval for retail food Outlets</td>
<td>One complete set of plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OF HEALTH</strong></td>
<td>Denver 80204</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOSPITALS</strong></td>
<td>893-7963</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT DIVISION</strong></td>
<td>3840-G York St.</td>
<td>Abandon Sewer Permit</td>
<td>Application for Sewer Use and Drainage Permit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denver 80205</td>
<td>Sewer Use and Drainage Permit</td>
<td>Two sets of site plans with plumbing detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>829-1451</td>
<td>Build-Over-Sewer Permit</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cut-Off Permit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mainline Extension Permit</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conditional Extended Sewer Permit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Connection Permit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DENVER WATER DEPARTMENT</strong></td>
<td>1600 W. 12th Ave.</td>
<td>Stub-In Permit</td>
<td>Application for Stub-In Permit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denver 80204</td>
<td>Water Supply License</td>
<td>Application for Water Supply License</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>623-2500 x 415</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ZONING ADMINISTRATION</strong></td>
<td>3840-H York St.</td>
<td>Zoning Permit</td>
<td>Application for Zoning Permit for Construction and Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denver 80205</td>
<td>Use Permit</td>
<td>One set of plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>575-2191</td>
<td>Sign Permit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STATE AGENCIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOCATION/PHONE</strong></td>
<td><strong>PERMITS OR APPROVAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>SUBMITTALS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DIV.</strong></td>
<td>1101 Bellaire, Rm. 208</td>
<td>Emission Permit</td>
<td>Application for Emission Permit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STATE DEPT. OF HEALTH</strong></td>
<td>Denver 80220</td>
<td></td>
<td>Application for Supplemental Emission Notice-Land Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>320-4180</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STATE DEPARTMENT</strong></td>
<td>2000 S. Holly</td>
<td>Street Development Agreement</td>
<td>One set of plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OF HIGHWAYS</strong></td>
<td>Denver 80222</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>757-9514</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WATER QUALITY CONTROL DIV.</strong></td>
<td>4310 E. 11th Ave.</td>
<td>Permit to Discharge</td>
<td>Application for Permit to Discharge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STATE DEPT. OF HEALTH</strong></td>
<td>Denver 80202</td>
<td></td>
<td>Supplemental Information Request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>320-8333 x 3231</td>
<td></td>
<td>One set of plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRIVATE AGENCIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOCATION/PHONE</strong></td>
<td><strong>PERMITS OR APPROVAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>SUBMITTALS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MOUNTAIN BELL</strong></td>
<td>1005-17th St.</td>
<td>Connect phone service</td>
<td>Floor plan with telephone connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denver 80202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>892-6202</td>
<td>Connect power</td>
<td>Developer's electrical engineer should state project's power requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY</strong></td>
<td>550-15th St.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denver 80202</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>571-7881</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Happens To Your Zoning Application

APPLICATION FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF ZONING ADMINISTRATION

The Zoning Administration refers application to:
1. Planning Office
2. Design Engineering
3. Wastewater Control
4. Traffic Engineering
5. Land Office

Application is reviewed by the Zoning Committee of City Council. Committee meetings are held monthly.

Planning Office and other agencies:
1. Review application
2. Formulate recommendations
3. Present advice.

The Zoning Administration requests the City Attorney's Office to draft a Council Bill.

Council Bill is introduced for first reading. The Public Hearing date is set by City Council. Applicant must post signs under the direction of the Zoning Administration. Applicant pays all outstanding fees including publication and sign costs.

Formal Public Hearing before City Council.

If passed by City Council and signed by the Mayor, Final Publication will be on the Friday following the Public Hearing.

Rezoning becomes effective in 30 days unless the Council Bill contains an Emergency Clause.

NOTE:
If application is denied after a Public Hearing before City Council, a new application may not be filed prior to one year from date of said denial for the same zone district on the same land area or part thereof.
All rezoning signs must be removed within 15 days after the Public Hearing or be held in violation of The Zoning Ordinance.

In case of a Legal Protest from the owners of 20% of the land area within the protest area, 10 affirmative votes will be required for passage. The applicant must attend the Public Hearing and make a presentation to City Council for the rezoning.
Planned Unit Development Rezoning Process

Preapplication conference with DPO.

Application filed with Zoning Administration.

Complete Application sent to DPO; Set Planning Board Date.

DPO review and analysis for staff recommendation.

Planning Board Public Meeting 1st & 3rd Wednesdays.

Zoning Committee of Council Meeting 2nd Tuesdays.

Mayor/Council Meeting following Tuesday morning.

First Reading of Council following Monday night.

Public Hearing at Council 4th following Monday night.

Development Review Committee if approved by Council.

Site Plan Review.

WITHIN 45 DAYS

Preapplication conference with DPO.

Application filed with Zoning Administration.

Complete Application sent to DPO; Set Planning Board Date.

DPO review and analysis for staff recommendation.

Planning Board Public Meeting 1st & 3rd Wednesdays.

Zoning Committee of Council Meeting 2nd Tuesdays.

Mayor/Council Meeting following Tuesday morning.

First Reading of Council following Monday night.

Public Hearing at Council 4th following Monday night.

Development Review Committee if approved by Council.

Site Plan Review.

Planned Unit Development (PUD). While PUDs are most common for housing developments, it also is frequently applied to other forms of development such as shopping centers, industrial parks and mixed-use development. PUD allows the unified, and hence potentially more desirable, development of an area, based on a comprehensive site plan. PUD can have a number of advantages over conventional lot-by-lot development, such as mixing building types and uses to create a more heterogeneous community, combining often unused yard space on individual lots into larger common open spaces, offering greater incentives for lower-cost housing, lower street and utility costs resulting from reduced frontage, and the possibility of increasing the density of a development while providing desired amenities to residents.

A PUD plan must contain three basic elements:

- An existing conditions map.
- A district plan map.
- A narrative description.

Together these must address all applicable regulations in the Ordinance.

An individual wishing to develop a PUD must first confer with the Planning Office, and then may submit the required plans and information to the Zoning Administration. The application is forwarded to various agencies and other interested parties for review and comment. After this review is completed, the application is presented to the Planning Board for review and a public meeting. Recommendations of the Board are then forwarded to the City Council for review and action at a public hearing. If the PUD District Plan is approved by City Council, the applicant must then submit a series of more detailed site plans for review by the Development Review Committee. If these plans are approved, the plans are filed with the Clerk and Recorder. The project must then be built in conformance with the approved plans.

*D.P.O.—Denver Planning Office.*
P.U.D./P.B.G. Site Plan Review Process

**Schematic Phase**

1. Schematic plan submitted to DPO (PBO only)
   - 2 WEEKS
2. Review & comment by agencies
3. Comments incorporated into Prelim. Plan & resubmitted to DPO
   - 2 WEEKS
4. Owner pays ZA application fee & submits application for approval
5. Developer may obtain street address from Design Engr'g and sewer permit from Wastewater Mgt. Building plans may be submitted to Bldg. Dept. for review.
6. Design Engr'g schedules City Service for Permanent copy of plan submitted to D.P.O. and Zoning for signatures.
   - 3 WEEKS
7. Mayor/Council meeting: 1st & 2nd reading by City Council on City Service Agreement
8. Site Plan is filed with Clerk & Recorder by Design Engr'g

**Final Phase**

1. Review & comment by agencies. If OK, approval form circulated
2. Approval form signed by all agencies & returned to D.P.O.
3. Owner pays ZA applicaiton fee & submits application for approval
4. Approval form signed by all agencies & returned to D.P.O.
5. Developer may obtain street address from Design Engr'g and sewer permit from Wastewater Mgt. Building plans may be submitted to Bldg. Dept. for review.
6. Design Engr'g schedules City Service for Permanent copy of plan submitted to D.P.O. and Zoning for signatures.
   - 3 WEEKS
7. Site Plan is filed with Clerk & Recorder by Design Engr'g

**Denoting Terms**
- DPO—Denver Planning Office
- ZA—Zoning Administration


Christiansen, Monty L. 1977. Park planning handbook. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. A how-to-do-it guide for landscape architects and civil engineers. However, the first chapter discusses planning, parks planning, the park planning team, the park planning process; also provides definitions of terms (p. 13).

Cranz, Galen. 1982. The politics of park design: A history of urban parks in America. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. Excellent history of park theory, relationship of parks and planning departments, uses of parks, attitudes toward parks, etc. Also has good methods used section (as example) and good evaluation of sources by types, as well as extensive bibliography.


Delavou, John. Parks Planner, Department of Parks and Recreation, City and County of Denver. Telephone interview with author, 14 July 1986.


Denver, City and County of. Denver Municipal Facts, 1922-1930.

-----. 1984. Final reports of the mayor's management review committee.

-----. City Park fact sheet, February 3, 1986; revised 2/11/86; from Mayor Pena's office to concerned citizens.


-----. 1982. Denver urban design sourcebook.


Denver Post, August 24, 1986; September 5, 1986.


Gallavan, Patrick J., Acting Manager, Department of Parks and Recreation. Letter to Denver Residents, 17 April 1986.


Hawkins, Barbara. [no date]. A selected bibliography for park and


Jacobs, Jane. 1961. The death and life of great American cities. New York: Random House. Almost agoraphobic; emphasizes the negative aspects of urban parks. Prefers active sidewalks to the "border vacuums" created by large parks; accepts neighborhood parks and squares that are located in diverse, vital areas, "where life swirls." Wants to have a few good small neighborhood parks, since most people in cities don't have time to fill extensive open space, and good parks benefit from "a certain rarity value."


Littrell, Donald W. [no date]. The theory and practice of community development: A guide for practitioners. Columbia, Missouri: Extension Division, University of Missouri-Columbia.

McCall, Virginia, and Joseph R. McCall. 1970. Your career in parks and recreation. New York: Julian Messner. Describes personal and professional qualifications, educational requirements, work atmosphere, etc. for many different types of parks, including one chapter on urban parks. Discusses structure of parks and recreation departments in a superficial way. Geared to high school students contemplating career in parks and recreation.


Patterson, Kaaren K. Compliance Coordinator, Colorado Historical Society. Personal communication with author, 4 September 1986.

Pena, Federico. Mayor, City and County of Denver. Executive Order No. 8: Contracts and other written instruments of and for the City and County of Denver. 5 December 1983.


bibliography for local information sources.


Wiberg, Roderick A. Director of Parks Planning, Parks and Recreation Department, City and County of Denver. Telephone interview with author, 2 May 1986.


Winholz, Wilford. 1968. Planning and the public, in Goodman,

Wirth, Conrad L. 1980. *Parks, politics, and the people*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press. Mainly concerned with the National Park Service, but also includes complete text of the Park, Parkway, and Recreational-Area Study Act of 1936 and comments on the origins, need for planning information, products and results of the Act (see pp 166-ff). Resulting brochure listed the types of recreational activity that should be considered in parks: physical, aesthetic, creative, intellectual, and social.

