



## **Boulder Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

**FROM:** Alison Rhodes, Director, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** Matters from the Department

**DATE:** September 27, 2021

### **A. Reservoir Annual After-Action Review Process Overview**

The City of Boulder Parks and Recreation Department (BPR) uses adaptive management principles to evaluate and improve services continually. These principles are outlined in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) and Boulder Reservoir Master Plan (BRMP). At the Boulder Reservoir, BPR routinely considers operational procedures and programs to identify opportunities to better support recreational opportunities for all Boulder Reservoir users and to ensure the appropriate balance of recreation and conservation.

Since 2019 and each fall, reservoir staff perform an annual After-Action Review (AAR) of the peak season and boating program. This process involves a city-sponsored questionnaire to gather feedback and qualitative data as one tool to inform planning for the following year. The questionnaire includes both consistent questions year-to-year and feedback opportunities related to current issues. This input, combined with quantitative data and other inputs, allows BPR to respond appropriately for the upcoming year and/or those that follow.

Staff use this qualitative and quantitative input and discuss the findings with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) in November. The PRAB's input will inform the 2022 South Shore Management Plan. Following is a brief summary of the process and timeline:

#### **September: Prepare and Gathering Information**

- September 22: Questionnaire launch, open for 2 weeks through October 5th
- September 27: PRAB Process Overview

#### **October: Analyze Data and Develop Options**

- Analyze questionnaire results and peak season performance data
- Evaluate Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) program for species risk, technological advancements,
- Develop possible policy and/or service adjustments.
- Evaluate financial and programmatic impacts of potential adjustments

## **November-December: Finalize and Communication 2022 South Shore Management Plan**

- PRAB Discussion of potential policy changes or operational adjustments (November)
- Finalize 2021 boater program for December communications and January sales

### **B. Restaurants in Regional Parks**

Recent controversy about the restaurant at the reservoir has raised the question of how restaurant uses are permitted and managed within city facilities from the zoning perspective. The proposed code change would make it more clear how the uses are permitted on Publicly zoned properties, more specifically within the city's larger regional parks. On October 5, 2021 (first reading) and October 28, 2021 (second reading), City Council will review changes to the Land Use Code in a draft ordinance which would make restaurants allowed by right if within a regional park managed government facility and no closer than 500 feet from any residential zone. Restaurants closer than 500 feet would require Use Review. This code change would only apply to the Flatirons Golf Course, Boulder Reservoir and Valmont Park, which fit the definition of a regional park. The Planning Board will also discuss this ordinance at the October 7, 2021 meeting. The relevant memos will be shared with the PRAB as they are finalized and available and the below information is shared with the board as background.

Restaurants in parks contribute to placemaking by providing spaces for people to eat, gather and celebrate; they provide community benefit through enhancing place-based experiences with specialized services and by providing revenues to cash-strapped agencies. They exist in parks of many jurisdictions and sizes all over the world and here in the United States help to make public spaces the heart of every community.

In Boulder, the public realm has been similarly and carefully designed, developed, and fostered to provide spaces for people to connect to nature and each other. The decline of tax revenues related to the pandemic and shifting consumer trends highlight the importance, now more than ever, of the Boulder Parks and Recreation 2014 master plan direction to actively seek out partnerships to help build community and strengthen financial sustainability. Engagement to date for the Parks and Recreation master plan update, including input from the PRAB and City Council, supports continuation of partnership efforts, and current financial challenges accentuate the value of diverse revenue streams.

Allowing restaurants by right in the city's regional and city parks (not including the smaller neighborhood parks throughout the city) aligns with the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, supports community-developed and PRAB-approved concept plans, and allows the city to appropriately program public spaces while still providing for full City Council review through lease approval and use review.

Community planning demonstrates direct support for restaurants at the regional parks (the Boulder Reservoir, Flatirons Golf Course and Valmont City Park). Details from the site-specific planning processes are highlighted here, with complete planning documents also available as linked.

### *Flatirons Golf Course*

At a broader community level, and while not within the defined area of the East Boulder Sub-Community Plan, the city's only golf course is adjacent to the southern border of the area and just east of the 55<sup>th</sup> and Arapahoe Station Area. With a full summary of recent engagement available [here](#), a restaurant at Flatirons Golf Course can help address feedback noting desires to:

- Support small businesses, with food and beverage one of the most requested retail types.
- Provide new places for social gathering as well as passive recreation or green spaces.
- Develop 15-minute neighborhoods, with dining readily available to current and future neighbors.

Flatirons has a history of food service, with the Flatirons Country Club providing hospitality on-site as part of the membership and for events. The Parks and Recreation department began operating Flatirons Golf Course as a municipally owned public golf course in 1986. The original clubhouse was converted to become the Flatirons Events Center, which was further expanded to a total of 17,400 SF in 1991. For more than 10 years and up until 2013, Spice of Life leased the facilities for meetings and events as well as off-site catering. Included in the original structure was a snack bar operated by a third-party vendor.

The September 2013 floods contributed to a City Council approved decision to demolish the past its life-cycle, extremely energy inefficient, inaccessible, and hazardous Flatirons Events Center. In 2020 and as outlined in the demolition decision, Boulder Parks and Recreation began planning for the facility's replacement; the 2021 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes funding for the design and construction of a PRAB-approved concept plan. Final design and permitting are underway, with construction bidding anticipated winter 2021-2022.

The [PRAB-approved concept plan](#) outlines a restaurant envisioned to appeal to the surrounding neighborhoods as well as to daily golfers, and the event lawn will be utilized for many community activities and events. As the project team finalizes the building's design, the intentions are to deliver a well thought out and functional facility that will reach new markets and increase revenue.

As one survey respondent and neighbor shared, "With a full-service bar/restaurant, this could easily become a place to grab a reasonable dinner with the family after a round of golf or just to enjoy the outdoors without having to go very far (live 3 blocks west)."

Revenues from successful hospitality can contribute interfund subsidy to increase golf accessibility to the broader community and support community programming at Flatirons.

### *Boulder Reservoir*

The City of Boulder Reservoir ("the reservoir") is one of the most popular and heavily visited park facilities in the city and region. It is also one of only six northern Front Range facilities supporting water-based and powerboating recreation opportunities and though smaller than other area facilities, the reservoir offers a significant range of services to the community and maintains one of the highest visitation rates of approximately 300,000 per year.

The Reservoir has always operated a concessions area near the beach provided by an outside contractor. Prior to the demolition of the previous Bathhouse and Administration Building and patio as described previously, the concessions area was on the ground level and provided a snack bar concessions experience with grab and go food and drinks.

In 2012, the Boulder Reservoir Master Plan (BRMP) indicated that the most critical facility serving reservoir visitors was needing repairs and renovation, and in 2016, staff began planning for its replacement based on the cost of rehabilitation exceeding that of a new facility. The final concept plan, approved by the PRAB in January of 2017, was developed based on feedback from a cross-section of Boulder community members, reservoir user groups and the PRAB. The details of that process and concept plan may be found in the [PRAB Memo January 2017](#) (starting on page 27). Based upon community engagement, including several open houses, on-site feedback sessions, and policy direction from the Boulder Reservoir Master Plan and Boulder Parks and Recreation Master Plan, these goals were established and approved by the PRAB:

- Extending shoulder season use opportunities of the Boulder Reservoir Regional Park;
- Establishing partnerships with various groups to expand programming and offset construction and operating costs;
- Expanding concessions offerings with possibilities of obtaining a liquor license for the site and for exploring a partnership with a larger scale concessionaire;
- Creating a “welcoming” and “family oriented” design character, promoting a healthy and athletic lifestyle, and focusing on sustainability of the facility; and
- Creating multi-use spaces serving a variety of events across all generations of user groups.

The PRAB and Council-approved lease with Landloch, LLC to operate Driftwind Restaurant at the Rez is designed to achieve these goals and includes guiding principles to ensure that operations of the leasehold align with and promote community values.

#### *Valmont City Park*

Findings of the East Boulder Sub-community plan apply to Valmont City Park as well, and both the developed and undeveloped portions of the park fall within the planning area.

The [2015 South Valmont Concept Plan](#) supports many of the same desires expressed to date in the East Boulder sub-community plan (access to food and beverage, walkable amenities), and emphasizes the development of facilities that will support a wide range of activities and uses and serve nearby neighbors and the region. The South Valmont portion of the city park is at concept plan only, and development of any facilities will include more specific and targeted outreach to develop facility specific concept plans. Future community facilities are outlined in the South Valmont concept plan; facility development, such as food and beverage, is dependent upon future public/private partnerships to become reality as they are unfunded.

### **C. Historic Places Plan**

As previously presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB), the Historic Places Plan (HiPP) will serve as a planning document and guide for the department’s stewardship of twelve culturally relevant and historically designated resources that are both owned and managed by BPR. The outcomes of the final plan will ensure each site’s vibrant integrity and preservation within the community. The intent of this agenda item for PRAB is to provide background information and updates for awareness on plan development to-date and next steps.

The results of the current planning process will fill gaps in information required to align each resource/site with specific strategies and initiatives. Further, the HiPP will integrate with the

concurrent BPR Master Plan Update as strategies and initiatives are developed for historic properties, outlined in the final HiPP. These priorities will allow staff to prioritize future financial needs and data-driven decision making. Resources addressed in this process are historically designated at a variety of levels including City of Boulder landmark status, State Register of Historic Properties, National Register of Historic Places, and a National Historic Landmark. The twelve sites are grouped under the following four categories:

### **Historic Districts:**

- Chautauqua Park
- Columba Cemetery
- Downtown Boulder-Pearl Street Pedestrian Mall

### **Buildings/Structures**

- Harbeck- Bergheim House
- Glen Huntington Bandshell
- Fire Station No. 02
- Roney House
- Platt Farmhouse

### **Rolling Stock:**

- Colorado & Northwestern Railroad Locomotive No. 30
- Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Caboose No. 04990
- Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Coach No. 280

### **Archeological Site:**

- Boyd Smelter Site

## **Background & Project Goals**

In March of 2019, BPR applied for a survey and planning grant from History Colorado, State Historical Fund (HC-SHF), to develop this plan. In August of 2019, the department was awarded the full funding request of \$190,000 from HC-SHF, with a cash match of \$77,000 for a total project budget at \$267,000. Following a competitive bidding process, staff selected Mundus Bishop (Landscape Architecture) as the lead consultant with additional contributions by Ratio/HP (Architectural) JVA, Inc., (Structural Engineering) and PaleoWest (Archeological). Each consulting team demonstrates an interdisciplinary approach to historic and cultural resource planning.

### Goals of this project include:

- A. Integrate all relevant plans and analyses completed prior to the grant award, and all survey and planning work funded as part of this project, into one concise planning document, including those done to inform capital decisions, programs, and operations.
- B. Separate, define, and integrate Historical & Cultural resources across a variety of departmental practices to balance levels of service, operations and maintenance, financial sustainability, and program quality.
- C. Begin with the end in mind to inform data-driven decision making.
- D. Utilize the final plan to serve as a guiding document for departmental staff to rely on and revisit when engaging in decision making for work related to any of the twelve designated resources.

As outlined, the HiPP will dovetail with the BPR Master Plan update. In addition to this departmental guiding document, the HiPP also supports goals and objectives in two other plans: one city-wide plan and one countywide plan. Specifically, this project supports the objective listed in the City-wide Historic Preservation Plan to, "Ensure the City of Boulder remains a leader in historic preservation through the careful stewardship of its own historic resources and encouragement of the innovative and collaborative approaches to historic preservation." And it supports the county-wide goal within the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan to address, "Community Conservation & Preservation" through "Leadership in Preservation: City & County Owned Resources".

### **Project Phases, Timeline & Community Engagement**

The project will be developed over five main phases led by the consultant and core team, with stakeholder's providing feedback in phase one through three and subject matter recommendations for consideration through phase four and five. Each phase and the project timeline are informed by, and align with, the BPR master plan update. Staff are partially complete with phase four with major key project deliverables for phase one through three presented in the draft 'Existing Conditions and Historical Contexts' document, which includes staff and grantor comments, and can be viewed [here](#). An overview of each phase is presented below.

#### Phase One: Project Kick Off & Background Research (August 2020 –January 2021)

- Hold preliminary meetings with interdisciplinary consultant team and city staff and initial consultation with SHF
- Conduct archival research and collect existing materials on each resource
- Review goals and objectives for the Historic Places Plan
- Complete initial site visit for each resource

#### Phase Two: Assessment and Inventory of Existing Conditions (October 2020 – June 2021)

- Complete project base mapping for 6 resources
- Conduct field reconnaissance to record existing conditions of 9 resources
- Assess current and potential use of all resources

- Prepare ADA assessment and identify safety/compliance for landscapes/buildings
- Prepare Existing Condition Assessment Plan

Phase Three: Historic Context Development and Resource Evaluation (October 2020 – June 2021)

- Develop property history for each resource
- Assess integrity and identify character-defining features
- Compile draft historic context statements for each resource
- Analyze spatial relationship between the landscape, natural resources and built environment, finalize written descriptions for each, and finalize graphic representations with maps for select resources (illustrating significant features)

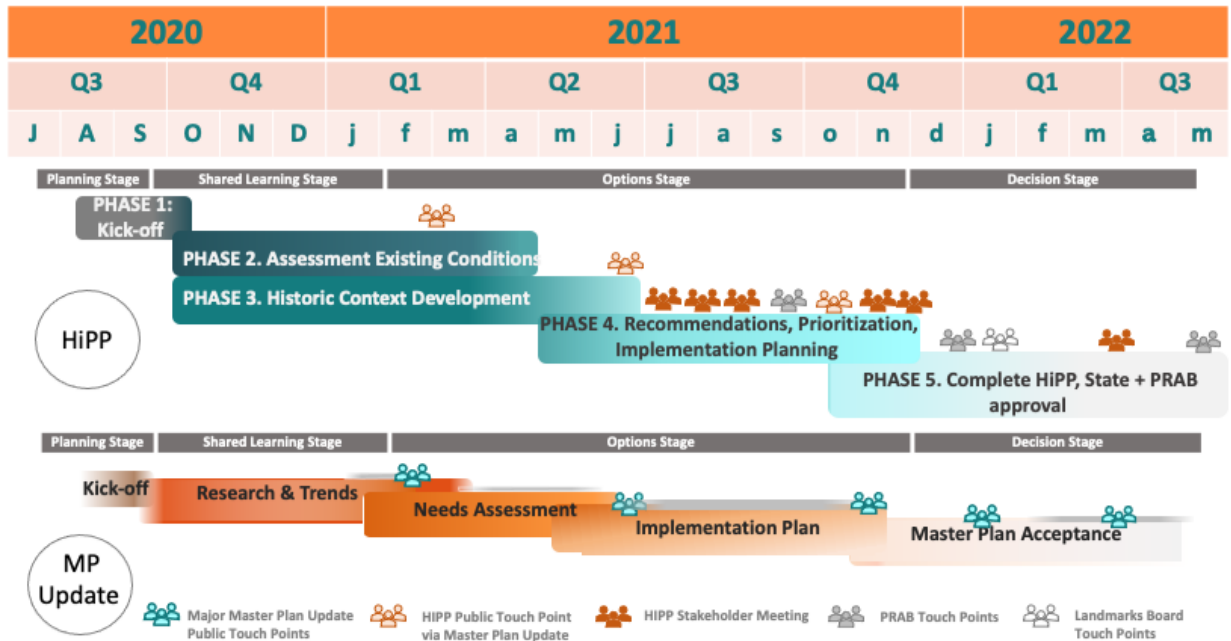
Phase Four: Treatment Recommendations, Prioritization + Implementation (June 2021 – February 2022)

- Integrate historic integrity, significance, existing features, overall conditions, and current and future use in treatment recommendations
- Identify management approaches and align with the city's Asset Management Program
- Draft graphic illustrations and sketches detailing recommended treatments and priorities
- Determine how preservation approaches within the plan align with applicable county, city, and departmental planning documents and initiatives
- Explore funding strategies and estimate potential proposed costs
- Develop options for community involvement, programming, and education

Phase Five: Complete Historic Places Plan (February 2022 – May 2022)

- Compile, illustrate and integrate all resources into the final HiPP plan
- Prepare final Management Report
- Include tailored results from the maintenance Condition Assessment Reports, Cultural Landscape Reports, ADA assessments, list of prioritized resources and individual features for management decision making)
- Prepare final Historic Places Plan

## Historic Places Plan (HiPP) Project Phase, Timeline and Engagement Alignment



### Community Engagement

Throughout the HiPP planning process, the department continues to engage with city-wide staff, the Boulder community, a targeted stakeholder group and local decision makers PRAB and Landmarks Board (LB) to gather their input on the plan’s direction and focus. Additional information on engagement structures may be found in the Project Charter, and accessed [here](#). Three core engagement goals with underlying objectives will be addressed across three engagement windows and span the city’s engagement spectrum from input to collaboration. Each goal is being explored at key touch points with major milestones for the following engagement participants in the HiPP’s planning and decision-making process :

- Broader Public – the HiPP is utilizing opportunities to connect with a wide-range of community members through Master Plan Update engagement touch points including open houses, awareness at public park openings and in person/digital surveys.
- Subject Matter Stakeholders – a group of eight stakeholders are participating in targeted engagement, which is a key component of public outreach for the HiPP. The group is comprised of community members with technical and subject matter expertise.
- City Staff – in addition to the BPR project core team, staff across BPR’s Urban Parks and Community Building divisions provide input and feedback on their respective fields. Additional city staff from Planning & Development Services Historic Preservation division and the Public Works Facilitates division provide valuable contributions to this project.
- State Staff – the grantor (HC-SHF) provides two staff members that lead review of this projects work products and provide financial oversight for project budgeting. All draft project deliverables are reviewed for final grantor approval following city staff and stakeholder review.



- City Boards & Commissions – two city boards provide administrative review procedures for the HiPP. PRAB will review regular milestones and key planning developments, while discussing and considering support of the draft plan and approval of the final plan. Landmarks board will receive a consolidated update on milestones and project developments while informally considering support of the plan.

Engagement Window 1 (October 2020 – July 2021)

Secure technical community experts as project stakeholders following gathering of background and assessment data in phase one through phase three. Solicit expert feedback and records from a Stakeholder Group of industry experts, to close these information management gaps. Integrate all relevant plans and analyses completed prior to the grant award, and all survey and planning work funded as part of this project, into one concise planning document, including those done to inform capital decisions, programs and operations.

Engagement Window 2 (August 2021 - December 2021)

Utilize feedback from the community, aligning outcomes of the public engagement process for both the HIPP and the Master Plan update to help separate, define, and integrate Historical & Cultural resources across a variety of departmental practices to balance levels of service, operations and maintenance, financial sustainability, service excellence, and program quality.

Engagement Window 3 (January 2021 – May 2022)

Integrate all public input to form the draft plan and informed, data-driven decision making.

**Current & Next Steps**

As described above, phase one through phase three of the HiPP produced extensive documentation on existing conditions and historical contexts for resources. One condition of the grant requires staff to select a “sample” resource to address first, across each project phase. The sample staff selected was the Glen Huntington Bandshell. The charts and graphics provided below highlight work completed for the Bandshell during phase one through three, and how these inform BPR’s current and next steps for this site and all other resources.

Phase One – Three      ----->      Informs      ----->      Phase Four

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Condition Assessment Chart Aligns with Character Defining Site Features | Treatment Recommendations Chart is Developed from Assessing Conditions, Future Use and Potential Funding Levels |
|---|---|

Table 1-1: Character-Defining Features

| Feature   | Condition | Contributing/Non-Contributing |
|---|-----------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Topography</b>                               |           |                               |
| Berm / Flood control levee                      | Good      | Contributing                  |
| <b>Vegetation</b>                               |           |                               |
| Mature grove of trees surrounding the Bandshell | Good      | Contributing                  |
| Understory shrubs planted on berm               | Good      | Non-Contributing              |
| <b>Circulation</b>                              |           |                               |
| Concrete sidewalk (northeast)                   | Good      | Contributing                  |
| Concrete sidewalk (northwest)                   | Good      | Non-Contributing              |
| Sandstone pavers (southeast)                    | Good      | Non-Contributing              |
| Remnant stone path                              | Poor      | Undetermined                  |
| <b>Structure</b>                                |           |                               |
| Glen Huntington Bandshell                       | Good      | Contributing                  |
| Amphitheater seating                            | Good      | Contributing                  |
| <b>Small Scale Features</b>                     |           |                               |
| Stone retaining wall along landscaped berm      | Poor      | Contributing                  |
| <b>Views and Viewsheds</b>                      |           |                               |
| View to Boulder Flatirons from the stage        | Good      | Contributing                  |
| Views from Broadway Street                      | Good      | Contributing                  |
| Views from interior of Central Park             | Good      | Contributing                  |

| FUNDING              | PROGRAM / USE   | TREATMENT RECOMMENDATION   |
|----------------------|---|--|
| FISCALLY CONSTRAINED | Same, seasonal use  | Rehabilitate sandstone retaining wall to define toe of slope of back of berm   |
|                      |   | Install recessed can lighting for safety and program efficiency  |
| ACTION               | Progressing, seasonal use, increased site access for all                                  | Repair crack in foundation, gap-in-place   |
|                      |   | Install security/surveillance  |
|                      |   | Touch up/paint handrails   |
|                      |   | Repair roof  |
|                      |   | Remove 40% of seating (middle section or front sections, no slope or ground disturbance)   |
|                      |   | Add open lawn seating and ADA seating  |
|                      |   | Replace existing gravel in front of stage with sod and concrete  |
|                      |   | Rebuild concrete walkways to meet ADA compliance   |
|                      |   | ADA stage access - replace one set of stairs with a ramp   |
|                      |   | Full restoration of damage to Bandshell foundation   |
| VISION               | Enhanced, multi-seasonal use, accommodates multi-programming and use for community access | Re-roof structure  |
|                      |   | Re-wire bollards for power and provide new metal cover plates at the lighting bollards   |
|                      |   | Provide new stage lighting   |
|                      |   | Further investigate condition of the foundation through gaining access to the crawlspace   |
|                      |   | Further investigate floor framing  |
|                      |   | Replace damage wood siding as needed to match in kind  |
|                      |   | Replace the weathered or vandalized exterior plywood panels and paint to match in kind or replace with sturdy material to match as closely as possible |
|                      |   | Remove ivy from back panels  |
|                      |   | Repair and repaint plaster finishes  |
|                      |   | Re-construct historic, housing concrete sidewalks around 51% of existing seating   |
| ACTION               | Progressing, seasonal use, increased site access for all                                  | Add vehicular access to northeast corner of site, in compatibility with re-constructed housing sidewalks   |
|                      |   | Add program storage  |
| VISION               | Enhanced, multi-seasonal use, accommodates multi-programming and use for community access | Identify and add retractable "roof" and fencing for year-round use   |
|                      |   | Identify and add retractable structure for performance technology  |
| ACTION               | Progressing, seasonal use, increased site access for all                                  | Reconstruct historic, housing concrete sidewalks around 51% of existing seating  |
|                      |   | Reconstruct historic, housing concrete sidewalks around 51% of existing seating  |

### Graphic Representations of Existing Site Conditions, Generated from the Chart Above

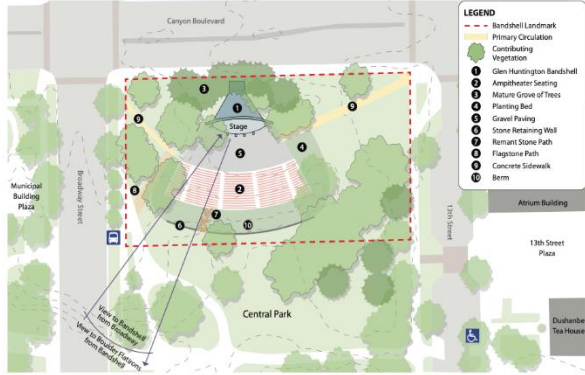
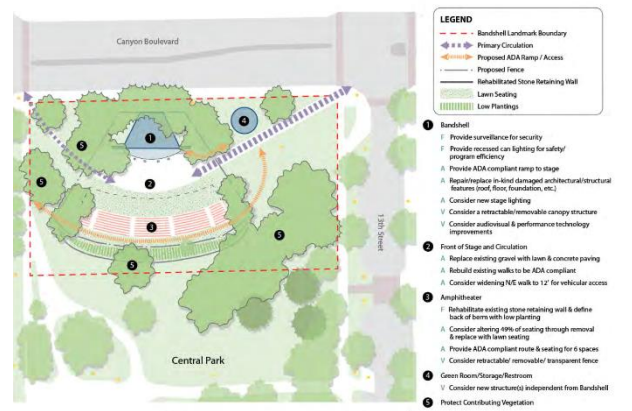


Figure 1-15. Bandshell Existing Condition, 2021 (source: Mundus Bishop)

### Diagram of Proposed Treatments is Informed by the Chart Above



Recommendations proposed for each resource align treatments that inform physical alterations, regular operations and maintenance, community building and funding explorations. This project will not propose specific “options” or “designs” for physical alterations, rather the project documents alignment and acceptance of future planning, community building and operational work at each site. Specifically, for the Bandshell and Pearl Street Pedestrian Mall, work developed through the HiPP may assist in future decisions at each site, should park improvements be funded in November through the Community Culture & Safety tax/ballot measure. In addition to the charts and diagrams highlighted above, consultants are developing renderings to help visually showcase alignment of recommendations. A rendered sketch that highlights proposed treatments to the Bandshell is provided below.

## SKETCH



Currently staff and consultants continue phase four work on remaining resources, which utilize a similar approach as outlined above. Staff will continue to provide PRAB with regular updates through future Consent Agenda items and look forward to a more in-depth discussion item in December to present all treatment options developed for all the historic resources. This information will be presented for review and feedback from PRAB and the city's Landmarks Board. Finally, a draft plan is expected to be presented to PRAB, to review and consider approval, in Q2 of 2022.