

## **OR5 – Surface Water Creek and Reflection Pond Features**

### ***Observations and Recommendations for Consideration***

#### **Observations:**

Having a beautiful entrance to the North end of the Marina with its adjacent parks is a good idea. It fits in with the planned Marina Steps and finishes the connection of the Marina and its surrounding parks (Beach Park, Fishing Pier Park, Outlook Parks 1 & 2 and Sound View Park) with the downtown corridor. It should be an impressive avenue for pedestrians, as well as bikes and vehicles. It is worth a meaningful investment by the City to present a great entry to the perfect place for enjoying the view, the many community activities and other waterfront recreation.

That said, the new 223rd street surface water creek with its retention pond feature unveiled at the City Council's public meeting of September 27 is hard to visualize. It also is thought to have some concerning implications:

Creating an open creek for one of the City's largest surface water runoffs and having it run through a high-density multi-dwelling neighborhood introduces a new flood risk to that area. An "atmospheric river" hitting the PNW could end up with devastating results.

The adjacent retention pond in the middle of the Marina floor which catches the runoff from the creek is reportedly to provide a water feature as a reflection pond and also a recreation area for children to have fun.

A reflection pond as an enjoyable visual feature seems duplicative when we have the most beautiful water feature in the PNW to reflect upon – Puget Sound.

The surface water runoff for children's recreation would require some sort of purifying treatment before its use. It would need to be at a drinkable quality, because kids will do that.

There appears to be some complexity to this project. It will have to connect the hillside surface water culverts to the creek. Likely the City will be laying new culvert and possibly digging up streets. That would imply an expenditure of considerable money over an extended period of time. In turn, funding such a project would require an evaluation of potential taxation implications for residents.

The City has apparently received a \$300,000 grant to explore the design possibility for the project. This approach would certainly create an amazing feature in the City, although it seems fairly expensive, time-consuming and also has some new risks for the City and residents near the creek. This project will also consume public open space along 223<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and the Marina floor with the pond.

Consuming public open space is a recognized part of any development in the Marina north end. All projects should be evaluated to ensure the consumption of that open space truly benefits the residents and is a feature that attracts visitors to Des Moines.

Alternatives to this creek and reflection pond should be considered by the City.

Instead of a creek, that will cost a lot and take a long time, the City could develop an approach for a nicely landscaped avenue with pedestrian features. That type of project could be done in a shorter period of time. That too, could be a beautiful and stunning entrance to the Des Moines Marina and its parks.

Instead of a reflection pond, which consumes public open space and is duplicative with the amazing view of Puget Sound, the City could construct an area for more recreational features – bring back shuffleboard, or Bocce, or bike rentals, paddle boards/kayaks, etc.

**Recommendations:**

- The City should hold a public meeting at the beginning of their recent “*surface water creek grant study*” to obtain public input. There should also be a second public meeting as the study is concluding to obtain the public’s responses to the study results and recommendation headed to the City Council. That way the Council can make a more informed decision knowing both the study findings and the public response. This study must also provide a set of supporting financial information and a schedule forecast for the project.

-The City Council should authorize a parallel study to create design possibilities for a “*223<sup>rd</sup> Boulevard Project*” that would bring together an alternative plan for beautification of the entrance and connecting path between the Marina and the downtown corridor. Similar public meetings should be conducted for this study and a set of supporting financial and schedule information must also be required. This study is a good candidate for ARPA funding. With the results of these studies, the City Council and the public are positioned with a set of alternatives that enable a meaningful decision. The outcome allows the City to move forward with planning that has a board support from residents.