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A city so vibrant needs high quality recreation sites within its city core. Places for our youth to socialize, test their knowledge and practice their skills. After all, isn't it time that we started paying attention to the various needs of certain segments of our society. Indeed, it is a lot easier to pay for recreation places now rather than pay a huge price to facilitate prisoners later.

From 5th to 2nd street between Washington and Jefferson there is a special part of Eugene. Underneath the I-105 on ramp is the piece of coal I refer to, it has not been polished into a diamond yet, but there is potential for something very important to the re-discovery of this part of Eugene and "it is under this bridge"! I am referring to a place where the youth of our city, and others, can come have fun. At the moment all that is under this bridge is a basketball court, a stage, a small playground, and a large set of horseshoe pits. What is needed here is a new skate park, one that's completely covered from the driving rain of a November night, one that's patrolled, protected, and safe for our youth. One that is so well lit up that it shines as a beacon in the night and provides quality recreation for our youth. Places for our youth to socialize, meet friends, and have fun. What is amazing is that, the Eugene regional area has several skate parks; yet, for some reason not one of them is covered, nor are any of them located at our city's core (CBD).

The idea of having a modern flagship skate park in downtown Eugene is a very exciting prospect for the city, which only has a few skate parks, and none of which are in close proximity to the cities supposed downtown. There are many benefits to having a centrally located skate park, and it would have few drawbacks. There is a long list of positive attributes; there are some very vital ones that should be laid out in order of priority. The first of which, being that an influx of youthful, athletic, and gifted people into an area that has become seedy and dilapidated, will greatly increase the appearance and reputation of the Washington Jefferson Park area. Second being that this undertaking

will give the city of Eugene and the community an excellent opportunity to flex their creative muscles by supporting and contributing to a skate park that shows how green and sustainable Eugene is striving to be. This skate park is only part of revitalizing a downtown for Eugene. By instituting a modern ecologically friendly drainage system, installing a landscape that is organic and accented by our beautiful indigenous plant species, using construction materials that are manufactured in the most environmentally friendly manner, out of naturally occurring composition components, and with local art on it. This could be something really special to Eugene. Third being that this is an opportunity for something that few cities have. A year round covered space that is tall enough to accommodate large and tall jibs and air to spare above, this is a gift from the ODOT designers! There are only a few Northwest cities that have utilized such architectural gifts, Burnside in Portland and UTF (Under The Freeway) in Spokane Washington. Burnside is only 10,000 sq feet, and has still earned national recognition as a landmark skate park; it has been in hundreds of videos, magazine articles, and several videogames. The 4 purposed sites for the downtown Eugene Skate Park are all larger than 10,000 sq feet. A fourth major benefit is that this will be a place that the area youth population will have a place to recreate in a positive athletic fashion in a place that can be used year round. Many local skaters make long drives to reach Burnside in Portland or Aumsville, Newberg, Ashland, or Corvallis. There are other skate parks in Eugene like Amazon, Bethel, Meadowview, and Churchill. None of these skate parks are covered or safe to skate in the wet winter months. Ask any skateboarder or biker, going through the rainy spells during the Eugene winter is excruciating, and has a negative effect on the morale of the skate/bike community, which is most of the people under 30 and some over. Having a skate park that is useable in the winter could also help lower the juvenile crime rates in Eugene. -Fifth, A covered, large skate park will make the area a destination for all of Eugene's surrounding cities skateboarding population. The people coming in could contribute to local businesses and even attract competitions and media acclaim. The more people frequenting the area, the less hospitable the area is for transients. The less transients want to hang out there, the less negative activities will occur, which would require less policing.

Starting from the Southern most part of the covered area and working North underneath the bridge, the first potential site would be the Sloped area and the stage in front of it. This area is largely unused, except for occasional events on the stage in front of it, during which time it is used as additional seating. It is 19,000sq feet and has sufficient electrical installation to run lights and a stereo. However it would be difficult to build in this site because of the steep slope and bridge pillars in the way. The next is the basketball courts. This is a 17,200 sq feet and is sufficiently flat and has a lot of vertical space. The bad thing about building here is that it is the most frequently used part of the purposed sites. Building here would take away a hard thing to replace, considering that this is the only covered public basketball court in Eugene. The next site is the small playground and restroom area. The playground is very seldom used because of the transient population and because it is always in the shade. The equipment on the playground does not meet current codes and the bathrooms are major attractions for illicit activities and are in an outdated structure. This site is the most preferable in my opinion because it is flat and has room for seats to watch and decent visibility from both Washington and Jefferson streets. This site is 17,400 sq feet and there is room on the west side that is not covered, but could act as growing space for the developing skate park. The next and last site is the horseshoe pits. These pits are not used everyday, but there is the Emerald Club of the Oregon Horseshoe Pitching Association who has events there up to 6 times a year. The horseshoe pits occupy 18,600sq feet, which are relatively flat and would suit the skate park nicely. This site also has areas that are not covered by the bridge and could be utilized for event seating, landscaping, and new bathrooms. The Eugene Parks And Open Space Report states that the current bathrooms near the playground are out of date and are an eyesore. Building a modern covering with portable bathrooms would be much cheaper than building a new bathroom facility. These portable toilets would require regular maintenance but they would be easier to clean and replace.

The skate park will improve the surrounding neighborhoods through contact metamorphism. The area has only become seedy because of a lack of interest and there is little to do or take pride in there. The benefits of a city-centered skate park are ten fold over the current usage of the covered area. If we can build a high-class skate park in an environmentally benign way, we will influence other new skate park undertakings around

the country. With the city pitching in \$292,000 we are now in a position to find a park designer to come in and survey our sites. The website www.skateeugene.com has all of the information about the skate park and what events are going on to raise the additional \$200,000 to build the park, the more money that is raised will be put into making this skate park one that will attract attention from all over the country. Eugene needs this skate park enough to have its development as a top priority for the city on the Capital Improvement Plan, which has contributed the \$292,000 so far. This skate park will be regional level, it is going to take more than \$500,000 to finish the park to all of it's potential, but it is a start. \$800,000 will build a skate park that will earn Eugene a reputation as a major skate destination. Hopefully with the help of the community and private investors, we can get this park built by December of 2009. There will also be room for the park to grow if the funds are there because all of the sites discussed in this paper are conjoined, if the first stage of the skatepark's development is successful, it will be surely easier to add on a few thousand more square feet.



Looking north at the stage



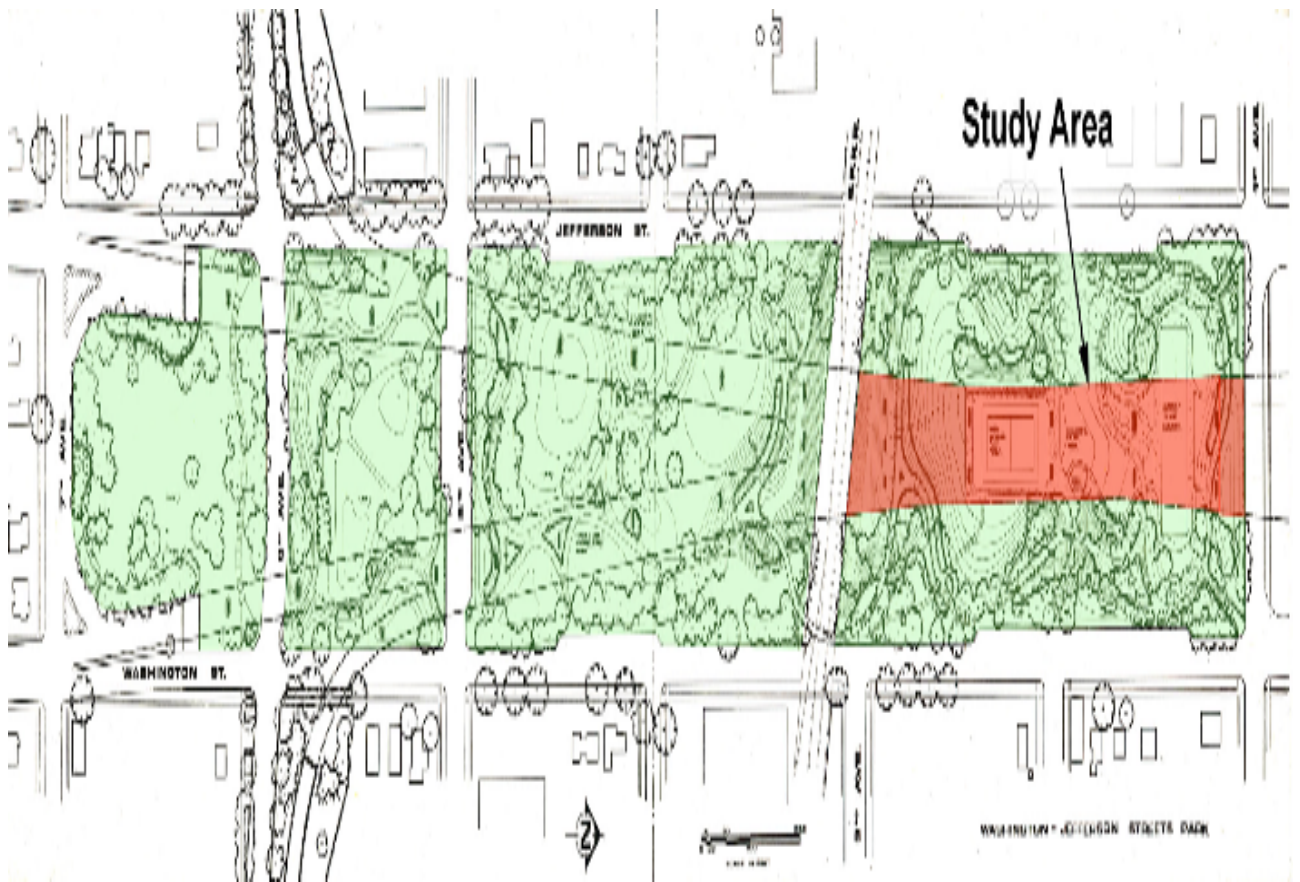
Old restrooms



The playground looking south



Horseshoe Pits from the west



Map of sites