



DRIFTWOOD Project Proposal

Prepared for: City of Yachats, Driftwood Alternative – Shared Street

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objective

The Driftwood Alleyway in the Yachats Commons Park has been in need of repaving for several years. The City Manager directed staff to find and apply for a grant in order to assist in financing the project. An ODOT Grant was found for existing street upgrades and was applied for and awarded. The project has now been designed to fit the grant requirements; a design which, unfortunately, does not conform to the community's leanings and vision of progressivism, inclusion, and acceptance. With this alternative design submittal, it is hoped that all grant requirements can be met while at the same time creating a more pedestrian, bicycle, and multi-use friendly area.

Goals

Develop a vibrant community center within the footprint of the Commons, 501 Building (Future City Hall), and Community Park and Wetlands. **Create** a parking area that can be used for the various events that are held throughout the year in the Yachats Commons as well as the summer Farmer's Market while at the same time creating the ability to close the street and use the area for public outdoor gatherings.

Solution

A "Woonerf" or "Shared Street". This concept is exceptionally well-suited for the Driftwood project. By using permeable paving of different colors and/or textures to differentiate uses, the entire area can easily be used by pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users, families with strollers, as well as slow moving vehicles. The lack of curbs and removable bollards allow for a varied and safe expansive, accessible location for public access and events.

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Project Outline

- **What is a “Woonerf”?**

Description from the Federal Highway Administration website:

Woonerf ("Street for living") is a Dutch term for common space created to be shared by pedestrians, bicyclists, and low speed motor vehicles. They are typically streets without curbs and sidewalks, and vehicles are slowed by placing trees, planters, parking areas, and other obstacles in the street. Motorists become the intruders and must travel at very low speeds below 10 mph. This makes a street available for public use that is essentially only intended for local residents. A woonerf identification sign is placed at each street entrance. ([source](#); [additional source 1](#); [additional source 2](#))

- **Paving and walkway structure:**

- Using the same footprint as was created by the engineering firm, create a single level permeable street bed. With the use of different textures/colors—and removable, solar-lit bollards—differentiate the bike lane from the vehicular lane.
- Along the west side of the area would be a walkway from the parking over the bioswale and along the grass field. This allows people to safely access the grass field and would be wide enough to be both ADA and COVID accessible for anyone.

- **Existing Skate Park:**

- Remove the wood fencing and install planters and benches along the west side of the skate park giving a sense of security and separation while at the same time creating an inviting space for youth and their friends and family to participate in the park.

From the Comfort Amenities section of the Public Skatepark Guide ([source](#)):

Seating

Seating is a clear consideration. Your skatepark should have seating for the park users that is within the perimeter of the skating area, but it should also have seating that is outside of the active area but close enough to see the action. Skaters won't want to leave the area whenever they need a short break. Friends and family arriving at the skatepark with skaters will want to be close enough to feel like they are a part of the action, but not so close that they are at risk of being hit by a wayward board.

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Set-down Areas

Many skaters will show up directly from school or will stop by the skatepark on their way to other destinations. They will have backpacks and, particularly if there's no water fountain at the skatepark, bottled drinks. When they arrive at the skatepark, they'll need a place to put down their stuff and, as they warm up, leave their jacket. Lots of the material they set down will be valuable...music players, cell phones, and so on. The place where they put this stuff should be close and within the skating area, and away from where people are walking by the facility. It needs to feel secure and accessible and be visible from all parts of the skatepark. In skateparks that don't afford a place to leave belongings, skaters will often unofficially designate a particular ledge for backpacks. This renders that structure unskateable, of course

- On both ends (north and south) use grass, native trees and ADA-compliant tables for shade and to further allow space for people to gather.
- Install bicycle parking racks on both ends of the skate park, also.

● **Environmental Considerations:**

● **Permeable Paving:**

- This regarding Permeable paving from the USGS website ([source](#)):

What are the Potential Benefits of Permeable Pavement? Permeable pavements help reestablish a more natural hydrologic balance and reduce runoff volume by trapping and slowly releasing precipitation into the ground instead of allowing it to flow into storm drains and out to receiving waters as effluent.

● **Bioswale:**

- From the American Society of Landscape Architect's website ([source](#)):

Bioswale/bioretenion pond benefits include*:

- *Reduced runoff: In a typical road, a 4-meter (13-feet) swale can reduce approximately 25 percent of total rainfall runoff.*
 - *Reduced pollutants: Bioswales/bioretenion ponds remove pollutants by filtering stormwater runoff through natural vegetation and soil-based systems.*
 - *Recharged groundwater: Instead of releasing stormwater into the drainage system, stormwater can be filtered and may provide some groundwater recharge.*
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- *Improved energy efficiency: Sustainable, decentralized stormwater management systems may be more cost effective than centralized stormwater systems. At the minimum, these natural technologies reduce pressure on existing systems and the maintenance costs associated with centralized stormwater management systems.*

**Sources: [Environmental Assessment, EPA](#); [Bioswales, Capital Regional District, Vancouver](#); [Stormwater Management: Swales, Sustainable Cities Initiative](#).*

- **Lighting:**

- By using solar-powered lighting in the park, we can help assure that the environmental leanings of the citizens are taken into consideration. Although initial installation costs can be higher than conventional lighting, the long term costs of solar-powered lighting far outweighs conventional lighting. Longer LED life, less maintenance needed, no electrical grid costs make these lights long-term budget-friendly.
- Solar-powered, illuminated bollards separating the bike lane from vehicular traffic not only provides lighting but are temporarily removable as well. This would keep the area safer for bicyclists and pedestrians while at the same time allowing for flexibility of use. The ability to open the entire area for pedestrian use during festivals, community gatherings, or an enlarged Farmers Market is an added plus.

Summary

2020 has been a rough year for the planet. The long-term brings with it certain imperatives: The need to move beyond fossil fuels and to passionately work for the protection of our shared natural environment stand now at our doorstep. The rapidly worsening Climate Catastrophe and the COVID-19 pandemic have shown the weaknesses that exist in our societal structures. We, as a community, can—and, really, *must*—learn from these events as we move forward. Understanding that the use of expanded outdoor public space has become not a luxury but a necessity, a project such as Driftwood becomes a perfect showcase for a positive this community can create within the these difficult times.

As beneficial as this project can be for community health and for the environment, the creation of shared streets has consistently demonstrated significant economic benefits as well. This, from a 2018 report from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission called “Curbless Streets” ([source](#)):

ECONOMIC VITALITY

The combination of improved accessibility, use, and perception of the street contributes to economic vitality. Studies of curbless street performance report higher property values, decreased vacancy, and healthy business growth. The streets are more functionally and aesthetically appealing to pedestrians and bicyclists, and are generally viewed as attractive locations for businesses and homes.

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Concluding Note

Rather than continuing along the same trajectory of moving people out of the way for vehicles, Yachats has the chance—right now—to do better. While the City Staff have done their very best to try and move this project forward in the most financially feasible manner by obtaining the ODOT grant, after years of this project languishing, it is now up to the community to step up and support finding the proper balance between economic, environmental, social and aesthetic considerations. It is our hope that this design submittal does just that. By using the footprint created by the engineer of record, allowing for an ADA and COVID-compliant walkway, a separated bike lane, and by upgrading the appearance and usability of the skate park, we hope that the re-design submitted will meet the point structure required of the ODOT grant to qualify for the full amount awarded.

And, please consider this (from the resident young person, aka David, the new 27 year-old in town):

To solve the puzzles set out by the Climate Catastrophe, we can no longer rely on the standards and norms that created the catastrophe in the first place. If we want a vibrant community that speaks to, relates to and, thus, invites members of the larger, shared community, we must be progressive and pro-active in terms of how we plan our City and our Future.

Attachments:

- Examples of solar street and bollard lighting
- Planter benches
- Bicycle parking
- Permeable paving

