

PROPOSAL Create an Ice Skating Rink Downtown on a portion of the Library Lane Lot

Ann Arbor Committee for a Downtown Skating Rink draft 2. pac 2-26-13

**Request to the Parks Advisory Committee:** Please consider and send a message of support to the City Council and to the Downtown Development Authority to support our proposal outlined below, for a temporary, experimental, experiential, see how it works, artificial ice skating rink downtown on a portion of the Library Lane parking lot. This project, beside its immediate fun virtue, would provide information relating to future uses of the lot as a possible civic center, urban park, etc.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Request to the Downtown Development Authority:** Please approve a matching \$25,000 demonstration seed grant to the Ann Arbor Committee for a Downtown Skating Rink, to match private donations, to establish an experimental skating rink on the Library Lane surface parking lot, according to the particulars of the following proposal.

Contacts and principals:

Stewart Gordon: 734 994-5070 [gordonstu@yahoo.com](mailto:gordonstu@yahoo.com): builder

Alan Haber: 734 761-7967 [megiddo@umich.edu](mailto:megiddo@umich.edu): social

worker organizer

Others on the committee:

Sara Duvall : amateur skater

Odile Hugonot Haber: nurse

Supporters and consultants:

Mark Hodesh Downtown Home and Garden

Elaine Selo, Selo /Shevel Gallery

Carol Lopez, Peaceable Kingdom

John Fingerle, Fingerle Lumber

Craig Forsyth, Ann Arbor Figure Skating Club

Mary Campbell, Everyday Wines

Scott Schmunk, Advantage Sports

Linh Song, Entrepreneurs Foundation

**Goal:** The committee desires to purchase, construct and operate a recreational, **artificial ice skating rink** (approximately 32'x72') on the northwest section of the Library Lane parking lot adjacent to the Ann Arbor Library on Fifth Avenue. This is an experimental project, projected to

continue for a minimum of two months, through the Winter and into early Spring, at which time the experience will be evaluated. If there is demand for the rink and the people of Ann Arbor are enjoying the rink, we anticipate a longer period of use. The rink will also be a place where ideas for the future of the site can be posted and discussed.

**Need:** While there are real-ice city rinks (Buhr Park and Veterans Park) and a Commercial rink in Ann Arbor, the vast majority of ice time in all three of these facilities is taken up by organized hockey and figure skating clubs. There is very little available time for families and recreational skating. The warming climate, in spite of our recent cold spell, has made the flooding of informal rinks in parks (which many of us remember) no longer feasible.

**Benefits to Downtown:** Downtown skating would be an attraction, both to do and to watch. People visiting Ann Arbor will be drawn to spend additional time in the downtown. The rink will become a destination for families in the area, who will also need meals, snacks, and other amenities. The rink will better the quality of life for those who work and live in the downtown area. It will create positive associations for all businesses in the area. The rink will be covered as a feature in a wide range of local and regional media, building the image of downtown Ann Arbor as a happening, fun place to be.

**Benefits to DDA:** Appropriate signage on the site and art posters will acknowledge the support of DDA, and other funders who wish to be acknowledged. This will reflect very well on DDA and our posters will be all over town.

**Feasibility:** The technology of artificial/synthetic skating ice is well established and has been tested and used in practice rinks and public facilities for more than a decade. It is a very low friction, polymer plastic. It can be used outdoors in all seasons. A winter rink, for example, which opened in Pittsburgh last year continued to operate successfully through the entire summer. Manufacturers typically guarantee the ice surface for ten years and are, therefore, present to oversee proper installation. The material can then be turned over and used another ten years. All additional necessary materials are readily available locally. Fingerle Limber can furnish all lumber and connectors.

**Budget and Financing:** The anticipated budget for purchase, constructions, and staffing of the rink for 2 months is approximately \$50,000. It is an eminently suitable project for the DDA. It will also be a demonstration experiment to measure the benefits of such use of open space both for public enjoyment and for community development. We see in this project a fruitful partnership between the DDA, city government, and private philanthropy. The committee has already raised pledges for about half the needed budget from individual and foundation pledges. We request that the DDA match the private funds raised in order to fund the project. Please see budget below

**Construction, materials:** The parking lot slopes slightly and has irregularities requiring that we build a level platform to support the skating surface. This deck will be constructed of 2x6 joists and beams on 4x4 posts. The slope is shallow and the greatest distance between the deck and the parking structure surface will be about 18". The joists and beams will be decked with 3/4" tongue and groove plywood. On top of the plywood goes a special underlayment membrane and the 1/2 inch artificial ice panels go on top of the membrane. The panels finger joint together to produce a strong, smooth easily laid surface. Construction will include a 30" fence around the rink and one gate at the highest point of the parking structure (constituting a about 6-8" high ramp up to the skating surface).

**Local construction, schedule:** The deck can be constructed with team professional carpenters, stage builders and community volunteers (both Stewart Gordon and Alan Haber are skilled in the building trades) in 2 days, like an old fashion barn raising. The spirit of community effort and the surrounding publicity are an intrinsic part of the project and its momentum.. Local sourcing of materials allows rapid delivery of any additional materials necessary.

**Operation:** The rink will be open and attended from 10 AM to 10 PM daily. At this point skates will not be available for rental, though we are continuing to seek a vendor who might provide that service. Some lighting is already available on the surface level of the parking structure. We are arranging with solar energy workers to install solar panels for the top of the elevator tower to power additional LED lighting. The committee plans to ask a token donation of \$1 from each skater.

**Staffing:** We intend to hire several staff "greeters," so one adult supervisor is present at all times the rink is open, to greet users, answer questions, take care of any problems that come up, encourage users to write comments in the comment book, keep a daily log, collect donations, etc.. We will have 3 four hour shifts a day. Pay rate at the city approved "living wage." We will also invite volunteers through the Ann Arbor volunteers and skaters networks to help out further, assisting skaters, keeping an eye on kids, etc. Overall supervision will be by the principal organizers.

**Maintenance:** Maintenance is quite simple. The rink needs to be cleaned with a damp squeegee each morning and when it gets heavy snow or debris on it. No other maintenance is required.

**Liability:** The Committee will secure adequate liability insurance to protect and hold faultless the City and the DDA from any problems that might arise in the course of the project. A hold harmless liability waiver will be part of the user sign in/ donation.

**Other amenities:** We anticipate some benches and tables associated with the site, maybe music, possibly hot roasted chestnuts, likely some food carts nearby, if there is enough use. Sections of the perimeter fence can be "mural boards" for art and ideas about Ann Arbor Downtown. Ice skating is "public art in motion." It is sure to stimulate the imagination.

**Impact on the Parking lot.** The rink and its periphery would cover 15 parking spaces. In our observation over the last several months, rarely have there been fewer than 15 vacant spaces, so there would actually be little net loss of surface parking use, and there has always been substantial vacant spaces below in the underground structure. The elevator exit path toward Fifth Avenue would go directly West rather than diagonally across the skating area over the Northwest parking spaces. We would draw minimal electric needs from parking structure service.

**Associated activities:** There might develop other community activities in adjacent areas of the lot, which would get their own permits and arrangements with the DDA and City for use of this publicly owned space, such as a Spring Party and an Earth Day festival.

**Further Fundraising:** We will continue fundraising further pledges and donations for added amenities and continued operation, should such be so decided.

**Advisory Committee:** The Ann Arbor Committee for a Downtown Skating Rink is inviting an advisory committee to draw on the interest and expertise of Ann Arborites to help this happen in the best possible way and provide general guidance to the operation of the rink. Several groups, downtown businesses and individuals have already expressed interest in being part of such a committee. We would expect to maintain a regular liaison with the DDA, the City Parks and Recreation Department, and other City staff as appropriate, during the operation of this project.

**Assessment:** While the project is operating, we intend to have a survey question sheet and “comments book” for users, and passers by to express themselves. After 2 months of operation, we will convene the advisory committee, and others interested, (that is, have a big open meeting,) to assess the successes and failures of the overall project, its continuance and funding, including possible additional DDA matching support.

**Continuations:** The plywood substructure would be an ideal dance floor and could be painted and used through the summer months. We would hope to reassemble the skating rink next Winter. It is also possible that the rink might remain popular through the summer months. If the project does not continue on this location, it could be disassembled and stored or moved and adapted to another location.

### **Project Budget. Expenses and Revenue**

Capital investment for 36’x70’ skating rink.		
~2600 sq. ft. of artificial ice @ \$10.00/ft		\$26,000
underlayment membrane@~ \$1.50/ft		4,000
delivery estimate		500
Lumber for support and fencing	6,000	
Lights(solar LED system)	800	
Carpenters \$100/day / 4 carpenters/2days		800
Art Poster		800
Liability insurance (awaiting quote, ball park estimate		1,000
Ongoing Expenses: Employee (\$150/day for 60 days/)		9,000

Tap into existing parking structure electricity	100
contingency, signage, supplies	1,000
\$50,000	
Income: Private seed donations	\$25,000 plus
DDA matching seed grant	\$25,000
token donations from users \$1.00 or more	3,000

estimate average, 50 people/day/60 days

\$53,000 plus

in-kind contributions: DDA: 15 (often vacant) parking spaces  
community: volunteer labor time, organizing, attending,  
benches and amenities love and art.

SURPLUS at conclusion, .....  
\$3000 plus

First comment from [annarbor.com](http://annarbor.com) article, Sunday February 17, 2013

**“Perfect idea! Best idea for Downtown AA I have heard in years! Excellent!”**

Poll in [annarbor.com](http://annarbor.com)

What do you think of the idea of an outdoor skating rink in downtown Ann Arbor? 920 votes:

**Let’s make it happen**

**60%**

I'm not sold on it

23%

Maybe if it's privately funded, I like the concept but I'm concerned about the cost 17%

Sources of technical information: google: artificial ice  
FutureSkate.net  
GlobalSyntheticIce.com

Almost everyone we’ve asked, face to face, has said “yes,” so we anticipate wide public approval, and appreciation to all who help make this happen.

Additional supporters, as we begin to ask more

Afternoon Delight

Moosejaw Sporting Goods

Jerusalem Gardens

Ann Arbor Committee for a Downtown Skating Rink is a not-for-profit unincorporated association, to establish and operate a downtown skating rink for an initial 2 month period to do a public service and to gain experience in the public use of the Library Lane surface lot for public community purposes.