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City Asks for Input on Redesigned North Gateway Concept

Bloomington, Ind.—The City today announced it is seeking feedback on a modified gateway for [Miller-Showers Park](#). This new gateway concept, developed by Indianapolis-based landscape architecture firm [Rundell Ernstberger Associates \(REA\)](#), stems from the incorporation of public feedback received through 2023.



The new concept includes stacked limestone approximately 10' high, reminiscent of blocks from local quarries, with the word "Bloomington" in letters mounted to the limestone. The letters will be backlit with adjustable LED lights that can be color-themed for community events.

[Feedback on the gateway concept is welcome online through Dec. 15.](#)

Comments may also be emailed to parcs@bloomington.in.gov; mailed to Parks and Recreation at PO Box 848, Bloomington, IN 47402; or shared by phone at 812-349-3700.

A contract addendum with REA is scheduled for presentation to the [Board of Park Commissioners](#) at their regular meeting Dec. 12 at 4 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 401 N. Morton St. The addendum will include the development of this gateway concept from schematic design to construction documents. Public feedback will be considered as the concept is finalized.

Site improvements planned for Miller-Showers Park will be adjusted to accommodate the updated footprint of the gateway element. Most improvements, including removing invasive Callery pear trees, installing sidewalks, reconstructing the pedestrian island on Gourley Pike and repairing asphalt, and landscaping and tree installation will be completed in the spring. A 120-foot section of new sidewalk has already been installed on the west side of College Avenue to facilitate appropriate and safe pedestrian and cyclist detours during construction, as well as to make permanent improvements to the gateway area.

A separate request for quotes for the construction of the updated gateway element will be used to select a contractor for the final installation of the gateway. That contract will be subject to approval by the Board of Park Commissioners.

The Bicentennial Gateways project was approved by the Bloomington Common Council on Oct. 31, 2018, as part of the Bicentennial Bond package. A total of \$1.25 million was set aside for the development and installation of the gateways.

Plans for the future of the Bicentennial gateway project will be shared with the community via City-issued news releases, social media channels, and on the [Bicentennial Gateway Project website](#) as plans are developed. [Community members may also sign up to receive email updates on the gateway project.](#)

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Bicentennial Gateway Project Timeline

- The Bloomington Common Council on Oct. 31, 2018, approved the sale of \$10 million in bonds for a variety of Bicentennial projects, including the construction, art, and landscaping of four to six gateways to the City. A total of \$1.25 million was set aside for the development and installation of the gateways.

- The Board of Park Commissioners on July 23, 2019, approved a contract with Indianapolis-based Rundell Ernstberger Associates (REA) for \$45,800 to complete conceptual design work on the Bicentennial gateways. Four potential gateway locations were identified: Arlington pedestrian bridge over State Road 45/46; Bloomfield Road at Twin Lakes Sports Park; State Road 46 and East Third Street; and the traffic island north of Miller-Showers Park.
- Parks and Recreation held a public open house Dec. 15, 2019, to unveil the proposed concepts for three signature gateways: At Miller-Showers Park, on the Arlington pedestrian bridge on State Road 45/46, and Bloomfield Road near Twin Lakes Sports Park. The East Third Street site was eliminated from consideration, as it was located on private land. The conceptual designs included the proposed size, construction materials, themes, graphic features and architectural and landscape elements. A total of 34 public comments about the gateway concepts were received online between Dec. 10, 2019, and Feb. 10, 2020.
- REA presented a Bicentennial gateway project update to the Board of Park Commissioners at their regular meeting on April 28, 2020. The three proposed gateway designs incorporated input from the public, Parks and Recreation staff, and City administration.
- Parks and Recreation staff restarted the Bicentennial Gateway project after it was halted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff reviewed REA's conceptual designs for the three gateway sites and determined the estimated costs to be over budget. At their May 22, 2022 meeting, the Board of Park Commissioners approved an additional contract with REA for \$133,925 for two, scaled-back gateway designs at Miller-Showers Park and the Arlington pedestrian bridge.
- Final schematic concepts of the two gateway sites were presented to the Board of Park Commissioners at their Dec. 13, 2022 meeting. A public open house was held Dec. 15, and an additional 59 people submitted feedback and comments regarding the gateway designs online between Dec. 16, 2022, and Jan. 6, 2023.
- The Indiana Department of Transportation in spring 2023 informed the City of its plans to replace the Arlington pedestrian bridge in the next 10 years. Staff eliminated the Arlington pedestrian bridge from consideration as a gateway site due to its limited lifespan.
- A contract for \$395,105 with bo-mar Industries for the structural design, fabrication, and installation of the Bicentennial gateway at Miller-Showers Park was approved by the Board of Park Commissioners on May 16, 2023. To date, \$32,628 has been paid to bo-mar Industries for the structural engineering and associated design work of the gateway element.
- A contract for \$575,000 with Reed & Sons Construction for site work necessary for the installation of the gateway, and sidewalk and paving improvements to the surrounding area, was approved by the Board of Park Commissioners on July 27, 2023. To date, \$13,759 has been paid to Reed & Sons Construction for project startup costs.
- Parks and Recreation issued a news release Sept. 5, 2023 announcing the fall 2023 installation timeline for the monolith-style Bicentennial Gateway at Miller-Showers Park.

- The Board of Public Works considered but did not act on requests to issue a Right of Way Permit for construction of the project at their Sept 12, Sept. 26, and Oct 10 meetings.
- The City released an update Oct. 27 announcing the modification of the timeline for fabrication and installation of the gateway, to allow additional time for public input and feedback.
- The missing 120-foot section of sidewalk in front of the former Steak N' Shake restaurant at 1919 N. College Ave was installed in November to improve connectivity in the gateway area and allow appropriate pedestrian detours during future phases of construction.