

# Big changes ahead for Cadillac City Park, Rotary Pavilion

By Chris Lamphere

Big changes are in store for the Cadillac City Park over the next several years, along with plans to spend large amounts of money to implement those changes.

The Rotary Performing Arts Pavilion will get a completely new look, the parking lot between the city park and downtown businesses will be redesigned, two new docks will be installed, a "splash pad" and skating rink built, and a portion of Lake Street will be completely redone to be more pedestrian friendly.

These are some of the highlights of the Cadillac Heritage Plaza PlacePlan, a multi-phase project intended to transform the look and appeal of the city park area.

Community Development Analyst Mike Coy said certain aspects of the project, particularly the docks, splash pad and skating rink, are long-term goals that will be constructed as funding becomes available.

Other aspects of the project, including the redesign of the parking lot and Rotary Pavilion, will begin this year.

## Rotary Performing Arts Pavilion

The plan to reconstruct the Rotary Pavilion was developed separate from the PlacePlan but will be closely tied to the overall project.

It includes the construction of an amphitheater-style seating arrangement that will create a better line of sight to the stage area.

Rotary member and Cadillac City Councilwoman Shari Spoelman said the current seating arrangement at the pavilion leaves something to be desired.

"The sight lines aren't very good," Spoelman said. "The new design will consist of tiered lawn seating sections."

Coy said the reconstruction also will include a path around the stage area, toward the direction of the train tracks.

He said the current orientation of the Keith McKellop Walkway brings pedestrian traffic right in front of the stage, which is not an ideal setup, especially during a performance.

Also, the flag poles will be moved, a new sound booth and dressing-storage rooms will be added, and the stage of the pavilion will be changed to be all the same level, instead of several levels. This was requested by the user groups, Spoelman said.

The total cost of the project has been estimated to be \$300,000, with \$80,000 of that cost covered by a donation from Rotary.

The remaining \$220,000 will be paid for through donations, grant money and a contribution from the city.

Spoelman said some of the details regarding how the project will be paid for still are being worked out.

Construction will begin shortly after Labor Day, with completion of the project expected before the beginning of the 2016 summer performance season.

Architectural designs for the project will be presented to the city council within the next few months. The project will then be put out to bids.

### **Redesign of parking lot between park and downtown**

Simultaneous to the reconstruction of the Rotary Pavilion will be the redesign of the parking lot between the city park and several downtown businesses, including the Elks Lodge and the Clam Lake Beer Company.

The parking lot will be reconfigured to remove the one-way lanes that run north and south. He said this change is intended to make the parking lot more pedestrian friendly.

Coy said work on the parking lot area also will include the installation of underground utility lines.

The Cadillac Downtown Development Authority has been very involved in the implementation of this aspect of the PlacePlans, and Coy said nearby businesses will be consulted to ensure everyone is happy with the final arrangement.

Total project costs are estimated to be \$550,000, with \$200,000 of that amount funded through a grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

The remaining \$350,000 will be paid for by the DDA, which will contribute \$250,000, and city property tax revenues, which will cover \$100,000.

Coy said this aspect of the PlacePlan project should be complete by early next year.

### **Future developments**

Cadillac City Manager Marcus Peccia said the Heritage Plaza project is so massive that it's hard to say how many years it will take to complete.

"We'll just keep adding to it," Peccia said.

As part of the long-term project plan, a "splash-pad" community area and skating rink will be constructed near the current location of the city fountain.

Also, special barriers are planned to be placed on the ends of Lake Street that can be raised during events that bring in a lot of pedestrian traffic.

Coy said the last phase of the project would include the construction of two new docks, one off the back of the pavilion, and the other to the south of the pavilion.

He added that it's too soon to determine a timeline for when other aspects of the project will begin, or an estimate as to how much they will cost.