**Changes of floodwater priorities**

A change in the timetable for developing the floodway along Rapid Creek is being proposed by Rapid City’s urban renewal department.

Pending approval from state and federal officials involved in Bureau of Outdoor Recreation funding, money originally programmed to be spent in the next three years in the area between the west city limits and Baken Park will be spread throughout the length of the floodway.

Principal change as far as the west end of the project is concerned will be a delay in the construction of the of-stream Canyon Lake. Funds proposed for that development will be shifted to the central and east portions of the floodway.

The change will enable the city to meet some priorities which citizens have established.

After the original project for the west end of the floodway was proposed and funded, city residents voted to locate the civic center north of the creek between Fifth and Eighth streets and the new Central High School adjacent to it between Eighth and West Boulevard.

This presented a need for developing the floodway in what will be the “front yard” of those two public facilities as soon as practicable. It is planned to develop organized game areas and the memorial lake and park in this central area.

Also planned for this area is a primary trail system consisting of an eight-foot wide asphalt concrete path for biking, walking and jogging. This system will extend from the Route Boulevard to the east city limit.

The trail system will tie the greenway together and provide neighborhood with recreational facilities rather than concentrating expenditures in the west area as it was originally proposed.

It is also planned to expand Rosevelt Park which serves a large portion of the north and east sections of the city.

It would be nice if the entire floodway could be developed quickly but, it is evident there is no way for the city to generate the $60 per cent local match funds in the next couple of years.

It is recognized that further delay in construction of a new Canyon Lake will disappoint many. But, when balanced with the need for developing the area near the civic center and new high school and for spreading development throughout the floodway as soon as possible, the change in priority appears justified.
Mayor Don Barnett, board chairman, said he had visited last week with members of The Spokane architect designing the project with Craig Associates of Grand City. The architects had advised him that new estimates for the total project have been pushed up to more than $15,5 million because of inflation.

The last estimated construction cost for the project, 19 months ago, was $10.4 million but the board had cut nearly $1.4 million of this by eliminating certain refinements, reducing the estimated cost to about $8.8 million.

Barnett said he told the architects that $13.5 million is far beyond the city's ability to finance and asked for alternatives. He said they discussed "hijacking" the complex by adding a 20,000-square foot convention center to the existing site, which would be a delay in the construction of the off-street Canyon Lake. Funds proposed for that development will be shifted to the central and east portions of the freeway.

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This presented a need for developing the freeway in what will be the "front yard" of those two public facilities as soon as practicable. It is originally proposed.

It is also planned to expand Roosevelt Park which serves a large portion of the north and east sections of the city.

It would be nice if the entire freeway could be developed quickly but it is evident there is no way for the city to generate the 50 per cent local match funds in the next couple of years.

It is recognized that further delay in construction of a new Canyon Lake will disappoint many. But when balanced with the need for developing the area near the civic center and new high school and for spreading development throughout the freeway as quickly as possible, the change in priority appears justified.