



2834 Jackson Blvd.

Rapid City, SD 57702

<http://friendsofrcparks.com/>

The Hon. Sam Kooiker
Mayor
City of Rapid City
300 Sixth Street
Rapid City, SD 57702

2 November 2012

Dear Mayor Kooiker,

Thank you for asking Friends of Rapid City Parks to comment on the proposed land trade between the city and Dream Design International, Inc. to exchange acreage in the Wally Byam Property for acreage near the airport.

We understand that the proposal to be discussed Monday by the City Council is to enable the opening of negotiations between the parties and that specific terms of any agreement would be brought to the council for approval at a future meeting.

Friends defers to the position of the airport board that the offered property adjacent to the airport will benefit airport economic development, and accept the analysis of to city staff and decision-makers on the expected revenue benefit from disposition of the Wally Byam property. We understand further that any grading or filling within the flood plain portion of the Wally Byam property will be done in accordance with the city's flood plain policy, and that the city will sever and preserve the flood plain portion of the Wally Byam property in accordance with this policy.

As the city negotiates terms for this exchange, Friends of Rapid City Parks encourages the parties to consider the potential of this exchange to serve as a model for exemplary development that includes open space and access from the development to existing and planned bicycle and pedestrian paths.

It is widely known that Rapid City's park system is one of the amenities that attracts not only visitors, but residents and new business. In a recent visit here, a nationally recognized parks development expert pointed out that quality of life and access to the outdoor environment mean that parks create great places to live and increase property values by as much as 20 percent.

The Wally Byam property offers a unique opportunity to create the kind of development that has "edge"—shared boundaries with open space, greenway, trails for jogging, walking or bicycling. Its proximity to the planned recreational trail that is "rail banked" between LaCrosse

Street and Kadoka along the former Chicago-Milwaukee-St. Paul Railroad line, and the fact that it borders on flood plain land that will be preserved as open space make it a candidate for the kind of planning that incorporates park and open space with development.

We encourage city staff to incorporate these ideas in negotiations with Dream Design International and look forward to supporting a proposal that enhances the exchange, Rapid City's park system, and the airport.

Sincerely,

Steve McCarthy

President, Friends of Rapid City Parks