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[innovate@boisestate](mailto:innovate@boisestate)

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# Local Elements

Nick Brown

*Department of History, Boise State University*

Cara Mia De Marco

*Curriculum, Instruction, and Foundation Studies, Boise State University*

Dustin Heeney

*Department of Biological Sciences, Boise State University*

Jessica Pearson

*International Business, Boise State University*

Levin Welch

*Department of Sociology, Boise State University*

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City of Boise  
Planning & Development Committee

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# Proposal for

## The Local Elements

... an eco-urban park to harbor Boise's local movement and need for recreational community space.

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## Executive Summary

The mission of *Local Elements* is to create an eco-urban park to harbor Boise's local movement and need for recreational community space. This project is an integral park that includes a marketplace, community recreation space, cultural and artistic representations and multipurpose educational facilities.

The goals of *Local Elements*, stem from the City of Boise's core values. These are to "ensure a safe, healthy and livable community", to assist Boise in becoming a "leader for sustainable development" and to "promote a strong and diverse local economy" by creating a space that "fosters an environment where learning, artistic development, social organization, innovation, culture, and recreation can thrive".

The location of this project includes 14.26 acres between Myrtle and Front streets and 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> streets. *Local Elements* will fit well with the local surroundings because it will create an additional flow of pedestrian traffic throughout the downtown core. By providing space to local artisans, producers and businesses in between two heavily traveled streets, it will provide them additional support to advertise and expand their products to various clients.

Close proximity to Boise State University and other education institutions offers campus populations greater opportunity to be involved in the community and enjoy the city. *Local Elements* will stimulate the economy and steer Boise toward connected, local community focus.

A key focus of *Local Elements* is to create a space that enables sustainable development. This project aims to minimize the negative effects onto the surrounding environment by embracing and preserving it. This will be accomplished through the innovative collaborative use of nearly all recycled building materials, geothermal heating, xeriscaping, rainwater recycling and solar power.

In order to facilitate this project of nearly \$10 million, it will be necessary to incorporate several different aspects of funding. There are various government and state programs that issue monetary grants for urban planning and redevelopment. This project would also likely hinge on the involvement of the community and certain donations from key community members.

*Local Elements* is a valuable development project for the City of Boise. It provides the citizens with an eco-urban park, designed to harbor the local movement and need for community space in Boise. It will remain a prominent place of interaction and use for generations to come.

## **Introduction**

*Local Elements* is a project developed in response to the needs of the Boise community. The mission is to create an eco-urban park to harbor Boise's local movement and need for recreational community space. *Local Elements* is an integral park that includes a marketplace, community recreation space, cultural and artistic representations and multipurpose educational facilities. Our vision for the future is to honor the past by creating the new socio-cultural hub of Boise.

Boise's local movement can be defined as the ideology that the best way to keep Boise's community unique and prosperous is to support local producers, entrepreneurs, and artists of all types. Community, according to Bridger and Luloff, is defined as: "the fact that one [person] naturally is connected to other people." Community is seen to be "natural" because people "...engage in social relationships with others on a continuing basis and...derive their social being and identities from social interaction" (Bridger Challenges 203-213).

## **Goals/Objectives**

Currently, along with the rest of the Union, Boise's economy is suffering. The market is showing signs of recovery; however, the requirements and sources for funding are still scarce. A second concern is how to keep Boise a vibrant and culturally unique city during the current recession. The young minds of Boise are what create the vibrancy and the constant renewal of this city. The current goals and objectives of this project are addressing these issues.

The first goal of this project is to "ensure a safe, healthy and livable community". This goal stems from the City of Boise's core values. The *Local Elements* project is

designed to also bring together civic organizations to help ease the burden of various social problems. By incorporating educational institutions of all sorts, the city and the people of Boise in the designing, maintenance and development of this community space, the needs and desires of all will be represented.

Secondly, this project is to assist Boise in becoming a leader for sustainable development and redevelopment. A key aspect of the *Local Elements* project is that the entire project is potentially self sustainable. Nearly all building materials are recycled which recognizes the importance for resource conservation and environmental consciousness. This way, a creative example of a manageable, affordable and environmentally friendly infrastructure will be created.

The third goal is to promote a strong and diverse local economy by creating a space that fosters an environment where learning, artistic development, social organization, innovation, culture, and recreation can thrive. *Local Elements* is a model for sustaining and consistently improving the community by combining the best that Boise has to offer. The people of Boise will have a space that combines music, entrepreneurship, art, innovation, recreation, education and more, while appreciating the history of Boise, the vibrant culture and the natural environment.

### **Location & Context**

The location of this project includes 14.26 acres between Myrtle and Front streets and 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> streets. *Local Elements* will fit well with the local surroundings because it will create an additional flow of pedestrian traffic throughout the downtown core. By providing space to local artisans, producers and businesses in between two heavily traveled streets, it will provide them additional support to advertise and expand their

products to various clients. Close proximity to Boise State University and other education institutions offers campus populations greater opportunity to be involved in the community and enjoy the city. *Local Elements* will stimulate the economy and steer Boise toward a better-knit, connected, local community focus.

### *The Marketplace and Shoppes*

Affordable and cutting edge shipping container architecture will encapsulate the Marketplace in which local artisans and merchants can represent themselves and their products in a more permanent fashion. These will be located on the ground levels among other local eateries and businesses in the Shoppes. All spaces in the Shoppes will be leased and 5% of the lease amounts will be donated to the Local Elements Association Fund (LEAF).

### *The Amphitheater*

The outdoor amphitheater will provide a much needed venue for local artists to perform and provide entertainment for the community. This amphitheater will be a collaborative effort between local artists and area educational and artistic institutions. The awning and stage structure will be composed of recycled materials from the construction process and can be developed by engineering students and designed by local art students. The space could also be used for public debate, book readings, musical performances, public lectures, theatrical productions and other public or private events.

### *The Greenhouses*

A group of three greenhouses, managed by different organizations will provide organic commodities. The first will be used for the sole purpose of providing food to the restaurants located within *Local Elements*. The second will be used for a variety of plants

that can be used to benefit botany and horticulture organizations. The third will be a community garden. The excess of all produce will be donated to local homeless shelters and soup kitchens. This is also economically and environmentally efficient with the help of the geothermal grid, the Boise River, the collection of seeds, and potential compost for natural and organic fertilizers.

### *The Recreation*

Moving the skate park to the far west end of the *Local Elements*, could potentially deter drug related crimes that exist in the current location. This will also give another recreational outlet that is new and fresh to the community's youth. The wall that separates the skate park from the parking lot will be a free space for people to create artwork without retribution. An ever-changing piece of cultural and artistic representation will be created by providing this blank canvas to local artists of all kinds.

### *The Park and Plaza*

The plaza and park are areas that bridge the local vendor spaces, retail stores and provide more community space. Included in the park is a play area, basketball courts, beach volleyball courts and amphitheater. The Plaza is another multipurpose space that can be used as additional farmer's market venues. Smart landscaping and rainwater recycling techniques allow for a beautiful and lush court yard with minimal impact on the Boise River.

### *The Office and Classroom*

The upper floors of the facility are multi-sized and multipurpose and can be rented out for a nominal fee. These facilities can serve the needs of local interest groups who need a base to help develop and accomplish their objectives. Civic organizations,



practitioners of the healing arts, local radio broadcasting companies and various educational institutions can also make great use of these functional spaces.

### *The History*

By way of historical analogy, Front Street was a railroad depot; the hub of the city. A market was created from imported products and local use and a culture was created by the movement and influx of people. In concession with this historical analogy, an antique railroad car will be displayed on the far northeast end of the plot, serving as a monument honoring Boise's history in the form of an attractive and historically interactive bar and grill. Additionally, all murals presented in the space will represent the cultures of those that came before us that helped to shape, mold and create the culture that is Boise.

### *The Art*

The large mural, art displays, architecture, historical monument, and in essence the entire development of *Local Elements* embraces many aspects of Boise's artistic culture.

### *The Transportation*

A space for downtown rail car stations at either end of the *Local Elements* area will provide easy access to the west and east ends of the south side of downtown. Pedestrian walkways bridging from the existing BoDo shopping area will be installed to encourage pedestrian traffic into the *Local Elements*.

The parking lot will be necessary because of the amount of traffic in Boise. Currently, Boise is a commuter city, many people travel via their personal vehicles. For 2010, it is a safe investment, yet, it should remain small in scope so that the City may

continue to push for a less automobile transported population within the downtown area. The parking area will also be needed for the producers and artisans to transport and unload and load their products.

### **Green Sustainability**

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The city is the ultimate consumer of resources, and the largest contributor to climate change. A key aspect of *Local Elements* is to minimize the negative effects onto the surrounding environment by embracing and preserving it. (Bell Edens 3).

#### *Building Materials*

All of the materials being used in the *Local Elements* are recycled. The entire building structure is built of recycled shipping containers. These are now being used more often because they are portable, affordable and environmentally friendly.

#### *Geothermal*

Geothermal is an efficient and affordable way to heat buildings. In fact, nearly all government buildings in Boise use this early “green” technology. By extending the already close geothermal grid to *Local Elements*, use of this renewable resource can contribute to the LEED rating of the buildings and can help save energy and money. (GeoEngineers Boise 17)

#### *Solar*

Solar technology is as efficient as it eco-friendly. By covering over 13,000 ft<sup>2</sup> on the top of three wings of *Local Elements*, there is a potential for creating nearly 178,000

watts of energy. This energy would sustain the buildings and excess would be delivered back to the grid for additional savings.

### *Rainwater Recycling*

All rooftops of the main buildings will be covered in a green roof. A green roof is made up of several layers that mimic natural processes. Installing a green roof can cost 40% to 50% more than a conventional roof but can last about 50% longer because the plants and soil shield the roof's surface from the destructive effects of the sun and elements.

The green roof and park areas will make use of xeriscaping to keep water consumption minimal. Xeriscaping is landscaping designed specifically for areas that are susceptible to dry climates or for properties where water conservation is practiced. Also incorporated into the green roof will be a rainwater recycling system in which all water that falls onto the roof area will be either absorbed by the plants or captured into a recycling system. The captured water can then be used to water the plants in the dryer months or irrigate the park system below. This system will save on costs and diminish the impact that irrigation has on the Boise water supply.

## Budget

Elements - Cost							
Shipping Containers	\$4,000	820	\$3,280,000	average of various quotes			
Amphitheater			\$250,000	estimate			
Landscaping			\$500,000	Lowes			
Rainwater Recycling			\$50,000	Rainbird			
Solar			\$700,000	Kyocera			
Other Building Materials	\$3,000	820	\$2,460,000	estimate			
Green Houses			\$100,000	U.W.V			
Ped Bridges			\$40,000	B.C.P			
Demolition			\$1,000,000	estimate			
Skatepark			\$250,000				
Play Area			\$100,000				
Ball Courts			\$20,000				
Labor			\$1,250,000				
			\$10,000,000				

In order to facilitate this project it will be necessary to incorporate several different aspects of funding. There are various government and state programs that issue monetary grants for urban planning and redevelopment. Through the Urban Land Institute, it will be possible to secure money in the form of community action grants. According to their website, "The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide." These community action grants are issued to developers that envision something innovative and create new opportunities for communities to come together. The eligibility requirements state that in order to apply for funding one would need to be a council member of Boise's district offices. Another way to secure this grant is to have any member of the ULI submit the project on behalf of another program or organization. The advantage of this resource is that the judging for the allocation of funding is based on the use of sustainable building efforts and certain smart growth

techniques in the project summary. However, the judging is also based on if matching funds are available.

With that in mind another possible source of funding could come from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD. Through the HUD it is possible to accept funding based on community development block grants. This program is a flexible program that provides resources to communities with a wide range of development needs. The CDBG program provides over 1,200 grants annually to various local and government projects. This CDBG entitlement program...

“...allocates annual grants to larger cities and urban counties to develop viable communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and opportunities to expand economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.”

This is a great resource for the city to use, because of the programs wide vision and multiple uses.

The stipulations of this grant merit that the funding be used to revitalize a neighborhood, promote economic development, and to provide improved community services and facilities. The upside of this funding would be the ease of allocation of funds. Boise has good eligibility as a metropolitan city and our project is tailored to benefit lower to mid income workers. The only thing that would hold back this project would be if the funding was used for acquisition, construction, or reconstruction of buildings for the general conduct of government; political activities; certain income payments; and construction of new housing by units of general local government. Since this project is strictly benefiting the community and the city of Boise, we can gloss over these stipulations.

In order to incorporate these funds into the project, a consolidated plan would need to be submitted to the local HUD field office. In conjunction with the HUD it will be important to collaborate with the Office of Departmental Grants Management and Oversight. This bureau is responsible for improving management efficiencies and streamlining grant processes, by working with HUD and other federal agencies. Utilizing this agency would be invaluable to the city's efforts to revitalize the community.

The Boise City Department of Arts and History accepts project applications for cultural initiative grants. Eligible organizations and individuals include: Arts, cultural or history organizations, educational and community organizations such as neighborhood associations, business district associations and social service agencies. This funding option is great and somewhat tailored to what this project is all about. The incorporation of the arts into the community and the expansion of local culture to the downtown area is what this *Local Elements* is focused on. The disadvantage to this grant is that it is for a small lump sum of \$500-\$2,000.

These programs in addition to certain tax incentives offered to businesses that invest in green buildings and sustainable practices could all help fund this project. This project would also likely hinge on the involvement of the community and certain donations from key community members. Any donations or philanthropic help would be invaluable to the realization of this project.

### **Involved Parties**

As the city developers for *Local Elements* there are a number of people that need to be involved in such a large production. First, there needs to be community support. Whenever anything is being put into an area that is populated, there is going to be

community feedback. To help in this effort it would be in the best interest of the city that Mayor Bieter facilitates open meetings to be scheduled so that community members have a chance to voice concerns and have questions answered. Any and all interested in understanding what is being developed should be allowed to attend.

The local and federal government will be heavily involved in this project. As discussed in the financial portion of this document, the government allocates funds to give grants to developments for various purposes. With the use all green innovation techniques being used in *Local Elements*, grant money will be sought out to finance part of the development. City officials and community leaders will also be a part of this development. Their support, both vocally and fiscally, will help to make this project a success.

Boise State University will play a major role in the development and overall implementation of *Local Elements*. Many departments, students and faculty will have the opportunity to be involved and benefit from the newly developed facilities. The engineering department will be part of the development and building of the space. Construction management and civil engineering students will receive first hand training and internship experience by designing and assisting in the construction process. The Art departments at various educational institutions can take part in creating this artistic space. The outdoor amphitheater will allow for Boise State students in the music and theater departments to hold various events. The business and marketing students will benefit from *Local Elements* by having the opportunity to work within their field of study to learn and grow. Overall, Boise State University and other educational institutions in the

area will truly connect with the community and downtown Boise through the development and use of *Local Elements*.

### **Limitations and Risks**

It is of the utmost importance to identify barriers to implanting this project, and finding possible solutions to these barriers. This project has the advantage of being able to apply for grants and other funding based on the projects goals of community involvement and cultural development. Another major hurdle that cities face in these times of economic trouble is the consideration of tax revenue rather than sound city planning. In the case of Boise, it is important to note that this project would address both of these woes in one solution. Political leadership is important and must be supported by technical capability and strong management. In most cases, inflexible zoning and codes are formidable barriers; in the case of this project the area is zoned for mix use and fits perfectly with the vision of the project.

Physical barriers to the goals of this project are as follows. One issue is background noise due to passing traffic. Because of the location, in order to minimize this noise and maximize the sound of the community there will be effective building barriers to absorb the sound.

The final physical issue that needs to be addressed is the amount of transients in the area. It is important to note that ignoring this problem will not fix the problem. In the immediate area there are two shelters for the homeless to utilize. In order to further assist in this problem there will be a police substation placed in the general area of the *Local Elements* complex. Because a majority of these transients are veterans, the



Veterans Association will be utilized and given space to be involved in assisting them as well.

## **Conclusion**

*Local Elements* is a valuable development project for the City of Boise. It provides the citizens with an eco-urban park, designed to harbor the local movement and need for community space in Boise. *Local Elements* will provide a place for people of all ages to enjoy. Local artisans, producers, and merchants will have an area to sell goods, meet community members and enjoy the culture of Boise. The development is sustainable as it uses solar and geothermal power and is made of recycled building materials. It will remain a prominent place of interaction and use for generations to come.

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