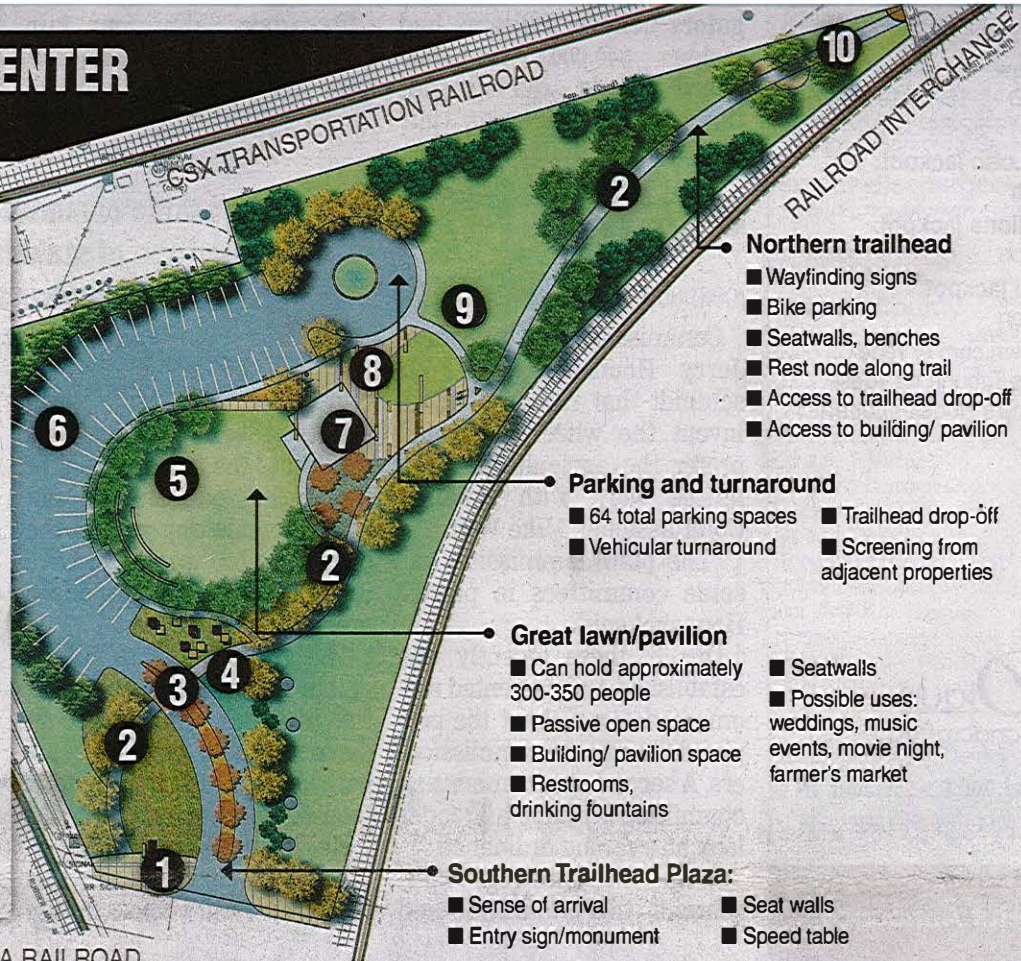


SEYMOUR CENTER TRAILHEAD

- 1 Entry trailhead plaza
- 2 Shared use path
- 3 Speed table trail crossing
- 4 Entry landscape
- 5 Great lawn
- 6 Parking area
- 7 Pavilion site pad
- 8 Main trailhead plaza
- 9 Future programming space
- 10 Depot trailhead connection



- Northern trailhead**
 - Wayfinding signs
 - Bike parking
 - Seatwalls, benches
 - Rest node along trail
 - Access to trailhead drop-off
 - Access to building/ pavilion

- Parking and turnaround**
 - 64 total parking spaces
 - Vehicular turnaround
 - Trailhead drop-off
 - Screening from adjacent properties

- Great lawn/pavilion**
 - Can hold approximately 300-350 people
 - Passive open space
 - Building/ pavilion space
 - Restrooms, drinking fountains
 - Seatwalls
 - Possible uses: weddings, music events, movie night, farmer's market

- Southern Trailhead Plaza:**
 - Sense of arrival
 - Entry sign/monument
 - Seat walls
 - Speed table

LOUISVILLE AND INDIANA RAILROAD

TIPTON STREET

DOWNTOWN CENTERPIECE

City officials want public input about park proposal

By JANUARY WETZEL
 TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER
 jwetz@tribtown.com

The city of Seymour wants input on a plan to turn a vacant area near the downtown into a gathering place for the community.

Mayor Craig Luedeman said he hopes the park will spark revitalization and growth of the downtown.

The city is accepting public comments on the project through an online survey. It asks questions such as what kind of

HAVE YOUR SAY

Seymour is accepting public comments on a proposed downtown park project through an online survey at www.surveymonkey.com/s/SHJZW5L.

features you'd like to see at the park, how you use existing parks and what kind of programming would encourage people to use the new park.

The \$2 million park will fill an area bordered by active rail lines owned by

(SEE PARK PAGE A7)

"I look at this addition to the community as another

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● Park

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1)

CSX Transportation and the Louisville and Indiana Railroad, with a main entrance on Tipton Street (U.S. 50).

Luedeman said the railroads won't affect the project, and the new park would make the area safer because fences and landscaping would force people to cross the tracks at certain points.

The park is being funded through two state grants, one from the Indiana Department of Transportation and the other from the Office of Community and Rural Affairs.

The city must provide a local match of an estimated \$200,000 toward the cost. The Seymour Redevelopment Commission will finance the city match, using tax dollars captured in tax-increment financing districts.

Construction will have to begin next year in order to be completed by January 2016 to meet the funding deadline, Luedeman said.

A conceptual site plan of the park calls for a large central lawn with a pavilion seating up to 350 people, restrooms and drinking fountains. Luedeman envisions the space as a venue for outdoor concerts and movies, picnics, weddings, family reunions, an expanded farmers market and other events.

Seymour resident Tom Gray, who has helped promote the annual Scoop the Loop in downtown Seymour, said he is excited about the possibilities the park holds.

"I would love to see an amphitheater, something to



TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Trash litters parking lot next to the east-west and north-south railroad tracks in 2012 in downtown Seymour.

regularly bring people downtown," he said.

A shared use path for bikers and joggers will travel the length of the park and will head north toward Broadway Street, connecting to an historic freight depot, which houses the Jackson County Visitor Center.

"This is where our new trail system will start," Luedeman said. "From there we hope to expand it throughout the city."

Justin Ratliff of Seymour agrees that walking and biking trails are needed to encourage people to be more active.

"Jackson County is ranked in the top third of the state for obesity," he said. "Some trails for walking probably wouldn't hurt."

There also will be 64 parking spaces in the park and a vehicle turnaround.

Since there are no plans for playground equipment, Luedeman would like to see an area designated for future programming become a small splash pad feature for kids.

City Parks Director Brent Jameson sees the trailhead park as the start of something important in Seymour.

"I look at this addition to

the community as another chance to improve the quality of life of our residents," he said.

"We believe it will bring family and friends together and give our citizens some additional green space to enjoy. Not to mention, it will add parking to the downtown area and an amphitheater for outdoor entertainment."

Nathan Engleking of Seymour suggested putting in something that will really catch people's eyes.

"I think it would be awesome to have a huge fountain there where everyone who drives past can see it," he said. "Or at least some kind of statue."

Plans do call for a large entry sign or monument to give people a sense of arrival, Luedeman said.

He first proposed the park in 2010 as a part of the larger Gateway Project to visually enhance areas of the city.

Work on the first phase of that project, which will improve the cloverleaf at the Interstate 65 interchange, will start this spring.

The downtown park will be landscaped with trees, bushes, flowers and grass, to help turn the vacant lot into an attractive green space, he added.

"It's a way to welcome people to our city and show them that we are proud," he said. "That is why we want to create this space."

The ideas are a far cry from what people see when they pass by the area now.

Most recently, the lot has been used by a private produce market, for parking during the annual Seymour Oktoberfest and as a place for young people to park and congregate. It's often littered with plastic pop bottles, tires and other refuse.

The lot is owned by Dick Elmore of Seymour. He has said in the past he has no reason not to sell the property and would support efforts to improve its appearance.

The city has not been able to negotiate purchase of the property with Elmore because of restrictions from the Indiana Department of Transportation.

"They do not allow local planning to negotiate a price, so we will have to rely on an outside buyer," Luedeman said. The buyer most likely would be an engineering or appraisal firm hired by the city.

Jo Hallett of Seymour isn't convinced the park is the best use of money or that it will bring more business to the downtown, however.

"Why would the city want to spend money on a small park uptown when we already have two other parks nearby?" she asked. "They should use the money to spruce up downtown more."

The city should model itself more after Columbus, she added.

"Columbus' downtown is beautiful," she said. "I would love to see Seymour look like that."