



Todd Larson of the Yankton Bridge Committee shares three schematic plans of how the Meridian Bridge Plaza may look as plans progress. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: First is a view of the east side plaza from the south. The view of the west side of the upper deck of the bridge shows copper pipes for musical interaction. The view to the south side of Levee St. near the bridge shows an informal gathering area.

# Meridian Plaza Takes Shape



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON

Black-eyed Susans bloom by the Meridian Plaza seating near a ginkgo tree. Curving sidewalk that leads under the upper deck to the other side of the Meridian Bridge is an area for future additions that will include large planters, art and music.

## Plants And Plans Loom For Bridge Project

BY BRENDA K. JOHNSON  
P&D Correspondent

"Lots of positive comments," Lisa Kortan said she has heard concerning plants at Meridian Bridge Plaza. Kortan is urban forester and horticulturist for Yankton Parks & Recreation. Bridge area renovation continues by Riverside Park.

Landscape professionals at RDG Planning & Design selected perennials of the region for Meridian Plaza that can thrive without extra care. Local contact for the project is the Yankton Bridge Committee through Todd Larson, Yankton Parks & Recreation. (605) 668-5231

"Prairie dropseed is the native grass by the plaza entrance sign," Kortan said. Fine seed head moves in river breezes beneath the sign. As the grass matures, a faint pink blush may echo the pink in the granite water feature. Perennials take about three years to establish and grow to their intended stature.

Liatrus or Blazing Star has purple stalks of blooms scattered in edges of plant beds around the plaza. These and other perennials were purchased at Di-

ane's Greenhouse in Fordyce, Nebraska. Neu Pond & Landscaping of Yankton installed the plants.

Ground cover like shrubs to the east side of the plaza are "Gro-low" Sumac. Their leaves have a light fragrance when brushed and turn red-orange in fall.

**"For art and music on the plaza, we'll be adding five more Yankton RiverWalk sculptures like you see in Riverside Park and downtown."**

LISA KORTAN

"Black-eyed Susans (by east seating in the plaza) are also growing by the boat dock in Riverside Park," Kortan said. "Native Switchgrass is planted to screen utility boxes at the site."

Ginkgo trees are to provide shade at the plaza.

Fritsch spirea found in the central bed in the plaza are said to have white blooms in summer and red/yellow colored leaves in fall.

To the west of the plaza, a row of hybrid "Karl Foerster" grasses move with river breezes. They are also found near the lower bridge entrance.

"Autumn Magic" black chokeberries

are said to have white flowers in spring, dark purple berries for birds and dark leaves in fall. Upright junipers and columnar Norway maples screen to the west.

"We'll see how these plants (thrive) with the wind and weather," Kortan said. "We may re-arrange a few plants. We plan to add plants along the curb by next spring."

Kortan motions to the new curving sidewalk on the east side of the upper bridge deck entrance, that leads under the bridge. Future additions to the plaza will occur here.

"For art and music on the plaza, we'll be adding five more Yankton RiverWalk sculptures like you see in Riverside Park and downtown," she said. "Along either side of the cement walls of the upper bridge at ground level will be two long planter boxes of flowers. Musical instruments, including large copper pipes and two other instruments resembling xylophones, will be installed. To the south of the bridge entrance along Levee Street, a small public gathering spot for such as local musicians to perform is planned. This plaza will be a place to interact with the beauty of the river, nature, music and art."

## New Roommate, New Pet: Beastly Complications?

BY ALISON BOWEN  
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So you're moving in with someone, and it turns out he or she already has a roommate — one that is sometimes smelly and at times quite charming.

In furry form, that is. What happens when your new roommate — whether a friend, significant other or family member — has a pet? Navigating someone else's adoration for an animal can add a thorn to communication in the kingdom of living together.

Tread carefully, experts advise, whether Fluffy belongs to a platonic roommate or a romantic interest. People can have emotional attachments to a cat or dog that rival similar feelings toward kids, said Dr. Jeremy Martinez, a Los Angeles-based psychiatrist.

"Some people will see their pets like children and may tie a lot of importance to that pet, more than you might realize," Martinez said. "You might see the pet as just an animal, but they might see it as a family member."

Cat Warren, the Durham, N.C.-based author of "What the Dog Knows" (Touchstone), has been both the one moving in and the one with an at-times

rascally pet.

When she moved in with her husband while they were dating, her asthma compelled him to find another home for his two cats. But years later, when they took in her parents' dog, an Irish setter named Megan, he adopted her as his own, albeit reluctantly.

"She really was a complete pill," Warren said. But when Megan died 12 years later, she recalled, "we actually both cried."

If you're moving in with someone who expects you to be a pet parent — or if you are deciding how much of a role you want to play in the pet's life — experts offered some guidelines:

Communicate. An animal, which should be a spirit lifter, can, in fact, become a wedge. Before moving boxes in, make sure to sit and speak. Just as you would talk about bills, discuss who will care for the pet and where it is allowed. "Dogs are really good at invading space," Warren said. "Are you going to allow the dog to be in the bedroom when you have sex, much less on the bed?"

And when issues arise — cats urinating outside their litter box, dogs chewing favorite shoes — instead of blaming or attacking the pet or person, use "I" statements, Martinez

suggested: "This is how I feel about the animal." Instead of placing the blame on the other person, this technique allows people to really redirect those strong emotions toward those feelings and toward more rational discussion.

Take care of your own pet. At least in the beginning, the responsibilities of pet ownership — feeding, walking, trips to the vet, purchasing food and other supplies — should be the primary pet owner's responsibility, said Charlotte Reed, a self-described "petrendologist" who offers pet etiquette advice.

"Don't expect your new boyfriend to want to walk your dog," she said.

And if your pet briefly turns into a monster, "You should expect to pay for anything that your pet destroys," she added. "If your cat pees on your roommate's bed, expect to buy your roommate a new bed."

Consider investing in a dog trainer to scope potential problems. "We never truly understand what our own bad habits are and what we tolerate versus what somebody coming into this relationship might tolerate," Warren noted.

Don't force someone to love your pet. If you were coming into a relationship in which a significant other had

a child, you would need to let that relationship develop naturally, Martinez said. The same is true where a pet is concerned.

The first meeting can be key. "Kneel down; let the pet smell your hand," Reed said. "Don't come looming over." Pet owners need to give their new roommate as much time as needed to get to know their pet. "Try to remember back to when that dog came into your life and what you did to bond with that dog," Warren said.

Be open to change. "Very often in new relationships, the person who has the pet is loath to give over any control," Warren noted. "They have to be willing to give over some control."

Understand that your routines might change. For starters, let the new person feed the dog, if he's willing. Have him set the food down, then quietly stand behind the animal, Warren advised. (Unlike standing in front of the dog and its food, this reassures the pet that the new person won't be taking the food away.)

Realize that your pet might love the new addition more than you expect. Sure, one fear is a dog growling at the new roommate, boyfriend or girlfriend. But what happens if

the pet actually likes the new person more?

"That can be very discouraging, and we see that happen with actual children, too," Martinez said. "Oftentimes that does require a discussion of those feelings between the two individuals, so that they don't harbor resentment."

Recognize that this doesn't have to turn into a negative situation. Warren and Reed both said that when their significant others embraced their pet equally, it became another member of the family. On the other hand ...

Be prepared to walk away. Sometimes, living with someone who has a pet reveals a different side of the pet owner. What if the person doesn't take good care of the pet? What if she thinks having a roommate means she can abdicate some responsibility?

"You have a date and don't want to come home? Either get home to make sure you can feed your cat or say to your roommate, 'Do you mind feeding my cat?'" Reed said. "Don't assume anyone is going to take care of your responsibility."

Reed had a friend who lived in an apartment where her roommate's cat cried all the time and was often left by itself for days.

"She had to move," Reed said.

Life lessons: Whatever happens, experts say, cohabitating with a pet will lend lessons about the strength of a friendship or relationship.

"Sometimes, dogs are great sort of barometers," Warren said.

## Online Training for Garden Educators Sept. 3

BROOKINGS — Fall Gardening with Children is the title of this month's garden-based education webinar. The program is scheduled for Sept. 3 from 9:30-10 a.m. CDT and repeated from 3:30 to 4 p.m. CDT.

"School teachers, afterschool and garden program leaders and helpers are all encouraged to participate," said Chris Zdorovtsov, SDSU Extension Community Development Field Specialist.

This is the fourth season of SDSU Extension's webinar programs targeting teaching garden educators.

The program, presented by Zdorovtsov and will feature planting information, season extension techniques and other garden learning activities for the fall.

To participate in the Webinar, visit [www.iGrow.org/events](http://www.iGrow.org/events) and click the link within the event posting. Participants are encouraged to log in within 15 minutes of the specified time, especially when participating for the first time, to allow for computer set-up.

Save the date for this upcoming session:

• Sept. 24, 9:30 to 10 a.m. CDT and repeated from 3:30 to 4 p.m. CDT: "Putting Your School Garden to Bed for the Winter," presented by Zdorovtsov.

If you would like to receive more information on trainings and grant opportunities related to youth gardening programs or to exchanging questions and ideas with others involved in similar projects, e-mail Zdorovtsov at [Christina.Zdorovtsov@sdstate.edu](mailto:Christina.Zdorovtsov@sdstate.edu) to be added to the SDSU Youth Gardening LISTSERV.

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7:40 am Vermillion Chamber (Nathan Welch)  
8:20 am Yankton RiverWalk (Katie Hunhoff)