Sunken Gardens Park Master Plan

Advisory Committee Meeting #4
October 1, 2020
Today’s Agenda

1. Welcome and Project Status
2. Overview: Alternatives
4. Discussion and Questions/Answers
5. Looking Ahead: Next Steps
2019 Game Plan for a Healthy City: Guiding Principles

Master Plan Goals

- TREE CANOPY
- RESOURCES
- INCLUSIVITY
- HEALTH
- ACCESSIBILITY
- FACILITIES and PROGRAMMING
- MAINTENANCE
- HISTORY
- CULTURAL HERITAGE

Master Plan Analysis

- TOPOGRAPHY
- STORMWATER
- LANDSCAPE
- ACCESS
- EDGES/ENTRANCES
- PROGRAMMING
- SPATIAL ORGANIZATION
- HISTORIC FEATURES
- PAVILION

Master Plan Alternatives

A: Legacy
B: Health
C: Connection
Overview

Sunken Gardens Park originally served as an adornment to the Speer Boulevard Parkway, and also served as a neighborhood park to the Lincoln / La Alma neighborhoods - and provided a variety of experiences and landscapes.

The original foundation of this cherished park is intact, as are memorable views into the park from Speer Boulevard and views from the park to the adjacent skyline.

But the park has suffered losses:

- Eroded walks and interior connections
- Reduction in active and passive activities
- Loss of safe pedestrian access from the surrounding neighborhoods
Overview: Yesterday and Today
Historic Landscape Features

Most of the remaining elements from the park’s Period of Significance have potential to be integrated into an updated park program.

Analysis Diagram: Historic Landscape Features

- Historic formal flower gardens: only the excavated bed shape remains.
- Reflecting pool: only the edge of the pool wall remains at grade.
- Historic stairways: disconnected from existing walks and paths.
- Historic service/tool shed needs repair and is accessed only through the maintenance yard.
- Historic water feature and brook: a single located in the lawn is the only remaining feature.
- Historic sunshade: once a feature of the W. 9th Avenue and Speer Boulevard entrance, the sunshade can be integrated into improved park entrance.
Interior Circulation

Many minor, connecting, paths and walks have been lost over the years. They haven’t been replaced because no new program or features have replaced the historic features that have been lost.

Just trying to run a lap around the park is a challenge.

New, health-focused, programming will drive new connecting paths and walks.

Interior walls were removed when destinations such as the pool and former flower gardens were removed.

The primary park trail does not have any direct connections to existing park features.

There is an opportunity to restore the historic interior loop path in the Southern Zone.

Incipient shortcuts and paths developed over time that are now paved.
A Strong Foundation

The foundation of the original park is evidenced by the definitive and distinctly different Northern and Southern Zones.

Each zone contains unique features that reflect prior uses and/or landscape elements.

Each zone offers diverse uses that are compatible with the surrounding landscape.
Edges & Entrances

Park access is challenging; the park is bordered by busy city streets.

Park entrances are difficult to discern and lack celebration and signage.
Proposed Alternatives

Different yet Compatible Visions

The following three alternative visions reflect what we learned from the survey, stakeholder interviews, Advisory Committee and research performed in conjunction with the Assessments and the Analysis. Each alternative vision addresses issues identified to-date, and reflects fundamental opportunities for the evolution of Sunken Gardens Park.

Alternative A: Legacy
- Reconnect with the past, celebrate the cultural history of the park and neighborhood, and bring history into a modern context.

Alternative B: Health
- Improve the health of city residents and visitors by expanding opportunities for exercise and engagement in a sustainable environment.

Alternative C: Connections
- Improve access and connections to the park and create opportunities for residents and park visitor to connect to each other.
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<tr>
<th>Access</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop through-park 5280 Loop link to improve east and west access</td>
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<td>#3, #7</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edges &amp; Entrances</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5280 Loop at W. 9th Avenue and Bannock Street entrance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>#3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstruct Speer Boulevard walk, preserve historic street-tree edge and make accessible</td>
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<td>#3, #4</td>
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<tr>
<td>New traffic control at W. 9th Avenue and Delaware Street</td>
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<td>#3, #7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redesign Elati Street to create connection to DPS West Campus</td>
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<td>#3, #4, #7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop back of curb to top of slope/park overlook at W. 9th Avenue coordinating with the 5280 Loop</td>
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<td>#3, #7, #15</td>
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<tr>
<th>Stormwater</th>
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<tr>
<td>Develop raingardens at historic garden sites in Northern Zone</td>
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<td>#2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reimagine historic water-based channel site in Southern Zone as stormwater based raingardens</td>
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<td>#2, #14</td>
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<tr>
<th>Landscape: Trees</th>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain ongoing successional planting in coordination with Master Plan scheme</td>
<td></td>
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<td>#1, #2, #11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop specific removal and successional planting plan for conifers at Speer Boulevard / DPS West Campus corridor</td>
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<td>#1, #2, #13, #14</td>
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<td>Develop deciduous shade groves for picnic</td>
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<td>#1, #2, #8</td>
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<td>Identify specific removals for entry / access improvements</td>
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<tr>
<th>Landscape: Ground Plane</th>
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<tr>
<td>Consider reduced mowing at steep side slopes for reduced maintenance and variety of texture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>#2, #11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop new annual gardens in association with interior circulation to reduce turf area</td>
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<td></td>
<td>#2, #14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop additional court / hard surface improvements to reduce turf area</td>
<td></td>
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<td>#2, #5</td>
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<th>Spatial Organization &amp; Programming</th>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain historic spatial organization of north / south zones and Speer to DPS west campus view corridor</td>
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<td>#3, #8, #10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop &quot;Community Center&quot;</td>
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<td>#3, #8, #10, #16</td>
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<td>Redevelop playground / nature play</td>
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<td>#3, #9, #10</td>
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<td>Develop subarea identities through garden design</td>
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<td>#2, #5, #13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop subarea identities through activities programming</td>
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<td>#4, #5, #8, #16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop expanded 5280 Loop transition zone</td>
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<td>#3, #4, #6, #7, #11, #12, #14</td>
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## Historic Landscape Features & Pavilion

- **Develop pavilion foundation stairs as 'Community Center' (Opportunity for interpretation of more recent history)**  
  - Goals & Objectives Met  
  - #8, #13, #14, #15
- **Make limited modification to existing features to encourage park user’s interaction**  
  - #8, #14
- **Redevelop Speer Boulevard walk as part of a 1K loop**  
  - #1, #5, #11, #13
- **Redevelop maintenance shed and yard**  
  - #4, #12

## Interior Circulation - Loop Trail

- **Reestablish interior path and walk connections to new and existing program**  
  - #3, #4, #8
- **Redevelop main interior path as a promenade connection to new and restored gardens**  
  - #8, #14
- **Redevelop interior edge paths to include a measured 1K loop and as a setting for fitness station**  
  - #4, #5
- **Reconstruct each park entrance to be more visible and accessible**  
  - #3, #6, #7

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### Alternative A: Legacy

**Goals & Objectives Met**

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### Alternative B: Health

**Goals & Objectives Met**

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### Alternative C: Connection

**Goals & Objectives Met**

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Sunken Gardens Park Master Plan | Advisory Committee Meeting #4
Alternative A: Legacy

- Reconnect with the past, celebrate the cultural history of the park and neighborhood, and bring history into a modern context.
Alternative B: Health

- Improve the health of local residents and park visitors by expanding opportunities for exercise and engagement in a sustainable environment.
Alternative C: Connection

- Make it easier to access the park by improving connections to adjacent neighborhoods, and create opportunities for residents and park visitors to connect to each other.
Analysis Discussion
Questions/Answers

1. What are the strongest elements of each alternative?
2. What are the weakest elements of each alternative?
Alternative A: Legacy

Alternative B: Health

Alternative C: Connection
There is no meeting in November as we await survey results.

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 3rd
• Survey #2 Results
• Preferred Alternative: Concept

Project Resources: Master Plan Project Page

✓ Assessment of Existing Conditions
✓ Analysis of Issues, Constraints and Opportunities
✓ Public Survey Results and Summary
✓ Summary of Stakeholder Interviews
✓ Proposed Alternatives: “Different Yet Compatible”
✓ Advisory Committee Meeting Presentations and Summary Notes

Denvergov.org/parkprojects – Sunken Gardens Master Plan
EVERY DROP: Resilient and environmentally sustainable

Tree Canopy 1. Maintain and renew tree canopy.

Resources 2. Enhance park landscapes and planting.

EVERY PERSON: Equity in distribution of parks and park resources and programming

Inclusivity 3. Create a safe and accessible park experience.

4. Cultivate partnerships.

Health 5. Create opportunities for improving mental / physical health.

Accessibility 6. Make the park safe and accessible to all ages and abilities.

7. Improve neighborhood access.

Facilities/Programming 8. Provide a framework for high-quality, intergenerational, multi-cultural programming.

9. Upgrade picnic, playground area and seating.

10. Preserve both active and passive areas.

EVERY DOLLAR: Manage Resources

Maintenance 11. Identify and strategize improvements that enable Park Operations.

12. Explore alternatives for increasing public value of Maintenance Building.

UNIQUE DENVER: Reflect Denver’s community and cultural identity

History 13. Preserve the historic composition.

14. Restore or reinterpret the historic features.

Cultural Heritage 15. Identify opportunities to celebrate the cultural heritage.

16. Explore and establish partnerships.