

Meeting Notes

Project: Washington Park Playground & Restroom
Meeting Date: Nov. 17, 2015

Re: Public Meeting
Location: St. John's Church & School, 700 S. Franklin St., Denver, CO 80209
Date Issued: Nov. 19, 2015

Present: Jess Clark, Stream Design
Will Iadevaia, Stream Design
Kerry White, Urban Play Studio (UPS)
Brian Wethington, Denver Parks & Rec. (DPR)
Chris Yanez, Denver Parks & Rec. (DPR)

Summarize meeting:

Brian Wethington (DPR) began the meeting by introducing the team, outlining the goals and objectives the project, the process for public involvement and the planned schedule of upcoming meetings and preliminary project schedule.

Chris Yanez (DPR) presented the previous citywide and local park planning efforts and how ongoing public investment in Washington Park and the new playground align with those previous efforts. He also clarified that this new project involves a complete renovation of the current diagonal playground with a larger development footprint, and that the current boathouse playground will remain in place in the interim. The future plans for the boathouse playground will be addressed in a separate process from that of the current renovation of the diagonal playground.

Jesse Clark (Stream Design) and Kerry White (UPS) presented the concepts of playground types, aesthetics and character covering the topics below:

1. Project introduction
2. What we know - Previous plans and their implications
3. Site - Fitting in to the Overall context
4. Character – complementing the park
5. What makes a great playground
6. Character of experience
7. Ways to think about the site
8. Interactive exercise

The interactive exercise involved rating a series of images based on several playground qualities that included: fun, challenging play, family friendliness, safety, accessibility and aesthetic appropriateness for Washington Park. *(This exercise is included as part of an expanded survey that can be found at the Denver Parks & Rec. planning [website](#).)*

9. Next Steps

Topics Discussed:

At the conclusion of the presentation a series of public comments and questions were fielded by the design team and DPR. These topics involved planning, site design and safety concerns.

Planning:

1. An attendee inquired on the classifications of Denver parks.
 - Chris Yanez (DPR) clarified that the park designations for Denver include pocket, neighborhood and regional parks and that Washington Park is classified as a regional park, Denver's largest park designation.
2. An attendee inquired about focus on the diagonal playground rather than the playground located at the boathouse.
 - DPR communicated that previous planning efforts involved moving the playground area away from the boathouse activities to the diagonal area.
3. An attendee inquired about the playground area being an active recreation site with basketball and tennis, how does this new playground relate to the previous planning effort in this area.
 - DPR communicated that the playground is separate from the planning involved with renovating/moving the basketball courts and there is currently no funding for doing so.

Site Design:

1. An attendee expressed that toys and other items often get lost at the playground, and suggested the inclusion of a community lost & found or a bulletin board for listing lost or found items.
2. An attendee expressed interest in the inclusion of a community toy bin.
 - Brian Wethington (DPR) expressed the difficulties this presents with maintenance crews when toys are left out, and this feature would require further discussion.
3. An attendee inquired as to the difference in cost of the aesthetic styles described in the presentation.
 - Kerry White (UPS) emphasized that it is too early in process to make that determination, more factors than aesthetic and typology determine final cost and this would be more adequately addressed once the design team and DPR is further into the design process.
4. An attendee inquired if they should be envisioning the new play area being significantly larger than the existing one at the diagonal.
 - Jesse Clark (Stream Design) reiterated that the new site would encompass more area making the new playground size comparable to the current playground at the boathouse.
5. An attendee emphasized the need for accessibility for disabled children be included in the playground.
 - The design team and DPR expressed that this is a priority and that continued feedback throughout the design process is key to these needs being met.
6. An attendee inquired if the needs for all ages of caregivers are being met, such as grandparents.
 - The design team expressed that the intent is for this playground to accommodate all ages and this includes caregivers.
7. An attendee suggested the playground should include circulation for kids on scooters to stay away from main traffic of cyclists and other traffic on the diagonal.
8. An attendee suggested the inclusion of elements like a rideable train.
9. An attendee suggested to accommodate children on skateboards and scooters on the pedestrian only section of the diagonal.
10. An attendee expressed the need for more bike racks near the new playground.
11. An attendee suggested that if the bathrooms are sex separated that changing tables should be included in both the men's and women's restroom.

Safety:

1. An attendee expressed concern that metal slides get far too hot in the summer months.
 - The design team expressed awareness of hot slides being an issue and that slide material and shade would be addressed in the design process.
2. An attendee expressed concern that this park is adjacent to the vehicular roundabout and providing adequate separation between toddlers and cars.
 - The design team noted that location of age specific programming and providing adequate 'buffers' for problematic adjacencies would be addressed during the design process.
3. An attendee expressed concern over integrating different age groups into one playground, older kids using play areas meant for younger children.
 - The design team communicated that the playground design will involve strategies for mitigating the issues associated with multiple age groups. Other attendees expressed that it is essential to have a playground suitable for multiple age groups so they can bring their older and younger children to one playground.
4. An attendee expressed concern over the sharpness of concrete curb and play elements at the boathouse playground and that the danger of these surfaces should be considered when designing the new diagonal playground.
5. An attendee expressed concern over the inclusion of wood elements in the new playground since splinters have become an issue at the boathouse playground.
 - DPR communicated that current design and maintenance methods have been successful at mitigating this issue at other Denver playgrounds.
6. An attendee expressed concern over the current disrepair of the boathouse playground.
 - DPR communicated that this is a known issue and will be addressed separately in the future planning for the boathouse playground.
7. An attendee expressed concern with geese at the park.
 - DPR communicated that this is a system wide issue and there are limitations to addressing it based on state and federal law.

Stream Design believes this report accurately reflects what transpired at the meeting. Please provide comment to the appropriate project manager if you have a different understanding of what occurred or would like to add specifics or additional information. Notification should be made within 5 working days of issuing this report, after which, it is assumed that all parties agree that this report is accurate.

CC: File