YOUR CITY, YOUR PARKS

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK: INPUT SESSION #1 FINDINGS

MAPPING EXERCISE

Participants were asked to comment on an aerial map that showed existing conditions of the property and surrounding context. Most comments were general and not directly related to a specific location on the map. Comments described concerns and needs for wildlife and habitat preservation, lighting, safe connections to the park across 32nd, and a need for play opportunities for kids in the neighborhood. Below are key findings:

- Many residents of Maple Villa, a housing community along the site’s west side, were opposed to a new park space or desired only minimal, low-impact development on the property.
- The majority of participants were interested in preserving natural habitat and protecting local wildlife. Many participants were interested in an educational nature trail.
- Several participants noted an increase in young families in the neighborhoods south of 32nd, and voiced concern about safety crossing the street to access a park.

BASIC NEEDS EXERCISE

Connectivity to each other and the natural world, a sense of belonging within our community, personal and environmental safety, and well maintained recreational opportunities are all important factors when considering how people access and relate to a public park. These needs vary from person to person and are unique to the community in which the park is located.

Participants were asked to select four images that resonated with them in terms of safety, connection, recreation, and belonging in relation to a new park in their neighborhood. People choose from over 30 images of experiences, textures, ecologies, and uses and wrote on each card why that image had a significant meaning to them as they thought about the green space and their own needs and concerns for the site and surrounding context.

To the left is a summary of common themes for each Basic Need.

Connection / Protect Wildlife and Habitat
- “Connect with nature in an accessible way”
- “Love to connect with Ken-O-Sha trails for walking and/or biking”
- “Connect kids to nature!”
- “Cultural events, farmers market”
- “Families together”

Activities for Families / Low-Impact Trail System
- “Opportunities for community projects”
- “Protect wildlife, protect wetlands”
- “Opportunities for children to connect with nature and be immersed in nature”
- “Keep natural”
- “Trails that take advantage of the unique environment”

Belonging / Welcoming Spaces that Celebrate Diversity / Nature and Peace / Inclusive
- “Mediation garden with a few benches”
- “Our children of color need to feel welcome in green spaces and be connected to nature’s serenity”
- “Quiet place for reflection”
- “Wheelchair accessibility is my number one priority.”
- “Barrier free”
- “Small pavilions scattered around for small groups, friends connecting”
- “Fun for families”
- “Spaces to practice African dances and music. Also space to perform!”
- “Performance area for acoustic players. Small groups, not amplified”

Safety / Traffic and Pedestrian Safety / Crime and Lack of Policing / Ecological Health
- “Crosswalk across 32nd”
- “Head safe access for traffic. This is a dangerous street”
- “Major concerns about drug, traffic, and increased crime”
- “Regular police oversight, including after park closure and night time”

Recreation / Diverse and Inclusive Play / Accessible Nature Trails / Environmental Education
- “Cultural festivals, events”
- “Areas for older kids—sports courts, rock climbing walls... places teens can be active and can avoid trouble!”
- “Toddler friendly play!”
- “We need a playground in this neighborhood. There are very few—we just moved here in November and have struggled to find parks with playgrounds and sports activities”
- “Passive recreation aka quiet enjoyment”
- “Label the trees, plants, etc. for environmental education”
- “Walking trails for all ages/abilities. A quiet environment for appreciating nature”
- “Gardening/gardens for all age groups”
- “Large, fenced dog park space”

COMMENT CARDS

"Could we have a natural beauty area/park? A meditation garden would be nice with flowers, plants, natural benches out of wood or logs. A peace pole would be nice."

"I would never want to see any development there that encouraged large group events like ball fields, soccer fields, picnic pavilions, etc. And certainly nothing that had lighting for night events. Any park should have limited hours, with locked gates to prevent non-recreational users from using it for bad activity."

"Keep it all natural. Don't change a thing. We don't need any more pavement in the world. What about the trees? We need more, not less of them. Noise levels from them would be a problem. What about the wildlife? Don't displace them. MD to the park! It's a park the way it is!"

"I'd like natural trails with signs for kids. Small pavilion and picnic tables. A splash pad for kids."

"I have serious security concerns. I also have concerns about too many crossing the extremely busy street (coming from the apartment complexes). Last year someone was hit by a car and killed crossing the street. We bought our condo based on the 'backyard' being all natural and enjoy the wildlife being around."

"Love the idea of nature trails. Native plant guide. Low impact."

"Passenger vehicles and park area."