

Taylor Park
Focus Group Meeting # 1
Building Grounds, Security and Safety
Meeting held at the Hedges Administrative Center
218 W. Madison St
Oak Park, IL 60302

March 13th, 2008

History

- Very busy streets and this park has always been a refuge, nice trail at center, can lose yourself.
- Keep in mind historic plan
- Jensen used large shrub masses, meadows/trees to move from one space to another. It would be difficult for police to survey the park. Shrub masses were removed because of security issues; in some areas they were 60-80" tall.
- Is it possible to keep design intent with other plant material?
- Post WWII the park became more active with team sports and a philosophical change about recreation, also we live in different times, security is an issue and we can't have large shrubs
- The old park had a stream with decorative bridges on the north side, removed in 1982.
- Frank Lipo at the historical society says we are welcome to come see him
- I think Charles White designed the comfort station- same as Scoville/Lindberg/Taylor

General Utilities

- The power pole with transformer near the comfort station is from the 1960s. There is a distribution panel. Let's get rid of the pole and run sub grade to comfort station
- Takes a long time to get COMED commitment
- Look at Austin to change service, change to different class of voltage and it may be 30-40K

Drainage and Soils

- There are many issues with drainage
- Ground water comes to surface in East and SE of the park
- Changing drainage can cause other problems
- When the VOP Streets and Sanitation Department redid Elmwood, an under drain system along curb at Division was installed and tied into MWRD system
- The sidewalk at Ridgeland causes liability issues. The sidewalk has subsided and material comes down slope and raises soil levels at walk.
- The soil and dense clays are remnants of a terminal moraine from Lake Illinois
- The water main at Elmwood and Berkshire is pretty new
- Perhaps create pond/wetland in SE
- Is it possible to cause wetland area without children's liability?

- It would be nice to have a water/natural features
- If a wetland, there should be no dog park even remotely nearby

Ridgeland Alignment

- The staggered intersection is a problem for traffic
- Why not connect Ridgeland straight through the park?
- Divide the park and create a separate section for the residents on the east
- Reducing open space will be looked at with jaundiced eyes, regardless of original plan.
- What about houses, don't they need access?
- Old Ridgeland alignment could be a one-way street and reduced in width
- The park in the middle of 2 heavily traveled roads is an issue.
- Dividing the park is a real issue
- The separate facility could be a dog park
- Advantages
 - Traffic movement
 - Pick up more park space?
 - Enhance property values?
- Utilities now in Ridgeland are local water and local sewer, nothing major
- Look for federal funds, transportation enhancement funds, add a bike path
- Double separation from the park with an access local road and Ridgeland?
- What about an underpass, grade park over road
- It would cost a fortune
- Street might have gone through there in the '20's
- At Field Park old roadway concrete was discovered which added real cost to the project to have it removed.

Teens, Kids, Security

- Teens congregate in the evergreen trees
- The hang out at Bunker-Village Siren
- They want to hang out/congregate
- The play equipment is for ages 12 and under
- Picnic BBQ is for families
- Maybe add a section for teens to hang out separate from play equipment and picnic area
- Have a spot for the police to send the teens
- There has been a lot of vandalism to the building. Teenagers do things in groups. The windows were broken by a particular kid. He eventually moved away
- Send them to Stevenson if possible – too far away
- How about rock climbing/skate dots?
- Trees are an aesthetic addition but provide concealment opportunity to do something/assault

- People hanging out after park closes
- Police have to get out of car due to topography, size and lighting of the park
- Increase lighting in the center of the park
- I hate that Barrie is lit too brightly.
- Careful not to over-light for sake of natural area, keep the park low lit especially here for beauty and historic value
- Keep balance for security and park effect
- Tennis courts have dark spots where kids hang out

Play Center and Comfort Station

- Move play center by the picnic area to get away from Division, have larger play area next to picnic area
- But the comfort station at Division is historic
- Love to move play center and comfort station also to north side
- If the comfort station is moved, we would not be able to get the park listed (?)
- Open to leaving comfort station where it is and move play ground to the other side of park

Dog Park

- Should be away from busier streets
- Discussion about where to put dog park was held without a conclusion
- If on East side, it should not be even remotely near a wetland/habitat

Soccer Field/Meadow

- Very wet, added tons of sand and calcite clay and over seed
- We add 8k of sod every year
- Currently the field is 50x100yd, we want 60x110 yards
- Is artificial turf an option?
- A lot of people would be attracted, we would need to fence
- We would need control points
- A fenced-off area is not a good idea, off soccer season it is an open meadow