

Taylor Park
Focus Group Meeting #2
Park District Staff
Meeting held at the Hedges Administrative Center
218 W. Madison St
Oak Park, IL 60302

March 13th, 2008

General

- A lot of utilization from the area, people walk great distances
- Park used for picnic, tennis, soccer, camps, walking, games etc.
- Perimeter sidewalk is enjoyed as a walking track
- Resident said that she expected the park to look better than Chicago parks but Taylor looks like it is in poor condition.
- The playground equipment is out of date
- It is beautiful but it is overused, lawns get torn up, dogs let loose, general look of wear and tear
- Much money is spent to re-sod every year and erosion is widespread.
- Need signage that is more aesthetically pleasing
- Mark gateways/entrances-put all signage at park entrances and make part of design vocabulary
- People ignore the signs
- People let dogs off leash and it is a problem

Ridgeland Alignment

- Should Ridgeland be reconnected straight through the park?
- There is a drainage issue. We should find out what we are dealing with by using borings
- Would rerouting Ridgeland solve only water problems?
- Bringing Ridgeland back could truncate sled hill
- Who has jurisdiction for Ridgeland?
- Park would be disjointed; capacity and function would be hampered by that

Drainage and Soils

- Taylor is on the continental divide. Isn't there a continental divide marker?
- That is why Taylor Park is so wet. The ridge changes from clay to sand at that point. That is why there is a constant stream of ground water coming out into Division. It occurs naturally.

- When installing the new play area next to the comfort station, they hit a high water table.
- Initially it was nice soil but quickly turned to clay and the hole filled up with water on top of a hill!
- I use the perimeter for walking. A lot of ice builds up on sidewalks.
- The lower areas and the sidewalk on Ridgeland flood. It is partially due to the sidewalk being higher than the park; water must go somewhere.
- Path has subsided, needs to be raised and reconstructed
- Use water or find a spot for it to go
- Water challenge is major. If it is solved, it would recreate useable space.
- Groundwater issue needs to be straightened out. MWRD won't let more groundwater into the water system
- Need to know where it is at and dive into the problem (no pun intended)
- Until you hit July/August the park is always damp
- Water stands and people go through it. Dogs and bikes tear up the surface
- Compare it with Lindberg which is more pleasing. It was renovated completely 10 years ago and has underground drains that Taylor does not.

Tennis

- Tennis court wind break is poor
- Tennis courts are very important-must stay
- Make tennis courts more open
- Tennis courts lighting needs to be replaced-almost 40 years old
- Patching inhibits the light control
- Lights to stay on until 8pm

Playground

- I would like to see playground expanded
- It was built as a tot lot rather than a real playground
- It needs to be rehabbed

Picnic Area

- Bbq is utilized often not only by residents and is permitted
- Kids like to climb trees over there.
- Some drainage issues nearby
- Expand the area and potentially have umbrella shades
- There would be maintenance problem

Soccer Field/Meadow

- Soccer field is large portion of space
- Athletic field is complete mess, so many amendments needed to make the grass grow
- Surface is not flat
- Re-grade entire soccer field so slope starts further back
- Drop is too steep
- Lights for fields?
- People leave Oak Park to use other areas of green space

WALKS

- We plow the walks. It has become expected by the residents.
- Very difficult to find the curving paths in the snow and often we hit grass edge.
- Would like to see sidewalks wider and have markers that are aesthetic to guide the plowing.
- Kids steal the current markers. We need markers people don't run off with.
- Straighten perimeter walks or give them larger or more consistent curves
- Use trees as markers. No they grow roots into the sidewalk
- Root crown comes out too far
- Heated walks are too expensive to maintain; we would triple the budget from an energy perspective

Planting

- Jensen used native materials, Columbus Park is the closest to his philosophy, didn't use many annuals
- Want to see more color and lushness, potential to add in area by comfort station
- Give people something nice to look at while they are stopped at Division and Ridgeland. Create an area for annuals or perennials. Maybe use a crash barrier to protect them.
- Those plants would need water
- Create a wetland where the park floods. We need to take out diseased trees and replace the ones that are coming to the end of their time
- Whenever you create something, you create more problems.
- Huge hawthorns, some smaller ones have passed their prime 'wizeden'

- Rethink the raised flower bed at the corner of Division and Elmwood. The pines have shaded the beds out at the corner of Elm and Division.
- One Pine is diseased and should be removed
- There are many memorial trees. If any have to be moved, we must keep the community informed
- Try to keep the two copper beaches
- In wet areas try to plant water-loving plants and trees, such as tamarack (invasive). Swamp Cyprus, birch or goat willow.
- Swamp white oak would be good.

Irrigation

- Bunker is associated with civil defense; was originally built to house compressors and motors but is not in use currently.
- Remove it, but where would the irrigation controls go?
- They need to see the fields from the irrigation control sites.
- New technology could replace it. Current system uses hydraulics.

Kids and Summer Camps

- Summer camp is based in the park
- Slopes prevent us seeing kids in other parts of the park. It is a security issue.
- Summer camps have no centralized home location and we use the school more than the park.
- We would like a pavilion for picnic and camp programs to provide shade, congregating area and a place for rainy days etc.
- The comfort station needs connection to play areas and kid uses.
- Could have a comfort station near or in the new pavilion near the picnic area.
- Summer camp needs storage tied into shelter and comfort station.
- Nice gardens on the side of Division. Beware of drivers going into park.
- Dog park-tennis court as one wall of park
- Potential proximity to playground
- Group fences/fenced areas together
- Can't go between soccer field and tennis courts since you rotate fields
- Things are invisible and bbq area needs to be enhanced
- Much too small of a bbq area, needs a shelter
- Parking becomes an issue, create permits
- Storage 250sf would be enough for camps
- Create sound buffer if nearby

- No point to spend money to re-grade soccer field if you aren't going to add lights
- Soccer is not a good vantage point, not near bathrooms, can't view tot lot
- Now have roll away goals, idea is to run it in multiple directions-drainage problems arose, field is beat to pieces
- Should be a drop-off /curb-cut staging people to come and go, preferably near shelter
- Place for kids to put things-do arts and crafts
- Shelter/roof with columns with lockable storage areas
- Shelter should provide sightlines, and connect where people congregate, drop-off, playground, connectivity
- We need a drop off for senior citizens and unloading
- How about a drop-off in nw corner off of Elmwood
- Too close to intersection
- Park bench area can be a good space too
- Drop off, like size of Barrie or Field Parks(2 cars/school bus)
- Traffic flow may be interrupted
- The comfort station is tiny and badly laid out - not useful for storage and is in a bad location