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SOUTH PARK RENOVATION PROJECT  
OPEN HOUSE IN THE PARK  
August 22, 2013

MEETING NOTES

The objective of the Open House in the Park event was to reach out to park users who would not typically attend a public meeting or provide comment through the standard community outreach processes. The event took place during mid-day, at a time when the park was filled with lunch-time visitors. For two hours presentation materials illustrating the proposed concept for the park's renovation were on display at various locations within the park. Recreation and Parks Department staffs, designers from Fletcher Studio, and community volunteers from the South Park Improvement Association were on hand to answer questions and collect feedback from interested park users.

Overall, responses received were positive. Only one commenter expressed a desire to see the park remain as-is. All others were happy to learn about the proposed improvements. Common questions, general themes and comments made by the park visitors as they reviewed the proposed park renovation plan were as follows:

1. Interest in the future of the children's play area was common. Park users wanted to make sure it was still going to be part of the park. Specific comments included:
  - 1.1. Users liked the tall swings and would like them to stay in the plan.
  - 1.2. Play features that would be appropriate for a larger range of age groups was desired.
  - 1.3. A perimeter fence or other barrier to prevent small children from running toward the street and to keep dogs out of the play area is need.
2. Concern over the length of the construction and whether the total park would be inaccessible during that period was expressed.
3. The fate of the parks trees was a common question. Specific comments included:
  - 3.1. Removal of some trees would be desirable so that the interior of the park could be sunnier.
  - 3.2. The large trees at the perimeter of the park are the trademark of the park and should be preserved.
  - 3.3. The park is home to raptors, so the removal of large trees should be avoided or be done in a way that does not disturb nesting.
  - 3.4. Many of the trees are dying and look like they may fall. Trimming or replacement trees should be included in the project.
4. Park furnishings and amenities for lunchtime visitors was a common theme. Park users expressed a desire to see the following incorporated into the plan:
  - 4.1. More seating opportunities, especially seating for small groups.

- 4.2. An interest in seeing small performance spaces within the park was expressed.
- 4.3. One users wanted more bike racks in the park.
5. Interest was expressed in providing a dedicated dog-play area. One commenter also suggested setting aside some space for where dogs would be prohibited.
6. There were many comments on the proposed park hardscape. Specific comments include:
  - 6.1. Users liked the meandering path concept and the amount of seating provided.
  - 6.2. Concerns were raised over the total area of concrete proposed within the park. Suggestions included:
    - 6.2.1. Reduce plaza areas and path widths
    - 6.2.2. Use alternative materials or use colored concrete to make the surfaces warmer
    - 6.2.3. Reduce the quantity or width of the platforms, or provide planting within the centers of the platforms.
    - 6.2.4. Reduce the number of seat walls, and utilize wood benches that are more comfortable to sit on.
  - 6.3. One park user asked if it would be possible to expand the park out and reduce all the street pavement; eliminating curbs and mixing street life with the park.
7. Other comments received include the following:
  - 7.1. The design should be more in-line with the historic character of the neighborhood.
  - 7.2. More lighting should be provided.
  - 7.3. The proposed planted path edges may be difficult for park gardeners to maintain.
  - 7.4. Expand traffic calming features, such as adding another bulb-out, to slow down traffic.