



Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska
Parks & Recreation Department

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MEMORANDUM

Date: January 8, 2015

To: Parks & Recreation Commission

Cc: Holly Spoth-Torres, Parks Superintendent

From: Steve Rafuse, Park Planner

Project: **PRC 15-01: Valley of the Moon Park Master Plan**

INTRODUCTION

Valley of the Moon Park (VOM) is a 21.78 acre community-use park located in the South Addition neighborhood of Anchorage. Established in 1960 as part of the Chester Creek Greenbelt, the park has long been one of Anchorage's most popular and beloved parks. In 2010, MOA Parks and Recreation invested \$500,000 in upgrades at the park; including new playground equipment, improved ADA accessibility, and a new picnic shelter.

PURPOSE

The master plan provides a 5-10 year vision for the development and management of Valley of the Moon (VOM) Park. The plan embodies the community's vision to preserve the character of the park while providing for a range of recreational opportunities accessible to all residents of Anchorage. This master plan identifies community needs, addresses issues and public expectations and establishes a framework for future development of the park.

More specifically, the purpose of the master plan is to:

- Address concerns over safety and overflow parking
- Provide a formal direction for the off-leash dog area/little league ball field
- Determine appropriate and compatible uses
- Provide a park that encourages active community use and discourages negative activities
- Develop the park in a manner that preserves the character of the park

PLANNING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement is an important component of any planning process. To ensure that Valley of the Moon Park (VOM) master plan aligns with the desires of the community, a public involvement process was led by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department.

Outreach: Parks and Recreation staff kicked-off the project with presentations at both North Star and South Addition Community Councils. Staff also contacted members of the 2009 site plan task force to solicit input. To assist in the development of the master plan, an advisory group was formed. The group was comprised of park users, neighbors, and representatives from both North Star and South Addition Community Councils.

Advisory Group: The advisory group's primary role was to identify improvements and to ensure that those improvements align with the needs of the local community. The advisory group was tasked with

providing input and recommendations to help guide Parks and Recreation in a three-step planning process:

Step 1 - Identify current and future needs

Step 2 - Determine appropriate development and prioritize improvements

Step 3 - Build consensus on a site plan for future development

The advisory group carefully considered four alternative site plans. The group deliberated on the size and location of facilities as well as the appropriateness and compatibility of uses. Through dialog and discussion the advisory group developed consensus on a preferred master plan.

KEY ISSUES AND DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS

Parks and Recreation staff worked with an advisory group to identify key issues and prioritize desired improvements. The group sought to develop the park in a manner that preserved the character of the park, while adding new amenities and improved existing facilities. The following lists highlight's issues and concerns addressed in this planning effort as well as improvements identified by the advisory group.

Issues and Concerns:

- Parking is limited and overflowing onto 17th Ave
- Uncertainty over status of ball field/dog park
- Lack of trash cans and dog stations near ball field
- Port-a-potties are difficult to service at location of screens
- Safety concerns from undesirable activity in and around the park

Desired Improvements:

- Construct safety fencing along 17th Ave
- Move the screening for the port-a-potties closer to the parking lot to improve servicing
- Remove the dugouts
- Formalize off-leash dog park
- Add amenities and improve the fence/gate to the off-leash area
- Expand the existing parking lot to the east and include landscaping
- Retain open space areas "as is"
- Leave the forested area "as is" to maintain a visual and noise buffer
- Add adult exercise station
- Add bike racks
- Expand the community gardens
- Clean up the homeless camps in the woods

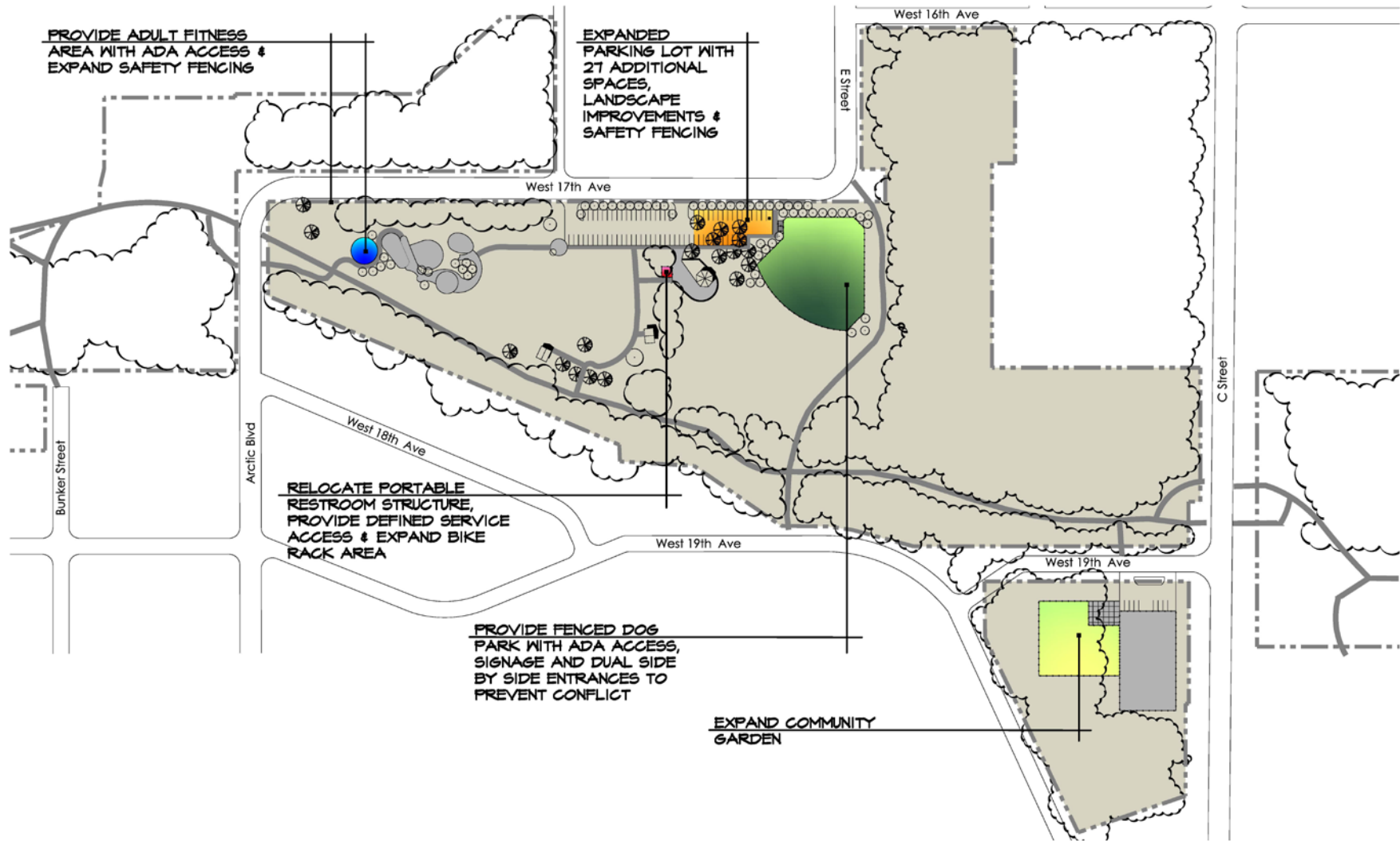
MASTER PLAN PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Four alternatives were developed based on the information gathered through the planning process. Each alternative presents a conceptual theme that provides for various uses and configurations of facilities. The alternatives were presented to the advisory group for discussion and later refined into a preferred alternative.

The preferred alternative retains much of the same footprint and existing infrastructure with improved or expanded facilities. The master plan identifies six new improvements: 1) a new adult fitness station located directly west of the existing playground equipment; 2) the restroom screen will be located next to the parking lot to allow for easy servicing and to improve the visual aesthetic; 3) the parking lot will be expanded to the east by 27 spaces to minimize on-street parking and improve safety; 4) a new formalized off-leash dog park space will assume the footprint of the little league field; 5) fencing will be extended to continue along 17th Ave to improve safety; and, 6) the community garden will be expanded by approximately 50%.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department recommends approval of the Valley of the Moon Park master plan. The master plan was developed in coordination with an advisory group and includes extensive stakeholder and community involvement. The plan has been approved by North Star and South Addition Community Councils. The Department recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission pass the proposed resolution in support of the Valley of the Moon Park master plan.



Valley of the Moon Park Master Site Plan

Anchorage Alaska 9.30.2014



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PRC RES NO. 2015-01
Valley of the Moon Park Master Plan

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to both the Mayor and the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission has the responsibility and duty to provide for the long term vision of our park system by ensuring that a balance of parks, natural resources, and recreation facilities provides for the health, welfare, and safety of all residents of the Anchorage Bowl; and

WHEREAS, the Valley of the Moon Park master plan provides a 5-10 year vision that will guide future development at the park; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department partnered with local Community Councils, stakeholders and park users to establish an advisory group to assist the Department in identifying and prioritizing desired improvements for the Valley of the Moon Park; and

WHEREAS, the improvements proposed in the master plan are based on community and stakeholder input and have been vetted by the advisory group through deliberation and consensus; and

WHEREAS, the improvements proposed in the master plan have received support and approval from the both the South Addition Community Council and the North Star Community Council;

WHEREAS, the new off-leash dog park space proposed by the advisory group and identified in the master plan has been recommended by the Animal Control Advisory Board, as required under Title 17.10.090;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the master plan submitted by the Department and the advisory group for the Valley of the Moon Park.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 8th day of January, 2015.

Chair
Parks and Recreation Commission

ATTEST:

John Rodda, Director
Parks & Recreation Department