



Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska
Parks & Recreation Department

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MEMORANDUM

Date: November 12th, 2015

To: Parks & Recreation Commission

Cc: Josh Durand, Parks Superintendent

From: Steve Rafuse, Park Planner

Project: **PRC 15-19: Davis Park Master Plan**

INTRODUCTION

Davis Park is a 77.92 acre community use park located in the Mountain View neighborhood in northeast Anchorage. The park serves both the local neighborhood as well as the larger community and provides for a unique mix of recreational activities not found in other parts of Anchorage. The park features soft-surface trails, athletic fields for rugby and ultimate frisbee, a basketball court, a little league baseball field, a parking lot, a picnic shelter and community gardens.

In recent years, residents and community leaders have sought to transform Davis Park into a major community asset. This is reflected in the 2015 Mountain View Targeted Neighborhood Plan which identifies "Improving Davis Park" as one of the community's top five priorities.

The Davis Park Master Plan recognizes the communities desire to improve the park. The plan provides a path forward for future investment by identifying community needs, addressing issues and concerns, and establishing a framework for future development of the park.

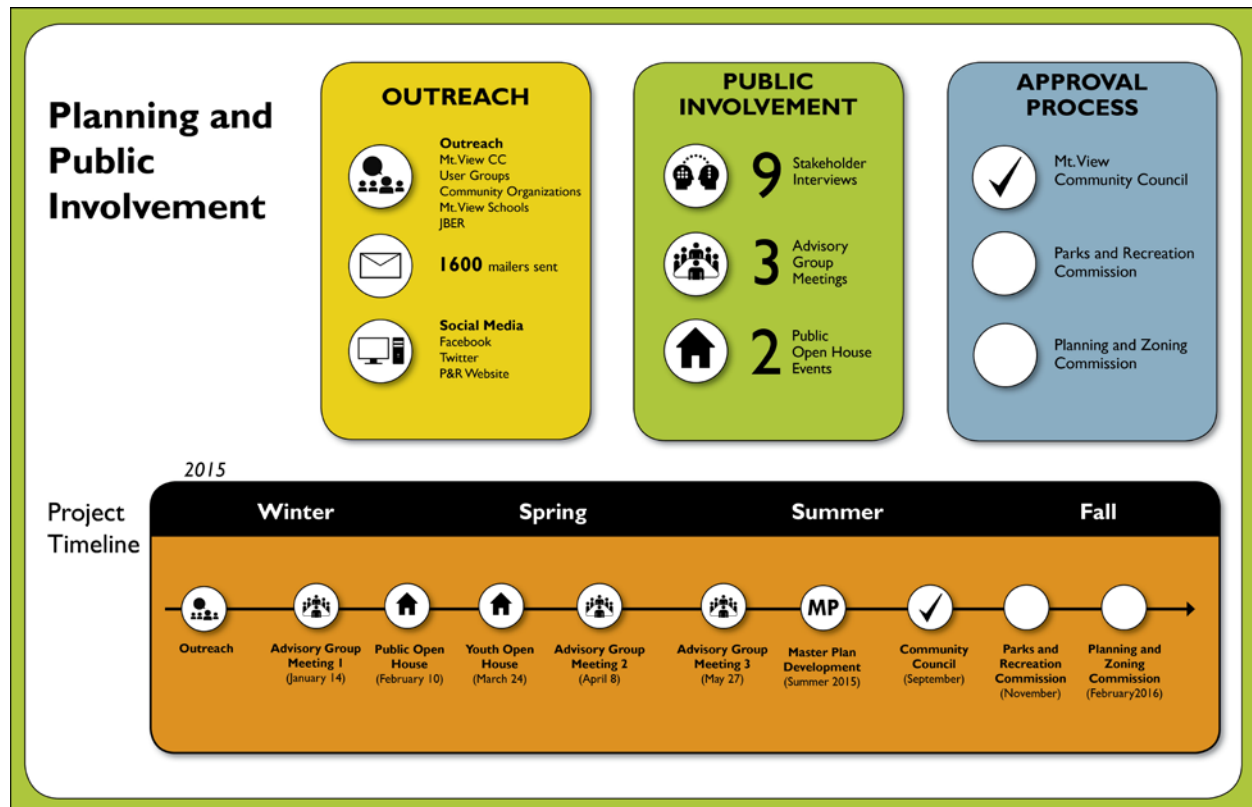
PURPOSE

The Davis Park Master Plan provides a 20 year vision for the management and development of Davis Park. The plan embodies the community's vision to provide active and healthy recreational opportunities to the residents of Mountain View and northeast Anchorage. More specifically, the purpose of the Master Plan is to:

- Determine the current and future recreational needs of the Mt. View community
- Identify and prioritize the community's desires for new improvements
- Provide a park that encourages active community use and discourages negative activities
- Recognize existing uses in the park and determine how best to accommodate their needs
- Create a tool for future fundraising

PLANNING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement is an important component of any planning process. To ensure that the Davis Park Master Plan aligns with the desires of the community, a public involvement process was led by Anchorage Parks and Recreation staff. The graphic on the following page provides a summary of the planning and public involvement process.



THE MASTER PLAN

Parks and Recreation staff worked with residents and stakeholders to identify key issues and prioritize desired improvements. Based on feedback gathered through the planning and public involvement phase, a list of common themes was distilled, providing a foundation for the recommendations proposed in this plan. The following section provides a summary of the issues and concerns, general consensus agreement items, and the proposed recommendations for future development at Davis Park.

Issues and Concerns:

Stakeholders recognize that Davis Park is a valued community asset. However, a lack of investment and few year-round activities has led to concerns about safety and security at the park. Stakeholders indicated that there were few “eyes on the park” to discourage negative activities. While residents called for the development of new amenities and facilities at the park, sports organizations cited the need for new investment and upgrades to existing fields. Several other issues were identified such as:

- Safety and security issues including drinking and homeless camps
- Limited bike and pedestrian infrastructure connecting the neighborhood to the park
- Athletic fields need upgrades and improved irrigation
- Little investment in new park amenities
- Few facilities to support year-round activity
- Uncertainty over the long-term status of JBER land lease

General Consensus Agreement Items:

The Davis Park Master Plan includes a series of recommendations for future development of the park. These recommendations are based on a series of consensus agreement items. Together, these items provide the core vision for the Davis Park Master Plan. The following list summarizes items of agreement:

- Recognize Davis Park as a valued community asset in the Mt. View neighborhood
- Encourage safe bike and pedestrian connections to the park
- Develop the park with a mix of facilities and attractions that give the park an unique identity
- Provide a connection to Lions Park while still recognizing the individual identity of each park
- Develop the park in a manner that balances new facilities with existing natural areas
- Preserve the character of the forest
- Activate the park with positive use
- Focus new development in highly visible area between the parking lot and the athletic fields

Recommendations:

The recommendations identified in the Davis Park Master Plan provide for active and healthy year-round recreation. Each recommendation is intended to address issues identified during the planning phase and is accompanied by a series of action items. The following list of recommendations is sorted by topic area.

- Access and Connections
 - Improve bike and pedestrian access to the park
 - Strengthen the connection between Davis Park and Lions Park
 - Improve connectivity and circulation within the park
- Land Use
 - Seek long-term lease agreement with JBER to support future investment
 - Revise the parcel boundaries to reflect the existing fence lines
- Forest and Trails
 - Upgrade existing developed trails
 - Manage forest as a valued natural resource
- Athletic Fields
 - Upgrade the existing athletic fields to address uneven playing surface
 - Expand the footprint of the athletic fields to accommodate more active use
 - Upgrade irrigation system for improved field maintenance
- Baseball Fields
 - Upgrade existing little league ball field
- Basketball Courts
 - Upgrade the basketball court
- Disc Golf
 - Develop a 9 hole disc golf course at Davis Park
- Community Gardens
 - Expand community gardens at Davis Park
 - Manage and maintain the community gardens as a community asset
- Skate Park, Bike Park, Boulder Climbing Area
 - Develop a small to medium sized skate park
 - Develop a small to medium sized bike park
 - Develop a small to medium sized boulder climbing area
- Amenities
 - Provide restroom facilities at Davis Park
 - Add amenities to improve park users experience
- Parking Lot
 - Expand the parking lot to support the development of new facilities
 - Provide space to accommodate a farmers market



STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department recommends approval of the Davis Park Master Plan. The Master Plan is the product of an extensive public involvement process which included numerous presentations at the Mt. View community council, two public open house events, three advisory group meetings, nine stakeholder interviews, and a survey.

The Master Plan has received unanimous support by the Mountain View Community Council. The Department recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission pass the proposed resolution in support of the Davis Park Master Plan.