



South Anchorage Sports Park (SASP) Master Plan Update Advisory Group Meeting #2



March 4, 2014 • Spenard Recreation Center

Attendees:

Bob Hoffman, Betty Hertz, Kent Best, Neil Koeniger, Birgitta Kyttle, Nancy Beardsley, Steve Beardsley, Deanna Montagna, Willie Paul, Dave Carter, Todd Glidewell, Steve Rafuse, Dwayne Adams, Sara Wilson-Doyle, Kim Graham.

Overview Notes:

The second advisory group meeting regarding the South Anchorage Sports Park master plan update began with a thank you and short review of progress from Steve Rafuse, Park Planner with Anchorage Parks and Recreation. He explained that Parks and Recreation staff had met with USKH prior to the meeting to produce alternatives based on advisory group and stakeholder feedback. It was also explained that the purpose of this meeting was to narrow the concept for the preferred alternative in response to the master plan. Introductions of all attendees then followed.

Sara Wilson Doyle (USKH) then provided a review of stakeholder input as highlighted in an interview themes handout. Each attendee was given an 11x17 handout. Sara then directed users to their agenda and the ground rules, and again reiterated the meeting purpose - to get honest but respectful feedback around each alternative and the mix of potential uses.

Sara then pointed participants to a list of the uses being considered for inclusion in the SASP on the back of their agenda. She outlined two categories: 1) uses that each alternate proposes as baseline facilities, (Playground, Restrooms, Pavilion, Parking, Little League, American Legion (1 field), Dog Park, Trails) and; 2) uses that are included in a few but not all alternatives that would be important to consider tonight (American Legion (1 more field); Radio control; Paintball; Bike/Pump Track/BMX).

Before opening the floor for advisory group input, Sara described in detail the four alternative concepts (presented on large posters). Dwayne Adams (USKH), who worked on the original master plan and was highly familiar with the site and user group issues, provided clarifications and additional history. The alternatives each had themes incorporating input and ideas from the advisory groups' first meeting and stakeholder input, but tried to offer very different approaches to laying out uses in order to solicit feedback from advisory group members. These concepts include:

Concept #1 - Enhance Casual Use:

This concept focuses on uses that generate activity year-round and appeal to the casual drop-in user. To support year-round use the concept adds more traditional community park facilities such as a pavilion, play equipment, restrooms and other amenities. Ball fields are retained in their original locations and some additional parking is added. The concept also includes naturalized open space and a water feature to be added to the north section of the property. Because this concept focuses on year-round use, RC and Paintball are relocated to permanent locations in parks that better suit their needs.

Concept #2 - North/South Focus Areas:

Concept #2 creates north/south focus areas and is the one alternative to include a stadium. In the south, active and attractive traditional park activities such as ball fields and community park facilities (pavilion, playground, restrooms) are highly visible from W. Klatt Rd. The concept includes a stadium (located south of the existing AL field) that would support baseball and a host of other possible uses (important little league games, soccer, dog trials and shows, etc.). Little league also expands its current use area to 4 fields with expanded parking to support all of the spectators (often including grandparents with accessibility issues).

In the north, Concept #2 retains the water feature from Concept #1, and focuses uses that attract users no matter their location. These types of uses are typically regional or citywide attractions such as Radio Car, Paintball, Dog Park, and a Bike Park.

Concept #3 - Well-Defined Use Areas:

This concept provides for well-defined use areas by grouping similar uses together with clear boundaries. The north includes a mix of non-traditional park activities such as Radio Car, Paintball, and Bike/Pump Track. The center of the park concentrates ball fields, grouped together to utilize utilities with a core concession/service area. The southern portion of the park, closest to road and the Klatt trail system is a highly visible community park with traditional amenities. To the west of the community park is a fenced dog park with a separate parking lot located on Tower Rd to minimize conflicts with other park users. The fenced dog park and Community Park would provide highly visible year-round use of the park.

Concept #4 – Community Park:

This concept re-orientates SASP to a more traditional community park model; moving uses (RC, Paintball) that are more citywide attractions to permanent locations that better suit their needs. The concept retains ball fields, enhanced with utilities, and creates mixed-use activity nodes that serve the outdoor recreation needs for South Anchorage, similar to other regional parks. The northern section of the property is designated as an off-leash dog park.

After this presentation, the meeting was then opened to comments and feedback from the advisory group members. Each was asked to describe what they like and don't like about any or all of the alternatives:

Individual comments from advisory committee members are as follows:

Birgitta Kytte

- Liked water feature with swale in Concept #1 & 2, liked the multiple access points of Concept #3 and increased parking throughout all areas, pedestrian connection from CIRI is great (but CIRI is not interested in a direct road connection to SASP). Also, P&R needs to verify if water/utility connections across property lines are possible – they may be prohibited by AWWU tariff.

Deanna Montagna

- Liked localized concessions and utilities of Concept #3's concentrated ball fields.

Todd Glidewell

- Liked concept #3 for localized utilities, field arrangement and irrigation but with expanded parking between dog park/community park/fields, and with removing the internal "horseshoe" road to expand community park space.
- Asked that the paintball course be flat to avoid injuries and have access to electric.
- Suggested clear signage for dog users with a park map for clarification.

Betty Hertz

- Suggested that the dog park in Concept #3 is not ideal and that north is a better location. Recommended using Concept #3 but with dogs moved to the northwest of the park in an

expanded large area that supports dog field trials and competitions (with a smaller fenced off area for training), recommended adding water feature to Concept #3 since there are so few places for dogs near water. Betty also liked grouped fields and the community park.

Neil Koeniger

- Suggested moving the top 1/3 of Concept #2 to Concept #3, moving Bike/Pump Track to SW corner of park, a fenced dog park with a water feature in the northern portion of the park is highly desirable.

Willie Paul

- If fields can be upgraded to artificial turf, then there is no need for irrigation or extended utilities, wanted to know the cost breakdown of artificial turf vs. extending utilities, BMX tracks need irrigation to control dust, adding a water feature will harbor more mosquitos on site, liked combination stadium fields, noted that baseball fields are used in the winter for snowshoe softball games.
- Discussion - the potential of the stadium of Concept #2 to accommodate little league as well as an AL stadium with (3) little league fields (e.g. concept #3 - sub LL field for AL stadium). A diagram of this approach was drawn by Dwayne Adams (a side conversation ensued about cost of moving their fields vs. the cost of extending water – no concrete numbers determined). Also likes community park adjacent to fields for family viewing and safety (rather than parking lot directly south of fields).

Ken Best

- Liked Concept #3 – brings similar demographics/uses to the same areas of the park, noted that the bike pump track and radio cars should stay together in terms of proximity as it keeps the visibility together, also concerned over a water feature harboring more mosquitos, extended water utility would be nice but not necessary, needed space for RC should remain at 125'x80'. Also commented that they were open to relocating elsewhere if necessary.

Bob Hoffman

- Did not like having a dog park at front of lot and noted the dog park concepts should not be so large as ¼ the size of the whole park. Also thinks dog parks should be entirely separate from little league fields for safety reasons to avoid dog bites and dog/small children intimidation issues.
- Prefers amended #3, asked to keep RC and bike pump track in the southern portion of the lot near a parking lot, likes how Concepts #1 & #2 brings activity into all parts of the park.
- Like the community park idea and agreed a modified concept #3 would work with the internal “horseshoe” road becoming a fire access road.
- The expense of irrigation can be lowered through good design and proper maintenance

Dave Carter

- Agreed that moving top 1/3 of Concept #2 onto Concept #3 was a good idea.
- Liked the function of the water feature for recharging Klatt bog; however, is concerned about a lot of dog activity in the bog since it is habitat that dogs may compromise (nesting birds, moose, etc.).
- Agreed that dog parks and kids should remain separated.
- Asked to see the community park enlarged to the west, requested some detail given toward landscaping schemes and making plantings visible from West Klatt Road.

Steve Beardsley

- Likes modified Concept #3, worries water feature will be more of a swamp than a true asset to the park
- Prefers the internal “horseshoe” road be used for emergency access only.
- Is concerned that the current soils can't support an artificial turf field

- Likes ball fields together in Concept #3
- More parking off of Tower Road for Concept #3.
- Commented that dog users will use the RC Track and Pump Track in winter regardless of other designations as they may not put in the effort to drive or walk to the far northern end of the parcel.

Nancy Beardsley

- Liked safe walking trails and fenced dog areas.
- Agreed that the community park area should be larger, adding more parking to Concept #3.
- Likes the idea of an American Legion field being combined with little league fields – Concept #3.
- Stated that legislative funding needs to be returned and reissued; it is a legal issue.

Consolidated Alternatives Input

The following is a consolidated list of feedback organized into (2) columns for positive attributes and negative attributes that were noted; these are labeled “like” and “don’t like”.

LIKE:	DON'T LIKE:
Attractive water feature Multiple park entries (Concept #3) More parking Ball fields grouped together (Concept #3) Concessions and utilities (Concept #3) Concept #3 uses space well – utilities Expanding parking for fields Water feature (w/ dog access) Community park amenities The idea of using a stadium for dog trials Dog park with water access Top 1/3 of Concept #2 moved to Concept #3 RC and pump track up front Stadium artificial turf (like Bartlett concept) Dog Park in the back (north) Concept #4 parking w/park pavilion by baseball overlook Concept #2 move community park west – group field Concept #3 RC + pump track together, group demographics (w/ water) peat is less dusty Concept #3 amended has attractions w/more parking Concept #1 & #2 will work Dog obedience and training area South 1/3 community park Lighting to improve security SolarBee fountain, help mosquito pond Loops for dog walking Fire lane instead of an internal “horseshoe” road Grouping ball fields Separating dog and pedestrian areas Community park area larger	Road connection to CIRI Dog park up front (best in back w/ other uses visible) Size of dog park in Concept #4 (Dog park too big) Water feature acting as a swamp and breeding mosquitos Dogs using the whole park off-leash Price comparison? move L.L. fields vs. extend water lines Dog Park near Little League fields Where is landscaping? Flowers? Color from road? Expensive water, PVC pipe, seasonal close down Internal “horseshoe” road – change to fire access road Dogs: no defined user group, need signage Dogs using RC/Bike areas (south) areas in winter Artificial turf on peat? Will it work? Pump track in winter – use? Smell of the existing irrigation pond

Other discussion and feedback items include:

- Good signage - park rules and park map showing clearly defined user areas
- Idea of cheaper seasonal utilities (PVC pipe for irrigation can be located at shallow depths and drained before freeze-up)
- Mosquito control through use of SolarBee for pond circulation

- Decommission existing irrigation pond,
- Bring in power and lighting to the parking lots to improve security
 - o Consider park neighbors in design and location

Sum up of Consensus Agreement Items:

Dwayne and Sara both highlighted that there is extensive agreement around a number of elements that USKH will combine into a preferred alternative and present at the next and final Advisory Group Meeting. Elements of consensus come primarily from a combination of Concepts #2 and #3 with a number of alterations:

Southwest: Provide parking, possible Bog interpretive/access connection; control dumping and tower access road issues; focus Bike and Radio Car together with water access for dust control (although peat content may help); no lighting across from residents. Provide clear signage to deter off-leash dog use.

Southeast: Focus and expand the community park idea to incorporate the existing road as a fire lane/promenade/path/area for a market or events, etc. Include lighting, and security measures (especially visibility into the park from the road, and strong connectivity with CIRI property (with consideration to future development and complimentary uses) to the east and regional trails to make it more active. Provide clear signage to deter off-leash dog use.

Central: Focus all the ball fields (AL and LL) and explore the potential of 3 little league fields with a multi-use stadium (turf would be nice if it is viable on these soils, and will require some movable fences). Incorporate a core concession and service/storage area, utilities/lighting, and ample parking (especially for little league) with good handicapped accessibility. Provide clear signage to deter off-leash dog use.

North: Focus the off-leash dog activity, enhancing the area for this use including fenced off areas for training, dog trials/shows, separated entrance/exit to reduce confrontations between dogs, etc (i.e. Arctic Benson Park). Explore the feasibility of the pond/water connection idea (ensure it is an asset, not a swampy mosquito area with stagnant/stinky water) and use the water to help create a good boundary for the off-leash dog area in the northwest corner of SASP with possible interpretation and pedestrian connections to the Klatt Bog (with consideration for impacts especially to habitat /nesting and legal limitations). Also try to work out public access to and/or around part of the pond/water feature that does not require interactions with off-leash dogs. Incorporate lighting at the parking area along with signage and amenities for dog users. Consider a permanent home for paintball in their existing location, but with some better separation between it and the dog park access to reduce confrontations and dog attraction to old paintballs that are made with beef products.

Wrap-Up

The Advisory Group members were thanked for their contributions, and the next meeting was scheduled for Monday, March 31st. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.