



Valley of the Moon Park Site Plan Update

Advisory Group Meeting #3

April 29, 2014 • Federation of Community Councils Office

Overview:

Anchorage Parks and Recreation is updating the site plan for Valley of the Moon Park. To ensure that future improvements align with the desires of the community, Parks and Recreation is working with an advisory group.

The third advisory group meeting for the Valley of the Moon Park site plan update took place on April 29th, 2014.

Attendees:

Anna Bryant, Penny Burt, Mark Butler, Josh Durand (P&R), Lanie Fleischer, Susan Miller, Kelsey Parpart, Vik Patel (APF), and Melonie Rieck

Meeting Synopsis:

Project Recap: The meeting began with a round of introductions followed by a recap of the project goals and main issues by Park Planner Josh Durand. Josh discussed the purpose of the meeting and the role of the advisory group in helping Parks & Recreation build consensus on an updated site plan for Valley of the Moon Park. An updated project timeline was then presented that accurately reflects Community Council and Commission approval in the autumn following summer recess. Vik Patel from the Anchorage Park Foundation was present to take notes.

Following introductions and review, Josh Durand discussed the common themes that were generated during the previous two meetings. Some advisory group members asked questions and additional points of clarification were made.

Preferred Alternative: Josh Durand presented a Preferred Alternative based on the advisory group's feedback of the four alternatives proposed in the second meeting. As requested, basic development costs for each proposed improvement were provided. The presentation was followed by a group discussion and then each member of the group was allotted time to speak. Individuals were asked to express what they "like" and "don't like" about the proposed site plan.

The meeting finished with general consensus among the group in support of an amended version of the Preferred Alternative.

Preferred Alternative

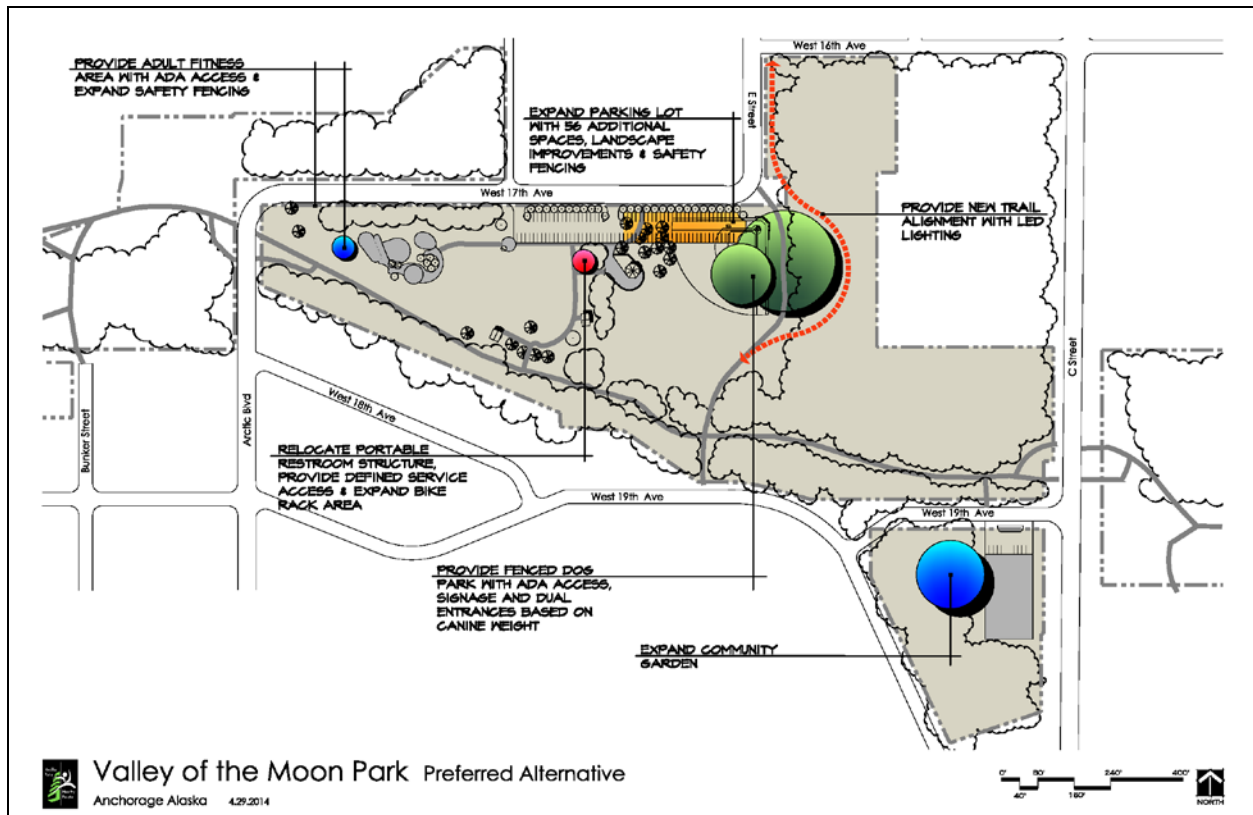


Illustration 1: Preferred Alternative

The following is a description of the Preferred Alternative as presented and is based on advisory group feedback. This is *not* the final site plan.

Preferred Alternative Description:

1. **Fencing:** Extended fencing east on along 17th avenue to provide improved safety in the area adjacent to the playground. (\$25-\$50K)
2. **Adult Fitness Equipment:** Develop an adult fitness area with seating and ADA access. (\$60K)
3. **Parking:** Expand the existing parking lot to the east with an additional 56 parking spaces. Landscaping improvements will also occur just north of the expanded parking lot. (\$80-\$200K)
4. **Port-a-Potty Restrooms:** Relocate the restroom screen to just south of the existing parking lot. Improved service access and landscape screening will be provided. (\$5-\$10K)
5. **Community Garden:** Expand community garden to the west of current location. (\$?)
6. **Dog Park:** Formalize accessible dog park at current ball field location with modified fencing layout. (\$70K)
7. **Trail/Bike Path:** Re-route existing north-south bike path around new dog park fencing.

Summary of Group Discussion:

The following is a summary of discussion points generated during the presentation of the Preferred Alternative:

Fencing: Fence should be at least 5 feet tall so that kids cannot climb over. Design should be aesthetically pleasing and it should be constructed as to allow easy repair by Parks maintenance staff.

Adult Fitness Equipment: Fitness stations should be separated from playground equipment but be located in a way as to provide for clear site lines of the playground. Connect area with a paved pathway.

Parking: Parking is an issue, particularly overflow parking on 17th Ave; however, there is no general consensus as to how much parking to add. Issues to consider: the addition of both Sharrows on 17th Ave and dedicated bike lanes on Arctic Blvd. and E St. Parks and Recreation will conduct a formal parking study this summer to help determine the appropriate solution to parking at Valley of the Moon Park.

Port-a-Potty Restrooms: Relocate the restroom screen to improve service access. Expand and formalize bike parking. Explore ideas for renovating old restroom building as a potential location for a food vendor.

Community Garden: Expanding the community garden to the west of its current location is widely supported.

Dog Park: Formalize a ½ to ¾ acre dog park at the current ball field with a modified fencing layout. Provide dual entrances and ADA access. (\$70K)

Trail/Bike Path: Re-route existing north-south bike path around new dog park to avoid conflicts with trail users and dog park users.

Children's Forest Area: Not included in the formal site plan, but already exists to some extent.

Approval Process: The advisory group's approval of a site plan does not guarantee the development of all improvements. It is the first step in the approval process. Advisory group consensus does; however, demonstrate community support for improvements and helps park projects acquire funding.

Individual Group Member Comments:

The following list is a summary of comments from individual members of the advisory group.

Penny Burt:

- Dog Park: fix the fence, don't move it; the current surface/field turf is good; add a bench for older folks to rest
- Adult Fitness: like the adult fitness area
- More Parking: supports more parking, on-street parking is dangerous and additional parking would be better even if it moves into the fenced dog area
- Priorities: fix the dog park fence, move port-a-potties

Lanie Fleischer:

- General: feels that the park is a great park as is and that there is no need to change it that much; the playground and picnic shelters are very active and the park as a whole functions very well; money should be spent on making things better rather than changing and relocating amenities (i.e. bike path)
- Adult Fitness: supports the addition of an adult fitness area
- Fencing: supports expanding the fencing along 17th Ave
- Community Garden: supports expanding the community garden
- Dog Park: the size of what is currently used as an off-leash area is plenty
- Bike Trail: the trail is fine in its current location and does not come too close to the off-leash area; there is no need to re-locate the trail
- Priorities: port-a-potties first, ameliorate the northern end of the dog park for parking space, expand fencing along 17th Ave

Melonie Rieck:

- Adult Fitness Equipment: supports the additional of an adult fitness area
- Fencing: supports expanding the fencing along 17th Ave
- Restrooms: supports relocating the restrooms
- Bike Trail: does not support moving the bike trail
- Community Gardens: does not support the expansion of the community gardens; feels that if the Muni can't enforce the rules and use the waitlist then we don't need more gardens
- Dog Park: it shouldn't be too big, rather there should be more dog park options around town; prefers the dog park to stay in the location of the ball field instead of encroaching into the woods
- Parking: does not support more parking, however, is interested in seeing the data that is generated from P&R parking study this summer
- Forest: would like to discourage homelessness in the woods
- Other: add more bike parking
- Priorities: port-a-potties and bike racks, fix the dog fence so that it is adequate for dog usage

Susan Miller:

- Ball field: save the ball field; possibly remove the outfield fence, keep the sideline fences, remove the dugout to eliminate the unwanted visitor problem and debris problem
- Dog Park: locate the dog park in the northeast area of the park and save the expense of moving the trail
- Forest: the forest is currently a barrier and doesn't feel as if it is part of the park; open up forest, thin trees and bring into park; consider adding a "park ends here" sign to delineate the park boundary
- Bike Trail: does not support the expense of moving the trail
- Bike Lane: not sure if willing to give up on-street parking for a bike lane
- Priorities: expand fence along 17th Ave, move port-a-potties

Mark Butler:

- Fence: supports the expansion of the fence along 17th Ave
- Adult Fitness: supports the addition of an adult fitness area with a connection to the trails
- Forest: does not support additional tree thinning (already too much thinning along the Chester Creek Trail corridor; the potential future Knik Arm Bridge would bring significantly more cars, traffic and noise along C St
- Dog Park: does not want a dog park bigger than ½ acre in size; the current ball field should not limit the size of the dog park
- Bike Trail: does not support the re-alignment of the bike path through the woods which would mean more cutting trees
- Priorities: fix dog park fencing to make room for parking, add simple amenities for the dog park, port-a-potties

Kelsey Parpart:

- General: mostly in favor of the Preferred Alternative as presented; appreciates that the wet low lying area south of the playground has been addressed by P&R and is no longer wet
- Forest: lots of homeless people living in the woods
- Dog Park: with dog parks in general – it is all about sightlines and the wooded areas don't get used much; you can throw a ball in a wooded area but the people stand in the sun; need 2 or 3 additional garbage cans

Anna Bryant:

- General: I like most of what is presented in the Preferred Alternative
- Parking Lot: supports additional parking; add more parking as this town is mostly automobile commuters
- Dog Park: would like the dog park to stay in the ball field area and move a little to the south; add trash cans and a double entry

- Community Garden: supports expanding the community garden and thinks that it is a great thing
- Priorities: dog park fence, port-a-potties, dog amenities (if we are planning for parking, we might as well move that now - depending on what the study says)

Summary of Consensus Items:

Several items of consensus have been reached through the advisory group process. The group began by identifying key issues in the park and worked towards addressing those issues through facilitated discussion and open dialog.

The following is a list of items in which there is broad consensus among the group:

- Expand the fencing along 17th Ave to improve safety near the playground
- Add adult fitness area to the west of the playground with a connection to the trail system
- Expand the C Street Community Garden to the west to accommodate demand for garden plots and those on the waitlist
- Move the restroom screen and port-a-potties to a serviceable location
- Formally designate a dog park in the present location of the ball field with upgraded fencing and entrances

One issue that remains to be resolved is parking. While the group recognizes the safety issues associated with overflow parking onto 17th Ave, there has yet to be consensus among the group as to how much additional park at Valley of the Moon Park is appropriate.

Anchorage Parks and Recreation will conduct a formal study of parking at Valley of the Moon Park in summer 2014. As the group reconvenes in the fall for the approval process, Parks and Recreation will share the results of the study along with recommendations.

Next Steps:

Parks and Recreation will amend the Preferred Alternative based on feedback from this meeting. This summer, Parks and Recreation will study parking issues at Valley of the Moon Park. In the fall, the Department will make recommendations addressing parking and will present the final site plan for approval.