

# RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK

## MASTER PLAN UPDATE

### Advisory Group Meeting #2 Summary

Thursday, March 28, 2019

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Russian Jack Springs Park - Lidia Selkregg Chalet

#### Overview of the Master Plan

Anchorage Parks and Recreation is updating the master plan for Russian Jack Springs Park. The master plan will provide a framework for the management, maintenance, and development of facilities and other park assets over the next 20 years. To ensure that the master plan aligns with the desires of the community, Parks and Recreation is working with a community advisory group

The Russian Jack Springs Park master plan advisory group was formed to help guide Parks and Recreation in the development of the master plan update. Advisory group members represent a variety of community interests and user groups and is comprised of park neighbors, representatives from user groups, Parks and Recreation Commissioners, and local community council representatives.

The second advisory group meeting for the Russian Jack Springs Park master plan took place on March 28th, 2019 at the Lidia Selkregg Chalet at Russian Jack Springs Park.

#### Attendance

##### Staff

Steve Rafuse – MOA Parks & Rec Project Manager

Van Le, AICP – R&M Consultants, Inc. – Planner & Public Involvement Lead

Mark Kimerer – Bettisworth North Architects and Planners – Landscape Architect

##### Advisory Group Members

Sherry Wright	RJCC
Gary Snyder	East High cross country coach
Kristi Wood	NECC
Kendra Kloster	NECC/RJCC
Mick Brogan	First Tee
Erin Kirkland	PRC/East ANC resident
Eric Milliken	PRC/East ANC resident

##### Guests

Terry Cummings  
Gwenn Haslett  
Kate McClellan  
Ruth Fahl  
Marc Grober

## Meeting Summary

The meeting began at 6:00 PM with Steve Rafuse from Anchorage Parks and Recreation providing a welcome and overview of the master planning process. Steve reviewed the meeting agenda and objective, described the role of the advisory group, and outlined the ground rules for a productive meeting.

Following this overview, Steve gave a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation began with census data showing socioeconomic and demographic trends and continued with a summary of public involvement and online survey results.

Following the presentation, Van Le from R&M Consultants and Mark Kimerer from Bettisworth North presented a summary of common themes from public input gathered to date. Common themes were organized into three general categories: 1) What people like or value about RJSP, 2) What issues they would like to see addressed, and 3) What types of changes or new improvements would people like to see at the park in the future. The group discussed these common themes and added comments. The group ultimately resolved that the themes as expressed are consistent with public input and provide a foundation of general agreement items.

### Meeting Objective:

To review community input gathered to date, identify common themes and agreement items, and to begin the process of prioritizing issues to be addressed and future improvements to be considered during the concept development phase.

Following the discussion of common themes, Van Le led the group in a visioning exercise. Van shared examples from previous park planning projects and asked participants to envision their ideal park and to write down a vision statement that reflected that vision. Individuals shared their vision statement with the larger group.

The meeting concluded with an overview of next steps and a group photo.

## Summary of Common Themes

The following is a summary of common themes from the planning and public involvement process to date. Comments were compiled from the online survey (2/5/19 - 3/18/19), public workshop #1 (2/27/19) advisory group meeting #1 (1/31/19), correspondence with user groups, and conversations with the larger public.

The planning team asked three general questions to better understand 1) what people value about the park, 2) what issues they would like to see addressed, and 3) what types of changes or new improvements would they like to see at the park in the future. Questions were open-ended to allow people to express their thoughts and opinions in their own words.

Comments were collected and organized into common themes or topic areas. A summary of these common themes is provided on the following pages as well as a graphic site analysis. The common themes identified in this document are not intended to provide a comprehensive list of comments, rather they reflect the areas in which there was broad agreement.

## What people like or value about RJSP:

### General

- A park for all seasons, year-round recreation
- Location and size of park (300 acres)
- Mix of developed facilities and natural areas
- Variety of activities and recreational facilities
- Something for everyone, family friendly activities for all ages

### Recreation Facilities

- Variety of recreational opportunities and facilities: playground, skate park, soccer fields, softball fields, golf course, trails, dog park, chalet, greenhouses, model RR, learning labs, events and programmed activities...

### Natural Character of the park

- Urban Oasis: "Solitude", "Serenity", "Scenic", "Wild", "Beauty"
- Unique and varied terrain
- Natural features: Chester Creek, spring, forest, hills, wetlands...
- Wildlife and habitat

### Trails/Trail Experiences

- Variety of trails and recreational opportunities
- Scenic trails in a natural setting
- Winter ski trails and grooming
- Trails that connect to the larger trail system
- Lighted trails

### Access and Location

- Large destination park located in heart of East Anchorage
- Central location and ease of access
- Close proximity to neighborhoods and schools
- Great access to larger trail system (i.e. Chester Creek/APU/Glenn Hwy-Ship Creek Trail)

### History + Nostalgia for the park

- Family friendly, activities for all ages
- Evolved with Anchorage as a growing city
- Long history of events and community activities
- Dena'ina people and land as part of early history of Anchorage

## Upgrades, Changes or New Activities:

### Maintenance and Upgrades

- Repave multi-use trail and add lighting
- Improve summer and winter trail maintenance
- Rehabilitate/remove/re-purpose deteriorating facilities
- Upgrade amenities:
  - restrooms

- trash cans
  - mutt mitt stations
  - picnic facilities
  - benches and seating areas
  - signage and kiosks
- Fix the sledding hill
- Modernize the Chalet and Greenhouse
- Upgrade the Chalet parking lot to support events

### Signage, Maps and Wayfinding

- Add trail maps, wayfinding and signage

### Access and Circulation

- Connect the north and south areas of the park through a 2<sup>nd</sup> tunnel and multi-use path loop (at Debarr and west part of park)
- Improve access along Pine Street, E 20<sup>th</sup> Ave, Boniface Pkwy.
- Improve access off of Debarr Road

### Increase Use of the Park through New Activities

- More events and programming
- Activate the park with positive uses
- Beginner and intermediate mountain biking trails
- Senior activities
- Identified new activities:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ bike park</li> <li>○ disc golf</li> <li>○ community rec center</li> <li>○ skating ribbon</li> <li>○ ski rope tow</li> <li>○ fire pit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ bocce</li> <li>○ pickle ball</li> <li>○ snowboard park</li> <li>○ zip line</li> <li>○ community gardens</li> <li>○ space for food trucks</li> </ul>
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### Partnerships

- Partner with user groups to upgrade facilities:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ soccer fields</li> <li>○ softball</li> <li>○ dog park</li> <li>○ trails (ski &amp; single track)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ golf</li> <li>○ model railroad</li> <li>○ local schools/educational/athletic programs</li> </ul>
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### Issues to be Addressed:

#### Safety and Security

- Lack of lighting
- Illegal camps
- People getting lost, park orientation
- Crime, vandalism, and dumping
- Hidden parking areas
- Visibility

- Perception of security in the park
- Lack of use in areas/isolation
- Deteriorating or unused facilities

### Preservation of Natural Areas

- Maintain the natural character of the park
- Balance development of facilities with the preservation of natural areas
- Wildlife interactions
- Protect important natural resources - forest, spring, wetlands, wildlife habitat...

### Management and Maintenance

- Forest management (clean up windstorm damage)
- Remove illegal camps
- Resurface paved trails
- Define dog park space
- Trail hierarchy (Clarify trail designations/user type)
- Balance user group interests to minimize conflicts

### Access and Connectivity

- Dumping and illegal activity along E 20<sup>th</sup> Ave
- Upgrade existing tunnel (and consider a 2<sup>nd</sup> tunnel)
- Improve safety of hidden parking areas
- Boniface/NE access points
- Access from Debarr Rd to/from Lidia Selkregg Lane
- Improve bike and pedestrian access along Pine Street

### Facilities

- Upgrade amenities – restrooms, trash cans, picnic area, benches, mutt mitts...
- Invest in upgrades to existing facilities
- Signage and wayfinding are needed
- Fix sledding hill
- Trail maintenance and upgrades are needed

### Common Themes Discussion

- Values or Likes: add “quiet” to Natural Character of the Park
- To ‘Increase Use of the Park through New Activities’
  - Add:
    - 20-50 yard archery
    - volley ball
    - senior friendly activities (example Folker Park)
    - native plant/ wildflower tours
- To ‘Partnerships’
  - Add
    - Cyclocross
    - Trailside Discovery
- Add new trees at the Polar Bear playground
- Widen Multi-use trails from 8’ to 10’, soft shoulders, preferred not D-1
- Replant new trees after windblown areas are cleaned of downfall
- Research Dena’ina placenames and incorporate interpretive info

## Vision Statements

The following vision statements were drafted by advisory group members and guests at the meeting:

- "Russian Jack Springs Park provides East Anchorage with access to 300 acres for both outdoor recreation and refuge while preserving the area's history, culture, and community spirit."
- "Russian Jack is an emerald gem of a park in the center of diverse East Anchorage neighborhoods; it has activities for users of all ages with plenty of space for natural trails and wildlife viewing with the peace and quiet, which is hard to find in an urban environment."
- Russian Jack Springs Park neighborhood nature park, springs, bike, and ski, and walk with birds and moose, sledding with squirrels, wild flowers."
- "Russian Jack Springs Park is our local place to get away from the big city, enjoy a variety of recreational activities, and get in touch with nature all year round."
- "Russian Jack Springs Park is a place of serenity and beauty that connects our neighborhoods, provides a safe place for families, and honors the history and culture."
- "Honoring the past, improving the existing footprint, and access for all to Anchorage's east side gem."
- "Russian Jack is a shared area where a variety of people can enjoy diverse activities and events year round in a relatively quiet, natural setting near neighborhoods."
- "Russian Jack Springs Park is the best of Anchorage; the park has something for everyone, from undisturbed nature, scenic trails and wildlife, to active sports where my children and their children will grow and nurture a spirit and appreciation for the best this city has to offer."
- "Russian Jack Springs Park is a unique blend of untouched natural wilderness and develop recreational activities in the heart of one of Anchorage's most diverse neighborhoods. The park supports dozens of users groups all year long."
- "Preserve the wild, scenic, quiet, natural ambiance of Russian Jack Springs Park for current and future generations, and for wildlife, birds and fish, and provide recreational activities for all age groups and diversities."

