



CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT NEAR NORTH PARK FRAMEWORK PLAN



January 29, 2019

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Special thanks goes to the members of the community who participated in the planning process. This document has been prepared in coordination with representatives from the community, the 27th Ward Alderman, the City of Chicago, the Chicago Housing Authority, and the Chicago Park District. Thanks to those individuals for supplying information, insights, assistance, and reviewing plans and documents.

Plan prepared by the Chicago Park District, Department of Planning and Construction, Michael Lange, Lakefront Planning Coordinator, in cooperation with the Near North Park Advisory Group and 27th Ward Alderman.

History

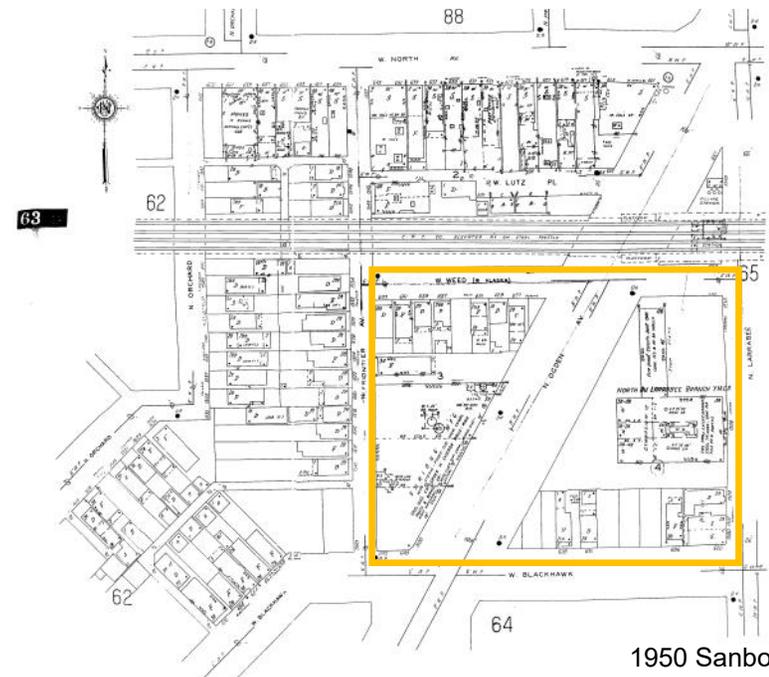
The Near North Park, located in the Near North Side community area, is a new 3.8-acre park to be developed by the Chicago Park District.

In 1906, the park site included the C.F. Baum Company Dress Trimmings mill surrounding by residential dwelling units. By 1935 North Ogden Avenue divided the site with various manufacturing buildings located west of Ogden (Mattress Factory, Paint Shop, Filling Station, Auto Body Repair, and even a Tin Shop). East of Ogden Avenue the North Avenue Larrabee YMCA was located south of Chicago Transit Authority elevated rail. In 1979, as part of the Near North Career Metropolitan High School construction in 1979, this site became the outdoor field for the school until the school closing in 2001.

Since March 2011, the Chicago Housing Authority has worked to develop the Cabrini-Green Development Zone Plan that seeks to build strong, vibrant communities and provides opportunities for new park space to help meet the needs of a growing population in the Near North side community. The land was transferred to the Chicago Housing Authority to be included in the development zone plan. The Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners on May 9, 2018 authorized the acceptance of the site for a new park. The land was transferred to the Chicago Park District in May 2019 and was officially issued Park #598.



North Avenue Larrabee YMCA



1950 Sanborn Map

Existing Conditions: Site



Lawn (looking southeast)



Lawn (looking northwest)



Lawn (looking southwest)



Lawn (looking northeast)

Framework Plan Principles and Objectives

Based upon the community input and vision categories, there are 3 primary principles:

1. Balance the park environment with spaces for people that provide a range of activities that are active and passive in service with the community.
2. Foster an inclusive park setting that reflects and supports the culture of its users and neighbors and is open to everyone.
3. Create a park environment that will serve the entire community, across generations and invites everyone to come out and play for a lifetime.

The main objectives of the plan and any projects and/or programming are as follows:

- Create a cohesive park atmosphere
- Improve park connections into the neighborhood
- Unique community identity and sense of place
- Increase programming and staffing
- Maintain and enhance the natural landscape of the park
- Improvements should be environmentally friendly
- Enrich the quality of life for our community in physical health and well being
- Sustainability as a framework to meet environmental, economic and social goals

Capital Recommendations

Site Improvements

A cohesive park atmosphere can be created with some improvements to the park. These can include:

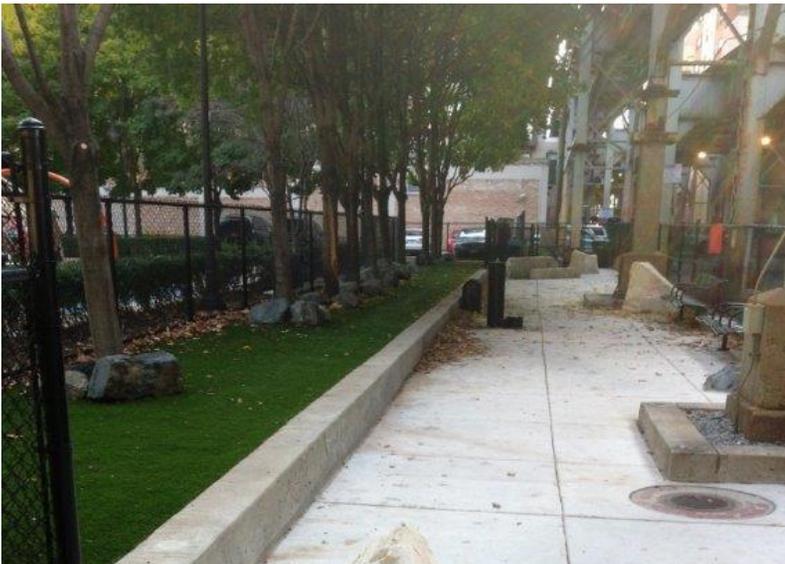
- Provide large lawn spaces for multi-purpose uses
- New bench seating, bike racks, drinking fountains, and gathering spaces
- Gateway features at entrances to the Park
- New ornamental pedestrian lighting within the park

Feature Improvements

- Create a track and/or walking path around the park.
- Potential to add fitness stations in park.
- Provide connections to park pathways and neighborhood
- Add a dog friendly area in under-utilized areas of the park (i.e. under/next to the CTA).



Gateway features at park entrances can create foster a sense of community and identify



Activating an under-utilized area of the park with a dog friendly area can provide alternative connections into the park.



A sculptural playground can create innovative play opportunities and connects to the natural environment.

Capital Recommendations

Landscape Improvements

Integrating passive and active uses creates a balanced park environment that encourages community interactions across all generations, which can be achieved with these simple improvements:

- Plant new trees and preserve existing trees in park
- Remove weedy landscape along the park edges
- Maintain passive lawn for multiple uses (soccer play or picnicking)
- Create community garden space for gardening that includes perennials, annuals, and edible garden plants
- Create a new playground that could include the development of a Nature Play Area



Plantings along the park edge can balance the natural park environment and create a sense of place



Nature Play Spaces can incorporate the surrounding landscape to bring nature to children's daily play



A play lawn provides an opportunity for a picnic or a game of soccer.

Program and Event Recommendations

Programming Improvements

Programs that are inclusive and support the culture of the community creates a safe park environment. A few recommended program improvements will foster a park setting that invites all generations to come out and play such as:

- Sports programs that building community and pride
- Gardening classes
- Wellness and Fitness Classes

Seasonal events provide an opportunity to explore and experience the park throughout the year. These events should continue or be added as follows:

- Movies in the Park
- Family Events all year round such as Jazz Concerts or other musical events.
- Safe Camp Outs
- Shakespeare in the Park
- Circus in the Parks



Tunes and Turtles provide a program for children to experience reptiles and amphibians in a fun and active atmosphere.



Movies in the Park encourages everyone to come out and play.

Concept Plan



- A** Great Lawn
- B** Walking Path
- C** Potential Dog Friendly Area

- D** Playground
- E** Plaza
- F** Shade Trees (Typical)

- G** Park Benches (Typical)
- H** Ornamental Lighting (Typical)

Implementation

The framework plan serves as a guide to the future improvements at Near North Park. It anticipates that changes will be implemented over time with some projects beginning sooner while others may come years into the future. This plan is the community's collective vision for the future of the park and provides a method for evaluating changes and improvements.

The recommendations outline in the plan depend on the availability of funding mechanisms (private and/or public), consent from property owners, support from local alderman and legislative leaders, and from the community. Projects can be implemented as funding is available and would proceed with design and construction in accordance with applicable local, state, or federally mandated rules and processes. Design of any project may vary from what is shown in this framework and should be evaluated accordingly.





Chicago Park District, Board of Commissioners

Chicago Park District, Michael P. Kelly, General Superintendent & CEO

Department of Planning and Construction

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