

Smith (Joseph Higgins) Park

Framework Plan

December 3, 2007



Chicago Park District

Department of Planning and Development



Table of Contents

	PAGE
❑ FRAMEWORK PLAN PURPOSE	02
❑ CONTRIBUTORS	03
❑ PROCESS – Public Meetings/Surveys	04
❑ LOCATION	
■ Location Map	06
■ Park History	07
❑ EXISTING CONDITIONS	
■ 2006 Aerial	09
■ Areas of Focus	10-27
❑ RECOMMENDATIONS	
■ Conceptual Site Plan	29
■ Playground	30-31
■ Facilities	32-34
■ Site	35-37
■ Park Programming	38
■ Miscellaneous	39
❑ IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES	
■ Capital Improvement Priorities	40
■ Programming Improvement Priorities	41



Framework Plan Purpose

The purpose of a framework plan is to create a long-term plan for Smith Park that responds to diverse neighborhood needs.

The Framework Plan provides a vision for improvements to the park over time and serves as a planning tool for both the community and the Park District.

The Plan also outlines priorities and ensures that improvements are done in a coordinated and holistic manner.

The Plan is consulted as capital funding becomes available.



Contributors

- ❑ Alderman Billy Ocasio, Ward 26
- ❑ Chicago Park District
 - Beth Tomlins, Project Manager
 - Art Richardson, Region Manager
 - Cynthia Rosario, Area Manager
 - Bob Foster, Sr. Project Manager
 - Tom Versen, Park Supervisor
 - Nidhi Goyal, Planning & Development Intern
- ❑ Smith Park Advisory Council
 - Kathy McCabe, President
 - Tracey Thanos, Vice President
 - Jacqueline Torres, Treasurer and Programming Chair
 - Anna Morford, Secretary
 - Joe Moorhead, Development Chair
 - Steve Vanderpoel, Beautification and Long Range Planning Chair
 - Angie Heimgartner, Playground Chair
 - Members of the Smith Park Advisory Council
- ❑ Other Contributors
 - Smith Park Neighborhood Association
 - Ukrainian Congress Committee
 - Christy Webber Landscaping
 - Friends of the Park
 - WRD Environmental
 - West Town Chamber of Commerce
 - Center for Green Technology



Process— Public Meetings/ Surveys

□ SURVEYS

- 2006 Community Events- Movie in the Park, Concert in the Park, Halloween Party
 - Priorities for Improvement
 - 131 Completed Surveys
- 2007 Community Event- Children's Carnival
 - Priorities for Improvement
 - 24 Completed Surveys

□ MEETINGS

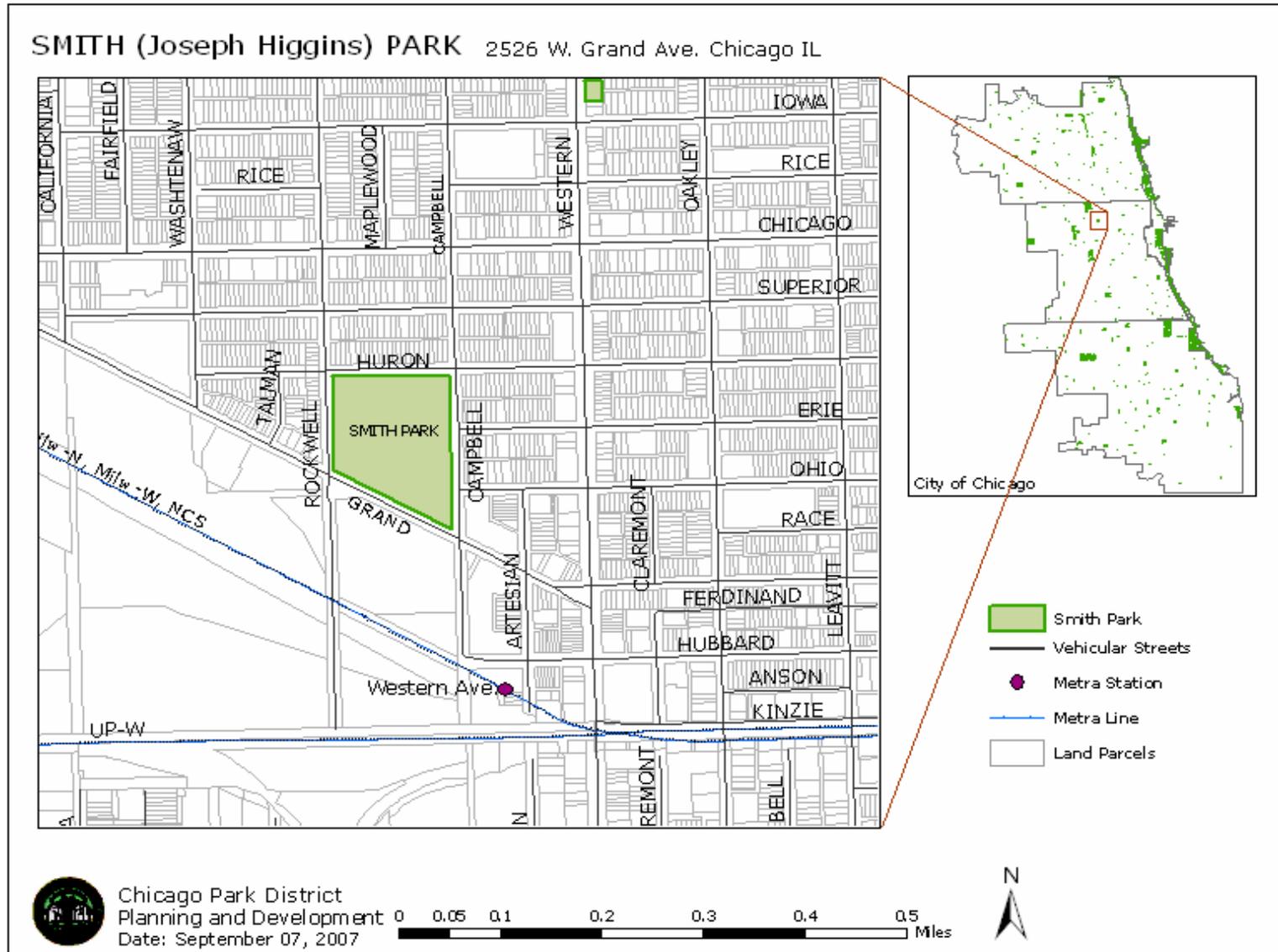
- Smith Park Advisory Council Meetings
 - August 2005- Meeting with Friends of the Park
 - October 2005-2006- Meetings with Alderman Ocasio
 - October 2006- Meetings with Christy Webber Landscaping
 - Fall 2006- Meetings with Center for Green Technology and WRD Environmental
- Chicago Park District Meetings
 - May 08, 2007- Framework Plan and Playground Meeting with Community
 - May 30, 2007- Playground Meeting with Community
 - June 26, 2007- Playground Meeting with Community
 - July 11, 2007- Playground Meeting with Community
 - August 01, 2007- Framework Plan Meeting with Advisory Council Leaders
 - September 14, 2007- Draft Framework Plan Meeting with Advisory Council Leaders
 - September 25, 2007- Draft Framework Plan Meeting with Community
 - November 28, 2007- Final Framework Plan Meeting with Community

Location



Location (Park No. 1015)

Map



Location

Park History

In 1929, when a large city dump in the West Town neighborhood had been completely filled, the Bureau of Sanitation transferred part of the site to the Bureau of Parks and Recreation. The city soon named it the Smith Athletic Field for Joseph Higgins Smith, alderman of the surrounding 32nd ward from 1914 to 1933. Although it had been named, the park had few improvements until the late 1930s, when the city installed playground equipment, constructed a small brick recreation building, and created an athletic field that was flooded in winter for ice skating. By the late 1950s, a World War II tank and artillery piece had been placed in the park.

In 1959, the city transferred Smith Park to the Chicago Park District, along with more than 250 other properties. After making initial improvements, the park district added a spray pool, swimming pool, and bath house in the late 1960s. In 1979, a large modern field house was constructed in Smith Park. Nine years later, Smith Park dedicated its gymnasium to Tom Positano, a high school student who had been active at the park, and who received a Junior Citizenship Award posthumously.



Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions (Total Park Area- 9.82 Acres)

2006 Aerial



Chicago Park District
Planning and Development
Date: September 07, 2007

SMITH PARK 2006 AERIAL



Existing Conditions

- ❑ Playground & Spray Pool
- ❑ Facilities
 - Field House
 - Recreation Building
- ❑ Site
 - Landscaping
 - Field Drainage & Wear
 - Walking Path
 - Garbage Bins
 - Additional:
 - ❑ Play Slab
 - ❑ Northwest Section of park
- ❑ Park Programming
- ❑ Miscellaneous
 - Lighting
 - Drinking Fountains
 - Signage
 - Seating
 - Fencing

Areas of Focus



Existing Conditions

Playground & Spray Pool



Existing Conditions

Playground & Spray Pool

- ❑ Two separate playground areas in park; heavily used by community residents
- ❑ Community likes high number of swings currently in the park
- ❑ Existing playgrounds do not meet Park District's current standards (e.g. play equipment, surfacing, ADA compliance)
- ❑ Awkward empty spaces between timber wall and fencing
- ❑ Lack of direct connection between the two playgrounds and spray pool
- ❑ Spray pool runs all the time during season, requires controlled on/off
- ❑ Large mature trees provide good shade during day time; play area may require more night light



Existing Conditions

Facilities- Field House



Existing Conditions

Facilities- Field House

- ❑ Overall, the building is well programmed and well used by the community
- ❑ Building Assessment
 - ADA Compliance
 - ❑ Field House needs ADA compliance renovations; e.g. toilet stalls not ADA compliant
 - Utilities Upgrade
 - ❑ Some services may require upgrade including HVAC system, lighting and plumbing
 - ❑ Air/ventilation in the gym could be improved
 - ❑ Community requesting to add fitness center in the building (Note: vacant room available on the second floor)
 - Exterior Repairs
 - ❑ Some structural repairs are needed; e.g. a crack on the exterior brick facade, leakage concerns for curved window frames on second floor
 - ❑ Community thinks that outer facade of field house is unattractive
 - Continued Maintenance
 - ❑ General maintenance work may be needed including ceiling, flooring and painting
 - ❑ Some doors may be replaced with new hardware
- ❑ Existing 'green' elements include large windows for natural light and recycling bins inside the field house; opportunities for additional 'green' initiatives in the building



Existing Conditions

Facilities- Recreation Building

- ❑ Building Assessment
 - ADA Compliance
 - ❑ Building needs ADA compliance renovations, e.g. accessible entrance, toilet areas
 - Utilities Upgrade
 - ❑ Services require upgrade including heating, lighting and ventilation facilities
 - Exterior Repairs
 - ❑ Exterior of the building needs repairs including roofing, gutters and downspouts, doors and windows; opportunity for using eco-friendly elements
 - Interior Repairs
 - ❑ Interior of the building needs maintenance work and general repairs including wall finishes, ceiling and painting
 - ❑ Floor of the clay room needs repair
- ❑ Mainly used for pottery classes; community interest in additional activities in the building



Existing Conditions

Site- Landscaping



Existing Conditions

Site- Landscaping

- ❑ Large mature trees provide good shade around park
- ❑ Native and ornamental landscape beds exist at northeast entrance and along Grand Avenue; community interest in additional landscaping along Grand Avenue to create buffer from roadway traffic
- ❑ Clusters of ornamental trees create interest
- ❑ Opportunities to enhance northwest, southeast and east entrances of the park
- ❑ Opportunities for enhanced landscaping around field house
- ❑ Opportunities to use sustainable plantings, 'green' practices
- ❑ Existing enhanced landscaping requires continued maintenance by community/ outside contractor



Existing Conditions

Site- Field Drainage & Wear



Existing Conditions

Site- Field Drainage & Wear

- ❑ Some flooding occurs in ball fields and northwest corner near tennis courts during heavy rains
- ❑ Grass worn in high traffic locations
- ❑ Continued field maintenance required after park events/festivals
- ❑ Potential for eco-friendly design to control site storm run off



Existing Conditions

Site- Walking Path

- ❑ Community expressed high demand for walking/running path in the park
- ❑ Continuous interior walkway exists on east and north sides; west side served by Rockwell Street sidewalk
- ❑ Opportunity to continue interior soft path along south side of park
- ❑ Existing walking path material is concrete or asphalt; potential to add adjacent soft surface path
- ❑ Potential to use eco-friendly materials for the walkway



Existing Conditions

- ❑ 55 gallon garbage drums currently exist in the park
- ❑ Improve coordination between park staff and outside contractor for garbage collection
- ❑ Opportunity to introduce waste recycling program throughout the park

Site- Garbage Bins



Existing Conditions

- Play Slab
 - Vacant asphalt slab exists on east side of park
 - Used by community for miscellaneous activities; e.g. sports practices, bike riding, skate boarding

- Northwest Area
 - Existing playground to be demolished
 - Potential community interest in new use for site.
 - For example: senior citizen's nature garden, fenced dog area, additional swings for kids

Site- Additional



Existing Conditions

Park Programming



Existing Conditions

Park Programming

- ❑ Programming opportunities exist for children and adults
 - Children Programming
 - ❑ Early childhood recreation
 - ❑ Recreational tumbling
 - ❑ Sports Club for 6-12 year and 13-17 year olds
 - ❑ Teens Club
 - ❑ Basketball program for teens
 - ❑ Additional seasonal sports for teens
 - Adult Programming
 - ❑ Pottery program
 - ❑ Senior Citizens Club
 - ❑ Basketball program
- ❑ Classes offered based on availability of recreation staff
- ❑ Community interest in more recreational programs
- ❑ Community interest in rescheduling some programs
- ❑ Community interest in a seasonal farmer's market
- ❑ Current lack of funding for additional programs
- ❑ Opportunity to introduce environmental awareness programs



Existing Conditions



Miscellaneous

Existing Conditions

- Lighting
 - Existing flood lights and tall pedway lights in park
 - Sufficient lighting exists along the walkways
 - Night lighting not provided for ball fields and tennis courts
 - Existing lights on timers

- Drinking Fountains
 - Need cleaning, possible repair of minor cracks
 - Fountains not ADA accessible

- Signage
 - Overall sufficient signage in park
 - Community interest in kiosks for park postings
 - Community interest in additional signage for dog rules and barbeque rules

- Entrances
 - Community interest in highlighting park entrances to encourage residents to enter park

Miscellaneous



Existing Conditions

Miscellaneous

- ❑ Seating
 - Wooden benches provided along pathways and playgrounds
 - High use of benches by community
 - Community request for seating in the swimming pool area

- ❑ Fencing
 - 4 feet high chain link fencing covers majority of east side of park
 - Tennis courts, playgrounds and swimming pool have existing fencing
 - No other existing fencing in park
 - Community request for full enclosure of park with ornamental fencing

- ❑ Opportunities for eco-friendly design elements



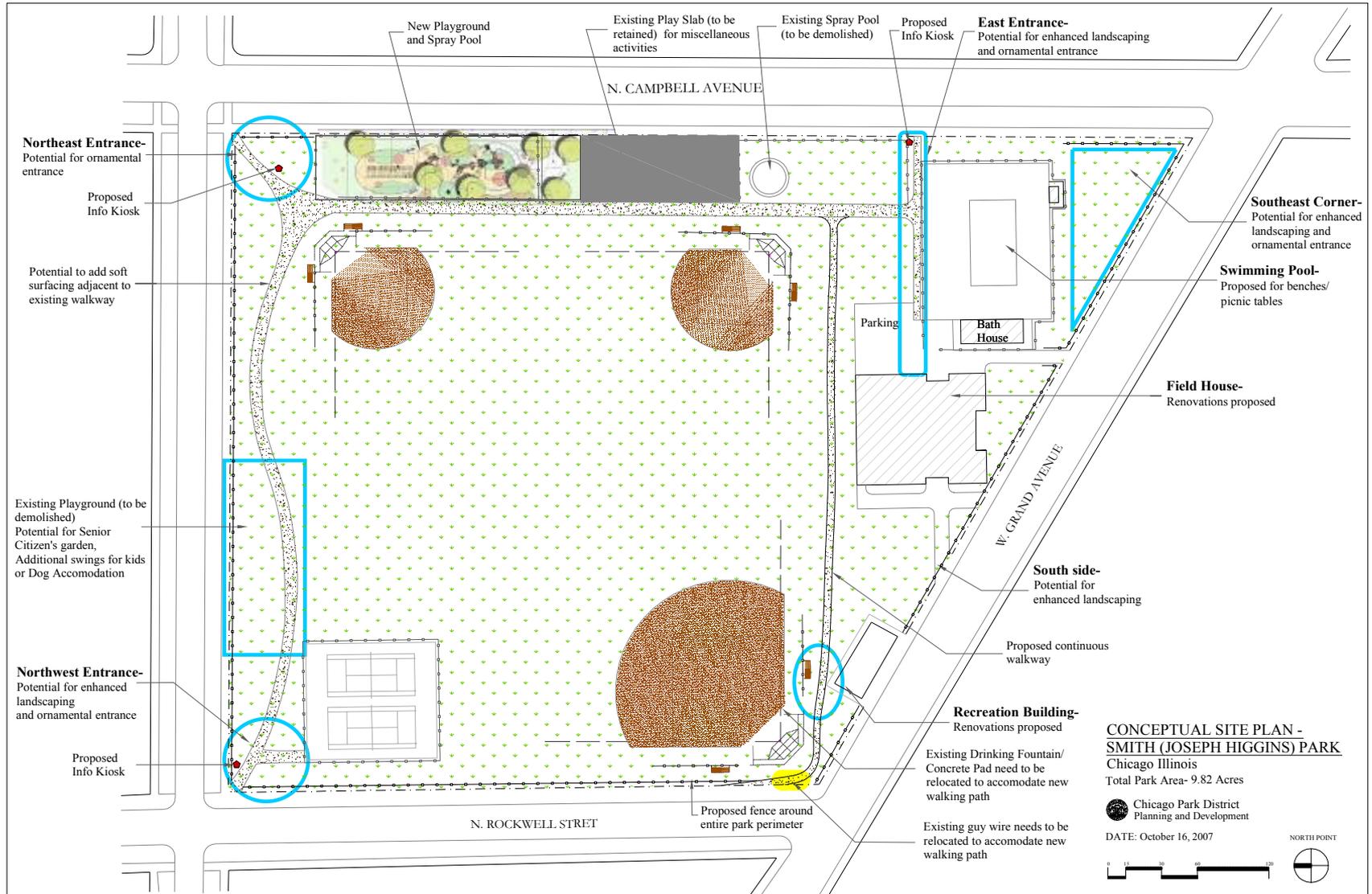
Recommendations

NOTE: Most pictures in this section are not from Smith Park and are used to present only the idea for recommendation



Recommendations

Conceptual Site Plan



Recommendations

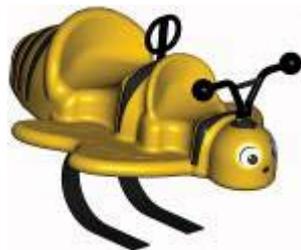
Playground & Spray Pool



2-5 Year Olds Area



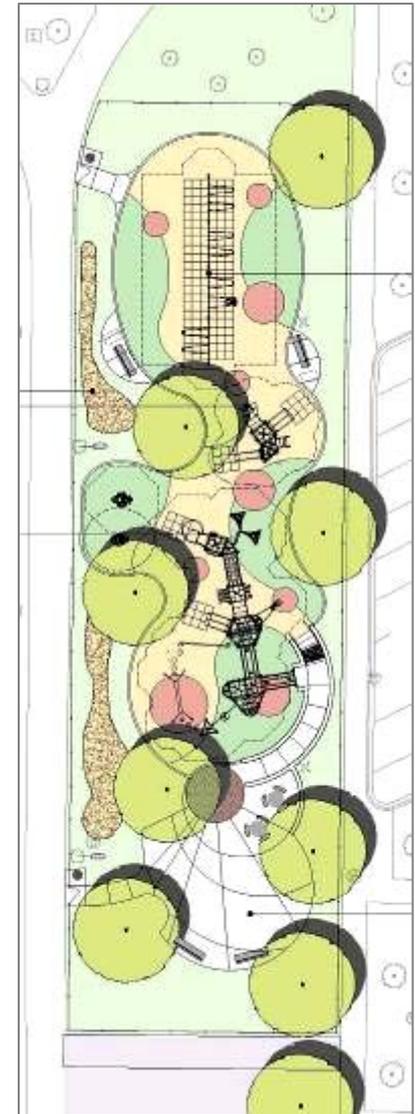
Back



Recommendations

Playground & Spray Pool

- Demolish existing playgrounds and spray pool
 - Salvage and recycle demolished play equipment as possible as a 'green' initiative
- Install new playground on northeast side of park
 - Good location due to presence of mature shady trees
- Redesign playground to remove awkward spaces; expand play area towards south
- Connect spray pool with the new playground
- Potential to add more swings within park; location to be determined
- Playground components to include:
 - New play equipment for 2-5 year and 5-12 year olds
 - Rubber soft surfacing
 - ADA compliance
 - Timed water spray feature activated by touch sensors; only operates during set hours
 - New fencing, full enclosure of playground and spray pool
 - Additional pedestrian scale lighting as necessary
- Green Initiatives
 - Use companies that follow green practices; e.g. products made with recycled materials where possible, manufacturing material reuse, maximum travel distances enforced



Recommendations

Facilities- Field House

- Building Assessment
 - ADA Compliance
 - Ensure field house is ADA compliant; e.g. redesign of toilet stalls
 - Utilities Upgrade
 - Upgrade services as needed including HVAC system, lighting and plumbing for efficient energy use
 - Provide large fans in gym to enhance natural ventilation
 - Establish new fitness center in the building
 - Exterior Repairs
 - Complete minor structural repairs to the building as necessary, e.g. repair crack on brick facade; reseal the window frames to prevent water leakage
 - Install living walls as possible to beautify outer façade
 - Potential for mural on north side of building
 - Continued Interior Maintenance
 - Complete general maintenance work as needed including ceiling, flooring and painting
 - Replace doors with new hardware as needed



Recommendations

Facilities- Field House

- Implement 'green' initiatives in field house
 - Conserve energy using maximum day light and natural ventilation
 - Investigate feasibility for green roofing
 - Investigate installing low-flush toilets for water conservation
 - Promote recycling waste and using recycled products
 - Disconnect gutter downspouts; connect downspouts to rain barrels/cisterns or directly to rain gardens
 - Install green screen on southwest windows to reduce summer heat, allow winter light
 - Additional greening requires continued maintenance from outside source
 - Community garden club, outside contracting



Recommendations

Facilities- Recreation Building

- Building Assessment
 - ADA Compliance
 - Ensure the building is ADA accessible, e.g. main entrance ramp, new ADA toilets
 - Utilities Upgrade
 - Install and upgrade services as needed including HVAC system and lighting for efficient energy use
 - Exterior Repairs
 - Complete exterior repairs as needed, e.g. roof tiles, gutters and downspouts, doors and windows
 - Potential to connect downspouts to barrels for site storm run off collection
 - Potential to add green elements
 - Interior Repairs
 - Repair and clear out interior spaces as needed
 - Repair or replace existing floor slab in clay room as necessary
 - Complete general repairs including wall finishes, flooring, ceiling and painting as needed
- Potential to add additional pottery program for children
- Add additional programs to the building; needs community consensus on programming options. (e.g. nature center, kids crafts program, concessions)



Recommendations

Site- Landscaping

- Retain existing large shade trees as possible
- Enhance park with additional landscaping
 - Enhance northwest, southeast, and east entrances to make park more inviting
 - Buffer along Grand Avenue
 - Improve/increase plantings around field house
 - Include eco-friendly elements
 - Rain gardens
 - Use native materials, hearty and sustainable plant types
 - Diverse habitat for wildlife
 - Store rain water runoff on site for irrigation
- Create gardens for programming opportunities
 - For example: children's education gardens, organic herb gardens and vegetable gardens
- Existing and enhanced landscaping requires continued maintenance from outside source
 - Community garden club, outside contracting



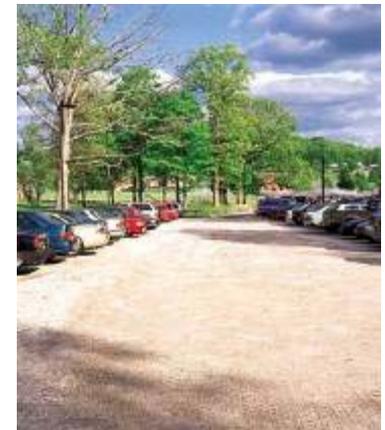
Recommendations

Site Improvements

- **Field Drainage and Wear**
 - Top dress, seed and aerate ball fields to reduce rain water collection
 - Create rain gardens as possible to collect storm water runoff
 - Improve drainage on northeast corner near tennis courts; opportunity to distribute water through french drains

- **Walking Path**
 - Create new walking/ running path on the south side of park between ball fields and field house to provide continuity to existing walks
 - Use pervious material to reduce storm water runoff
 - Add soft surface walkway adjacent to existing concrete/asphalt walkway

- **Upgrade Garbage Bins**
 - Improve coordination between the park staff and garbage collection contractor
 - Upgrade existing garbage cans to CPD's standard waste and recycling bins



Recommendations

Site- Additional

- Play Slab
 - Retain play slab for miscellaneous purposes
 - Paint games including 4-square and hopscotch on the surface
 - Use play slab for other programming opportunities
 - Local art display space
 - Kids bicycle obstacle course/ safety training



- Northwest Area
 - Create new use for site; community interests include:
 - Senior Citizen's Garden
 - Landscaped area with ornamental fountain and benches
 - Additional swings for kids
 - Dog Accommodation
 - Fully enclosed dog friendly area requires community consensus, funding, organization and continued maintenance by community



Recommendations

Park- Programming

- Create new programs for all ages
 - For example: craft classes for kids, soccer and football programs, yoga and pilates classes
- Potential to reorganize staff/ program schedules as necessary for improved community participation
 - Survey community for optimum programming options and timings
- Form a community subgroup to organize seasonal farmer's market
 - Establish on a hard surface in the park area to avoid turf damage
- Form a community subgroup dedicated to acquiring funding for additional programming and recreation staff
- Establish 'green' programs
 - For example: public awareness programs on green initiatives and eco-friendly solutions, children education programs, neighborhood recycling/composting contests



Recommendations

- Lighting
 - Add lighting to ball fields and tennis courts to allow night use; needs community consensus
 - Convert all park fixtures to energy conserving lights
- Drinking Fountain
 - Replace existing with new ADA accessible fountains
- Signage
 - Install information kiosks at main park entrances
 - Install additional dog rule and barbeque signage as necessary
- Fencing
 - Replace existing fence in the playground and spray pool with ornamental fencing
 - Add ornamental fence around entire park
 - Especially on south side of park as barrier to Grand Avenue
- Seating
 - Upgrade existing benches with ornamental steel benches as necessary
 - Potential to add benches/ picnic tables in pool area
- Entrances
 - Add ornamental feature to main entrances to beautify and encourage residents to enter park

Miscellaneous



Capital Improvement Priorities

- Projects listed in order of community priorities for improvement
 - 1) New Playground and Spray Pool
 - 2) Senior Citizen's Garden
 - 1) Located in northwest section of park; including ornamental fountain
 - 3) Walking Path
 - 1) New walking/ running path between field house and ball fields
 - 2) Soft surfacing adjacent to existing walkway
 - 4) Additional Signage
 - 1) Information kiosks
 - 2) Dog rules
 - 3) Barbeque rules
 - 5) Enhanced Landscaping
 - 1) Northwest, southeast and east entrances and along Grand Avenue
 - 6) Recreation Building Improvements
 - 7) Field House Improvements
 - 1) Building Renovations
 - 2) New Fitness Center
 - 8) Field Drainage and Wear Improvements
 - 9) Ornamental Fencing
 - 1) Along entire park perimeter
 - 10) New Drinking Fountains
 - 11) Upgraded Garbage Bins
 - 12) New Seating
 - 1) Benches throughout park
 - 2) Benches/picnic tables in pool
 - 13) Ornamental Park Entrances
 - 14) Additional Lighting
 - 1) Tennis courts and ball fields



Programming Improvement Priorities

- Projects listed in order of community priorities for improvement
 - 1) Reschedule Existing Programs
 - 1) As possible; coordinate with park staff
 - 2) Determine priorities through community survey
 - 2) Fundraise for Programming
 - 1) Create community subgroup dedicated to fundraising for programming initiatives
 - 3) Add New Programs
 - 1) For adults and children
 - 2) Determine priorities through community survey
 - 4) Re-program Recreation Building
 - 1) Investigate options for additional programming; e.g. a nature center, additional classes, concession stand
 - 5) Establish Farmer's Market
 - 1) Create community subgroup dedicated to organize



