

Meeting Notes

E C Hughes Playground - Play Area Renovation - Meeting #1

April 19, 2018

5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Southwest Teen Life Center, 2801 SW Thistle Street, Seattle WA

Attendees: Approximately 18 participants (including 11 children)

Project Team Libby Hudson, Planner; Bronwen Carpenter, Landscape Architect; and Katie Bang, Project Manager

Project E C Hughes Playground Renovation will update the play area and play equipment with structures accessible to children of all abilities. Additionally, the project will enhance safety and improve accessibility in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Budget & Schedule Budget: \$600,000 for planning, design and construction
Schedule: Planning & Design: Spring & Summer 2018
Construction: Fall/Winter 2018

Introduction & Project Description

Staff presented an overview of the project and summarized the survey input from the community, noting that the project budget is limited to the play area and accessible routes to the play area and restroom, and that the wading pool is not part of the project (and will remain as-is), and also explaining that the wood play structures have reached the end of their life, similar structures have been pulled from other play area (Lincoln Park) because of termite damage, and will need to be replaced here also. The toddler swings have already been pulled from this site [due to termite damage](#). The park is popular in the summer – the wading pool a big attraction, and a summer youth program occurs out of the field house.

Libby Hudson went over the feedback received from the survey [to date](#), noting that approximately 85 people have filled out the survey and that it will remain open for another week (until April 30th). According to the feedback the park is used fairly often (2x a week / 2 x a month) in the afternoon mostly, and is focused on kids 2-12, where climbing, swinging, using the wading pool and the sandbox are most attractive. It is important that play equipment should suit the toddlers and older children and that the sitting/gathering features be improved; however, BBQs were not highly valued. Respondents desired the “nature-inspired” play equipment style, and would like the new play equipment to include climbing, sliding and swinging, ahead of balancing structures and monkey bars/upper arm. Imaginary play rated higher than spinning equipment. Individual comments for [play](#) equipment included:

- A Viking swing
- Covered play for year-round use
- Play structures that are challenging and active – not risk-adverse

- Baby swings, merry-go-round and slides
- Keep the existing swings if possible
- Two commenters wanted more focus on younger kids

Other written comments from survey:

- A couple of commenters noted that the sand box was one reason they come to the park, another thought it was undesirable
- Several comments included maintaining the wading pool, increase days it is open an, and include weekend openings
 - Parks Response: These comments will be passed onto the Parks programing people
- Some felt the play equipment should not be [replaced](#), but rather repaired or dollars put elsewhere; One suggestion dollars for a trail around the park, improving field for soccer instead of play area improvements
 - Parks Response: The equipment needs to be replaced to meet current safety features and cannot just be repaired

Staff noted that Roxhill Elementary School was moving into the nearby E C Hughes Elementary School building next fall, and that the Friends of Roxhill were creating a playground. The Friends group was kind enough to share the survey information that they utilized in designing their play area, noting that the Seattle School District does not allow swings at school playgrounds. Parks staff agreed that we wanted to compliment the play elements proposed for the school rather than repeat elements, and so the park design will continue to provide swings as a play element. [Because the Roxhill Elementary Playground is receiving public funding \(through a Neighborhood Matching Fund grant\) it will be required to be available to the public during non-school operating hours.](#)

Libby shared what the Friends of Roxhill heard: Top 3: Swings, Zipline, Slide – Next 3: Playhouse/fort, Monkey bars, Spinning equipment. Based on their feedback, the school playground design selected the following three elements:

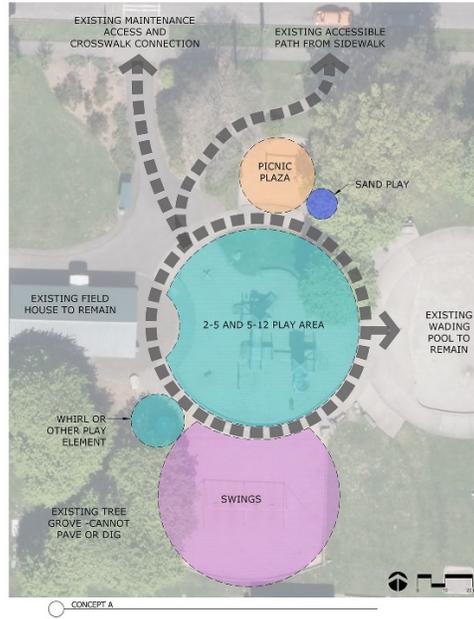
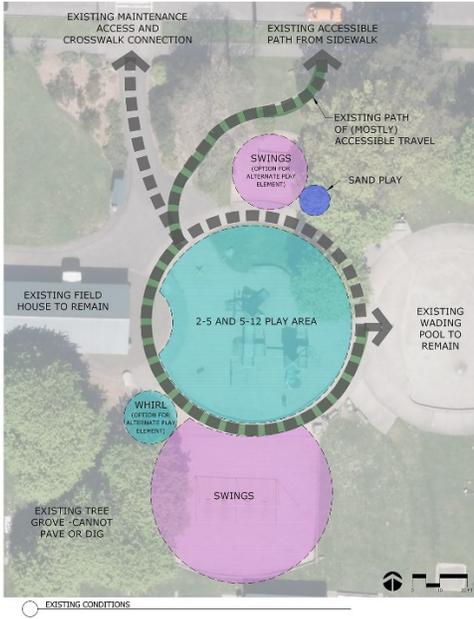
- Zipline
- Climber w/2 slide & Monkey bars
- Spinner “Omnispin” Spinner

Bronwen Carpenter described the park features with structures for older (5-12) and younger kids (2-5), noting the play area includes two sets of swings (toddlers’ swings are currently removed), sand play, large climbing structure, and a whirl. She noted that the site is fairly level and basic layout of the play area is good, but could use improved gathering space. [She asked](#) how the group felt about the BBQs currently scattered around the play area. There are some pathway issues where it doesn’t meet accessibility requirements that will need to be fixed. Bronwen understood that many people enjoy the tall swings there, but they don’t meet our current safety standards and will need to be replaced.

Bronwen described conceptual options for the play area layout [and how they varied from the existing layout.](#)

Concept A

[Replaces the current tot swing location with space for a picnic plaza. The space for the giant swings to the south is oversized and will accommodate additional bays of swings.](#)

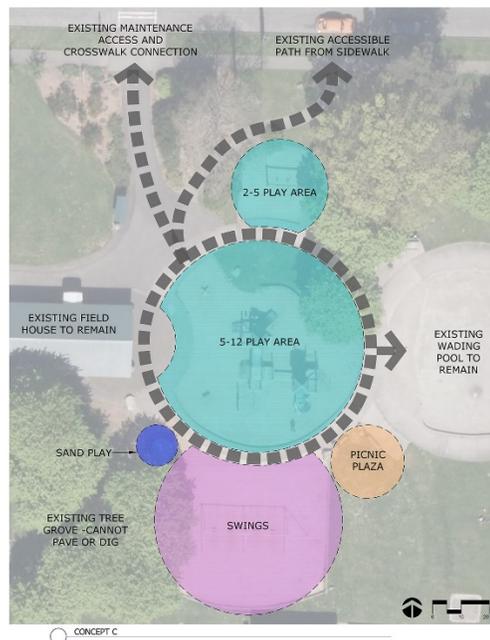
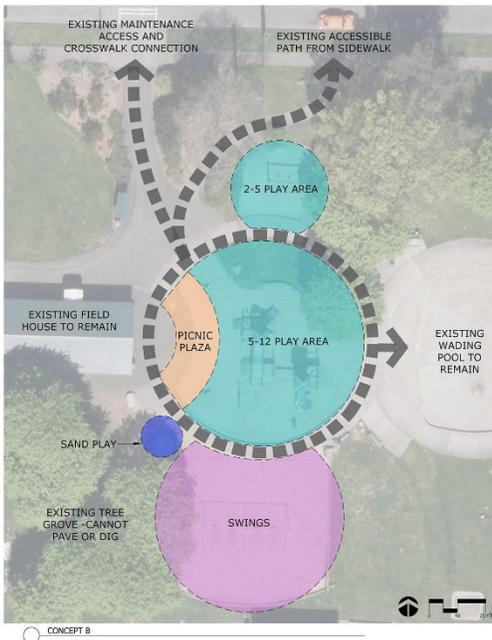


Concept B

- Changes tot swing area to 2-5 play space
- Locates picnic plaza on west edge of play area, adjacent to the field house
- Moves sand play to existing whirl area

Concept C

- Changes tot swing area to 2-5 play space
- Moves sand play to existing whirl area
- Locates picnic plaza between the swings and wading pool



Discussion & Feedback

The group discussed the concepts and equipment options and had the following questions, comments and concerns:

General concerns and questions

- Animals are in the bushes – raccoons and cats. Sometimes a nuisance. Occasional homeless person too
- People drive into park sometimes [when bollard is down](#); Sometimes to access the BBQs. Should include more fencing and gate to prevent this
- Will picnic be covered?
Parks Response: No; there is covered area provided at the fieldhouse and the summer program brings in additional shade structures
- Concerns about the traffic on S. Holden St. and the play area [safety](#):
 - People do not stop at the stop sign
 - A lot of ferry traffic along Holden
 - Need more fencing
 - Need better crossing; there's a flashing [caution](#) light, but people ignore
 - There are many new, young families moving into this neighborhood, walking to the parkParks Response: Staff will discuss these issues with SDOT staff; suggest that those neighbors that have these concerns also contact SDOT

Site Layout

- The picnic plaza location from Concept C is preferred.
- Have play elements for older kids closest to S. Holden Street and to move the 2-5 play further into the park, away from the busy street.
- Locate 2-5 and 5-12 adjacent to each other but provide some separation between them
- Consider adding more fencing along S. Holden
- Put seating in centralized location so that parents can easily see/reach children playing in different parts of the play area
- The existing tree in the play area provides nice shade
- Keep eastern lawn area; used a lot during wading pool season
- The [western side of the lawn](#)-is not used that much, would be ok to eliminate

Seating

- Need seating by the 2-5 year old play area
- It would be nice to have the 2-5 and 5-12 seating in the same area for those parents with kids in both age ranges wanting to watch both
- Need seating to watch children in the 2-5 play area – those adults are tired
- Court: Like to see the sports court improved with a basketball hoop geared toward younger kids
Parks Response: This is outside the scope of this project but will follow up with name of person to contact at Parks

BBQs

- These are used during the summer, sometimes kids abuse them – firecrackers, etc.
- Like the BBQs, [would like](#) wheel chair access to [some of](#) them; It's hard to move through the park to get to [these existing ones](#)

Parks Response: an accessible BBQ can be included in the new picnic plaza

Sand Play

- Will the sand play be kept?

Parks Response: Survey feedback has been mixed. Because there has been more positive than negative responses we opt to keep it.

Swings

- Love to see a parent –child swing; there are not many in Seattle and these also work for those with disabilities
- Love to see a Viking swing
- Existing giant swings are awesome – sad to see these go, but understand the safety issues; Sad we are diminishing risk taking in play areas
- Viking swings sound fun
- Need 2 adult swings beside each other for parent and child to swing next to each other
Parks Response: These will be provided, cannot mix swing types within a bay

New Play Features

- Like the monkey bars that work for more than one ability with closer and further bars –cool idea
- Prefer monkey bars that are stationary to those that move
- Talk tubes are popular; consider multiple outlets
- “Double” slide or wide slide on 2-5 structure for racing or parent/child
- Climber w/ slide or some sort of challenge
- Want equipment/elements that cannot be found elsewhere in SW Seattle
- Would like to see smaller elements to challenge balance
- Whirl
 - Keep existing merry-go-round if possible; Newer types of merry-go-rounds are hard for kids (and even parents) to push
 - Like the merry-go- rounds that are integrated into the rubber surfacing of play areas – no issues with kids falling under
 - Want a spinner that is easy to push for kids

