

Meeting Notes

Loyal Heights Play Area Renovation - Meeting #2

February 12, 2018

7:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

Loyal Heights Community Center, 2101 NW 77th Street, Seattle

Attendees: Approximately 30 participants (including 7 children)

Project Team	Libby Hudson, Planner; Pamela Alspaugh, Sr. Landscape Architect; and Shannon Glass, PLA, Project Manager
Project	Loyal Heights Play Area Renovation will update play equipment with play structures accessible to children of all abilities, geared toward two age-groups, 2-5 and 5-12. Additionally, the project will enhance safety and improve play area accessibility in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
Budget & Schedule	Budget: \$600,000 for planning, design and construction Schedule: Planning & Design: Fall 2017 – Early 2018 Construction: Fall 2018

Introduction & Project Description

Staff presented an overview of the project, and a summary of the community outreach thus far, which included a December meeting and informational survey. The previous public input was reviewed and considered in designing the proposal and incorporating site features valued by the community. The purpose of the second meeting is to share the preferred schematic design, the refined play equipment options and gather feedback to further refine the design proposal for the play area renovation.

Schematic Design

Pamela Alspaugh presented the preferred schematic site plan, which includes an expanded play area (removal of the existing berm and wall), which has separate equipment for children ages 2-5 and 5-12 and accessible unitary surface under the 2-5 year-old equipment, and also includes renovation of the existing loop walkway and new park furniture. The proposed design is described below.

- Plaza and walkways

A new plaza area (with three four-person tables) is situated along a new connecting path that will be located on the eastern edge of the play area. This new walkway provides a second, interior loop to the existing circular loop. The community desired to maintain the existing circular loop walkway and the lawn (to the extent possible while accommodating space for the play area). The new connecting walk/plaza will provide additional ADA access for those using the park and additional seating for special events conducted in the lawn. This small plaza (30' circular area) will have a different surface treatment. It is situated in a sunny spot that can be used to picnic or sit and view the play area or lawn. One possibility for this small plaza, is to make one of the tables a gaming table that would include a built-in checkboard.

The southern portion of the loop walk that leads from the basketball court to the play area will be moved south of the existing pine trees. The current path is in bad condition due to upheaval from the tree roots, and the relocation should help maintain a better surface. This new portion leads to the top of the playfield stairway and

connects near the basketball court. The basketball court will remain as it is, but a new drinking fountain will be placed near the intersection of the new existing loop walkway.

Two bike racks are also provided, one near the play area and the other near the community center.

- **Play area zones and surfacing**

Two play area surfacing is proposed – a larger area of engineered wood fiber and a smaller area intended for the 2-5 year-old’s play equipment that is poured in place (PIP) rubber play surfacing. This surfacing will allow all abilities to access to the play equipment and is proposed in part based on community comment that wood chips make it very difficult to maneuver a wheelchair.

Play Equipment Options

Equipment options included two primary designs geared toward the two age groups. These can be mixed or matched between the two options, and can be made with different colors or configurations. The two options include the following:

Option #1

2-12 year-old’s Climbing Structure & Net Climber:

- Two-level platform tower (no roof), provides play for younger children on the lower level
 - Lower level has a bridge and a two-person slide –reached by steps or a net bridge that connects to the net climber
 - Upper level has two slides and is reached by way of climbing poles, a center ladder climber or from the lower platform
- Net Climber – climbing structure includes multiple netting levels with rubber discs, and is connected to monkey bars and a net-bridge leading to the lower platform of the tower

2-12 year-old’s:

- Swings – includes four strap swings and one two-person facing swing called a “friendship swing”
- Rotating net climber – proposed for both options; much like a merry-go-round with a net, located in the southern end of the play area

2-5 year-old’s Structure:

- Low climbing structure – includes two slides, a tube slide and half circle slide
- Partially roofed and has various ways to climb up to reach the two slides
- Located in the PIP area

Option #2

2-12 year-olds:

- Two-level, multi connected structure for older children on the upper level, younger ones on the lower level
 - Lower level has a curving slide and climbing pole
 - Multiple options for access are provided, including an ADA ramp, wide stairway with transfer, net-climber, monkey bars or climbing poles
 - Provides ground level play activities under the upper platforms, including a hanging beam with springs that hangs from the sky bridge above
 - Upper level has two bridges, three tower platforms and three slides (one of which is a dual slide)
 - Multiple climbing options provided, including a climbing wall and cork-screw climber

- Structure does not have roofs, but has overhead shading components called “shadow trees”
- A spiral game table – proposed just south of the large play structure
- Rotating net climber – provided in both options, proposed the southwest corner of the play area
- Swings – proposed in south corner of the play area, includes four swings total, two strap swings and two adult/ infant facing swings called “expression swings”

2-5 year-old’s Structure:

- Low climbing structure, includes “shadow trees” overhead, and located in the poured in place rubber surfacing area
- Includes two slides - a tube and half circle slide
- Includes various ways to climb up to structure, including a turtle in which the head is the step up

Wrap Up

Shannon Glass will take the project over at the construction document phase. The project plans and equipment will be finalized and sent to participants electronically and will be posted on the web within 6 weeks.

Comments and Questions

These include Parks responses to questions, and are organized by topic.

Preferred Schematic Site Design:

Fitness structures

- Can fitness structures for all ages be incorporated into the play area renovation; for example, design elements that could also serve as parkour challenge?
- Would like to see walls, pull up bars and other site elements that challenge adults too
- Exercise fitness structures are not sufficient

Parks Response: Exercise equipment might fit in as part of the lower playing field project, if budget allows. This project is to renovate the play area to meet the needs of children ages 2-5 and 5-12. However, we do try to incorporate other play opportunities desired by the community provided these do not detract from the primary purpose of the play area, can be accommodated within the project budget, and will continue to meet other standards such as ADA. This project site is level and fairly small and may not be appropriate for some of these suggested uses.

Basketball Court

- What’s happening with the Basketball court?
Parks Response: The basketball court is in good shape and will not be touched as part of this design.

Play Area Design

- Understand from last meeting that the design would include equal area for both of the two age groups
Parks Response: The discussion at the last meeting focused around the play desires of the two age groups and in the end of the discussion the group agreed that the play area should provide active play opportunities for both age groups, and not focus on one group over the other
- What is the thinking behind the rubber surface in the play area?
Parks Response: As discussed in the last meeting, it is difficult to push wheelchair through woodchips and the proposed surfacing provides easy access, enabling children of all abilities to play together.



- Could the current surfaces be used?
Parks Response: The walkway is in poor condition in most areas (uplifting, cracked, etc.) and will need to be resurfaced. The play area will need all new surfacing to meet standards, and the ADA rubber surface will be added to provide for an all abilities play surface and meet the needs and desires communicated in the previous meeting.
- What is being done with the grade of the site?
Parks Response: The existing berm will be removed to expand the play area, and the play area grade will be fairly level with the walkways. Some areas will be brought up in elevation slightly, to address some drainage problems.
- For this renovation, do you have to remove everything? Can't something be re-used?
Parks Response: Parks plans for equipment replacements and other play area renovations as the equipment reaches the end of its life cycle, planning for renovation prior to equipment becoming unsafe. Renovations must meet current safety standards, so equipment is replaced and surface/slope addressed to meet current ADA standards. This usually means much of what is there must be replaced.
- Does the site design show the area with the rubber surfacing?
Parks Response: Yes -- it can be viewed on the site plan, indicated by in pink on the site plan.
- Can the pavement incorporate a checkerboard on the ground?
Parks Response: Pavement finish treatment can be considered and the plaza will have a different surface treatment than the rest of the walkways.

New Plaza, Tables, Walkways and Benches

- How big is the plaza? *Parks Response:* This area is fairly small for an outdoor feature, 30' across.
- Like a couple of tables – picnicking, sitting and watching play area or lawn area
- Like the game table option
- Like the idea of tables there— park has only one now
- Important to have tables there for parties
- Will benches be on the west side of the path?
Parks Response: Yes, new benches will face the play area and be located on the west side of the walkway.
- What will edge the path? *Parks Response:* The walkway will be flush with the adjacent surfaces, whether lawn or woodchip. There may be a slight rise to the surfaces to direct drainage.

Lawn

- Lawn renovation in front of building? Can work be coordinated?
 - Misunderstood – turf replacement is for the playing field, not the upper lawn area.*Parks Response:* The community center project will address resurfacing areas in front of the center and providing proper ADA standards for the parking area and walkway leading to the entrance. The other related project is the renovation of the playfield, not the lawn in front of the center.
- Don't want trees in lawn area/near walkways that would buckle.



Trees

- Are any trees being removed?
Parks Response: One tree will be removed to expand the play area and the new walkway. This tree will require that three trees be planted elsewhere on the site.
- Where would these new trees be planted?
Parks Response: This is not yet determined. What location would the community like to see for additional trees? The group indicated that the area along X street between the sidewalk and the play area would be good, providing some screening along that side. There is an existing pine tree there that is a concern and may need to be removed. Parks is having the arborist take a look at it.
- Place trees in bare area or along west side of path – near 22nd – this area is dark

Southern Hillside

- Natural path downhill stays? Boulders/natural play on hill possible?
 - Plants there are nice.*Parks Response:* A boulder might be able to be placed in the area where the tree was removed, but any other location will invite trampling of the undergrowth that has finally established on the hillside.

Lighting

- Can lighting be included in the northwest corner of the play area; and what about walkway lights?
Parks Response: We can look at the possibility of solar lighting, however, the budget does not allow for the cost of extending electrical lines and new lighting. Maintenance would also be a cost consideration.

Play Equipment Design

General comments/questions

- How easy is it to hybridize the equipment design options?
Parks Response: Very easy; We can select elements from on to the other and combine. There are some exceptions, such as the netting design, which is designed the way it is to meet safety standards.
- Like the spinner thing; Discovery Park has similar
- Like natural colors – fit into vegetation and as the structure ages, doesn't show it so much. What color scheme options are there?
Parks Response: There are many color choices; natural and neutral colors were preferred based on previous comment.

Swings

- Parent-kid swing: Can you push a child if you're not sitting in it?
Parks Response: Yes, a child could ride alone in the swing and be pushed.
- Kids *comments:* I like friendship swing

Climber/Towers

- Option #2 - How does climbing structure work? What do kids do on it?
Parks Response: The lower level is geared to younger kids, with multiple ways up. There are activities to do as well as climbing and sliding. The upper level provides play for older and more daring children, also with higher slides and multiple ways to climb to the upper platform. The overheads give shadow patterns on the play structure.



- Is it possible to put roof on Option #2 (tower)?
Parks Response: It is, but roofs are costly and less suitable for this play area, which is open and surrounded by larger trees.
- Tower looks busy (netting); Can it be reconfigured?
Parks Response: The netting is designed to meet safety standards so it is unlikely that it can be altered.
- Don't like the cage like grid of the netting structure.
- My kid loved climbing on the net structure at Discovery Park.
- Can stairs be added so adults can join the child on the slide?
Parks Response: The slide is meant to be entered from the climber located within the structure. Adding an outside stairway would require increasing the size of the play area.
- Is there a way to add a slide for younger/smaller kids?
Parks Response: There's another slide for younger kids, which can be seen in the other elevation view.
- *Kids comments:* Like the climbing tower; Like to watch kids play on the climbing/netting; Love the turtle

Net Merry-go-round

- Merry-go-round with net – love it
- Is there an entrance for younger kids?
Parks Response: Yes, the entrance is inside the structure.
- *Kids comments:* I like climbing merry-go-round

Plaza

- Plaza table – Any room for a ping pong table?
Parks Response: This could be added. It appears there is general support for a ping pong table. It probably would be better located near the basketball court.

Other Concern/Questions

- How long ago was the existing play area constructed?
Parks Response: It was later confirmed that the play area was last renovated in 1996, so this play area is due for renovation as the equipment is reaching the end of its life span.
- What is unsafe?
Parks Response: The existing equipment does not meet current safety standard and the renovation will bring in new equipment that will. The existing equipment is not unsafe, but is reaching the end of its life and needs to be replaced before it becomes unsafe.
- When will construction start, and for how long?
Parks Response: The construction will begin in the fall, after school starts, and will be closed for at least two months, unless weather requires it to be closed longer to allow for the construction to occur.
- Is budget (\$600) typical for other parks?
Parks Response: Each park is different. This budget includes all planning, design and construction. This is not atypical for a renovation of this size.
- Are we taking votes for play options?
Parks Response: Parks will consider the input from this meeting. We will also put the preferred Schematic Plan and the equipment options up on the website, along with the meeting notes, and the community can provide additional input. The schematic design and equipment will be finalized by Parks, sent to participants electronically, and the plans will be presented on the website in approximately 6 weeks.