



1st Community Meeting Minutes

Date: 9.15.15

Project: Marra-Desimone Park

Location: South Park Community Center, Gym

Issued by: Barker Landscape Architects

1. Attendance:

City of Seattle Parks Department:

Rick Nishi, Parks & Green Spaces Levy Manager
Jay Rood, Capital Projects Coordinator
Karen O'Connor, Senior Public Relations Specialist
Karimah Edwards, Parks Planner
Jaen Gomez, Parks Intern

Consultant Team members:

Nicolas Morin, Barker Landscape Architects
Brenda Snyder, Barker Landscape Architects

Number community members in attendance: 40

2. Meeting Framework:

Purpose of the Meeting:

To identify community priorities for Marra-Desimone Park, review long-range plan, and review two alternatives for programming.

Presentation:

PDF slideshow (History, Aerials, Project Overview, Elements of Master Plan, Design Criteria, Site Analysis, Programing Opts A&B, Design Game rules, Next Steps), full-sized hard copies of the site plan with game pieces for Design Game exercise including 11x17 prints of the site analysis and Program Alts A & B. All material provided in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Mien. Interpreters were also in attendance. Seattle Parks department was responsible for sending out notifications about the meeting, sign-in, and providing an activity table for kids, which was well used. This meeting was transcribed.

Project Vision:

"Create an engaging and welcoming urban park that provides open space and educational benefits to the South Park community, meet the operational needs of Marra Farm Coalition programs and offer an agriculturally-based educational resource/model for the City of Seattle."

3. Meeting Notes:

1. Jay Rood, Seattle Parks project manager, opened the meeting with an introduction of the team, a brief overview of this phase of development at Marra-Desimone Park, and a description of the goal for the meeting; to gather community input for the purpose of helping to prioritize which elements to include in the next round of site improvements.
2. This park has been in the works for a long time and its spiritual beginning is the farm.
3. Master Plan/Long Range Development Plan was completed in 2008.
4. Everything completed on site, since then, is being called "Phase 1". The work which will be built next year is being called "Phase 2".
5. Goal is to complete construction documents this Winter and be out to bid in the Spring with construction completed by next Fall, 2016.
6. Nicolas Morin, project manager for design consultant team, spoke to presentation, which included:
 - o Meeting Agenda, goals, and schedule.
 - o Background on the project, work completed since the 2008 Master Plan.
 - o History of the site through aerials and photos taken in the earlier half of the 20th century
 - o Context of surrounding neighborhood
 - o Review of the existing site and different areas within the farm.
 - o Elements proposed by the Long Range Development Plan
 - o Inspiration from other similar sites.

- Design Criteria & current areas of concern:
 - Accessibility- needs substantial improvement
 - Environmentally Critical Areas- Lost Fork of Hamm Creek is a treasured resource, but needs better vegetation management, more educational opportunities.
 - Safety/Crime Prevention through Environmental Design- Open sight lines, more vegetation management at perimeter and of large hazard trees
 - Opportunities include loop trail = exercise, activation, accessibility, natural surveillance
- Existing Site/Site Analysis- Farm and Recreation
 - How to link Farm to Park
 - Park has not yet been developed.
- Program Alternatives A & B
 - Alt. A reflects the Master Plan
 - Alt. B proposes adjustments include:
 - Similar ingredients to the Master Plan, but rearranged.
 - More multi-use, open program, and open recreational space.
 - More open sight lines across the site.
 - Improved parking layout for safety, drop-off, loading, welcoming experience from 5th/Director; establishes new “Front Door”
- How to play the Design Game
 - Everyone plays, work it out together, look for the win-win solution.
 - Quick review of the game pieces aka elements and “ingredients” of the Long Range Plan and some new items.
- Primary Questions to keep in mind:
 - What priorities do you have for this next round of improvements to Marra-Desimone Park?
 - How do you see this project as being more of a community park?
- 7. Comments and questions in response to the presentation included:
 - Layers of history for the “hill” was once flat, fill from 509, regarded when the swale was built - next step is to make is more functional
 - Budget is small for such a large site- need to be efficient.
- 8. Comments and ideas offered during the Design Game:
 - Community members who are new to South Park and find that the wayfinding to and through park is not intuitive.
 - Not sure what the difference is between a road and a path. Possible to have both at once- Yes.
 - Design really needs to be pragmatic.
 - Jake from Heyduwamish.org wants to help capture comments for the public process through open source map site.
 - There is an historic plum tree at the NW corner of the site, planted by Fred Marra’s grandfather- could be the last tree from that era.
 - Chicken Co-op is highly successful.
 - Tended to in the mornings and evenings.
 - Water collected from cistern.
 - Scraps from the farm.
 - Only 1 year old.
 - 17-20 chickens, some were donated by neighbors who no longer wanted theirs.
 - Good for kids/families who want to participate and don’t have time for pets at home.

Group Presentation (in the order that they presented at the meeting):

GROUP 8: (Rayna, Bill, Meredith)

- Liked the sun arc path of the MP/ its representation of the seasons.
- Located the bandshell as an anchor to the open area and to draw people to the middle of the park.
- Overlook - good line of sight
- Make use of grade changes
- Like different play areas- farm play, farm animals, little goat, more farm critters.
- Bring power in for bandshell, for lighting and to deter crime.

GROUP 2: (Martha, Jose, Paulina)

- Wide space for walking, jogging, biking, especially for elderly folks who want to use that space.
- Group member who farms- protect farming activity from visitors, encourage visiting around the perimeter.
- Can we survey the Latino farmers in Spanish?
- They like the idea of extending the farm and diversifying it.

- Can the gathering space be used to sell what they grow during the summer and enclosed during the Winter for gathering, meeting, and celebrating.
- Power for outside performances and improved security.
- More traditional play.
- Places for kids of all ages.
- Like the idea of exercise machines.
- Locate parking away from farm activity.

GROUP 3: (Matteo and Fred)

- Keep it simple.
- Improve pathways first- make it easier for everyone to get around.
- Make it easy to maintain. Visits the park every day with his son and has noticed more positive activity when they have been mowing- more activity, frisbee, golf, catch. Less positive activity when overgrown and
- Full of trash.
- Biggest appeal of the park is the farm- seeing the seasons change, seeing where food comes from- expand farming and support more community involvement. Encourage that- fix greenhouse.
- Expand the architectural part of the park.
- Is size of P-Patch equal to demand?
- Basic vegetation maintenance. Can't walk through apple orchard.
- Many treacherous spots throughout.
- It would be great to have an asphalt parking lot, to prevent rocks getting kicked up and at their house, across the street, when late night joy ridding/donuts in the parking lot.
- Closing gate to help enforce park hours?
- Add play structures.
- Lots of young children in the neighborhood.
- Has heard good things about children play farm on Beacon Hill.

GROUP 6: (Dagmar and Sean)

- Would like to have a public gathering space
- Want an entrance as shown in option A w/ art.
- Prefer option A
- Think wayfinding is good
- Want farming specific theme play equipment rather than something traditional.
- Center area for farm gathering area - equipment, etc.
- Want market area but not sure if should be centrally located or near the parking
- Group maintenance equipment and farm animals
- Demonstration area for farming near market area, probably near buses and parking area

GROUP 1: (Couple, new to South Park)

- Want to bring the two halves of the park together - unify them so not half park and half recreational. To do this want to have a market zone in the middle of the park where people can try the food grown on site.
- Group together the picnic area, farm play, storage, market, and the wash and pack station
- Entry sequence at 5th Ave, from north-central area grouping bus /unloading, parking, interpretive signage, bike rack, gathering area and rest rooms.
- In the south, an expansion of farming, livestock area
- For recreation, want to create a neighborhood edge where community and environment activities happen together - group the multi-use building with catchment that attaches to the swale, a natural play area, and a map for wayfinding.
- Want there to be clear indication from the edges what is happening in the center of the park - clear visibility, distinct access points, easy to monitor and know what should or shouldn't be happening.
- Maintenance access at South end.

GROUP 4: (Alde, teen from HeyDuwamish group)

- Focus is on priorities- how to make this community friendly, safe, and inviting to all ages and abilities.
- The historical tree line that has divided the park is becoming hazardous - clear it out and put in a agricultural learning center. It could have a historical component to explain everything that has happened to the site.
- Add a natural play area and fix the parking.
- Gate at parking lot.

- Keep the open field.
- Add bathrooms, easier maintenance access, and vegetation maintenance
- Key is to keep the plum tree - it has historical significance for the park as is quite old
- Put in a picnic area
- Add another entrance
- Would like to see a few covered plazas
- From Mexico, many small plazas in parks- "simple but catches beauty in it"

GROUP 5: (Julie, Mien community gardener's table)

- Gardening is very important for us.
- Keep garden, no car or truck in the middle.
- Farm is a significant emblem of what United States offers to immigrants (MEIN) so want to maintain farm character
- Don't want to have the parking too close to farming area because it is dangerous - muggings can happen
- Share cultural ideas & lessons of the old life, organic methods, knowledge for the children.
- Provided good visibility throughout the park for safety, but also so community can see changes to gardens throughout the seasons
- Want a playground or festival area so there can be international celebrations of cultures in park at different times of the year. This allows different cultures to grow closer.
- Bathroom should be close to the parking area and not close to the garden area.
- Recreation area close to the bathroom and parking, easy for kids to use.
- Traditional cultural art.
- Would like a shade area for people who work in the garden all day - rest, eat lunch, etc.
- Want a windmill or other emblematic item to distinguish the farming area- energy, sign of farming.
- Don't have big fields back home.
- Make use of all land.
- Peaceful activity.
- Blueberry field between gardens and parking
- International garden.
- Take out big trees because they are dangerous for everyone
- Picnic area for everyone, for the people who work in the garden - a place where they can be with their family on the weekend and can mix people of different cultures, etc.
- Liked Option B.

GROUP 7: (Laura)

- Like Option B the best
- Entrance at Director.
- Learning Center for kids at Concord.
- Want the parking further away from the garden area
- Like:
 - Entrance Marker
 - Restroom by the Parking Lot
 - Bike Racks by the Parking Lot
 - Multi-Use Community Building by the Parking Lot that can double as a market and learning area.
- Want 'Farm' back in the name because of the history associated with title.
- Want the colorful bandshell for performance space
- Utilities would be near the bandshell
- Like current chicken coop and want to add more livestock to that area
- Want natural play, farm play, picnic tables, and benches
- Also want a wash station
- More livestock- can be managed by the community and things
- Goats can be rented out for brush removal as fundraiser.
- Edible forest near the livestock area
- Facility to support sustainable farming practices near the greenhouse
- Add a restroom and picnic area
- Improve the wash area the farmers use
- A fix for flooding?
- Make the path through the center stronger

FOR ACTUAL DESIGN GAME BOARDS, SEE DESIGN GAME RESULTS PDF

Additional comments/questions made after the meeting:

1. What are the cultural demographics of the farm itself?
2. What are we celebrating.
3. How many acres are there for agricultural use in Seattle?
4. Keep Farm in the name.
5. Like a historical building.

Additional meeting notes captured by Jaen Gomez, Seattle Parks Intern:

1. Livestock: incorporating space for additional farm animals. Several people mentioned the idea of adding goats. ties into the farming theme and would create educational component. could help with maintaining overgrown areas.
2. Bandshell: Various groups liked the idea of have a stage area that could be used in multiple ways. They would also like to take advantage of the Bandshell that is currently just in storage.
3. Parking: Various people directly involved with farming at the site were concerned that the proximity of a parking lot could lead to damaged crops. Others mentioned they would like to the parking lot altered from its current state as it does not feel safe, nor is it practical. They would also like it to be more ADA friendly so more people can have access.
4. Paths : Circulation around the garden rather than through was something that was brought up. Some were afraid that paths directly through the farm space could result in more harm than good. Also, many suggested that they desired paths that could be better maintained. currently a lot of the paths are overgrown and poorly maintained and many are discouraged from using them. Paths also could utilized/ incorporate better signage. Some suggested that the NE corner of the site is crucial connector for pedestrians and would like it to be more accessible.
5. Gate: many suggested the idea of adding a gate to the future parking space in attempt to discourage unwanted activity.
6. Playspace: many suggested they would like play areas that allow for wider age groups to utilize. Play areas attract families and promote a safe environment in the park. Also some liked the interactive areas done in jefferson park.
7. Entrances: Most seemed to like option b with the clearly defined entrances. At the moment there is confusion about where to enter and where not to. They would like to have well defined entrances with signage and other wayfinding elements.
8. Bike Racks: A growing number of people are utilizing bikes as transportation and would like to see more bike racks be incorporated to the final design .
9. Adult workout equipment: Various groups suggested the potential to have fitness equipment areas for adults to exercise. Would allow for more users to take advantage of the site.
10. Restrooms : There currently is a need for improving the restroom but their was also much talk about eco-friendly alternatives such as compost toilets .
11. Close Looped Systems: In addition to the restrooms they would like to potentially see things like the wash station and roof tops incorporate some type of close looped system. They want to promote waste reduction and energy conservation wherever they can. Materials, etc.
12. Historical: Along with the name of the site, many would like to make sure historic elements are incorporated into the design. while the division between the two lots is historic the trees that currently mark that line are not. Many people don't know the history of the site but they would like to preserve it because it is culturally significant.
13. Education Center: Many expressed their interest and the importance of making space for and education center. Many schools around the area could take advantage of this, but also local public could learn more about farming practices. The center could also serve as a gathering area during special events.
14. Option B: From my overall take away it seemed most people generally gravitated towards option B.

