

Project Status Report

February 22, 2002

The second public workshop held in conjunction with the development of a concept plan for Booth Park was held on February 20, 2002 from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm at the DPS Building. Approximately 25 people were in attendance. The purpose of the workshop was to present conceptual alternatives for the development of Booth Park based on the initial input received in January, as well as identify elements to include in a preferred alternative.

The results from the initial workshop were reviewed by summarizing the common and distinctive elements that were discussed.

Common Elements From First Workshop

- Formal Entry / Gateway / Seating
- Balance between environmental restoration / protection with recreation development and public spaces
- Tell the story of the site / interpretation
- Native plantings
- Connections / linkages to community
- Intergenerational
- Sculpture / Art
- Formal edge along Old Woodward
- Shade structure / plantings
- Focus / access -- Rouge River

Distinctive Elements From First Workshop

- Public Restrooms
- Parking
- Skateboard Area
- Bridges / Walkways to Central Business District
- Kiosk / Private Concessions

Wade-Trim then presented and reviewed with attendees three separate conceptual alternatives for the site based on those elements identified in the initial workshop. The intention was to allow participants to envision how elements might fit into the site and obtain feedback regarding what they liked and what they disliked. Considerable input was gathered. Overall, community members and attendees feel it is important to maintain a balance between recreation amenities and protection of the environment. Also, the magnitude of the improvements should be scaled back a bit to ensure the park maintains a "neighborhood" feel. Workshop attendees would like to see two bridge connections across the Rouge, one to Old Woodward and the other to the city parking lot near Jacobsons. A hardscape feature/gateway at the corner of Harmon and Old Woodward would be nice as long as it is appropriately scaled and provides an open feel. The play area should be near Harmon to provide for easy access and ensure safety. Art should be incorporated into the design as well as continuous walking paths. No parking or retail/concession space should be located within the park.

Participants were informed that the city is intending on applying to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (applications are due April 1, 2002) for funding assistance with the implementation of the conceptual design. This application process requires a public hearing as well as the need to have the City Commission pass a resolution of support for the project and commit to its implementation should the City be awarded a grant.



Meeting Summary

Public Workshop

6:30 pm to 9:00 pm

Wednesday, February 20, 2002

Department of Public Services

The second public workshop on the development of a conceptual plan for Booth Park was held on February 20, 2002 at the DPS Building. Approximately 25 people were in attendance including Parks and Recreation Board members, Plan Board members, City staff and neighborhood representatives. (See attached sign-in sheets) The purpose of the workshop was to present conceptual alternatives for the development of Booth Park based on the initial input received at the January Public Workshop, and identify elements to include in a preferred alternative.

Bob Fox began the meeting by welcoming all those in attendance and briefly described how we arrived at this point. Wade-Trim (WT) then introduced the agenda for the meeting and the goals for the workshop. WT then reviewed the results from the initial workshop by summarizing the common and distinctive elements that were discussed.

Common Elements From First Workshop

- Formal Entry / Gateway / Seating
- Balance between environmental restoration/protection with recreation development and public spaces
- Tell the story of the site / interpretation
- Native plantings
- Connections / linkages to community
- Intergenerational
- Sculpture / Art
- Formal edge along Old Woodward
- Shade structure / plantings
- Focus/access -- Rouge River

Distinctive Elements From First Workshop

- Public Restrooms
- Parking
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- Bridges / Walkways to Central Business District
- Kiosk / Private Concessions

WT then presented and reviewed with attendees three separate conceptual alternatives for the site based on those elements identified in the initial workshop. The intention was to allow participants to envision how elements might fit together onto the site and obtain feedback regarding what they liked and disliked. Considerable input was gathered including the following comments:

- Be sure to keep in mind drainage on the site. There are currently very soggy areas that will have to be addressed during design.
- Include interpretative stations to discuss the history of the site along the parks' pathways.
- Keep an open, informal play area in the central part of the site.
- Include areas designated for art/sculpture, but don't make recommendations as to what these should look like. Keep these areas for competitive art contests, commissions, etc.
- Bring the soils and grass back to a higher quality.
- This is a Neighborhood Park in intensity.
- The bridge connections to both the parking area toward the Central Business District and to Old Woodward were viewed as positive and should be part of the final concept.





- Limit the impervious surfaces on the site.
- Keep the trail a chip trail so that it discourages bicycle use.
- Provide a continuous pathway throughout the park.
- More elements for children, informal play space was important.
- ADA accessibility of gateway area
- Non-invasive signage and interpretation
- The challenge will be in the execution of the design of the play area. Balance between something that will fit in with the feel of the park and still entice children to play on it.
- The Rouge waterway is one of the last major waterways and flyways in the area. More than 50 species of birds utilize this area. Any design should be very sensitive to this fact. Stabilize both banks.
- Provide a gateway marker that would not be too imposing and fit in with the plaza. Have this element to be determined at a later date and make a flexible item within the budget. Possibly tie into the wayfinding system.
- Leave spaces for art that can be phased in at later dates.
- No parking within the park. Parking on Old Woodward is currently underutilized.
- Use the flow of Alternative #1 into Alternative #2
- Include alot of seating and shade
- Alternative #2 needs a connection to Old Woodward
- Do not encourage bicycle access to the chip trail and discourage bicycles within the park. Steps may be better connecting to the city parking lot area so as to discourage bicycle access.
- No retail or concessions within the park. Deed restrictions prohibit this.
- The park should enhance retail but not permit it within its boundaries.
- Get a better understanding of the deed restrictions for detailed development.
- Provide a small paver/stone work area that is not too obtrusive.
- Treed gateway. Less is more.
- Use the natural topography of the site to enable people entering the park to see all the way to the river area. Keep vistas in mind.
- Let the neighbors choose specific play equipment for the park.
- Play area should be up toward the front of the park for safety, access and visibility.
- Depressed play area is a nice idea.
- If parking is eliminated on Harmon Ave., and the walkway to the play equipment is relocated, the traffic and turn around issues in the neighborhood may no longer exist.
- Parking should not encroach into the park site.
- Don't plan to solve individual problems with the design/layout of the park.
- Like #1 with no formal gateway structure, two bridges and two levels/areas of play structure for different age groups.
- Separate the play area away from the gateway area a little bit.
- Like the idea of the art pods, but may be a bit large.
- Like the idea of rotating or permanent art throughout the park.
- Possibly a cable bridge across the river
- Do a paver campaign to fund that expense
- Include drinking fountains
- Enhance the view from the Old Woodward road bridge that currently exists.
- Make the formal edge a bit more simple.
- Gateway area may make a gesture toward Booth's ironwork but some of his simpler designs.

Conclusion:

The meeting concluded with a consensus recommendation to move forward with the refinement of a concept that blends Alternative 1 and 2. The above comments should be incorporated as is appropriate.

Meeting attendees were also made aware that the City is pursuing funding assistance through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for implementation of the Booth Park improvements. They also were made aware of the upcoming public hearing in March regarding the grant application.

