



MEETING NOTES OVERVIEW

Rochester Park and Recreation Master Plan Listening Sessions October 22, 2015

On October 22, 2015 the project consultant team (Hoisington Koegler Group Inc and SEH) facilitated seven (7) listening sessions. The purpose of these sessions was to engage with key stakeholder groups related to the development of the City's Park and Recreation Master Plan. Invitations were sent to more than 70 organizations in Rochester. 25 individuals attended the sessions. Discussions at the meetings focused on understanding how the groups currently operate, participation trends, needs from the parks and recreation system, and future opportunities. Input received during the listening sessions is summarized on the following pages in the form of meeting notes. The project consultant team will use this input to assist with the identification of key issues to address during the master planning process.

Schedule of Listening Sessions:

- 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. Arts
- 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. Nature/Environment
- 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Indoor Sports
- 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Schools
- 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Outdoor Field/Court Sports
- 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Outdoor Adventure Sports
- 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. Diversity



MEETING NOTES

Rochester Park and Recreation Master Plan

Listening Session: Arts

October 22, 2015

Stakeholders Attending: Carole Brown (Rochesterfest), Carol Berteotti (Civic Music/Riverside Concerts), Sherry Clowes (Eden Garden Club), Michel Heminger (Eden Garden Club)

Consultants & City Staff Attending: Rita Trapp (HKGi), Anna Springer (HKGi), and Mike Nigbur (City of Rochester)

Key Findings

- Good historical partnerships with Parks and Recreation
- Permanent stage at Soldiers Field would be nice
- Stage cover and sound improvements at Mayo Park would be nice
- Nice to have smaller venues in neighborhood parks and/or a true mobile stage
- Smaller groups have mostly operated on own and have not always vocalized well their needs. May be opportunities for in-kind support that groups don't even realize.
- Lack of knowledge about park system a barrier – good to have events/activities to draw folks into the park system to build awareness

Rochesterfest

- Celebrating 34 year in 2016. Wonderful partnership over the years.
- Moved to Soldiers Field Park in 2015. Definitely want to continue at that location. Such positive feedback from the move. So much more space – green space. Also use other parks for other events that are related.
- Found that so many folks who didn't know that Soldiers Field was there – knew about the golf course/pool
- Transportation solved with the trolley
- Food vendors – noon hour was light. Nice that IBM bused on two days and gave folks a coupon
- Some challenges – track was challenging due to rain. Water line needs to be addressed
- Next to Veterans Memorial a big plus
- New parade route
- Parking ended up not being an issue – only comment was not enough handicap spaces. Kmart was happy to partner. Mayo provided lots after hours.
- P and R Showmobile used as mobile stage
- Permanent stage at Soldiers Field over the long-term would be nice

Civic Music/Riverside Concerts

- Sunday concerts – free concerts up to 20,000 people – 7 a year – at Mayo Park. Need a permanent stage cover. Sound improvements could be helpful. Arena may be looking at adding rigging. Better handicapped parking. Some people sit on other bank of the river.

- Convention Center runs the concessions so they get the proceeds.
- Silver Lake for the 4th of July – have concert band at shell.
- Like to have more opportunities for smaller venues – in the neighborhoods. May be financial more than anything else. Could benefit from a mobile stage.
- 25th anniversary in 2016. Hoping for large bands next year.
- Big concern about who will own the park space – Civic Center or Parks. Green space so important.
- DMC – liked that had some performance spaces – maybe good to spread out
- Program for Thursdays on 1st.

Eden Garden Club

- Takes care of flowers around Heritage House in Central Park
- 20 or so members
- Volunteer hours at local nursery to earn money for the plants
- Curious of plans for Central Park
- Feeling like DMC has been more for out of town people then for local residents
- Unsure about what “Master Plan” for Central Park from Rochester Chamber Leadership Group is and where it might lead
- Heritage House a good partner and Parks Department is now
- Generally older members
- Increase in funding to do more
- Challenge to get tables down for summer celebration

Other ideas

- Get art into the neighborhood - explore traveling exhibits, flowers moving around, more than just statutes
- Cultural Trust – hired consultant for public art. Not sure where that plan is at
- Used to be arts festival at end of August
- Note that there is a lack of understanding of the park system. “Park crawl” to help folks explore the park system – could some of the groups/partners help staff or provide activities
- Place for estate planning money to be donated
- Adequate power at venues for concerts
- Better ways to engage with the Park and Recreation System - way to understand the process
- Not fun to come downtown to walk since on concrete
- Not fun to stand up for all the events
- Community garden - have water at the site
- Linking public transportation to events at the park system (weekend loop to park)
- Art caching –related/similar to geocache – art in the broad sense – historic sites,
- Rochester park day/week
- Smaller shelters without power/restrooms
- Feels like the parks are underutilized
- Neighborhood park – local parks are important. Natural space/open areas are good
- Picnic tables – hierarchy for where need more than others
- More groups to get involved in the parks - master gardeners, neighborhood groups
- Hard to do marketing in Rochester – networking/word of mouth seems to be the most valuable



MEETING NOTES

Rochester Park and Recreation Master Plan Listening Session: Nature/Environmental October 22, 2015

Stakeholders Attending: Joel Dunnette (Zumbro Valley Audobon Society, Master Naturalist), Pam Meyer (Quarry Hill Nature Center), Dawn Littleton (Friends of Indian Heights), Ruthann Yaeger (Prairie Smoke Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts), Megan Moeller (City of Rochester Public Works)

Consultants & City Staff Attending: Gabrielle Grinde (HKGi), Anna Springer (HKGi), Mike Nigbur (City of Rochester), and Paul Widman (City of Rochester)

Key Findings

- Natural area maintenance has not historically been a priority, but there is unrecognized demand
- The Quarry Hill Nature Center is well-utilized and perhaps not meeting demand
- A new framework for working with volunteers is needed
- A more detailed understanding/inventory of natural areas is needed as an entry point for management
- More marketing/education around natural areas is needed
- City policy/stance on natural areas is needed

State of Natural Areas & Existing Conditions

- 'Hanging on, but improving'
- City Parks should have more native plants (for education and experience purposes)
- Not a lot of effort in maintaining natural areas.
- Lots of groups doing volunteer work, but need a more comprehensive plan backed by the city.
- Two native plant guys working for the City doing maintenance
- Not a lot of restoration.
- Essex park had a nice natural area with nice trails, wildflowers, birding (gold crown warblers), but an arrangement with RASC resulted in bulldozing and putting trails everywhere- (which caused organization for Indian Heights).
- Experience Rochester handout talks about Indian Heights
 - "Discover Rochester by foot" - people are interested but they don't know the resources are there. Demand is unrecognized. Nature lovers are not vocal as sports people are.
- In past 5 years things have changed
 - More diversity of presentation of park stuff
 - More recognition of nature groups.
 - More interest in things outside of parks.
- Certain parks have vocal supporters, but there are areas that have no vocal supporters.
- There are great spaces that people don't get to –lack of marketing
- Park adoption program works for parks; could this work for natural areas?

- Volunteers need to understand how you navigate the system. There is not a clear system.
- Invasives control – a strategic plan needed
- Do try to get and utilize SHIP money
- Have natural areas along the Zumbro bike trail
- Public works has rain gardens in park lands in past but have not maintained them due to lack of funds.
- Trails and bike trails-funding is associated with transportation so they get built and maintained by public works.
- Stormwater projects are funded thru stormwater utility fees.

Volunteers

- Seems like the city is new to working with volunteers (county has had a greater history of this).
- As an active volunteer, Dawn sees a gap in the city's ability to respond within the existing framework to work with volunteers and respond to needs.
 - It requires persistence to work with the city. Mike agrees. There is a cultural shift that is occurring, but not fast enough.
 - Volunteers need to be adopted as a way to maintain the natural systems - can't rely on one person- needs to have backups so that it is resilient
- Volunteers have to build trust with the city in the current system.
 - City could help with education of volunteers. Skilled teaching the skilled. Volunteers are great for maintenance.
 - Some places need a commercial company to care for (prairie).

Quarry Hill Nature Center

- Use is high! Regular parade out there most days. It needs to look good. Prairie around willow creek, for example.
- Invasives are a problem.
- Quarry hill is open 7 days per week.
- 100,000 visitors per year; use is mixed. Look at their master plan.
- Go to Northern Hills to get Monarchs for Quarry Hill (speaks to degradation)
- Not enough parking at quarry hill; 83 spots currently. But don't want to be loved to death.
- They do take education programs out of the park.
- Quarry Hill is a non-profit; people assume they are city employees.
- Quarry Hill organized a 365 bio-blitz to inventory the park.

Indian Heights

- Volunteer group does great work

Education

- Joel has done some events at Kutzky Park, while this is not a great stream; it is valuable because it is present and easily accessed downtown.
- Interpretation needs to be more varied.
- Need education about 'weedy patches' that have purpose.

- Wayfinding in natural spaces and a good decent map is critical. Marketing is needed/wayfinding is critical. One you can put on your phone (technology!). Balance informational signs and uninterrupted experience
- Friends groups have ownership of parks and that works well; they care for it and present information about it and feel comfortable with that. Not always Park and Rec's responsibility. City should be working with those groups.

Needs

- Need consistent wayfinding that ties things together without being generic.
- Not all parks should look the same. Should have branding.
- Need an inventory of high quality versus lower quality natural areas.
- Marketing
 - Brochures –how do you get information out. School district?
 - Information sharing on the web.
 - Natural programming
 - People need to be comfortable in natural area.
 - Passport to parks program to get kids to parks (stamps and ribbon) working with hikes and park visits and park office. Partnerships with mayo, county.
 - Include winter outdoor uses.
 - Get people healthy, active. Promote free resources!
 - Need to come up with ideas that require low staffing commitments.
 - City also needs to get better at trumpeting their projects to generate support– eg floating islands
- Grant writing
- Access
 - Destinations need to be spread out; near to everyone and accessible via transit
 - Bike trails can also be used to expose people to 'nature'. Potential for natural areas along bike trails. Signage and restoration along trails.
 - Places where natural areas could be connected: greenway to cascade lake,
- Adult recreation /fitness loops / stormwater ponds.
- Pollinator friendly areas
- Shallow creeks could have hop skip jumps. Creeks could be integrated better.
- Cascade is a resource for natural areas as well
- City needs a stand that wild spaces have intrinsic value on their own.
- Developing an inventory and big ideas about the places. Involve technology.
- Amenities list for parks should be dialed down to:
 - pond, lake, prairie, fens etc, so people can dial down to what's available
- Good to have a high level inventory/system wide plan. Is there a way to do this with volunteers?
- Invasive species needs to lead to restoration.
- Northern Hills has been a great resource for monarch but it is degrading fast! Even in the past 10 years.
- Need a natural area plan to move forward. Where are the opportunities for greatest return/low hanging fruit.
- A little interest shown by the city really energizes people's interest.
- Need a system-wide champion and there needs to be money put into.
- Need a way to justify this money (with \$ value).

- Squeaky wheel gets greased. Need an Integral process to engage/ empower people interested in natural areas.
- Work needs to be maintained.
- Nature playgrounds needed.
 - Will address people who are not comfortable letting kids totally run. The 'bunny hill' of nature. Oxbow Park has a great example. But that is very heavy handed- don't do that everywhere!
- Police need to be less tolerant of bad behavior in parks.
- City should take the time to visit county parks: Oxbow and Chester woods (gamut of very high end and one done by volunteers).

Potential Partnerships

- Library is a good resource. They will share information.
- Prairie Smoke organization.
- Zumbro Valley Audubon Society



MEETING NOTES

Rochester Park and Recreation Master Plan

Listening Session: Indoor Sports

October 22, 2015

Stakeholders Attending: Bill Shaughnessy (Rochester Swimming), Maureen Schembri Wismayer (Rochester Figure Skating Club)

Consultants & City Staff Attending: Gabrielle Grinde (HKGi), Anna Springer (HKGi), and Mike Nigbur (City of Rochester)

Key Findings

- The needs of Rochester Figure Skating Club are largely being met
- Competitive and athletic swimming (lap swimming/training) needs are not being met; there is a need for facilities that can support demand in Rochester
- Outdoor recreation swimming conditions in the City are poor (restrooms and staff)
- There is a lack of coordination/working relationship between the school district and other entities, including the City and athletic groups
- Hockey needs are being met.

Swimming

- Rochester Swimming: non-profit that represents competitive swimming and diving in Rochester
- Participation is stable.
 - Stable; forecast is proportional to anticipated growth of Rochester
 - On competitive side; approx. 1300 participants (about half size of hockey group in Rochester). Peaks during Olympic years (15%)
 - Success of local teams has impact (eg if U of MN diving does well kids get interested)
 - Limited by facilities. Kids drop out because there is no place to swim.
- Pools get used on a daily basis all year round with two week break in august. High school girls swimming and diving. Tuesdays and Thursday nights throughout season, to thanksgiving. Then boys starts.
- Summer recreation swimming programs uses Silver Lake and Soldiers field in the morning; so right now they have no where to swim with rec center closure.
- No high school pool built since 1974. Public pool built in late 1980s (soldier's). Rec center
- Serious Need
 - Century school built in 2000 without a pool. 65 girls bus to another high school. 5-7 to 10 pm at night.
 - Codes have caught up; only John Marshall has a divable pool (60 years old and is starting to have issues). Modeled after U of M pool that was removed in 1990.
 - John Adams pool is not used-leaks.
 - Soldiers Field is 1980s.
 - Willow Creek has air handling problem so that is closed.

- YMCA pool is 70 years old.
- Athletic club/country clubs have little pools that have been used, but not ideal
- Have even tried hotel pools.
- Rochester divers go to Winona to practice at St. Mary's.
- Need 50 yd /50 meter pools.
- Swimming community's priority is to not lose any space
- Rec center will not satisfy the needs for the community. Rec center pool is booked solid when it is open.
- High school swimmers can't swim until 8 pm and then they are swimming until 10pm.
- Would hurt to lose ANY pools in Rochester to splash pad.
- Ideally need indoor pools to serve high school and community.
- Aquatic centers attract people that want to stay cool. People go to St Charles 20 miles east or to Stewartville waterparks.
- Memorial Day to labor day outdoor recreation pools- could stay open longer if they could find staff
- Maureen has found that there is no place to train for swimming (laps) on an individual basis. Outdoor close pools at labor day; no reason for that except there is no lifeguard. Could be flexible with lifeguards.
- Swimming is especially important in winter;
- Resources are limited for swimming times available. Athletic club pools are full of kids. Rec center is full. Need an indoor 50m pool to train elite swimmers (rec center pool is 50 m but they half it, which doesn't meet the needs of people training)
- Rochester Swimming is on the hook for \$700,000 to finish the rec center; just to get what they had before. The new pool will flex to 50M pool.
- Schools
 - Are not taking actions to address this issue. School pools administered by the district - so they close during holidays and aren't really friendly to the public.
 - Schools are currently trying to get referendum for education, so there is no appetite for pools.
 - Other organizations would be open to working with the schools, but they are struggling themselves.
 - Have had issues with schools in the past when they have shared facilities; Bills are erratic; double schedules and retroactively raises rates
- Seating at rec center holds 1800 people, but often have way more than this attending events.
- Relationship with city - Good relationship with rec center staff/coordinator.
- Lifeguards and pool maintenance is poor.
 - Lifeguard supervision is unsafe; they are on their phones.
 - Person in charge of lifeguards is not present at pool, but the city does nothing to change this poor behavior.
- Swimming Concern
 - Plans for soldiers field made them afraid! Either pool is removed, replaced by a splash pad, or shrunk so that they can't use them.
 - Rec Center is good, but they can't maintain what is at soldiers field to maintain what they have.
 - Need to ease burden that the high schools haven't stepped up to.
 - Mayo put a pool in with 4 lanes but it is always full.
 - People will pay a fee to swim laps; per use (2-10 bucks, passes).

- Increased fee would have to be justified-better water quality (chlorine smells John Marshall). Salt water is not legal for competitive (at mayo clinic).
- Multi-use facilities-pool, gym, ice. Energy conversion (heat from generator to heat pool)

Figure Skating

- Kids are currently skating in the rec center, despite the ongoing construction
- Participation
 - 300 kids come in and out of program. 150 core group. Stable numbers past few years.
 - Is a very expensive sport. If they can keep costs down that helps.
 - Ice time seems to be adequate. Use ice at the Rec Center in afternoon and morning.
 - Don't use graham unless there are high level competitions (eg next year they will use Graham).
- Events
 - Skating competitions - try to get regionals and nationals.
 - Have an annual ice show in April - Take a year of preparation
 - Exhibitions for kids are smaller.
 - Testing takes a lot of time.
- Facility Needs
 - Have a new cooling system at the Rec Center.
 - Another ice rink would be nice, would attract higher level competitions, but on a day to day basis their needs are being met.
- Two outdoor skating rinks that figure skaters can use but the quality is poor – mess up your skates (rocks coming thru).
- Should have more outdoor ice and work with broomball. 7 outdoor rinks and rink at soldiers.
- DMC plan has rinks. City challenge; cold weather is great, but fluctuating temps are not conducive to competitive skaters. Current generation of outdoor ice makers are great.
- Figure skating all goes thru RFSC, even school lettering program. Competes against other clubs (from the cities or Duluth). Testing sessions held once per month.
- They work with one person from park and rec (ed) so that works well.

Hockey

- Bill notes that hockey is a huge group.
- Ice Hawks use rec center rinks and are getting their own locker room in the current remodel.
- Hockey uses pull tabs to raise several million dollars every year.
- Nice facilities at Graham, but would like more.
- No high school hockey facilities, but high schools pay for use of city facilities. Schools get priority at city facilities for games.
- Currently 5 sheets of indoor ice in Rochester.
- Ice is full from 6am to 9pm.
- Graham facilities are kept up really nicely; recent seating expansions, ice cooling, paint and mold removal.
- Hockey brings in lots of people to watch (2,500 people capacity at Graham)

Running

- Local running community says they really like the track at soldier's field.
- Community is scared that the whole north end of soldiers will get encompassed by UMR
- Cinder track is liked by runners – softer than concrete.



MEETING NOTES

Rochester Park and Recreation Master Plan

Listening Session: Schools

October 22, 2015

Stakeholders Attending: Pat Carroll, Rochester Swimming, Jay Hesley, UMR

Consultants & City Staff Attending: Rita Trapp (HKGi), Andy Masterpole (SEH), Mike Nigbur (City of Rochester)

Key Findings

- Biggest need for UMR students is improved trail connectivity, winter maintenance, and safety (lighting/call boxes) improvements
- Potential opportunity for partnership with UMR relative to community space.

UMR

- Currently has 150 students on campus and 300 students off campus. Intermediate goal of 1,200 students with 1,000 being undergraduates
- 50% of incoming students bring a car when they start school. However, by the end of the first semester only about 20% do.
- Utilize outside sources to manage some of their services. They always look to partner – health, transportation, etc
- Access to parks for students – Soldiers Field....a great partnership with city.
- Interested in:
 - Access to trails - Students don't own cars, they want trails 24/7/365. Seems like trails more for recreational than transportation use. They want other routes from point to point. Not all bike trails connect real well in Soldiers Field. Students – want to see “Safety Corridors” – security, lighting, call boxes, etc. Students are dispersed throughout the City.
 - Transit – operations end too early that can serve students with night classes
 - How DMC fits – how to integrate Soldiers Field and downtown
- Intend that the campus to take on Urban Village concept
- Services/Needs – 10% of their footprint would be restaurants/retail stores....all of the ground floors
- Need for a community gathering space – potential partnership with Parks and Rec as their facilities maybe could serve that purpose
- Access to river could be better
- No desire for intercollegiate athletics, maybe intermural. Clubs: students get together and form the clubs, not sponsored by UMR - examples: dance club, ultimate Frisbee
- 3 block issue – once you get past those 3 blocks, then you're in the trail system.
- Could 3rd and 4th ave be one way pairs and serve as greenway connection

Swimming

- In schools - JM is the only competitive pool in town for swimming and diving. Mayo only has diving. Century has nothing
- Swim Clubs: Orcas – 520 students and Med City -320 students
- 2 triathlon teams in town
- YCMA – pool should be 4 times current size
- Could there be a way to set up aquatic facility similar to the National Volleyball Center?
- No aquatic director for the city of Rochester
- There is way more swimmers (12 times), but the pool system has stayed the same.
- Distributed pool system may be needed because Rochester is now more spread out.
- There's a huge need for more swimming facilities – they do use Soldiers Field so outdoor facilities can serve part of that need.
- There could be an outdoor destination pool in Rochester.

Other Opportunities

- Parks are underutilized. A lot of great green space, but nothing is happening in it. Parks need more activity – facilities and programming
- The next generations want different activities...progressively think ahead! Not just about what those currently in leadership roles want or traditionally do.
- Parks need to be better connected with trails. Columbia, Maryland example. Distributed model of access. Bozeman, MT
- Develop programs around health and wellness.
- Mayo Park needs portable bike racks – for the Riverside Concerts. It's that mentality that Rochester needs to have.
- Should the city provide a commuter bike facility? Parking, showers, etc.
- Visitors have no idea where to run/walk.
- Link Soldiers Field to Kutzky or Mayo Park
- Growing size of community means there needs to be a discussion about whether facilities should be centralized or disbursed throughout.
- Portable bike racks for festivals and events
- Facilities to support bike commuters in Downtown (showers, lockers, etc.)



MEETING NOTES

Rochester Park and Recreation Master Plan Listening Session: Outdoor Field/Court Sports October 22, 2015

Stakeholders Attending: Gary Westerland (RYFSA), Tim Butdnal (Rochester Tennis), Angela Teal (JP Softball), Paul Gronholz (RYBA), Chris Powell (RYBA), Josh Sipple (Park Board)

Consultants & City Staff Attending: Rita Trapp (HKGi), Andy Masterpole (HKGi), Mike Nigbur (City of Rochester)

Key Findings

- Participations rates are stable
- Distribution and quality of fields a challenge at times
- Caliber of sports complexes not in line with competitors – particularly southern Twin Cities communities
- Renovations and modernization needed for multiple sports

Rochester Youth Baseball Association

- Trying to get their numbers back up from early 2000. Now at 1600, used to be 1800...trying to reverse that
- Kinderball K-3; House league 4-6. K-3 is 75% of their numbers, then as they age, it tapers off. Age 15 is the highest, because the move onto High School
- Fall ball and Winter ball
- RCTC complex – is challenging given anytime they want to do something they need RCTC permission which takes awhile
- User agreement with the City needs to be updated
- Vision – make a large facility on the north side of town – owned by the city! Either a combined facility (with soccer?).
- In MN they are the only south league
- Their RCTC facility is no longer top notch
- Rochester has doubled in size, but their numbers have gone down
- The field conditions, at times, are not good... Allendale Park is a prime example. People don't want to play on grass infields.
- They are very spread out – use all the fields across the City. Families spend a lot of time driving between parks
- RYBA hires its own groomers.
- Largest set is Watson with 3 fields and RCTC with 2 fields
- Amount per capita – funding – is embarrassing!

JP (Just Play) Softball

- Adult team - broke off and started their own league to try and maintain lower fee structure
- They want a fee structure that is fair or more places to play. 60 adult softball teams want to play at an affordable, decent place to play.
- Based on fundraising and sponsors
- Feel like not getting charged same rates as other softball association

Tennis

- Kutzky park, 15 courts, club house needs renovation.
- Trends: strong tennis community, thriving.
- He would like to see additional funding for tennis
- Done a good job with distributing facilities around the City
- Tennis did try a camp with Boys and Girls Club that went well. Not able to transition from camp to actual participation – much do to transportation, some to parent perception of the game

Rochester Youth Fastpitch Softball Association

- Numbers are stable. Seeing some growth at younger ages. Have three levels for every age group
- Offering more options – fall leagues, dome leagues, etc.
- They struggle with the same things at their complexes – they have fields all over the city
- Schools don't groom the fields, RYFSA hires its own groomers.
- Rochester's facilities are not up to par with other communities. They need to have the proper facilities to attract the bigger tournaments, which are a big economic draw for the City. Economic impact for large tourneys is huge.
- We need to do a better job of attracting minority populations. Barriers seem to be transportation, cultural, financial. Transportation – kids don't ride their bikes anymore, parents drop off/pick them up.
- Working with a private business for potential vanpool service.

Other

- Neighborhood Parks are seeing facilities get used
- Use seems to be based on who is in the neighborhoods at that time
- Do use open field areas for practice – particularly at younger ages



MEETING NOTES

Rochester Park and Recreation Master Plan Listening Session: Outdoor Adventure Sports October 22, 2015

Stakeholders Attending: Lori Bratvold (Keep Pushing Forward Non-profit), Joanne (Public Health), (Rochester Rowing Club), Jan (Rochester Pickleball Club)

Consultants & City Staff Attending: Gabrielle Grinde (HKGi), Anna Springer (HKGi), Mike Nigbur (City of Rochester), and Paul Widman (City of Rochester)

Key Findings

- These smaller organizations are relatively self-reliant and are generally meeting the needs of under-served groups
- City has a good working relationship with these groups
- Further coordination and investment could yield great returns in terms of providing opportunities for growing/trending activities
 - Repurposing of Silver Lake Firestation to accommodate bikers, rowers, etc; dock improvements at Silver Lake; Skate park improvements; continued effort for pickleball courts

Participation

- Pickleball:
 - 7 yrs ago 4 people played, now have over 200.
 - Have bylaws, president, vp, secretary, treasurer
 - Very young to very old.
 - Did an event with Ben at park and rec and it was a great success (SACC group).
 - Aiming to get 6 dedicated courts at Cooke Park.
 - National growth is expected to grow from 2 million in 2015 to 8 million in 2018.
 - Skill focused. Teach good sportsmanship.
 - 6 courts together are ideal.
 - Ladder play one night a week to compete.
 - Playing at the Nat Volleyball center and hope to get back at the rec center.
- Rowing Club
 - Around for 20 years.
 - 50 kids that come and go.
 - A few adult members.
 - Lifetime sport.
 - A good alternative for kids that are not good at or don't enjoy traditional sports.
 - Is a sport that grows nationally, but not so fast here in Rochester.
 - Kids of different ages work together caring for boats and equipment

- Row on the river. Dock was a Boy Scout project
- Requires a 2000M section.
- Concerned that the river is filling in!
- Bike Club
 - Program for middle school kids- donate /earn a bike program.
 - Weekend rides that are open to the community.
 - Wednesday nights the club is open with a handful of kids and have given away over 100 bikes over the years.
 - Trained teachers to do bikes in PE, bike rodeos.
 - Trying to build the culture of biking in Rochester.
 - Working on bike lanes. Long way to go for bike infrastructure.
- Skateboarding/BMX/scooter.
 - Anticipates it growing.
 - Most cities have elaborate skate parks and are great places to hang out in addition to skating.
 - Nearly everyday people are visiting the Rochester park from other cities- whether it's from a nearby city or people visiting mayo.
 - Just added a new cement box and it brings people in.
 - Have users on Roller skates, people in wheelchairs.

Events

- Rowing
 - probably will never have a regatta; they are huge and require a lot of space. EG in Oklahoma the national rowing facility
 - 2000m and six lanes needed for regatta. Almost got one at Crystal Lake, but utility line easement prevented it from being adequate size
 - Host an indoor race (row and race on the screen). Is well attended, but not like Crash B in Boston.
- Biking
 - Bike socials (pub to pub, blizzard ride, last bike social had 45 people)
- Pickleball
 - Would like to host tournaments at Cooke to generate money and fun.
 - Members play in the Senior Games in twin cities.
- Skateboarding
 - 4th of July was their first event and it was well attended.
 - Best trick on New Box event drew 24 competitors.
 - An expanded park could easily have a large event. Rochester native Alec Majeris (#2 street skater in the world – Dew Tour, Rockstar, Adidas sponsors) helps draw people to the events, as well as others locally.
 - Great examples of parks include 3rd Lair, Burnsville outdoor park, La Familia, Blaine.
 - Current facility is 12 years old.

- New concept by Rochester native Chris Patnaude- used to design skate parks professionally and is willing to do this for the city.

Needs

- Rowing
 - Winter facility power pull thing is fine.
 - They need the river to be dredged; its too shallow.
 - Need a 2000m 6 lane facility. Reservoirs are not big enough. Goose poop they can deal with.
 - Currently use two hockey shacks for their boathouses.
 - Firestation would be great to have access 6 days per week from April to November.
 - Rowing machines; would be nice to have a home for them.
 - Their shells are 67 or 45 ft long fiberglass need to keep out of sun.
 - Host a summer camp for kids.
 - Interest in working with Adaptive Rec group- teach autistic kids to row.
 - Boys and Girls club- team building events; explore options.
 - Safety/warmth of facilities is a priority/concern
 - Dragon boat ladies need a place as well! They need a few bins – could share the firestation with them.
- Biking
 - Need for a bike hub for community to use for maintenance (tools and equipment).
 - Would like to share the firestation!
 - Partners include: We bike Rochester, Youth Bike, Mountain Biking Club, all those groups would work together!
 - Have set aside money for a bike share. Nice Ride is in talk with City.
- Great to talk to one another in this venue! These groups can work together. Half the tools you use for bikes you can use on skateboards.
- Pickleball
 - Needs 6 courts. Working on this at Cooke. Having trouble getting bids to build courts. Almost need to start from scratch in repurposing the courts. Rarely see tennis players there
 - They play for 2.5 hours every day.
 - Play inside at the National Volleyball Center.
 - Recently got garbage cans but could use recycle bins
 - Some play at Goose Egg, too.
 - Rochester pickleball website is a great resource
- Skateboarding
 - Working with Mike.
 - Needs maintenance. Have repaired ramps (with Mikes permission)
 - Kids take care of one another
 - Need garbage cans, picnic tables, water would be great,
 - Serves lower income kids who don't have great supervision – don't send water with their kids. A lot of the kids spend their whole summer day there.
 - Need expansion – space is getting tight.

- BMX skaters get along pretty well- scooters do damage. Scooters and skateboarders get along the least well.
- Port a pottie at skatepark is ok.
- Running water would be good for injuries
- Rowing
 - Dock is in fair condition; Kayaker also use the dock.
 - Would like water and warm space to address if someone falls in the water. (Picnic shelter nearby does have running water, but it is kind of far away)
- Bike
 - Trail users/bikers have expressed concern about people that hang out at certain areas, or homeless people.
 - Concern about access to water and bathrooms attracting transients
 - Bike infrastructure- on street bike lanes. Mixed support for bike infrastructure downtown.
 - Gamehaven will be a huge boon for Rochester mountain bikers.

Communication/Scheduling/Operations & Maintenance

- Rowing
 - Pretty self-sufficient.
 - Running water would be amazing.
 - Dredging by the city needs to be done.
 - Boathouse (hockey shacks) are in fair condition
 - Dock maintenance needed (Quarry Hill and kayakers use it, too)
 - Club is currently saving money for a new boathouse.
 - Working relationship is good with the city.
 - Other Cities facilities: Long Lake is taking over an old restaurant for a boat house. Madison has a great boat house.
 - There are facilities that are better, but without a better track they will never have a ton of members. But they should have a nice facility. They can share Silver Lake with paddleboats. Zumbro Lake is too busy and too far away to access after school.
- Paul: Firehouse is under study right now for public use; Cost estimates should be known in the next couple of weeks.
- Pickleball
 - Communications with the City are good. Have gotten meetings and appreciate the support.
 - Future room for advancement/more space down the road.
 - Commercial nature of Cooke Park is good (ball noise).
 - Work with national volleyball center: have punch cards and pay to use.
 - Pickleball is a relatively inexpensive sport to play
- Skateboard
 - Historical feeling of resistance towards the skatepark in Rochester.

- Skaters feel that park and rec don't care about the skate park and make it difficult to improve.
- Event hurdle is insurance. Is there another way to work with this? \$237 for insurance for an event.
- Biking
 - Email is not a strength of the City, but working relationship is good.
 - Dream plan addresses the fact that there is not a diverse population using the parks. Can we do something to outreach?
 - Will there be funding to program parks?
 - Need to teach kids how to free play! They don't know how to do this anymore!



MEETING NOTES

Rochester Park and Recreation Master Plan

Listening Session: Diversity

October 22, 2015

Stakeholders Attending: Omar Nur (Somalia Rebuild Organization)

Consultants & City Staff Attending: Rita Trapp (HKGi), Anna Springer (HKGi), and Mike Nigbur (City of Rochester)

Key Findings

- Use of parks and recreation by the Somali Community is limited; athletics are segregated
- Children in the Somali Community typically play soccer and basketball
- Rely on the YMCA for most of their recreation needs
- Somali Community holds very large gatherings during two holidays

Somali Community

- 3,000 to 4,000 Somali people in Rochester. Difficult number to pinpoint because it is always fluctuating. Generally a growing community
- Sports
 - Soccer and basketball are popular
 - Football, volleyball, baseball is not very popular
- Concerned about youth safety
 - Increasing obesity
 - Afterschool activities
 - Terrorism recruitment (not a problem in Rochester, but the community was disturbed by recruitment issues in Minneapolis)
- Most of the people are in NW, but there are mosques and business districts in 3 or 4 places throughout the City
- Don't feel comfortable walking in pairs; often walk together in groups
- Younger kids play video game and like their cell phones
- Somali families are typically larger; 5-6 kids
- Go to mosque to pray
- Somali community members like to help one another, and other families that come here from outside the state to visit, even though they have little money themselves
- If someone is sick you take care of them. That is part of the Muslim religion.
- Fasting during Ramadan affects their activity levels and when activities occur
- Elder women council younger girls/women
- Immigrants from the larger cities need help adjusting especially (Nairobi, Mogadishu)
- 3 Islamic centers/mosques in Rochester

Somalia Rebuild Organization

- Omar Nur, Founder/Director – been in US for 16 years. Masters in Public Health, 2 sons (5th and 2nd grades)
- Tries to help people adjust to American life and fill the gaps in knowledge, make people aware of different opportunities
- Approximately 100 people in the organization

Facility Use

- YMCA is a great resource for the Somali Community; they feel safe there
 - 4 Somali basketball teams
 - Two times a year, for religious holidays, they use park behind the YMCA
 - YMCA works with them to programs Zumba for women at specific times
 - Girls can play basketball
 - Use exercise equipment
- IBM park has been utilized for gathering
- RCTC - Have used that for celebrations/gatherings
- Would like more low-cost/free opportunities to play soccer and basketball
- Interest in golf, but don't have an understanding of the game and protocols
- Two Somali soccer teams. Don't use Fuad Mansour complex (use Watson complex. Play against Bosnians, Sudanese, etc.
- High school students play on the high school teams
- Would like more access to free, open areas
- Kids need places to play
- Women play amongst themselves, especially for weddings.
- Catholic Church and IACC help learn English. Offer afterschool programs.
- Only really gather as a community during Eid and Ramadan.



Rochester Parks & Recreation

October 2015 Open House

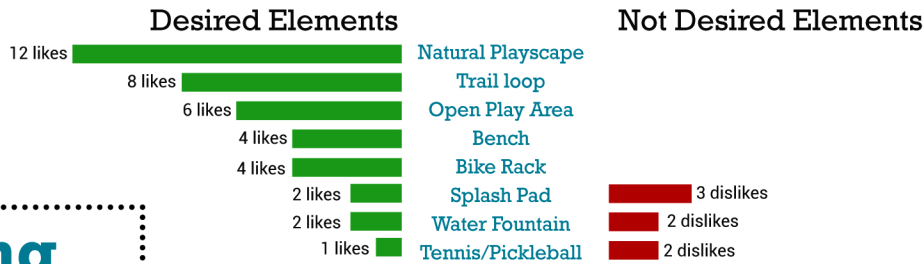


Highest Priorities for Parks & Recreation Investment



Priorities

What Elements Should Go in Neighborhood Parks?



Spending

Most Important to do in the Future

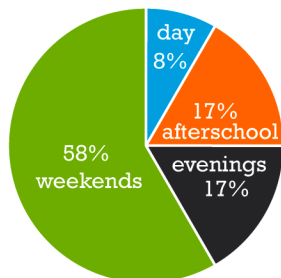
- 1 Improve/Add Pools
- 2 Improve Sports Facilities
- 3 Reduce Chemical Use

If Additional \$ is Available

- 1 Keep downtown green - don't develop current greenspace
- 2 Community permaculture
- 3 Splash Pad in addition to Pools

Programming

When Should Programs be Offered?



What Future Programs Should be Offered?



Most Attended Programs



Willing to Pay For

- 1 Land Acquisition for Open Space Protection
- 2 Winter Activities

Most Attended Events



Festivals



Music



Runs

Rochester Open House Comment Card Responses

10.22.2015

1. Selecting MN consultants is a plus!
Need to maintain and create quiet spaces (for example, Central Park) for respite and contemplation in an urban environment
Preserve historic components where possible
Consider all age groups and skill levels when planning ski trails and other facilities – try not to cater to just the “athlete”
Preserve “wild” quality of Quarry Hill. Resist black top.
2. Rochester can grow with community with creating our green area that is sustainable.
Permaculture designed park can bring people together! It is educational, good for earth, our future, and beautiful. If Rochester can have more natural place it would be whole healthy city!

-Hiromi Walleser, permaculture designer

3. I feel that there is a huge need for natural playscapes. As a teacher in Rochester, I have seen how over-scheduled children are. Often their play is even structured w/ sports etc. When they are able to interact w/ nature in open, natural playscapes, they are able to connect w/ nature and themselves in a whole different way than they do at a splashpad or sports field.
4. Underground parking facilities for downtown or special events.
5. Would like to see member of park board come to shadow of growth forum on Nov. 5 at 7:00 at Christ United Methodist Church 500 4th Street. We are discussing impact of growth on quality of life in Rochester.
6. First of all, the Rochester Park Dept does a really professional job of maintaining this extraordinarily important resource as a vision for the future unfolds, with large increase in population expected (DMC) the goals should be, in my opinion, the following:
 - a. Increase natural parkland (i.e. such as Quarry Hill Park – it is well used and well loved)
 - b. Any playing fields (present and future) should have zero chemical input. Rodeo – which is presently used is now recognized by the World Health Organization as a carcinogen and our EPA is now reviewing it as well. It’s banned in some European Countries. 2’4D – Millenium products are also known to be suspected carcinogenic as well as neurotoxic – effect reproduction, etc. We need to keep our children away from these products. They American Pediatric Assn. has now parted company with Monsanto.
 - c. We need to employ citizen volunteers (count appointed work people – teen environmental clubs, etc.) to help with trash and park surveillance.

-Flo Sandok, 1516 13th Ave NE, 507-288-1149