

Grand Avenue Park Expansion Public Meeting 3

Overview

On Tuesday February 28th, approximately 40 people attended the third public meeting for the Grand Avenue Park Expansion Master Plan. The purpose of this meeting was to present and review two preferred ideas and design options of the park for feedback and discussion.

The meeting was held at George R. Gauld School, and included a presentation from Jim Melvin, a Principal of PMA Landscape Architects. Jim presented two refined design options based on the design team's research and the feedback received from the public at the second public meeting. Questions of clarification and small-table discussions followed, facilitated by independent facilitator Jane Farrow. The small table discussions included a review of the options developed by the design team.

This meeting report was written by the facilitation team of Jane Farrow and Sara Udow. A summary of key points from the meeting and requests for information are included below. All requests for information will be reviewed and responded to at the next public meeting.

Summary of Key Points

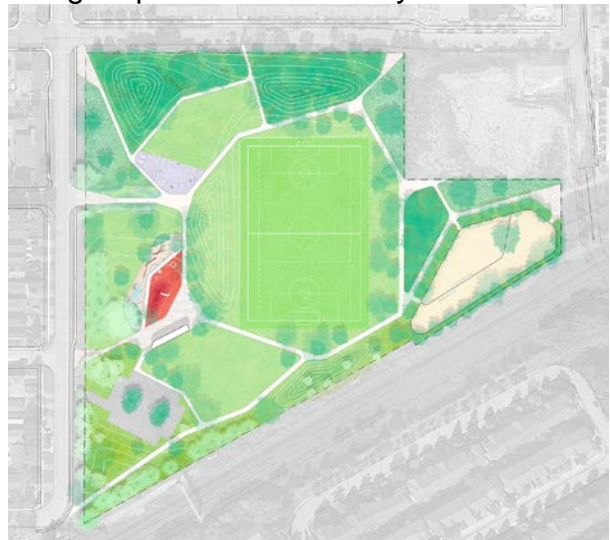
Two refined design options were presented – Community Loop and Community Web. (see illustrations below 'Loop' and 'Web'). Participants were provided guided questions to discuss preferences in each design related to:

- 1) Adjacencies (placement and relationship of program elements) and;
- 2) Elements in the park.

Design Option 1: Community Loop



Design Option 2: Community Web



1) Adjacencies

1. **Participants preferred the fluidity of the 'Loops' design for the path and circulation network and the layout & programming in the 'Web' design.**
2. **The majority of participants preferred parking in the south quadrant of the park** for the following reasons:
 - It is out of the way and therefore is seen to minimize impact;
 - It is separated from the green space area;
 - It is located further from traffic; and
 - Lastly, there was concern that parking in the north quadrant would cause traffic congestion because of its proximity to the bus stop.

Some participants preferred parking in the north quadrant due to concern that the southern quadrant would become an extension to the GO station parking lot. Others asked why there was no option for parking in the eastern portion.

Many participants requested that vehicle parking in this lot be metered and limited to three hours, so people can't stay for a whole day and that these parking restrictions be enforced.

Request for Information:

Is parking enforcement possible through the planning process? How does parking enforcement work? Could parking in the eastern portion be considered?

3. **Most participants prioritized locating the playground where parents could maintain visual contact with their children.** This includes locating the playground in close proximity to the multi-use court, community plaza, picnic area and naturalized area. It was felt that the multi-sports field should be separated from these features.
4. **Some participants were unsure if 3% of the total park area was adequate** and if more space could be allocated to the playground features.
5. **There were mixed opinions on the location of the small 'tobogganing' hill.** Some preferred that it be placed next to the sports field in order to separate the adolescents and children play area and act as an informal seating area to watch games and activities throughout the park. Others preferred the hill to the south of the site to provide views of the park and to avoid cutting up the space. The design team was asked to revisit this issue in the next phase and consider limiting the height of the hill to accommodate views and address safety concerns.

2) Elements

6. **Participants supported a diversity of ecological types in the park.** Three different types of plantings were illustrated in both designs. There was a preference for the forests and trees to be located on the edges of the park. There

was also consensus that the meadows, which include pollinators, be located away from play areas, due to allergies and bees/wasps.

Request for Information:

Participants request information that confirms that the natural features will be able to survive with the future condominium development and construction happening in close proximity to the park.

7. **There were mixed opinions on whether the area should feature more mowed or natural areas.** Some participants preferred the naturalized areas. Others wanted the picnic area to be expanded.

8. **A majority of participants preferred a connected, cycle friendly and sustainable pathway system.**
 - Many participants preferred the connection to Manitoba Street outlined in the 'Community Web' option. Many further requested a sidewalk along Manitoba Street or an east-west connection through the park on Manitoba to allow for multiple entryways to the street.
 - Most participants supported a path system that accommodates bicycles, rollerblades and skateboards. However, there were mixed opinions as to whether all paths should be bike/skate friendly or if there should be a hierarchy of larger and smaller paths, with the larger paths supporting cyclists and skaters.
 - Recommendations for the use of environmentally friendly materials were made, including permeable pavement or interlocking stones. However, there were concerns that these materials would negatively affect the experience for cyclists, skaters and also those using strollers and wheelchairs.

Request for Information:

Is it possible to include a sidewalk along Manitoba Street? [This question is out of the scope of this study but will be brought to the attention of Transportation Services].

9. **A large dogs off leash area was preferred.** Two options for the dogs off-leash area were shown. The first included one large area for dogs of all sizes and the second included two separate areas for small and large dogs. One large area was overwhelmingly preferred although one participant preferred the separate spaces to protect small dogs. In addition to the size of the off-leash area, participants requested the following:
 - Good lighting around the dog park;
 - A potential loop/pathway around the dog park;
 - The use of large-aggregate gravel at the entrance to avoid the grass turning to mud. (Jack Darling Park was cited as an example).

10. **A range of elements were suggested for the playground.** Participants liked the splash pad as well as the natural play areas (using wood features) recommended in the options. Further recommendations included a sandpit, space for hop-scotch and/or four-square and rock climbing opportunities.
11. **Adult fitness was seen as a priority.** Adult fitness equipment and nodes were mentioned by several people as important features to work into the park design and plans.
12. Other elements recommended include the following:
- A small stage for the community gatherings, events or movie nights;
 - Space for a farmers market;
 - Water fountains, washrooms and change rooms;
 - An area for skateboarding, ie. some elements for grinding, riding
 - Good lighting;
 - Additional benches, especially along walkways
 - Bike parking and air pump stations for bicycles; and
 - Street crossings and stop signs on Grand Avenue.
 - Being mindful of people's allergies, so locating taller grasses and meadows that trigger pollen allergies or bees further from playing fields.