

City of Evanston, IL

# Independence Park Improvements

## Community Open House #3

Chandler-Newberger Community Center  
Thursday July 6, 2023 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Feedback  
Summary



# Community Open House #3

Chandler-Newberger Community Center  
Thursday July 6, 2023 6:00pm - 8:00pm

## Independence Park | Final Concept Plan Review

The planning team hosted an open house style meeting with the Evanston community at the Chandler-Newberger Community Center on Thursday July 6, 2023. During the event, which ran from 6p-8p, the design team provided an overview presentation, took questions from attendees and then asked the community to participate in a series of interactive exercises, designed to explore their thoughts and ideas for improvements to the Final Concept Plan. This input will inform the final updates to the Independence Park plan.

The following pages document the input received during the event. This is the third and final community engagement touch point that will be held during the design process.





# Civic Commons

## Final Concept Plan

### Key Takeaways

Participants responded positively to the concept's overall form and composition.

"I like the design as is - feel it maintains what's good while updating what is needed."

"I love the shape, the flow and placement of features. This is a nice synthesis of the most desired features of concept's B&C. Keeps positive features of current park - trees, lawn, picnic tables."

"Love the plaza, stage, and flex seating. The balance of gathering space and play spaces is great."

"I was ready to have a zillion complaints but aside from the large stage which will not be used that often I absolutely love it. It's perfect."

While not a part of the project scope, restrooms emerged as a topic of discussion at the Community Workshop. Participants were split on their desire for inclusion of a restroom at the park.

"Bathrooms are an absolute need. Please find a way to put them in."

"Bathroom! You took away library!"

"Please add bathrooms. Library closed, no public bathrooms."

"Like the current plan without the bathroom"

"Neighbors like there is no bathroom."

"If you add bathrooms, they have to be on Central Street for safety."

*Specific feedback on the playground and plaza can be found on the following pages of the summary.*

*Opposite Page: Final Concept Plan for Independence Park*

*Following Spread: Photos of comments received during the 07/06 Workshop*

**LEGEND**

-  Holiday Tree (Proposed)
-  Holiday Tree (Existing)
-  Deciduous Tree (Existing)
-  Deciduous Tree (Proposed)
-  Ornamental Planting (Proposed)
-  Groundcover Planting (Proposed)
-  Open Lawn (Proposed)
-  Concrete Plaza (Proposed)
-  Concrete Walks (Proposed)
-  Tree Grates (Proposed)
-  Brick Pavers (Proposed)
-  Rubberized Surface (Proposed)
-  Engineered Wood Fiber (Proposed)



# Civic Commons

Final Concept Plan | Independence Park



## What do you love most?

Write your answer on a post it note and post it below!

Feedback responses to "What do you love most?":

- Shade/tree cover provided near playground areas and dining terrace, connectedness of the playgrounds
- Crosswalk between Stewart + park near Livingston would be nice
- redefine could prefer not to have a bathroom
- Neighbors like that there is no bathroom!
- want private wood ATOT box on Livingston
- Cool playground setup in Livingston, MI near where the ferry docks -> check it out
- Good you moved dining fountain away from street
- Love the plan & the setting, maybe at getting "play" in space?
- Shade is essential
- Love the mix of play and open space, picnic tables would be nice
- Not a fan of bathroom, like the design fountain though, like the overall plan with a bathroom
- I was ready to have a zillion complaints but aside from overly large stage which will not be used that often, I absolutely LOVE it for picnic
- Thank you for being so thoughtful toward everyone who will use the park. But yes, if possible, more swings please.
- Love the string lights
- The stage, the plan, the placement of fountain... A nice touch!! of just behind the ground level of the stage & C. Keep from being a "dead" area. This love the plan.

# Inspiration

The concept envisions an enlivened gathering space for the Central Street communities. An entry plaza complete with a performance stage to host community events, large and small, while a series of meandering paths invite park goers to explore the diverse and varied landscape.



Meandering Paths



Ornamental Plantings



Structured Playground



Park Seating



Performance Stage



Open Lawn



Flexible Seating

Will these be locked up every night by the city? Does this have to be a permanent structure?



Dining Terrace

Love the tree grove of dining reminds me of Lincoln Center in NYC. Please include!

## What could be better?

Write your answer on a post it note and post it below!

Need to maintain swings  
Baby change at all most week day times

Play equipment needs to have shade or include shade elements (pretend to be a tree, etc.)

Can we have a lot more trees? (more shade, more greenery, etc.)

Too much sun too little shade in the performance stage

Why the same kind of furniture as fountain square (cage)

PERFORMER SEATING IS AN IMPORTANT TO HAVE! MORE THAN JUST A GOOD IDEAS!

permeable paving for trees - what kind of trees also

to have some public library tables nearby  
More  
Inclusiveness, like to encourage families to get out and play!  
and Adults!

safer cross walks on Ashland

# Playscape

## Final Concept Plan

### Key Takeaways

Participants responded positively to the nature-inspired qualities of the playground.

"Love the organic mix of play and open space."

"Nature play space is fun and different from other playgrounds."

"Pictured play equipment and ornamental plantings look like a lot of fun for the kids!"

"Love all of the green space and organic "movement" between different zones"

Participants provided feedback on playground equipment and their desires for specific features to be intergrated.

"Please add more swings. We have 4 regular and 4 infant swings now and they are regularly full. Please don't reduce!"

"8 swings would be ideal. They get really busy!"

"Add face-me swings in infant swing group"

"Add an individual and group spin playground equipment"

Participants were mindful of budgetary constraints and long-term maintenance.

"How long lasting are the more ornamental play structures? Is it more expensive? Longevity is key."

"Given the higher cost of rubber please evaluate where it is placed."

# Playscape

Final Concept Plan

The Playscape at Independence Park crafts a play experience unlike any other in Evanston. A series of "play rooms" enable Evanstonians large and small to scramble, slide, swing, and explore this accessible and varied playscape that includes both natural and structured play elements.



## What do you love most?

Write your answer on a post it note and post it below!

## What do you like better?

Write your answer on a post it note and post it below!

8 Swings would be ideal. Swings get really busy.

Love all of the green space and organic materials between cones. Ditto!

Nature-focused aesthetic + native plantings - yes!!!

Structured playground equipment and ornamental plantings look like a lot of fun for the kids!

Rubberized surface!

Nature play

Love organic mix of play & open space

Hand-picked Trees + shade

Can splash pad be added later?

No Bushes, please use a long line of low fence. Need to maintain visibility to living st. Low plants are 100% better for shade.

Please add a crosswalk from S side of living st. to parking lot.

# Community Commons

## Final Concept Plan

### Key Takeaways

Participants appreciated the flexibility and diversity of seating options.

"Love the tree grove and dining."

"Love the mix of different tables and seating options."

"Use 'Central Street' colors for the tables."

Participants provided feedback on the features within the Community Commons and their desires for specific features to be integrated.

"Fewer benches along Central Street - turn into cafe style tables."

"Not sure many people will be sitting on benches on sidewalk by parked cars."

"Bicycle racks/bicycle repair stand-sponsored by Mack's Bike and Goods on Central St."

"Composting bins-yes"



**MKSK**