

Penny Park Renovation Project
December 11, 2014 Public Meeting
Audience Questions and City Responses

Question 1:

Is a divider necessary between the ages 2-5 play area and the rest of the park?

The Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) Publication #325 minimally recommends a buffer zone between ages 2-5 and 5-12 play areas. A physical divider is not required.

Question 2:

How much green space will be lost with the new design?

The proposed playground design does not impact any of the existing green space. The proposed pavilion and/or restroom will impact the existing green space to some extent but exactly how much cannot be determined until a design is finalized. The schematic design provided by Leathers & Associates indicates a pavilion that is 24 feet by 36 feet in size.

Question 3:

What creative options does Leathers have available that can be added to the design?

Leathers and Associates' design can be tailored to suit community preferences.

Question 4:

Why does it appear that 50% of the creative play space has been lost?

Leathers & Associates design was based on input received from students at Dewey Elementary School and Cherry Preschool. Students indicated a preference for athletic equipment over imaginative / creative equipment. As a result, the current design is geared more toward athletics.

Question 5:

Why is there so much unused space near the spinning toy?

American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standard F1487-11 requires specific use zones around each play structure which provide obstacle-free safety surfacing and circulation space. The schematic drawing provided by Leathers & Associates does not allow for additional structures based on the use zone requirements.

Question 6:

Are any trees impacted by this project?

No existing trees will be impacted by this project.

Question 7:

What are the major changes and why were they made?

Leathers & Associates design was based on input received from students at Dewey Elementary School and Cherry Preschool. Students indicated a preference for athletic equipment over imaginative / creative equipment. As a result, the current design is geared more toward athletics.

Question 8:

What specific equipment is failing and how?

To date the following play components have failed:

1. The existing chain walk is no longer functioning properly
2. The track ride's handle is broken and has been removed. This component is no longer manufactured; additionally entrance/exit points for this component do not meet safety standards
3. The climbing wall cables have been removed and the opening has been barricaded
4. The steering wheel from the "bouncing" car has been removed as it did not meet safety standards
5. The sliding entrance platform was removed due to wear, rendering the main access to the structure inaccessible
6. Several tot and belt swings have been removed as they did not meet safety standards

Additionally, many sections of decks, walls and railings have been replaced over the years. This work is becoming more frequent as time passes.

Question 9:

Did the City conduct or request any testing be done? Were any reports generated?

To date, no testing has been done. However, the City of Evanston performs monthly playground safety inspections and playground structure maintenance including sanding splintering wood, pounding down protruding nails, varnishing the wood and repairing equipment as needed.

Question 10:

Why not consider rehabilitation instead of demolition?

The City is willing to look into the rehabilitation option. There are concerns regarding safety, ongoing maintenance and ADA compliance that have also led to consideration of renovation.

Question 11:

Was there a competitive bidding process to hire Leathers? If not, why?

As a result of their unique experience with the project's initial implementation, Leathers & Associates was hired through a sole source contract which was approved by the City Council on October 13, 2014.

Question 12:

Are any original Leathers' staff part of this build?

No original Leathers & Associates staff members are part of this project. The original project was built in 1990.

Question 13:

How did the City pick Dewey and Cherry Schools to visit on design day? Why is Cherry (a non-profit) being considered for the steering committee?

The Leathers' design process seeks to incorporate input from some of the children that utilize the park. The city originally selected Dewey and Cherry schools due to their frequent use and proximity to the park.

The final make up of the steering has not been determined

Question 14:

What caused the budget to increase from \$150,000 in March of 2014 to \$500,000 today?

The fiscal year 2014 budget for the Penny Park project was intended to address design services only. Construction funding is typically not provided until the anticipated construction year. The \$500,000 budget is for fiscal year 2015.

Question 15:

Why is the toddler space disproportionate to the older kid's area? It seems too big.

The size of the ages 2-5 play area can be tailored to meet community preferences.

Question 16:

Can the new material be monochromatic in color?

Leathers can design the playground to meet the color requirements preferred by the community including a monochromatic color scheme.

Question 17:

Can we flip flop the ages 2-5 and 5-12 play areas?

The arrangement of the two play areas can be tailored to meet community preferences.

Question 18:

Will the pavilion interfere with the green space, sled hill, etc.?

The proposed pavilion will reduce the amount of green space at the park. The amount of green space impacted cannot be determined until a final design is developed. The schematic design provided by Leathers & Associates indicates a pavilion that is 24 feet by 36 feet in size. The schematic design provided by Leathers & Associates does not appear to interfere with the sled hill.

Question 19:

Is the pavilion enclosed or open?

The specific design of the pavilion has not been determined at this time.

Question 20:

Should we consider a “self-composting” restroom?

Staff will take the suggestion into consideration.

Question 21:

Why are there so many monkey bars in one area?

Leathers & Associates design was based on input received from students at Dewey Elementary School and Cherry Preschool. Students indicated a preference for athletic equipment over imaginative / creative equipment. As a result, the current design is geared more toward athletics.

Question 22:

Can we add a community garden?

Staff will take the suggestion into consideration. The garden, like a restroom or pavilion, may impact current green space on the site.

Question 23:

It sounds like safety concerns are driving much of the new design. What accidents have been recorded / reported in the past two decades that necessitate this?

The City of Evanston does not track playground accident data.

Question 24:

Why is preservation not a consideration in the process?

Preservation is an option however access, maintenance and safety of current equipment are also concerns to be considered with the community.

Question 25:

What is precipitating the rebuild of the most popular park in the neighborhood?

Equipment age, non-compliance with ASTM standards and non-compliance with ADA requirements are the primary reasons this renovation project is being pursued.

Question 26:

Why separate age groups?

ASTM Standard F1487-11 and CPSC Handbook #325 require uniquely designed and separate play equipment for children ages 2-5 versus children ages 5-12. This is done primarily due to the anthropometrics and developmental abilities of children within these two age groups.

Question 27:

If Cherry Preschool uses the playground can they only use the 2-5 area?

Each play area (ages 2-5 and 5-12) is designed specifically for and recommended for use by children in those designated age groups.

Question 28:

What about older members of the neighborhood, those aging-in-place, who would benefit from and use the park? More benches maybe?

Additional benches can be added to the project if desired by the community.

Question 29:

Does a specific percentage of renovation trigger a requirement for a complete rehabilitation?

ASTM safety standards do not contain trigger points for renovation versus rehabilitation. The Illinois Accessibility Code does contain trigger points relative to ADA compliance as follows:

All Public Facilities - Alteration Costs 15% or Less. If the alteration costs 15% or less of the reproduction cost of the public facility, the element or space being altered shall comply with the applicable requirements for new construction.

All Public Facilities Other Than State-Owned - Alteration Costs 15% to 50% and Less than \$100,000. If the alteration costs more than 15% but less than 50% of the reproduction cost of the public facility, and less than \$100,000, the following shall comply with the applicable requirements for new construction: A) the element or space being altered; and B) an entrance and a means of egress intended for use by the general public.

All Public Facilities Other Than State-Owned - Alteration Costs 15% to 50% and More than \$100,000. If the alteration costs more than 15% but less than 50% of the

reproduction cost of the public facility, and more than \$100,000, the following shall comply with the applicable requirements for new construction: A) the element or space being altered; B) an entrance and a means of egress intended for use by the general public; C) all spaces and elements necessary to provide horizontal and vertical accessible routes between an accessible entrance and means of egress and the element or space being altered.

All Public Facilities - Alteration Costs 50% or More. If the alteration costs 50% or more of the reproduction cost of the public facility, the entire public facility shall comply with the applicable requirements for new construction.

Calculation of Reproduction Cost

For the purpose of calculating percentages of reproduction cost, the cost of alteration shall be construed as the total actual combined cost of all alterations made within any period of 30 months.