

Appendix 4 – Building and Outdoor Spaces Review of Parks Summary

Summary

The following is a summary of the park information collected by the Age-Friendly Evanston, Buildings and Outdoor Spaces work group in July, 2015. First, almost all the parks are in good to very good shape. Some are outstanding. The notes and photos sent during the process of reviewing the parks contained information about problems we found relating to specific parks. We realize that some of the parks we have reviewed are up for renovation, but if there was something that seemed especially in need of attention, we included that information. This review also includes questions we have as well as general observations about the parks. We haven't yet had an opportunity to mention the wonderful features of many of the parks, but we have taken note of them. There is more to come! See "Next Steps" at the end of this document.

Questions for Bob

- 1. Is mulch and sand replacement part of regular park maintenance? Many parks could use both. As noted in the photos sent, quite a few of the parks that use mulch are quite weed infested.*
- 2. There are several areas that look like parks but are not on the park list. Are they actual parks? The first one is on Hinman between Main and Kedzie (in front of a parking lot). There are benches and a trashcan at the location. Another is where Harrison and Lincolnwood Dive intersect. It has a park bench and plantings. There is a large piece of land east of the canal between Davis and Church just north of the #65 Administration Building. Is this a park?*
- 3. Is Emerson Square Park a Parks and Rec park? It is not listed in the directory.*
- 4. What are the actual boundaries between Lighthouse Landing and Lawson?*
- 5. What are the boundaries of Robert Crown and the Washington School playgrounds? It was hard to tell as they blended together.*
- 6. The boundaries of Curry Park are not clear. Which area here is Parks and Rec and which belongs to Montessori?*
- 7. Would you like us to visit the parks not managed by Evanston Parks and Recreation?*
- 8. It was difficult to actually find the two McCormick parks. There were no signs, but we thought they might be the two green spaces on the west side of McCormick with one near Grant and McCormick and the other near Bridge St. Is this correct?*

9. *There are a number of dead or dying trees in the parks. Is Parks and Rec responsible for the trees along the edges of the canal or is that the Water Reclamation District? We thought maybe the latter.*

10. *Benches, bleachers, and picnic tables – There are a number of old picnic tables, benches, and some bleachers in various parks that are in good condition except for the paint. The picnic tables and benches are the old ones constructed with thick wood and metal. Would it be possible to involve the youth summer job program in re-painting these?*

11. *The condition of the bleachers throughout the parks is inconsistent. Some are brand new and look great. Some are old but fine. Some are broken and a few could pose a danger – like the ones by the tennis courts at Lovelace. Is there a program to replace or repair those that are damaged?*

12. *What is the white building in the middle of the field at Robert Crown used for? It looks like it was once a bathroom.*

13. *Is there any thought to redo the labeling of the Arboretum trees? Many labels have disappeared. Also, will the waterfall in the bird sanctuary be repaired?*

14. *Are the community gardens on the west side of McCormick on Bridge part of Eggleston Park?*

Parks Without an Identifying Sign

Clyde/Brummel

Southwest

Leah Lomar

Trahan

Acherman

Ellingwood

Quinlan

Howell

South Boulevard

Hinman

St. Paul

Stockham

Larimer

Dawes (could use a sign at both Dempster and at Church)

Lawson (could use a sign on Sheridan)

Hobart

McCormick

Congregational

Fountain Square

Merrick Rose Garden (needs city park sign – many think this park is private)

Twigs (could use a sign on Bridge St.)

Eggleston

Parks That Need Better Lighting

Some of these parks do not have lighting except for street lighting, but may not really need additional lighting, as they are small parks and located right next to or between private residences or apartment buildings. Each one needs to be evaluated for lighting individually.

Clyde/Brummel	Ellingwood	Tallmadge
Sargent	Hinman	Hobart
Southwest	Snyder	Gilbert
Dobson/Brummel	Grandmother	Ingraham (lights in parking lot only)
Leah Lomar	Larimer	Penny
Levinson	Grey	Oldberg
Trahan	Raymond	Alexander
James (west parking lot)	Lunt	Currey
Cartwright	Fountain Square	
Independence	Patriots	
McCullouch	Philbrick	
Ladd Arboretum		

Parks That Need Bike Racks

Parks that are all green space were not listed here since a bike rider might take a rest in one of those parks, but would not necessarily need to park and lock a bike.

Cartwright	Leah Lomar	Baker
Ackerman	Dobson and Brummel	Hinman
Independence	Southwest	Snyder
McCullouch	Sargent	Hobart
Larimer	Monroe Tot Lot	
Brummel Richmond	Garden Park	

Parks With Safety Concerns

These safety concerns, although not many, include both physical safety and safety concerns about crime or gang activity.

Gilbert (J. Blake residents report safety concerns at night)

Penny (Rotting wood, exposed nails in places)

Alexander (need pedestrian crossing at Grove and Ridge)

Garden/South Boulevard – (drug and gang activity reported)

Beck (gang activity?)

Hobart – (wooden stairway from Ridge into park could be dangerous -- no railing, slippery when wet)

Kelly Tot Lot (needs a fence)

Garden (piece of metal retaining wall sticking up near rock wall by lake)

Clyde/Brummel (gang activity?)

Parks That Need Fence Repair (could be a safety concern at some parks)

Kelly Tot Lot needs a fence – hedges have many gaps and no longer enclose the park. Also, there is quite a bit of traffic on the corner of Michigan and Keeney.

Hobart	Robert Crown (by Lee St.)	Dobson and Brummel
Garden	Levinson	(cyclone fence)
Cartwright (cyclone fence)	Leah Lomar	Southwest
McCullough		

Public Transportation and Parking

Most of the larger parks where community events would be held are near public transportation. One exception is the lakefront parks. There is no public transportation east of Chicago Ave. All the parks have nearby street parking.

Clean and Inviting

Parks that have heavy use, especially on weekends, or after an event, tend to have litter. Generally though, most all the parks were pretty clean.

Parks Where Playground Equipment or Sports Fields/Courts Need Attention

Play equipment seemed generally to be in good to very good shape as were most of the play fields and tennis courts. Information about problem areas was sent earlier.

Places to Rest

Most parks have an adequate number of benches (A few parks could use more benches)

South Boulevard

Clark Square

Leahy	Two parks have no benches and need at least
Ingraham	one.
Ladd Arboretum near Green Bay Road	Jennifer Morris
	Stockham

Green Space and Shade

We found beautiful trees and shade in almost every park.

Accessibility

Most of the parks are accessible with good pavement and pathways. The walking paths at most parks (lakefront, east of canal, arboretum) are generally in pretty good shape. We know that the path at the Arboretum will be replaced. Those paths that need attention were sent with the photos during the park review. Some parks once had walking paths that are now grown over. A few of these parks are mainly green space – a nice peaceful spot to sit and relax. These parks are now not really accessible to those using a walker or a wheelchair.

Clark Square	Harper	Quinlan
Lunt	Trahan	Howell
Ingraham	Stockham	Independence
Patriots	McCulloch	St. Paul – partly accessible

Bathrooms

All the park and beach bathrooms were clean, but, except for those that have been restored, they pretty much all need at least paint and some upgrades.

Parks That Are Generally in Poor Shape

This is a short list. Almost all the parks are in good to great shape. Most of the problems are minor, like needing to be weeded, or needing a bench or a piece of equipment replaced. The parks listed here are the ones that we thought need the most work. Several are up for renovation.

(*)

Penny *	Baker*	Grey*
Fountain Square*	Garden*	McCulloch*
Philbrick	Jennifer Morris	
Hobart	Fitzsimons	

Next Steps

The Buildings and Outdoor Spaces work group would like to work with Parks and Rec to re-design the park information on the website and in publications. We want to highlight some of the features that are wonderful in the parks but are not generally known unless you make a visit. Currently the park information mainly consists of which parks do or do not have play fields for sports. This is important, but if we listed only the play fields/courts that actually are present in each park there would be room to list other amenities. A number of parks have interesting memorials or garden features and public art that are not mentioned. These would appeal to everyone, not just young families. For example, there is the fireman's memorial at Fireman's Park, the war memorial at Patriot's Park, the pond, native plantings, and the sled hill at Lovelace, fitness courses at various locations, scenic walking/bike paths in the parks east of the canal, the beautiful Rotary Garden at the Arboretum, the "slide sculpture" at Cartwright, etc. Our work group was consistently excited about the "finds" we made as we went through each park.

Our group is currently working on developing a potential design for the above that would not take up more space than the current park information and the park "cards" on the website. I hope that we can meet some time toward the end of August to share our ideas and get your opinion about what can be done to enhance the age-friendliness of the park information.