

Wilderness Park Community Working Group

February 22, 2017

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Parks and Recreation Department

WELCOME!

- ▶ Thank you for your time and energy
- ▶ We will do our best to make your time productive
- ▶ Feel free to move around as needed
- ▶ Coffee and water available in back
- ▶ Restroom out the door and across the hall



Introductions



- ▶ Lynn Johnson, Director of Parks and Recreation
- ▶ Nicole Fleck-Tooze, Special Projects Administrator
- ▶ Chris Myer, Operations Coordinator
- ▶ Sara Hartzell, Park Planner
- ▶ Matt Mittelstadt, SW District Supervisor
- ▶ Aaron Druery, Dist. Sup. of Greenways and Open Spaces

Purpose

- ▶ To discuss the needs of Wilderness Park in the context of the goals established, prioritize projects that may be accomplished given the resources available, identify possible sources of additional funding, and identify projects that might be appropriate for volunteer assistance.
- ▶ Outputs from these meetings will be taken before the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for their review and approval, and used in strategic planning for the Department.



Expectations

- ▶ Share Your Thoughts
- ▶ Respect the Input of Others
- ▶ Bring Your Experience
- ▶ Be Open to New Perspectives
- ▶ Keep the Overall Goals in Mind
- ▶ Think about the Big Picture
- ▶ Be Realistic in what can be Accomplished
- ▶ Take these Discussions Back to Your Organization



Agenda

- ▶ Review of community survey results
- ▶ Review of 2000 Management Plan
- ▶ Review of 2005 amended Overall Goals, discussion of amendments and additions
- ▶ Review of Park maps
- ▶ Summary of Upcoming State, City and County Projects which Impact Park
- ▶ Issue Identification Exercise

Community Survey

- ▶ Distributed via email, web, social media, press release
- ▶ Ran for two weeks - Feb 3 through 17
- ▶ 706 participants (395 1999 responses)
- ▶ 363 listed Wilderness as one of their favorite parks - 207 had no favorite
- ▶ All but 30 respondents have visited Wilderness Park, 600 within the last year (about 58.6%)



Satisfaction with Conditions

- ▶ Safety: 83.7% Satisfied or Very Satisfied (75.1%)
- ▶ Trail Maintenance: 77.8% Satisfied or Very Satisfied (72.1%)
- ▶ Trail Markers: 63.3% Satisfied or Very Satisfied (70.9%)
- ▶ Condition of Bridges: 67.1% Satisfied or Very Satisfied (63.6%)
- ▶ Entrance Upkeep: 82.4% Satisfied or Very Satisfied (80%)
- ▶ Litter Pick-up: 83.2% Satisfied or Very Satisfied (76.3%)
- ▶ Habitat Quality: 86.3% Satisfied or Very Satisfied (83.3%)
- ▶ Variety of Uses: 86.5% Satisfied or Very Satisfied (75.7%)
- ▶ Park Access: 85.5% Satisfied or Very Satisfied (80.3%)

Activities



- ▶ Walking: 80.3% (75%)
- ▶ Observe/Enjoy Nature: 53.9% (20.6%)
- ▶ Bicycling: 48.5% (22.5%)
- ▶ Relaxing/Peace and Quiet: 46.4% (3.9%)
- ▶ Bird Watching: 21.1% (12.3%)
- ▶ Picnics: 9.3% (3.4%)
- ▶ Horseback Riding: 7.7% (4.9%)
- ▶ Fishing: 9.3% (5.4%)
- ▶ Other: 15.2% (15.7%)



Importance of Wilderness Park

- ▶ Overall: 92.6% Very Valuable (59.2%)
- ▶ A Place for Wildlife: 82.3% Very Important (66%)
- ▶ A Place to Experience Nature: 84.8% Very Important (63.7%)
- ▶ A Place to Study/Learn About Nature: 75.9% Very Important (61.3%)
- ▶ A Place for Recreation: 81.1% Very Important (53.3%)
- ▶ A Place that Demonstrate Importance of Natural Space in Cities: 74.2% Very Important (52.8%)
- ▶ A Place for Flood Protection: 75.6% Very Important (50.9%)
- ▶ A Place for Historic and Cultural Resources: 58.7% Very Important (41.2%)



Other Items

- ▶ The Issues most often identified as critical were:
 - ▶ Preserving the Park (high)
 - ▶ Expansion of urban development (highest)
 - ▶ Park Maintenance (moderately low)
 - ▶ Protection of Wildlife (low)
 - ▶ Pollution (moderately high)
- ▶ Almost 80% were supportive of additional funding to improve the park (53.2%)
- ▶ About 82% felt overall park maintenance was Fair to Good
 - ▶ The highest priority maintenance needs were Bridges, Fallen Limbs, Trail Markers, Trail Surface and Ecological Concerns
- ▶ 55.2% indicated they would be willing to be on a mailing list for volunteer opportunities, 17% indicated they might be.

2000 Management Plan

- ▶ Result of analysis of a set of subarea studies developed in the late 1990s
 - ▶ Ecosystem Study - EA Engineering, Science and Technology
 - ▶ Ecosystems Study Critique - Mediation Ecosystem Study Critique Committee
 - ▶ Land Acquisition - Recommendations made as part of the Ecosystem Study
 - ▶ Hydrologic Study - US Army Corps of Engineers
 - ▶ Transportation Study - Olsson Associates
 - ▶ Opinion Survey - Random Sample by UNL Sociology Department

Vision of Wilderness Park

- ▶ Flood Protection
- ▶ Natural arteries into neighborhoods
- ▶ Illusion of Wilderness
- ▶ A place to escape urban landscape
- ▶ Nature related recreation
- ▶ Enjoy nature on nature's terms
- ▶ Part of a corridor of green encompassing Lincoln (Salt Valley Greenway)
- ▶ Enjoy a vignette of area in pre-settlement conditions
- ▶ Elements of nature allowed to interact on nature's terms
- ▶ A place to experience a sense of wilderness



Integrated Plan with Management Strategies

- ▶ Integrated the plans listed
- ▶ Came about because of concern over development adjacent to the park
- ▶ Comprehensive Plan was amended to call for a subarea plan
- ▶ Included involvement by public and more intensive participation by a citizen planning group



Recommendations

- ▶ Maintain as a natural area
 - ▶ Provide opportunities for nature related recreation
 - ▶ Maintain roughness value of stormwater conveyance
 - ▶ Continued scientific monitoring
 - ▶ Balance vegetation for roughness while protecting prairie and bur oak areas
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- ▶ Trails
 - ▶ Improve surface
 - ▶ Specific recommendations for bridges
 - ▶ Bridges capable of allowing vehicles
 - ▶ Development of abandoned railway (Jamaica North)
 - ▶ Trail links to neighborhoods



Recommendations

▶ Resource Protection

- ▶ Maintain and restore prairie remnants
- ▶ Manage bur oak communities
- ▶ Monitor and eradicate noxious weeds
- ▶ Maintain mature tree stands
- ▶ Remove brush and trees in a patchy manner over period of years
- ▶ Management outside of nesting season
- ▶ Discourage increased human disturbance, especially in southern two-thirds
- ▶ Maintain Salt Creek in its natural state, allow to change channel
- ▶ Manage on a watershed scale
- ▶ Revisit Transportation recommendations



Recommendations

- ▶ Visitor Protection and Services
 - ▶ Bridges and trail accessible to emergency and maintenance vehicles
 - ▶ Restrooms at north and south
 - ▶ Bridges, trails and restrooms accessible to the disabled
 - ▶ Compatible uses adjacent to park should be encouraged
 - ▶ All boxes in parking areas
 - ▶ Flood warning system



Recommendations

- ▶ Land Acquisition and Buffers
 - ▶ Use BMPs, purchase and easements to protect adjacent lands
 - ▶ Extend park to Roca
 - ▶ Acquire abandoned RR to Roca
 - ▶ 100 ft buffers along tributaries
 - ▶ Developments should embody recommendations of Stormwater Advisory Committee
- ▶ Community Participation
 - ▶ Volunteer assistance for Maintenance
 - ▶ Science Advisory Committee
 - ▶ Land Trust
 - ▶ Continued community involvement encouraged

Overall Goals: 2003 Edition

- ▶ Establish and maintain a variety of habitats that will provide a broad array of wildlife.
- ▶ Manage bur oak communities to encourage regeneration of seedlings.
- ▶ Maintain the park as a “natural” environment area.
- ▶ Maintain and restore prairie remnants especially the sandstone prairie area.
- ▶ Restore some old field areas to native prairie grasses.
- ▶ Eradicate invasive exotics such as honeysuckle, buckthorn, leafy spurge, and musk thistle.
- ▶ Develop management strategies of areas of the park that harbor “sensitive ” species and develop management strategies to protect those areas.
- ▶ Follow management practices that maintain/increase “roughness” value of stormwater conveyance area along Salt Creek to enhance flood control benefits of the park.
- ▶ Encourage the function of Salt Creek as a natural system by maintaining and enhancing its meanders, oxbows, wetlands and vernal ponds.
- ▶ Maintain mature tree stands to provide habitat for Coopers’ Hawks, barred owls and woodland birds.
- ▶ Conduct scientific monitoring of the park and its resources. Inventory plants and animals in the park including mammals, snakes, amphibians, lichens, mosses, ferns, etc.

Overall Goals

- ▶ Exercise:
 - ▶ Discussion of 2003 Goals
 - ▶ Suggestion of Amendments
 - ▶ Suggestion of Additional Goals

Park Maps



Upcoming Projects

- ▶ Wastewater Main on north side of Old Cheney Rd
- ▶ Grade control and stream bank stabilization at Pioneers and Old Cheney crossings
- ▶ Bridge repairs to Pioneers and Old Cheney Bridges
- ▶ Freeway improvements to Highway 77



Wastewater Main

- ▶ Installation of a 36" main on the north side of Old Cheney Road
- ▶ Serve new development on the west side of Highway 77
- ▶ Connect to existing sewer main underneath the Jamaica North Trail
- ▶ 40' permanent easement, 60' temporary construction easement
- ▶ Possible future expansion with a parallel main
- ▶ Will involve tree removal, trenching, installation of manholes
- ▶ Design to begin this year, construction in 2018 or 2019

Wastewater Main

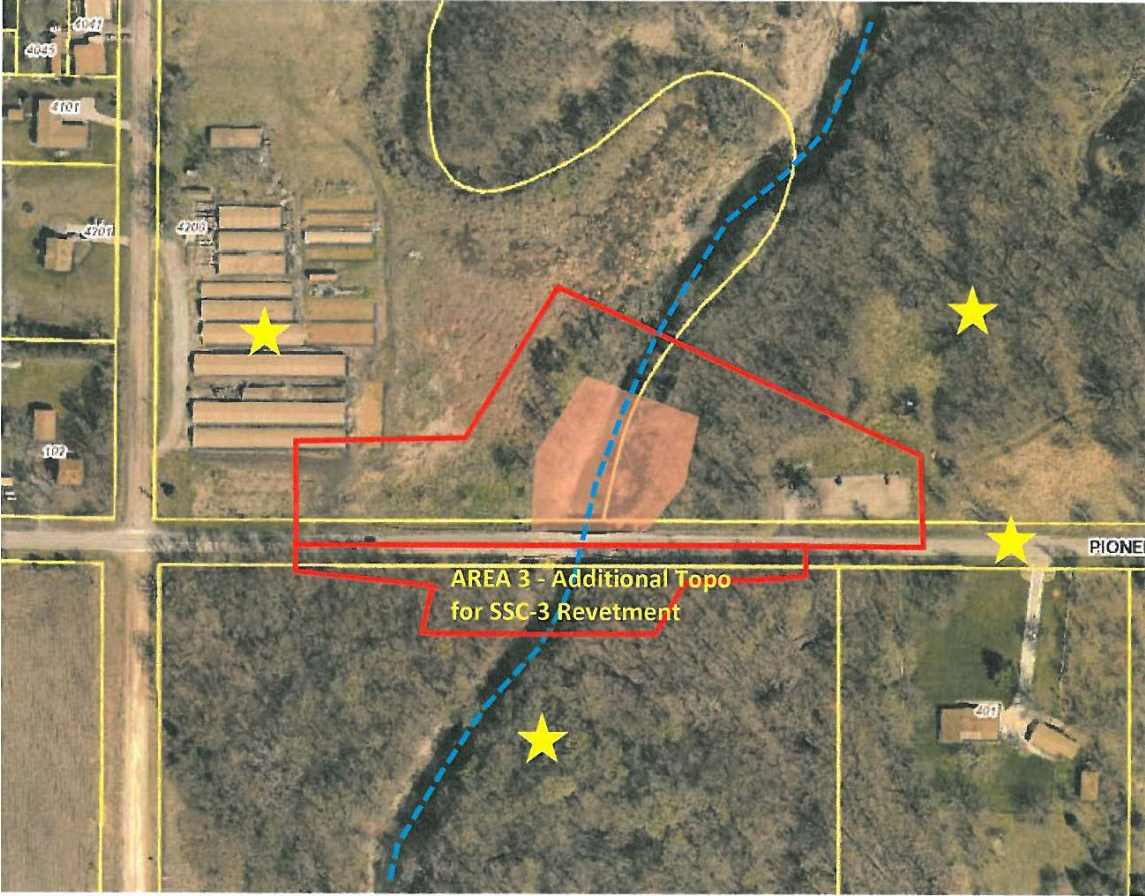
- ▶ Two alternatives
- ▶ Reviewed trees along both alignments
- ▶ Old Cheney Road (aqua) was selected as least disruptive to park



Grade and Bank Stabilization

- ▶ Joint project with the NRD and WSM
- ▶ Immediately downstream of both the Old Cheney and Pioneers bridges
- ▶ Address significant erosion and incising of channel and protect structures
- ▶ Will involve addition of rock structures in the channel, laying back banks and protecting with riprap
- ▶ Will require tree removal and probably some trail rerouting
- ▶ Is being coordinated with Wastewater project and every attempt is being made to do this work concurrently
- ▶ Design has begun and construction is planned in 2018

Grade and Bank Stabilization



County Bridge Repairs

- ▶ Repairs are needed to the Old Cheney and Pioneers bridges, which are in the County jurisdiction.
- ▶ 2015 floods washed significant soil from around the concrete pilings
- ▶ Questions about the undercrossings at both of these bridges
- ▶ Although the previous two projects are in the same general area of the Old Cheney bridge, it is not anticipated that either will address the issues at the bridge itself.
- ▶ Unclear what will be involved in these projects or what the timing is for repairs

County Bridge Repairs



Highway 77 Freeway Improvements

- ▶ Project planned by the State Dept. of Roads
- ▶ Will improve Highway 77 to freeway standards with interchanges and grade separated crossings.
- ▶ Will involve closing of Saltillo Road, Rokeby Road, Yankee Hill Road and Old Cheney Road intersections.
- ▶ Interchanges added with South Beltway and at Warlick/W Denton Road
- ▶ Flyover at Pioneers Blvd, but no access to Highway 77
- ▶ Have identified a point where Wilderness trails have been using ROW at Rokeby Road. This must be stopped immediately in order to get environmental approvals.
- ▶ Planned to be constructed some time after 2020

Issue Identification Exercise

- ▶ Use Post-Its to identify:
 - ▶ Green - things are going great here! Keep it up!
 - ▶ Yellow - I'm either not sure what's going on, or I am beginning to get concerned...
 - ▶ Pink - I am definitely concerned about this and would like to see it addressed!
- ▶ Add an explanation on the Post-It
- ▶ Not everyone will be present at the next two meetings (Ecosystems and Trails & Facilities) So this is your chance to make sure your comments are seen by all.
- ▶ All comments will be recorded and linked to the point on the map where you place them.

