

Memorial Park Master Planning Project

Focus Group Summary of Comments/Concerns

Held on: August 22 and September 20, 2018

Landscaping

1. How many trees will be removed? What will decide the removal?

Comments/Concerns

- Would like to keep as many mature trees as possible.
- Like the feeling of being under the trees, enhance rather than change this feature.

Responses

- Based on the current plan, 7 existing trees will be removed. These will be identified on a plan.
 - These trees were identified based on the concept from 2016. Since that time, 3 of these trees were removed due to poor condition – one of them being an ash that succumbed to the emerald ash borer. One of the trees identified is an evergreen shrub around a memorial plaque. We will seek to accommodate the three remaining trees in the plan if at all possible.
- Additional tree planting will be planned so they are established prior to any necessary future removals.

2. Parameter of Park Green buffers and barriers?

Comments/concerns

- Would like to get rid of the orange fencing during events and come up with a solution more aesthetically pleasing. Possibly underground post holders?
- Keep the existing light poles
- Would like to see a green leaf buffer and barriers
- No permanent fencing, would like open/lawn
- Park drawn into downtowns
- Protect neighborhood consider to insulate
- Should flow with the concept of downtown Wheaton
- Identify park entrances for large crowds
 - Wayfinding signs flow around site

Responses

- We will look into the potential for underground post holders. At a minimum, a different color temporary fence can be used such as green.
- Several comments were received regarding the need to keep the park open so that neighbors could have a view of the park and that patrons could flow in and out of the park more easily. This also affects the connectivity of the park to the neighboring downtown. These comments need to be explored more to see if there is a compromise that will meet everyone's expectations.

- A plan for signs will be developed and include entrances and wayfinding

3. Petanque

Comments/concerns

- Would like a covered area - it would enhance picnic/patio use
- Is it staying or getting larger?
- Make a petanque area that can have multiple use
- Suggestion of pickle ball addition

Responses

- The existing petanque area is 19' x 60' and we are proposing to increase the size to 40' x 60'. This will allow additional games to be played at the same time by the club and will allow a nice space that can be covered by a tent for special events.
- Considering the limited number of participants for Pickleball in comparison to the area used, this is better served elsewhere. This is part of the reason for removal of the tennis court. Pickleball has been added to other courts in the community including Northside Park.

4. Sidewalks/pavers

Comments/concerns

- Larger paths to get utility vehicles in and out for events
- Sidewalk positioning – stays the same?
- Would like the ability to purchase commemorative pavers
- Different size paver's different prices.
- Sidewalks/paths that are ADA accessible

Responses

- The proposed system of paths will enhance the flow of the park with the reconfiguration of the amenities within the park.
- We will look at areas that would be ideal for a commemorative paver program. This could be in the existing ribbons of the sidewalks or a designated space by the band shell.
- All improvements will meet accessibility requirements and universal design for inclusion for all.

5. Memorials

Comments/concerns

- Do not need a whole area dedicated for memorials, make more efficient use of space
- Education aspect – interpretive signage, key points along timeline for context
- Add memorial garden

- Add different memorials in timeline
- Leave room for expanding the timeline
- Separate areas. Make a conflict area
- No memorials that look like grave stones.
- Prefer recognizing armed services instead of specific wars

Responses

- The goal of the planned area is that it will be comfortable and inviting for general use and include native plantings
- Interpretive signs will be planned in the design
- The majority of response appear to support the timeline concept. We will look at ways of recognizing different services within the design.

6. Other/Landscape

Comments/concerns

- A reflecting pool with seat walls – No long range maintenance, filtration and this would encourage the homeless.
- Plans for Terrace Use?
- Memorial Building interiors will remain the same.
- Create patio or multi use area
- Space for both small and large groups
- Additional lighting
- Will the gazebo in the southeast corner remain? It is a gathering place for unintended users.

Responses

- Water feature will be designed for low maintenance that will not encourage unintended use.
- The proposed terrace on the south side of the Mary Lubko Center would be open to public use for most of the time similar to the existing terrace space. During special events and rentals, it is anticipated that this can be used as a “VIP” area with limited access.
- The spaces planned in the design will accommodate a various range of group sizes.
- Lighting will be planned to provide safe access through the park and discourage any unintended uses.
- The gazebo is planned to be removed and will not be replaced.

Band shell

7. Seating

Comments/concerns

- Get rid of the worn-out benches people prefer to bring lawn chairs.
- Permanent seating effects multiple purpose and nature.

- Improve seating from lawn area?
- Make seating are inviting and comfortable
- Would like chairs fixed “stadium style”
- Slope of seating for view of stage
- Leave front area for dancing etc. and pit group
- Canopy to leave the ability to continue events in inclement weather.
- Access control for permanent seating
- More picnic tables
- Bring your own seating, chairs, blankets etc.

Responses

- The original intention was for more permanent seating on the paved area under the overhang. Based on the comments, we will look at options to be able to reconfigure or remove this seating throughout different times of the year to allow other uses.
- With removal of the tennis court and reconfiguring the band shell location, the lawn area will be increasing by 20% to over half an acre. It is unlikely that turf can be established under the overhang for more open space.
- The height of the stage has not been determined at this point. However, sight lines for lawn seating will be strived for through sloping the space and other means.
- Additional picnic tables and seating throughout the park can be added based on demand.

8. Stage

Comments/concerns

- Load in and out are there stairs or ramps? Ex: grand piano ability to get on stage.
- 9’ wide paths and thresholds/doors with removable mulleins
- Band feels stage is too low, need to make higher.
- Pit for orchestra relevant to stage.
- Height of stage to allow better viewing from grass area.
- More storage area in band shell
- Bigger performance area
- Utility room dressing room
- What is the stage surface
- Detour skaters from accessing the stage (currently jump off stage)

Responses

- The design will accommodate loading of equipment to and from the stage and consider larger equipment up ramps and through doorways.
- The height of the stage in comparison to the audience will be looked at and whether an orchestra area can be accommodated.
- We are seeking to balance the size of the different spaces requested with the overall size of the building that can be accommodated within the park and the existing budget.
- The surface of the stage is anticipated to be concrete
- Designs throughout the park will strive to limit undesirable activities

9. Sound/Utilities

Comments/concerns

- Complaints about noise level.
- Balance dialogue – sound volume
- Is sound location permanent?
- Improve sound
- Contain sound – wireless speakers around park.
- Direct noise away from residences
- Different electrical boxes –currently kids stand on them. Consider lock boxes for power and put times on electrical same with WIFI.

Responses

- A sound specialist is a part of the design team to specify the sound system. Our expectation is that sound quality will be improved. Speakers throughout the park will help with this to allow patrons to hear performances at reasonable volumes. We will continue to adhere to the city's noise ordinance.
- The specialist will help us to determine the appropriate location for a sound board and whether this is permanent or wired for temporary use.
- Fixtures will be designed to be appropriate for their needs and limit unintended use.

10. Restrooms/Concessions

Comments/concerns

- Create spaces to hide portable restrooms
- Where will restroom lines flow and how will that impact other things such as sight lines
- Add stage room restroom
- Include bathrooms in band shell building
- Concessions stand, catering for MLC.
 - Do not put in line of sight with stage.
 - Limit concessions menu to stay sensitive to local businesses

Responses

- Locations are being considered for portable restrooms and will be designed appropriately to shelter them from the surroundings.
- Revisions to the restroom and concessions location is being consider to reduce concerns about detracting from performances.
- The number of existing restroom fixtures is being tripled throughout the park and there will be individual unisex restrooms designated for performers.

- The menu for concessions is expected to remain limited in selection and not compete with local businesses.

Miscellaneous

11. Programming

Comments/concerns

- More opportunities for events and schools to utilize i.e. homecoming, festivals usage of stage
- Fear of over programming areas, limit/boundaries what is appropriate
- Neighbors -Do not want to see programming every weekend 7 days a week
- Would like guidelines and adhere to them
- Program in off hours so we don't compete for parking with businesses
- See more plays something other than Shakespeare in the Park.
- Host movies in the park, yoga in the park on stage
- More Music Mondays

Responses

- Guidelines will be developed to assist with future programming decisions.
- Any additional suggested programs will be communicated in advance.

12. Parking/Traffic

Comments/concerns

- Parking needs -work on partnerships with schools, churches, etc.
- Police need to enforce parking in driveways.
- Change parking lot lights to LED make yellowish subdued lighting (currently "camping")
- Create a loading zone so we do not utilize parking spaces.
- Potential change of traffic direction

Responses

- We will work with the city and other neighbors to develop the maximum opportunity for event parking with the minimum impact on neighboring streets.
- Enforcement is a police function that we will encourage.
- A loading zone has been added to the plan.
- The city is looking at changing all of Hale Street to one way to improve traffic flow and increase street parking.

13. General

Comments/concerns

- What is the cost of the project? Where are the funds coming from? Will it raise taxes?
- Would bring value to the community
- Time line for construction
- Remove tennis courts they are used by dog walkers
- Patio areas might encourage homeless
 - Put patio closer to stage
- Security
 - Monitoring
 - Securing after hours

Responses

- The estimated project cost is \$5 million dollars. This has been accounted for in the park district budget. We can fund it with current reserves. It will not defer other maintenance, but the project is considered a priority over other possible improvements throughout the district (i.e. improvements to the pools).
- Construction is anticipated to begin in June 2019 following the Taste of Wheaton Event
- All areas will strive to limit undesirable activities
- Currently security is only provided when our programs have equipment or other items of value that need to remain in the park overnight during special events