

## Island Park Master Plan

Public Input Meeting #1 Summary

6pm-8pm

Fargo Park District – Robert D. Johnson Recreation Center

2/17/2022

### Design Workshop Meeting Summary

A Public Input Meeting and Open House was facilitated on February 17, 2022 at the Robert D. Johnson Recreation (RDJ) Center in Fargo, ND. Members of the design team of AGL Landscape Architects and RDG Planning and Design were present at the RDJ Center Gymnasium where design concepts, diagrams, and sketch illustrations were presented for public input and feedback.

The design team provided a brief presentation to inform attendees of the following items being studied during the master planning process for Island Park:

- Existing Conditions and Analysis
- Community Park Characteristics and Services
- Park History and Preservation Opportunities
- Active and Passive Park Uses
- Additional or New Programming Opportunities
- Public Participation and Engagement

After the brief presentation, the public was invited to visit the workshop stations for more information and to solicit feedback on a variety of topics. The following pages summarize the input received at each of the seven (7) workshop stations facilitated at the open house.



## **Summary of Input Received at Workshop Stations**

### **1.**

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections:**

*Workshop Station Facilitated by Amy Kronbeck, AGL Landscape Architects*

#### **Summary of Input Received:**

- Seating at north entrance – pavilion
- Direct access from main path to YMCA
- Fix low, muddy spots
- Opportunity to get up into tree canopy
- East/west path would be nice
- Leave lots of open green space
- Add pollinator gardens and paths
- Add lanes in walks
- Wider paths for cyclists
- SE Corner of the park is dark and seedy
- Winding paths are nice but want to be able to commute directly through park
- There are no unsafe connections
- Pedestrian underpasses at Dill Hill and FMCT would be great
- The intersection of 7th Street and 6th Avenue is a ped/traffic conflict spot



### **2.**

### **Park Facilities and Amenities:**

*Workshop Station Facilitated by Brett Gurholt, AGL Landscape Architects*

#### **Summary of Input Received:**

- Provide quiet sitting spaces for healing in nature
- Pretty lighting for safety at dusk
- Walk through gardens and water areas (use drainage as advantage for peaceful spaces)
- I hope we have an open mic
- All walks need to be common so we know we are in park just because of walks.
- No modern light posts
- Keep historic aesthetic
- Public bathrooms should be accessible year-round and cleaned regularly near gazebo / pavilion.



- Don't get hung up on keeping historic structures if costs are enormous
- Move tennis courts to consolidated space
- More picnic tables in the shade, public restrooms
- Pollinator garden
- Plant conservatory
- Fountain
- Scandinavian Life, Bath Haus, Sauna
- Restrooms should be located near the playground for family use and small children. Changing tables should be included.

### 3.

### ***Arts and Cultural Opportunities:***

*Workshop Station Facilitated by Matt Niebuhr,  
RDG Planning & Design*

#### Summary of Input Received:

#### **DIAGRAM No 1.: Monuments / trail paths in EXISTING LOCATION**

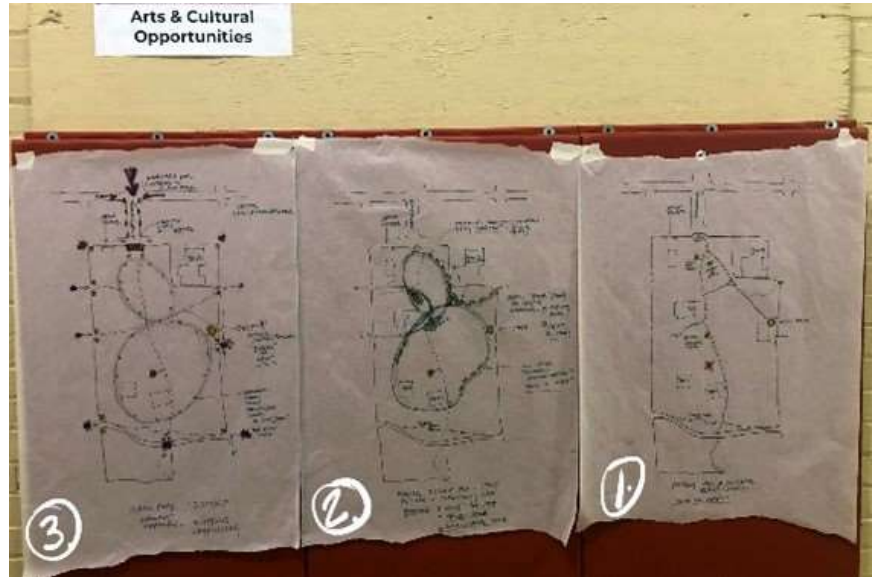
- Positive Comments
  - Gazebo in the right place – don't move it
  - Lots of history / memories like it in the trees
  - Like the history of the monuments (Civil War Monument) important to have that in the park
  - Like the old Fargo arena façade
  - Like the look / history of the tennis complex façade
  - Like the FMCT but will it get fixed up?
- Negative Comments
  - Can't easily see / find the monuments.
  - Too many trees around the civic war monument.
  - old pool viewing stairs fixed up or removed – seems dangerous
  - Existing poetry walk is "underwhelming" but nice to have





## DIAGRAM No 2: Monuments moved / alternative / additional trail pathways

- Positive Comments
  - Ok with moving monuments
  - Like the idea of placing them adjacent to pathways to be seen and not a destination.
  - Like a deliberate 'landscape room' around the monuments
  - Like the introduction of alternative looping paths of short or longer or figure 8 combinations. Short or long walks on lunch break / walking.
  - Like the idea of combination of hard surface and alternative path surface like bark chips or granite chips, etc.
  - Like the idea of seeing different moments 'in the land' as you walk around different paths
  - Like the path that meanders and provides alternative routes if different kinds of activity going on (at Gazebo / Tennis areas)
  - Like the idea of the path connecting to FMCT more if FMCT is "fixed up"
  - Ok with introducing some element that raises up "poetry" along the walk along a revised pathway – depends what it is... can't see it very well in the sidewalk now.
- Negative Comments
  - Be careful of trees
  - Keep a good sidewalk to the Gazebo



## DIAGRAM No 3 / No 5: Park entry Monuments - Alternative trails / lighting / placement

- Positive Comments
  - Like the idea of something with brick and historical character. (Sketches #5)
  - like opportunity to show / tell 'history' at the north end entry off Broadway pictures / words / built into the monument in some way.
  - Like idea of Land Acknowledgment incorporated along with a bigger piece of history about the land / park – (additional comment – the land existed and has a history before it was a named Island park)
  - Like the idea of some sort of leaf theme – with lighting and river themes.
  - Like idea of bringing some monument to Main / old Front street intersection with Broadway
  - Like idea of different type of lighting along different paths
  - Table top comment written: "Some art by Indigenous community and with their input"
- Negative Comments
  - Need more than one history to be told about the park (Land Ownership + Name - in the context of the positive comment about a land acknowledgement statement)

#### DIAGRAM No 4.: Cultural 'events' spaces / additional ideas

- Positive Comments
  - FMCT – Discussion on the idea of transforming the existing pavilion (with glass) into a “artist-in-resident” workspace / sharing space and program
  - Desire a cultural focus on Native American History in the region / Red River
  - Desire connections to ideas that may connect to an Indigenous cultural center possibly east of 4th street
  - Desire space to focus on a full sharing Indigenous culture / land ‘ownership’
  - Desire to connect park path to FMCT



- Idea: FMCT open theatre space transforming in the Scherling Grandstands
- Like the idea of “live theatre / music in the park”
- Theatre in the trees
- Idea – repurpose Arena Façade as backdrop to ‘events plaza’ / lighting to give it a purpose.
- Negative Comments (none)
  - No comments opposed to more activities / larger ‘gathering’ plaza idea to the northwest corner at Arena Façade. (Parades / Demonstrations, etc)

#### Additional ideas / notes from tabletop and discussions:

- Get better garbage cans with lids (Trash can style to contain overflows)
- Kinetic Sculpture
- More indigenous art
- Healing Gardens – see table-top note / Kiwanis club interest
- Reference: World Health Organization report “Green and Blue spaces and Mental Health”
- Utilizing nature-based solutions for public health challenges – specifically mental health and well-being.
- Kiwanis Club of Fargo – President Kara Kluvers is interested in partnership for “passive” space art & nature-based place within park.
- Looking for Indigenous Respect

#### Recommendation to reach out to:

West Acres Mall (Regional Showcase - West Acres Art and Performances - West Acres Mall)  
 FM Visual Arts Association (Fargo Moorhead Visual Artists | FMVA)  
 James Williams / Andy Maus, the CEO and Director at the Plains Art Museum

#### Additional:

Program of Indigenous Cultural Center (Dike West site adjacent) – connection to the “artist-in-resident” space idea at the FMCT pavilion  
 Connection to the Red River – important
 

- Community Garden

- Spiritual place to practice cultural rituals (Sweat Bath + Medicinal plants garden)
- Outreach / Administrative office support
- Elevated View platform – connecting to the river – see and be seen above the dike.

#### 4.

#### ***Historic Preservation and Interpretation:***

*Workshop Station Facilitated by Bryan Leininger, AGL Landscape Architects*

##### Summary of Input Received:

- Trees are the most important historic element of the park
- Clean historic arena wall
- Public art could be proposed on the arena wall to brighten the north façade
- Introduce native plants and shrubs to the park
- Recognize pre-white settlement history – Island Park was a sacred space to the native tribes
- The historic gazebo should not be moved
- Find a way to make the Scherling Complex / old pool grandstand useful
- The arena wall is a singular piece of history that carries little weight – many in the community don't even know what it is.
- Statues/sculpture/memorials and their placement could be re-worked to make them feel more prominent. Indifferent about them being kept within the park. Angel of Hope could stay.
- The civil war statue needs better access and trees to be removed.
- Keep to the pastoral style of landscape – retain space for simple passive rec. throughout the park



**5.**

Workshop Station Facilitated by Kene Okigbo,  
RDG Planning & Design

**Community Event Spaces:**

Summary of Input Received:

- Appreciation of food truck events
- 5 am runners with headlamps use the park
- Immigrant families use the park for group/family gatherings
- Picnic tables are heavily used.
- They are very mobile and that is an appreciated feature (flexibility)
- Connect with Mike Solberg from Bell Bank
- Request for a splash pad
- Request for ice skating - A nod to the historic skating
- Request for curling
- Winter programming will sometimes be cancelled due to weather – are there design considerations to mitigate that?
- Space for grilling food - Preference of food trucks over a permanent food/concessions option
- Reports that some citizens have been unable to reserve park space for large gatherings due to large liens/insurance needs
- Concerns with moving the pool too far south and closer to residential space
- Concerns with losing the green lawn on the southeast side of the park
- Appreciation for collaboration with FMCT and the inclusion of an amphitheater.





**6.**

**Additional Park Programming Opportunities:**

*Workshop Station Facilitated by Jake Axtman,  
AGL Landscape Architects*

**Summary of Input Received:**

- Consider additional lighting near the conifer tree grove near the YMCA. It sometimes feels unsafe in this location at night.
- The park is much safer than it used to be. There are some homeless people there, but they don't seem to bother anyone.
- Consider adding large chess board.
- Miss having baseball games and practices at Dill Hill. We should look to add more activity or vibrancy in this corner. It is underutilized now.
- The tree clearing closer to 4th Street is used more for spontaneous active uses, such as frisbee or flag football, than is Dill Hill.
- The lack of trail connection east to west is not a big deal.
- Consider exploring locations outside of Island Park for the pool.
- The historical statues are cool, but I don't know the history of them and really don't pay attention to them.



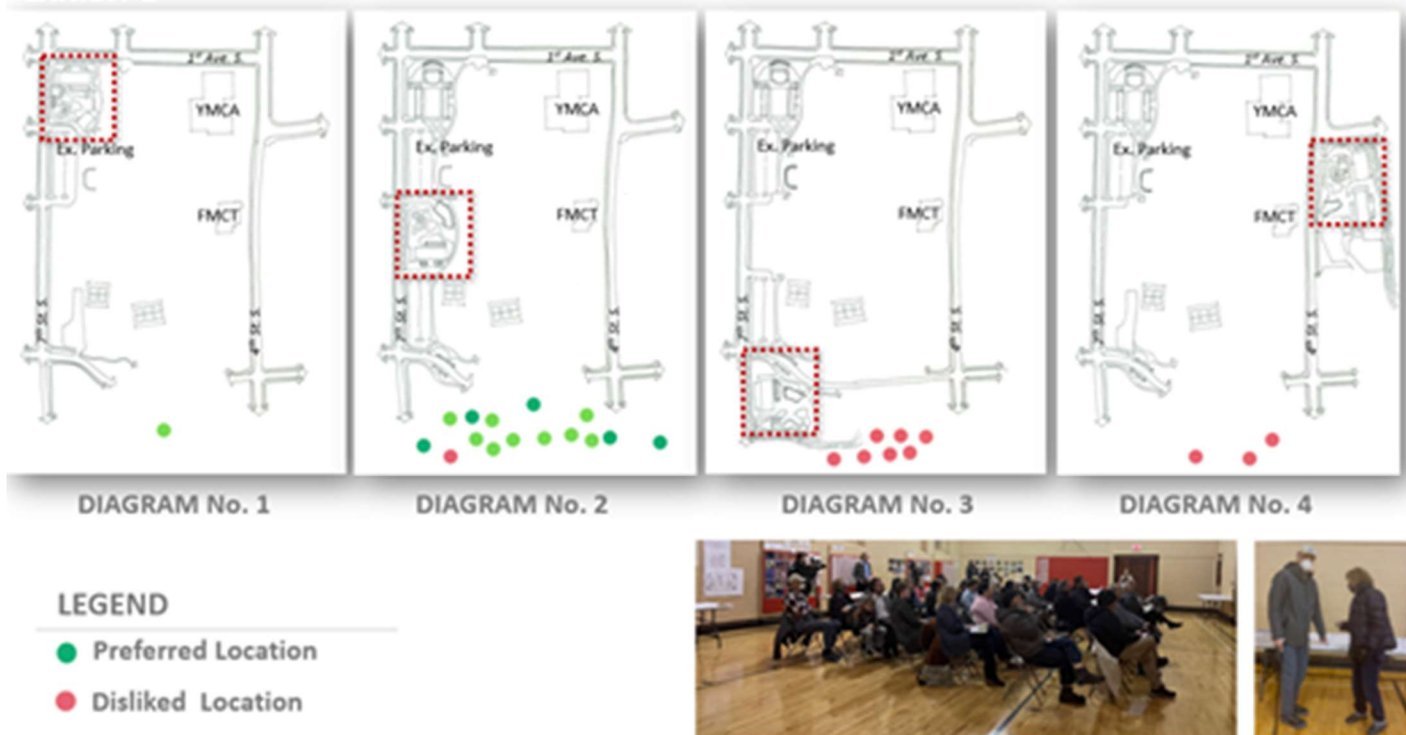


7.

***Island Park Pool Location Options:***

Workshop Station Facilitated by Mike Bell, RDG Planning & Design

**EXHIBIT 1**



Summary of Input Received:

**DIAGRAM No 1.: Locate in The Existing Location**

- Positive Comments
  - This is where the pool has been for the last 25 plus years. why move it?
  - The noise from the pool would be better off closer to downtown and away from the residents further to the south.
- Negative Comments
  - This site could be better used for something else

**DIAGRAM No 2.: Shift the Pool South Along 7th Street (Preferred Pool Location by Participants)**

- Positive Comments
  - More room for the pool
  - Better access to parking on the north and south of the facility.
  - The new parking could better serve the entire park.
  - The concessions and restrooms in this location is more centrally located within the park.
  - "I like the idea of moving the tall slides away from the intersection of 1st Avenue South and 7th Street South".



- The existing pool site could be better used for something else that relates more to downtown.
  - I like the idea of moving the slides away from the intersection.
  - I think the corner of 1st Avenue South and 7th Street South could be a really a cool place that provides more opportunity than a pool that isn't open more than three months a year.
  - Is there a way we could have a splash pad outside of the fence so it could be used for a longer season than the pool?
  - If the old WPA pool wall became something more like an amphitheater, the new pool locations would provide great access to parking, restrooms and concession access.
  - I really like the opportunity to create something special at the corner of 1st Avenue South and 7th Street South
- Negative Comments
    - Moving the pool south will create a noise issue with the surrounding residents
    - Be careful not to cut to many trees down.

#### **DIAGRAM No 3.: Shift the Pool South of 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.**

- Positive Comments
  - None Provided
- Negative Comments
  - I don't like the location
  - Not enough room for parking
  - Too close to the surround homes
  - This would take away the kids open space

#### **DIAGRAM No 4.: East Side Of 4th Street South**

- Positive Comments
  - Would it actually fit?
  - Interesting idea.
- Negative Comments
  - I am concerned the pool and slide footing would be impacted by the levee.
  - Aren't there underground utilities there?
  - It feels as if it is not part of the park
  - Too detached from the park

#### **End of Meeting Summary**