

**Meeting Subject:** UPD Staff Workshop

**Issue Date:** March 7, 2023      **Owner:** Urbana Park District

**Meeting Date/Time:** March 8, 2023 / 11:00 AM      **Project Name:** Weaver-Prairie Park Master Plan

**Meeting Location:** Microsoft Teams      **Project Number:** 0220988.00

**Reported By:** Debbi La Rue

**Present:** See attached Sign-In Sheet

On February 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, Farnsworth Group facilitated focus groups designed to discuss needs and opportunities at Weaver and Prairie Parks. The February 20<sup>th</sup> focus group concentrated on diamond and rectangular athletic field facilities, and the February 27<sup>th</sup> focus group participants represented general recreation interests. Five questions were used to facilitate conversation in both groups:

1. What do you like about Weaver Park, Prairie Park, Brookens Fields, and Canaday Park as they are now?
2. What concerns about the parks do you have as they are now? What would you like to change?
3. What activities, programs, or events do you like at other parks that you would like to see here?
4. What amenities or facilities are not currently offered, but should be?
5. Who or what groups of people are underserved in the park complex? How could the park district be more welcoming?



Individual responses and themes are provided below. Scans of original documents are provided in the project’s OneDrive folder.

ATHLETIC FIELDS	GENERAL RECREATION
<b>Q1: What do you like about Weaver Park, Prairie Park, Brookens Fields, and Canaday Park as they are now?</b>	
<p><b>Themes</b></p> <p>Athletic fields</p> <p>Natural amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Softball / baseball / grassy fields / cross country 😊</li> </ul>	<p><b>Themes</b></p> <p>Environmental features</p> <p>Community connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wetland and prairie great educational opportunity</li> <li>• Pollinators and water purifiers</li> <li>• Nature at its best! Best species diversity in the area</li> </ul>

ATHLETIC FIELDS	GENERAL RECREATION
<b>Q1 CONT'D: What do you like about Weaver Park, Prairie Park, Brookens Fields, and Canaday Park as they are now?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring community together (Brookens parking – good access)</li> <li>• Good location of Brookens fields</li> <li>• Visibility of running</li> <li>• Prairie Park – two fields at one location</li> <li>• Fourplex ideal (min.)</li> <li>• Open space / tents for people watching</li> <li>• Wetlands / trails / woodland</li> <li>• Soccer field north of baseball is awesome</li> <li>• Too many parks 😊</li> <li>• Lohman / cricket pitch</li> <li>• UPD responsiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humans and nature come together</li> <li>• Common and rare birds (need wetland)</li> <li>• So close and accessible +1</li> <li>• Connects to KRT and schools</li> <li>• Potential and ongoing restoration</li> <li>• Adjacent to underserved communities</li> <li>• No road on eastern edge</li> <li>• Walk and explore with kids</li> <li>• Berry picking for pies!</li> <li>• Activity kits</li> <li>• Great space to break / relax</li> <li>• Picnic tables, especially during Covid</li> <li>• Neighborhood nights!</li> <li>• Sledding!!</li> <li>• Cross country</li> <li>• Birds like hedgerow between parks</li> <li>• Good climbing trees between ball fields</li> <li>• Connectivity between parks</li> <li>• Located near school and underserved areas</li> </ul>
<b>Q2: What concerns about the parks do you have as they are now? What would you like to change?</b>	
<p><b>Themes</b>  <b>Parking</b>  <b>Field Conditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underutilized prairie space</li> <li>• Lack of parking (all agreed)</li> <li>• Traffic flow</li> <li>• Fields not always maintained (mow / marked)</li> <li>• Lack of restrooms and concessions</li> <li>• Potential park-school conflict</li> <li>• Uneven / unlevel fields (player injuries)</li> <li>• Want more cricket fields</li> </ul>	<p><b>Themes</b>  <b>Accessibility</b>  <b>Maintenance</b>  <b>Public education</b>  <b>Grass fields north of school</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2005 Master Plan not good (too many sport fields and parking)</li> <li>• More prairie plants / plan diversity</li> <li>• More active engagement with immigrant community (UPD)</li> <li>• More transportation options</li> <li>• More activities for kids</li> <li>• Focus on adults</li> <li>• Hard to access depending on weather and physical ability (MTD could assist)</li> <li>• Lack of sidewalks (Scottswood Neighborhood)</li> <li>• Trail / path along east property line</li> <li>• Access KRT</li> <li>• Poor lighting (east)</li> <li>• Sidewalks don't get cleared of snow</li> </ul>

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<b>Q2 CONT'D: What concerns about the parks do you have as they are now? What would you like to change?</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link / strong connection between Weaver and Prairie Parks</li> <li>• Do something with the mown turf area north of the school</li> <li>• Trails are sometimes not mown – confusing to navigate</li> <li>• Ticks and mosquitoes -&gt; public education (signage) about what to do</li> <li>• Add trees</li> <li>• Wasp stings (they nest in trees)</li> <li>• Grass fields north of school could become food forest, school curriculum, address food insecurity</li> </ul>
<b>Q3: What activities, programs, or events do you like at other parks that you would like to see here?</b>	
<p><b>Themes</b>  <b>Community connections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair / local businesses (doesn't have to be sports)</li> <li>• University of Illinois Partnership – local students stay and raise families</li> <li>• Community interact with students – part of the Urbana community</li> <li>• Draw surrounding community into Weaver Park with athletic fields</li> </ul>	<p><b>Themes</b>  <b>Public education</b>  <b>Multigenerational</b>  <b>Accessible – bilingual, trauma-informed, and cost reductions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health program / education at local park with fresh-picked foods             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fruit trees / plants – what do we do with them?</li> <li>○ What can we eat? How do we prepare it?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Education on-site</li> <li>• Multi-generational programs</li> <li>• Parent alternatives during youth events</li> <li>• Collaborative programs between communities and with the University</li> <li>• Bilingual or multilingual programming</li> <li>• Programs for teens and early 20's</li> <li>• Free or reduced programming for Link Card holders</li> <li>• De-stressing / trauma-informed programs</li> </ul>
<b>Q4: What amenities or facilities are not currently offered, but should be?</b>	
<p><b>Themes</b>  <b>Flexible facilities</b>  <b>Softball fourplex or sports megaplex</b>  <b>Indoor and outdoor facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dome / indoor facility</li> </ul>	<p><b>Themes</b>  <b>Edible plantings</b>  <b>Wayfinding and educational signage</b>  <b>Skatepark</b>  <b>Indoor and outdoor facilities</b>  <b>Pathways</b></p>

ATHLETIC FIELDS	GENERAL RECREATION
<b>Q4 CONT: What amenities or facilities are not currently offered, but should be?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fourplex, basketball, volleyball (year-round play)</li> <li>• Replace prairies with ball fields</li> <li>• Dedicated soccer sports facility behind school</li> <li>• More restrooms!</li> <li>• Trail around whole facility</li> <li>• Megaplex (soccer, basketball, baseball, cricket)</li> <li>• Splash park, challenge course (ninja warrior)</li> <li>• Cryuff courts (small game spaces)</li> <li>• Outdoor basketball and tennis courts – unfenced, regulation size, free</li> <li>• Configurable fields and spaces</li> <li>• Fix prairie baseball field</li> <li>• Baseball / softball adjustable fields with astroturf</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food forest / publicly accessible food (native species, e.g., Paw paw)</li> <li>• Wayfinding signage (between two parks)</li> <li>• Identify what can be taken to eat and what’s protected (signage – “take &amp; eat”)</li> <li>• Orchard</li> <li>• Fresh food to eat</li> <li>• Indoor track</li> <li>• Fruit trees on west side of Prairie Park to keep wasps away from school (proximity to parking lot and sidewalks)</li> <li>• Elderberry, raspberry (along edge in hedgerow)</li> <li>• Need trees around soccer fields (Brookens)</li> <li>• Ninja course for kids</li> <li>• Splash pad</li> <li>• Commandeer Lohmann Park (for skate park)</li> <li>• Interconnected trails to better link entire ‘superblock’</li> <li>• Wayfinding signage (between two parks)</li> <li>• Bicycle safety town</li> <li>• Drinking water</li> <li>• Outdoor track</li> <li>• Outdoor bathrooms</li> <li>• Playscape (natural combined with play) (Homer Lake)</li> <li>• Multi-generational facilities</li> <li>• Fitness stations with signage</li> <li>• QR codes</li> <li>• Skatepark at Canaday or Brookens (for kids in neighborhood, teenagers, or young adults)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Need about 8,000 – 18,000 SF</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Pump track around skate park</li> <li>• Indoor (Brookens gym)</li> <li>• Interpretive / educational signage for natural features</li> <li>• Indoor and outdoor playground</li> <li>• Outdoor basketball</li> </ul>
<b>Q5: Who or what groups of people are underserved in the park complex? How could the Park District be more welcoming?</b>	
<p><b>Themes</b>          Fees          Transportation / Access</p>	<p><b>Themes</b>          Amenities for older adults / those with physical limitations</p>

ATHLETIC FIELDS	GENERAL RECREATION
<b>Q5 CONT: Who or what groups of people are underserved in the park complex? How could the Park District be more welcoming?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't charge folks</li> <li>• Basketball courts do not exist outside gym – gym = \$1, that's still money</li> <li>• Beautification at Douglas, water park, outdoor courts, trails, redone baseball field more appealing to neighborhood               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Unifying</li> <li>○ More things accessible in the park</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Long way to get to anything if you don't have a ride</li> <li>• More focus groups – this is a great testament to the Park District's intention to serve larger community</li> <li>• People who pay / rent should have access when they do (but also, parks should be free)</li> <li>• Tournaments – okay to pay</li> <li>• After hours – facilities used for off-purposes – condoms/ needles found</li> <li>• Hire extra staff for cleaning</li> <li>• Ensure information is being delivered to all about meetings</li> <li>• Well lit / lighting directed away from homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indoor facilities</li> <li>Water fountains</li> <li>Multi-generational facilities</li> <li>Transportation and unsafe pedestrian pathways</li> <li>Representation in UPD staff</li> <li>Lack of active recreation</li> <li>Exercise stations</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents with children – need indoor activities for small kids – don't want to wait for bus with small kids</li> <li>• UPD needs to hire people of color on staff – <i>representation</i> within staff</li> <li>• Accessibility – people with physical limitations and how do people get help during a medical emergency? How do they explain where they are? (There's a forest preserve that has solved this.)</li> <li>• Trail markers – Meadowbrook art is a great marker for wayfinding (e.g., "I'm by the rabbit statue.")</li> <li>• Workout stations everywhere, like in Paris (mini-stations)</li> <li>• Outdoor exercise like in South Korea – body weight exercises – not super intensive</li> <li>• No water fountains – unsafe in heat</li> <li>• Latino men love playing soccer at Brooken on the weekend               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Local neighborhood kiddos don't play there or walk</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Crossing Washington St is dangerous at dark – multiple accidents outside of the school during school hours</li> <li>• There is no playground or active recreation</li> <li>• There is no indoor walking track</li> <li>• Elderly or older adults / people with physical disabilities (e.g., people who use wheelchairs) should be able to use some of the Weaver Park paths</li> <li>• Elderly parents / grandparents (no playground)</li> <li>• Primarily used by sports teams</li> <li>• Local African American community doesn't feel safe walking in this area, especially at night</li> <li>• Highschoolers</li> </ul>

ATHLETIC FIELDS	GENERAL RECREATION
<b>Q5 CONT: Who or what groups of people are underserved in the park complex? How could the Park District be more welcoming?</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Single-parent homes</li><li>• No transportation, not accessibility by bike / walk</li><li>• Benches to take breaks</li><li>• People of color live in local neighborhoods, but are not in the parks</li></ul>

**Distribution:** All Attendees  
FGI Team

**Attachments:**

*Sign-In Sheets*  
*Charts from sessions*