

April 17, 2024

To: Parks Board

Fr: Craig Spieziele, craigsp@agelight.com

Re: Ashwood Park Planning

Good evening, my name is Craig Spieziele. I'm here to discuss the future of Ashwood Park. My remarks stem from the April 3rd meeting and the park survey, aiming to offer constructive feedback to enhance the community engagement process.

It's crucial to grasp the initial sentiments expressed by the community. At the April meeting, over 70% of attendees, through the placement of "red dots," indicated a preference to maintain the park as it is and preserve its open green space. Attendees voiced confusion regarding the process, budget, and questioned the need to repurpose the park rather than keeping it as a flexible space for various community and neighborhood activities.

There are lingering concerns surrounding the proposed community center. Questions about height limitations, budget need for another levy, and the percentage of existing green space it would occupy remain unanswered. This context was not been provided at the meeting or in the survey. Without such information, one must approach any responses favoring a community center with caution. Regrettably, the survey seems to focus more on respondent demographics than on park usage patterns and preferences.

To realign this project on track, I would like to reiterate key questions previously submitted:

1. **Vision:** Is the park envisioned as a neighborhood park serving the downtown core and adjacent neighborhoods or serving the city at-large? How does its function compare to other parks in the area, and what needs does it address? How does affordable housing intersect with park priorities?
2. **Metrics:** What activities occur in the park today? What is the current usage pattern and hours of use? Who are the primary users?
3. **Parking and Transportation:** What transportation options are available to access the park? Can provisions be made promote walking and rolling to the park? Aside from handicap parking, can drop-off and pick-up zones be prioritized vs parking? What obligations does the city have regarding provide parking for KidsQuest?
4. **Scope:** What are the existing zoning regulations governing the park? What are the height restrictions and shadow implications? Are there any existing constraints affecting the park's use?
5. **Funding:** What is the budget for Ashwood Park, and how much has been spent to date? How will ongoing operational and maintenance costs be covered? If funds designated for Ashwood are not utilized, could they be redirected to projects such as Meydenbauer Park or the Grand Connection?
6. **Feature Tradeoff Options Cost:** To facilitate community understanding of priorities and trade-offs, I propose a workshop where attendees are provided with approximate costs for each proposed amenity or feature and then choose them within a defined budget. This approach has successfully been employed in Bellevue Essentials classes and optimize prioritization.

In conclusion, I believe that having this information will enable the community and the Board to make informed decisions that will positively shape Ashwood Park for future generations. I look forward to collaborating with all stakeholders towards these common goals and objectives.

Respectfully,

Craig Spiezele