

**Advisory Committee:**

Names highlighted below were in attendance at the second advisory committee meeting on August 18, 2022.

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On August 19, 2022, the second Advisory Meeting for the Kessler Park Master Planning Process was held. This meeting was held at the Northeast Library from 5:30 to 7:30. The meeting's purpose and agenda are below.

**Purpose:**

- Review progress on community engagement and analysis.
- Evaluate program and connectivity concepts for each main park node

## Agenda:

- Review Project Timeline
- Review Community Outreach Efforts
- Review Park Analysis
- Park Node Concepts
- BREAKOUT DIALOGUE ON CONCEPTS
- Group Report Out and Discussion
- Next Steps

## Meeting Notes

A link to the presentation can be found [here](#).

The following notes are from the breakout group dialogue on concepts and the report out.

### **Group 1: Area - Maple Park + Gate 1, Overlook and trail to Columbus Park.**

#### Concept 2:

- General approval/support for splash pads in Maple park.
- Concern over the types of courts would be installed; mainly if the courts would be for mainstream sports vs trendy (i.e soccer or basketball vs Squash).
- A connection between Maple park and Lexington Ave is deemed crucial for general accessibility and connectivity.
- Kessler Park and Maple park should locate mobility hubs near areas where foot track/activity is greatest. Suggested areas included: gate 1, at the entrance/exit of maple park, or the local shopping strip (near PH coffee).
- Gate 1 was noted as the preferred area for west-end Columbus park connections.
- The urban agricultural concept was the least favored. Factors included the idea of a third party managing the land and/or programs rather than it being local, infrastructure for water is lacking, and overall farming operations and maintenance would encroach on the environment of the park.

#### Concept 1: **Preferred Concept**

- Locations of the dog park, walking trails, native plantings, multi-use fields, picnic shelters, playground, and small splash pad were preferred over concept 2. The location for the mobility hubs would need to be revised.
- Park should be designed for all age groups; young and old (exercise equipment, various playgrounds for all age groups).
- The addition of nature loops and savannah restorations were highly favored (benefits of a nature loop could include more eyes on the park).

#### Columbus Park Connections:

- Improve pedestrian lighting and overall safety on the Cliff Drive trail.
- Gate 1 was noted as the preferred area for west end/ Columbus park connections.

Cliff Drive:

- Option 1: Pedestrian, jogging/scooter, and bike.
- Option 2: Pedestrian, bike, and rubber tram/trolley.
- Option 3: Pedestrian, bike, and weekend/first Friday drive.

The group favored option 2 overall. They liked the idea of having spaces dedicated to pedestrians for walking, jogging, and running, as well as an inclusive option (i.e disabled and/or immobile individuals where they can see and experience the park just like everyone else) such as the tram for visitors.

Themes: Accessibility, mobility, connectivity, sense of place, safety, and inclusivity of park visitors ranging (in various age groups and activity levels).

Other: A parking study was recommended for the site. Exactly how many cars can park on the street? Could a parking lot be added close by? How many cars could be parked in the parking lot?

## **Group 2: Area - Reservoir, Lake, and Gate 2**

Reservoir:

- The cable car would be very expensive
- Could we restrict access to the road that goes through the park? Maybe it closes from midnight to 5 am?
- Need ample direct access/parking close to amenities, accessible parking for an event
- Love the amphitheater, more direct parking access is needed
- Well-lit, safe parking
- Add light but limit light pollution
- Make the 1-way very clear (or don't do it, people probably won't observe the signs)
- More parking! More small parking areas along the drive
- Mitigate donuts
- Maybe the road doesn't continue all the way through the park?
- More clear, targeted programming grouped together is a good thing
- Signage at the entrance and throughout the park is really important, number the parking areas so people know there are more as they keep going into the park
- Overlay of where art can be, it could be changing, permanent, or community based
- More community-based art throughout the more natural areas, could do a residency like JoCo, should be next to a facility of some kind (like the nature center), would increase a sense of ownership in the park
- Angle parking along Wabash (create a bump into the park like other areas there)
- Signage for parking, "more parking ahead"
- Increase porous/pervious surfaces
  - Make the whole road through the park porous (possibly stone)

#### Lake:

- Parking is very necessary on Chestnut down by the lake - needs to be configured to allow better access/movement for getting in/out of the parking lot rather than just pulling into spots
- Jack has 18 holes for disc golf designed east of Chestnut too
- Look at connections and walking on the N side of Chestnut over by the railroad
- The historic bridge (on Lexington) has stairs that could connect down to Chestnut (with a lot of improvement)
- There are more trails North of the lake
- Original Wildlands site is located East of Chestnut with old growth forest mostly cleared out, dumping has increased
- Unhoused have moved more west towards City Market
- Removing honeysuckle would solve a lot of problems (improve safety, retain vegetation, etc.)
- Connect to the lake in more ways, have a more clear flow of people
- The boardwalk idea is super cool - both boardwalk and some that go out into the lake for fishing
- Think about the entry to Chestnut
- There's no sightline to the parking, it's not by any programming, could be a target

Decision: Concept 1 for the Reservoir is preferred with the following suggestions/modifications:

- Maintain the architecture and history of the park
- Keep aspects of the reservoir intact, especially the art
- The KCDC presentation scheme fits this scale
  - Has local draw, ice skating, year-round programming
  - Maybe ice-skating could go to the Concourse?
- Walkable tower, something to get people up high/that they can climb in the reservoir
- LIGHTING!
- Dog park there would be very muddy, maybe move it further east, possibly south of the reservoir
- Could have a bridge at the west entry and embrace the water in that part of the park
- Signage, sightlines, sidewalks
- More ways into the park, connect people at more places
- WAYFINDING
- More restrooms by the amphitheater
- Playground+sports should be more clustered and further to the west on top of the hill by the road/overlook
- There needs to be another set of restrooms further west

- Maybe a nice structure with a portapotty inside? There are parks in Johnson County that have real bathrooms in the summer and close/transition to portapotty in the winter
- The cable car (in scheme 2) is fine if there's a way to pay for it/it seems like a lot of earth moving to locate it there

Decision: Concept 2 for the Lake is preferred with the following suggestions/modifications:

- The visitor center belongs by the lake!
- Stairs down from Lexington
- There is an opportunity to have more nature play down by the lake, possibly artist commissioned
- Add a mobility hub by the lake
- More access points to the trail that goes down the hill
- No parking lot up by Lexington, it's too big, might cause runoff into the lake, and doesn't have any sightlines

### **Group 3: Area - Concourse, KC Museum and Gate 3**

#### KC Museum

- This area would be a very difficult place to build a structure (hotel or otherwise) due to strong neighborhood opinions about maintaining status quo and low traffic flow, no matter how closely the design fits within the community. There is not local appetite for highly public uses in this area. The open space here is used and enjoyed by the community the way that it is. The "meadow" is a quiet reflective space with a beautiful view. The whole hill is used for sledding in the winter by all ages.
- The accessible path with stopping points to enjoy art, benches, and tables felt appropriate to the group. The Monet garden in Overland Park's Arboretum and Botanical Garden was referenced as a good example. The Laumeier sculpture park in St. Louis sculpture park was also referenced for interactivity and placement in nature. Other feedback on conservation in the park included support for the whole park being an arboretum or botanical garden. (other examples shared include: Untermyer Gardens, and City Garden sculpture park)

#### Concourse:

- This would be a better place for a hotel since it already has so many public uses and is well-populated by many visitors. Start with treetop cabins and phasing for hotel. Move parking behind the building would be more pleasing.
- Perhaps a dog park could be the first phase of activating this corner until a more permanent building project is funded and designed. Or food truck space? FLEXSPACE during first phases.
- Include parking for the playground area.
- The bridge is a problem spot - include safety/CPTED features/lighting/cameras.
- The fountain should be converted to a safe space for all ages to play and cool off. (phase 1)

- Include pedestrian mall and close Gladstone to vehicular traffic to increase safety for pedestrian use and family access to playgrounds on hillside (phase 1) - perhaps available for food trucks
- Include cafe and shaded area to sit next to cooling plaza and playground
- Hire local people to work in cafe, hotel, and manage park - work with schools
- Could there be staff housing in the Park?
- Love the added features of treetop play and cable car! Connecting nature, views, play. These should be free to use (at least on certain days of the month) by residents of surrounding neighborhoods.
- There should be a welcome station at the end of Gladstone where it becomes a pedestrian plaza with great signage - "You are here" and a map of places to go that are color coded so colored trail markers can be placed throughout the park for consistency and wayfinding.
- The Concourse could be the base of operations for Kessler Park - staff buildings and welcome center
- Include sign on highways to exit for Kessler park and major road signs.
- Other examples referenced include [The Gathering Place](#) and the [Omaha Zoo Alaskan Adventure splash park](#)

#### Cliff Drive:

- Prefer pedestrian and bike only
- Trolley could be good as well since it would increase accessibility and monitoring of the park since the driver would be a constant presence watching and reporting on activity along Cliff Drive

#### Other topics in the area:

- Scarritt Elementary School is for sale (KCPS) - hoping to attract proposals for rehab (Senior Housing?, Park Staff housing?Daycare?) It is a few blocks from the park and could provide a location for a paid parking lot and shuttle as the activities increase.
- Put the EPA consent decree to work on conservation in the park
- Increase parks staff here
- Bring KCPD and Parks together to agree on responsibilities

### **Group 4: Area - Gate 4, Gladstone, Trails, Indian Mound, NE Athletic Fields**

Concerns about wheelchair and stroller access along Kessler access – few curb cuts, and need a new ramp to connect to the trail

#### Connectivity and Traffic on Gladstone Discussion

- Need direct connection to Budd Park – and this team should collaborate with Draw Architects who are doing their planning
- Askew problematic crossing (two road crossings)
- 9<sup>th</sup> and Van Bunt
- Several key places for people turning donuts – are there traffic and road features that could prevent that? Noticed that the new bike lane on Lawrence has stopped the 3-abreast passing and some donut spots

- Scarritt Neighborhood association (homeowners, not the renters who dominate in numbers) has objected to bike lanes, but they are on the 5-year bike/ped plan
- Lots of this bike lane conversation was about how bump-outs or road features could make the roads safer
- Question: can you explain the boulevard limitations on changing # lanes?

#### Indian Mound

- People like access to the Mound – can you use a pathway and benches to encourage appropriate uses and discourage driving or 4-wheeling – large boulders?
- The sidewalk between Indian mound and Gladstone hill is severely degraded
  - o Need to decide on the arrangement of biking and peds
  - o Figure out multi-use pathways
- The bike, as imagined in the mobility hub, can't be placed in that corner – the mobility hub needs to move west
- Overlook is too tempting for mischief, too hard to maintain, and too blocked in visibility (no sightlines to keep eyes on it) – could be a future phase
- Cliff Drive – use trail and signage to unite bike path and inspire connectivity
- Group LIKES option 1, doesn't mind the figure 8, open/picnic space should be maintained
- Access to the top of the pathway – bridge over the center with a photo op?
- Question: Can you rent wheelchairs?

#### Athletic Fields

- Grave concern about both options. Understand we need partners, but there are too many badly maintained fields and abandoned urban park sites
- Liked BarKC as a partner possibility
- Liked dirt bikes and four-wheeler playground

#### Other thoughts?

- Narrow the fairways and create more obstacles on disc golf
- Maintain volleyball in maple park! - demand is huge
- No one neighborhood should be deciding wider community benefits

#### Cliff Drive Options

- Option 2 with some concerns about the divider, interest in the trolley

#### **Notes marked on concept maps**

- Maple Park Option 1: Arrow drawn near the mobility hub station indicating that it be located near Lexington Ave. Note along Maple Blvd curve: "Potentially Close"
- Maple Park Option 2: Drawn bump-outs for off-street parking along Lexington Ave, adjacent to sports courts. A small number of bump-outs for off-street parking were drawn along the north end of Maple park, at the intersection of The Paseo and Lexington Ave.

Parking along the northern access would be adjacent to the proposed walk path within the park. The proposed splash park and playground on the north side of the park were recommended to be moved closer to the sports courts on the south end. Savannah restoration was recommended to incorporate a loop.

- Lake Option 2: Do away with the parking lot proposed along Lexington Ave. Note written "Savannah Restoration" and parking lot Xed out.
- Reservoir Option 1: Parking lot near N Garfield dr and St John Ave. Addition of Restroom and fountain near proposed Amphitheater (west side). Addition of pump out for street parking along Wabash Ave from Pendleton Ave to St John Ave. Move playground closer to sports courts.
- Reservoir Option 2: Addition of Gates near the entrance and exit of the Reservoir street layout. One gate at the intersection of E Lookout Point DR, Wabash Ave, and St John Ave. Second gate at Pendleton Ave and Wabash Ave. Cable is expected to be costly. Improve access and connection from Lexington Ave to North Terrace Lake. Follow contour lines to build a path.
- Concourse Park Option 1: Arrows were drawn on the map indicating that the proposed hotel on the southwest end of the Concourse park, along Lexington Ave and Bellefontaine Ave, be moved up, to face closer along the street. The parking lot would then be located behind the hotel instead of the front. A proposition indicated by the participants was to move the parking underground; either directly under the hotel or adjacent to it. Participants proposed phasing the construction of the hotel and parking lot by first having a savannah or woodland restoration around the perimeter and/or a dog park on the land as an early phase while the hotel is being planned.
- KC Museum Area Option 1: The sledding area on the hill across the street from the KC museum should be preserved and not obstructed by the half-mile accessible loop.

## **Report out notes**

### **Group 1: Area - Maple Park + Gate 1, Overlook and trail to Columbus Park**

Add mobility stations near Independence. Enhance Maple Park to respond to Riverview Gardens residents. This is a local park for residents, not a regional draw. There is only street parking available. Courts and restrooms should be near fields. Urban Agriculture does not seem appropriate for this site unless the nearby neighbors have stated the need. Like the idea of a dog park - it is needed in the area. Cliff Dr: Open to Trolley and should also have a stop at the KC Museum. Access for all. Potential revenue stream.

### **Group 2: Area - Reservoir, Lake and Gate 2**

Reservoir Option 1: Increase parking, but not located parallel to Lexington Ave (permeable, visibility, CPTED). Add restrooms, access to water, and lighting (but not too much to pollute). Increase accessibility to the lake, and add more parking closer to amenities through the park. Favored the KCDC concept: Preservation. The Cable car idea is innovative but, overall costs are worrying. Lake: Parking on Chestnut (this is what people see - coming from outside), welcome center and nature center, stairs, trails, signage, art throughout the area, and respect topography.

### **Group 3: Area - Concourse, KC Museum, and Gate 3**

Concourse: combo of both concepts: close Gladstone as a pedestrian mall to create better connectivity, and safety (phase 1) , make the water feature a safe pool space. SW corner: could be the central welcome center for Kessler Park, nature center, and parking. Like the idea of a hotel here, but also explore other uses. KC Museum Option 1: Maintain open space and view, area is already used a lot; Like the idea of an accessible trail with interactive art garden, picnic tables and benches, and cable car. Signage should be at the central welcome center (Concourse), and coded signage/trail markers throughout the park to let you know where you are and how to get to the next place.

### **Group 4: Area - Gate 4, Gladstone, Trails, Indian Mound, NE Athletic Fields**

Gate 4 to Indian Mound: Needs better accessibility and consistency of materials, picnic table, trash receptacles, lighting and signage. Add mobility hubs at Gate 4 and Indian Mound. Option 1: Savannah restoration, preserve picnic. Option 2: Overlook- Move for more visibility or build in a later phase once the area is visited by more people and safer. Traffic safety hotspots on Askew and Van Brunt. Connect to Budd Park.

NE Athletic field: Access is tricky - Market would be hard, there are fields at 9th and Van Brunt (poor condition). Need to maintain what we already have before building something new. Recommended testing spaces so as not to displace other uses, solar fields, dirt bike track, and/or pump track.

Cliff Drive: The trolley provides the best means of access around the park. The trolley could be partnered with a hotel as the main operator and/or with a sponsor for trolley operations.

### **SYNTHESIS OF CONVERSATION FOR FULL PARK**

- The group appreciated the idea that Cliff Drive could have a dedicated trolley and driver to both expand access to this corridor and have more eyes on the space to manage it and keep it clean. The trolley could potentially be operated by a sponsor organization.
- Interest in strategically placed mobility hubs where foot traffic is already high.

- Interest in centralizing regional attractions and a welcome/educational center.
- Carefully integrate accessible parking for each area to manage influx in use without burdening proximate residents.
- The group was unsure whether the NE Athletic Fields should be considered part of Kessler Park.
- Create a clear and consistent signage/wayfinding system for highway, main roads, and throughout park with a central sign and coded markers throughout the park.
- Each group focused on increasing safety and equitable access to park areas. (especially for nearby residents to enjoy any new amenities free-of-charge)
- The big ideas for a cable car, treetop play, hotel and cabins, and art park were well-received, but the group agreed that identifying near term projects are very important to make sure that the longer term projects are successful once the partnerships and funding are ready to move forward.
- Near term moves suggested focused on safety, pedestrian connectivity, and natural resource conservation so that more can appreciate this beautiful park. Several have suggested that Kessler Park should be KC's botanical garden or arboretum.

## **NEXT STEPS**

- Multi-lingual focus groups, 8/28 @ St. Anthony's Parish, 8/31@ NE Library, 9/7 @ Riverview Gardens
- Refined concepts for Community Open House
- **Community Open House, September 24th @ The Kansas City Museum 11am-3pm (Education Room, 2nd floor) - flyers and social media coming soon!**
- Final Advisory Committee Meeting, Thursday October 27, 5:30p location to be determined