



## CITY OF SAINT PAUL

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## Follow up to Victoria Park Design Charette

### Summary:

On January 22, 2013, a Design Charette was held from 6:00 to 9:00 PM at the Nova Charter School with members of the Victoria Park Design Advisory Committee. Committee members were divided into five separate groups and each group received a Victoria Park base map along with activity cutouts drawn to match the scale of the base maps. The charge for each of the groups was to develop their own separate park plan using the supplied cutouts; moving them around and adding and subtracting “activities” on the base maps. At the completion of this exercise, each group pinned up their respective plans and discussed the merits of each plan. As they left for the evening, all participants were asked to initial the plan they were most in favor of; however, due to the late time, not every one present selected a preferred plan.

Our hope is that this exercise has helped the Committee members understand the size of the Victoria Park site, and begin to develop consensus on which potential activities the site can support; as well as where they feel the best spots in the park are to locate those activities. With this information, the design team will be able to develop alternative concepts for further discussion and input.

### Design Advisory Committee Charge:

With this in mind, it is important to hear from each task member which of the five plans developed at the charette they tend to favor and why. Please take a fresh look at all five plans and let us know which plan (or combination of plans) you prefer. Staff has reviewed each plan and listed pro and cons from design professional perspective; attempting to be as objective as possible. Please submit your comments by Monday, February 25, 2013. Results reflecting Committee input will be compiled and distributed prior to the next meeting on March 19, 2013.

### Plan #1 Features

- *North Side* : 2 tennis courts proposed on Nova Property, one multi-purpose field across the street from Nova for hurling, rugby and soccer, additional parking, pond also used for skating, separate picnic tables and an amphitheater overlooking wetland. Boardwalks shown on wetland, ½ acre of community garden plots, restrooms, picnic shelter, play equipment including splash pad, tot lot, wading pool and swings.
- *South Side* : Flexible open space approximate size of 2 hurling fields (not striped), 3 orchard areas shown, amphitheater overlooking trail access down to river,



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additional parking, restroom and shelter building on this side as well, sliding hill (not clear if mound or some other landform).

**Pros:**

- Least disturbance to neighbors if field lighted
- Striped multi-purpose field highly accessible to Nova
- Amphitheater and individual picnic tables overlooking wetland offer excellent view potential
- Boardwalks in wetland offer nice potential to access wetlands
- Pond size could provide hockey or general skating
- Play area, splash pad/pool, restrooms and picnic shelter in close proximity making water/sewer access less costly.
- Restrooms on both sides good idea
- Community gardens at north side have access to water and close access to parking and Mississippi Market
- The (2) "Hurling size" flexible open spaces, allow the greatest opportunity for informal, but more active recreation like Frisbee, kite flying, kickball, etc.
- The second amphitheater location near access to the river, may allow for gatherings for river related study, birding, classes, etc.
- Orchard location near site access and trails may offer better protection from vandals and ease of maintenance

**Cons:**

- 3 orchard areas at .75 acre total exceeds perceived need for site
- ½ acre of community garden plots exceeds perceived need for site
- Location of gardens so close to main access to park may have maintenance issues/concerns if gardens not kept up
- Sliding hill so close to bluff may not be possible
- Two picnic shelters exceeds perceived need for site

**Plan #2 Features**

- *North Side:* Multi-purpose field (striped for hurling, rugby, and soccer) located adjacent to Adrian Street. Splash pad (and wading pool?), swings, restrooms located adjacent to new Thurston Way, pond and hockey adjacent to wetland, no play area. Boardwalk in wetland.
- *South Side:* Has picnic pavilion, restrooms and orchard/wildflower garden located at east end of site. No other uses indicated on south side.

**Pros:**

- Good field access and minimal neighborhood disturbance if field is lit.
- Wetland boardwalk allows access into wetland
- Pond location closer to wetland frees up larger open space
- Restrooms and play features close to Thurston Way and existing parking result in good neighborhood accessibility
- Picnic shelter and restrooms near river access provides better opportunities for use of river related open space

**Cons:**

- Unclear what plan is proposing for south side as appears to be underutilized.

**Plan #3 Features**

- *North Side:* Restrooms, picnic shelter, wading pool and splash pad located next to Thurston Way across from Nova School. Pond is located at entrance corner of

Adrian and Thurston, water feature indicated at center of the park and picnic tables shown adjacent to RR property. No field or active area indicated on this side.

- *South Side:* (2) picnic shelters and (2) restrooms – one on either side of site. Play area and bread oven on west side and play area and swings on east side. One multi-purpose striped field for hurling, rugby and soccer. Second informal flat area for kite flying, pick up games, etc. Canoe-kayak storage beneath Shepard Road Bridge.

***Pros:***

- Large open un-programmed space on north side
- One picnic shelter and restroom located on east side has easy access to water/sewer and parking
- One multi-purpose striped field and additional area for informal lawn space on south side

***Cons:***

- North side has activities lined up close to Thurston Way which does not take advantage of large open space
- Too many shelters and restrooms – (3) of each exceeds perceived need for site
- (2) play areas shown – exceeds perceived need for site
- Use of north side of tracks is limited

**Plan #4 Features:**

- *North Side:* Utilizes some Nova property for tennis court(s). Has ½ acre devoted to orchard and community gardens and a picnic shelter and an amphitheater are shown near the wetland.
- *South Side:* One striped multi-purpose field and additional flat (unstriped) space, with a “meditation” labyrinth and restrooms on the west side. A funicular access to the river bottom, and canoe/kayak storage are shown near the east end of the site.

***Pros:***

- Amphitheater location near wetland takes advantage of views and quiet
- One striped field for multi-purpose athletics located close to east access road and the proposed restroom
- Tennis court(s) on school property may provide for joint funding/use
- One unstructured flat grass area for informal play
- A working funicular could provide easy accessibility to the river

***Cons:***

- Limited use shown on North side
- No children’s activities such as play area, splash pad etc. are shown
- Community garden at major site entry not always visually attractive if not maintained
- Funicular requires high maintenance, security and protection from vandals as a result of its location and lack of visibility; therefore, at this particular location, City approval is not likely.

**Plan #5 Features:**

- *North Side:* One acre of community gardens/orchard space located adjacent to Adrian Street along with parking and an amphitheater. One striped multi-purpose field shown adjacent to Thurston along with restroom and a play area. One tennis court proposed on Nova property.
- *South Side:* Viewing mound shown on west side of site. East side indicates restrooms and two picnic shelters.

***Pros:***

- Additional parking lot on North side to access adjacent community gardens
- Proximity of amphitheater to gardens may offer teaching opportunities
- Multi-purpose field in close proximity to Nova school
- Adjacent restrooms and play area (to field) provides good accommodations for families watching games
- Viewing mound on south side provides potential sliding hill and nice elevated site views
- Additional restroom on south side provides enhanced opportunities to utilize this area of the park
- Both shelter locations potentially could provide nice views towards river and good access to riverfront trail system and canoe/kayak route on the river

***Cons:***

- No activities are shown on largest flat open area within Victoria Park
- Limited activity on south side of tracks results in few “eyes on the park” and can enhance feeling of isolation, lack of security and resulting use of bluff areas by homeless population