

Rancho Palos Verdes

Lower Hesse and Grandview Park – Concept Plans

Workshop #2 (July 17, 2010) Summary

Overview:

Workshop #2 was held on July 17th at the Fred Hesse Jr. Community Center. The Workshop was broken into two sessions; a morning session to review design process on Lower Hesse Park, and an afternoon session to review design process on Grandview Park. In attendance were approximately 60 Rancho Palos Verdes residents, Park Design Consultant staff including Project Manager Michelle Sullivan, Councilman Brian Campbell, and city staff: City Manager Carolyn Lehr, Deputy City Manager Carolynn Petru, Recreation and Parks Director/Public Works Deputy Director Tom Odom, Maintenance Superintendent Emilio Blanco, Senior Engineer Nicole Jules, Administrative Analyst Katie Howe, and Recreation Program Supervisor Nancie Silver. Each park workshop began with the design consultant and city staff sharing information and history on the two park sites. Councilman Campbell, Project Manager Sullivan, City Manager Lehr, and Recreation and Parks Director Odom gave an introduction emphasizing the importance of public input in the design process, creating opportunities for recreation for the residents, and the achievement of a balance of recreational opportunities for Rancho Palos Verdes residents.

Following the presentation, the participants were broken into three subgroups that rotated between presentations on park programs, park circulation, and park character. The following is a summary of what was presented and attendee comments received. For each workshop, approximately thirty participants were in attendance, most of whom were residents from the neighborhoods directly adjacent to the parks. Valuable input was received.

LOWER HESSE

PROGRAMS

Each group session reviewed the following:

- The program outreach performed by city staff
- A summary of what was heard at Workshop #1
- The programs included in current conceptual plans
 - Tennis Courts (3)
 - Basketball Court (1)
 - Restroom / Storage
 - Parking (30 cars)
 - Flexible Lawn Area
 - Dog Park
 - Additional Picnic Areas
 - Additional Trails
 - Viewing Nodes
 - Exercise Circuit

- Program Imagery
- Two program space diagrams showing relationships of programs to each other
- Two options with program layouts on the site
- Site line studies from Upper Hesse to Lower Hesse and from the adjacent neighbors into the park
- Precedent study on dog parks

PUBLIC INPUT

Most workshop attendees live in neighborhoods directly adjacent to the park and stated that they do not want a dog park program in Lower Hesse. At the suggestion to set aside dog park discussions from the park plans, there was greater attendee participation. If it is necessary to include active recreation programs (tennis and basketball courts), attendees would prefer them to be integrated into the site in the least impactful and least visible way possible. There were also comments regarding the inclusion of the additional softball field overlay at the multipurpose field located at Upper Hesse currently under study by city staff; workshop participants would like to retain the existing walking path that rings the current field. Some commented regarding the outreach by the city staff and the concern that it did not reach enough of the population to reflect the wants and needs of the community.

The following are comments shared by Workshop attendees:

General

- The neighboring park users are concerned about development of the park and prefer the activities to be more passive
- Lower Hesse is not a park in its current state
- Lower Hesse is enjoyed by people who walk in it
- Some active uses and other elements might be fine but need to be controlled
- Preference for park not to include additional active uses
- Parks need to consider recreation for the future and for children. Recreational activities are important.
- Is there an option for residents to design the park?
- Site lines are important to the adjacent residents
- Will there be a park tax?
- City staff/consultant should establish programming before determining traffic or character elements of park
- Program was preplanned. I was in attendance at Workshop #1; they are not listening to our input.
- Like that sand volleyball program was removed and could be substituted by putting volleyball nets up on the flex lawn
- Want to ensure that people using the park cannot see into neighboring homes, while these same residents are able to see into the park and/or the ocean.

Program Selection

- Q: Why can't city rely on school district for active recreation rather than placing it in Lower Hesse? An: The school district supports the entire Peninsula, and school activities take priority. For this reason, the facilities are often not available to the general public. Adding active recreation to Lower Hesse will create more recreational opportunities for youth and Rancho Palos Verdes residents.
- Q: Is the design consultant's program at the direction of city staff? An: Yes
- Program outreach performed by city staff is invalid; residents were not asked what they DID NOT want in the park.
- Provide a bigger outreach program, such as a mailer to each resident
- Supportive of youth recreation, with a focus on skate parks; with the 18 acres at Lower Hesse, one acre could be devoted to a skate park.
- Participants were supportive of the inclusion of a discovery garden program

Other programs to be considered

- Activities for seniors, like Bocce Ball
- A new and different kind of play area, perhaps with no lawn
- Inclusion of a nature center or shuffle board court
- Sustainability "stations" to teach about sustainability

Park Users

- What volume of people will use park?
- Currently, large groups come into Upper Hesse Park from other areas
- Concern with outsiders from other cities using the park. Neighboring cities have parks as well.
- Those closest to the park and who are impacted should have more weight in the design process.

Tennis/Basketball Courts

- Place basketball and tennis courts adjacent to the Locklenna Lane end of the park, set back from the street, and worked into the grading to conceal them.
- Place the tennis courts into slopes to integrate them into the park and to make them less impactful to the park and neighborhood
- Place courts in the center of Lower Hesse
- Unlighted courts will get less use than will lighted courts
- Limit tennis courts to 2 courts
- Court sports are a lot of hardscape and will provide little capacity for the community
- Prefer no tennis
- Tennis courts should be lighted; otherwise they will be underutilized.

Flex Lawn

- Inclusion of flexible lawn will allow additional area for unstructured play within the park, especially if the Upper Hesse field is being utilized by another group.

Dog Park

- Many workshop attendees were immediate neighbors of the park, and expressed adamantly that they do not want a dog park.
- An attendee expressed a desire for the inclusion of a dog park
- One attendee mentioned that his home abuts Hesse Park, and he is concerned with the compatibility of this program in close proximity to his property. His concerns were noise, smell, worn down appearance, and the impact to his property values.
- Will placing a dog park on the former Palos Verdes Landfill site alleviate the need for a dog park at Lower Hesse?
- One attendee pledged to give \$1,000 in support of moving the dog park program to the former land fill site in lieu of having it located within Lower Hesse Park.
- Additional dog park comments as follows:
 - Next to homes is a problem – noise and smell
 - No one from Rancho Palos Verdes wants a dog park
 - Is the Annenberg site an option for dog park?
 - Dog park should be placed at City Hall
 - There is a need for dog park on the Peninsula, but not in Lower Hesse.
 - Dog park will negatively impact overall park maintenance.

Restrooms

- Q: Will the restrooms be locked when the park is closed? An: Yes.

CIRCULATION

For the Circulation Break-out sessions the following items were reviewed:

- Circulation Context Maps
- Localized Circulation Diagrams
- A traffic study is being generated by the city which will address many of the comments below

PUBLIC INPUT

There were many questions regarding traffic management, including arrival to the park, access points, and visibility. There also were many parking related questions. Participants would like to minimize the parking, but not to the point that park visitors are parking on the street and displacing residential parking.

The following are comments shared by Workshop attendees:

Traffic Generation

- If park stays the same as it is today, there are existing traffic safety issues that need to be addressed.
- Q: How many people will the park enhancements bring in? An. Completion of traffic report will assist in answering this question.
- Intense active uses will bring in traffic. The current park uses are not generating a lot of traffic.
- Park visitors from other cities will come to the park
 - There is no need to support cars from outside the neighborhood
 - Bringing people from outside of area will increase traffic
 - Parks in other cities exist; people tend to use parks closer to them
- Palos Verdes Estates has no active parks
- Concern about intense traffic resulting from adding recreation to the park
- Concern about traffic resulting from dog park inclusion
- Dog park will create traffic problems at Locklenna and Hawthorne
- Traffic study should be done prior to finalizing concept plans

Intersections and Speed

- Q: How do you determine need for stop signs vs. light? An: By preparing a traffic study
- Locklenna/Hawthorne intersection is dangerous. Can a light be added?
- Will a light at Verde Ridge and Hawthorne increase traffic on Verde Ridge to Lower Hesse?
- Can a traffic signal be added at park entrance?
- Bring traffic in at one point and out at another, rather than two way egress.
- Too many left turns necessary
- Berm @ Hawthorne hinders visibility
- Topography at Locklenna & Hawthorne hinders visibility
- Traffic on streets adjacent to park requires traffic calming measures
- Locklenna speed and visibility is a problem. Perhaps right turn only. Come around to future light at Verde Ridge.
- Blind curve at Locklenna Lane requires traffic calming
- Install speed bumps on Locklenna Lane
- Fog causes traffic problems
- People don't know how to navigate the area and get lost

Parking

- Traffic backs up when parking lot does not open early
- Not adding additional parking will hurt residents and will put pressure on street parking
- Split up parking; break parking lots into 2-3 smaller areas
- Add 30 parking spaces at Upper Hesse parking lot
- Upper Hesse parking lot full on weekends
- Parking is an issue during soccer games; people park on the street.

- Distance and grade change make it difficult to see Lower Hesse parking lot
- People are not complaining about parking
- Eliminate parking along the downhill section of Locklenna, because of poor car sight lines
- Parking on cul-de-sacs a problem. Permit parking for residents is a solution.
- Street parking is currently a problem
- Free permit parking is a good idea; every house should get certain # of spaces.
- Extend permit parking east
- Prefer parking lot on the eastside of the park along Locklenna
- Do not lose vegetation when creating parking lot
- Use permeable paving in parking lot
- Do not create visual blight
- Screen neighbors from parking lot

Trails

- A high school aged student mentioned that he was very supportive of the trail expansion to allow for cross country courses, and liked the trail that connects Upper Hesse to Lower Hesse Park.
- A participant stated that the park is great the way it is; don't change it.
- Retain existing trails, and add new trails.
- Create a place where kids can ride bikes, and where it's safe for kids to learn to ride bikes.
- Lower Hesse is enjoyed by people who walk in it
- Youth need places to play - active recreation areas are needed
- Require decomposed granite paths for joggers
- Q: Will some paths accommodate wheelchairs? An: Yes
- Trails currently labeled ADA accessible, are not accessible.
- Improve trails, and do not add structures.
- Q: Is there a need for switchback trail? An: It is proposed in one option to allow for better trail connectivity between Upper and Lower Hesse Park.
- Like the "wilderness" feel of existing trails at Lower Hesse
- No good solutions shown; the trails are best as they currently exist.

CHARACTER

During the Character Break-out Sessions the following information was reviewed:

- Character Imagery to explain the site amenities, materials, and finishes for the park
- Park Character existing in Rancho Palos Verdes parks

The following are comments shared by Workshop attendees:

PUBLIC INPUT

The general input is for the park to retain a natural appearance, with natural, drought resistant plantings. The neighbors want screening to mitigate the proposed sport courts. They want to improve on the fencing between the Park and Verde Ridge residences. The workshop attendees also expressed that they want park maintenance to be environmentally responsible, sustainable, and maintainable at a minimal cost. They want to retain views into Lower Hesse Park and to the ocean. Some attendees expressed that they prefer no change at all.

General

- Prefer natural character
- Education and nature would be a focus for the park
- Include signage about native planting and wildlife
- Screen views of basketball and tennis courts
- Like the park to walk
- Take safety precautions at bathrooms.
- Like the idea of the staff outpost for security reasons
- Spend 2 days/week for maintenance
- Address the Rancho Palos Verdes issues of traffic, dogs, and views.
- Retain wildlife in park
- Raccoons a concern
- Enforce city ordinance regarding feeding stray cats.
- Create buffers considering fire safety, view corridors, and privacy.
- Privacy is a problem for some homes that can be viewed from outer trail.
- Clarify enhancement vs. modification

Site Amenities

- Fencing between adjacent residential lots and park is falling apart.
- Build fencing that would allow residents to access park from their backyards.
- Low profile character wood fence
- Include shaded picnic areas with trees

Sustainable

- Solar lighting in few key locations
- Include recycling / compost
- Wood recycling trash receptacles
- Capture the storm water / runoff
- Include permeable paving in parking area
- Responsible water use!
- Irrigation – low volume water usage
- Use of xeric (natives) plants will reduce amount of effort to maintain plantings

Landscape

- Keep the big trees
- Retain indigenous plantings
- Preference for natural, drought resistant plantings
- No manicured lawns
- Create a long-term strategy for gopher control
- Do not plant trees that will block views.
- Find a balance between trees and views.
- Want marsh area to be natural looking

GRANDVIEW PARK

PROGRAMS

Each group session reviewed the following:

- The program outreach performed by city staff
- A summary of what was heard from Workshop #1
- The programs included in the current conceptual designs
 - Day Camp
 - Discovery Play Area
 - Additional Picnic Areas
 - Cycling Course
 - Restroom / Storage
 - Parking (40 cars)
 - Flexible Lawn Area
 - Dog Park
 - Additional Trails
 - Viewing Nodes
 - Exercise Circuit
- Program Imagery
- Two program space diagrams – showing relationships of programs to each other
- Two options with program layouts on the site
- Site Line Studies from adjacent residential neighborhood into and beyond the park
- Precedent study on dog parks

PUBLIC INPUT

A summary of the programs were reviewed with workshop attendees. The majority of the workshop attendees were from neighborhoods directly adjacent to the park and were not supportive of the dog park program for this site. At the suggestion to set aside dog park discussions from the park plans, there was greater attendee participation. The neighbors expressed that they like this site to walk their dogs, walk the trails, and that they enjoy the view. It seemed that many were not against the inclusion of a day camp, and that some liked the inclusion of the discovery play area. Retaining views beyond the park was important. Many wanted the park to be more accessible, but were also concerned about safety and security with the proposed development. Most do not like the inclusion of the Cycling Circuit program. They are also concerned about the landscape character and preferred natural, drought tolerant plantings.

The following are comments shared by Workshop attendees:

General

- Concerns on spending/paying for construction
- Keep uses as passive as possible

- Lock restrooms at night
- Security is important
 - Secure park from vehicles and pedestrians at night
 - Solar panels for security lighting
 - Provide fencing in some areas for security
- Drainage problems on east side
- Do not want construction in open space; will create a hazard zone
- Q: What is the phasing for implementation and can it be phased? An: Needs to still be determined
- Identify development hazards on plan
- There is no community demand for this park
- Utility connections need to be reviewed and verified, such as sewer from the restrooms, and electrical line on east canyon
- Preserve site lines
- Determine programs prior to circulation development
- Concern that consultant is limited to program in Request for Proposal
- The buffer zone between the park site and Rancho Palos Verdes residents' homes needs to be studied further to provide buffering and to retain the view out to the ocean
- During the 4th of July, the neighborhood likes to watch fireworks from this location
- If dog park and cycling programs are removed, there would be support for the rest of the park concepts presented
- Attendees would still like to be able to walk their dogs

Dog Park

- Do not want dog park
- Signed a petition for a dog park, but does not feel a dog park belongs at this location, since location is isolated and difficult to find, and the topography is challenging.
- Expressed that ½ -1 acre for a dog park is too small
- Small and large dogs must be separated
- People need to pick up after their dogs

Day Camp

- Q: How will the day camp be operated? An: It will be similar to a summer program, where children are dropped off for several hours, and there will be a variety of crafts, games, and recreation.

Discovery Play Area

- Attendees liked concept of a discovery play area
- Place discovery play area on west end of park

Flexible Cycling Area

- Do not like the inclusion of the cycle zone for mountain bikes; there are already a lot of trails on the Peninsula.

- Cycling area too active of a use for this park
- Locate cycling on east side to provide connection with open space bike trail

Restroom/Storage

- Prefer that facilities are down the slope closer to Montemalaga, and that development on the flexible lawn area does not impede existing views
- Q: Will restroom be locked at night? An: Yes
- Eliminate restroom

Parking

- Want to understand the program capacity and its relationship to the parking count
- Concern about size of parking lot
- Prefer to have parking further from Ironwood Street, and closer to west end of park

CIRCULATION

For the Circulation Break-out Sessions the following topics were reviewed:

- Circulation Context Maps
- Localized Circulation Diagrams
- A traffic study is being generated by the City which will address many of the comments below

PUBLIC INPUT

General input on circulation focused on reducing the amount of parking within the site, and removing the dog park if it would reduce the number of parking spaces required. The concept program diagrams presented did not allow vehicular access from Ironwood Street, and inclusion of permit parking for the residents would help prevent visitors from parking on Ironwood. The workshop attendees from the neighborhood supported this solution. The residents, however, want pedestrian access to the park from Ironwood. Some still supported only parking on Montemalaga; it was explained that this option would be less safe than would parking within the park site.

The following are comments shared by Workshop attendees:

General

- Will circulation change if elements are removed?

Vehicular

- Are there estimates of how much traffic will be generated by dog park?
- What are the concerns with cars parked on the adjacent street?
- Make sure grade at vehicular access/egress provides for visibility for safety
- Concerned about making a left turn from the park onto Montemalaga
- Reduce speed to 25 MPH on Montemalaga - provide traffic calming
- Leave Montemalaga as is - no change

Parking

Parking Count

- Q: How were parking counts derived? An: From the park programs and usage.
- Q: Is there a legal requirement for parking lot? An: Good planning accommodates parking based on park capacity, programs, usage, and the timing of usages.
- 40 car parking lot is excessive
- Break parking lot into smaller parking lots
- Eliminate dog park to reduce parking count
- If there is to be no development of dog park and cycling, then parking lot needs will be reduced
- Parking on street (Montemalaga) is minimal except church and voting times

Location

- Q: Does parking lot need to be on site? An: Yes, it will be safer for the public.
- Place parking lot at north end of park, and take vehicle road all the way through site.
- Do not add parking lot at north end of site
- Parking better on west side due to drainage
- Make parking lot inconspicuous and provide screening
- Make parking minimal
- Provide free permit parking on Ironwood for residents
- Use Grasscrete product for parking lot paving material

Trails

General

- Connect trails to Palos Verdes Trail System created in 2003 by Trail Task Force
- Like trail system
- Trail on north side is on private property
- No trail behind houses on south
- Separate cycling from pedestrian trails
- Provide residential pedestrian access from Ironwood Street

Cycling

- Cycling will be a liability for city
- Cycling can be controlled by setting rules. Cycling is good.
- Prefer cycling on east side to connect to open space trails
- Prefer cycling location on the west side; less steep terrain
- Prefer cycling area that allows for young bicycle riders to ride with their families in a safe environment

CHARACTER

For the Character Break-out Sessions the following topics were reviewed:

- Character Imagery to explain the site amenities, materials, and finishes for the park
- Park Character existing in Rancho Palos Verdes parks

PUBLIC INPUT

The participants of this session expressed that they would want the park to be as natural in appearance as possible, to have minimal turf areas, and to include trees that would provide shade, but not on in areas were trees might block views. It was also important that the park structures, such as restrooms, not block views. Attendees prefer a landscape of natural and drought resistant plantings. Safety and park security was also discussed. Fencing at key locations was one way to control after hour park visitation. They also want the park to be more accessible and more comfortable to visit.

The following are comments shared by Workshop attendees:

General

- Views, cycling, and dog walking are enjoyed at the park in its current state.
- Parking lot should be small, natural looking, and should use Grasscrete pavement.
- No geometric shapes
- Manicured look not desired
- Fence the park - safety is a concern at night
- Make the park a place where residents can take their kids
- Reduce noise by closing park at night
- Do not like the character of a dog park in the park

Sustainable

- Green/brown trash receptacles
- No asphalt for parking, make it green
- Minimize turf
- Parking – decomposed granite vs. permeable pavers.
 - Permeable pavers probably better on slope
 - Grasscrete product is another option
- Make pedestrian trails and family bicycling area sustainable

Site Amenities

- Include unisex restrooms
- Q: What will the restroom building look like? An: Natural in appearance, built with appropriate materials of the area
- Have artist work with Rancho Palos Verdes stone
- Add a sun clock
- Rancho Palos Verdes stone benches

- Quickly eliminate sign vandalism that may occur
- Don't light park
- Create signage in the affirmative and not the negative, for example: It would be better to say "Pedestrian only" vs. "No bikes."
- Don't use asphalt
- Preference for permeable paving

Landscape

- Tree selection should promote sustainability, a nice habitat, and shade.
- Use natural, drought resistant plantings
- Demonstration native plant garden with labels
- Vegetable garden club