

MOA PARKS + RECREATION NORTHWEST DISTRICT

“Destroying our parks is not cool!”

– Comment from a meeting attendee

I. Stories from our Parks

- Chester Creek trail in general
- Visitors value trail experience
- Westchester winter activities
- Going out to Pt. Woronzof, belugas, view with visitors
- Russian Jack springs (the springs)
- West high pool
- Fairbanks Park inebriate problem versus picnic to retake park
- Two view parks in Government Hill neighborhood
- Freeze event was awesome
- University Lake dog park is asset for dog owners
- Sound of Chester Creek at new project
- Westchester lagoon – skating, families (Norman Rockwell-esque)
- Walking trails: Goose Lake/APU, Sitka Park, Russian Jack sledding, ducks in creek
- Tuesday Night Races, family races (family ritual)
- Fairview Lions Park, Fairview recreation center – annual neighborhood picnic
- Like that parks are multi-use, year round
- Town Square Park ice
- Snowshoe baseball & beer on the Park Strip
- Children’s programs at University Lake

II. Issues

Open Space/Environment/Habitat

- Concern about setbacks to lakes and creeks. (note: Title 21 ordinance will address this)
- Wildlife is both an attraction and attribute
- Dog Parks
 - Degradation due to over use- water quality issues
 - User groups should engage users
 - Wildlife impacts
 - Beach erosion problems
- Westchester shore is degraded
- More food leads to more wildlife

Playgrounds

- Safety an issue
 - Broken glass
 - Chronic public inebriates
 - Want clean and green

- Trail/bike path conflicts
- Connect with Anchorage School District more with parks and equipment
- Reduce dog usage on baseball/play grounds
- Address season-ability of equipment
- Lyn Ary Park
 - Safety audits
 - Broken branches
 - Homeless
- Balto Seppala and Lloyd Steele Parks
 - More amenities per master plans
 - Older kids play equipment
- Need more equipment at the park at Chester and 20th, there is nothing now
- Accessibility an issue at south anchorage SP? Park
- Dog parks

Recreation Programs Health

- More programs for aging population
- Need recreation and childcare close to home
- More money to fund summer programs

Safety

- Need bed for everyone before we can kick people out of parks (not just homeless)
- Bear habitat in sunset park, removed, safety is better in last 5 years (in Government Hill)
- Wildlife hazard markers done well and some not done very well
- Clearer more visible and open environment lead to less inebriate problems
- Addressing Inebriate problem is critical
- Youth problem in parks
- Underutilized parks and becoming problem areas
- Different issues in heavily used trail sections versus underused sections
- Multi-modal conflicts of high speed bike versus pedestrian traffic on trails
- Culverts are places of nuisance
- King Street Park provide only has one access
- Chester Creek green belt is well lit

Trails

- Bear Issues
 - How will number be affected by fish in Chester Creek?
 - Education? Hard to know if education is enough.
“Personally, find notion of bear hunting appalling. Need to first do everything else (bear resistant trash containers mandatory in bear areas, post warnings, common sense like staying away from parks in areas along water bring peak of salmon season, protect habitat – maybe some private land shouldn’t be put.)”
- Over use of trails/maintenance
- The cut-through at Westchester park
- Muddy routes
- Solutions? New trails?

- Unofficial routes become rutted and unattractive
 - Tuesday night runs go through wetlands, terrain that is being damaged by large numbers of runners
- Connectivity is big
 - Fairview: need links from Chester creek trail north into Fairview
 - Trail dead ends (east bound) at Lake Otis
 - Trail maintenance needed (especially in winter)
 - Trail connections are particularly important for kids and for people of lower incomes (e.g. route along Cordova)
- Cordova Street
 - Snow banks block safe use
 - Opportunity for partnerships (e.g. department of neighborhoods)
 - Fairview request through MOA to state was rejected
- Look at where folks are going not just for fun
 - Fairview to – grocery store, downtown, airport heights
- See trails as transportation
- Need wider trails due to conflict
- Links that are safe for kids to get to and from school
- Disc golf conflict with trails – e.g. “Don’t throw Frisbees at my head when I come out of the tunnel.”
- Threats to integrity of coastal trail
 - Airport
 - AWWU pump station
 - Residents eliminating trails
 - Asphalt repaving
 - City land not dedicated to trail use
 - Need a dedicated trail corridor (all Heritage Land Bank land); buffer for trail and habitat and viewshed
 - Needs a proactive approach to protecting a huge asset; well used, well loved,, big economic asset (promoted by ACVB)
- Safety – less of a problem on coastal trail than others

III. Goals/Themes

Playgrounds

- Keep it in good shape (maintenance, volunteers clean and consistent help)
- Parks should be fun and feel alive – watch children learn and grow

Recreation Programs Health

- Challenges – Big Themes
 - Outreach and communication, connection to residents and users
 - Funding, especially operations \$
 - Energy costs going up
 - Kids – keeping children active and healthy
 - Multiple ethnicities increasingly diverse population needs
 - Aging population

IV. Strategies

Open Space/Environment/Habitat

- When a use is considered in a park with high habitat value address the possible impacts in advance
- University park is a great dog park – keep it but make appropriate rules/signs
- Rain gardens – water production deduction tool, expand Taku Lake is good example
- Place value on wildlife
- Thin very carefully in green belts especially find balance maintain habitat
- Wildflower garden in parks cooperate with youth groups, plant society
- Create view parks – protect views in existing ones and add additional native species to be used in parks don't plant not natives
- Parks plans – important natural areas measure progress, take action to implement plan goal, ID key high value open (natural) spaces to purchase

Playgrounds

- Hotline to call about damage

Recreation Programs Health

- Community Feedback
 - Go to churches – tell about programs and get input
 - Info out to schools in packets like we used to
 - Sponsor game boy challenges/competitions and guitar hero concerts in local rec centers use there events to talk with kids about recreation issues
 - Other ways to get feedback: governor's picnic, meetings in churches, more culturally appropriate spaces, news clip Channel 2/Channel 11, school newsletter, kids day, week of the young child
- Heath/Get Outdoors Anchorage
 - Think about park development (appropriate) plan
 - Conversation with Anchorage School District on ethnic diversity
 - Unstructured play places (e.g. Park and Play)
 - Education about existing programs/parks – get the word out
 - Identify partners
 - Program to borrow gear from MOA
 - Different cultural values for parks
 - Clean air (greenbelts contribute to)
 - Remember that “recreation new to some cultures”
 - Target adult population too, connect family outdoors
- Park and play – Youth Employment in Parks
- Winter uses/programs neighborhood parks
- Free/affordable programs - childcare assistance for recreation programs
- Licensed childcare for parks & recreation so can accept childcare asset money
- Transportation to parks for kids from childcare centers
- Fishing, hiking, skiing - outreach intro level (skis/snowshoes for kids)

- Westchester ice skating/hot chocolate
- Additional money when school not in session for kids recreation programs from Anchorage School District

Safety

- Education about animal encounters (moose primarily)
- Thin vegetation to reduce safety issues inebriates
- Appropriate location for training for road biking
- Dog users, more safety (enforcement of leash laws) animal control to check
- Homeless use park for shelter
- Trail watch
- Raising the sight line in parks
- Police and Parks & Recreation to work together on inebriate on A & 15th area
- More active presence - get to people instead of passing observation
- Identify a user group for use for under utilized parks
- Trail Watch: more emphasis on events and thinning brush than daily patrol
- Surveillance
- Surveillance for earthquake park parking lot

Trails

- Expanding ski usage – room for skate and classic, winter commute (if trails are maintained to allow it)

V. Action Items

Open Space/Environment/Habitat

- Dog park maybe Spenard beach

Playgrounds

- Unstructured activity areas needed for soccer
- Neighborhood ball field
- Bi-lingual signage – make neighborhood specific
- Playgrounds more wholesome – no graffiti (Valley of the moon)
- Volunteers – playground/park passport would get kids and families to different communities/parks and taking care of them
- How do we get kids outside?
 - Park and play
 - Art in park
 - Kickball
 - Supervised activities

Recreation Programs Health

- Volunteers to run programs with grant for food/supplies/facility – Challenge grants for programs

- Kinder-gym in parks/Spenard Rec. Center

Safety

- Pedestrian connectivity needed East – West along Delaney

Trails

- Connections
 - Park strip to coastal trail
 - Fairview to downtown east west trails
 - Fish creek estuary trail (no one knows about it – no connections)
 - Elmendorf “fence trail”
 - Trails to parks (especially in SW Anchorage)
- Coffee shacks, snacks, bike rental, skate rentals, beer, fondue along trails
 - Valley of the moon e.g. ice cream shack
 - Great for families
 - Hut to hut hot chocolate
 - Wine tour – yurts
- Trail maintenance – crevasses, fish creek trail
- Campbell Creek bike path connection under Seward hwy
- Upgrade lighting on trails