



Project: Larimer / East Liberty Park Planning
Regarding: Public Workshop #1 Meeting Summary
Date: December 9, 2015, 6:00pm
Location: Kingsley Center

OPENING REMARKS

Tom Cummings, Director of Housing at the URA, welcomed all present to the workshop. He explained that the workshop was convened for three reasons:

1. The workshop is intended to get input on the design of a new neighborhood park and open space network for the Larimer and East Liberty communities.
2. The new open space, which was contemplated in the Vision to Action Plan, will further the community revitalization efforts, build on, and leverage all the work and investment that the community has already put in.
3. This park system will be a great community asset for existing and new residents and help reinforce the community identity "as a state-of-the-art green community."

He noted that funding has not been entirely secured. Some funds are in place for phase A through the Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant (CNIG) and City funds allocated to CNIG. As of now, no funds are in place for Phases B and C, which are long-term initiatives. The URA cannot promise that this will happen overnight, but with a concerted effort, our goal is that the vision that you help create can be implemented over time.

He introduced the design team, which combines a national design perspective with local expertise. The lead consultant, Wallace Roberts & Todd (WRT), is represented by Garlen Capita. WRT is based in Philadelphia and was selected through an open Request for Proposals (RFP) process with input from LCG, Larimer Community Watchers, Kingsley Association, ELDI, and other partners. The WRT team includes four subcontractors: Community Solutions Group, Studio for Spatial Practice, Brean Associates, and Sci-Tek Consultants.

He thanked Kingsley Association for hosting the meeting, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, the project team for donating their time and expertise towards the project and for helping get the word out, the implementation partners (City of Pittsburgh and HACP), Reverend Burgess' office for lending his support and helping to get the word out, and all present for spending their valuable time.

PRESENTATION

Following Tom Cumming's introduction, members of the consultant team gave a presentation. Garlen Capita, WRT, introduced the format of the meeting and told the group about WRT's past work, which includes a variety of open space projects and other Choice Neighborhoods projects. She also explained that the team's approach to this project capitalizes on the extensive visioning and planning work that has already been done by neighborhood stakeholders. Finally, she showed the group the boundaries of the open space system in this project. The system has been split into three zones: A, B, and C. Zone A has defined boundaries, while Zones B and C are still subject to discussion. A variety of factors will impact the final boundaries of Zones B and C, one of which is the location of new housing. This project will include detailed construction drawings for Zone A, schematic designs for Zone B, and programming and conceptual alternatives for Zone C.

Karen Brean, Brean Associates, presented the public outreach and stakeholder engagement strategies. For the past several months, the process has been guided by a Project Team, which represents a broad range of interests: residents, environmental organizations, local businesses, youth, and government. The Project Team meets monthly. This is the first of three public workshops. In addition to participation at the Project Team level and at public workshops, community stakeholders will also be invited to give input during focus groups geared towards specific groups (e.g. youth or seniors). In the lead-up to this meeting, the consultant team, the project team, and a Community Liaison (a local resident hired to help with public engagement) have reached out in a variety of ways including door-to-door visits, postcard mailing, and social media (see attached presentation for full list).

David Ostrich, WRT, discussed the team's work thus far to review existing plans and inventory the park site. He listed the plans that the group reviewed and gave a short synopsis of how each plan will inform this project.

Garlen Capita, WRT, concluded the presentation by explaining the goals of the workshop. Activities at the stations around the room will help the team understand who the community wants the park system to serve, what community members want to do in the park system, and the overall vision for the park system. Garlen explained that after the meeting, the next steps will be for the team to summarize tonight's input, meet with community groups and organizations on specific park and open space elements, and present conceptual alternatives to gather input at the next community-wide meeting in February or March of 2016.

The presentation has been attached to this meeting summary.

POST-PRESENTATION QUESTIONS

How will park development affect home values?

- Kendall Pelling, ELDI, noted that house values have stayed low in Larimer. When the park and other development is completed, house values would likely go up.

Can jobs be created through this effort?

- Christine Brill, Studio for Spatial Practice, responded that the SEED criteria are intended to reflect the outcomes that the community would like to see. Economic development is one of the SEED criteria.

Garlen Capita, WRT, also noted that incorporating jobs and income-generating activities into the park is something that residents have voiced interest in and that there can be creative ways to do that.

What is the overlap between this park and Highland Park?

- Park zones B and C reach Negley Run Boulevard, providing some opportunities to make connections. However, the first phase, Zone A, is entirely on the Larimer side of Negley Run.

Can this park be funded by RAD funds, similarly to the major Pittsburgh parks?

- Susan Rademacher, Parks Conservancy, stated that, if the community would like to see the Larimer Park become part of Highland Park, the proposal would go through a process. If it becomes part of Highland Park, it could share in RAD funding. More information about RAD can be found here: <http://radworkshere.org/>

How will the park accommodate individuals with disabilities?

- Garlen Capita, WRT, responded that the park design will meet basic ADA and Universal Design requirements. However, the team will also invite participation by a representative who will speak to those issues as part of the Project Team.

What about the residents who aren't at this meeting?

- The Project Team and consultants will continue outreach efforts to round out participation in the planning process. To support that effort, we have engaged a Community Liaison who lives in the neighborhood to do some of the face-to-face on the ground outreach. In addition we especially want to have greater youth participation so we will be conducting some smaller focus group work sessions.

What is the current pool of funds available for park development?

- Tom Cummings answered that there is approximately \$1M available through the Choice budget set aside for "critical community improvements." There is also \$2.9M available for capital projects from City funds. There is also some State funding, but the URA will go back to the State for additional funding when the design is ready. David Ostrich, of WRT, noted that WRT recently worked on a similarly sized park which cost \$5M to construct.

Will McCormack Baron Salazar (MBS) construct the park?

- Tom Cummings responded that MBS is developing the housing, not the park.

How much of this property does URA own?

- Tom Cummings responded that the URA owns the property in Zone A. In addition, in zones B and C, there is significant public property, owned by the URA, the Housing Authority, or the City.

Best case/worst case, when would Zone A be ready?

- Garlen Capita answered that the design of the park is slated to be completed by October 2016, followed by a 12-18 month bidding and construction phase. Jessica Smith-Perry, URA, added that the best case scenario has construction starting in late 2016. In the worst case, construction would start in 2017. She added that the schedule is dependent on funding.

STATION ACTIVITY SUMMARIES

KEY POINTS

Vision

- Intergenerational – especially space for seniors and children to be active together
- Celebrate and preserve neighborhood diversity
- Safety

Activities / Features

- Multi-season activities (also use park in bad weather)
- Employment is important to the community – could be linked to food and gathering spaces
 - Several participants mentioned food vendors or space for a farmer's market. The Zone A park could be a well-suited space for the East Liberty farmers market, especially if the market moves in the next few years.
- Sports field ranked #1 in Activities and Usage
- Stormwater management should be interactive and visible
 - Water feature tied for #1 rank in Gathering Spaces
- Intergenerational gathering around play and community events
 - Large play element ranked #1 in destinations
 - Playground ranked #2 in Gathering Spaces
 - Event lawn and performance space tied for #1 rank in Gathering Spaces
- Natural spaces
 - Participants valued "hearing crickets", "deep nature," "soft edges" and hillsides
 - Nature walk ranked #2 in Activities and Usage
- Some participants mentioned a dog park or visiting the park with their dogs.

STATION: VISION AND IDENTITY

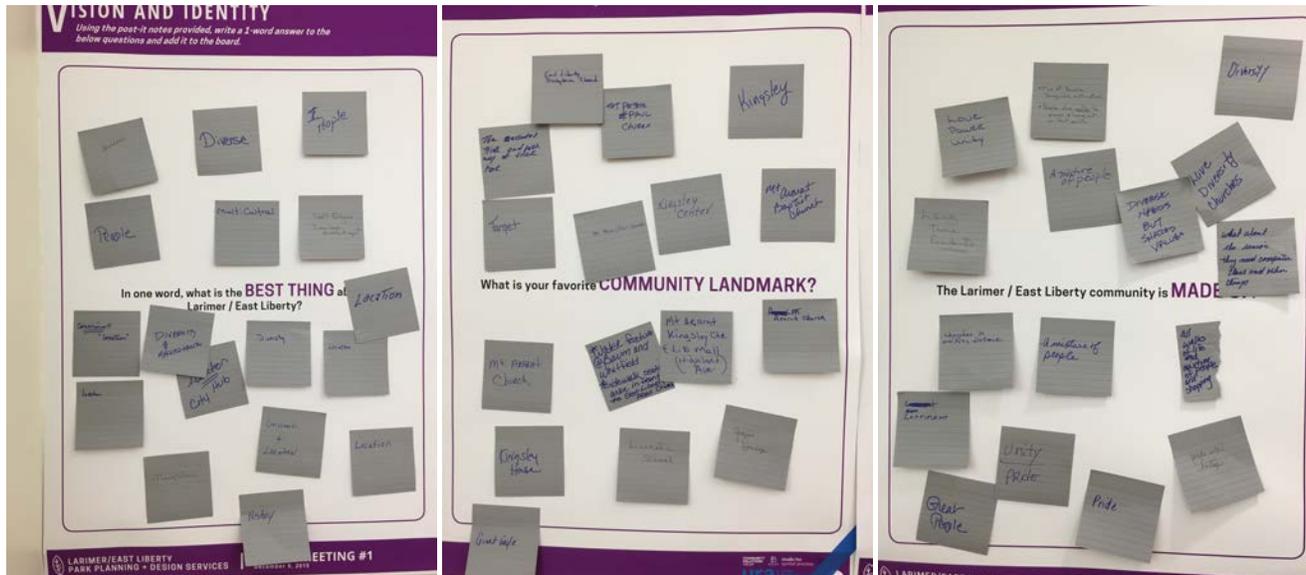
a. Activity description: Visitors were asked to write 1-word answers to four questions on post-its and place them on boards.

In one word, what is the BEST THING about Larimer / East Liberty?

- Location / convenient location / location city hub (7)
- Diversity /multicultural / diversity and affordability (4)
- People / neighbors (3)
- Boundaries
- Soft edges. I can hear crickets at night
- History

What is your favorite COMMUNITY LANDMARK?

- Churches (7)
 - Mt. Ararat (4)
 - St Peter and Paul (2)
 - East Liberty Presbyterian
- Kingsley (4)
- Local business centers (2)
 - East Liberty Mall
 - Grasso Sausage
- Large retailers (2)
 - Giant Eagle
 - Target
- Public open spaces (2)
 - Water feature at Baum and Whitfield;
 - Sidewalk seating area in front of East Liberty Presbyterian
 - The secluded trails and pathways of Frick Park



Vision and Identity Boards 1, 2, and 3

The Larimer / East Liberty community is MADE OF...

Most participants described the people and community of the neighborhood:

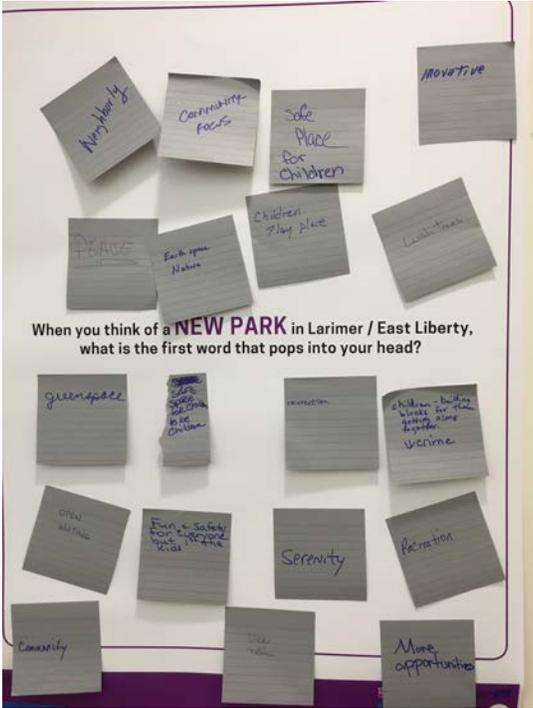
- Diversity (2)
- Unity
- Pride (2)
- Love
- People with heritage
- Great people
- All walks of life and mixture of people and shopping
- Long time residents
- A mixture of people (2)
- Diverse needs but shared values
- Mix of people: young/old, multicultural
- People who walk to places and hang out on front porch

Other responses:

- Convenient
- Churches in walking distance

When you think of a NEW PARK in Larimer / East Liberty, what is the first word that pops into your head?

- Children (5)
 - Safe place for children
 - Children play space
 - Children (building blocks for them getting along together), reduced crime
 - Fun and safety for everyone, but first the kids
 - Safe space for children to be children
- Community (4)
 - Community
 - Community focus
 - Open, inviting
 - Neighborly
- Nature (4)
 - Greenspace
 - Lush trees
 - Earth space, nature
 - Wild nature
- Recreation (2)
- Peace / Serenity (2)
- More opportunities
- Innovative



Vision and Identity Board 4

- b. Activity description: Visitors were asked to answer "What is your vision for this new park?" by filling in blanks on a form with statements about the park.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is social place. I enjoy visiting with my family and friends. I think the new vision is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to enjoy.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is social place. I enjoy visiting with my family/friends. I think the new vision is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to come together as one, reunited.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is welcoming. I enjoy visiting with my friends and colleagues. I think the new picnic area is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to celebrate.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is safe and beautiful. I enjoy visiting with my [blank]. I think the new safe play/green space is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to gather and intermingle safely.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is unity for everyone and a great idea. Let's do it. I enjoy visiting with my family and friends. I think the new park church is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to grow, prosper, and be a great community.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is safe. I enjoy visiting with my children. I think the new kids shower is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to interact as neighbors.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is innovative. I enjoy visiting with my friends and family. I think the new paths and views is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to come and chill!

The Larimer / East Liberty Park will be beautiful. I enjoy visiting with my dog. I think the new open space is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to become inclusive!

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is deep nature. I enjoy visiting with my animals. I think the new hillside trail is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to stay in touch with nature.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is family. I enjoy visiting with my friends. I think the new open space is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to play, be safe, and meet with family and friends.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is for families. I enjoy visiting with my neighbors. I think the new revitalized, sustainable park is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to have social space.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is fantastic! I enjoy visiting with my neighbor. I think the new water park is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to gather together.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is open. I enjoy visiting with my grandchildren. I think the new play spaces are really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to interact/socialize.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is [blank]. I enjoy visiting with my grandchild. I think the new slides are really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to thrive and develop.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is connect. I enjoy visiting with my granddaughter. I think the new recreation is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to heal.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is destination. I enjoy visiting with my friends. I think the new green space is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to connect with neighbors.

The Larimer / East Liberty Park is pride. I enjoy visiting with my family. I think the new ideas is really cool. I think the park will become a great place for our community to enjoy.

STATION: ACTIVITIES AND USAGE

- a. Activity description: Visitors were asked to use dots to select the top 3 activities that would keep them coming back to the park again and again.

Activities were prioritized as follows:

1. Sports field (15)
2. Nature walk (14)
3. Open space (13) ←tie→ Gardening (13)
4. Outdoor classes (11) ←tie→ Passive recreation (11) ←tie→ Small court games (11) ←tie→ Exercise (11)
5. Lawn games (7)
6. Iconic steps (2)

Other ideas:

- Activities for seniors (programming for seniors)
- Dog exercise area
- Food forest / permaculture / use the hillsides as terraces
- Programming (computer classes) for seniors
- What happens after summer is over!
- Community orchard – anyone can pick fruit and eat
- Tai chi classes
- Concert grove / artistic expression
- Swimming / wading
- Green trail network connecting core of neighborhood to park and shopping



Activities and Usage Top 4 Images in order of preference (#1 rank → #4 rank)

b. Activity description: Visitors were shown a map with other parks in the area and asked to fill out a form about visiting them.

What is your favorite Pittsburgh park?

- Highland Park (4)
- Frick Park (2)
- Point Park
- Squaw Valley Park, O'Hara Twp
- Allegheny river trail
- Schenley
- All of them

What do you do there?

- Highland Park
 - Walk, run
 - Events (Jazz Festival in August)
 - Walk the reservoir
 - Read
 - Picnic (2)
 - Go to jazz concerts
 - Ride bikes
 - Swim
 - Jog
- Frick Park
 - Walk (2)
 - Visit dog park
- Point Park
 - Attend events / bike
- Squaw Valley Park, O'Hara Twp
 - Walk, run
- Allegheny river trail
 - Bike and walk, but mostly look at the water
- Schenley
 - Walk the trails, esp the deep ravines
 - All of them
 - Take the kids/grandkids
 - Go biking, swim, walk
 - Go to concerts everything

How often do you go there?

- Highland Park
 - 2x + per month
 - 1/month
 - About once a week
 - Every weekend in summer
- Frick Park
 - Monthly
 - Twice a month
- Point Park
 - At least once a month
- Squaw Valley Park, O'Hara Twp
 - 2x + per month
- Allegheny river trail
 - 1/mo
- Schenley
 - 1/mo (not a resident)
- All of them
 - Just about 340x a year

How do you get there?

- Highland Park
 - Walk or bike
 - Walk
 - Bus
 - Bike
- Frick Park
 - Walk
 - Drive
- Point Park
 - Bike or drive
- Squaw Valley Park, O'Hara Twp
 - Walk or bike
- Allegheny river trail
 - Ride my bicycle
- Schenley
 - Walk from work
- All of them
 - Walk, bike, drive, or bus

What is this park missing?

- Highland Park
 - Perimeter trail – as at Squaw Valley Park
 - D.K. (???)
 - Nothing
 - Food vendors
- Frick Park
 - Community activities
- Point Park
 - Food
- Squaw Valley Park, O'Hara Twp
- Allegheny river trail
 - I wish the river was clean enough so we could have swimming areas all along the river!
- Schenley
- All of them
 - More people, more concerts, more activities for seniors, wave pool, more bike trails, snowboarding, skating rinks

STATION: STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Activity description: After reviewing boards with background information about stormwater and green stormwater infrastructure, visitors were asked to use dots to select their top 3 images that best represent how they would like to see the park use stormwater management systems and features.

The features were prioritized as follows:

1. Interactive water play (20)
Note: Do we have too many waterparks?
2. Water features (17)
Notes: Slippery? (top image); Safety concern? (bottom image)
3. Stream channel (14)
4. Bioswales (12)
5. Boardwalks (11)
6. Wetlands (9) ←tie→ Permeable paving (9)
7. De/re-tention basin (3)

Other ideas:

- Ephemeral / seasonal pools (habitat)
- What about after summer – there's spring and winter!
- Natural public pool



Stormwater Images 1-4 in order of preference (#1 rank → #4 rank)



Stormwater Images 5-8 in order of preference (#5 rank → #8 rank)

STATION: GATHERING SPACES

Activity description: Visitors were provided with dots and asked to select the top 3 spaces that they would like to have in the park.

The features were prioritized as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Performance space ←tie→ | Event lawn |
| ←tie→ | Water feature (14) |
| 2. Playground (13) | |
| 3. Market plaza (11) | |
| 4. BBQ / picnic area (10) | |
| 5. Play area (7) | |
| | 6. Small seating area (6) |
| | 7. Hammock grove (6) |
| | 8. Plaza or square (4) |
| | 9. Trellis walk (2) |
| | 10. Viewpoint (1) |

Other ideas:

- Braille signage
- Tactile / interactive with senses
- Benches with backs
- Accessible play
- Walking / running trail
- Shade
- Wood play structures / nature play
- Deep nature walking trails / hillsides
- What about winter programs, summer good but what about after that!
- Dog park (with doggy bag dispensers...)



Gathering Spaces Top 4 Images

STATION: DESTINATIONS

Activity description: Visitors were asked to select one special feature and describe in one word why they were drawn to it.

The features were prioritized as follows:

1. Large play element (7)
 - Action
 - Kids (2)
 - Kids play area
 - Family, people friendly
 - Yes
 - Intergenerational
 - Full family activity
2. Elevated walkway (6)
 - Open play (not crowded)
 - I like the concept of elevated spaces
 - It's beautiful
 - Walking
 - Abandoned railway
 - Accessibility (view point)
3. Inhabitable art (5)
 - Intergenerational
 - Working remotely
 - Peace of mind / relaxation
 - Peaceful
 - Revelation
4. Forest walk + stair (4)
 - Awesome
 - Negley Run
 - Love woods
 - Immersion in woodland
5. Large water feature (4)
 - Public natural pool
 - Water
 - Wishing well
 - Interesting
6. Viewpoint (3)
 - Peaceful
 - Serenity
 - Drama
7. Environmental art (2)
 - Unique
 - Yes
8. Pavilion (0)

Other ideas:

- Usable spaces when it rains (it rains a lot!)
- Outdoor skating rink!



Destination Images 1-4 in order of preference (#1 rank → #4 rank)



Destination Images 5-8 in order of preference (#5 rank → #8 rank)



STATION: PARKING LOT

Activity description: If visitors came to the meeting with concerns or questions that did not directly related to the park system, they were asked to write their concerns on the board or ask the project team members at the station (Betty Lane and JW Kim).

- 55 and up – we need computer classes and other bingo trips, painting, house improvements
- Job training for young adults!

STATION: PRESCHOOL / SCHOOL AGE PARK ACTIVITIES

Activity description: Players were asked to select, with green dots, their top 2 favorite images from the boards. Post-it notes with comments were added where more information was needed/ wanted.



Preschool / School Age Boards

Top 3 Images:



Picture 2 - 13 dots
Note: Grandson will love it!



Picture 13 - 12 dots
Better (slide) for smaller children



Picture 5 - 11 dots
Because my child is adventuring (adventurous).

- Picture 11 - 6 dots
- Picture 14 - 5 dots
- Picture 4 - 4 dots (Note: My child likes slides. The bigger the better.)
- Picture 6 - 4 dots (Note: How about a knotweed maze?)
- Picture 8 - 4 dots

- Picture 1 - 3 dots
- Picture 7 - 3 dots
- Picture 9 - 3 dots (Note: Helps build spatial intelligence)
- Picture 3 - 2 dots
- Picture 12 - 1 dot
- Picture 10 - 0 dots

Additional elements missing: Biking trails, tunnels to call through or walk through that show images of nature (exploration and education encouraged)

STATION: PRETEEN / TEEN PARK ACTIVITIES

Activity description: Players were asked to select their top 2 favorite activity cards from the table and write why they selected it on post it notes.

Most selected images (3 votes each):



Notes on most selected images:

Picture 3: Kids like water sports; Fun, healthy, releasing energy; Wild!

Picture 18: Improvisational music; Music brings people together and it should be everywhere; Music in the parks! (Lots of pianos can be found cheaply)

Picture 25: I like to observe sports; I like shooting into the hoop; it is fun for me; Basketball is a popular sport and all kids like to play

Picture 27: Active kids, unique activity; Rock climbing- more boulders necessary than ropes; Like climbing wall activity

Picture 34: Great specific exercise equipment to boost better health; I like the idea of exercising outside

Picture 51: Spray park! Kids love it!; I love water and it is not dangerous. Children and adults can enjoy it!; Elements of soothing water and to cool off during play

Images receiving 2 votes:



Notes on images receiving 2 votes:

Picture 13: Relaxing, right along the way

Picture 16: Different; Like it except for cost issues

Picture 37: I picked this because it is very creative for a basketball court and it looks nice at night; It's nice for the view at night and looks relaxing

Picture 52: Sensual, playful and meditative; Water!

Images receiving 1 vote:



Notes on images receiving 1 vote:

Picture 1: Great for adults and children to play

Picture 5: Social interaction

Picture 7: Can grow things, have shows, or a hang out space

Picture 15: For all ages

Picture 22: Bike trail off of streets, by the woods. You can walk and bike.

Picture 26: I like to exercise and it would be cool to exercise in a park

Picture 35: Place to people watch and work quietly but in a crowd

Picture 38: This is different from a regular basketball court

Picture 41: Because it encourages community

Picture 42: I like this. Chess is a game of the mind and most people like to play

Picture 43: Active uses at night

Picture 46: Builds community

Picture 48: Holding events in the park would be nice

Picture 49: Skating is good for the body and the spirit

Notes on images receiving no votes:

Picture 9: Boys enjoy skateboarding

Picture 10: Offers different types of physical activities

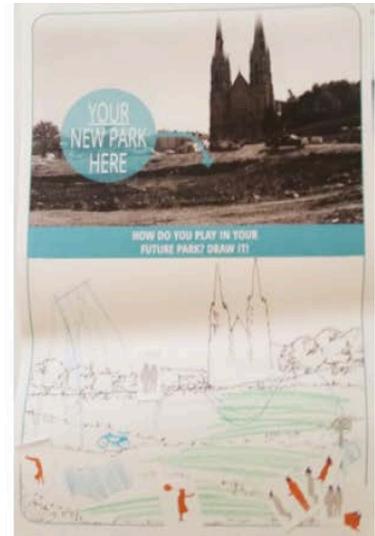
Picture 24: Challenge

STATION: KIDS STATION

Activity description: Players were asked to select their favorite images and collage them onto a paper plate. The images showed a variety of activities that may occur in parks. Players could also augment their collages with markers and crayons. Additionally, players could use the coloring activity sheet to imagine what their future park may look like.



Images and collages from the kids station



PUBLIC WORKSHOP PHOTOS

(Photos thanks to Kingsley Association)



Garlen Capita presents.



Kendall Pelling answers a question.



Laverne Peakes and Evelyn Brooks facilitate.

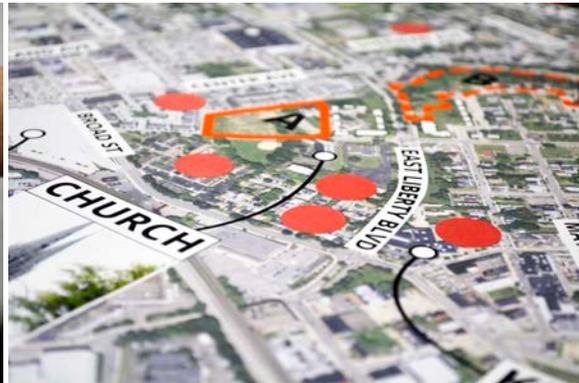


Christine Brill explains the SEED process.



Heather Mallak invites youth participation through collage activities.





Community members participate in station activities.