

SADDLEBROOK PARK

March 22, 2011 Summary of the Neighborhood Design Process

Background - As basic information for the neighbors at the first and second meetings, Wenk Associates provided the following data:

- dedicated as a 4.929 acre neighborhood and approved with the Final Plat for the subdivision in June, 2003 (Goal 3 – Park Master Plan – provide parks and recreational facilities, Objectives 3.1 – 3.7)
- as a city neighborhood park, this park serves a residential population in a radius of ½ mile with convenient vehicular and trail access (Goal 5 - Park Master Plan – Objective 5.1 - safe walking distance)
- located along the Moon Gulch drainage and Trail (with multi-use, paved and soft trails that extend west to Tucker Lake) and located on the north side of the Farmers Highline Canal (a portion of the Heritage Canal Trail) both connecting east along 75th Avenue to the Indiana Equestrian Center (Goal 5 – Park Master Plan, Objective 5.4 – off-street, multi-use trail connections between residential and parks)
- with paved and soft trail connections north to Northwood Acres
- with future trails intended along the Farmers Highline Canal south through West Woods to Van Bibber Creek (as part of the city’s approved Trails Master Plan)
- funded with Park Development Fees and Capital Improvement Project funds for a construction budget of \$494,681.44 for phase one development of a park master plan that will be the product of a neighborhood design process (Goal 3, Objectives 3.1 – 3.3 and 3.7)
- the park site is located above the flood plain in Moon Gulch overlooking the 10.3 acre regional detention to the west of the park and the HOA-owned local detention area (another 0.924 acres of open space) to the east of the park
- 7.82 acres of natural open space is owned by the city to the south of the Farmers Highline Canal along the Moon Gulch drainage (Goal 4 - Protect important open space areas, Objectives 4.1 - 4.4)
- west of the McIntyre Street alignment along the Moon Gulch is 12.99 acres of city-owned open space drainage and Trail
- the HOA owns other undeveloped tracts that add to the high percentage of open space around the park

Site Analysis – In general, the designers were working with a developable park site that staff had already prepared in collaboration with the developer. For example, the park area sits above the Moon Gulch flood plain with good access from 75th Avenue. City staff requested a water line stub to the back of curb at the park for a water tap that will be necessary for irrigation to landscape improvements.

As a water quality protection, the developer was obligated to capture park runoff before it reaches the Farmers Highline Canal. The park is structured to provide positive drainage to an inlet that flows to the HOA detention area with an easement that drains under the

FHL to the Moon Gulch drainage. (Goal 2 – Protect and enhance the natural environment)

Nutrient levels in the soil are minimal, typical of the area, though slow to grow pasture grasses. Soil testing will pin down the necessary soil amendments necessary for the different landscape areas within the final master plan.

Views into the site from the street edge are excellent for patrol and security purposes. Views from the site are exceptional to the west overlooking the permanent pond in the regional detention area and over the roof tops to the west with a full panoramic view of the foothills.

Staff recommended that the developer position the park below the street grade. This produces a safer relationship between street and park, since kids will not be as likely to chase stray soccer balls, footballs, baseballs, etc. into the street. And, if they do follow a ball into the street, they will have to run up a slope of several feet vertical, which should slow them down and hopefully give them more time to notice and wait for traffic.

At the same time, the developer built the paved trails through the park and open space (east-west along the Moon Gulch drainage and Trail corridor.) In the overlot grading process, the developer left the park with gentle slopes across the park, easily accessible from existing trails and throughout the park for the seniors in the patio home areas.

The developer provided soft trails that ribbon through the park for mountain bike, jogging and equestrian trail uses. Existing soft trails connect east to the Indiana Equestrian Center, north to Northwoods Subdivision (an equestrian community) and west along the Moon Gulch drainage and Trail to other equestrian communities.

As a neighborhood park, on-street parking normally represents sufficient parking, unless a major attraction (i.e., a large picnic shelter) is intended for the park. At Saddlebrook, a lengthy portion of 75th Avenue adjacent to the park provides more than enough on-street parking area.

Park Design Process (With input from the neighbors at 3 separate meetings)

Public Meeting #1

For the first meeting, the designers prepared preliminary sketches incorporating ideas that they thought could serve the community. At the same time, the sketches encouraged discussion and ideas that the neighbors used to form their own preferences for the park. The citizens expressed those preferences by placing dots on the elements and images that they liked, with or without sticky notes for additional explanation. High priorities were: picnic groves, less traditional playgrounds, bocce ball courts and horseshoe pits. Neighbors expressed less initial support for basketball and picnic shelters.

There was some concern about developing the site as a park if it jeopardized the existing views and natural qualities of the site. Some neighbors expressed concern that there was not a large representation of families with children at the meeting.

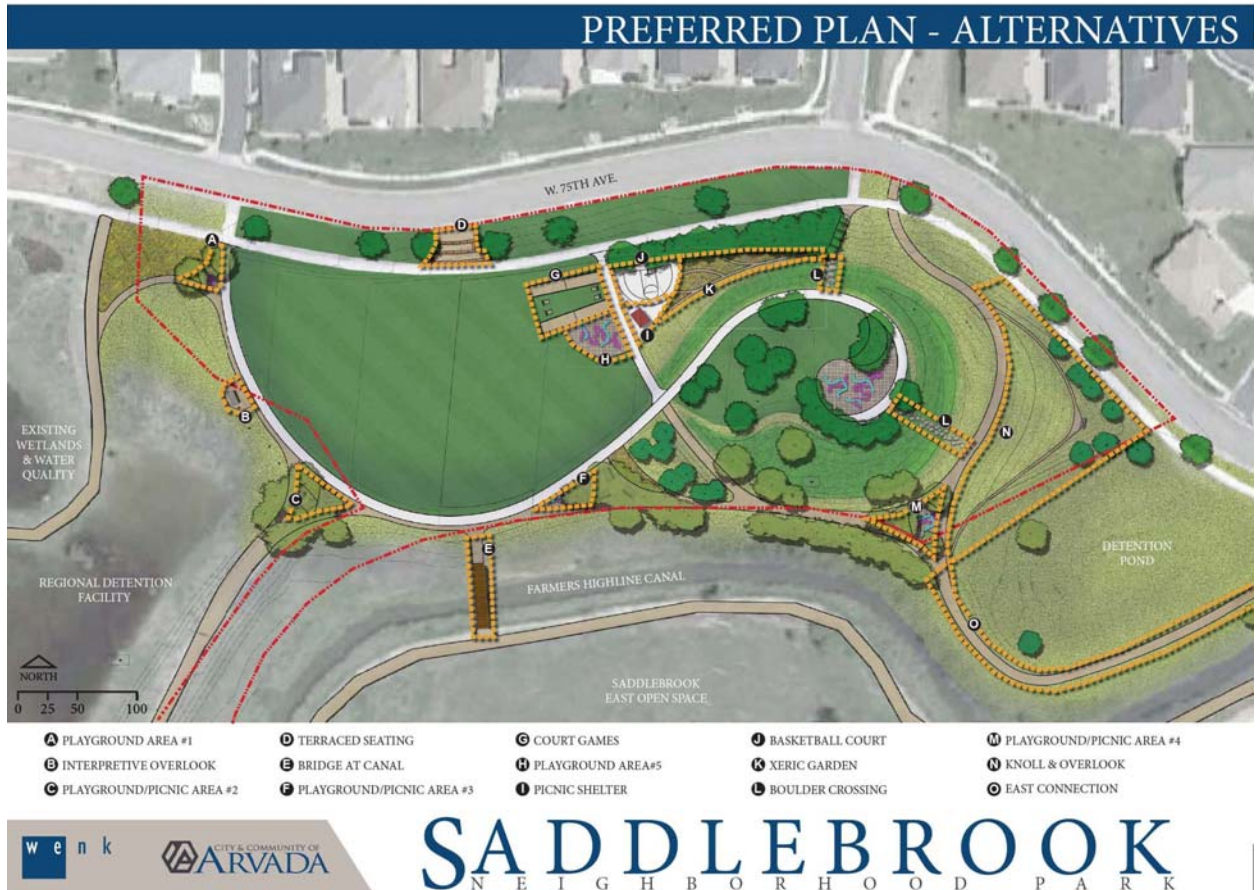
(CONCEPT A – Grand Lawn graphic)



Public meeting #2

Two park concepts were presented based on the feedback from the first meeting. Citizens were given a comment card to express their preferences for different elements within the plans so designers could begin to prioritize the elements. The neighbors strongly supported basketball at the second meeting, since permanent basketball hoops are not allowed in Saddlebrook driveways. Also important, the neighbors preferred a master plan with trail connections, tree groupings for picnicking, a balance of environmental and traditional play structures, lawn areas, and some active play areas.

(Preferred Plan graphic)



Public Meeting #3

The overall master plan for the park was presented at the third meeting with an explanation about the neighbors input relative to each element. Wenk staff represented the master plan as an overall attempt to respect neighbor input and inclusive about all the play elements. However, the designers did not expect everything on the master plan to fit within the budget. For that reason, they combined those elements receiving the most support into a core cost that fit within the budget. Those elements and work necessary to provide a basic park framework included the following:

- general grading and site preparation
- playground/ basic structure, naturalized features
- concrete and soft surface trails
- irrigation system/ tap, meter, backflow preventer, controller,
- site amenities/ benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles
- blue grass lawn/ soil amendments and seed
- landscape/ tree, shrub and groundcover plantings

Since there were 15 master plan elements that did not fit within the core construction budget, the designers requested a final neighbor assessment of priorities. With a priority ranking for the remaining elements, actual phase one construction would include as many of them as possible, in order of priority. With the current (highly competitive) bid environment, the designers expected to add elements to the core construction project.

The following elements were ranked by the neighbors (using green sticky dots) into a range of priority from 1 - 15.

- 1) basketball court (J) - 42 dots
- 2) bridge over the Farmers Highline Canal (E) – 30 dots
- 3) second playground feature at center of the park (H) – 23 dots
- 4) playground feature – area 5 (M) – 14 dots
- 5) court games (G) – 13 dots
- 6) picnic shelter (I) – 12 dots
- 7) xeric garden (K) – 6 dots
- 8) boulder crossing (L) – 5 dots
- 9t) east connection (O) – 4 dots
- 9t) terraced seating (D) – 4 dots
- 10) knoll & overlook (N) – 2 dots

playground feature – area 1 (A), interpretive overlook (B), and playground feature – area 3 (F) – all received 0 dots

Additional comments at the third meeting included the desire for a bigger half-court basketball element rather than the modified court shown in the plan, inclusion of exercise stations and two crosswalks and crossing signage at the existing ADA ramp entrances into the park from 75th Avenue.

With the Master Plan completed, Wenk will now begin detailed design for all the park elements, making site adjustments as requested by the neighbors at the third meeting with sufficient detail to accommodate logical, safe relationships between elements. As the detailed construction documents are prepared for bidding the projects, park design and maintenance staff will review plans and documents for additional input into the final bid documents.

Staff expects the project to be bid producing a contractor recommendation for approval at the July 11th City Council meeting. Subject to that approval, staff expects construction of Saddlebrook Park to begin in August for construction through September, October and November for completion in 2011.

(Final Master Plan graphic for Saddlebrook Park)



Consultant and staff believes that the Final Saddlebrook Park Master Plan will satisfy the spirit of the Arvada Park Master Plan Goals 1 and 2 to “Develop a safe and comprehensive multi-purpose trail system” and to “Protect and enhance the natural environment, and develop parks, trail and outdoor recreational facilities in an environmentally sensitive manner.”

The open lawn area provides a multi-purpose, safe play surface for a wide variety of games without blocking views to the west. The ADA trail connections provide access between the Moon Gulch Trail and elements within the park and a core structure along which those elements can be added with additional funding. The same paved trail leads deeper into the heart of the park for the kids and parents, the playground and picnic grove. The playground is sited away from irrigation ditch and 75th Avenue to ensure safe buffers for the kids and to focus activity away from the natural, environmental setting.

Surrounded by open space, riparian habitat will gradually mature and provide the dominant natural character at the site, highlighted by the wildlife that will follow, especially those that travel along the Farmers Highline Canal. Park improvements will provide a trail access along much of this natural setting on an edge at a respectful distance from the wildlife. Occasional windows (at the overlook and the FHL bridge) are intended along the trail where wildlife viewing will become more common. The bridge

will take the public to a future trail corridor on top of the FHL maintenance road, again overlooking the riparian habitat along the Moon Gulch Drainage.

Similarly, many of the active play features in the park are set closer to the public along 75th Avenue, away from the likely wildlife habitat. Semi-active play features overlook the wildlife habitat, but are even intended to mimic nature, with boulder placement in caterpillar forms. The natural-form play areas are placed adjacent to picnic functions at locations where other views are available into the wildlife habitat.

The park will serve the current neighbors as expressed at the end of the third meeting with applause. With additional funding and future phases, the park will ultimately grow to serve the needs of future residents, especially as the natural environment matures around the park.