

Project: Larimer / East Liberty Park Planning  
Regarding: Public Workshop #2 Meeting Summary  
Date: March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 6:00pm  
Location: Kingsley Center

## **POST-PRESENTATION QUESTIONS**

(See attached presentation)

When will the project be completed?

Garlen Capita, WRT, responded that the design work will end in October, at which point the URA will take 12-18 months to find and engage a contractor and to build the Zone A park. Zones B and C have less solid timelines because the boundaries, final designs, and funding are not yet in place.

Who will pay for the park?

Tom Cummings, URA, responded that the URA and design team will be working on estimates of the cost of the park. At this point, the URA does not have all the funding in place, but several entities have already committed to supporting the project. The City has committed money out of the capital budget, the URA will be requesting funds out of the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, the URA will continue to apply to the state for funds, and with clearer designs and cost estimates, the URA will embark on an aggressive fundraising campaign to foundations and private donors. HUD has given its preliminary approval of the use of Choice funds for the park.

Will the park cause rents to continue to rise every year?

Kendall Pelling, ELDI, explained that the park will be a great neighborhood amenity, which will make the neighborhood a more attractive place to live for current residents and those who do not already live in the neighborhood. He also addressed the issue of rising rents in affordable developments like Fairfield (where the person asking the question lived). HUD defines the upper limit for rents each year, and Fairfield must keep rents at or below that level. Each year, HUD raises the limit on rent, so each year Fairfield is entitled to raise rents within the HUD limit. Unfortunately, that process is federally-defined, so the park planning process is unable to address rising rents.

Zone C shows a trail between Negley Run Blvd and Lenora Street. Will houses be taken on the hillside of Lenora to accommodate the park?

Garlen Capita addressed the timeframe for the park in Zone C. Right now, any park facilities in Zone C are in a much more long term plan than Zone A or even Zone B. The park planning process is not proposing any displacement of residents in the Zone C area. As plans progress for Zone C in the coming years, community groups will certainly work closely with residents.

If Zone C is not developed, will there be any active sports fields?

Garlen Capita responded that Zones A and B do not have the area required for full-size sports fields. Zone C has the largest amount of flat land, making it the ideal location for sports fields. In the unlikely event that no park space is developed in Zone C, the facilities at Larimer Playground will still be in place.

Residents in Zone C should be more proactively engaged as plans for Zone C move forward.

What kinds of long-term jobs can be created through the maintenance of the park?

Garlen Capita responded that the consultant team has heard consistently from the community, the URA, and other stakeholders who have been working closely on the project that job creation is important. Emily Mitchell, URA, added that the URA has been working with Penn State Center and other partners on a green infrastructure maintenance training program that could serve the proposed park system.

There are no indoor facilities in the proposed concepts for Zone A. What will kids and seniors do in the winter?

Garlen Capita answered that the park planning process has been looking at outdoor facilities, while Kingsley Association is focusing on indoor recreation facilities. Kingsley has been a critical partner in the park process, and the park system and Kingsley's indoor facilities are intended to complement each other to create a well-rounded recreation network for the neighborhood.

Several attendees raised concerns about black residents being displaced from East Liberty.

Tom Cummings responded that the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) is intended to help address displacement of long-term, lower-income residents, which includes many black residents. CNI requirements mandate that a minimum of 155 affordable units be built as replacement housing. Kendall Pelling added that the project is building more than double the required replacement units. He explained that the 356 units will be comprised of 1/3 public units, 1/3 "affordable" units, and 1/3 market rate units. Rent structures will be as follows: In the public units, residents will pay 30% of their income; in "affordable" units which are funded through Low Income Housing Tax Credits, residents earning 40-60% of Area Median Income will pay rents that will rise slightly each year because of changes in AMI; and in market-rate units, rents will not be subsidized. He concluded by reminding the group that although several high-profile market-rate developments are being built, 30% of all of the housing units in East Liberty are income-restricted.

Will the park cause flooding to get worse in the neighborhood because of the underground Silver Lake?

David Ostrich, WRT, responded that the consultant team includes engineers and geotechnical experts who will make sure that any underground lakes in the area do not come up. Robert Ware, Penn State Center, added that the park will manage its own stormwater at a minimum, but there are also multiple other projects in the neighborhood working to address stormwater management concerns.

How will play equipment meet the needs of children with disabilities?

David Ostrich responded that specific play equipment has not yet been identified. As the design team works with the URA and the rest of the project team to create construction drawings, all parties will work to ensure that there will be accessible equipment.

Can adjustments be made in the features and programs presented in tonight's meeting?

David Ostrich and Garlen Capita responded that tonight's meeting is intended to solicit community feedback on the proposed designs. The design team will change the plans presented tonight based on feedback received.

# STATION ACTIVITY SUMMARIES

## ZONE A AND A'





ZONE B



- Path to [East Liberty] Blvd (no steps) from Auburn Street
- Open meadows for winter sun
- Bike riding on the trails
- Snow shoes, cross country skiing
- Activities for older [people]
- Community to make friends
- Trails for walking, senior walking groups
- Not just for kids but for everyone
- Please be mindful of accessibility needs
- [Contact] Mara Kaplan for accessibility information
- Like walking trails
- Picnic/cookout opportunities for nearby neighbors

ZONE C – The Bluff (Open Space and Recreation Opportunities)

Zone C – The Bluff

The image shows a conceptual design map for Zone C - The Bluff. The map features a central area outlined in red, labeled 'Zone C - Study Area'. Surrounding this area are various streets including Jackson St, Stanton St, Highland Ave, St Marie St, Negley Run Blvd, Enora St, Larimer Ave, Auburn St, East Liberty Boulevard, Rodman St, Station Street, Harvard St, Kingsley Association, Mayflower, and Tennis St. The map is annotated with several circular images and text boxes:

- Natural Areas:** A circular image showing a wooded area with a stream.
- Event Space:** A circular image showing a group of people sitting on a lawn.
- Orchards:** A circular image showing a row of trees in a field.
- BBQ:** A circular image showing people gathered around a fire pit.
- Sports Fields:** A circular image showing a green soccer field.
- Gardens:** A circular image showing people working in a garden bed.
- Adventure Play:** A circular image showing a child on a play structure.
- Stormwater Management:** A circular image showing a wetland area with a swan.

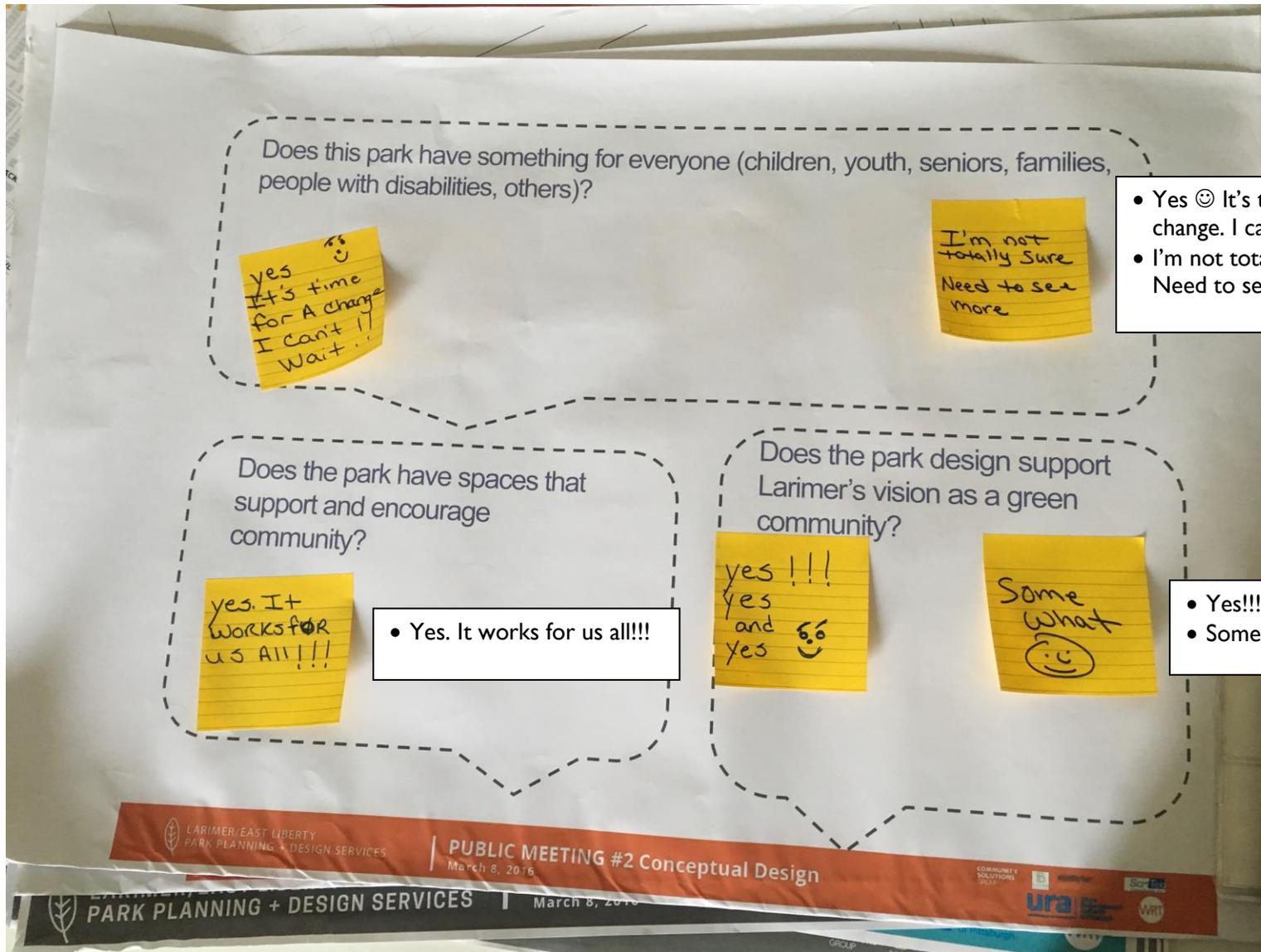
A handwritten note in blue ink is placed over the map, reading: "Regulation field that could have downsides. What about smaller play fields?". A white text box with a black border is also present, containing the text: "Regulation field that could have downsides. What about smaller play fields?".

At the bottom of the map, there is an orange banner with the following text and logos:

- LARIMER/EAST LIBERTY PARK PLANNING + DESIGN SERVICES
- PUBLIC MEETING #2 Conceptual Design March 8, 2016
- COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS
- ura
- WRT



OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES



What are your favorite park elements and why?

I like the elements slated for kids ☺ they need a safe/fun space

Don't know so far the housing looks nice but it should be for everyone

walking trails & spas for kids of all ages

- I like the elements slated for kids ☺ they need a safe/fun space
- Don't know so far the housing looks nice but it should be for everyone
- Walking trails and spaces for kids of all ages

If only one feature of this park system could be built what would you want it to be?

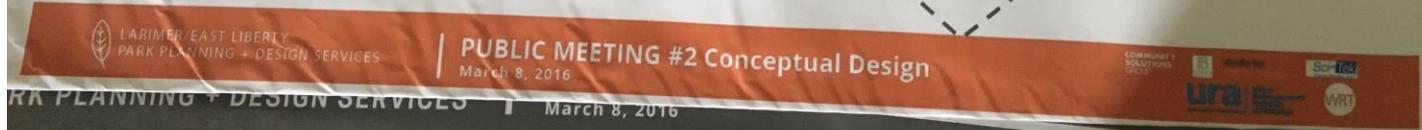
I don't know because it's hasn't been implemented stacy c.

- I don't know because [it] hasn't been implemented – Stacy C

What elements can be improved and why?

- Don't know until I see it...

Don't know until I see it...



## YOUTH COLORING ACTIVITY



One young person participated in the coloring activity. She drew spaces programs including yoga classes, hydroponic farming, biking, and science classes.

**PHOTOS**



