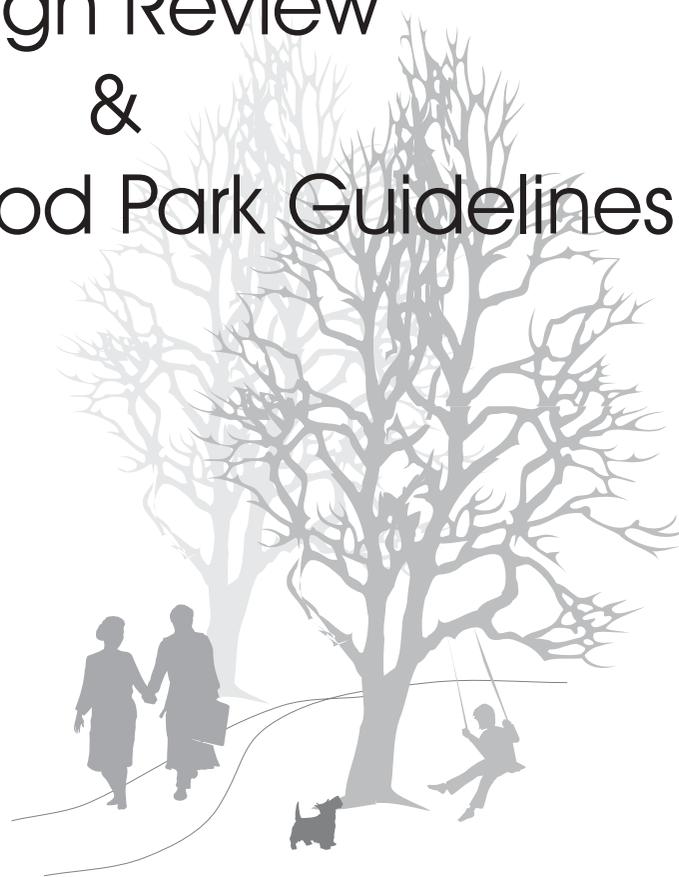




Design Review & Neighborhood Park Guidelines



Land Architecture

Planning

Urban Design

Carson City Parks & Recreation Department Design Review & Neighborhood Park Guidelines

11/96

INTRODUCTION

Since good park design is a process of conceiving and composing recreational areas, facilities, and support elements into an attractive, enjoyable park environment. And the complexity and quality of good park design is directly correlated to the expertise of the park designer. Then a comprehensive park development plan and technical design requires special knowledge, training, and skill from the design professional.

Recognizing that park development is an important public work and public participation a key element in park planning and design in our community, the Parks and Recreation Department & the Parks Commission adopt the following design review process and development guidelines as a standard of performance for all neighborhood park and RCT development to encourage innovative, interesting, functional, safe and environmentally attractive park facilities for the citizens of Carson City:

THE PROCESS

[These guidelines are intended to identify a review process and inform the trained professional park designer/ landscape architect of the goals for neighborhood park planning and design in the community. With the understanding that good design is a dynamic process and only primary design phases are indicated here, these guidelines serve to initiate a clear and coherent program.]

Planning:

Planning is to be performed in consultation with Parks staff and include an evaluation of existing parks system recreational resources, needs of the neighborhood, and appropriate public participation.

Develop a design program that describes the objectives of the proposed park in terms of physical character, activity, and the expected user experience.

Develop an activity analysis and identify the relevant participant, support, resource and facility factors that are essential to the anticipated recreational experience and proposed park plan. This will include equipment needs, activity period, user profile, participation parameters, and area, utility, access, and other design considerations.

Design :

Perform an appropriate analysis of relevant on-site and off-site factors and provide a site analysis report and diagram, at suitable scale. (Investigate soils, geology, hydrology, vegetation, topography, climate, land-use, utilities, and demographic/ cultural issues, etc., as relevant.) Provide a clear statement of the design objectives derived from the design program.

Develop alternative concept plans that result from the synthesis of the design program and the site analysis. Delineate the pros and cons of each concept, indicating the different approaches, priorities and compromises of each alternative.

Evaluate alternatives and recommend a preferred concept plan. Refine the selected concept plan through focused data collection, if necessary, and further design exploration. Develop an appropriate physical setting that promotes an attractive leisure experience for the preferred activities. Review of concept proposals by parks staff and the Park Commission for comment is warranted.

Design Review:

Prepare a general development plan and design that provides for visual attractiveness and stimulation in the park setting, and uses innovative design techniques to enhance site opportunities and mitigate constraints, and further refines the park plan to meet the design program. This plan should be supported by a design report that explains the reasons for selecting or discarding of

alternative and preferred concepts in the planning/design process, as well as colored section, elevation, and perspective sketches that show the character of key design

elements (plant materials, structures, walkways, entry view, etc.). It should explain the design intent to the general public, and indicate type, color, and quality of materials. This plan and report should be in presentation format (see minimum standards, below) and be accompanied with a preliminary cost estimate.

The design report and drawings of illustrative site plan, elevation, and perspective sketches, in appropriate format & bearing the registered stamp of the responsible design professional, should be presented to the Parks Commission for review and approval. The report should be in 8"-1/2" X 11" format, typed, reproducible, one bound, one unbound (for photocopy). Reduced size (11" X 17") of the site plan, cross-sections, elevations, and perspective graphics should be included in the report for review by the Parks Commission prior to the public presentation. The public presentation park site plan should be at a maximum 1" = 25' scale (1"=20', preferred), colored, notated, and have supporting colored graphics (sections, elevations, perspectives) at suitable scale for public viewing.

Completion and review of detailed construction drawings, specifications, and related contract documents follows approval of the general development plan. Changes in character, quantity and quality of design elements and materials from those approved during the public presentation should be discussed with Parks staff and

brought to the Parks Commission for review and comment. Construction drawings, specifications, schedules, etc. should be provided in both hard copy (with registered stamp) and digital format. Plan and detail drawings should be on vellum / mylar (24"X36") and on

PC computer disks in Autocad R12, .DWG file format.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

The following design principles advise the creation of optimum park relationships and inspire good park design that produces an attractive facility and enjoyable recreational experience for the community.

- The essential elements of design, including scale, harmony, contrast, repetition, dynamic balance, color and sequence, are important to providing an attractive and interesting park experience.
- Scale and proportion of all park elements should be compatible and promote unity in overall park design.
- Human scale and visual detail should be used to stimulate enduring use of the park.
- Entry design elements should provide useful visual cues for the visitor.
- Spatial areas should be designed to provide for a sense of relaxation, or dynamic action, or delight/enjoyment/calm, etc., through spatial modulation, sequence, and the harmonious relationship of design elements.
- Plant material color, texture, form, scale, and grouping should be used creatively to provide focus, interest, drama, and a perceptible character to the park and its features.
- Size and visual character of trees should be in proportion to their setting and the overall design intent.
- Choice & placement of plant materials should satisfy:
 - environmental conditions (soil, water, climate, sun/wind exposure)
 - cultural conditions (evocative impressions and images)
 - functional conditions (durable, maintenance, longevity, conservation)
 - aesthetic conditions (tree shape quality: soft, airy, bold, majestic)

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- Circulation routes for park users should be designed in relation to their function; paths should guide and encourage appropriate movement.
- These areas should be designed to provide for pleasant transitions:
 - Active - Passive
 - Formal - Informal
 - Natural - Structured
 - Vehicle – Pedestrian
- Structures should be designed and sited as integral components of the larger landscape setting.
- Design of play areas for children should promote curiosity, wonder, challenge, fun, safety and shelter.

- Park design should seek to create a distinctive site character, in context with its surroundings, and establish a setting that encourages neighborhood interaction.
- Park design should weigh the use of shelter/gazebo/amphitheatre as focal architectural elements or visual landmarks.
- Design of park should enhance pedestrian and bicycle access/arrival, with auto parking minimized.
- Potential conflicting activities should be resolved in the design process.

DESIGN GUIDELINES:

The intent of the guidelines is to promote functional, attractive, and well-built park facilities, while allowing for imaginative design of the park setting. Park activity areas should be designed in an arrangement that encourages appropriate use, access, surveillance; buffers incompatible activity while arranging complimentary activity to create a sense of pleasure and unity of the whole.

Access:

- On-street parking is preferred for neighborhood parks to allow for the greatest park-use area.
- Bicycle access/parking facilities should be provided as part of the design program.
- ADA requirements should be incorporated into the park design.

Circulation:

- Circulation conflicts between pedestrians, bicycles, and autos should be minimized / mitigated.
- Primary pedestrian walkways should be min. 6' wide.(Width to be determined by use.)
- Walkways with alternate maintenance vehicle access should be min. 8' wide, and designed for load.
- Concrete is the preferred hard-surfacing for primary circulation routes.

Play Zones:

- Play/Activity areas should be designed for the appropriate age and activity levels.
- Play space for children should provide an appropriate mix of play types: challenge, discovery, enclosure, a natural play experience, and the appropriate setting, space, and surfacing for each.

Site Drainage:

- Natural flow patterns of a site should be incorporated into the design of facilities, where appropriate.
- Surface flow is preferred over culverted flow to minimize maintenance.
- Primary use areas should have positive drainage to an appropriate collector.
- Turf fields should have 2% slope to provide positive surface drainage.

Landform:

- Landforms that create a varied park and recreational experience in concert with the design intent of the

park are encouraged.

- Park design should work with the landform and accentuate positive site features.
- Detention basin slopes should be a minimum 6:1; (for RCT credit).
- Berms should be a minimum 4:1; (Unless part of an exemplary design feature)

□ Landscape Character:

- The design of the park should provide for coherence and quality in the use of plant materials (trees, shrubs, groundcover. etc.) and retain valuable trees and vegetation, where appropriate.
- The use of trees in the design should provide for a recognizable landscape character; formal/informal, rustic/urban, riparian/upland, etc.; and consider seasonal appearance; use large-scale trees where appropriate.
 - Parks should have a predominant deciduous tree cover and grouping to provide for mitigation of climate extremes and seasonal winds. (Min. mature deciduous canopy coverage of 33%.)

□ Spatial Organization:

- The design should incorporate the elements of spatial organization: appropriate area, form, enclosure, containment, grouping, and transition for the various

levels of activity, and experience intended for the park.

□ Visual Elements:

- The design should incorporate visual techniques such as screening, sequence, enhancement of appropriate visual elements; and create a sense of drama, interest, and exploration, as appropriate.
- Artistic/sculptural/focal elements can be an ingredient of good park design.
 - Color, texture, and form should reinforce overall design of park.

□ Energy/Water Conservation:

- The principles of energy conservation site planning should be evident in the design of the park; including solar access, wind mitigation, conservation of soil and water, energy efficiency, and pedestrian / bicycle accessibility.
- The seven principles of Xeriscape landscaping should be considered and incorporated into the park landscape areas:

Xeriscape Principles:

- Planning & Design
- Soil Analysis & Improvements
- Practical turf areas
- Appropriate plant selection
- Efficient irrigation

- Mulching
- Appropriate maintenance

□ Quality of Materials/ Construction:

-Materials and products should be of a durable, attractive, appropriate, and consistent quality throughout.

-To ensure durable park facilities, current City uniform building codes and Standard Specifications for Public Works are the City adopted minimum standards of construction for public works; i.e, park projects.

-Certain materials/products are designated as standardized park components. (See Standard Park Components, below.)

- American Nurseryman's Association standards for high quality plant materials are the preferred standard..

□ Lighting:

-Lighting should serve both functional and aesthetic considerations, and be energy efficient.

-Lighting should provide appropriate illumination for secure evening use of facilities, discourage vandalism, and enhance the visual ambience of the park.

- Luminaires should be appropriate in size, color,

material and scale to the setting, provide cut-off control of illumination, and visually reinforce the design style of the park.

□ Maintenance/Vandalism:

-Maintenance should be a clear design consideration, while not impeding innovative and interesting park design.

-Principles of defensible space should be apparent in the design.

-Materials that are durable, modular, and vandal-resistant are preferred and be given appropriate consideration.

-Surveillance of targeted elements by the neighborhood and park ranger should be considered in park design development.

* **Special Cases:**

□ Detention Basin parks:

-Detention basins should be designed for park use early in the development process. (Review by park staff and park design consultants early in subdivision design.)

-Basin parks should provide for out-of-flood areas for structures, recreational equipment, and support elements not favorable to basin flooding.

-Urban run-off can be hazardous; basin inlet/outlets should protect basin park users. Warning signs indicating the quality/depth of run-off are appropriate. (Further research may indicate that substantial closure time may be necessary to protect park users from run-off contamination.)

-Basin soils should be tested to indicate probable time-to-dry after inundation, and/or depth to groundwater.

-Basin parks should have a naturalistic/attractive contouring of basin. (Recommended minimum 6:1 slope; steeper slopes will be allowed with exemplary design contouring.)

-Basin parks with limited recreational utility should be given proportional RCT credit.

- A range of plant materials that sustain short-term inundation should be considered in the design of the basin wetted area.

□ Linear park:

-Linear parks should have sufficient width to buffer adjacent land-use, provide space for trees, rest areas, and an enjoyable outdoor mobile experience.

-Linear park sidewalks (min. 8') are not to be considered on-street bike lane substitutes.

-Lighting for evening walking and security are an essential consideration.

-Walkway adjacent to roadways should be separated from road by a min. 10' planting zone.

-Turf area should be minimized; other living groundcover preferred.

-Curb ramps along the primary travel path should have a standard 5' bottom width; (wider than ADA minimum).

-Curb ramps and sidewalk should be arranged to provide for auto/pedestrian safety & visibility at intersections/crossings.

- Curb ramps should use only one (1) removable bollard on centerline for 8' or 10' wide pathways to inhibit vehicle access, when appropriate.

Standard Park Components:

To allow for efficiency in maintenance and repair, materials inventory, training of personnel, and recognizing the need for consistently attractive and durable products, certain park facility products, materials, and elements are recommended as standard components of park development. In some cases a choice of products, materials, manufacturers, or systems will be available, in others there will not. (Substitutions may be appropriate to accommodate exemplary park design)

See Standard Park Components handbook for descriptions, details, specifications, manufacturers, etc. [handbook currently in development process].

List of Components:(candidates)

- * Irrigation Equipment
- * Tables / Grills
- * Drink Fountains
- * Bicycle Racks / Storage
- * Flag Poles
- * Refuse Containers

- * Play Apparatus

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- * Walkway / Multi-use Paths
- * Comfort Station (floorplan, fixtures, lighting).
- * Signage (identifier, directional, warning, regulation)

(The "Orange Book", Standard Specifications for Public Works, (latest edition) will be referenced within the Standardized Park Components manual.)

Park Commissioner: Design Review Process

1. Understand what the park planner/landscape architect has done.

- During presentation try to understand the broad design concepts and issues.
- Look for the justifications for the design; ask for clarifications, if necessary.
- If you cannot read the topographic relief, the spatial arrangement and activity areas, or aesthetic design intent, ask to have them explained.
- If you do not understand the significance of an issue, ask. Ask. Ask!

2. Consider the program and goals for the Park

- Are the primary objectives of the park, as identified in the Design Report, supported by the plans and drawings? Does it make sense?
- If you are not convinced, move on, but qualify judgments accordingly.

3. Evaluate how the detail of the Plan realizes the goals and objectives for the Park

- From the park plan, discover its concept: major use areas, circulation patterns, spatial structure, etc.
- Mentally combine the site analysis and park plan, and ask these questions:
 - * What is the nature of the park to its surrounding area?
 - * What is the relation of activity areas to the park site?
 - * Is the relation of activity area to adjacent activity area appropriate? Functional?
 - * Are major structures appropriately located for access, aesthetic effect, etc.?
 - * Is the circulation pattern sensible and appropriate?
 - * Are the spatial areas of appropriate size and create the intended experience?
 - ≠ Do the design details reinforce the intended aesthetic character of the park?
 - ≠ Does the design provide for order and variety?
 - ≠ Are the stated goals and objectives for the park satisfied?
- Draw conclusions about the quality of design for each element in each activity area.