

Carroll Park Master Plan Update, Community Meeting January 21ST, 2014



Tonight

Recap of Approved Master Plan and Consensus
Community Recommendations from 2005

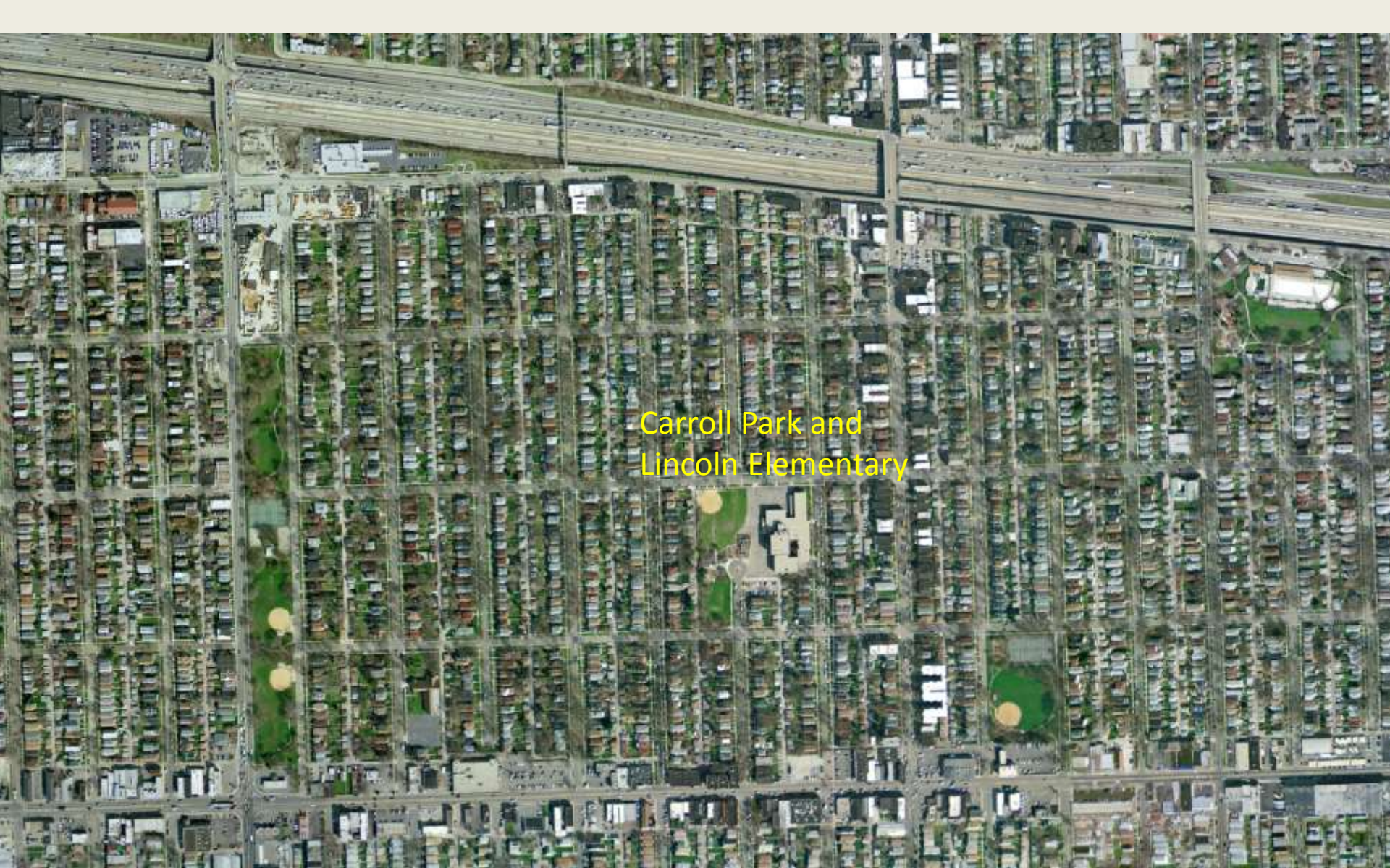
What has been accomplished so far

Potential next phase of improvements

Near term and Long Term

(year of construction to be determined)

Discussion of alternatives



Carroll Park and
Lincoln Elementary

Carroll Park - Central to the Community



Master Plan process 2005

Focus Groups and then Community Meetings



3 Votes Held on Six Schemes

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After changes and caveats
Concept 1 got a wide majority

Neighbors boil Carroll redesign down to two concepts

Plan calls for cooperation between parks, schools, village

By BILL DWYER

Oak Park Park District officials met for the second time with Carroll Center area residents last Wednesday evening. With a goal of winnowing six proposed park redesign concepts down to a single plan for park board consideration, the group of some 20 neighbors, in the end, settled on two plans, basically 1A and 1B.

"Concept one was the option of choice," said park district Executive Director Gary Balling Monday, "but concept three was and is the back up."

The Carroll planning process is the first of 18 planned neighborhood meetings scheduled over the next year or two to develop master plans for every park district property. While the long term plans call for extensive multi-million dollar renovation of Carroll and other parks, Balling said that short term improvements would be far more modest. The district, he said, had set aside \$500,000 for park and playground improvements at Carroll over the next year.

Park officials and their consultant, Altamano, had met with four focus groups in September. Out of those meetings, over a dozen concepts had been developed. From those, Altamano was to have drawn up three concepts to be discussed at Wednesday's meeting, although the park district got a bit more than it expected.

"We asked for three concepts and they came back with six," said Balling. That was just as well, if the deliberation with citizens was any indication. The process clearly involved a series of trade offs, with no alternative that met with total acceptance by those present.

Both Balling and Altamano principal John Mac Manus were at pains to assure the attendees that there was no intention by anyone associated with the planned park improvements to take any of the four houses directly east of the park's south end against their owner's will.

Mac Manus and his Altamano colleagues clearly favored several concepts that featured a new park district field house physically attached to nearby Lincoln School, 111 S. Grove Ave. Such an arrangement, which both Mac Manus and Balling noted had met

with approval by school officials, would allow "dual use," which would result in significant cost savings in relation to heating and cooling, maintenance, staffing and security and such costly add-ons as locker rooms, restrooms, and office space.

With a goal of choosing a concept most able to be phased-in, participants focused on the ability of park district contractors to build any proposed plan in workable stages over the next 10 to 20 years. That idea gained added weight in light of Mac Manus's statement that the existing Carroll field house would remain standing until any new field house was constructed.

"The starting to find a hybrid between concepts one and three," said Mac Manus.

With a final concept decided upon, and a final recommended plan to be presented to the park board at a Dec. 1 meeting, Balling said the next step will be addressing details

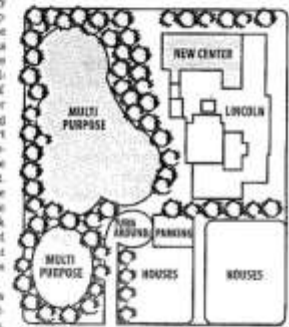
of the proposed plan with school district officials.

"We will be meeting with District 37 in the near future to discuss the proposed changes and talk about how we can work together on the cooperative project that will ultimately benefit park, care and school students," Balling said in a faxed statement Monday.

Consultation, said Balling, will be key. "One partner can't do it without the other," he said. "We don't think this project is going to take a lot of creative and strategic work on the part of the park district, District 37, and the Village of Oak Park as partners to make this happen."

Not everyone was happy with the process. The affable Mac Manus apparently offended one participant late in the discussion. As for the man pointed out to Mac Manus for perhaps the fourth time that he didn't want a field house that was attached to Lincoln School, in part out of previously expressed distrust of school officials dictating its use, Mac Manus noted the objection, nodded and said "you're obviously very concerned about the school taking over." When the man immediately stood up and got on his jacket, Mac Manus said, "You don't have to know me, to which the man replied, "I don't need to be involved," then walked out with his young son.

Mac Manus, who was puzzled at the man's reaction, nonetheless expressed his vote in attendance during the vote to last week, though it proved to be the last vote for his preferred concept.



Illustrated by Katie Olson

WIDE PLAY FOR THE BUCK: The new proposed Carroll layout looks to maximize gain, minimize expense in park and school district.

Utility Triangle Covered Sealed Fine Dining Platform

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Main Issues 2005

- No N-S path
- Playground needed to be replaced
- Turnaround and playground occupied the center of the park
- Major sightline issues
- Lighting and safety
- Condition of fields
- Condition of Center





Playground in 2005 reaching the end of useful/safe life, sightline issues and lack of pathways



2005



2013

Turnaround & new playground moved east, green space gained and pedestrian scaled lights introduced



Playground needed to be replaced

From meeting in 2005

Tiles have too many joints, glued to asphalt, falling apart, Mike (Grandy) prefers wood chips, 4-5 years they become soil, wood chips good but inconvenient. Roberto said “bolts break”, some plastic composite boards replaced with boards from benches. Playground reaching end of its life.

Phase 1 Construction \$370,000

Recommendations carried out

- Relocated the turnaround
- Relocated and updated the playground
- Added a tree-lined path through the park to make a link for residents and to demarcate school playground from the ball fields
- Added seating
- Added lighting to improve safety
- Improved drainage under the playground



Before



After



After



Community also called for a new Recreation Center in the long-term November 2005

8

NEWS

Wednesday, November 9, 2005

PIONEER PRESS

Rec center neighbors favor razing Carroll

By HOLLY M. ANDERSON
STAFF WRITER

Conceptual plans for renovating Carroll Center came together last week during a second public meeting to review options to demolish and replace the building elsewhere in the park.

A final plan is scheduled to be presented to the Park District of Oak Park Board at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 1 at the Oak Park Conservatory.

Twenty residents who attended the meeting Nov. 2 worked with John Mac Manus and Josephine Bellalta, of village-based landscape architecture firm Altamanu, to narrow six concept schemes for the space at 1125 S. Kenilworth Ave. at Fillmore Street. The six concepts were based on comments from residents at an Oct. 5 public meeting.

A majority of residents in attendance liked a plan that calls for building a new center north of Lincoln School. The proposed new building could be two to three stories, matching Lincoln School's height, if located to the north of the school, Mac Manus said.

Park District Director Gary Balling said the proposed changes would take place in eight to 10 years, and would be worked out in collaboration with Lincoln School officials. Both school and park district offices would be located in the new building, under the plan.

Park Board President David Kindler said the first phase in redesigning the park could be addressing drainage issues, making the play fields more desirable and improving the sub surface by removing remnants of a street from below the park's surface.

Residents' review

Residents on hand Nov. 2 discussed what they liked and didn't like about the proposed concepts.

One asked why the park district has designed a new center and park space before settling on what programs will be located there.

"We're looking at space allocations first," Balling said. "Then we can determine programming. We know we need more space for more active programming. We have a deficit in

adult programming and need more multi-purpose spaces."

Another speaker asked why the center should be torn down.

"To me the whole idea of Oak Park is about its history," she said. "The center isn't the greatest thing, but it's not the worst either."

Mac Manus said the current center needs extensive repair and isn't large enough to provide space for new programming such as martial arts, aerobics and a gymnasium.

Park District Buildings and Grounds Director Mike Grandy, who was Carroll Center director until 1987, said the 1927 building by Prairie School architect John Van Bergen has been extensively altered, and isn't sound enough for renovation.

"It's a tired building," he said.

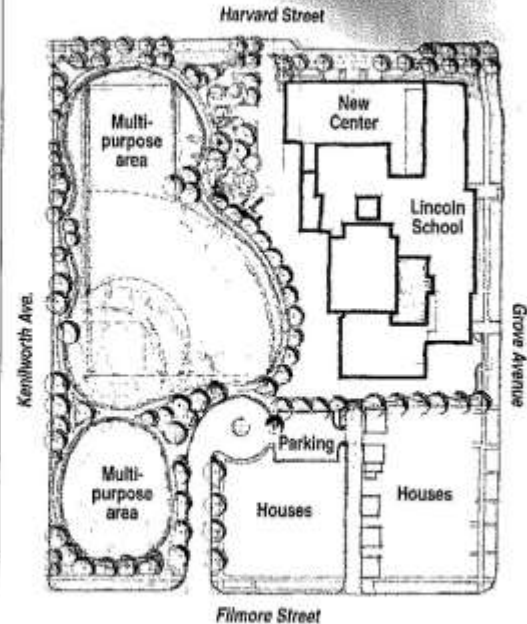
One resident suggested the buildings original fireplace and beams be salvaged for reuse in the new building.

Marty Hackl of River Forest, an author and authority on Van Bergen, was dismayed Thursday to learn of plans for Carroll Center.

"A case can always be made

Proposed redesign for Carroll Center

The park district is considering new plans for Carroll Center, including relocating the center, sports fields and playgrounds. A majority of residents at a public meeting last week prefer this plan out of six presented.



Source: Park District of Oak Park; Altamanu

Pioneer Press / dcb

for tearing a place down if in the end that's what they want to do. They'll say it's dilapidated or too heavily altered," he said. "A case can also be made for preserving it."

In addition to Carroll, four

other centers - Field, Anderson, Barrie and Stevenson (now demolished - also were designed by Van Bergen. The latter was later demolished.

A 2004 report by the Oak (Continued on page 12)



The difference in plan before and after Phase 1 construction



2005



2010

1. Relocated the turnaround. 2. Relocated and updated the playground



2005



2010

3. Tree-lined path makes a link for residents, demarcates school playground from the ball fields, seating added, green space gained and field widened



Eventually the Center is to be replaced by a new Rec Center attached to the school and the Tot Lot moved to make a contiguous green space. But this outside current funding.



Please Note: District 97 remains interested in the New Center, however Funds are not currently available to construct the New Center



Long Range Master Plan

Background: Comments by Community Members

Carroll Center First Meeting 2005

- Carroll Center: Ca. 1920's Architect John Van Bergen
- Building changed many times, not original design.
- Building has been maintained but is older and "tired"
- Small footprint, using basement for programs
- Site lines an issue-police/school concern. Center/play ground block views
- Could make an open space that has a multi purpose green
- Not rented very often, most people do not know that you can rent the Center, residents often use River Forrest facility on Madison, the building could be rented for parties and weddings, needs additional space
- Should be open all day (as it used to be)
- Access to bathrooms during games, kids use the trees

Current Programs 2005:

- Camp Acorn
- West Suburban Rec.
- Center has programs and is staffed but not every day

What age groups use Carroll Center?

- Preschool; K-3 classes; La escuela; Leagues (fields or gym) 3rd through 8th grades
- Tues-Thur exercise adult group

Background: Comments by Community Members

Carroll Center Second Meeting 2005

- The Center had historic significance but had been altered significantly
- It reflected the aims of the social/park movement of the 20's
- At first public meeting there was no support for restoring or keeping the Center
- The Center was described as "tired" and was too small for multiple uses
- Mike Grandy spoke about how the building had changed over time and the difficulties and potential expense of restoration
- 3 residents spoke about the changes made to the building over time
- One resident spoke in favor of restoration, he later informed the meeting that he was a contractor who worked in restoration
- He stated that he believed it would be extremely expensive to restore
- The location of the building and how it divided the park was discussed
- The possibility of a new center was discussed
- The benefits of a new center connecting it to the school were discussed
- Public sentiment is involved and therefore it would be good to incorporate existing building elements into the new building (Artwork)
- Removal of the building would open up park
- Safety Issues - Parking and drop-off takes place behind the existing Center at alley. If Center moved, then alley drop off resolved
- Center would stay until new building constructed
- One resident said that the new Center should be at south end of park

Carroll Center Continued

- More economic for PD and school to pool funds
- A new multi-purpose facility would be very popular
- Gym Availability? One Entry/Shared after hours, Park/School Relationship?
- If Gym attached to school:
 - Helps with security and staffing
 - Access: Day/night?
 - Pre school & Older kids
 - Could be multi story with main user on ground floor
 - School needs space but would it be really available to the public?
- One resident in particular wanted the Center at the south so that it could be separate and bikes would be allowed. In 2005 the school did not want bikes and roller blades because of small kids



Today

The Park District is looking at the next phase of continuing improvements

The Park District has used the additional community recommendations from 2005 as a starting point

What were those recommendations?



Additional Recommendations

- Add a circulation path around the park with distance markers for school and residents.
- Add a new entry in NW corner
- Improve the field and add irrigation system
- Add "field box" storage for bases, nets, lining material etc.
- Have all baseball facilities installed to high standard of design.
- The concept of creating an outside classroom/waiting area discussed



Long Range Master Plan



Tonight we will look at 4 areas of the park



Recommendations: 1. Continue perimeter path & add entry and 2. Improve the field
We will show you some images and then we can discuss



Recommendations: 1. Continue perimeter path add entry
Note diagrammatic only



Periphery paths popular in Park Survey and called for by school representatives and residents



Periphery path waiting to be completed and there is already a small entry on NW corner



Space for path along west side, entry could be moved slightly to the east for safety reasons

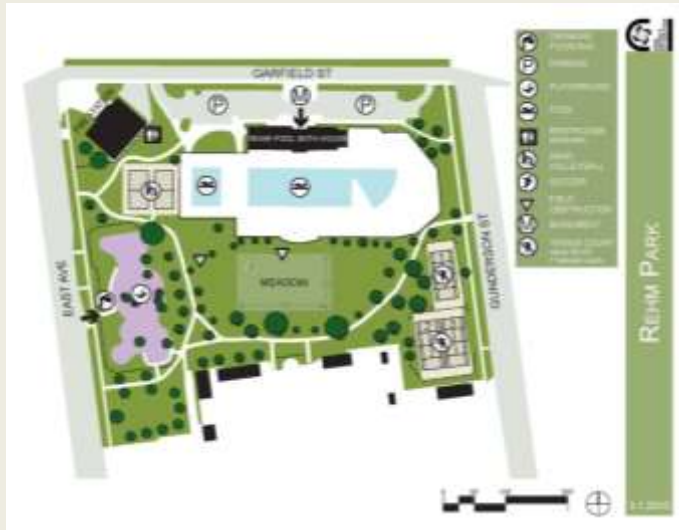


Carroll Park and
Lincoln Elementary

Maple

Euclid Sq.

Ballfields in the area: Largest 220 ft. smallest 160 ft.



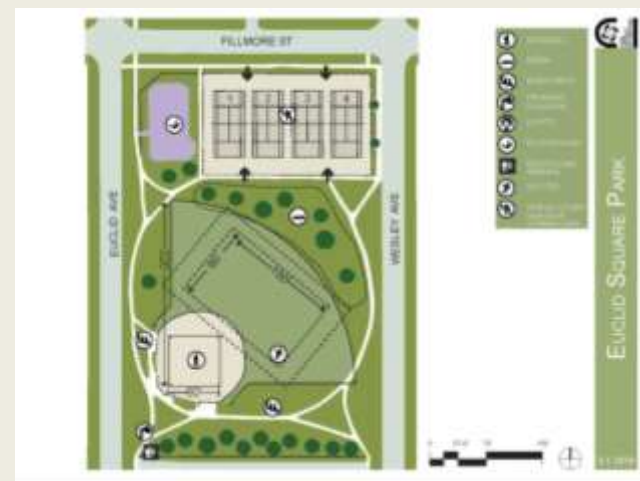
Rehm Park No Ballfield



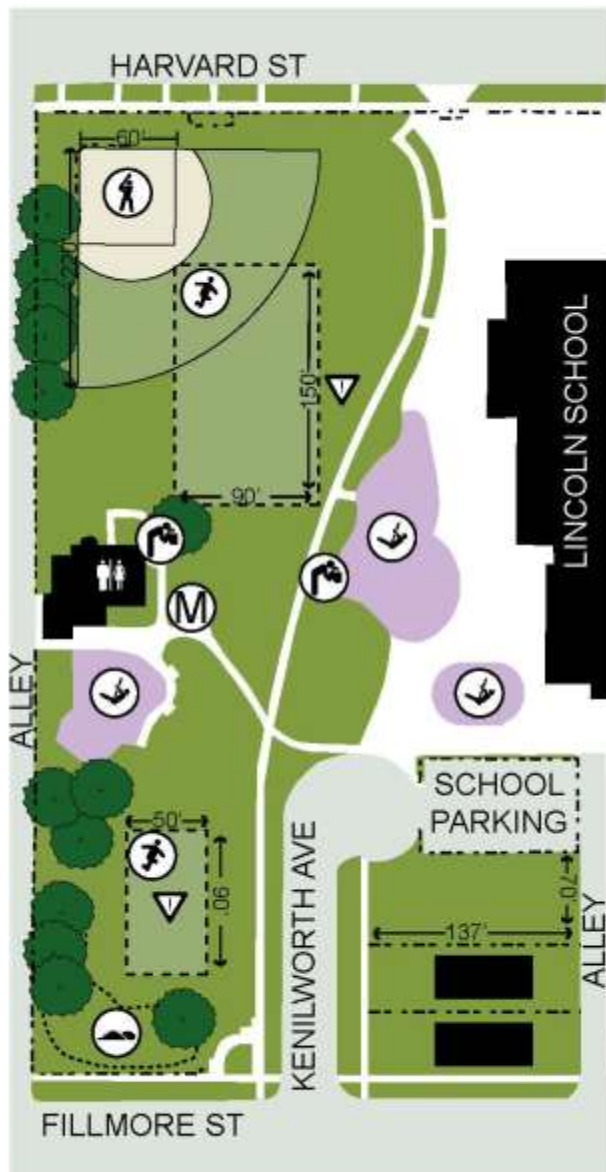
Barrie Park 1 Ballfield 220 feet



Maple Park 2 x 160 feet



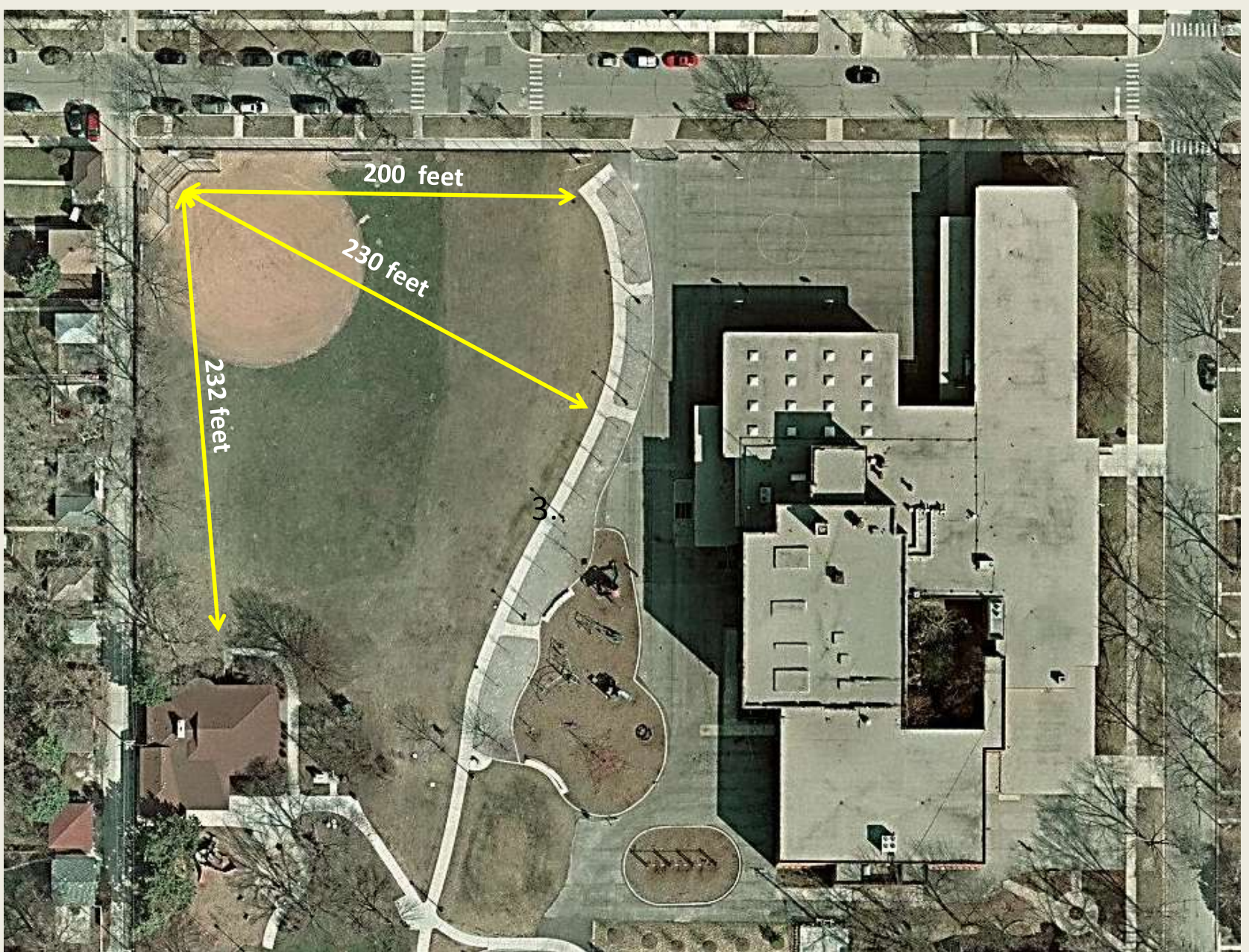
Euclid Sq. Park 1 Ballfield 220 feet



- BASEBALL
- BERM
- DRINKING FOUNTAIN
- FIELD OBSTRUCTION
- MONUMENT
- PLAYGROUND
- RESTROOMS
- SOCCER

CARROLL PARK

3.1.2010



Comments by Community Members Meeting 2005

The Field

- Used for T Ball, up to 4th and 5th grade, lighting on poles, additional lighting from school
- Areas of heavy erosion and compaction
- MH in SE of field is not a catch basin
- Flooding occurs occasionally in winter/spring when snows melt (remains of street below grade?)
- Sewer and water are down the middle of vacated street. (remains of street below grade?)
- Gary Balling (then Executive Director of the Park District) stated that “It is always good in the long run to spend money on planning and on underground utilities as a base for the future.”





2005



2013



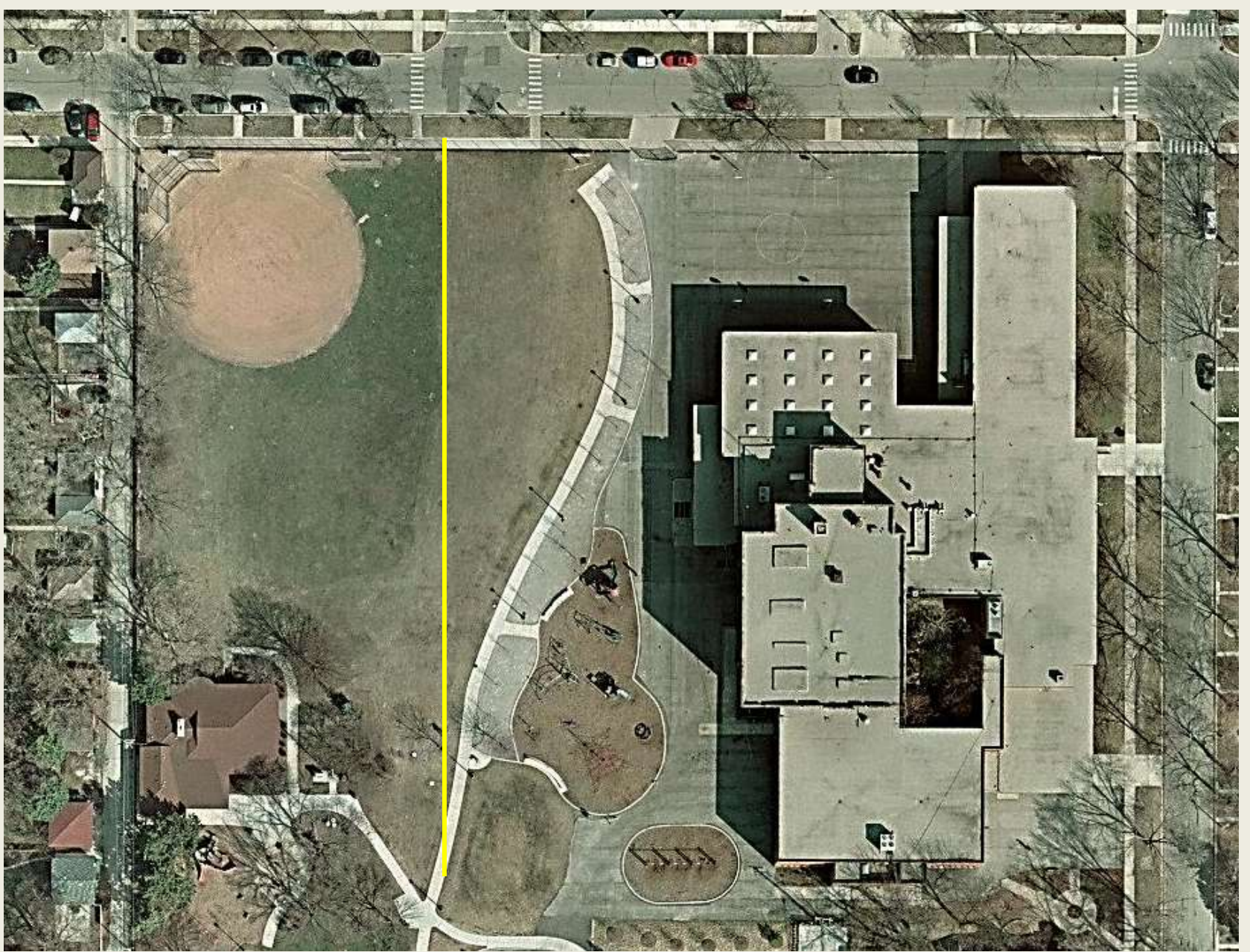
Potential Improvements to the Field

- Perimeter Path
- Regrading/Resodding
- Irrigation
- New backstop and fencing
- Players benches
- Bleachers
- Park Entry Sign
- Additional lighting
- Landscaping

Issue

In 1965, part of Kenilworth was closed between Carroll Park and Lincoln School to connect school to the park. What are below grade conditions? Some of that street could still be below grade.









Carroll Park

● 2 Soil Borings / Perc Tests



Dec. 20, 2013



Altamanu Inc.
landscape architecture • urban design • planning

We have to understand underground conditions therefore PD having soil borings taken



Park District of Oak Park

Altamanu Inc.



Comments on Proposed Perimeter Path and Field Improvements



Recommendations: 3. Add an outdoor classroom/waiting area in new space by the drop-off, close to school, playground and Center. But should not block views and elements should be movable if tot lot relocated in the future



New green space could be a continuation of the playground but drainage needs to be improved

Idea:

Outdoor classroom and waiting area
Could use natural boulders?

Heavy but
Inexpensive

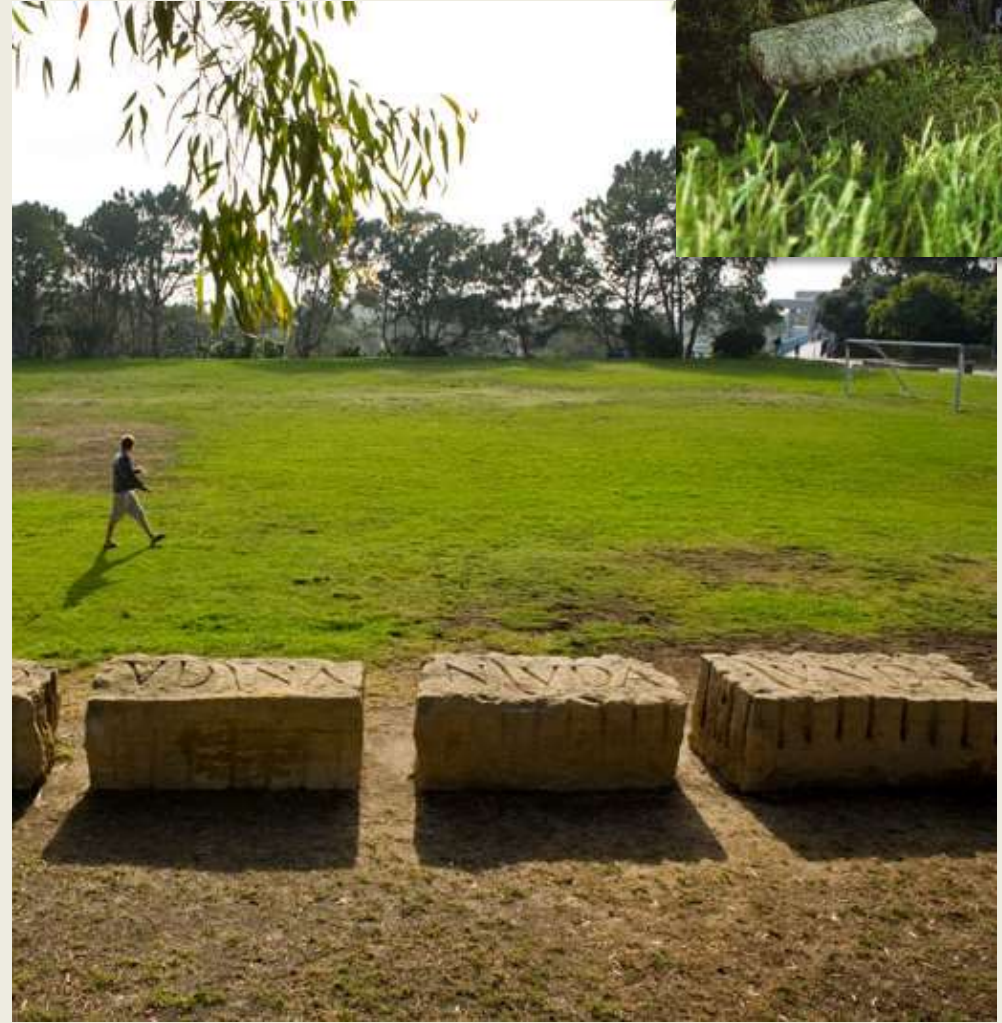
Allows for creative
free play

Natural products



Idea:

Incorporate historic info for kids to discover?



Idea:

Different types of seating?
Used at Irving Elementary





Comments on Outdoor Classroom/Waiting Area



The Park District purchased two properties on Kenilworth and added green space



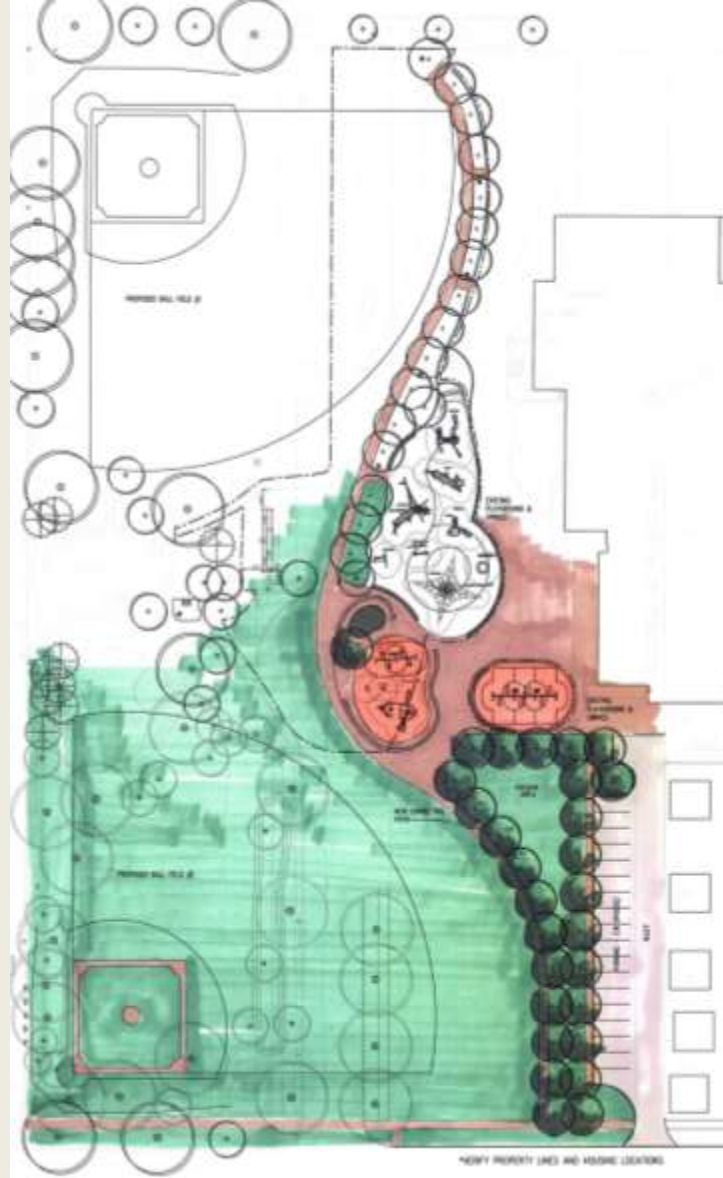
The concept was to purchase the remaining houses on Kenilworth if/when they come available, remove the road inside the park and create a new entry and enlarged fields



This would provide space for more ballfields or whatever the community wants



This would provide space for more ballfields or whatever the community wants



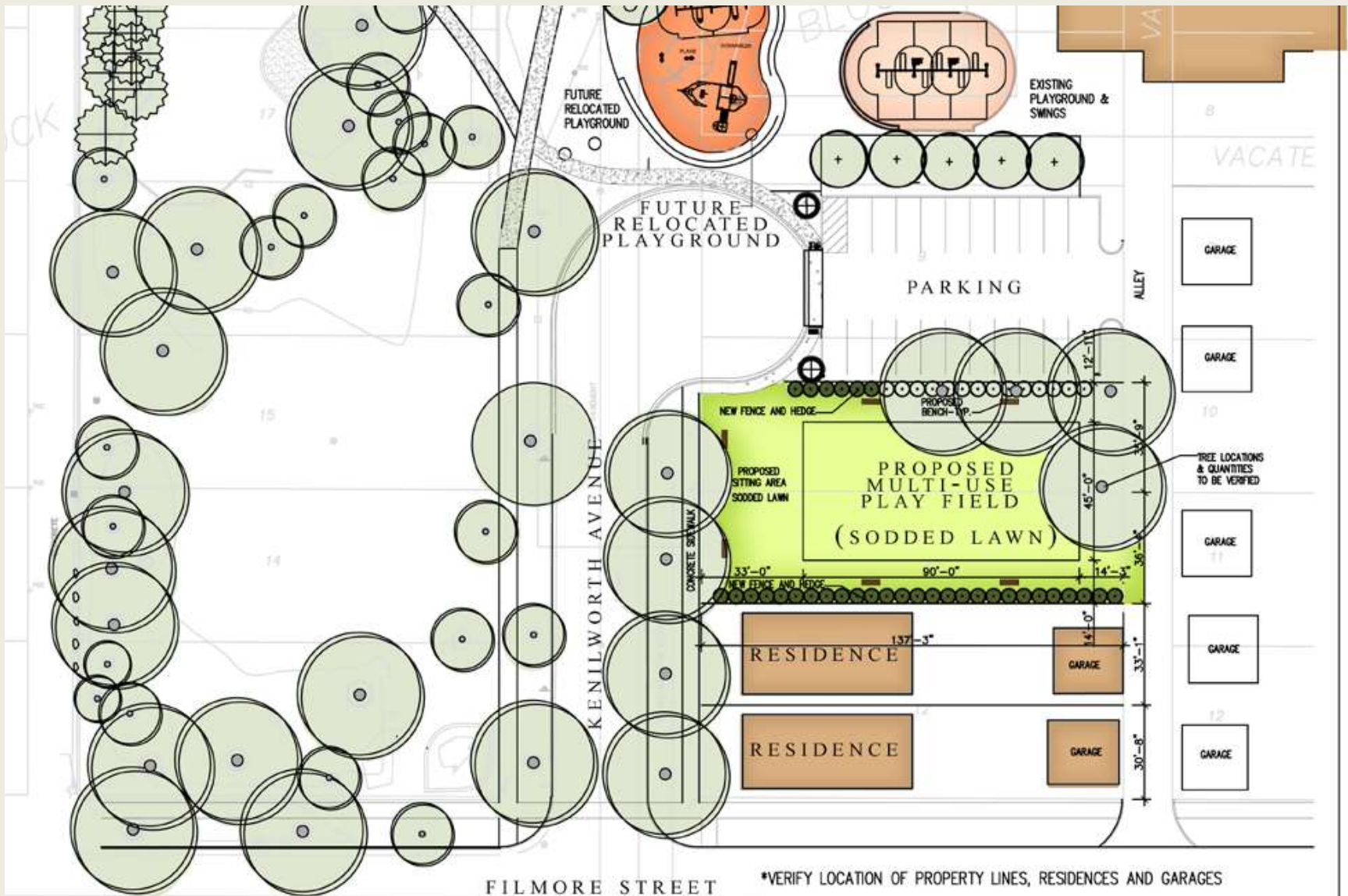
This would provide space for more ballfields or whatever the community wants



In the meantime how will we use this green space?



Space approx. 45 ft. x 72 ft.



It could be a simple sodded area for multi-purpose use?



Potential batting cages



Comments on Open Space 4





2005



2010