# Athletic Field Park – Community Planning Process Midtown Revitalization Program – Kiteley Neighborhood

# Report



For City of Longmont Staff and the Kiteley Neighborhood

By: Tanya Ferencak

City of Longmont Community and Neighborhood Resources Neighborhood Revitalization Program Kiteley Neighborhood

August, 2011

### Acknowledgements

This document represents the collaborative process between the citizens of Longmont, especially the Kiteley Neighborhood Group, City of Longmont staff from Community and Neighborhood Resources, Public Works and Natural Resources, Longmont Power and Communications and Parks and Recreation.

This effort could not have been successful without contributions from the following individuals that helped steer the process and who generously shared their time during the planning process.

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# **Executive Summary**

The community planning for the Athletic Field Park improvements was initiated through the Neighborhood Revitalization Planning process for the Kiteley Neighborhood. Residents, when surveyed in the Kiteley neighborhood indicated that Parks and Open Space were an important element and asset of the area that they would like to focus their time, attention and funding on, with the support of the Midtown Revitalization Program. Open space areas identified for improvement were Athletic Field Park, and the Spring Creek Gulch open space near Baker St. and 11<sup>th</sup> Ave., where the Second Start and 11<sup>th</sup> & Baker St. Community Gardens are currently located.

The community planning process for Athletic Field Park entailed a process lasting over 1 year. The process included the input of numerous neighborhood residents along with City of Longmont staff, Boards and Council members. The effort has resulted in a very clear direction that calls for the redevelopment of the park to better serve the needs of the surrounding neighborhood.

The concept is intended to be used as a multi-year planning document that the Kiteley neighborhood will use to invest their Midtown CDBG Revitalization grant dollars, future grants dollars through the NGLA and other funding sources and hopefully as guidance for a future master planning process of the Park Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project.

The planning involved a public process including neighborhood meetings and surveys (both on-line and hard copy mailings to the neighborhood). While the Athletic Field Park community planning process addresses the neighborhood desire to increase a sense of community through an improved gathering space, unique focal feature of the neighborhood and recognition of this parks history and use, the City also needs to be vigilant of maintenance costs, safety and primary use as a detention pond. The community planning process has determined that additions to the park include recreational opportunities through an improved non-traditional playground that focuses on natural play elements that are built into the unique landscape found at the park, passive recreational opportunities through additional group seating areas, shade and landscaping; additional lighting (provided by LPC) the maintenance of the active, open turf sport area and space, and general enhancements to park aesthetics.

Athletic Field Park's primary use is as a large detention pond and part of the Loomiller Storm Sewer system. The storm sewer system starts near 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Hover Street and enters Spring Gulch No. 1 near 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The storm sewer is 84" diameter as it crosses Main Street under 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue. There are two 48" diameter pipes near the southwest corner of Athletic Field Park. One pipe continues downstream to the creek, the other goes upstream to the park. There is also another 42" diameter pipe in Kimbark Street that collects storm water from 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Main Street.

This project was originally designed to eliminate the flooding of Main Street between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenues which occurred 2 to 4 times per year. This flooding would shut down

Main Street and photos would always be taken by the newspaper showing people in canoes or wading in the street. The 84" diameter pipe collects storm water during a storm and flows east into the 48" diameter pipe. The water continues to flow east and bypass the pond until the 48" diameter pipe is full. Then, the storm water backs up into Athletic Field Park. This project was constructed in 1999 and we have had limited storm water backing up into the detention pond. Large floods greater than a 20 year event will have water in the park and the 100-year flood will fill the park. The park is designed to totally fill with storm water until the water in the 48" pipe lowers which allows the park to drain. In the past twelve years this detention pond was built, it has only filled up three times with water, and only on the south end of the detention pond. It is always the south end of the detention pond that fills with water first.

### Introduction

The Athletic Field Park Community Planning process began in May of 2010 with the initial neighborhood group meeting as part of the Mid-town Revitalization project. The revitalization project identified upgrading Athletic Field Park as one goal of that overall effort. This first step in the process was to add lighting to the Park that was considered dark and unsafe by many residents who like to walk around the path at the top edge. A public process was held over 1 year which defined goals, reviewed plans solicited public opinion through a variety of efforts. This community planning report summarizes the work done and the options proposed.

### **Background**

Athletic Field Park is a large detention pond and part of the Loomiller Storm Sewer system. The storm sewer system starts near 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Hover Street and enters Spring Gulch No. 1 near 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The storm sewer is 84" diameter as it crosses Main Street under 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue. There are two 48" diameter pipes near the southwest corner of Athletic Field Park. One pipe continues downstream to the creek, the other goes upstream to the park. There is also another 42" diameter pipe in Kimbark Street that collects storm water from 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Main Street.

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The park is designed to totally fill with storm water until the water in the 48" pipe lowers which allows the park to drain. In the past twelve years this detention pond was built, it has only filled up three times with water, and only on the south end of the detention pond. It is always the south end of the detention pond that fills with water first.

Athletic Field Park was designed to be as multipurpose as possible while keeping the detention as the primary function. The park was purchased and constructed using 100% storm drainage funds.

Bruce and Nancy with Play Environments (retired) were the Landscape Architects for the park. When designing the detention pond area we held public meetings to gather input about the design. As is typical with most public projects, the input around the design of the detention pond was varied. At the time, there was not much involvement from the Parks department for design or involvement in the park. From the public input gathered it was determined that many wanted the area to remain natural, or include natural elements and vegetation in the design.

The earth mound on the south end of the park is a spiral labyrinth. This detention pond project eliminated the flooding of Main Street between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenues which occurred 2 to 4 times per year. Because we wanted something different to happen during the next flood, the spiral labyrinth was designed so the water rising in the detention pond would go up the spiral and then go back down when the water receded. This not only provided an aesthetic natural element in the south end of the park, but would provide something to see during a flood since the street would not provide any entertainment. The south end of the park was created with much care by City Staff, landscape professionals and the input of many neighbors who lived around the park at the time. The mound and spiral labyrinth, although not a "functional" part of the storm drainage system is still an integral and important part of the detention pond design. It is meant to be a natural element of the park, remind of the neighborhood's history, as well as act as a creative measurement tool to have on hand when the water rises.

The landscaping included interest items on three of the four corners. The park sign and flowers were constructed at the southeast corner. A small stage and place for skate boards was constructed on the southwest corner. A puzzle and tables were placed at the northwest corner. The northeast corner was graded to allow mowers and maintenance vehicles to enter the park.

The basketball court was constructed at the north end of the park to provide a concrete surface for various uses.

The soccer fields were placed in the middle so that fans could sit on the slopes and watch the action.

The sidewalk surrounding the park was also constructed moving both vertically and horizontally to add some interest and provide seating areas as well.

## **Community Planning Process**

Neighborhood Meeting #1 First United Methodist Church May 4, 2010

Tanya Ferencak

Dale Peterson Ryan Ward Kathy Comfort Pat Zulauf Bob Ferenc Chad Marks Lynn Wing Jeannine Christy

The initial public meeting for the park master plan was held at the First United Methodist Church on Tuesday, May 4 at the regularly scheduled Kiteley neighborhood meeting. Among other agenda items, including the neighborhood revitalization planning process, the park planning process and goals of its redevelopment were discussed. There was a brief introduction of what had been done in the previously completed in other Neighborhood Revitalization areas such as Kennsington, Historic Eastside and Old North Longmont for their neighborhood parks.

### **Goal Setting**

An initial goal setting exercise was conducted with the following goal established for the creating of a Park master plan and the utilization of the Midtown Revitalization funding for the Kiteley Neighborhood:

Create a park master plan this promotes a clean, safe and attractive environment; enhancing neighborhood activities and respecting the concerns of nearby residents

#### Visioning

The group suggested the following potential program ideas for the park:

- New lighting
- Water drinking fountain
- New benches and better seating
- Art work (make the park unique)
- Playground all ages
- Picnic area with shade

#### **Process**

Because of the unique history of the park it was important to determine if it was feasible to add a playground to the park because of the primary use it hold as a detention pond. It was determined the first stage of the park planning process would be to add additional

lighting, through LPC, around the south, east and north edges of the park as well as add improved seating to the seating areas by the walking path to include benches with backs.

Neighborhood residents met with police did a walking tour of the neighborhood at night in July of 2010 to determine the true need for lights in the entire neighborhood. Athletic Field Park was identified as a very dark area, on top of the fact that is it an area of high use.

With the collaboration and financial support of Longmont Power and Communications lights ware installed on the south, east and north sides of Athletic Field Park in December of 2010 as part of the Kiteley Neighborhood Revitalization Plan.

New benches were ordered in April of 2011 and paid for with Midtown Revitalization funding.

Staff Meeting #1 Athletic Field Park Meeting 2/7/11

Tanya Ferencak Paula Fitzgerald Ben Wagner Bill Paul

City of Longmont Staff discussed issues about playground designs for Athletic Field Park. It was determined that

- We cannot build beyond the edge of basketball court in the north of the park because need open space in the middle of the park for organized sports like soccer and football.
- We cannot build a playground at the south end of the park because of it's primary use as a detention pond, and although highly unlikely, that park will fill with water staring at the south end first.
- Need a minimum of 10 ft between playground and the edge of the basketball court or some is sand is used, otherwise sand gets on court and causes slippage problems.
- Irrigation lines will have to moved be aware
- NEC design has a 5% grade to allow vehicles, but vehicles can come down through the two (2) trees or to the south of the trees as well.
- We have about 25 ft of useable space in the NWC and about 30 ft of useable space in the NEC for the playground design.
- Can we use Kaboom, Miracle or Game time manufacturers? Yes, as long as they adhere to the safety and design standards. Park will have to be safety certified afterwards.
- Sand is the best option for playground base material

- Need to check and see if purchasing will allow for a design build option for the playground.
- A survey will need to be included in the community planning process, it will be important to ask what components the neighborhood would like in the playground design such as a Spinner, Digger, Climber can be built into the hillside, Slide can be built into hillside, etc.
- Swings can be included but will take up a LOT of space.

Neighborhood Meeting #2 First United Methodist Church February 15, 2011

Tanya Ferencak

Pam Cross
Beth Tulanowski
Kathy Comfort
Jim and Mary Force
Leah Smith
Bob and Connie Ferenc
Dale Peterson
Pat Zulauf
Chad Marks

A second goal setting exercise was conducted. People were excited to begin talking about improvements to the park and begin the survey. Information was shared with the group from the City Staff meeting, and many questions came up about the design of the park and the location of the new playground. Bob Ferenc was very vocal about removing the spiral labyrinth at the south end of the park and adding the playground in that location. The group decided that more information was needed about the detention pond and the spiral mound at the south end of the park.

Neighborhood Meeting #3 First United Methodist Church March 15, 2011

It was shared with the group that according to Dave Hollingsworth, Sr. Civil Engineer, Public Works and Natural Resources, was designed Athletic Field Park, that because of the primary function of Athletic Field Park as a detention pond, the City does not support altering the mound or the spiral labyrinth or adding a playground at the south end of the park.

Athletic Field Park and the Loomiller Detention System By Dave Hollingsworth

Athletic Field Park is a large detention pond and part of the Loomiller Storm Sewer system. This project was originally designed to eliminate the flooding of Main Street between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenues which occurred 2 to 4 times per year. This flooding would shut down Main Street and photos would always be taken by the newspaper showing people in canoes or wading in the street. The 84" diameter pipe collects storm water during a storm and flows east into the 48" diameter pipe. The water continues to flow east and bypass the pond until the 48" diameter pipe is full. Then, the storm water backs up into Athletic Field Park. This project was constructed in 1999 and we have had limited storm water backing up into the detention pond. Large floods greater than a 20 year event will have water in the park and the 100-year flood will fill the park. The park is designed to totally fill with storm water until the water in the 48" pipe lowers which allows the park to drain. In the past twelve years this detention pond was built, it has only filled up three times with water, and only on the south end of the detention pond. It is always the south end of the detention pond that fills with water first. Athletic Field Park was designed to be as multipurpose as possible while keeping the detention as the primary function. The park was purchased and constructed using 100% storm drainage funds.

## Neighborhood Meeting #4 First United Methodist Church April 19, 2011

Tanya Ferencak Paula Fitzgerald Ruby Bowman

Bob Ferenc Ryan and Valerie Ward Pat Zulauf Kathy Comfort Pam Cross Lori Hewitt Beth Tulanowski Chad Marks Dale Peterson Bob Uhr Sibyl Goener

A survey was proposed by the group as a means to garner neighborhood wide opinions on the park. Current likes and dislikes as well as ideas for proposed changes were discussed as important items to be addressed through the survey. A door to door sweep with the survey was suggested since the neighborhood had recently done a similar survey for the revitalization project with good results. An on-line survey (Zoomerang) was suggested as a means to get even better participation. A subcommittee was also suggested to develop the questions.

Tanya Ferencak explained that a community planning process typically includes visioning, conceptual plan review and comment, and draft master plan review and comment opportunities at a minimum. The group attendees determined to either use their normal monthly meetings or call for special meetings for the park community planning process. It was suggested to stage at least one meeting at the park, under a canopy with a fair or picnic to draw in residents. This was considered an ideal venue for the concept plan review and comment meeting.

The plan development process would also collaborate with City parks and recreation, LPC, and Public Works and Natural Resources Engineering staff to garner those concerns.

The following were identified as a typical public process, which could be modified if needed:

- Survey residents for idea input
- Brainstorming / visioning meeting (neighborhood group to develop programs from survey results)
- Design –build proposal for playground and other structures to determine expenditures for CDBG funding
- Concept plan presentation and public comment meeting (at park)
- Master plan development and presentation and public comment meeting
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board presentation and recommendation once Master Plan is complete
- City Council formal adoption of master plan

Visioning for the park with the group included the following elements.

- More interactive games around the upper edge of park, similar to what is already in place.
- Adding distance markers around the sidewalk around the upper edge of park
- Adding painted footprints or other artistic element to the sidewalk around the upper edge of the park
- Adding exercise stations or stretching areas around the sidewalk at the upper edge of the park
- Painted hopscotch
- Adding a walking labyrinth to the park
- Adding a covered picnic shelter to the park
- Adding more trees to park
- Adding more natural landscaping to park
- Adding public art
- Adding a playground area to the park
- Adding a couple of small playground areas to the park
- Look at revamping skate area at SWC of park
- Look at use of basketball court, is it used enough?

- Incorporating the playground area into the earthen sides of the park, using elements such as tunnels, slides, climbers with vertical elements
- Adding elements for tots
- Traditional playground vs. a non traditional playground
- Groups likes slides, climbers, spinners and diggers for playground
- Group recognizes there is not enough room for a swing
- Like natural elements
- Natural stone climbing structures
- Buried fossils to dig for in the sand
- Removing the mound with spiral labyrinth at the south end of the park and placing the playground in this area

## **Survey**

A survey was designed by CNR and neighborhood residents in May of 2011. Two formats to survey the public were provided: an internet based 'Zoomerang' survey posted on the City website at the following address: http://www.zoomerang.com/Shared/SharedResultsPasswordPage.aspx?ID=L26GGQVQ V26L; and a hard copy survey mailed to property owners, occupants and businesses within the neighborhood. The on-line survey was also sent up to all Athletic Teams using Athletic Field Park for their matches and practices by Ben Wagner from Recreation Services. The survey was posted on-line from to June 1, 2011 through July 30, 2011. The hard copy surveys were mailed on June 1, 2011.

It was determined by the Athletic Field Park Focus group that it would be important to ask about the following issues, along with other questions, in the survey:

- Would they support a playground at the park?
- Would they support a non-traditional playground?
- What elements would they want to see in the playground?
- What additional elements would they like to see in the park?
- Do they use the skate park/stage? If not, what would they like to see there?
- Would they support a multi use option/redesign of the basketball court?
- Do they like the spiral mound? What would they do to improve it?

## **Survey Results**

Results from the survey were to provide programming direction for the Community planning process and ultimately the park master plan.

The following is a summary of major results from the survey:

• 83% of the survey results were obtained from residents within 3 blocks of the park.

- 79 surveys were returned. 53 by mail and 26 via internet. This constitutes a response rate of 13%.
- A majority of the respondents (greater than 50%) like the park because it is green and open and un-programmed with natural elements such as the spiral mound, open athletic area and hills.
- Most respondents (greater than 50%) feel the park does NOT currently meet the
  needs of toddlers, grade school children and people with disabilities, but most
  respondents (50% or a greater) felt the park meets the needs of teens, adults and
  seniors. The reason most people felt the park did not meet the need of toddlers or
  grade school children was, specifically, because it does not have a playground
  area.
- A majority of respondents (93%) said they did not use the skate park/stage in the SWC of the park. Most said they did not even know it was a skate park to begin with. A majority of respondents (over 50%) agreed with redesigning the use of that corner, especially if it incorporated a group seating area with shade.



Skate Park at SW corner of Park

- A majority of respondents (84%) support the addition of a non-traditional playground that is incorporated into the slope of the hill on the north end of the park. It is important that it contains natural play elements such as, slides, natural elements to climb on (boulders, statues, logs), spinners, imaginative play toys, swings, a climber and a sand area with buried fossils or other interactive toys like a digger. It is important that the playground does not interfere with the open athletic field in the center for the park.
- A majority of the respondents (73%) find the spiral mound at the south end of the park to be an interesting and valuable element, and 70% of the respondents found it to be unimportant to change or remove the spiral mound, in fact many people strongly opposed the removal of the mound. Respondents did agree that the would like to add educational signage about it's purpose and use, historic plaques about the park and spiral mound or to add a play feature/art piece at the top of the mound.



Spiral Mound – view from west



Spiral Mound – view from south

• A majority of respondents (62%) support the basketball court remaining as is. It is a great use for adults and teens, and most respondents say it is used frequently.



Basketball court on north side of park

• Shade trees, landscaping and a picnic shelter (or other shaded group seating area), were selected by most respondents (over 50%) as being desirable in the park. More shade in the form or trees or shelters could be added at the SWC or the NWC of the park, or along the sidewalk where informal seating currently exists. This could be accomplished by a trellis, or other natural shade structure.



NWC or park



informal seating area along sidewalk



Benches located along sidewalk

• A majority of the respondents (over 50%) use walking path (sidewalk) for exercise or to walk pets. Most respondents felt this was the most inclusive element of the park as it could be used by toddlers up to seniors, and people with disabilities as the sidewalk is accessible on all 4 corners. Distance markers, exercise stations and a drinking fountain were selected by most respondents as being desirable to add to the park.



Sidewalk/walking path



sidewalk/walking path

## Neighborhood Park Focus Group Meeting First United Methodist Church August 9, 2011

Tanya Ferencak
Tracy Defrancesco

Kathy Comfort Chad Marks Ryan Ward Dale Peterson Pat Zulauf

The Kiteley Neighborhood Park Focus group again convened to discuss survey results and next steps. The park focus group was very happy with the clear direction that the survey provided for the Kiteley neighborhood. It was discussed that we did not meet the 20% goal for survey responses, but that we did reach over 10%, which is enough move forward with the process.

It was determined that for the design build component of the community planning process it would be beneficial to include the design of the playground, and the redesign of the skate park, and the additional of group shaded seating areas to the park. This could be completed in the short term and with Midtown Revitalization funds. Currently there is \$55,000 allocated for this project, the focus group was concerned we would not have enough to complete the process. They were told that if additional funding was needed, it could be requested through the Midtown Revitalization Program.

The group also discussed it would be important to have a neighborhood meeting to discuss and give input on the designs as part of the process. As part of the design build process, After the initial design of the project, the Athletic Field Park focus group would like to hold a neighborhood wide meeting in the park to discuss and make alterations to the design as needed.

The park focus group asked when the master planning process would begin for Athletic Field Park. The group did want a guiding document to be put in place to talk about the design of the park as a whole and attempt to finance the park with CIP funding. They were told that they are in line with the Parks department, although it is uncertain when a Master planning process will begin.

It was determined that the long term planning for the park, the elements of a drinking fountain, trees and landscaping, distance markers around the sidewalk, exercise stations, a bike rack, Art in Public Places a kiosk and historic plaques could be added through NGLA grant funding and in small steps year by year.

The group planned for the neighborhood wide meeting on Tuesday August 16<sup>th</sup>. Survey results, pictures and a "dotocracy" vote will be done.

Staff Meeting Monday, August 22

Tanya Ferencak Paula Fitzgerald

Tanya Ferencak met with Paula Fitzgerald met w to review the survey results and talk about the next steps and design build process for Athletic Field Park. Paula supported the direction of the survey. She suggested using

- Park Pets for climbable statues,
- Kompan for non-traditional climbing structures
- Big Toys
- Poligon for shade structures and trellis'

She said the design/build process should consider set backs and sight distances for the all the seating areas along the edge of the park.

Design considerations for the playground to use materials that will not float away.

All parks design standards and specs need to be included in the bid.

Neighborhood Meeting #5 First United Methodist Church Tuesday August 16<sup>th</sup> Tanya Ferencak

Ryan Ward Bob and Connie Ferenc Pat Zulauf Chad Marks Kathy Comfort

The Kiteley Neighborhood decided to present at their regular August meeting and included discussion of the survey results and park programming. A summary list of programming ideas derived from the survey was presented along with discussion items.

Immediate Plans to consider in the design build process

- Keep Park simple and as open and green as possible. Continue design to include natural elements that promote imaginative play
- Add shade and/or group seating areas with in the SWC, NWC or along the seating areas along the sidewalk of the park
- Redesign skate park at the SWC of the park
- Add a non-traditional playground at north end of park
- Include the theme of "water" in the concept and design of the park

Long Term Plans for future development

- Add distance markers and exercise stations around sidewalk/walking path area.
- Include a drinking fountain, kiosk for neighborhood events and historic plaques to park
- Improve shade trees and landscaping have parks department fill in landscaping from site plan (only about half of the trees that at are on the site plan are in the park)
- Consider using Art in Public Places (AIPP) for a climbable sculpture.

Programming elements to include in the concept plans as determined by a "dotocracy" vote and agreed to by the neighborhood included:

# Themes for Design/Build Process – September 2011

### **Park Theme - Water**

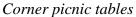
The group unanimously agreed that it will be important for the park to have a "theme" in the design as it moves forward. The two themes that were suggested where Athletics, from the park and playing field, and the history of the park being the Longmont High School playing field at one time, or water, because of the history of the floods and the Loomiller storm drainage system at the park.

### **Park Colors**

All colors to be added to the park should be natural, and support the open, green, unprogrammed nature of the park. Survey and input from meetings does not show that the neighborhood supports the bright, extravagant colors seen in traditional parks and playgrounds.

# Northwest Corner of Park - Picnic Shelter and Terraced Playground







View from picnic tables and hill

• Add a rectangular or square shelter over the picnic tables



**SQR 20** 

- Add a solution to the numbers games and hide it somewhere in the park
- Put a multilevel slide and climbing feature. Preferable that includes a rope structure or climbing area, tunnel and a terraced slide. (This picture is only conceptual. The expectation is that the terrace matches the current grade at the Park and not be as steep or vertical as this example from Golden)



# Northeast Corner of Park- Non-traditional Playground



- Add small non-traditional playground to include
- A slide similar to this concept



• A spinner, like either of these



Supernova GXY916



Spinner Bowl ELE400024

• Natural climbing features like climbable boulders (this concept can also be incorporated into the NWC with the terraced slide and climbing rope feature)



Park Pets Sierra Boulder

• Imaginative play-scapes like climbable statues



Park Pets TURTLE - 38W X 62L X 27H, 145 lbs



Loveland Fairgrounds park – submerged canoe in back

- Other items that were important but not as highly ranked were; interactive musical toys, swings, climbers, spring toys.
- The group did not like the idea of a sand play area or a digger or a labyrinth and did not want it included in the playground design.

Trellises/Covered Seating along sidewalk



There are four semi-circular seating areas along the sidewalk. Results from the survey indicated that more group and shaded seating was needed. The group likes the concept of adding a trellis similar to those below in these areas, as well as designing a back support along the curved bench/seating area and improving landscaping.





Southwest Corner of Park - Skateboard Area/Stage



93% of surveys said they did not use this area, and a majority approved redesigning the space. Opportunities include, shaded seating area, historic plaques or picnic area