

# City of Lake Forest Park

## Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

# Memo

**To:** Lake Forest Park City Council

**From:** Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

**cc:** Cory Roche

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### Background:

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) has been honored to be a part of the project to create a new park in the city. At this stage, we have been asked to review and discuss several open design questions and provide our recommendations to the City Council. The city has held two design open houses for community members to attend, as well as two online surveys. The most recent open house and survey provided much community input regarding the pending design questions. Additionally, members of the PRAB have discussed those questions with their own networks of local community groups and PTA's.

### Summary:

Pending Design Question	PRAB recommendation
1. Parking Options	Minimal parking to include required ADA spaces, adequate load/unload spaces, and several permit-only spaces related to use of the building.
2. Lyon Creek Preserve Options	Meadow
3. Beach Options	All beach
4. Lakefront Shelter Options	Balanced design – useful for the purpose, but not ornate
5. Play Area Options	Nature inspired, but with a strong focus on an actual play area useful to kids year-round
6. Community Dock Options	All-activity dock, including exploring the addition of a swim float.

## **Details:**

A note on community input: The PRAB found the survey responses to be very helpful in identifying what is important to the residents of the city. We read all of them and discussed themes and concerns. While we cannot address every comment raised, we really appreciate the time and effort that respondents took to share their views.

### **1. Parking**

We would like to begin by recognizing that parking is a huge issue for this park. Based on the park size and location, no design scenario will provide adequate parking within the park for the busiest days. The city will need to rely on the parking spaces available near City Hall as the primary parking. Another aspect of this project is to improve the pedestrian experience on the walk between that parking area and the park, including sidewalks, curbs, and signage.

The park will need some on-site parking spots, but we suggest those be kept to a minimum:

- Accessible parking spaces to accommodate our park users with such needs (and to comply with state law).
- Several short-term load/unload sites, to allow for loading of people, picnic supplies, human powered watercraft, etc., and to minimize the need to carry such things across Bothell Way.
- A few permitted spaces for building users, which may include city or police staff, program/service providers, etc.

Another design option included a few more long-term, non-permitted parking spaces by removing green space and one of the smaller cabins. After much discussion, the PRAB does not recommend that option. On balance, we expect the presence of such “general use” parking spaces will increase traffic circulation through the park as drivers look for parking. That could lead to unwanted parking on the neighborhood street of Beach Drive when the small number of spaces are full. We also want to be mindful of the increased vehicle traffic in the area with more park users visiting the park.

Community input leaned toward the “more parking” option, but on our review of the comments, we believe our suggestion of “minimal parking” plus dedicated accessible, loading, and permitted spaces will meet those needs. The PRAB also recommends this option to encourage and support alternative means of travel which connect with this park well, including bikes, transit, and walking.

### **2. Lyon Creek Preserve**

Primary consideration is to do what is best for the health of the creek. Between the forested option and meadow option, we support both but have a preference for the meadow. Public opinion was evenly split on this question, but we believe the meadow option is an uncommon area for our current parks, while forested spaces are more common. For purposes of variety, the PRAB recommends the meadow option. The community input also leaned in favor of the meadow option.

### **3. Beach Options**

The design options presented the choice between an “all beach” area or a smaller beach area with a separate, dedicated space for small boat (human powered) launching. The PRAB discussed both, but ultimately determined that an “all beach” option would better address the community’s needs. The community’s primary goal for this park is beach access, and we think that is important to provide. The dock option we recommend below provides ample watercraft launching, as does the beach area – though not separated from the swim area. We advise the city to monitor how the community uses the park with watercraft, and include appropriate signage to direct watercraft launching to the dock or edge of the beach area. If park usage shows heavy watercraft traffic on the beach that interferes with other beach use, we expect the city can alter this park design choice in the future. But until that is demonstrated, we suggest opting for more beach. This recommendation is also consistent with community input.

### **4. Lakefront Shelter Options**

Community and PRAB input was aligned in not wanting the showpiece option. Community input was split between the other two options (simple or balanced design). The PRAB recommends that the “balanced design” option will meet the community’s needs by being useful all year.

### **5. Play Area Options**

Community survey results and the PRAB recommendations are aligned that a “nature-inspired” play area will be a better fit than the other two options (big timbers or from nature). However, the PRAB wants to make special mention of a consistent theme that this play area needs to be real and robust, with many activity areas and varying ways of play. Many community comments focused on the lack of “real” playgrounds in our city parks. We recommend a play area that children will want to use all year.

### **6. Community Dock Options**

Community feedback was evenly split between the two proposed options: All-Activity Dock and Modest Dock. The PRAB discussed the options and community input, and we recommend the All-Activity Dock as meeting community needs at this time and into the future. A longer and larger dock will allow greater access to the water and views. It will also allow for easier watercraft launching, which supports the “all beach” design option above. Given the difficulty and expense of building a dock, the PRAB has the understanding that it will be difficult to start with a small dock and then add on later; better to build the dock we want all at once.