100 Dix Drive Conceptual Master Plan

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Final Draft
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**Introduction**

On September 20, 2016, the City of Manhattan submitted an application for Hazard Mitigation Grant funds to the Kansas Department of Emergency Management (KDEM). Funding from the grant was to be used to purchase three properties at 921 Village Drive, 939 Village Drive, and 100 Dix Drive. The property at 100 Dix Drive, which is located in the 1% Annual Chance Floodplain, sustained substantial damage from a fire in 2016, and needed to be significantly altered in order to comply with the City’s and Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) minimum floodplain regulations. In March 2017, the Kansas Department of Emergency Management and FEMA approved the grant application for these properties. The grant requires that the sites be owned by the City and maintained as open space. The 100 Dix Drive property is the first of these properties to complete a planning and conceptual design process.

The City of Manhattan Parks and Recreation Department has worked with neighborhood residents to develop a plan to turn the site at 100 Dix into an outdoor amenity and community asset. Several meetings were held to speak with members of the neighborhood in order to determine the nature of this outdoor space and to receive feedback on design proposals. A final conceptual design has been developed based on this community input.

**Site Information**

**Context**

The site is approximately 12,000 square feet and is located within the Dix subdivision in the Northview neighborhood in Manhattan, Kansas. The site is located at the southeast corner of Dix Drive and Casement Road. Casement Road receives a high volume of traffic and serves as a north-south connection between Tuttle Creek Blvd and Marlatt Avenue. The surrounding neighborhoods are comprised of single-story residential housing. No firm demographic data for the area is available. Anecdotally, however, current residents in the area are a mix of working professionals, families with young children, and retirees. The site is located near several existing outdoor amenities. Northeast Community Park is less than half a mile to the east of the site, and a Linear Trail access point is approximately 800 feet to the south along Casement Road.

**Existing Site conditions**

Currently, the site is a grassy area with a slope around 1%. A line of trees exists along the west side of the site. Trees consist primarily of species selected for quick growth, including maple and poplar species. A large arborvitae is located on the northwest corner of the site. The arborvitae, while in good condition, extends out into the existing sidewalk on Casement. The site has a high level of visibility from both Dix and Casement. Existing trees may block some views along Casement.

Structures on the site include fences and water and electric utilities. Fences are located on the adjacent properties to the south and east of the site. A 7’ tall wooden privacy fence is located along the east edge of the site, and a 3.5’ tall chain link fence runs along the south edge of the site. There is a high level of visibility between the site and the property to the south. A water meter pit is located near the driveway on the north side of the site. A storm drain is located on the northwest corner of the site along Dix Drive. Storm water pipes and sanitary sewer run along the west side of the site. Overhead power lines run along the south and west sides of the site. The overhead lines are approximately 15’ tall.
Site looking south

Existing trees along Casement Rd

Fences and utilities
Neighborhood meeting 1

On May 25, 2017 a meeting was held with neighborhood residents to solicit input on how this open space should be used. Three suggestions for a basic design were made and members of the neighborhood indicated their preference with a show of hands. The three suggestions were:

- Simple open lawn and existing trees – 5 votes
- Community gardens – 2 votes (+1 from before the meeting started)
- Park and playground – everyone else (Approx. 14)

Further clarification of the third option was then voted on.

- Playground for young kids with a barrier along Casement – a couple votes
- Resting/picnic spot with benches, landscaping, and trees – majority

Conceptual Designs

Feedback from the first public meeting served as a starting point for the conceptual design phase. During the conceptual design phase four concepts were produced. The four concepts include The Yard, Playce, The Grove, and Resurgence. The overall project goal was to create a community asset that not only provides a pleasant visual experience, but also creates an inviting space for the community to use and enjoy.

The following list includes basic park features as well as preferred features suggested by residents. Although each concept explores different ideas, all concepts include these features:

- **Signage** to identify the place
- **Landscaping** to enhance visual and experiential qualities and provide a buffer to blocks views to the property to the south of the site
- **Trees** to provide shade and visual interest
- **Bike parking**
- **Trash can**
- **Drinking fountain**
- **Seating**
The Yard

The Yard provides an enhanced open space for the community to use. The central feature of the site is an open lawn. The open lawn provides a multi-use area for a variety of activities to take place. Encircling the lawn are paths configured to create a small loop. The path provides circulation within the site and creates a diagonal connection through the site from the neighborhood to the existing sidewalk along Casement.

Another function of this space is to serve as a resting place along the route between Linear Trail and Northeast Community Park. Benches were added along the paths to provide places to rest and to watch events occurring on the central lawn. Landscaped areas are provided along the paths to enhance the experience of walking through the site. The intent of this design was to give this space the feeling of a back yard that the whole community is free to use.
**Neighborhood Playce**

Playce creates a vibrant, playful activity space. Areas are provided to accommodate different types of play for different age groups. A small playground for younger children (age 2-5) is located in the center of the site. In the southeast corner of the site, a half standard sized basketball court is provided. The court is marked with regulation lines and provides people with an alternative to shooting baskets in a driveway. Areas for passive recreation are also included in this design. A small shelter where people can sit and rest is located adjacent to the playground. A small shaded lawn next to the court provides a place to sit on the grass and watch basketball. Areas along the fences are planted with a dense row of evergreen trees to provide site enclosure. The intent of this design was to create a fun, active space where people can enjoy different types of passive and active recreation.
The Grove

The Grove uses abstract representation to explore the relationship of the preexisting home and imprint of that structure on the landscape. A small grove of trees fills the space where the house once stood, symbolizing the presence of the house. The grove consists of small ornamental trees that will provide seasonal interest through vibrant spring blooms. A buffer of native plants outside the grove provides privacy, additional visual interest, and ecological value. This space is envisioned as a peaceful place where people can have a quiet, contemplative experience, and escape from everyday life. Upon entering the grove, one feels transported into a serene, reflective space. Movable seating allows people to sit and rest within the space. Additional trees along Casement and Dix help enclose the site and help the site become a shady and relaxing place.
**Resurgence**

Resurgence tells the story of the site by incorporating a narrative of the river and the home that once stood on the site. A sinuous path, lined with dense, colorful vegetation, runs along the edge of the site. The curving line of the path and the vibrant vegetation create a dynamic experience that represents the flowing movement of a river. A picnic shelter/pergola structure and low sitting wall re-create an outline of the former house and enclose a small lawn area. The forms of these structures abstractly represent the “resurgence” of the home from the landscape. The shelter and sitting wall are designed as fragments merging back together to create a whole form. The perforated overhead form of the pergola structure blends into a solid overhead plane which serves as the roof of the picnic shelter. Picnic tables are provided under the shelter. The concrete seat wall is created from concrete blocks, placed at intervals that merge into a solid seat wall. The Resurgence provides a relaxing, intimate space while incorporating history and meaning into the site.
Neighborhood Meeting 2

The four concepts were presented at a neighborhood meeting held on October 24th. The meeting was attended by seven neighborhood residents. After a presentation of the concepts, residents engaged in discussion and provided feedback. Initially, preference was shown toward the Playce concept. People were enthusiastic about having an area for children to play, however, several people were highly concerned with the safety of children playing close to Casement. After a conversation regarding safety, playground cost, and future Northeast Community Park playground renovations, preference shifted to Concept 4, Resurgence. The meeting ended with the group reaching a consensus to move forward with Resurgence.

For several days after the meeting, the City continued to receive feedback via emails and phone calls. The majority of emails and phone calls were in favor of the Resurgence concept. A list of suggested modifications was compiled based on feedback from the community. Modifications were then incorporated into the design during the design refinement stage.

Design Refinement

During the Design Refinement stage, Resurgence was modified to include suggested modifications made by the community. These modifications included the addition of:

A visual barrier to provide privacy between the site and the property to the south.

A barrier along Casement to prevent children from running into the street. There was agreement that it could be some type of vegetative barrier instead of a wall or fence.

Parking spaces to provide parking for a small events like family get-togethers.

Lighting at night for safety.

Signs informing people to keep the area clean.

The following spread provides rendered images of the finalized Resurgence concept.
Central lawn for passive recreation

Scale = 1:20

Lawn
Pergola/Picnic
Shelter
Vegetated Path
Parking
Casement

Park entrance
Pergola Picnic Structure

Section looking north

Plan View

Section looking east
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

On November 6, 2017, the four concepts were presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The Board was agreeable to the idea of developing the space into a neighborhood park. The Board recommended moving forward with the concept chosen by the neighborhood.

Cost Estimates

Following is a budget estimate for the site improvements identified in the final concept plan. Costs are estimated in 2018 dollars, based on recent bid tabs from similar projects when possible. Cost ranges are provided for some items to account for variations in size or materials that would be established during final design. A 10% contingency has been added to the total. Updated cost estimates should be prepared as improvements are designed and funding sources are identified.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk (235 SY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gravel walkway (73 SY)</td>
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<td>Parking (2 stalls)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
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<td>Seating wall</td>
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<td>Picnic tables (3)</td>
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<td>Trash receptacle</td>
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<td>Bike Rack</td>
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<td>Signage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cedar Privacy Fence (138 LF)</td>
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<td>Trees (11): $250 ea = $2,750</td>
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<td>Landscaping (2,820 SF):</td>
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<td>Seeding</td>
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<td>Lighting</td>
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<td>Contingency: 10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optional: Wrought Iron Fence along Casement (84 LF):</td>
<td>$2,000-2,500</td>
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Total Estimated Cost = $70,000-85,000

Implementation

The neighborhood park at 100 Dix should be developed as funds are available. Projects could be implemented in smaller phases, over time, with Park operational funds, or as a larger turn-key project if adopted into the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Budgets for new park development are not guaranteed from year to year, so the City should pursue grant funding and/or community partnerships to help offset the use of City funds. Some aspects of the project, such as tree planting, landscaping, irrigation, and/or construction of the overhead structures, could be accomplished with City forces at a cost less than noted above. An organized group of volunteers could assist with some aspects of this work as well. Once a strategy for funding these improvements is identified, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the City Commission should consider a name for the new park site.

Until the recommended concept is fully implemented, the site should be maintained as a neighborhood open space. Mowing should occur on a regular schedule, consistent with other parks and open spaces. Existing trees should be managed by the City Forester in a fashion consistent with other street trees throughout the City.