

Re-program and Re-design Bethany Park Perimeter



Constance Rambuad’s proposal to re-imagine the park edge along Central Avenue.

COMMUNITY NEED

Much of the property that surrounds Bethany Park is in need of improvement. There are abandoned, and dilapidated houses that are south and west of the park. The older, medium-rise Bethany Residential Towers lacks ‘curb appeal,’ and lacks landscaping and safe passage in the parking lot. Local residents say that Central Avenue is “difficult to cross with wide car lanes”, “no safe crossing for pedestrians”, “no bicycle lanes to encourage bicycling,” a lack of functioning street-lighting, and a general “sense of confusion about where to best cross the street safely.” As a pedestrian coming from the north along 11th Street (let’s say from Pearson Elementary) it is chal-

lenging to make it to Central Avenue as there is no sidewalk. In effect, the park is like an island in the city with an unfriendly perimeter.

Over the past few months, having visited the park repeatedly and having spoken to numerous nearby residents, on a regular day the park is empty and there’s a general sense that it is an unsafe place to be. (One Sunday afternoon in September, when KU architecture students were there to observe the park, they were told by a local city employee that they shouldn’t be there—that is was ‘unsafe.’)

PROCESS

The park would be better connected with the surrounding residential and

small business neighbors by improving the physical condition of the park perimeter and by improving its identity. Based upon observations and conversations with those at the Central Avenue Parade and La Placita events, the following perimeter-park needs are:

- improve the sidewalks along Central Avenue so that they provide safe pedestrian ways on either side of the street
- provide safe, mid-block and intersection crossings with attractive landscaping
- provide safe routes for bicycles along Central Avenue
- provide bicycle racks that are visible from the street



Street is difficult to cross for pedestrians and cyclists.



Creative bus stop in Baltimore by Mmmm artist collective.



Abandoned houses directly south across from the park hurt the identity of this as a healthy, thriving place.s

- Central Avenue needs better street-lighting to make it feel safer
- providing a pavilion-like structure to support La Placita events, farmers’ markets and food trucks
- work with nearby property owners to renovate and improve buildings and the streetscape with low-maintenance plantings and trees
- insert new mixed-use, retail/housing projects along the perimeter of park to increase urban activities and numbers of people that would use the park

NEXT STEPS

Seek feedback from a variety of stakeholder residents and community leaders

through UG Parks & Recreation, Latino Health for All Coalition, Free Wheels for Kids and Healthy Communities Wyandotte to review the proposed programming and design ideas; confirm that we have reached out to all of the appropriate stakeholders and to determine who is missing; and in general, seek more input and feedback. Meet with CABA and those that participate in La Placita to get more detailed input on infrastructural needs for a pavilion, parking and the streetscape along Central Avenue. Meet with nearby property owners to discuss proposed ideas about how to improve the private properties adjacent to the park and seek further insight from them on how this might be achieved.

PROJECT FACTS

Timeline: August 2015-Present

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

- Rabia Bajwa
- Jeremy Chuon
- Doug Dawson
- Caitlin Fitzgerald
- Violette Franchi
- Shelby Hartman
- Brittany Hediger
- Matt Kenney
- Janiliz Matos
- Luke McElwain
- Doriane Andrade Meyer
- Anne Moreno
- Abby Noelke
- Constance Rambaud
- Kailey Smith
- Culin Thompson
- Shannon Criss, Professor

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Central Avenue Betterment Association (CABA)
- Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City
- KU Work Group for Community Health & Development
- Unified Government Parks & Recreation
- Healthy Communities Wyandotte
- Community Health Council of Wyandotte County
- KU Mobile Collaboratory

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Edgar Galicia, CABA

