Foumey Park Neighborhood Conceptal Improvement Plan

May 2008

Toumey Park Neighborhood in cooperation with the City of Tucson Parks and Recreation Department





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> Prepared for: Toumey Park Neighborhood Association

Funded in part by: Cooperative Extension Service of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

January 2008

The Drachman Institute College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture The Universtiy of Arizona Corky Poster, Director Marilyn Robinson, Associate Director David Marhefka, Graduate Student

The Drachman Institute is the research and public service unit of the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Arizona, dedicated to the environmentally sensitive and resource-conscious development of neighborhoods and communities. The Drachman Institute dedicates its research and outreach activities to the proposition that housing is the building-block of neighborhoods, and neighborhoods are the building-blocks of communities.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Toumey Park Neighborhood requested the help of the Drachman Institute on the planning and conceptual re-design of Toumey Park. In collaboration with the City of Tucson Parks and Recreation, an initial meeting on September 6, 2007 discussed the scope of the project. Site visits were conducted.

Based on the information discussed at the initial meeting, a program for the project was developed. A comprehensive site analysis was presented to the community in an open forum meeting on November 8, 2007. During this meeting we were provided with feedback from those in attendance and were able to refine the conceptual ideas for the project. The refined conceptual ideas were then used to formulate the final conceptual design presented in this document.

The goals we set out to accomplish on the Toumey Park project included:

- Create safer access to the park for all user groups.
- Design a circulation path to be used by pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Increase use of native trees and vegetation to increase sustainability of the site.
- Provide a community bulletin board on-site for posting of community meetings and functions
- Address vehicular parking issues around the park.
- Improve night lighting at the park.

This document includes the design process including analysis, conceptualization, and design synthesis. The Conceptual Master Site Plan incorporates all the design ideas to improve Toumey Park to meet the needs of the people currently using the park.



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Toumey Park Neighborhood Association submitted a request to Drachman Institute in May of 2006 for design and planning assistance for Toumey Park. Drachman Institute met with the neighborhood association three times at regular monthly meetings. Neighbors provided their input and feedback on Park improvement ideas.

The long-term goal of the project is to improve the park by creating spaces for people to gather, play, relax and socialize. This is accomplished by the addition of program elements desired by the community. The Drachman Institute conducted an assessment and analysis of Toumey Park and incorporated feedback from the Toumey Park Neighborhood Association and community members into the design recommendations reflected in this document.

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Ecology photograph, IV International Botanical Congress, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. August 18, 1926. (http://www.esa.org/history/peopleid.php)



James Toumey (17) was one of the founders of the Ecological Society of America





The University of Arizona was founded in 1891. That same year Professor James Toumey (who went on to found the School of Forestry at Yale) began what was to become an extensive cactus collection. Eventually comprising over 600 specimens, the garden expanded to cover a 25,000 square foot area on the western side of Old Main, the University's first building. The original cactus garden stretched from the front east side of Old Main, all the way to Bear Down Gym.

After many years and the construction of the Mall, a small section remains, known officially as the Joseph Wood Krutch Cactus Garden. Krutch was a prominent author who retired to Tucson in the late 1940s. He took an interest in the desert environment and became a noted nature writer. He died in Tucson in 1970. The garden was dedicated to his memory in 1980.

Design Implication: A native vegetation garden with inclusion of the history regarding the esteemed botanist it memorializes would tie the site to its namesake, James Toumey.

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The park usage varies throughout the day. Several visits to the site were made at different times of the day and week. Usage varied widely. During weekly daylight hours users were mostly adults from a local residential treatment facility. These users made use of the ramada and table while occasionally sitting in the shade of the large eucalyptus tree. These users mostly sat, smoked cigarettes and drank coffee.



In the evening weekday and weekend hours the park was occupied by young families. These users utilized other parts of the park including the playground equipment, swings, ramada, and the open grassy areas. Several of these users also brought their dogs to the park as well.

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Recent improvements include ADA access and new playground equipment.



A concrete pad where a picnic table used to sit.



The park infrastructure is heavily tagged with graffiti.



A BBQ stand near the ramada.



Drinking fountains are weed infested and in disrepair at the park.



Excellent views of the Santa Catalina Mountains are enjoyed from the park.

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Trash indicates that people are drinking alcohol in the park.



The park has a baseball backstop but no diamond or bases.



A basketball court sits at the eastern edge of the park.



Several dead trees, including this palm, reside at the park.



An electric utility line bisects the park north to south.



ADA access points exist but are not connected to sidewalks except on the western edge of the park.

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SITE ANALYSIS **CONTEXT**



This figure illustrates the context of the Toumey Park neighborhood in relation to other Tucson landmarks.



The park sits in the center of the neighborhood, giving all residents equal access to the park.



Toumey Park neighborhood in relation to surrounding neighborhoods.



Nearby parks include: Linden Park, San Gabriel Mini Park and Hoffman Park.

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Zoning near the park is residential with commercial to the south along 22nd street.



There is currently no street lighting in the Toumey Park neighborhood except along the south and east border.



The population density is very high around the park especially to the east (2000 census data).



This figure illustrates different forms of bike routes and local schools in relation to Toumey Park.

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SITE ANALYSIS SITE INVENTORY













Address - 4500 East Eastland Street, Tucson, Arizona

- 7 acres total 6 acres of turf
- 1 ramada with 2 concrete tables and 1 standing charcoal grill
- 1 play structure with adjacent concrete table
- 1 basketball court
- 1 baseball backstop with two 10' benches and home plate
- 1 swing set with 6 toddler swings, 1 concrete table adjacent with 1 standing charcoal grill
- 1 free-standing picnic table with 1 standing charcoal grill
- 3 drinking fountains
- 6 garbage cans
- 2 emergency/maintenance vehicle entrances
- Bisected north to south by 18' utility easement

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PARK SURFACES



Seven acres in size, Toumey Park is dominated by turf, which is watered by Tucson City Water. No reclaimed water lines run in proximity of the park. Residents expressed interest in decreasing water use at the park.

OBSERVED ACTIVITY



Identified are areas of activity including running, soccer, frisbee, tag, baseball and numerous other movement oriented activities. Areas of passive recreation such as gathering, talking, sitting and watching others are also identified.

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CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT **PROGRAM** Elements

•CIRCULATION PATH

SAFER ACCESS

•MORE NATIVE TREES AND VEGETATION

•BENCHES

•COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

VEHICLE PARKING

•BETTER LIGHTING

After the initial community meeting it was determined through feedback from those in attendance and from information attained from the community survey conducted by the neighborhood association that the elements above would be the most desirable to the community as improvements to Toumey Park.

The Drachman Institute then integrated the site analysis with community input to synthesize the data into three concepts. These concepts were presented at the second community meeting on November 8, 2007. Feedback on these concepts helped formulate the final concept. The concepts are presented on the following pages.



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The three alternate concepts integrated multi-use space, open space, picnic areas, playground areas and native plant garden space. A pedestrian circuit path is included in all concepts.



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The final concept is the synthesis of the most desirable aspects of the previous concepts synthesized into one.

Within the community forum participants responded most positively towards the second concept. The addition of a picnic and social space in the southwest corner of the park was one addition to the concept that community members desired. This expanded the area in which people could picnic while creating more adjacency of disparate elements. For example, families can picnic next to locations where their children can play.

It was also discussed during the presentation that the current on-street parking would be most effective in slowing traffic around the park. In addition, it is perceived that the use of parking carved from park space may actually increase the speed of traffic on the streets surrounding the park. Consequently this parking scheme is eliminated. Those in attendance responded positively to the inclusion of a native vegetation garden at the park. This would act to decrease water use by decreasing the amount of turf at the park. The introduction of native plant species also attracts native bird and wildlife species.

Enhancing the social picnic areas near the existing ramada is done by increasing the number of tables and BBQs in these areas. Connectivity is enhanced with paved walkways that bring visitors from the mains paths to the ramadas.

The pedestrian bike path around the park connects all parts of the park and provides a safe place for walkers, joggers, children to ride bicycles and parents to push strollers.

A community bulletin board is located near the landmark mesquite tree of Toumey Park on the east side of the park. The proximity to park amenities within a social area is a small gathering center within the park.

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Above: The Conceptual Master Plan shows the overall planting design integrated with the existing plants and infrastructure. The zones are delineated by paths, fields, plantings and structures.

Left: The James Toumey Native Habitat Garden: Toumey was one of the first U of A professors and a botanist. He planted the original cactus garden on campus before moving to Yale. This garden uses mostly native plants and has three dedicated habitat loops: Bird-Butterfly-Lizard.

The images on the following pages are perspective representations of the elements in detail.

This is presented as a concept and not a construction document. However it demonstrates a vision of what could happen at Toumey Park.

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IMPROVED ACCESS



Access to the park is made safer for pedestrians by the addition of intersection landscaped roundabouts and crosswalks.



Crosswalks make the access to the park safer by alerting drivers. Four-way stop signs at all the intersections around the park will also slow traffic and make crossing the street into the park safer.

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CREATING COMFORT THROUGH MICRO-CLIMATES





The addition of native vegetation such as desert willow and palo verde trees make the park more lush while keeping water use low.

Benches placed under new and existing trees provide respite for community members visiting the park.

Additional table and BBQs are placed in the shade of new trees.

Connecting sidewalks to the existing ADA entry ramps gives users access to the amenities of the park and creates an aesthetic cohesive flow to the pedestrian circulation.

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CONNECTION AND CIRCULATION



Right: A community bulletin board located by Toumey Parks landmark mesquite tree alerts neighbors of upcoming meetings and park events. Left: Concrete pathways connect the various areas and amenities of Toumey Park. Additional trees around the basketball court provide shade for spectators and those taking a break from the action.



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JAMES TOUMEY NATIVE HABITAT GARDEN



The James Toumey Native Habitat Garden integrates the natural landscape - the Sonoran Desert - into an in-town experience. Visitors are able to experience the desert through simple interaction. The garden also can be used for more directed learning experiences through interpretation of plants and wildlife. Native avian species such as Gambles quail, phenepepula and a variety of hummingbirds are attracted to the garden. The use of native plant species ensures that water use will be low and that maintenance will be minimal.

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ENHANCED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE



The addition of trees and benches near the existing play structure allows parents to keep a watchful eye on children while relaxing in the shade.

Additional swings near the play structure allow families to play and enjoy this end of the park without the need to walk to the west end of the park where the existing swings are located.

The pedestrian pathway that encircles the park is used by pedestrians and those on bicycles who come to the park for a recreational experience or are using the path as a conduit to other destinations. PATHWAY SECTION - raised pathways capitalize on water harvesting while creating a designated pedestrian through-way.



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DESIGN CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN PARK LIGHTING







Several older street lamps exist within the park but are in need of an electrical upgrade. The character of these older lamps adds charm to the park. Efforts should be made to maintain them instead of simply replacing them with newer lamps. If new lights are installed, it is recommended that they follow pedestrian paths to add safety and security for walkers after dark.



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Historic information: http://www.esa.org/history/peopleid.php

GIS data: Pima County Department of Transportation Geographic Information Service: http://www.dot.pima.gov/gis/maps/mapguide/