

TOWN OF QUEEN CREEK FIVE- PARKS MASTER PLAN

Focus Group Meeting No. 1
October 3, 2006, 9:30am
Location: Our Lady of Guadalupe Church

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY (MOMS)

This focus group meeting was held in conjunction with the Town of Queen Creek's local Moms Club monthly meeting. The Moms Club is a national organization whose goal is to offer support to moms and to provide a forum for topics of interest to mothers. This event is held on the first Tuesday of every month. There were approximately 19 members present at the meeting.

Following club business, Troy White (Queen Creek, Parks & Recreation Department) gave a brief overview of the Five-Parks Master Plan project and the planning process. He explained the purpose of the focus groups and that input from the Moms Club was important since they are primary users of the parks during the day. Dave Wilson (EPG) then described what active and passive elements are as described in the PTOSMP and reviewed the location of each of the park sites. Dave also gave a brief description of each of the sites using exhibit boards. Each display graphic included an aerial photo of the park and its surrounding areas. Photos of site features, site conditions, on and off site views and existing amenities were included on the display. Dave then opened it up to the group for questions, comments, suggestions, etc.

EPG/J2 received information and input from club members. Following is a summary of the input received:

- Members stated that Desert Mountain Park is a great park, however, although the play structures are shaded, there is limited shade provided in areas where parents sit. They would like to see more shade in general (provided by shade trees or shade structures). Members also mentioned that they would like shade areas where they could lay blankets on the ground and sit with smaller children while watching other children on play structures.
- Members would like to see more of the soft surface material (resilient surfacing) underneath play structure areas and even in areas under armadas in close proximity to the play structures. This would allow parents to place blankets on a soft surface material for small children instead of on hard concrete.
- Members would like to see more infant swings (a fully enclosed seat that prevents small children from falling out). There are currently 2 at Desert Mountain Park and parents often find children standing in line waiting to use them. They felt that 4 swings would be sufficient for this park.
- It was suggested to include misters around playground area or a splash area where children could play. They believe this would make the use of these facilities more comfortable during the summer months.
- Several members suggested the need to have restroom facilities at the parks. Dave noted that most of the sites, with the exception of San Marqui, will have at least one restroom structure.

- Many of the members would like to have a changing table or changing area in the restrooms. Also, they would prefer the restrooms be located close to the play area because it helps when toilet training younger children.
- One member saw a merry-go-round at Apache Junction and asked about having a merry-go-round structure. She clarified this was not a motorized merry-go-round but was the type where children could push a platform mounted on an axle causing the platform to spin. Dave mentioned that most municipalities do not have those anymore for safety/liability reasons. The member asked if there could be some kind of play equipment that spins.
- Members asked why swings are not covered with a shade structure or shade trees. If it is possible they would like to have shade provided for all play structures, including swings.
- There is a desire to have sidewalk loops for jogging-strollers, walking, etc., and they would like to see distance markers along the loops so users can keep track of distances.
- They would like to have chilled drinking fountains.
- One member asked about having interpretive areas (learning areas or teaching areas) where they and their children could learn about the desert ecosystem (animals/vegetation, etc.). The opportunity to develop interpretive areas as a way to enhance the park themes was discussed and the members acknowledged these suggestions as favorable.
- They suggested features like a lake or pond, or possibly a large water feature. This was desired as a way to help soften the effects of the intense summer heat. The caveat to this was to arrange it in a way to have it be safe.
- One member suggested using desert vegetation that does not attract bees or other stinging insects be used for planting.
- There was a concern expressed about the use of decorative boulders in the landscape. A member mentioned that children like to climb on them and it has been her experience that children hurt themselves by falling on the boulders.
- Members with small children would like to see play structures that are lower to the ground but have the same elements as play structures for older children. This is primarily for safety so that if they fall it is not as high and also so parents can reach their kids if they need to. One member suggested that even a 5' high structure would be good.
- Members noted that many of the play structures have open sides, such as along bridges or crossings with very little to keep children from falling. They would like play structures enclosed for safety.
- Many playgrounds are by parking lots and are not fenced in. It was suggested that a 4' high fence could be used and would not even need to completely enclose the play area. There just needs to be enough fencing to define a limit and provide a visual separation from the parking area. There is an example of this fence design at The Villages, a residential subdivision within the Town.
- A few members mentioned that they would prefer if the play area was farther away from the parking lot, others liked the convenience but liked the idea of a fence.
- Members suggested basketball courts with lighting. The lighting was requested to extend the opportunities for play during the evening hours. They would like to keep the adult basketball courts away from play areas.
- There was a suggestion to provide a basketball court with lower goal heights for use by younger players. Perhaps this court type could be located closer to the play area.

- One member mentioned a concern for theft so they would prefer to have the parking lot in view of play areas.
- Group facilities such as an amphitheater was suggested. This could be used for plays or concerts.
- Members also mentioned providing smaller group seating areas where they could have “story time.” These facilities could be smaller than an amphitheater. Shade would be an important part of these outdoor gathering areas.
- Members requested BBQ grills. They said there are not any provided at Desert Mountain Park.
- One of the members is a kindergarten teacher and recommended that triangular monkey bars not be used in play areas. This is due to the fact that children of kindergarten age are not coordinated enough to use them and she has seen many kids fall off and hurt themselves.