

# Community Outreach Summary – Forest Park Cultural Park



Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program



## **Executive Summary**

In 2017 the Village of Forest Park, Illinois submitted an application for technical assistance to the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program of the U.S. National Park Service. RTCA is a community partnerships program that supports local governments and community groups that are planning outdoor recreation or natural resource conservation projects. In their application, the village described an opportunity to develop a property purchased several years ago into a multi-use and multi-season community park that could potentially include a variety of recreation and cultural amenities.

As part of their technical assistance request, the village identified several planning components where RTCA staff could provide project support. These included: identifying and analyzing issues and opportunities, assessing and engaging partners and stakeholders, priority setting and consensus building, identifying funding sources, and general planning assistance. Initial project meetings with the Forest Park Mayor and his staff further clarified the role and assistance that RTCA staff could provide the village at the current stage of the proposal. Both partners developed a Project Summary to document the project goals, scope, and desired outcomes, and a Project Work Plan to identify a general timeline for accomplishing outreach events and milestones.

Staff from the Village of Forest Park and the RTCA program agreed to undertake a multi-month community outreach process to inform local residents and stakeholders of the general proposal for the site and solicit initial feedback and comments. Given the mission of the National Park Service and the RTCA program, this outreach would focus specifically on potential opportunities for outdoor recreation and green space development. This community outreach process consisted of two phases that occurred between February, 2018 and August, 2018.

This report consolidates public feedback received during the outreach meetings into one document to serve as a resource for local policymakers. The information contained in this document can serve as a first-step towards understanding the preferences, opinions, and concerns of those community members who participated in the outreach events.

## **Project Proposal & Existing Conditions**

The Village of Forest Park currently owns approximately 11 acres of undeveloped open space located near the intersection of Van Buren Street and Grove Lane. According to the website for the *Forest Park Review*, the village acquired the property in 2001.<sup>1</sup> The village's Comprehensive Plan for 2014 identified the site (referred to as the Altenheim Property) as a potential opportunity for developing additional green space for the village or for redevelopment into a combined mixed-use residential area and open space. The Comprehensive Plan states "feedback from public meetings, surveys, and workshops indicated the community's strong desire to redevelop the Village-owned Altenheim property as open space. At the same time, the results of a market analysis of this property suggest that this location would be viable for single family or senior housing development."<sup>2</sup> The comprehensive plan also recommended the village develop an open space master plan that would include a detailed analysis of open space alternatives, including "what kind of open space is desired by the community (passive, active)."<sup>3</sup> While this community outreach process is not intended to be a component of a site-specific master planning process, the information gathered from residents and stakeholders could become useful context to village planners or policy-makers when the time comes for such a project.

The village's 11-acre property is a combination of two distinct parcels of land to the north and south of the current Altenheim Senior Living Community. The borders for the much larger south parcel are Concordia Cemetery on the west and south, the Altenheim campus on the north, and the townhomes and condominiums of the residential complex Residences at the Grove on Van Buren Street to the east. The north parcel is a smaller and roughly triangular plot adjacent to Madison Street and Van Buren Street. In recent years, the village has utilized the north parcel as a venue for community events such as Groov'n in the Grove and the Forest Park Ribfest.

While the north plot contains a few small structures (such as picnic tables and wood stands) to support community events, the south plot is almost entirely open space. The south plot does contain several vacant buildings that the Altenheim formerly used as part of the senior living center. The long-term future of these buildings is uncertain, but it is possible that an open

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<sup>1</sup> Lifka, R.J. (2018, February 13). Park Service gets involved in Culture Park process. *The Forest Park Review*. Retrieved from <http://www.forestparkreview.com/News/Articles/2-13-2018/Park-Service-gets-involved-in-Culture-Park-process/>

<sup>2</sup> Village of Forest Park. (2014). Village of Forest Park Comprehensive Plan 2014. Pg. 88. Retrieved from <http://www.forestpark.net/dfp/node/343>

<sup>3</sup> Village of Forest Park. (2014). Village of Forest Park Comprehensive Plan 2014. Pg. 89. Retrieved from <http://www.forestpark.net/dfp/node/343>

space plan for the southern portion of the property could incorporate their footprint into proposals for expanded green space. Much of the south parcel is grassy open space, although several sections along the property borders contain shrubs, bushes, and mature trees. These green spaces are particularly noticeable near the Altenheim's cemetery next to the southwest corner of the south parcel and the southern border adjacent to the parking area for the Chicago Transit Authority blue line station.



Left: Image of the tree line and sidewalk remnants leading from the buildings to the Altenheim cemetery in the south parcel.  
Right: Open space of the south parcel located in the Southwest corner adjacent to Concordia Cemetery.  
(Photographs: National Park Service)

Forest Park community members currently do utilize the southern parcel for a wide range of active and passive recreation activities, particularly the residents of the nearby residential buildings. The Forest Park Public Library has held programs and activities at the open space, to include outdoor yoga, nature walks, and family-friendly events. Residents have reported that the area is prone to standing water after large rainfall events due to the topography of the property. The Des Plaines River is located approximately a quarter-mile to the west of both parcels. While integration of the ecological or recreational benefits associated with the river-way were not a priority during this outreach process, there is an opportunity to consider them in the future. The Illinois Prairie Path is also a regional recreation amenity that is located nearby. The trailhead for the eastern starting point of the trail is located on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, approximately half a mile from the property. How this amenity could complement open space planning efforts could also be a future planning consideration.

The community outreach process was designed so that a Community Planner from the RTCA program would have an opportunity to speak with both municipal agencies and

organizations that have a significant presence in the community and residents who live in Forest Park and call it home.

## **Community Outreach and Public Feedback**

The community outreach process consisted of two distinct phases. The first phase involved individual meetings between RTCA staff and representatives of fourteen different local government agencies or community organizations. All but one of these conversations involved in-person meetings between representatives of the respective stakeholder groups; one discussion took place over a telephone call. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss how new developments at the property could be an amenity for both their organization and the community at large. RTCA staff discussed how stakeholder organizations currently utilize the space and how they might use it in the future; and more importantly, what opportunities or concerns these representatives have regarding current proposals. RTCA staff also shared templates for the posters that were in development for the public outreach events so that stakeholder representatives could provide input for how the posters could better reflect potential outdoor recreation and green space activities and amenities suitable for the community. Suggestions made during these meetings led to several changes in the public feedback posters utilized during the community events. RTCA staff held targeted stakeholder outreach discussions with the following organizations:

- Forest Park Public Library
- Homeowner Association for Residences at the Grove
- Park District of Forest Park
- Forest Park Community Center
- Progress Center for Independent Living
- Forest Park Arts Alliance
- St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
- The Altnheim Senior Living Community
- St. Bernadine Catholic Church
- Forest Park Historical Society
- Kiwanis Club of Forest Park

- Forest Park Gardening Club
- Concordia Cemetery
- West Cook YMCA

Discussions with these stakeholders yielded a wide variety of ways that people currently utilize the property, and sometimes-conflicting visions and preferences for how this open space could be an asset for the community in the future. While each group brought a unique perspective, several common themes for opportunities and concerns emerged during these conversations.

## **Opportunities**

### **Open Space**

The most common theme that emerged is the perception that the Village of Forest Park could benefit from additional open space. Several stakeholders have emphasized that the Forest Park Cultural Park could be an opportunity to establish “unstructured open space” that allows “flexibility for how the space is utilized.”

### **Green Space**

Almost all stakeholders were supportive of improved landscaping of the current site and establishing native plants and greenery that transform the area into a more natural setting. Several commented that increased wildlife habitat (either pollinators for insects or plants/structures for birds) could give local residents the opportunity to “experience nature” in their community.

## **Concerns**

### **Compatibility**

The biggest concern among stakeholders was how to make this a worthwhile amenity to the village as a whole, while understanding that residents currently live in close proximity to the proposed site. As one stakeholder commented, this area “is a neighborhood” and future development should consider impacts to the immediate surroundings and the people that live there.

### **Safety**

This theme mostly seemed to focus on parking (where stakeholders were split, but generally agreed that it should be minimized) and traffic flow on Van Buren Street, as well as the presence of any physical structures (e.g. shelters, bathrooms) that would need to be monitored and maintained to ensure that they are not utilized after dark or in inappropriate manners.

### **Inclusivity**

There was a general sentiment to make the village-owned open space an amenity that is for everyone and available for use by everyone. Both in regards to physical access (ADA compliant and adhering to principles of Universal Design) and in what activities should be prioritized.

The second phase of the community outreach process consisted of three stakeholder events and four public events where residents could interact with feedback posters and engage in activities to provide input on future proposals. The outreach events during this phase were identically structured to give residents the same opportunity to leave feedback regardless of what day or time they participated. RTCA staff held two evening stakeholder events at the Residences at the Grove and one afternoon event at the Altenheim Senior Living Community. Four community events were also held for the general public, two of these were hosted at the Forest Park Public Library during weekday evening hours and two were hosted at the Park District of Forest Park Administration Building during weekend afternoon hours. Approximately 100-120 people attended the community outreach events to provide feedback.

These events contained three different mechanisms for attendees to provide feedback. These were: 1. Activities/Amenities Poster, 2. Opportunities/Concerns Poster, and 3. A Drawing Exercise. The first poster (Activities/Amenities) contained icons for twenty common park and recreation amenities and asked if an attendee would prefer that amenity to be included as part of a proposal for the site, instructing them to place a colored sticker indicative of their preference next to that icon. The second poster (Opportunities/Concerns) asked attendees to write down on adhesive notes any thoughts or opinions they had related to what opportunities might exist for future uses of the site as well as what concerns they have about future proposals. The drawing exercise was an 8.5x11 inch sheet of paper with an overhead image of both the north and south parcels. During this activity, attendees could visualize their thoughts for what should go at the site and what a community amenity in the space might look like.



Stakeholder outreach event at Residences at the Grove.  
(Photograph: National Park Service)



[illegible]

Above Right: Image of Opportunities/Concerns Poster.

Below: Drawing submitted by one attendee as a concept design for the Forest Park Cultural Park.  
(Photographs: National Park Service)

Draw what you think the Forest Park Cultural Park should look like.

Comments:

Are there noise ordinances in town?

trees / native plants / Wall way / conservation area

playground? or would it get too noisy?

Will there be a connection here?

Parking

Should stay green & natural for Altheim residents to enjoy. Don't cut them in withering.

This space is great as is - perfect for Festivals / smaller community events. Maybe would get used more w/ better parking purpose?

## **Initial Results of Community Feedback**

The approximately 100-120 people that attended the combined community outreach events expressed a great variety of preferences and opinions. It should be noted again that the scope of RTCA technical assistance for this project was focused on potential outdoor recreation and green space proposals for the village-owned property. While the community events highlighted these two planning concerns, comments regarding all potential uses of the property were accepted and included in this report. Attendees submitted over 150 comments indicating their thoughts on opportunities and concerns for the site and 25 individuals drew concept designs for a potential Forest Park Cultural Park. Each of the individual Opportunity/Concerns comments are included in this report as Appendix 1. RTCA staff will forward the drawings of the concept designs to village staff at the Forest Park mayor's office. The two following images show the sum of all responses to the Activities & Amenities poster and visualize the comparative differences in resident preferences.

### **Initial Results of Community Feedback – Forest Park Cultural Park**

<b>Activity/Amenity Categories</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not At All</b>
Shelter	14	9	6	10	4
Walking Path	64	27	0	0	0
Wildlife Habitat	29	21	2	0	1
Public Art	20	14	4	3	4
Bicycle Racks	15	18	8	1	3
ADA Compliant Amenities	37	19	0	0	0
Native Plants / Pollinators	39	19	0	0	2
Interpretive Exhibits	13	10	4	3	2
Prairie Habitat	29	23	1	1	0
Bio-Swales / Rainwater Retention	16	11	5	6	8
Benches / Seating	46	19	2	0	0
Picnic Tables	27	18	3	3	7
Tactile Displays	11	11	3	3	0
Green Space	54	18	0	0	0
Winter Recreation Opportunities	26	18	3	1	0
Exercise / Fitness Path	36	19	0	3	2
Parking	8	15	2	13	18
Restrooms	16	18	3	14	14
Playground	29	16	3	4	7
Community Gardens	36	11	4	3	5

Chart 1: Combined results of the Activities & Amenities poster.

## PUBLIC RESPONSES FOR POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES & AMENITIES

WOULD YOU LIKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES/AMENITIES TO BE A PART OF THE FOREST PARK CULTURAL PARK

Very Much Yes No Not At All

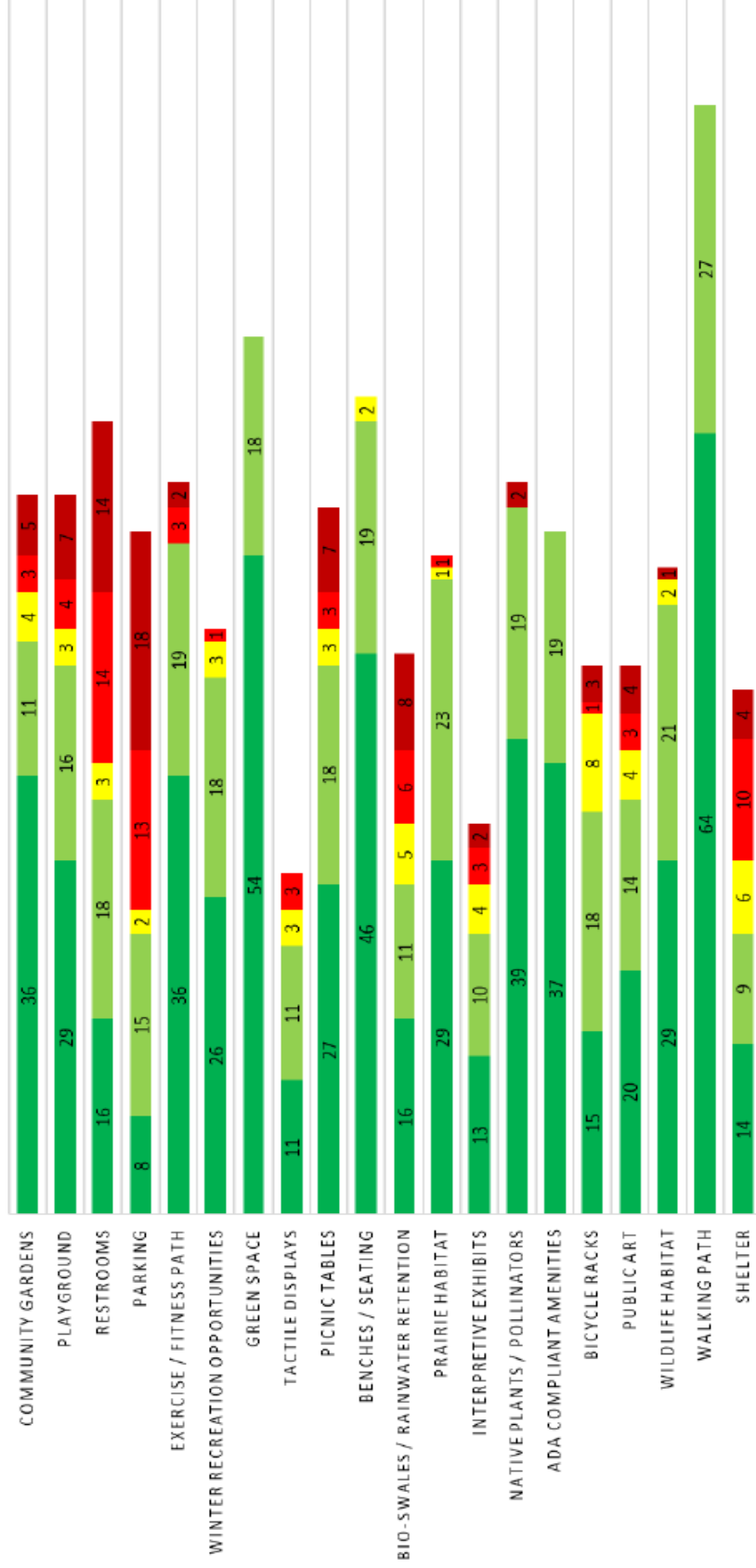


Chart 2: Graph of results from the Activities & Amenities poster.

## **Next Steps**

The purpose of this report is two-fold. First, it serves as a project deliverable from the National Park Service RTCA program to the Village of Forest Park showing the consolidated results of a public outreach process that was the central focus of RTCA's community assistance during Federal Fiscal Year 2018. Secondly, it serves as an initial planning resource for elected officials, village planners, potential stakeholders, and community residents. This report is not a final and comprehensive summary of all potential development opportunities, nor is it a recommendation by the National Park Service for any particular proposed use. This community outreach process is one step in visualizing potential opportunities to make the village-owned property on Van Buren Street an amenity for the community. Future planning discussions will ultimately decide what that proposal will contain and how a project of that scale may be accomplished.

## **Appendix 1: Comments from Opportunities & Concerns Posters**

### **What Opportunities are there for the Community?**

- Yes- Lots of Green Space! So welcome in FP!
- Dog Park. Paths for walking. Running Track. Nature Center. City garden. Gazebo.
- Addl. Parking. Addl. Policing. Community Garden. Dog park.
- A Place to walk Dogs – Bird Sanctuary w/ paths for walking, sitting, park for kids.
- Would like a Park with place to BBQ (charcoal), grilling, walk track, green space, gazebo.
- Communal park to bring people together. Add gardens + green space + cultural facilities for community to enjoy. Walking Paths. Dog Park.
- Arboretum/Bird Sanctuary with paths, benches for “passive” recreation. Bird watching. Dog walking. Photography. Ecology education. Etc.
- Bird Sanctuary. [agree]
- Walking paths. Playground. Dog park, dog run area. Maintain green space. [agree]
- Green space – there’s very little in FP. Promotes community.
- Historical museum and landscaped park.
- Playground. Walking path. Wild flowers. Maybe small pond.
- A playground + Park would provide families with a place to enjoy the outdoors. Gather with friends.
- Dog walk. Exercise path. Community garden. Nature path w/ pond or fountain.
- Sport fields. Sand volleyball courts. Baseball field. Rec activities. Social gathering space.
- Walking/exercise area/path. Green space. Native plants. Community Garden. All Positive for the community.
- We would enjoy any space that would be tranquil – The “Grooving in the Grove” is about all we would care to see as far as a music venue goes. Wildlife, trails and botanical garden would be best use of this beautiful lot.
- Please no concert venue. Green space is pretty as is. Too much traffic + noise if this land is highly developed.
- Useable green space. Parking (small amount) for small Grove festivals just south of Madison.
- Butterfly “sanctuary”- just outdoor plants, paths. Sandhill cranes migrate through region – don’t disrupt!!
- Space for wildlife, butterflies & birds, honeybees, native plants. Supporting local natural ecosystem.
- I would like: dog park, sculpture park, community garden.
- Van Buren is crowded enough without a “music venue” adding to the congestion.
- 1. Local shopping- small grocery store, City Target, restaurants, coffee shops. 2. Dog park / children’s park.
- Highly concerned to concert venue to noise, traffic & safety compromising quietness of the venue. 512, Van Buren 7753.
- Dog park. In a portion of the 11 acre site, on the far side away from entrance (also dog park should not be directly adjacent to large playground area), I think of secured fenced dog park is needed for the Forest Park community. Access by paid permit.
- I would like an ice skating rink – serve hot chocolate. Playground would be great!
- Childrens playspace green areas / park district. Smaller venue for music would be great.
- Dog allowed on leashes if police monitor.
- Something like Skinner Park in city would be nice. Community garden, butterflies, covered space for picnics.
- Nature Preserve, make a monarch butterfly way station. Something for bees + bats? Something for the migratory birds that use the green space already.

- Dog friendly playground, walking paths, picnic space, etc. – swimming pool? Multi-generation space. Will the falling down building be addressed. Lots of new housing in area = great opportunity to improve this end of Madison area.
- Allow people to walk their dogs (on leash) there. No dogs sign is very off-putting + anti-community. Dogs love being in nature.
- Something like Scoville Park in Oak Park would be nice. [I agree]
- Fully-fenced rectangular dog run that can be locked + rented every 30 minutes would bring revenue into the Village. The existing dog area on circle + 290 is too small. My dogs like to run and don't get excited by that small park. Think DuPage Forest Preserves.
- Playground, concert venue would be ideal.
- My idea for the space would include the building of berms (sp?) or small sled hills to highlight (terrain would provide "focus areas" for garden space) the different activity areas. The playground area should NOT be adjacent to the dog park.
- Native plants to attract butterflies. Entire Village would benefit.
- I'm only in favor of a dog park if owners are heavily fined for not cleaning up after them. I think anything that is done should have video surveillance to deter criminal activity.
- A 4 seasons performing arts venue contributes to "Cultural Park" and to community.
- Music Venue. Farmers Market.
- Music / Performing Arts Venue. Farmer's Market. Designated walkway from CTA stop.
- Music Venue. Performing Arts. Farmers Market. Trolley service Madison increase foot traffic for Forest Park business. Community Events. Renovation of River.
- Performing Arts. Private Events. Farmers Market. Gardens. Walk path – Prairie Path. Races – charity. Dog park – paid. Generate revenue for Madison. Antique shows.
- Add opportunities for community events: festival grounds, farmers market, music venue.
- Performance Arts. Music Venue. Farmers Market. Create a walkway or bridge to the cultural park.
- Green Space: Prairie plantings to encourage bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. More rustic & natural, less "preened." Connectivity to Prairie Path.
- Performing Arts Venue: The Chicago Symphony Orchestra has been searching for a new venue in the West Suburbs. This could be it! Many theater & music organizations need performance/rehearsal space in west suburbs. Think Harris Theater concept with many "in-house" groups in residence with rental opportunities for others.
- Art: Something like what is in place in Millennium Park – large sculptures/installations. Native plants/grasses as art. "Sound Art"- like what is outside of Milwaukee's Discovery Center. Visitors play the "instruments" which are also art.
- Cultural Park / Music venue would be a great asset and attraction to Forest Park. This is a unique opportunity for the community to stand out in a good way.
- Children + youth cultural center would be fine.
- A garden with the sun exposure.
- The south end of the (Arforwood Bld) will be subjected to much heat when the church, cafeteria, and campus is exposed to the "sun" during the summer months.
- Important criterion for use of park should be peace and tranquility of neighborhood.
- Combination memorial – exercise – walking – nature appreciation venue.
- There is so much green space in this area. We have a lot of Forest Preserve land. What is needed is businesses to support the convenience of the many residents of the area and commuters: FEDEX, salons, food stores, cleaners, etc.
- Altenheim resident: an area tastefully landscaped for light exercise. As in a safe blacktop pathway going around Altenheim buildings or property! Also, a "labyrinth" tastefully landscaped for walking and stress relief + meditation.

- I think having food available for purchase will enable people to spend more time at the cultural park. Maybe spend the entire day.
- Swimming Pool. All year round usage for Seniors only.
- Parking would be nice for CTA parking but there isn't enough parking for Altenheim as it is.
- Safety and Security.
- 1. Band Shell for small music venue. 2. Conservatory or garden.
- I favor green space and quiet. We have enough activities already here in summer. I'd like a natural nature path.
- A place for green space. A gateway to Prairie Path. More green space, keep open space, top desire Peace & quiet space – there is less and less of that already.
- I'd like to see small businesses such as dry cleaners, food stores, and UPS pick up, anything to serve the local residents and communities.
- Great area for a park – green spaces, picnic, prairie plants, walking paths, dog park.
- Park-Green Space – in Forest Park is desperately needed. Making a place for children and seniors and families would be wonderful.
- Bring live music to Forest Park! The bars on Madison don't have it.
- Be sure to bring about Ralph's idea of a concert/cultural venue. A great opportunity for Forest Park!
- Dog park would be wonderful for town homes and walkers in Forest Park.
- Tactile Gardens would be great for all ages and people with disabilities. Would be great to have an area that is helping the environment and attracting people to the area that wouldn't necessarily visit.
- I support the proposal which exists for a band shell / music venue and seating/parking. Anything beyond that is a "nice to have."
- Please add a concert stage area to the proposed plans.
- Love having a family driven environment that can increase revenue for Forest Park. Music venue, concession, food trucks.
- Live music 100%! A place for all ages to have a safe environment to go.
- More green space, picnic areas, place for periodic fests (ribfest).
- 1. Incorporate Ralph's Culture Park idea to entertain and to generate revenue. 2. Create an environment that promotes and protects plants and animals in their nature habitat. 3. Ensure that the space is ADA compliant and user friendly.

### **What concerns do you have about the proposal?**

- If theater (noise)- should limit to small shows, community run, engineer sound to direct away from residents towards cemetery, limit parking.
- No "Cultural Park," too much noise, traffic.
- Noise, litter, traffic congestion.
- Noise at night. Safety at night. Traffic. Light at night. Please limit park from dawn to dusk.
- [yes]
- What proposal? There is no proposal to respond to. Thanks- bait + switch!
- If you're talking about the so-called "Cultural Park" my concerns are: traffic, noise, security, loss of privacy. Does Calderone care?
- Noise. Parking. Frequency of events. Capacity of potential arena.
- Forest Park has not proved it can manage The Grove (Groovin @ the Grove, etc.). Proposals for anything more of that nature is ridiculous.
- Music venue. Noise. Traffic/Pollution. Parking issues. If alcohol is allowed problems with drunk people. Litter.



- Noise. Traffic. Parking.
- Music at night involve crowds of people. This is a major concern.
- Too many people + traffic would scare off the wildlife. Deer. Coyote. Skunks. Birds. Turtles.
- Noise. Foot traffic thru the property grounds. Strangers from train line. Decrease in property value. Personal safety / invasion of privacy. Vandalism. Increase in insurance costs.
- Noise. Light at night. Parking / Traffic / Congestion on 1-way street. Litter / Garbage. Crime / Drunk people. Loss of property value. Safety.
- Noise. Pollution. Traffic. Parking. Safety w/ crowds.
- My balcony directly faces the area where the music venue would be. I am concerned about my property value/resale and the unavoidable extreme noise. A small music venue (200 people) at most. Also concerned about traffic and drunk pedestrians.
- Noise. Traffic. Safety. Parking. Lots of people in area. Litter.
- Noise. Traffic. Need sidewalks. Security.
- Noise Traffic. Parking. No music venue.
- No dog park. Loss of property value. Safety. Traffic is already a problem. Noise level. Parking. No music venue. No basketball courts.
- Traffic congestion. How would people get into/out of the space? Many unwanted people already present in area at Blue Line Station, how would we keep the new area safe/clean?
- There is no proposal to respond to! Seems like a bait and switch to me.
- Traffic flow. Noise. Safety. Littering. Loitering. Property values. People cutting through. Pollution. Size of venue. Any recreational area should be dawn to dusk only! No public restrooms – invites unsavory characters.
- Re: music venue. Loss of property value!
- Concerns: Traffic- additional access and egress must be provided- only one way out is unsafe. Noise- stages must face way from residences. Backstage and Production traffic- (trucks, etc.) must go in+out and be parked out of sight of residences on Van Buren.
- Traffic. Security. Noise.
- Traffic problems. Noise. Will it be 7 days or weekend only?
- Too Busy. Too much traffic. Need peace and quiet, not more activity.
- No basketball courts. No soccer / football. No softball / baseball. No beach volleyball. No parking available for such things. This should be quiet parkland where people walk or bike to enjoy the park. No skateboard park.
- No dog park.
- Traffic flow must be improved!
- No Bathrooms! Too dangerous- people drift from Blue Line- don't want these available/un-monitored.
- Concern: Driving access is one way out + traffic on Madison is difficult to get out to. When parking on the street there is a pedestrian hazard.
- Traffic can only go one way so that is an issue. Noise depending on size of venue. Parking, bathrooms, people overflow into our community is a concern.
- Van Buren St. is TOO SMALL already for all the traffic on it. Combined with the fact you can't exit on to Des Plaines, traffic struggles as is. We can't add "400 to 7200" other people and their vehicles.
- Concerns: Traffic! Noise! Parking!
- No noise at night past dusk.
- No concerts, music, big crowds.
- Noise!! Blue line pedestrian traffic, dangerous!
- Concerns about: Quick removal of dilapidated Altenheim building, Traffic patterns + pedestrian safety – 1 way access from Van Buren. Dawn to Dusk hours. No music venue!



- Noise, Traffic, Crowds, No Music Venue.
- No large concert pavilion. The proximity to the Grove is too close. Traffic is already a big concern – Van Buren has now become a public trans/bus line, and Blue Line users that drive go very fast/over speed limit.
- NOISE. Increased traffic w/o increased traffic management plan. Stressing municipal resources- police/fire/EMS w/o revenue.
- Parking? We need traffic light by Van Buren – too busy during 4:30p.m.-
- No concerts, music, big crowds.
- I am concerned about – Traffic, Litter, Noise.
- This plan would bring too much traffic to the area!
- Additional car & pedestrian traffic on Grove Ln. One car exit on Van Buren (at Madison), no traffic signals. Trash generated by music venue and left on Grove Land and Van Buren, who will pick up?
- Who will provide security for the neighborhood during & after music venue events? Who will provide traffic control for music venue events?
- No bathrooms, no concerts, traffic, litter.
- Abandoned buildings are falling down, “attractive nuisance.”
- The comfort of the residents of Altenheim should be considered. Consider what it will look like/sound like from their building.
- No permanent music venue. Traffic is a concern as road is already busy & narrow.
- Traffic big concern.
- No dog park! Barking under my window – NO.
- No alcohol.
- Parking is an issue- people can walk to the park.
- Proximity to the “L” station makes me nervous. There should be nothing in that area that allows for damage unseen as happened at Altenheim. No driving path thru the area.
- Will worsen traffic flow Van Buren/Madison intersection. Desperately needs at very least a stop sign on Madison for east bound traffic + a sign not to block intersection. And we (cars) should be allowed to exit onto Des Plaines.
- No mention of original concept’s amenities! Performing arts venue. Farmers Market. Festival. Community Events.
- High cost & duplicates regional amenities.
- Pedestrian access @ West Jackson. Foot crossing- behind community center across train tracks- so folks do not have to go around/thru CTA.
- Parking. Traffic. Noise.
- Concerned that this will become more softball field & rec center (we have plenty of that). Traffic plan. Noise. Parking- design should encourage people to walk or ride bikes to the Cultural Park.
- What will happen to influx of traffic – parking? The new buildings being constructed are going to be enough of an issue – how will the amount of people coming to this “park” or “green space” be handled – more security? Time limit?
- Fear of losing the wall protection of the church place. Dust of tear down.
- Foot traffic and parking around Altenheim campus.
- Altenheim resident – No noisy sports arena! An exercise path or a circular maze or a large circular ‘labyrinth’ to walk inside for meditation, stress-relief, or relaxation. Labyrinths are now used inside or outside in churches, hospitals, or public/private spaces! Must be well-landscaped!
- Fencing between green space and Altenheim. Concern for traffic.
- What’s wrong with this land the way it is?
- All of the traffic + parking that will be around the Altenheim.

- Concerns-Altenheim Resident – “A Must” a red light traffic signal at the intersection of Van Buren St. and Madison Ave! “Rush Hour” now starts at 3:30pm and is impossible in get in here or get out of here right now!
- Is anything ever going to be done about the falling apart buildings the village owns before you spend money on a park?
- Does noise and safety matter for Altenheim residents? These people move here because of its seclusion. Now it will be completely changed.
- Concern – too much traffic in area is increasing concern. Need of traffic light up to Altenheim + the edge of Forest Park property at Madison St.
- Traffic, parking, densely populated residential area, safety, security.
- Deeply concerned that a music venue would be considered. Forest Park already has Madison St. We have a need in the Village for Green Space.
- Bad idea for concert venue! Very densely populated residential area!! Noise, pollution, traffic, safety.
- It looks like they’ve already built a music venue at the park district that will work well.
- Overbuilding the area already getting too congested. No dogs- mess, noise, smell. Respect for the historic nature of property. Respect for those buried in area. Losing historic picnic grove in front.
- Ideas for green space and playground music venue are good, but who will take care of upkeep + police patrol. Does Village have \$ to maintain.
- What percentage of open, undeveloped green space should a community have? Our community has ‘green space’ for active recreation, that is a soccer field, skateboard area, etc. but we do not have a ‘green space’ for passive recreation, that is walking, birdwatching, photography, etc. where aesthetics and education are the primary objective of the space. I believe that the property across the street is the last of the ‘green space’ in Forest Park. I would like to see an Arboretum/Bird Sanctuary with paths and benches. An area where people can relax and enjoy nature. While this is not necessarily a money maker for the town it does provide an ecological service. For example, trees suck up CO2 and help mitigate climate change. They provide a habitat for birds that eat insects. A swallow eats a thousand mosquitoes a day. They also provide habitat for pollinators that help people with their gardens, etc. So, the presence of these critters provides a service beyond what one may get from simply seeing them. Also, having an unpaved area to soak up rain during high precipitation events that might otherwise runoff and flood streets and sewer systems is a positive. The town already uses the area to dump the snow that is plowed up during the winter. Treed areas are also good wind and sound barriers. A second idea would be to restore the church to create a history museum/landscaped park area and incorporate the small little cemetery into the park/museum. I know that in the past Forest Park has wanted to start a small community museum as we have a rich history and there is much history in the surrounding cemeteries (Haymarket Riot, Circus Train accident, famous people). The museum could be a starting point and visitors could then visit the spots highlighted at the museum and/or visit other places such as the softball museum and shops and restaurants in our downtown. Forest Park’s motto is “Big City Access, Small Town Charm.” They would lose that with a formal music venue. We already have the Grove for music. People enjoy Groovin’ in the Grove and all the festivals precisely because you can easily run into your neighbors and friends. It provides us with the small town feel and helps to live up to the town’s motto. We do not need or want a formal music venue in the middle of our neighborhood.