

MY BECK

REIMAGINING BECK PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING #1 FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Beck Park Expansion

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29TH, 2022 | 6 - 8 PM | ETHS TRANSITION HOUSE

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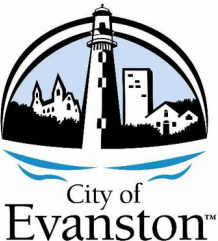
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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Nestled along the North Shore Channel and steps away from ETHS, King Arts, Gibbs-Morrison, and local businesses, Beck Park has incredible potential to be one of the gems of the 5th Ward. Side-by-side with the community, we are reimagining the park to ensure that it:

- **Embraces the neighborhood**, building on its cultural assets and integrating authentic and unique elements into this park.
- **Is inclusive and equitable**, ensuring the design supports opportunities for the physical, emotional, and social development of all people.
- **Is bold and innovative**, pushing the boundaries of traditional park and play design for the sake of creating a well-used, memorable, and beloved public space that will endure for generations.
- **Rediscovered the Channel**, which is currently hidden behind fencing and vegetation. Beck Park can redefine the relationship between community open space and the Channel, to create new activations, and to embrace natural systems and green infrastructure.

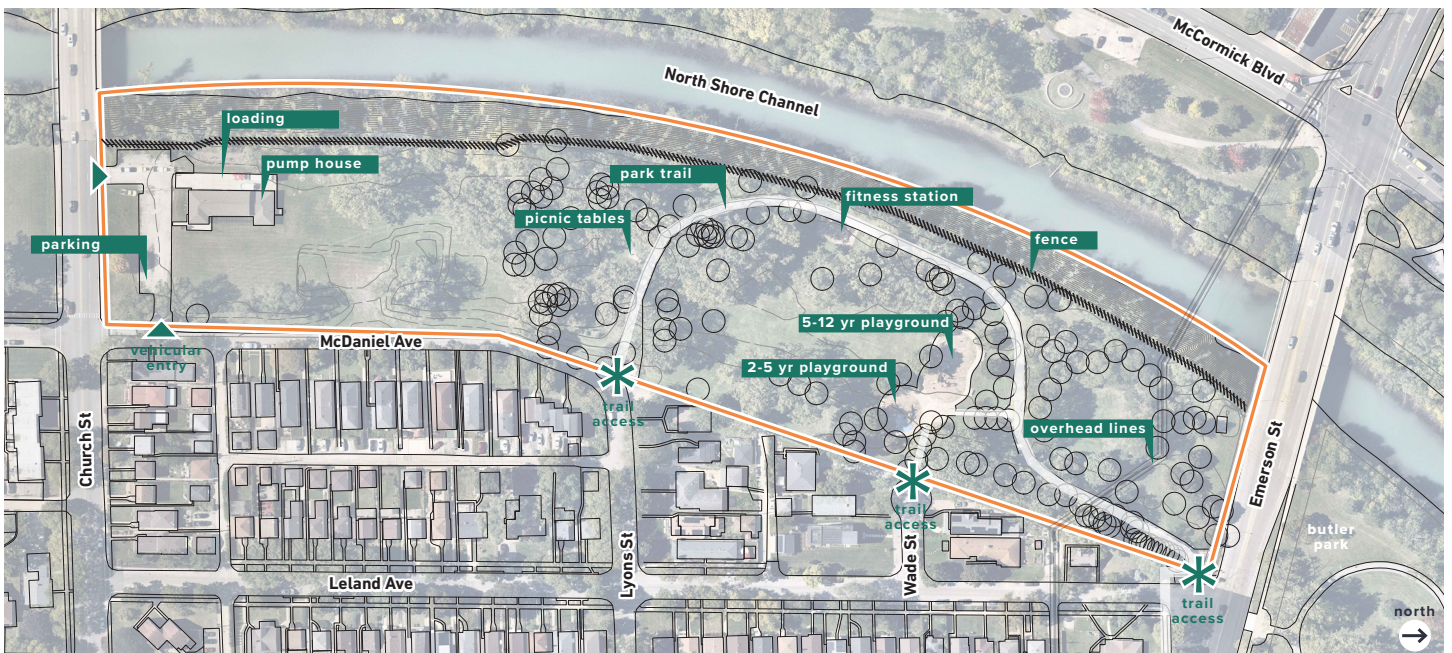
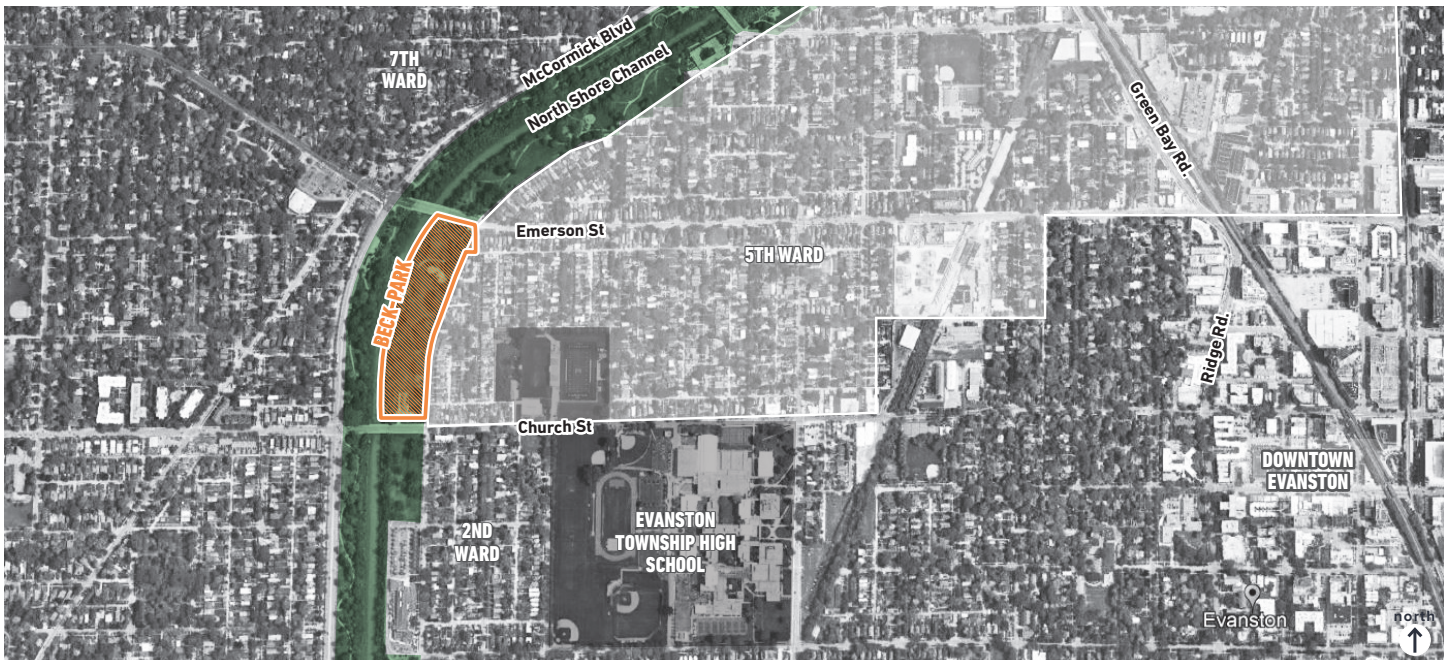


Beck Park Photography

Existing Conditions

Beck Park is located on the western end of the 5th Ward along the North Shore Channel between Emerson Street (to the north) and Church Street (to the south). Enveloped in mature deciduous shade trees, the park features generous open lawn spaces, a meandering multi-use trail, fitness and play equipment, picnic areas, an existing pump house with restroom and a deteriorated asphalt parking lot.

While the park runs along the Channel, little evidence of the Channel can be seen from the park since it is obscured by large plantings and fencing. On the opposite side, City streets and single-family home residences front the park property adding to the quiet and peaceful nature of the park setting. To the north, across Emerson Street, Butler Park continues along the Channel while to the south, across Church Street, open space continues on the property of District 65 Joseph E. Hill Early Education Center.



Beck Park Aerial Maps

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING #1

The first neighborhood meeting was held at the ETHS Transition House at 1742 Lemar Avenue on Thursday, November 29th from 6 to 8 p.m. The meeting format/agenda included:

- Meeting Welcome (City Councilmember Bobby Burns, 5th Ward)
- Project Background, Process, and Overview
- Neighborhood Introductions
- Q+A Session
- Breakout Exercises

Meeting exercises were designed to gather community input on topics such as preferred use of the community space, channel connectivity, accessibility and safety, programming, play equipment types, public art, etc. From self-led visual preference “Pinterest” sheets to pinning strings along park routes most frequently traveled, over 30 Beck Park neighbors, City staff and representatives, and the design team explored different ways the public space could be enhanced.



Neighborhood Meeting #1 at the ETHS Transition House

EXERCISE FEEDBACK #1



Current Access Experience + Journey to and through Beck

Neighbors used pins connected by string (color-coded by transit mode) to demonstrate how they access Beck Park from their homes. They were also asked to share their thoughts regarding access improvements while walking the group through how they currently experience the site.

How do you travel to Beck Park?

Once you have landed at Beck, how do you navigate through the Park?

Key Takeaways:

- Most neighbors walk to access the site by the main streets or surrounding alleyways.
- Wade and Lyons Street were the most common entrances, while many witnessed people traveling through and beyond the park utilizing the northern entrance at Emerson Street.
- Many flagged the crossing at Emerson Street as dangerous and have witnessed accidents.
- Neighbors navigate differently through the site depending on their own interests, including staying at the main play equipment station, circulating throughout the park, or continuing onward to other trails and destinations within Evanston (i.e., ETHS, work, lakefront trails, Central Street).

■ walking ■ biking



Breakout Exercise #1: Current Access Experience + Journey to and through Beck

Exercise Feedback #1: Current Access Experience + Journey to and through Beck

Key Takeaways:

MAINTENANCE + INFRASTRUCTURE

Tasteful lighting / Not cool LED
(not invasive to birds + neighbors)

Introduce different path types
(mulched ecology paths)

Drainage infrastructure solutions

Improve fence along channel
(western site boundary)

SAFETY + ACCESSIBILITY

Safer crossing at
Emerson Street (north to south)

Additional sidewalks
+ paths to travel

Increase walkability along
McDaniel Avenue + Lyons Street

Improve ADA accessibility

Addition of a walking bridge
over the Channel (east to west)

CHARACTER + FEEL

Naturalistic with
ample green space

Protect wildlife
(deer, coyotes, birds)

Ornamental trees

AMENITIES + LEISURE

Quality bike paths

Dog play area +
waste stations

Fishing point/access
along the channel

Nature-based
play equipment

EXERCISE FEEDBACK #2



Conversation on “What is There” + “What Could Be”

Neighbors gathered around a large aerial map of Beck Park and collectively shared their thoughts and ideas around what they would like to see at the park, and what amenities would strengthen the neighborhood.

What is your favorite amenity of the park today?

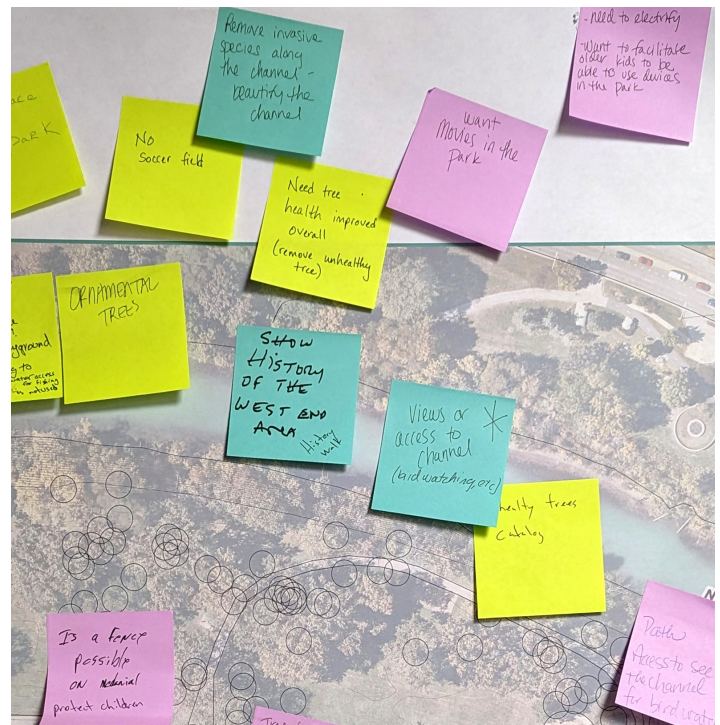
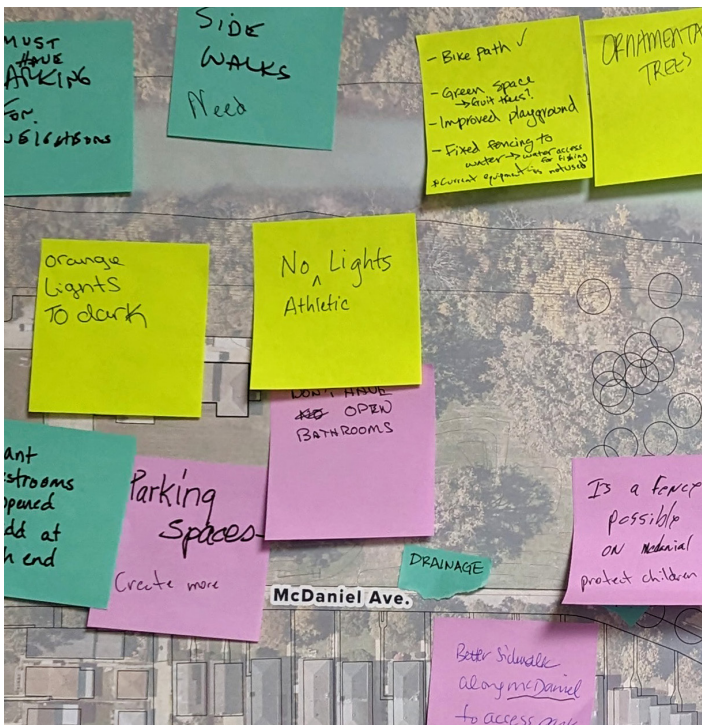
What are the existing challenges of the park?

What do you want to see at the park?

Do you have any concern about potential uses or activities?

Key Takeaways:

- Many neighbors voiced their support for additional natural elements and connections to the channel, while protecting the existing wildlife and neighboring residences.
- It was communicated that there is a big need for maintenance and infrastructure improvements. They believe drainage improvements can benefit the greater area while providing beautification and wildlife habitat opportunities.
- Safe access to and within Beck Park is a high priority for the neighborhood.
- Some neighbors advocated for park programming and activities such as a West End area history walk, movies in the park, fishing, and birdwatching.



Breakout Exercise #2: Conversation on “What is There” + “What Could Be”

Exercise Feedback #2: Conversation on “What is There” + “What Could Be”

Key Takeaways:

MAINTENANCE + INFRASTRUCTURE

Bright lighting (orange light is too dark)

Tree health/Invasive Species

Plowing streets + trails in order
to access park year-round

Mechanical equipment
fence/screening for safety

Drainage infrastructure solutions

Quality bike paths

SAFETY + ACCESSIBILITY

Improved crosswalk safety

Must have accessible parking
for neighbors + park visitors

Better sidewalks along
McDaniel Avenue to access park

Additional internalized paths

Access to free Wi-Fi + electricity

CHARACTER + FEEL

Views or access to channel

Plant ornamental trees

Green space with fruit trees

Bike-friendly elements

No athletic lights or fields

AMENITIES + LEISURE

Channel amenities (bike path,
birdwatching, boat launch, fishing)

Programming (movies in the park)

Accessible public restrooms

No public restrooms

Learning + play spaces

West End area history walk

Pet waste station

Roller skating area

EXERCISE FEEDBACK #3



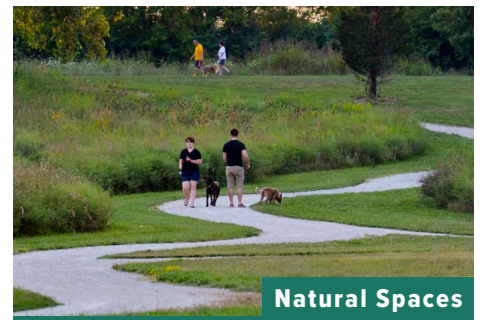
Visioning with the Beck Park Ideas Sheet

The last breakout table included self-led “Pinterest” sheets, where neighbors identified their favorite inspirational images and showcased their personal “mix” of desired aesthetics and uses. Neighbors built their own vision for Beck Park from a bank of over 100 image options.

What do you want to do here? How do you want it to look?

Key Takeaways:

- The twenty-two (22) images most commonly used by the neighbors included natural spaces, connections to the channel and nature, and nature-based play equipment.
- As seen on the following page, the other photographs selected align with a passive park structure with people resting on benches and walking throughout the park.
- Neighbors were also interested in drainage solutions, community-based programming and activities, and opportunities for public art.



Exercise Feedback #3: Visioning with the Beck Park Ideas Sheet



Breakout Exercise #3: Visioning with Beck Park Ideas Sheet

MEETING TAKEAWAYS

Listed below are the key meeting takeaways from the first neighborhood meeting:



Community-led + Transparent Process



Natural Character + Ample Open Space



Engaging + Friendly to All Ages



Infrastructure + Accessibility Improvements



Connection to Channel + City Systems



Long-term Support + Implementation



REIMAGINING BECK PARK