



## ECOLOGICAL DESIGN

### Near West community offers input to reshape Zone Recreation Center

#### Public workshop is first step in identifying improvements to space, amenities and recreational uses

When more than 50 members of the community met with Ward 17 Councilman Matthew Zone and representatives from the Mayor's office, EcoCity Cleveland, and the Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization at the Michael J. Zone Recreation Center on Lorain Avenue on September 21, 2002, they began a dialogue about defining more uses of the center's expansive, mostly unused green space. How could grassy fields be reshaped to accommodate more recreational activities, resting places, spaces that invite people to stay awhile, and areas that create a beautiful natural setting while offering environmentally and socially positive change? The ideas of the participants found below will play an important part in informing the planning process as it moves forward.

Many participants spoke of the unique opportunity posed by the presence of the large open expanse of green that surrounds the Michael J. Zone Recreation Center (land that was assembled by the state for an I-90 interchange that was never built). People spoke of coming to the park to play baseball and soccer with children's leagues, of walking through the area, and of the diverse community in which it is located. People also spoke of how accessible it is—not just to those who live and work nearby, but also in terms of its proximity to bus lines and the soon-to-be renovated W. 65th Rapid stop. Short-term improvements that were frequently mentioned included:

- Improved safety and security around the area by improving the lighting throughout the park, more security personnel patrolling the area, more "eyes" on the space, and an emergency phone.
- Adding amenities such as benches, water fountains, food stands and portable toilets throughout the area, but in particular in the areas farthest from the recreation center.
- Creating paths going around and through the space,

[Back to main EcoVillage](#)

[What neighborhood kids want at Zone Rec](#)

[Results of second community workshop](#)

#### Elements people like:

(Click on images for larger view)



potentially with lanes for runners/walkers separate from lanes for in-line skaters/bikers.

- Landscaping throughout, in particular around the main entrances. Plantings of flowers and shade trees.
- Improvements to the play spaces, including the athletic fields and the playground equipment.

Each of four groups at the workshop came up with creative ideas for long-term improvements for the green space. Many of these ideas fell into four main categories:

- Gathering places—The creation of one or more spaces within the expansive green space that serves to bring people together. This could take many forms: gazebos, picnic areas, an open theater, a fountain with a circle of benches around it.
- The use of alternative energy sources—wind and solar—to generate power for the lights and other amenities, and to educate users about clean energy technology.
- Public art—Suggestions include functional art installations throughout the space that could take various forms. For example, benches, arches, playgrounds, or water fountains. In addition, groups suggested murals, statues, gardens or other artistic means to represent the local community and the diverse groups that live, work and play there.
- Water elements—People were very enthusiastic about the presence of water elements in the park. In this category, the ideas ranged from a water slide and children's wading pool to an artistic fountain to a series of wetlands and streams to collect and clean runoff from the roads, buildings and highways that surround the site.

These are only a few of the ideas generated at the first community meeting. The workshop organizers hope that as the planning process moves forward, citizens will continue to be involved and invite neighbors, friends and family to participate. Stay tuned for updates and opportunities to contribute your expertise!

[Back to top](#)

EcoCity Cleveland  
3500 Lorain Avenue, Suite 301, Cleveland OH 44113  
Cuyahoga Bioregion  
(216) 961-5020  
www.ecocitycleveland.org  
Copyright 2002-2003