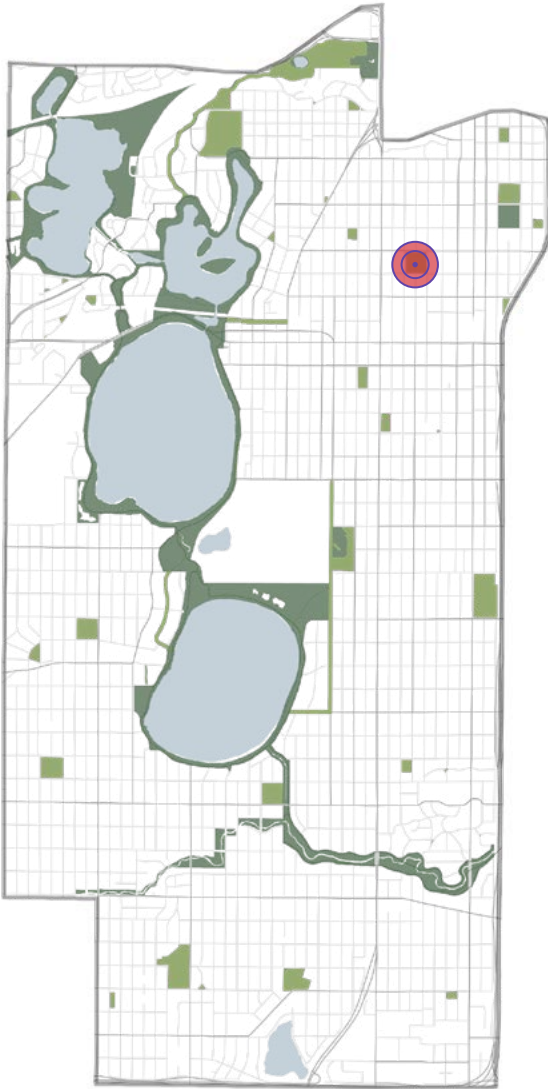


WHITTIER PARK



LOCATION AND HISTORY

Whittier Park is adjacent to Whittier International Elementary School on Harriet Avenue between West 26th and 27th Streets. The park is named for the school, which was named after John Greenleaf Whittier, a poet and advocate for the abolition of slavery.

The Whittier neighborhood was slated to receive a park in 1939, but because of World War II no parks were acquired or developed for many years. In 1955 the neighborhood petitioned for a playground in the vicinity of the school. It was a contentious project because homes would have to be demolished to create space for a park. In 1959 the Park Board allocated bond funds for the first time to begin buying land for the park, but due to continued opposition and delays, the project was abandoned in 1963 and the bond returned to the city. The desire for a neighborhood park, however, didn't disappear.

The park that exists now was approved in 1973 when the Park Board had the opportunity to access funds from a new federal "Parks in the Cities" program. These funds would cover half the land acquisition costs. The Park Board began construction of the Whittier Park recreation center and the adjoining playground, wading pool and athletic field in 1975. In 1989 the recreation center was named for Roger Imme, a grocer who operated a store across the street from the park who was shot unfortunately and killed in his store during a robbery. The park facilities were renovated in 1995 and upgrades were made to

the recreation center in 2008-2009 to improve the security and energy efficiency of the building.

Excerpted from history written by David C. Smith

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND CHARACTER

This is a highly active park space shared with Whittier International Elementary School. Many people from the neighborhood also come here to play and relax, enjoying activities both indoors and outside.

In the northwest corner of the park is a small parking lot, and in the northeast is a turn-around and drop off area serving both the recreation center and school building which are joined. The recreation center's main entrance faces the turn-around and the secondary entrance faces the parking lot. There are plazas and garden planters in front of both entrances.

South of the parking lot is a circular wading pool, three play areas, two half basketball courts, and a small grass hill. Each of these amenities sits in a separate circular container surrounded by concrete paving. A few small circles of grass or trees are also included but they are heavily compacted and often contain primarily dusty soil or mud depending on the weather. Grass berms with shade trees separate the play areas from Harriet Avenue to the west. A line of trees also separates the play areas from a multi-use field and diamond to the south. Both the field and diamond are also heavily compacted, experiencing problems with flooding and ice. The park areas are well loved but also heavily used, especially during the school year.

A walking path separates the field and diamond to the west from the school building to the east, and also experiences problems with flooding. Most of the park is relatively level except for the perimeter berms and a small slope between the school and field that serves as a short sledding hill in winter.

THE PROPOSED DESIGN

The design for Whittier recognizes how this small park is heavily used both as a neighborhood and school activity center. The play area and court circles surrounded by concrete and compacted dusty soil are replaced with a durable universally-accessible play surfacing that will allow multiple different uses to flow into one another and adjust in size as needed. Multi-use sport court striping (for futsal and basketball) will be applied to part of this surfacing near basketball hoops. To enhance the flexibility of this space, the fenced wading pool is replaced by a shade structure over a splash pad which can be turned off during school hours to be used as additional play surface.

The recreation center's west side entrance plaza will be upgraded to support a wider variety of more flexible uses. Urban agriculture will be formalized in front of the east side entrance. The parking lot is removed and planning staff will work with stakeholders during implementation to determine what amenities will replace it. Dedicated ADA parking and a drop-off zone is incorporated into the existing entrance traffic circle.

Where the park meets the school building on the south side, a new climbing wall covers part of the building façade. Nearby compacted and flood-prone

areas will be reconstructed to provide an improved connection to the school, seating, and a gathering area.

The existing multi-use field will be updated to create a more resilient soil profile to help resist flooding and erosion. Over time, the diamond's ag lime infield can eventually be removed to provide field space, though the backstop will remain to be used for kickball.

An unstructured open grass play area sits north of the field. Next to it, a new picnic shelter and seating area provide views of both the play areas and the field. Surrounding the south and west edges of the park the existing berm will be naturalized with native plantings, while the sledding hill next to the school will remain.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARKS

Whittier Park is less than a mile from Mueller Park, Washburn Fair Oaks, Clinton Field, 28th Street Tot Lot, Bryant Square, and The Mall. The Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park and Grand Rounds are just over a mile to the west. Access to the Midtown Greenway is located two blocks south of the park.

KNOWN LAND USE AND COORDINATION ISSUES

Because Whittier Park is a shared school site, improvements will be coordinated with the School Board.



- MULTI-USE DIAMOND
- HALF COURT BASKETBALL (2)
- PLAY AREAS
- PARKING LOT
- WADING POOL
- MULTI-USE FIELD
- SLEDDING HILL

WHITTIER PARK - EXISTING CONDITIONS



PROPOSED DESIGN FEATURES

1. BERM WITH NATURALIZED PLANTINGS
2. MULTI-USE DIAMOND WITH BACK STOP (*consider removing ag lime*)
3. UPDATED MULTI-USE FIELD
4. PICNIC SHELTER
5. PICNIC SEATING AREA
6. OPEN PLAY AREA
7. IMPROVED CONNECTION TO SCHOOL (*including seating, gathering, and flood mitigation area*)
8. CLIMBING WALL
9. MULTI-USE SPORT COURT (*lined for futsal and two half-court basketball*)
10. UNIVERSAL PLAY AREA WITH ACCESSIBLE SURFACING
11. SHADE STRUCTURE
12. SPLASH PAD
13. PARKING LOT REMOVED
14. URBAN AGRICULTURE ZONE

EXISTING FEATURES

- A. ADA PARKING
- B. ENTRY PLAZA TO THE BUILDING
- C. RECREATION CENTER
- D. WALKING PATH
- E. SLEDDING HILL

WHITTIER PARK - PROPOSED PLAN

	1: General Input Spring-Winter 2018 <i>Input themes prior to initial concepts</i>	2: Initial Concepts Winter-Spring 2019 <i>Input themes on initial concepts</i>	3: Preferred Concept Now <i>Key elements of the concept</i>
aquatics	Interest in both splash pad and/or pool Need fun water features Aquatics is big here Need shade	Split support – splash pad versus pool Kids can't use pool space during recess	Wading pool replaced with splash pad and shade structure
play	Interest in a climbing wall Need "hang out" & calm reading areas Need challenges for older kids Want more kinds of play equipment Need more multi-functional space Want accessible surface, not sand Current surface has trip hazards Need play area redesign so more useful Erosion & compaction problems Two play areas are too separated keep some open play space for variety of activities	Support climbing wall Climbing wall better if against building Support court surfacing Keep traditional play equipment Increase play area size Prefer single play area vs. two areas Need safety surfacing	Climbing wall added against building Berm with native plantings and trees maintained on two sides of park Multi-use sport court lined for futsal and half-court basketball added Universal play area with accessible surfacing added
athletics	Grass here turns to mud, needs help Terrible compaction, erosion on field Interest in artificial turf Need to prevent flooding Want upgraded, formal field with lighting Prefer field space to diamond here Want soccer field, more soccer space Mostly field sports here, some kickball Like existing multi-use diamond	Please address flooding issues, ice issues Split support for artificial turf Split support for seasonal dome, restricts sightlines during recess Support for removing diamond ag lime, but keep back stop Prefer field to diamond Support larger field area	Grass multi-use field remains, updated to mitigate flooding, erosion No artificial turf at this park. Multi use diamond back stop remains, consider removing ag lime
courts	Want futsal court Keep half court basketball Want full court basketball Want 4-square or hopscotch	Support for futsal court, sport court No fence on sport court Support two half courts over a full Not supportive of dome – park too small	Play area and sport court added as one continuous surface for flexible activities Sport court lined for futsal and two half court basketball
winter	Keep existing sledding hill Want ice skating	No comments	Sledding hill remains No ice skating planned for this park to reduce field compaction

WHITTIER PARK PROCESS

	1: General Input Spring-Winter 2018 <i>Input themes prior to initial concepts</i>	2: Initial Concepts Winter-Spring 2019 <i>Input themes on initial concepts</i>	3: Preferred Concept Now <i>Key elements of the concept</i>
landscape	<p>Like the existing grass, trees Interest in pollinator gardens Like berm w/trees on Harriet as buffer</p> <p>Need to prevent flooding Needs better drainage at foot of hill</p> <p>Want urban agriculture/edible landscape Like existing garden planters</p> <p>Entry plazas need reworking for events & multi use, to highlight building entrances</p>	<p>Add trees to south berm along 27th St Retain some trees/shade</p> <p>Support addressing erosion/flooding Support stormwater BMPs</p> <p>Support for urban agriculture/community garden Support improved school connection</p> <p>Support expanded plaza entries to recreation center</p>	<p>Berm with native plantings and trees maintained on two sides of park</p> <p>Improved connection to school and BMPs added in area of frequent flooding</p> <p>Urban agriculture zone added</p> <p>Expanded and improved entrance plazas added</p>
other	<p>Need picnic, grills, tables</p> <p>Want skate park</p> <p>Need dog park</p> <p>Keep parking lot – gets used</p>	<p>Don't support skate – park too small Opposition to skate park adjacent to school</p> <p>Park is small, need more space</p> <p>Support removing parking lot Retain parking lot, add signage regarding additional parking in school garage</p>	<p>Picnic shelter and picnic area added</p> <p>No skate park planned for this park</p> <p>No off-leash dog park planned for this park, instead CAC recommends dog park search area for the wider neighborhood</p> <p>Board approved removal of parking lot completely</p>

WHITTIER PARK PROCESS CONTINUED

Park Name	Asset Type	Project	2020 Estimated Cost/Project	Notes
Whittier Park	Aquatics	Splash Pad with Shade Structure	\$ 1,693,824	
Whittier Park	Play	Universal Play Area with Accessible Surfacing: includes climbing wall	\$ 1,734,639	
Whittier Park	Athletics	Athletic Field Renovation: includes one multi-use diamond with backstop and multi-use field space	\$ 770,384	
Whittier Park	Courts	Multi-Use Sport Court: includes lines for futsal and two half court basketball courts	\$ 183,668	
Whittier Park	Landscape	Naturalized Areas	\$ 23,389	
Whittier Park	Landscape	Urban Agriculture Zone	\$ 61,223	Urban Agriculture Areas will be implemented in partnership with specific programs or community members. Estimate includes water service
Whittier Park	Other	Parking Lot Removed	\$ -	Cost will be determined following additional community engagement.
Whittier Park	Other	Picnic Shelter	\$ 112,241	
Whittier Park	Other	Renovate Entry Plaza to the Building	\$ 99,670	
Whittier Park	Other	Renovate Walking Paths	\$ 156,926	
Whittier Park	Other	Miscl. signs, trees, furniture	\$ 93,581	
Whittier Park TOTAL			\$ 4,929,545	

COST ESTIMATE