

~~/~~ A NEIGHBORHOOD PARK REDESIGN PROCESS:  
IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION ~~/~~

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
The Problem Area .....	1
Purpose of the Study .....	2
Importance of the Study .....	2
Scope of the Study .....	3
Objectives .....	3
Methodology Overview .....	4
2. THE URBAN PARK IN THE UNITED STATES .....	6
The History of the Urban Park and Recreation Movement .....	6
The Boston Common .....	6
The Pleasure Ground Era .....	7
The Reform Era .....	12
The Recreation Era .....	16
The Open Space Era .....	22
Definition and Purpose of Urban Parks .....	27
Neighborhood Parks .....	31
3. URBAN PARK AND RECREATION PLANNING .....	34
A Typical Neighborhood Park Planning Process .....	35
The Predesign Phase .....	36
The Design Phase .....	41
The Development or Implementation Phase .....	43
The Actualization Phase .....	43
Approaches to the Process .....	44
Examples of Approach .....	45
4. REDESIGN OF URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS .....	49
The Need for Redesign .....	51
Deterioration of Parks .....	51
Disregard for User Needs .....	52
A Changing Society .....	54
Current Issues .....	54
Examples of Neighborhood Park Redesign .....	61
5. THE REDESIGN PROCESS .....	66
The Project Initiation Phase .....	69
The Predesign Phase .....	72
The Design Phase .....	85
The Documentation Phase .....	89
The Implementation Phase .....	89
The Post-Construction Phase .....	91

Chapter	Page
6. EVALUATION OF THE REDESIGN PROCESS .....	94
Methodology .....	94
Evaluation Based on Literature .....	97
Differences Between the Planning Process for New Parks and the Redesign Process .....	97
The Importance of Citizen Involvement .....	100
The Roles and Responsibilities of the Designer .....	102
Problems That Can Occur .....	105
Evaluation Based on Interviews .....	107
Similarities and Variations .....	107
The Importance of Citizen Involvement .....	111
The Roles and Responsibilities of the Designer .....	113
Problems That Can Occur .....	114
7. CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER STUDY .....	116
Preliminary Conclusions .....	116
Final Conclusions .....	123
Recommendations for Further Study .....	126
 APPENDICES:	
A. SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL FACTORS .....	128
B. BASIC USER NEEDS .....	136
C. QUESTIONNAIRE .....	147
REFERENCES .....	152
 ABSTRACT	

### LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. The Redesign Process---Project Initiation Phase .....	68
2. The Redesign Process---Predesign Phase .....	71
3. The Redesign Process---Design Phase .....	84
4. The Redesign Process---Documentation & Implementation Phases ...	88
5. The Redesign Process---Post-construction Phase .....	90



CHAPTER ONE  
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INTRODUCTION

The Problem Area

Neighborhood parks play a significant role in enhancing a neighborhood and the city itself, and in providing for the social as well as recreational needs of the people. Because neighborhood parks are an important part of city life, they must reflect society and the important changes that take place in society. As society changes, the needs of the people also change, and in order to survive, a number of neighborhood parks will have to undergo redesign. Many older neighborhood parks are deteriorating and some no longer meet the changing needs of the people. Other neighborhood parks were designed without regard for user needs [both recreational and social] and, as a result, suffer from underuse or nonuse, thus necessitating redesign.

Urban park redesign has been occurring throughout the 20th century but the relevance and importance of neighborhood park redesign is increasing. This is due not only to a greater realization that many existing neighborhood parks are deteriorating or not meeting the changing needs of the people, but also for other reasons. The current decrease in available funds for acquiring and developing new urban parks suggests that priority be given to redesign or renewal of existing parks before new parks are acquired (Gold, 1980). In discussing the future of recreation, Marshall (1983) supported this issue by stating that "an increasing percentage of recreation-oriented expenditures will be devoted to rehabilitating and retrofitting existing facilities" (p.79). In addition, increasing leisure time coupled with rising

transportation costs will increase demand and pressure on local parks to provide for the recreational and social needs of the people. Thus, there is a need for more information on the subject of urban park redesign, especially the process involved and important factors and issues related to redesign.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is first, to investigate the issue of urban park redesign; second, to identify a neighborhood park redesign process including important factors and considerations involved in the various phases of the process, and third, to evaluate the identified redesign process.

### **Importance of the Study**

Although some literature sources briefly mention urban park redesign, there is a very small body of literature that deals specifically with this topic and even less that discusses aspects of the process involved. The redesign process identified in this study will be an important addition to the existing body of literature because, to this author's knowledge, there is no documentation that specifically identifies a neighborhood park redesign process including considerations and factors that are involved in each phase of the process. In addition, this study can serve educational purposes and lay the ground work for further research concerning the issue of urban park redesign.

Because there is an increasing need for neighborhood park redesign, it is important that park planners and designers be aware of what is involved in a redesign project such as unique aspects, influential factors and considerations, problems that can occur, and the role of citizens and designers throughout the process. Thus the identified redesign process can

serve as a reference or guide that can be used by planners/designers when dealing with redesign of neighborhood parks and other types of urban parks including those in smaller communities.

### Scope of the Study

This study involves neighborhood park redesign which implies change in the existing design of the park. It does not deal with complete preservation or restoration, although some historical considerations will be taken into account.

This study deals with the issue of urban park redesign and the identification and evaluation of a neighborhood park redesign process including factors and considerations involved in each phase of the redesign process, particularly the phases of predesign and design. The study does not deal with what should be redesigned, but rather how to accomplish redesign and what to be aware of throughout the process. Therefore, this study deals with general information about the redesign process rather than specific case studies. The emphasis of the study is on neighborhood parks because they are a generalized form of most urban parks.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To study the history and evolution of the purpose and form of urban parks in the United States--how they have changed with the times and how purpose has influenced form.
2. To identify a typical neighborhood park planning process involved in new park development at the project level for the purpose of making a comparison with the redesign process.

3. To explain varying approaches to the process of new park development and to cite examples of new park development in neighborhoods with descriptions of the approach taken in each case.
4. To study the issue of neighborhood park redesign including factors that necessitate redesign, important and influential issues and considerations involved in redesign, and some examples of neighborhood park redesign.
5. To identify a neighborhood park redesign process through the synthesis of various literature sources, and to include influential factors and considerations as they apply throughout the process.
6. To evaluate the identified redesign process.
7. To draw conclusions concerning the feasibility of the identified redesign process in actual practice in terms of unique aspects and variations of the process, the importance of citizen involvement, the roles and responsibilities of the designer, and problems that can occur.
8. To draw final conclusions concerning the overall issue of urban park redesign.

#### Methodology Overview

Since the subject of urban park redesign has had very little investigation and most literature sources only briefly mention the topic, a review of literature to synthesize this information comprises a major portion of this study and was necessary in order to accomplish the first five previously stated objectives. After a neighborhood park redesign process was identified, it was evaluated in terms of the following criteria:

- differences between the planning process for new parks and the redesign process for existing parks
- similarities and variations between the identified redesign process and

- the redesign procedures identified through the interviews
- the importance of citizen involvement throughout the redesign process
  - the roles and responsibilities of the designer
  - problems that can occur throughout the redesign process

The evaluation was conducted in two parts. The first was an evaluation based on an analysis of information derived from the literature, and the second was an evaluation based on data collected from personal interviews with professional planners/designers who had been involved in neighborhood park redesign. The evaluations were compared and synthesized in order to draw conclusions concerning the feasibility of the identified redesign process in actual practice in terms of the previously mentioned topics. Final conclusions were then drawn which summarize the process and issue of neighborhood park redesign. A more detailed explanation of the evaluation methodology is presented in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER TWO  
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THE URBAN PARK IN THE UNITED STATES

Since park redesign implies change to the existing form of a park, it is necessary to understand the history of urban parks--how they have evolved and changed in terms of purpose and form, and how purpose has influenced form. The following chapter discusses how the form and purpose of urban parks have changed with society and have reflected the times. The last section of this chapter concentrates on a discussion of the neighborhood park.

Throughout the history of the urban park and recreation movement in the United States, various types of urban parks have evolved. This description divides U. S. urban park history into four typological eras, as developed by Cranz (1982), which explains how the events and philosophy of each period influenced the form and the purpose of parks and recreation. The four eras following the Boston Common include:

- The Pleasure Ground Era 1850-1900
- The Reform Era 1900-1930
- The Recreation Era 1930-1965
- The Open Space Era 1965 and After

History of the Urban Park and Recreation Movement in the U. S.

THE BOSTON COMMON

The park movement in the United States is relatively recent compared to the origins of the park itself which date back to ancient civilizations such as Sumeria, Babylonia, and Greece. The first parks in European countries originated as special pleasure grounds for rulers and the rich classes.

However, it was also customary in England "to set aside a portion of land in the towns for common use of the people" (Frye, 1980, p.22). These common areas served primarily as places that the people of the community could pasture sheep and cattle. Thus, the colonists from England who pioneered settlements in the New World made the town common a characteristic feature of the New England communities.

Most town common lands were eventually sold or reduced in size to accommodate the growing population of New England communities. However, the Boston Common, established in 1634, was one of the few that survived because new functions were discovered for this common grazing land. In addition to serving as a drill field for the militia, it attracted rope makers from the docks, orators and evangelists, and was also used as a place for an evening stroll (Brodeur, 1971, p.293).

The Boston Common is, therefore, often thought of as setting the precedent for municipal parks in the United States. However, the development of the Common as a park and recreation area came about years later and it was not until 1728 that it was officially recognized as such (Van Doren & Hodges, 1975, p. 14).

#### THE PLEASURE GROUND ERA 1850-1900

By the early 1800s the United States population was beginning to move from rural to urban areas, and consequently there arose the attitude that the urban population was in need of appropriate places to engage in their leisure activities. As cities continued to grow, the rural areas were being pushed back away from the reach of the city dwellers and the desire for the development of passive park and garden tracts also grew. In the early 1850s, New York City was experiencing this rapid growth, and the resulting lack of open space was brought to public attention.

The need for a park was strong enough to prompt the city of New York to acquire the land for one, and in 1857 the Board of Commissioners announced a competition for the overall planning and design of Central Park. Landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and architect Calvert Vaux were awarded first prize for their plan, of which the major concept was "to develop a pleasure ground that would provide a healthful atmosphere and a rural retreat as a positive contrast to city conditions" (Frye, 1980, p.25). This concept was influenced by the naturalistic parks which Olmsted saw in England, and was in response to the needs of the many people who, at that time, were moving from a rural oriented life style to the unfamiliar, rapidly growing city. The design of Central Park was composed of a pastoral landscape with informal masses of trees, grass defined meadows, large lakes and ponds, and meandering footpaths and carriage ways with pedestrian circulation that was separate from vehicular traffic.

Central Park was primarily designed to accommodate mostly passive recreation such as picnicking, horseback riding, walking, riding in carriages, boating, and ice skating. Olmsted stated that a true park is "a place where the urban inhabitants can, to the fullest extent, obtain the genuine recreation coming from the peaceful enjoyment of an idealized rural landscape in rest, giving contrast to their existence amidst the city's turmoil" (Butler, 1958-59, p.10).

Central Park was recognized as the first large planned public park and its huge success stimulated many other cities to follow New York's example and develop municipal parks. Thus, Olmsted and Vaux became famous for setting "a standard for park work that has not been materially improved or altered in subsequent years" (Newton, 1971, p.289). Within the next twenty to thirty years, these two men went on to become involved in planning many more



municipal parks in New York City as well as in other cities such as Brooklyn, Buffalo, Boston, Detroit, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco, and Oakland.

Thus, America's first city parks were conceptually anti-urban and were meant to be a relief from the city and its turmoil. They were characterized as pleasure grounds with vast landscapes of meadows, trees, undulating hills, ponds, meandering waterways, and winding paths and drives. Buildings were kept to a minimum and were designed to contrast with the commercial buildings of the city. These parks were rural in character and were located at the edge of the city (Cranz, 1978, p.9).

These pleasure grounds were centered around almost exclusively outdoor activities. In the later 1800s, playing fields for sports such as football, baseball, and less formal ball games were provided, but were located on the edge of the park to prevent interference with the tranquility of the inner portion of the park. Although these uses were more active than passive, they were, at that time, unstructured (Cranz, 1982, p.40).

As cities in the last half of the 19th century grew and spread into the suburbs and surrounding countryside, the urban population became more aware that parks and open space were valuable assets to their existence. The increasing desire for outdoor recreation stimulated the development of additional city parks and also different types of park areas such as playgrounds, beaches, and reservations.

In response to the growing municipal park movement, Olmsted developed the concept of a system of parks within a city, rather than individual unrelated parks. His idea was that a series of parks should be linked into a working complex by way of parkways or pleasure driveways (Rutledge, 1971, p.4). Frye describes a park system as "not only the development of different types of open spaces, but the relating of these open spaces to one another so as to form a unified whole, and the relating of them to the people they are designed

to serve" (1980, p.29). Parkways were designed to accomplish these relationships by joining park systems in order to make the parks more easily accessible to the people.

The first metropolitan park commission originated in Boston in 1892 through the efforts of planner and landscape architect, Charles Eliot. Eliot was concerned about how the increasing population of the cities and suburbs of the Boston environs and the increase in construction on homes and other structures was causing a continuous loss of rural landscape areas. Members of the park commissions of Boston and the surrounding suburban communities were called together various times to discuss the problem and take cooperative action. In 1892 the Boston Metropolitan Park Commission was established to acquire and hold parcels of land for the benefit of the public (Doell & Twardzik, 1979, pp.48 & 49).

In the 1860s and 70s the demand for active recreational pursuits was beginning to increase, especially for children. The crime-ridden, crowded, and unsanitary urbanized centers offered very few, if any, safe places for children to play. In 1871 the purchase of lands for playgrounds was approved by Brookline, Massachusetts residents but it took several years before the acquired lands were developed. Then in Boston in 1885 a parcel of land located in a corner of the Children's Mission yard became the first facility specifically set aside as a children's playground, and was known as the Boston Sand Garden. By 1887 Boston had ten such playgrounds underway and the playground movement was spreading to New York and Chicago where model playgrounds were being developed around settlement houses in response to the slum children's need for playgrounds. The New York City Playground Law of 1888 "provided \$1 million for the acquisition of lands for playgrounds and parks. Recreation activities, particularly for youth, were viewed as a

healthful and wholesome activity for the development of sound minds and bodies" (Van Doren & Hodges, 1975, p.15).

As the playground movement spread, it awakened a public awareness of the importance of active recreation, not only for children, but for everyone; resulting in the evolution of the recreation movement. Since the recreation movement greatly influenced urban park development in the early 1900s, it is important to discuss the split between the park movement and the recreation movement.

Previously, the park movement had primarily been concerned with passive and semi-active recreation. However, by the late 1800s, physical education enthusiasts saw that pleasure could also be derived from active recreation which provided skill development, planned exercise, and competition. The "Olmstedian naturalists" and the emerging "active recreationists" formed two differing administrations and schools of thought. Consequently, parks were labeled as passive natural retreats, and recreation areas became known as active sport-related facilities that included playgrounds, ball fields for team sports, and hard-surface court areas. Park departments and recreation departments became separate administrative agencies in some cities. Landscape architects turned their efforts to park development, and university programs in landscape architecture included options in park administration. However, since recreation departments were staffed by those with physical education backgrounds, many of the recreation areas were lacking in design (Rutledge, 1971, p.5).

In the late 1800s city politicians, administrators, and park designers refused to recognize organized sports and play in established city parks. The parks were used primarily by the upper and middle classes and remained passive or semi-active in nature. The controversy resulted in formation of the park movement's American Institute of Park Superintendents in 1898 and the

recreation movement's Playground Association of America in 1906 which changed its name to the Playground and Recreation Association in 1911 (Van Doren & Hodges, 1975, pp.16 & 17). Since the middle and affluent upper classes were the primary users of the traditional parks, their economic and political support went toward the park movement rather than the recreation movement.

#### THE REFORM ERA 1900-1930

Although the term "playground" has come to be associated exclusively with children's play areas, the "playgrounds" of the late 19th and early 20th century were characterized, not only by small children's playgrounds, but also by parks that were designed to provide organized recreation activities (both indoor and outdoor) not only for children, but also for adolescents, young adults, and eventually older adults. Cranz (1982) refers to these as "reform parks".

For the purpose of clarity in this discussion, the term "playground" will be used when referring to small play areas designed exclusively for children, and "reform park" will refer to parks of this era that included primarily other recreational facilities along with small children's playground areas. It should be noted, however, that organized recreation in this era was focused mainly on the young as opposed to adults.

The need for local playground spaces and parks that were more accessible to the working classes for frequent use soon resulted in the development of small neighborhood parks. Clarence Rainwater, historian of the play movement in the United States, described the concept of these parks as providing a contrast to the large city park in that the city park was a "breathing place" where "one could do little else", and the small neighborhood park became the "play park", providing a setting for the public playground or reform park (Frye, 1980, p.30).

By the turn of the century, small neighborhood parks and playgrounds were beginning to be more attractively developed in park-like settings in tenement districts of some cities. The size and location of these parks differed from the large pleasure grounds, but the principles of layout were somewhat similar. However, play equipment was incorporated with the picturesque character of the park. Cranz (1982) described the "transitional small park" as follows:

Designers organized these playgrounds around a central open field, encircled them with curved walks and clusters of shrubbery, and protected them with berms. Architecture stayed to the side, and, where possible, a lake or mere completed the picture (p.59).

The Charlesbank Outdoor Gymnasium, developed along the Charles River in Boston in 1889, was a model for the small neighborhood park. The attractive ten acre park setting provided recreation such as rowing, wading, bathing, and the use of play apparatus. Similar neighborhood parks were also developed in New York City and Louisville, Kentucky under the same concept of providing a park and playground that is both scenic and functional (LaGasse & Cook, 1965, p.15).

In the Industrial Age of the early 1900s people had more time on their hands because of shorter work weeks, larger incomes, longer vacations, and earlier retirement. This increase in leisure time resulted in an increase in demand for frequent and regular recreation and thus, the need for it to be provided closer to home rather than having to make trips to the city's outskirts for recreation.

The city of Chicago realized that there was a need for open spaces in the city's crowded districts, especially the South Side District. The large parks of the city's three park districts were thought to be unadaptable to playground equipment, and were inaccessible to many of the people who needed

them. With limited funds, the Special Park Commission equipped and maintained several parks of one to five acres on Chicago's South Side. They were popular and heavily used, and the park districts soon became responsible for providing more small parks for the people. Leaders in the South Park District advanced the idea of small parks not only as playgrounds for children, but also as social centers for all age groups of a neighborhood. J. Frank Foster, an engineer and general superintendent of the South Park District, was credited with originating the fundamental concept of the small park movement--"taking the park to the people" (Frye, 1980, p.32).

The increase in leisure time in the early 1900s was considered, to some people, "a threat to society". They thought that free time would be spent on improper behavior, such as spending time in saloons or dance halls, unless reform advocates offered them other ways to use leisure time, specifically by organizing play and recreational activities (Cranz, 1982, p.62). Thus, the underlying concept of the reform park was utility instead of beauty.

By 1922 a model reform park was characterized by a ten to forty acre formal design. Paths were straight, at right angles to one another, and kept to a minimum to save space for recreational uses. The park also provided both indoor and outdoor facilities with lights to accommodate night use. The field house contained indoor facilities such as gymnastic equipment, a basketball court, an assembly hall and stage, and separate locker rooms and showers for young men and women. The outdoor facilities included a running track and facilities for shot putting, jumping, and pole vaulting; an open game field, a children's playground, sand pits, gymnastic equipment, and a swimming and wading pool. The children's play areas and the outdoor gymnastic areas were surfaced with sand or blacktop instead of grass. Activities in the reform park were segregated by age and sex and carefully programmed by social workers. The park was supervised by trained leaders who understood that play

was significantly related to "the physical and social development of young people" (Cranz, 1982, p.67).

Within the playground movement and the recreation movement, active recreation was not only provided by new park and playground developments, but the increased demand for active recreation in the early 1900s influenced the integration of play equipment and other changes in some of the existing pleasure grounds. Butler (1958-59) explains:

The public, demanding opportunities to engage in baseball, tennis, athletics, picnicking, and golf, among other activities, cast an envious eye at the largely undeveloped properties dedicated to recreation use. It was easier to persuade the city fathers to make use of existing parks than to purchase additional land for recreation. Introduction in the urban parks of facilities for active, organized recreation was strongly opposed by many park administrators, but gradually the concept of their dual role of providing both beauty and function was accepted in most cities (p.11).

In some of the pleasure grounds, landscaping changes were made to provide vistas of new buildings and the city skyline, or to screen undesirable views of unsightly buildings. Concrete was used in place of gravel, and curved walks were straightened to provide easier and more direct circulation routes (Cranz, 1982).

In the inner city, the neighborhood park became a substitute for the street which children found appealing because of all its activity. Another way that the need for more neighborhood parks was met was through the utilization of open space around buildings and, especially, public schools. In 1890 New York City required that all schools constructed after that date were to include open-air playgrounds. The school-park concept was instituted throughout the country, and in 1911 the National Education Association formally approved the use of school grounds for recreation (Van Doren & Hodges, 1975, p.16).

During the reform era state lawmakers also recognized the importance of

recreation, and in 1911 New Jersey passed the first State Recreation Enabling Legislation that authorized local governments to provide recreation programs under a variety of organizations. In 1924 President Coolidge called a National Conference on Outdoor Recreation for the purpose of developing a national recreation policy. This conference brought recreation leaders together with park planners and superintendents, and resulted in the request for an inventory of outdoor recreational resources. L. A. Weir was appointed director of the study and in 1928 his book entitled Parks: A Manual of Municipal and County Parks was published. The book was a manual which dealt with the development, design, maintenance, and financing of parks and playgrounds for municipal and county park systems, and became necessary reading for park and recreational professionals for many years (Van Doren & Hodges, 1975, p.17).

#### **THE RECREATION ERA 1930-1965**

The extensive leisure-time programming and organization that was done by social workers and recreation play leaders in the parks and playgrounds of the reform era began to decrease in the 1930s. The number of trained leaders could not keep pace with the rapidly increasing number of small parks and playgrounds that were being developed. Park administrators also questioned the attitude of the previous decades--that organized recreation could serve as an instrument of social reform. Some recreationists thought that organized recreation could not change a person's attitude and morals if they were already in a state of delinquency (Cranz, 1982, pp.99-101).

In the 1930s leisure time continued to increase because of a shorter work week, daylight-saving time, improved automobiles and road systems, earlier retirement ages, and longer lives. However, increased leisure time in the



Depression of the 30s was also a consequence of unemployment. In response, the federal government developed emergency relief programs that provided park and recreation development projects, and supplied jobs and training for the unemployed. The Works Progress Administration provided recreation training, and the Civilian Conservation Corps provided workers with jobs for construction of indoor municipal facilities and outdoor park improvements. Through these projects, "needed outdoor facilities were constructed, and positions for 26,500 recreation leaders were made available through federal funds" (LaGasse & Cook, 1965, p.24).

There began to emerge an idea that parks needed very little justification, and recreation was taken for granted as an essential part of urban life. Emphasis was placed on the term "recreation" as opposed to "play" since "recreation" seemed to encompass all activities and age groups. The term "facility" also implied a wide variety of uses and structures. Some of the older parks continued to be transformed with additions of facilities such as swimming pools, bleachers, stadiums, and band shells. However, some of these were also developed on a site of their own as single purpose facilities. Swimming pools were the most popular facility, and baseball and football stadiums with large parking areas were also developed (Cranz, 1978, p.15).

One of the most prominent park and recreation leaders of the 1930s through the 50s was Robert Moses. After being appointed park commissioner of New York City in 1934, Moses began to rebuild and add to the park system of the city with the help of a professional planning staff of 1800, and a labor force of 80,000 who were working through the federal government's relief programs. The numerous projects undertaken varied from small neighborhood playgrounds to major parkways (Chadwick, 1966, p.217).

New York City's parks had been steadily deteriorating and the first step Moses took with the new Park Department was to rehabilitate Central and

Prospect Parks which had been allowed to run down. Landscaping was renewed and the decrepit zoos in both parks were rebuilt. Moses also saw to it that many other smaller, run down older parks were redesigned and reconstructed. In some of the rehabilitated parks, formerly idle areas were made useful by being set aside for football, baseball, soccer, and other open field sports (Newton, 1971, pp.629-632). Beach areas that had been inadequately planned and developed by previous administrations were redesigned and reconstructed to include bath-houses, refreshment pavilions, provisions for open-air concerts and displays, playing fields, and large parking areas (Chadwick, 1966, p.218).

As described in the 1940 report of the New York City Park Department, a number of new parks and playgrounds were constructed on publicly owned, undeveloped and unused lands that were suitable for recreation: "Abandoned school houses were torn down, reservoirs drained, construction yards cleared, unnecessary streets ripped up, and unused State waterfront properties taken over..." (Newton, 1971, p.634).

The new parks ranged in size from small neighborhood plots to large developments. The 1940 report also described the facilities in the parks which included:

...running tracks, handball courts, football and baseball fields, and stadiums. Surfacing of permanent paving material allows year round usage. Chlorinated wading pools, when drained in the fall, winter, and spring, are used for basketball and paddle tennis. When weather permits there is ice skating. Trees enhance the appearance and comfort of the areas. Buildings with accommodations for indoor activities in bad weather are provided in one-quarter of the playgrounds (Newton, 1971, p.631).

Although other cities also added some new parks and playgrounds [not as extensively as New York, however], repair and remodeling of parks had first priority during the Depression and World War II. The war also influenced the end of the federal government's relief programs which greatly slowed down park

repair or development until the 1950s when new construction began to rapidly increase.

The mid 1900s saw a change in the philosophy of the park departments. They now considered their function to be that of meeting the public demand for leisure activities, therefore making themselves subject to demand rather than to public service. Cranz (1982) explains the affect this philosophy had on park administration and budgeting:

This led, on the one hand, to an increased emphasis on the efficiency with which they could deliver services on demand, and this emphasis led to systems thinking and bureaucratization. On the other, it led to a general loss of interest in the purposes of parks and of park services which was in turn entirely compatible with the bureaucratic mentality. With the loss of idealism, however, came a loss of authority and prestige, and this was reflected in park budgets, which failed to rise during the era in a way commensurate with the expansion and diversification of park programming (p.107).

And so, the park departments' de-emphasis on the purpose of parks contributed to a decline in its authority and importance. This, along with the economizing restraints of the war, adversely affected park budgets; and coupled with the draft, influenced reductions in park department staff. Since a large portion of the young male population had gone to war, recreation participation by this group consequently declined in the cities they left. However, park and recreation facilities were still needed in cities adjacent to military bases (Doell & Twardzik, 1979, p.54). Additionally, gas and tire shortages during the war limited the trips that were made to recreation areas outside the city, resulting in a steady demand for parks and recreation facilities closer to home (LaGasse & Cook, 1965, p.26).

After the 1930s, the children's playground and its equipment became standardized in many cities. Because the rapid increase in the number of playgrounds overran the supply of trained leaders, supervision of play activities decreased. Therefore, play equipment that was safe, simplified,

and well-built replaced the gymnastic equipment. The standardized playground was then built with a paved surface surrounded by a fence, swings, sandpit, and jungle gym (Cranz, 1982, p.131).

During the Depression and the Second World War, parks helped to sustain morale by keeping people busy, and park departments encouraged community wide events in the parks such as music concerts, social dances, dramatics, and art exhibits in order to stimulate community interaction and integration. More programs in crafts were being offered to those not interested in or unable to participate in active sports, and as this philosophy continued into the 1950s, it evolved into an increasing concern to accommodate the physically handicapped and the elderly in parks (Cranz, 1978, p.15).

In the 1950s and early 60s, the rapid increase in population and a rising standard of living generated an increase in demand for active recreation. People were placing more emphasis on leisure time, and consequently park promoters became more concerned about providing numerous facilities and activities, and less concerned about quality and purpose.

A new design ideal that was characteristic of this era was the multiple-use facility. Park planners and designers were designing parks without a strong enough basis in social goals, making it difficult for them to recognize or create a style of park design that was most relevant for the present period. Cranz (1982) explains how eclecticism resulted:

In practice, various features of the preceding eras were juxtaposed, and a banal eclecticism was the result. Because this model simply extended a service defined previously, and no new forms were needed, none developed (p.122).

Many of these recreation facilities were typically paved with asphalt and surrounded by wire fence, with very little attention, if any, given to landscaping. The hard surfaces were often used because of their utility for multiple use, but also because they could be economically maintained. Also,

to minimize maintenance and supervision costs, old park design elements were standardized into a basic package, and plans were duplicated and used repeatedly regardless of the site conditions or the needs of the people who were to use the facilities. Whether suburbanites or city dwellers, the same design was received by both groups (Cranz, 1982, pp.122-123).

New parks, many of which were very small, were developed in congested inner city areas, public housing projects, and the suburbs. The suburbs, which were areas of low density, single-family dwellings located on the edges of the city, gained in popularity and grew rapidly in the 1950s. This influenced urban park planners to minimize concern for passive recreation and, instead, focus on active recreation and large-scale facilities. Cranz (1978) explained that "their assumption may have been that suburbanites had greenery and small intimate [passive] open spaces in their yards and needed large-scale facilities for [active] field sports" (p.15).

A new development in playground design surfaced in the 1950s with the development of the small children's amusement park which usually centered around a theme such as Storyland, Kiddieland, or Fairyland. Other playgrounds utilized free-form play sculptures of bright colors made of fiberglass or prefabricated concrete. The underlying concept, which continued and improved in the 60s and 70s, was to provide dramatic and imaginative play opportunities for children (Cranz, 1982, pp.126 & 131). In order to attract more people to some of the larger municipal parks, park departments also began to add more attractions such as children's zoos and children's rides.

A significant step was taken in 1965 toward recognizing that leisure needs included both passive and active recreation when the National Recreation and Park Association was formed. The NRPA was the result of the merging of five major national organizations in the park, recreation, and conservation

fields; and as such, helped to unify the park and recreation movements even though park departments and recreation departments are still separate agencies in some municipalities (Frye, 1980, p.42).

In the early 1960s, the federal government developed various financial assistance programs for municipalities in order to encourage park development. In 1961, The Housing and Home Finance Agency provided grants-in-aid to municipalities for open space land acquisition, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, established in 1965, provided matching funds to national, state, and local agencies for acquisition and development of outdoor recreational areas (Van Doren & Hodges, 1975, p.18).

Private investors and developers have also added significantly to the urban recreation system by developing recreation areas in cities and suburbs. However, memberships or fees are usually required before the facility can be used by an individual.

In 1955, the opening of Disneyland in California marked the birth of what were known as theme parks. A theme park is "an amusement park operating within a specially created environment and atmosphere" (Smart, 1981, p.154). They are family oriented parks that specifically provide entertainment and relaxation to their visitors.

#### **THE OPEN SPACE ERA 1965 and After**

In the mid to late 1960s, many inner city parks were littered, fenced in, had limited programming, and were the settings for riots and demonstrations which resulted in them being unused and, thus, unsafe. In order to attract people back into the parks, park administrators developed new permissive programs that included new activities such as motocross, skate boarding, trampoline jumping, and a variety of physical fitness programs. The new programming also allowed some popular activities that had previously not been

allowed in parks such as rock music, beer drinking, and "happenings" which were aesthetic events "whose subject, typically, was the urban population which participated in it" (Cranz, 1982, p.141).

The children's adventure playground received further development in the late 1960s with additional emphasis being placed on making use of the child's imagination. They included free form, interconnecting wood timbers stabilized in sand or gravel, vinyl spiderwebs for climbing, spray pools, and benches for parents. Newton (1971) describes how they encouraged imaginative play:

Instead of too few fixtures, too readily broken or too limited in use, here were abundant unbreakable objects to climb on or over or through--things becoming tunnels or mountains or whatever the children's imagining made them (p.638).

In the mid 1960s and subsequent years, the term open space was frequently used. This was a result of recognizing that many different types of outdoor spaces were designed for public use, instead of only recreational parks and facilities, and that all of these were significant parts of an entire system.

Land was becoming more expensive and the competition for it was greater than it had ever been, resulting in the increasing development of different types of parks and open spaces. Small parks and plazas were developed on lots, some of which were previously thought to be unusable because they were too small, too irregular in shape, or too close to busy streets. "Vest pocket parks" were small and usually located between buildings in the central city or in residential neighborhoods. They usually took the form of children's playgrounds, teenage social and athletic areas, or sitting areas for adults. The urban plazas and small midtown parks, or "mini parks", that were developed in the 60s and 70s were meant to enhance the downtown areas of the city by providing attractive places that could be used as "pleasant rest spots for

[people] shopping downtown and for clerks and business people on lunch breaks" (Cranz, 1978, p.17).

Because they were heavily used, the major surface areas consisted of cobblestone or brick instead of grass. These plazas and parks varied in size, with some using level changes as a strong design element. Water was often used as a major feature to attract people and muffle street noise, vegetation was contained in planters, and trees were used as vertical elements and to provide shade. These types of spaces have proven to be very popular among the public and are continuing to be developed in many metropolitan areas throughout the country.

Included among other types of urban open spaces are grounds surrounding museums, educational institutions, hospitals, industrial and office parks, and green spaces in the city and suburbs. In some cities, "urban cultural parks" can be found which are intended to preserve significant historic areas for educational and recreational purposes. Also included as urban open spaces are streets, sidewalks, bikeways, pedestrian spaces in shopping malls, waterfronts, and small pedestrian parks on the rooftops of underground parking garages and multistory buildings.

What was characteristic about the new urban open spaces was that they were intended to be an integral part of the city and its culture. Cranz (1982) explains:

There was a fluidity at their perimeters, so that park flowed into city and city into park. This went with the characterization of the park as an epitome, or ideal reflection, of the city and with the use of parks for experiences of the pattern and flow of urban life--for the contemplation of the city itself as a work of art (p.138).

And so, the prior emphasis on the recreation facility was now being replaced by an emphasis on the recreation experience.

The urban park movement in the 1960s and 70s also witnessed the increased



emphasis of two relatively new trends in open space design--conservation and citizen participation--both of which still play an important role in the planning and design of urban parks at the present time. The conservation style grew out of an awareness of the growing scarcity of resources, the energy crisis, and the historic preservation movement which consequently influenced the designation of Prospect and Central Parks as historic landmarks. Emphasis is placed on natural systems and natural beauty, and design is based on ecology and natural design principles (Hester, 1983, pp.50-52).

The citizen participation trend was stimulated by the civil rights movement, the desire of people to control their own neighborhood environment, and the park and open space needs of poor ethnic communities. These attitudes revived the notion of planning and design as elements of social change. Citizens become actively involved in the planning and design process, with the emphasis being on the process, not the product. A great deal of importance is placed on identification of user needs and "social interaction"--i.e., the way people interact alone or with each other in a space. Citizen participation also provides the means of identifying the needs of special groups such as the handicapped, women, children, and the elderly (Hester, 1983, pp.50-54). Park planners and designers are increasingly beginning to realize the importance of citizen involvement in the planning and design process and are utilizing this input in more urban park projects.

In recent years there have been some very imaginative solutions to problems of urban park development. In Seattle, Washington, an abandoned gas plant was turned into a park that took advantage of the industrial age structures on the site (Clay, 1981). Also in Seattle, another creative solution was the development of Freeway Park which made use of freeway air rights by developing a park that spanned over the freeway (Marshall, 1977).

A recent example of an attempt to solve an urban social problem is a park located in the Skid Row community of downtown Los Angeles, California. The park was planned through design workshops which involved the citizens in the process, and resulted in a place intended for the poverty stricken families, transients, and derelicts of the area (Johnson, 1982).

From the late 1960s through the 70s, the federal government provided a variety of financial assistance programs that were administered under the Department of Housing and Urban Development including Model Cities, Open Space Land, Neighborhood Facilities, Urban Beautification and Improvement, Urban Renewal, and Urban Planning Assistance. These programs, later consolidated into the Community Development Block Grant Program in 1974, assisted municipalities in acquiring and developing open space for parks and recreation areas, and for the purpose of urban beautification such as malls, squares, and waterfronts (Jensen, 1973, p.164). In addition, the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service administered the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program in 1978 which set priority on renewal of existing urban parks and urban park systems.

At the present time, all of the many different types of urban parks continue to exist, and examples of each can be found in almost every American city. Cranz (1978) stated that "each model evolved in different periods for different purposes and different populations" (p.18). Yet some new park developments still utilize characteristics from other eras, and incorporate these with present day park characteristics. This might be the result of confusion concerning the purpose of parks or the needs of the users. It might also be considered an appropriate response to today's complex society in which, among other things, some elements of past design are still thought of

as valuable and appropriate. However, this should be considered as only one response along with other possibilities that can be accomplished through innovative planning and design.

Throughout park history, urban parks have been most successful when they have responded to the needs of society. Even though many of them were intended to solve social problems, they often ended up being only the result of the problem, not the solution to it. Their form has usually reflected social attitudes and how the city was perceived at the time.

### Definition and Purpose of Urban Parks

The term "park" can sometimes be ambiguous and difficult to define because the concept of the city park has gone through a process of change over the years. The early city parks were predominantly naturalized passive retreats, yet containing a few areas for active recreation. Over time, most city parks were developed to accommodate both passive and active recreation. Many parks eventually included primarily active recreation areas, and when a tract of land was developed with active recreation facilities and no characteristically passive areas, it was considered a "recreation facility" rather than a "park".

As was mentioned in the description of the Open Space Era however, new and different types of urban parks have been developed in recent years that have broadened the meaning of the word "park". The following can now also be included under the category of urban parks:

- Adventure parks or playgrounds for children
- Vest pocket parks
- Small mid-town or mini parks
- Linear parks

- Waterfront parks
- Rooftop parks
- Cultural parks
- Theme parks

Although these various parks have different purposes and functions, they all have this in common--they are meant for the leisure time enjoyment of the public. A distinction should be made, however, between a "park" and a "square" [or plaza], since the latter type of open space also accommodates the public during their leisure time. French (1973) characterized a square as a space that "harbors the conditions of city life" and thrives on commerce and city activity; whereas, a park is "something of a retreat from the essential characteristics of urbanism" (p.39), but yet should not be insulated against the conditions of city life either.

An urban or city park, then, is a break or intermission from city conditions, in the form of a space that provides the public with a setting for the pursuit of leisure [active or passive], and located out of the major pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow. As this definition implies, the purpose of urban parks is no longer thought of as providing an escape from the city, as was the purpose of America's early city parks. The industrial age of the 19th century had an adverse effect on the city environment, and so parks were meant to provide "a positive contrast to city conditions; a healthful atmosphere and rural retreat" (Frye, 1980, p.25); and an escape from the overcrowding, pollution, and noise of the city.

In contrast to the escapist purpose of the late 19th century parks, the reform park of the early 1900s was an attempt to improve the quality of the city and its people. The purpose of the reform park was to achieve social reform by acting as a moral defense against the sudden increase in free time

which was perceived as having the potential to result in chaos and delinquency among the youth of the working class. In order for children, adolescents, and young adults to get the most out of their free time, emphasis was placed on organized recreation in an attempt to help "combat crime and delinquency and help the underprivileged" (LaGasse & Cook, 1965, p.14).

In the beginnings of the playground movement, the first children's playgrounds were developed in response to the conditions of the highly urbanized centers which were "crowded, filthy, and crime-ridden" and contained too "few safe places for children to expend pent up energies". The purpose of the early playgrounds was to provide children with places for recreation and play activities which were considered "healthful and wholesome...for the development of sound minds and bodies" (Van Doren & Hodges, 1975, p.15).

The purpose of the children's adventure playground of the 1960s and 70s was to make the most of a child's lively imagination. The form of the playground evolved from a response to the child's imagination and short attention span which demanded many choices and complex areas of play. Friedberg (1970) explained that "the more complex the playground, the greater the choice and the more enriched the learning experience" (p.44).

A number of city parks that were developed in the 1950s through the 70s were primarily for the purpose of meeting the increasing demand for outdoor recreation. However, the new and different types of parks that emerged in the central city areas in the late 60s and 70s were a response to the "urban crisis" or perceived decay of the central city that was affected by the many middle-class people and corporations who were moving to the suburbs. The purpose of these central city parks was to enhance and help revitalize the central business district in order to attract more people back into the central city. The "small mid-town park" especially had a well-defined purpose--"rest" for office workers and shoppers, and "for the tourist and

passerby an opportunity to be refreshed visually by the scale., the dense green growth, and hopefully, by the quiet of the space" (Zion, 1969, p.75).

The move to the suburbs also left the central city with a population of predominantly low income people who cannot easily find recreation outside their own neighborhoods, or afford any type of private recreation. This not only strengthens the need for public parks in these areas, but also reinforces a purpose of parks as providing the means that help contribute to the physiological and psychological well-being of the residents. Higbee (1969) explained that public parks and cultural facilities which provide relaxation, physical activity, and cultural development are necessary for these urbanized people in order to retain health and sanity in the city. "If such facilities and opportunities are available only to the economically privileged, then those who are disadvantaged may be expected to become anti-social, and occasionally to react in the most aberrant ways" (p.192). Parks alone obviously cannot completely fulfill these social needs, but they can influence and play a significant part in the social pattern and attitudes of the urban population.

Today our cities contain a variety of parks which serve specific purposes, but there are fundamental purposes and functions that are common to all parks located in a metropolitan area. The contemporary concept of an urban park is not only that of supplying needed recreation and physical activity, but also of providing beauty and balance in the urban environment. "Parks can provide safety valves for the tension of modern life" (Whitaker, 1971, p.8), but this does not imply that they are an escape from the city. They exist within the city and enhance it; they are a part of, rather than apart from, the city; and they bring the people together for social interaction. Above all, parks are for people, and they offer "the framework

for enactment of our own productions--be they creative, contemplative, athletic, or merely restful" (French, 1973, p.40).

Urban parks are a necessity, and in order for them to continue to be relevant and to be a significant element of urban life in the coming years, they must have a defined purpose and respond to the times. A response to the times involves a careful look at urban life and the rapidly changing needs and values of the urban population and may necessitate redesign of some parks. An understanding of these various factors will help to identify a purpose, and aid in developing innovative solutions and forms that will interest people, thereby increasing use and value to the city.

### **Neighborhood Parks**

The concept of the neighborhood park developed out of a need to provide parks that were more accessible to the people, and that could be used more frequently, especially by children. Butler (1958) described a neighborhood park as:

a playground for the entire neighborhood. It not only serves the children's needs, but affords limited opportunities for informal recreation for young people and adults. It is an outdoor center where the people of the neighborhood can find recreation and relaxation with their families, neighbors, or friends (p.98).

Hester (1975) explained how it relates to the neighborhood as a "public outdoor territory close to home which, because of the residents' collective responsibility, familiar association, and frequent shared use, is considered to be their own" (p.20).

Often times neighborhood parks are thought of as serving primarily the children and elderly of the neighborhood. However each neighborhood is different, and the geographic location and demographic characteristics of the neighborhood, as well as the facilities in the park will have an influence on

park use by teenagers, young adults, and adults.

The neighborhood park can be considered a generalized form of most city parks because it provides a variety of passive and active uses for all age groups. Facilities that are usually desirable in most neighborhood parks, depending upon the size, the character, and the needs of the neighborhood, include:

- Central open space, usually in grass; for flexible use
- Passive area with trees, shrubs, benches
- Community building [if not adjacent to school]
- Sport or game facilities
- Spray or wading pool for children
- Play area for young children
- Multi-purpose, hard surfaced court  
(French, 1973, p.87).

A general purpose of neighborhood parks is to stimulate social interaction by acting as a center for recreation, cultural activities, and education. It follows then, as Jacobs (1961) explains, that neighborhood parks are "creatures of their surroundings" (p.98), and are "directly and drastically affected by the way the neighborhood acts upon them" (p.95).

Neighborhood parks can be located in working places, residential areas, or a combination of these. They are particularly essential in neighborhoods or housing projects in which individual yard space is either minimal or non-existent. The best location, wherever possible, is adjacent to a public elementary school.

A neighborhood park is usually located within acceptable walking distance of any home in the neighborhood, since one of its major benefits is proximity to its users. This service area is typically defined as being within a radius



of one-quarter to one-half mile, and a recommended standard size is 2.5 acres per 1000 population which results in sizes ranging anywhere from less than two acres to twenty acres (Gold, 1980, p.268).

An appropriate summary to this description of neighborhood parks is an explanation, written by Jane Jacobs, of how successful neighborhood parks should function. Although written in 1961, it is still relevant in today's society:

Those [neighborhood parks] that are successful never serve as barriers or as interruptions to the intricate functioning of the city [and neighborhood] around them. Rather, they help to knit together diverse surrounding functions by giving them a pleasant joint facility; in the process, they add another appreciated element to the diversity, and give something back to their surroundings (p.101).

Thus, a successful neighborhood park is sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood and the city, which includes both the physical characteristics and the social patterns of life.

CHAPTER THREE  
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URBAN PARK AND RECREATION PLANNING

Before discussing the issue of urban park redesign and the process involved in redesign, it is necessary to become familiar with the term "urban park and recreation planning" and understand the process involved in new park development. Therefore, the following chapter defines "urban park and recreation planning" and describes a typical neighborhood park planning process that is used in most new park development. In a later chapter, this process will be compared to an identified redesign process. In addition, this chapter discusses approaches to the park planning process at the project level, how these approaches vary, and the changes that are beginning to take place in an emerging approach. This is followed by examples of how the process was approached in developing various new neighborhood parks.

The primary goal of urban park and recreation planning is to "improve the quality of life and environment in cities," and the basic objective is to "maximize human welfare by creating a better, more healthful, pleasurable, and attractive urban environment" (Gold, 1980, p.10). Urban park and recreation planning is a multi-disciplinary activity that can include architects, landscape architects, civil engineers, city planners, recreation and park administrators, sociologists, public administrators, environmental health specialists, and citizens, as well as others.

In order to clear up any confusion about the term "park and recreation planning", a brief explanation is necessary. Today this term, for all practical purposes, has been shortened to "recreation planning". It is a comprehensive term which includes, but is not limited to "park planning".

Gold (1980) describes "recreation planning" as a blending of "the knowledge and techniques of environmental design and the social sciences to develop alternatives for using leisure time, space, energy, and money to accommodate human needs" (p.5). In essence, it determines a course of action for providing and planning space in which people can spend leisure time; whether that space is a park, an indoor facility, or any other place where recreation can occur.

The term "park planning" is more specific, but is necessarily an integral part of "recreation planning". By today's standards, it cannot be separated from recreation planning because it focuses on providing a quality "recreational experience". Christiansen explains:

[park planning] cannot be limited to facility design and development. Park planners should be experience directed, not development directed. The development of park facilities provides only the setting for recreational experiences. This complete role should be reflected in the park planning process (1977, p.9). Therefore, the purpose of park planning is to ensure the necessary means, including human and physical resources and support services, to provide an established recreational experience (p.8).

Urban recreation planning involves two levels: project planning and system planning. System or policy planning deals with the process of planning an interrelated system or network of parks and recreation sites in a given area. It provides a basis for decision making and a guide for urban park development, which includes not only new park development, but also renewal of existing parks. The system plan is implemented by means of project planning which deals with the process of developing a specific site or project for recreational purposes.

#### A Typical Neighborhood Park Planning Process

Park planning at the site specific or project level basically involves

"physical planning"--the spatial arrangement of areas and facilities--and includes the procedures that precede and form the basis for the physical design of a park, the design of the park itself, and the implementation of that design. Other types of planning functions undertaken by a park agency that also provide input throughout the process include: financial planning [budgetary aspects], program planning [schedules, services, and events], functional planning [day-to-day tasks and services], and organizational planning [organizing special divisions within the agency] (Christiansen, 1977).

Christiansen (1977) described a typical planning process that is frequently used in most general new park site planning and development, and which can be applied to the planning of a neighborhood park. His methodology, which will be supplemented by other sources, includes:

- the Predesign Phase
- the Design Phase
- the Development or Implementation Phase
- the Actualization Phase

[Throughout this description, the term "planner/designer" will be used to indicate that a planner or designer can be directly involved in different phases of the park planning process and is not limited to the implications of his or her title, since many park "planners" have design backgrounds.]

## THE PREDESIGN PHASE

The predesign phase provides the basis for the other phases of the process. Thus, the degree of care and effort that goes into this phase can affect the success or failure of the project. [It is assumed that a site has

previously been selected.] The steps in this phase include:

- 1) General Background Information
- 2) Survey and Analysis
- 3) Statement of Objectives or Purpose
- 4) Program Development

1. General Background Information. General background information is gathered which includes: [1] topographic maps that indicate existing physical conditions of the site, plus soils reports; [2] census data about the neighborhood and possible previous information concerning the recreational needs and preferences of the residents; [3] information concerning current park planning and design issues; and [4] external factors that might influence the projects [i.e., economics, politics, etc.].

[Depending upon the extent of the project and the complexity of the site, a site analysis may be conducted at this time, if necessary, to determine limitations or carrying capacity of the site in regard to recreational activities.]

2. Survey and Analysis. The needs, attitudes, and leisure preferences of neighborhood residents must first be determined to aid in program development. The most common techniques of gathering this information are:

Interviews and Questionnaires---Information is obtained from individuals by personal interviews or mailed questionnaires. However, the mailed questionnaires are biased toward those who are motivated enough to return them.

Public Meetings---A public meeting can sometimes reveal needs and opinions that questionnaires cannot determine. However, because information is gathered from only those who attend the meeting, it is limited in accurately measuring the needs of the entire neighborhood.

It is important that user needs surveys attempt to determine the needs of all groups and special populations of the neighborhood. No matter what technique is used, in order to save time and money, the exact types of information that are desired and the methods of analysis should be determined before any study begins (Gold, 1980, and Hester, 1975).

The responses obtained from interviews, questionnaires, and public meetings are analyzed to provide information that can be used to develop objectives, to define the purpose of the park, and to aid in program development. The analysis should make an attempt to establish credibility by explaining how or why it was determined that the identified needs were viewed as important by the neighborhood or community, and should steer away from making value judgements (Gold, 1980 p.196).

3. Statement of Objectives and Purpose. Based on the results of the survey and analysis, the stated goals of the residents or client, and the goals stated in the city recreation plan, the purpose and the objectives of the park are established. The objectives provide a basis for program development and indicate directions toward achieving the purpose of the park (Gold, 1973, and U. S. Dept. of Interior, 1980).

4. Program Development. The program expands upon the objectives and describes them in terms of activities, facilities, and experiences that are to be provided in the park. The program should reflect the residents' needs and provide design directives for the physical development of the park. Neighborhood residents should be directly involved in program development by working with the planner/designer in this step of the process (Rutledge, 1971, p.93). In some situations a preliminary site analysis might be done to determine limitations and potentials that could influence program development.

Christiansen's method for developing a program is as follows [the degree to which each factor applies to neighborhood parks will vary depending upon the type of neighborhood and extent of development desired]:

1) Determine Activities to be Offered---Determination of activities is based on the results of the survey and analysis, as well as budgetary and policy factors, and site limitations.

2) Activity Analysis---A brief description of each activity is written to dispel any uncertainty about its definition. Each activity is then analyzed and described in terms of the following factors:

\*Experience opportunities--The level or type of experience or participation that will be provided such as: basic and advanced skills, programmed activity, unstructured activity, competitive experience, and spectator experience.

\*Rules and regulations--Particular rules and regulations that might affect the development of facilities.

\*Equipment needs--The special equipment that the park agency may need or want to provide.

\*User characteristics--The age, sex, skill levels, and disabilities or handicaps of the users.

\*Duration of activity and the participation rate--The length of the activity and the "optimum people at one time" or "design load" will depend upon the proposed experience level and extent of development which, in turn, affects activity scheduling, parking space, lighting, and the number of facility units.

\*Special requirements of facilities--The size, shape, and orientation of the facility.

\*Extent of development--In terms of conveniences, amenities, and degree of modification of the natural environment.

\*Special environmental requirements--The environmental characteristics and resources that are necessary to enhance the quality of the recreational experience.

\*Compatibility of activities--The compatibility or incompatibility of one activity to another.

\*Support services--Services that may be needed to support the activity such as maintenance; programming services; refreshments and supplies; health, safety, and emergency services; and possible fee collections.

\*Support facilities--Circulation and parking, electricity, shelters, park furniture and equipment, water, sanitation, storage, and safety and emergency equipment (Christiansen, 1977, pp.33-38).

Wurman (1972) developed a similar technique which analyzes activities in terms of "performance components" or "performance objectives"--i.e., who it is for, what it is for, and how it is supposed to function. The performance objectives, in the form of questions to consider in analyzing an activity, include:

\*Is it active or inactive?

\*Is it for an individual or group?

\*What age group will participate in it?

\*What specific space [size, shape, gradient] is needed?

\*What specific equipment is needed?

\*Is there more than one space or facility needed for this activity; and how frequently does the activity occur?

\*Does it require specific movement and circulation?

\*Does it require special safety and comfort facilities?



\*Is it affected by time, temperature, or weather?

\*Does it need a natural or man-made setting?

\*Does it require special maintenance? (Wurman, 1972).

The entire activity analyses are then compiled, organized, and documented into a complete design program which provides the basic directions for the physical design of the park, and also acts as criteria for evaluating alternative designs. In addition, design constraints that will affect the outcome of the design are included, such as: park agency regulations, safety and health regulations, state and local codes, budget figures, essential standards and specifications that must be met, and pertinent site limitations and restrictions (Christiansen, 1977, p.41).

## THE DESIGN PHASE

The design phase consists of the physical arrangement of the recreational facilities and areas that are described in the "design program". In this phase of the process, the park planner/designer plays a leading role in coordinating the contributions of the other members of the planning team. The resulting product of these efforts is termed the "general development plan".

Christiansen (1977) and Rutledge (1971) explain similar procedures of the design phase. Although the procedures involved in the design phase do not necessarily follow the same chronological pattern in every project, a logical order of procedure could be as follows:

1. Establish Performance Objectives. If the designer was involved in development of the program, this may have already been accomplished. Although it is ideal that the designer of the park be involved in program formulation, in some instances the program is developed prior to hiring a design consultant. In this case, in order to appropriately and successfully

interpret the design program, the design consultant can conduct an activity analysis in the form of a check-list based on Christiansen's or Wurman's method. This will aid in the development of a more appropriate and responsive design.

2. Site Analysis. The site analysis is the identification and evaluation of on and off-site conditions and how they will influence the park activities and facilities.

3. Develop Alternative Schematic Plans. Based on the design program, schematic designs are developed which indicate location and approximate space requirements of areas, functional relationships, and circulation patterns.

4. Evaluate Alternatives. Alternatives are reviewed by the residents and park administration in terms of how well they reflect the design program and needs of the residents. One alternative is selected for revision and/or approval, or it may be decided that certain aspects of different alternatives be combined into one plan.

5. Develop Preliminary Plan. The selected alternative is revised, if necessary, and developed into a more detailed preliminary plan. During this step, the designer should seek input and review from park agency personnel and other individuals who are knowledgeable in specific physical aspects of each facility and activity.

6. Develop General Development Plan. This is a refinement of the preliminary plan, and indicates the location, size, capacity, form, and orientation of all use areas and facilities. A cost estimate is also included.

7. Approval of General Development Plan. The final plan must be approved by the city or park board.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OR IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

This phase of the project consists of the following steps as described by Christiansen (1977):

1. Preconstruction Documentation. Construction drawings and specifications are prepared to indicate to the contractor how the park is to be constructed in terms of materials, dimensions, and location of facilities.
2. Construction Contracting. In contracting for the construction of public parks, park agencies must follow "competitive-bid" procedures in which public advertisement of park development is made and is open to any contractor. After bids are evaluated and compared, the low bidder is selected and given a "notice of award". The contract agreement is then written and signed, authorizing construction to begin.
3. Project Construction. This step involves the actual physical construction of the park by the contractor.

## THE ACTUALIZATION PHASE

This phase is not a terminating point, but rather occurs throughout the process, from predesign to post development, and includes programming of activities and preparation of financial, functional, and organizational plans. These plans are continuous and subject to change, and they evolve based on the needs of the users (Christiansen, 1977).

Although the previously described method is considered a "basic" or "typical" process, it can vary with each project in that the steps may not always occur in the same sequence, and, in some cases, steps may be added or excluded in order to fit the neighborhood and the times.

## Approaches To The Process

The approach that is taken, or the way in which the phases and steps of the park planning process are accomplished, affects the methods of data collection, the design program, and the resulting physical character of the park. The previously described process provides a structure or basis around which different approaches have evolved in the past two decades.

As pointed out in the history of the park and recreation movement, the approach to urban recreation planning had, in the past, been focused on the development of uniform two-dimensional plans based on standards in order to meet the demand for recreation, but without actually determining the real values and needs of the people. However, in the past fifteen to twenty years the focus has shifted to include social and environmental considerations and their impacts on the physical resource. More emphasis has been placed on the recreation "experience", and citizens have become much more involved in environmental design.

The approach to urban recreation planning that is now emerging is placing more emphasis on the quality and function of parks and recreation, human values and behavior, human development, and environmental management. There is more consideration for the mental and physical health of people, and improving the quality of urban life and environment. Citizen participation is playing a more active role throughout the entire planning and design process including maintenance and post-evaluation (Gold, 1981, p.54). Since this emerging approach is still in the beginning stages, it is usually the exception, not the rule, and so recreation planning still includes some of the more traditional methods as well.

## EXAMPLES OF APPROACH

The following examples of new neighborhood park development indicate how the planning process was approached in the predesign and design phases.

### Philadelphia's Neighborhood Parks

Under Philadelphia's Neighborhood Park Program, which was administered by the Philadelphia Recreation Department, some 60 small parks were developed in Philadelphia's inner city neighborhoods in the late 1960s. A typical process of how these were accomplished was briefly summarized by Asner (1969):

#### Predesign Phase:

- 1) A neighborhood group requests that a park be built in their neighborhood.
- 2) A recreation department community worker meets with the group in its neighborhood to evaluate the need and determine the extent of its interest and ability to sponsor a project. [Residents are required to participate in planning and construction, and to assume total responsibility for maintenance.]
- 3) Residents determine the type of facility needed, based on the purpose and the ages to be served.
- 4) A site is selected that is suitable for the facility requested.
- 5) A staff designer or a volunteer professional holds evening meetings in the neighborhood to determine residents' needs (p.176).

#### Design Phase:

- 6) The designer develops a preliminary plan and again meets with the residents to submit it for approval or modification. (p.176)

## Typical Neighborhood Parks

In a workshop that dealt with urban open space problems, a representative of a city park department briefly described a typical methodology for development of a new neighborhood park:

### Pre-design Phase:

- 1) Officials meet with the residents to get their general views.
- 2) A volunteer architect is contacted.
- 3) The park officials and the architect meet with residents to determine what they want in the park.

### Design Phase:

- 4) The architect develops sketches of what the residents wanted.
- 5) The sketches are discussed at another meeting.
- 6) The architect then develops a set of plans based on the discussions of the previous meeting. (Lawson, 1971, p.14).

## Phoenix Park

A more recent example is Phoenix Park, an inner-city neighborhood park in Decatur, Illinois. It is a low-income neighborhood, and many of the residents are unemployed, have few resources, and an excess of free time. Since there were almost no recreational facilities nearby, the neighborhood was in desperate need of a park. Three previous plans had been rejected because they were not sensitive to the needs of the potential users, and so the Housing Research and Development Program of the University of Illinois was contacted for assistance to make sure that the design responded to the preferences and needs of the residents. The researchers worked closely with an architectural firm in developing a conceptual plan for the park. The process as summarized

by Butterfield (1984) is as follows:

**Pre-design Phase:**

- 1) General background information was gathered which included a review of literature concerning recent park design issues and behavior studies, census data about the neighborhood, and existing information from previous group meetings and surveys concerning the recreational needs, preferences, and opinions of the residents. This was updated by telephone surveys that determined the residents' recreational preferences, and thoughts and feelings about what the park should be. The information was then analyzed to determine important issues.
- 2) Design criteria were developed that addressed all of the issues, and provided the basis for making design decisions. The three primary issues addressed by the criteria were: [a] the image of the park--the residents wanted the park to provide an identity and sense of place, [b] the safety of the park--conflicts between age groups and activities were to be avoided as much as possible. A sense of ownership was to be encouraged through citizen involvement in construction and maintenance, and [c] adequate facilities--the facilities were to accommodate all park users, give the park a unique identity, and provide a social place for neighborhood gatherings.

**Design Phase:**

- 3) A conceptual design was developed based on the design criteria. As design decisions were made, they were tested against the entire set of criteria to be sure that all the issues were addressed.

4) The conceptual plan was then annotated to document the design intentions. This will also aid in post-evaluation of the park's use. (Butterfield, 1984).

Further information concerning subsequent procedures of the process was not listed because the project is still in the beginning stages. However, it can be assumed that this project would include a review and revision session with the residents as the next logical step. It was also noted that the residents will be involved in helping with construction of the park.

Although the previous examples demonstrate subtle variations in the park planning process, they nevertheless follow the same basic process in that:

- \*the designer is involved in determining needs directly from the residents before any design begins,
- \*a plan is then developed in response to these needs, and
- \*the residents are involved in the review and approval of plans.

It should also be noted that in two of the examples the residents' involvement in the construction of the park is an important factor. These are only a few examples however, and it can be reasonably assumed that some methods of park planning today are still deficient in adequately determining user needs and preferences and directly involving citizens in the process. However, the Decatur, Illinois example seems to indicate that there is an increasing awareness of the importance of an in-depth and systematic approach to the predesign phase, as well as an increasing consideration for the needs of a specific neighborhood population, and the related social interaction that takes place in a neighborhood park.

The typical neighborhood park planning process and the previous examples will be used as references in determining how the process for new park development differs from the redesign process, and will be discussed in Chapter Six.



CHAPTER FOUR  
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REDESIGN OF URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

This chapter discusses the issue of neighborhood park redesign; what it encompasses, why redesign is needed, influential current issues, and some examples of neighborhood park redesign.

"Redesign" of a park refers to change in the existing physical design in terms of organizational layout of areas and/or facilities in order to improve the park and accommodate present-day social and recreational needs and preferences. Therefore, redesign indicates change. It can be incremental change or complete change; however, the land-use remains the same--recreation. The Change in the physical appearance of the park is the major objective of redesign, as opposed to preservation or restoration in which the major objective is to save a natural or historic landscape or return it to its original or former design intent.

Rehabilitation is a term that can have connotations of redesign. It involves returning a park "to useful condition, generally bringing it to a state of good repair, and possibly including some adaptation" (Kunst & O'Donnell, 1981, p.55). Other terms that are synonymous or closely related to rehabilitation are renovation, rejuvenation, and renewal. All of these terms imply the repair and improvement of older, run-down parks. Redesign may be a significant part of a rehabilitation project but redesign is not limited to older, run-down parks. A park that was developed ten years ago may still be in good physical condition, yet need to be redesigned because it is not adequately used or is not functioning as intended.

Redesign of existing urban parks has been occurring since the turn of the

century when the recreation movement influenced modification in passive parks. Society was changing and more leisure time brought about an increased demand for recreation. The changes that occurred in the parks were sometimes large-scale, and other times small or incremental. Butler (1958-59) explained some of the changes that took place in order to meet the needs of the changing society:

Park meadows were transformed into baseball fields, rolling landscapes became golf courses, park groves were equipped with picnic tables and benches, and playground apparatus was installed near the park boundaries. The construction of winter sports facilities, swimming pools, bandstands, bleachers, and outdoor theatres made possible a wide variety of recreation activities but caused many changes in the appearance of the parks. [However], resourceful designers located the new facilities where they best fit into the landscape, or screened them from view (p.11).

In some parks, changes conformed to the original park design, while in others changes were detrimental to the original purpose of the park.

In the 1930s, many parks were redesigned in New York City under the direction of park commissioner Robert Moses. Many of the city's run-down or poorly planned old parks, as well as neighborhood parks and playgrounds that had previously been "improperly laid out, equipped, or maintained," were redesigned by "installing adequate equipment, paving, and landscaping," and by including more indoor facilities (Newton, 1971, p.631).

Gold (1976) explained that funds for acquisition and development of new parks will decline and possibly no longer be available in the near future. The decrease in funds for new park development that many cities are currently experiencing suggests that emphasis be placed on renewal and redesign of existing parks, because updating and maintaining these parks will be all that many communities will be able to afford (p.14).

Thus, redesign is not a new trend, but the relevance and importance of neighborhood park redesign in urban recreation planning is increasing, not

only because of decreasing funds for new parks, but also because of a greater awareness of the needs of a rapidly changing society, and a realization that many existing parks are not meeting these needs.

### The Need for Redesign

The need for redesign of neighborhood parks can be influenced by three major underlying factors: [1] The deterioration of a park, [2] the disregard for user needs in the original planning and design of a park, and [3] the changing needs of present-day society.

#### DETERIORATION OF A PARK

The budget cuts that many park and recreation agencies have been experiencing have adversely affected park maintenance, and thus, the physical condition of parks. The lack of a management plan or a lowering of maintenance standards and staff reductions has resulted in the general deterioration of many parks (Nice, 1983, p.16). Maintenance staff reductions can also result in careless changes in the facilities and appearance of the park that correspond to less maintenance, but may not be in the best interests of the users. In some cases, older neighborhood parks have deteriorated because most of the available park and recreation funds were spent on developing new parks rather than improving and maintaining existing parks (Rendel, 1983, p.13).

Deterioration can also be caused by overuse. This occurs when a park or a certain area of a park is used to such an extent that damage or deterioration results although overuse must be considered relative to the area's capacity to withstand wear (Madden & Love, 1982, p.2). Overuse is more often associated with resource-based parks but neighborhood parks are not immune to the problem. In cases in which overuse occurs, thoughtful and

resourceful redesign can help solve the problem without discouraging use.

Another reason why redesign of deteriorated neighborhood parks is needed is to help revitalize neighborhoods and the city itself. The redesign of neighborhood parks can play an important part in the overall scheme of urban and neighborhood renewal by adding to the attractiveness of the city. As French stated, "the public park, like no other aspect of the urban scene, reflects the status of life and vitality of the city and its people" (1970, p.41).

It is not suggested however, that every park that shows signs of deterioration is in need of redesign. Sometimes better maintenance is all that might be needed. There are other elements that influence the deterioration of a park which relate more to behavioral influences than to physical or financial influences. These will be mentioned in the following discussion.

#### **DISREGARD FOR USER NEEDS**

Many of the parks that were designed in the latter part of the "recreation era" [1950s to early 60s] were standardized package designs that were often duplicated regardless of site conditions or the needs of potential users (Cranz, 1982, p.122). As a result, different classes of people living in different areas of the city received essentially the same park design even though their needs and problems were different.

In some instances, to save time and money, neighborhood parks are still being designed according to standards and assumptions that all neighborhoods need and want the same activities, which results in a standard, homogenous park for different neighborhoods (Hester, 1975, p.74). This method of park planning and design disregards the real needs and preferences of the users because the residents are not involved in the process. This includes not only

a disregard for recreational needs but also a disregard for social and behavioral needs--i.e., how people feel and interact in a space.

For many years most parks were designed without regard for the behavioral and social aspects of the users. Designers were more concerned with how parks looked rather than how they worked and how they affected people. Designers disregarded the connection between design and human behavior and the impact that design has on behavior. "Design [of a park] must be properly fitted to the social-psychological needs of those who use it; or they will either abandon it, alter it, or destroy it" (Marshall, 1983, F.117). [A more detailed explanation of the social/behavioral factors is located in Appendix A of this study.] Disregard for recreational and social needs results in poorly planned and poorly designed parks which "suffer vandalism and destruction because of underuse and an explicable, yet regrettable, lack of pride by residents" (Splenda, 1974, p.29)

Gold (1972) expanded upon the element of underuse in what he called "nonuse". He explained that people were not using neighborhood parks because the parks were not meeting the social and recreational needs and preferences of the neighborhood, and because the design, program, and maintenance of the parks were lacking in quality. Gold concluded that "parks that do not reflect or anticipate the social dynamics of a neighborhood invite nonuse" (p.375).

Poor planning and design can result in a lack of interest and support of the park by the neighborhood. This results in nonuse which, in turn, results in vandalism, deterioration, and a lack of safety. A poorly planned and designed park can also invite conflicts between uses and users, which can necessitate redesign. In addition, "misuse" can occur "if a park is not designed for the way people want to use it"--if it lacks "a sufficient variety of places and facilities to meet the diverse needs and activities of users" (Madden & Love,

1982, p.2). Misuse necessitates redesign and can also result in unintentional damage to a facility.

## A CHANGING SOCIETY

The need for neighborhood park redesign is also influenced by the rapid societal changes that are currently taking place. Neighborhood parks designed according to past values and standards, and without a well-defined purpose other than to meet the demand for recreation, may not accommodate the complex needs of present-day society. Many parks in the older parts of cities were established 50 to 100 years ago. Many of them may no longer meet the changing recreational and social needs and values of the people because these parks have not significantly changed in the past fifty years (Gold, 1976, p.39). Johnson (1970) adds: "If parks exist for the sake of parks rather than for meeting the needs of the people, then parks will truly become obsolete" (1970, p.4). If neighborhood parks are to survive, they will have to adapt to current changes in society which may necessitate redesign.

### Current Issues

The following issues concerning change and current conditions in American society either directly relate to, or in some way affect redesign of outdated neighborhood parks. This is not a complete or all-inclusive list however, because it may not include other broader issues that are only indirectly related. The relevance of these issues will vary within different regions of the country and depending upon the types or characteristics of the neighborhood.

Increasing Leisure Time. Most people will have more leisure time in the coming years and are expected to spend more of their disposable income on

recreational pursuits. Because of this predicted growth in the leisure industry in the coming years, it will become increasingly important for leisure and recreation facilities to be of high quality and up-to-date (Marshall, 1983, pp.30-31).

Transportation Issues. The costs of travel, in combination with the ever-increasing crowded freeways in urban areas, will discourage trips to long distance national and regional recreation areas and result in an increasing need for recreation closer to home (Gold, 1977, p.63, and Moore & Jones, 1981-82, p.321). This will increase pressure on neighborhood parks to play a significant role in providing for the recreational needs of the residents. Even though fuel prices have temporarily stabilized and cars are being built to be more fuel-efficient, the American concern for reducing energy resource consumption may continue to discourage the frequency of long distance travel to recreation areas.

Changing Population Characteristics. The need for redesign can also be influenced by the changing demographic characteristics of current and future society. The continuing move of the middle-class out of the central city to the suburbs and non-metropolitan areas has left the central city with a loss of leadership in matters of maintaining quality in the central city environment (Higbee, 1969, p.191). This has helped contribute to the deterioration of some of the public parks in those areas. It has also left behind a different class of population--the urban poor and immobile, and the elderly--whose different recreational and social needs must be met by neighborhood parks. Some neighborhood parks will therefore need to be redesigned to accommodate those needs.

Special populations, such as racial and cultural groups, the poor, the

elderly, single parents, and the physically and mentally handicapped are playing an increasingly important role in environmental design and are demanding that their needs be accommodated. This will consequently call for redesign of some neighborhood parks and thus require citizen participation in the redesign process.

In future years there will be an increase in the need for health and human services brought on by an aging trend that, by 1990, will witness an increase of 58 million people in the 30 to 45 year age group; a 63 percent increase over 1980 (Marshall, 1983, pp.22-25). The current emphasis on physical fitness and health will continue to increase as more people in this 30 to 45 year age group realize the value of physical fitness as a contributing factor in adding years to one's life, and in having a positive effect on one's work, personal life, and mental health. Thus, society is becoming more physically and mentally health oriented which increases the demand not only for more recreation, but also for quality in recreational facilities and experiences. Neighborhood parks can play a significant part in contributing to the physical and mental well-being of people by providing quality recreational experiences, facilities, and programs to accommodate these needs.

There is also an increased interest in activities that older adults can enjoy, since the number of older people is increasing and will continue to do so in the future. In addition, people are becoming better educated, and "the higher a person's education level, the greater will be that person's rate of participation in recreation", and also the greater his or her preference for better quality facilities and programs (Dattner, 1977, p.40).

Historical Considerations. These considerations do not necessarily relate to a need for redesign, but they are issues that can affect the



approach and outcome of a redesign project.

It was previously mentioned that parks which were designed 50 to 100 years ago may no longer meet the needs of present-day society. There is the possibility that some of these neighborhood parks may be, in some way, historically significant. In light of the current historic and cultural preservation movement, controversy can arise over whether to restore a historically significant park, or to "respond to changing needs and start all over again" (French, 1983, p.38).

The degree of historic or cultural significance, as well as the context of the park, must be determined and alternatives must be considered and evaluated. If a park is old, it does not automatically mean that the original design of the park should be saved. Preservation or restoration of the original design may not be appropriate but there may be certain characteristics of a neighborhood park that are worth saving because they are unusual or distinctive, or because they hold symbolic meaning and are valued by the residents. What is of major importance is the character of the park--the valued sense of place or "genius of the place"--which should be allowed to survive when changes must occur in the design of the park (Chadwick, 1966, p.315).

The problem and challenge of redesigning older parks is in meeting the needs of a changing society, while simultaneously retaining the basic character of the park. Brotherton (1983) suggests how a designer might approach this situation:

The designer can start from scratch, assessing the park's good points and its bad points, the relevant and the irrelevant, the assets and the liabilities. He or she can build on the best, respecting heritage without being ruled by it; adding, deleting, and developing (p.1).

Laurie (1979) posed some basic questions that should be answered when older

parks are redesigned: "To what extent are present needs the same as those of earlier days, and to what extent do the needs continue to be satisfied by parks laid out approximately one hundred years ago? What new needs require expression?" (1979, p.35).

Funding. Since the early 1960s, federal funds have played a major role in urban park and recreation development. The major categorical grant programs that apply to parks and recreation include the Land and Water Conservation Fund [LWCF], the Community Development Block Grant [CDBG], and the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery program [UPARR]. The LWCF provides grants specifically for parks and recreation areas. Individual states can apply for funds and, in turn, allocate these funds to cities for planning, acquisition, and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The funds usually cover fifty percent of the project cost and the locality provides the other half (Jensen, 1973, p.151).

Under the CDBG program, cities can receive a lump sum which they can use at their discretion for city and neighborhood development and improvement including, among other things, parks and recreation areas (So, 1979, pp.490-491). Even though the LWCF and CDBG funds are not limited to new park development, much of this financial assistance has, in the past, been used for the development of new parks rather than for the improvement of existing parks. In some cases, this has resulted in outdated existing parks that do not accommodate the needs of a changing society. As a result, the UPARR program of 1978 was established in response to a recognition of the serious need for rehabilitation of the nation's existing parks. The program provided federal grants to economically hard-pressed urban communities for rehabilitation of existing public park and recreation areas which had fallen into disuse or disrepair (U.S.D.I., 1980, p.9).

Since the 1980 election, appropriations to the LWCF and CDBG programs have seriously declined, and appropriations to the JPARR program have been cancelled. Even though there are no new appropriations to the UPARR program, the need for redesign and renewal of existing urban parks still remains. The declining appropriations to the LWCF and CDBG programs may influence a curtailment in new park development in some cities and could most likely influence an increasing concern for redesign of existing neighborhood parks.

There is currently a trend of "decentralization" in United States government. This is a shift of power from the centralized or federal government to state, county, and local governments. This will bring with it a shift in the responsibility for government programs which provide financial support. Since federal aid programs are declining and some are being completely abandoned, this will transfer financial responsibilities for recreational activities to state and local governments (Marshall, 1983, pp.41-42).

Most individual states have developed financial assistance programs for parks and recreation, or have established special taxes, a percentage of which go to park and recreation agencies in the cities of that particular state. Local governments usually levy taxes specifically for parks and recreation, as well as other taxes that in some way allow a certain percentage of the revenue to apply to parks and recreation. General obligation bonds and capital improvement funds are other sources of local government funding that can, in some way or another, apply toward park and recreation development.

Many local park and recreation agencies have become too dependent upon the federal government to provide financial assistance. Cutbacks in federal programs, coupled with cutbacks in local park and recreation budgets have caused, in some cities, a serious decline in funds for development and

improvement as well as in funds for operation, maintenance, and personnel. Park and recreation agencies must find alternative sources of funding and ways to cope with these decreases. Construction costs can be somewhat reduced by involving citizens in the construction of a park, and concessions and projects or events within a park can help bring in revenue (Walker & Duffield, 1983, pp.8 & 9). Voluntary agencies, neighborhood committees, special interest groups, or clubs can be encouraged to co-sponsor recreation programs or take on maintenance responsibilities. Fees and charges may also be placed on the use of facilities, although this should be done as a last resort (Kraus, 1981, p.30). Grants, bequests, or donations can be received from private foundations or trusts, or private investors who may have an interest in the neighborhood or community (Friedberg, 1970, p.147). In addition, private non-profit organizations can also sponsor facilities, equipment, programs, or maintenance responsibilities. Many of the previous funding alternatives can help provide operation and maintenance funds and reduce those costs, thus leaving more money available for development and improvement including redesign. However, pressure must still be put on government to help provide parks and recreation for the people.

Even though costs are rising and revenue is decreasing, people still expect to obtain the best value for their tax dollars--they expect "quality" facilities and experiences. Rising costs often make it necessary to cut back on, or even eliminate some facilities, activities, and amenities. New and imaginative ways to use available funds and resources must be developed without sacrificing quality. As Walker and Duffield submitted: "economic necessity [should be] the 'mother of invention' and not the excuse for unimaginative curtailment" (1983, p.9).

## Examples of Neighborhood Park Redesign

There are relatively few documented examples of neighborhood park redesign, and those that have been documented rarely include an adequate explanation of the process and issues involved. The following examples, however, illustrate how social considerations, regard for user needs, and citizen participation influence and play a major role in neighborhood park redesign.

### DANA PARK -- Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dana Park was the subject of a redesign brought about by conflicts caused by territorial dominance. A group of community leaders had been complaining about being harassed by teenage gang members in the neighborhood. The gang considered parts of the park as their "turf" which they exerted dominance over. Conflicts arose between the teenagers and the elderly because benches used by the elderly were located in the only space where football could be played. Conflicts also occurred between the teenagers and younger children because the play equipment was located near the gang's "hanging out" area and basketball court.

Planning and design team members held meetings and discussions with all user groups involved. Through these forums, conflicts and needs were identified, and a design program was developed through group compromise. The teenagers expressed their need for lighted basketball courts and an area to "hang out"; the elderly wanted sitting areas that would be safely out of the way of teenage play areas; and the small children needed a play area close to the school, yet not in conflict with the teenagers' areas. The program was then translated into alternative plans and presented in neighborhood forums.

Controversy developed between the gang members and the elderly in

discussing the alternatives, but suggestions and compromises concerning the design of the park resulted in a more appropriate and socially suitable preliminary scheme that was finally decided upon. After the preliminary plan was approved, the neighborhood residents were shown slides of specific plans and of different types of facilities that could be used in the park. Several more meetings were held before a final plan was approved. In addition, the construction of Dana Park involved the neighborhood residents in that the contractor hired members of the gang to help.

A unique and important factor in the redesign of Dana Park was that the users made the important design decisions. The conflicts were resolved by the user groups themselves as a result of participation throughout the planning and design process. The redesign was significant in that it incorporated diverse user needs and social factors into the plan, and it recognized territoriality and use patterns of the various user groups (Hester, 1975, pp.206-211).

#### **WASHINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL YARD -- Berkeley, California**

A project called the Washington Environmental Yard was an underused neighborhood space that included a typical asphalt covered school playground. The Yard is located adjacent to Washington Elementary School in the central city area of Berkely, California in a diverse, transient neighborhood comprised of various age groups, nationalities, and life styles. The space was redesigned under the direction of Robin Moore, a designer and teacher at the University of California at Berkeley, who received a research grant to plan an environmental education project that would combine play and learning.

Meetings were held with teachers, and all school children were surveyed to determine their preferences and views on what the Yard should become.

Feedback was also obtained through questionnaires and a drop-in house in which all residents, both young and old, could voice their opinions concerning what they liked about the space and what changes they thought should be made in the space.

University of California students also conducted on-site interviews and made daily observations to determine how the space was used. The analysis of the data indicated that the neighborhood wanted a wide variety of spaces, activities, and interactions such as "a natural resource area, an open space, a preschool corner, and a place for children to sit, read, and talk" (Hester, 1975, p.193). Safety and the appearance from the street were also found to be of concern, and the designer added other design considerations to the program based on his previous experiences.

Since a major focus of the space was the existing school yard, the students helped develop a master plan under the direction of the designer and based on the users' criteria. Consideration of social factors was of major importance in redesigning the Yard. There was to be a variety of spaces "to encourage various interactions; from a big meeting place for large social gatherings, to private niches where kids could escape" (Hester, 1975, p.193). By providing for a variety of spaces and interactions, it was hoped that the space would attract more residents and thus contribute to a sense of community. The design also prevented unnecessary user conflicts and recognized symbolically owned territories.

The master plan was flexible in providing for a variety of potential activity settings and in accommodating change. This flexibility, combined with consideration of social factors, contributes to a more socially suitable and successful space (Hester, 1975, pp.192-200).

## COLUMBUS SQUARE -- Kansas City, Missouri

Columbus square is a neighborhood park in one of the older sections of Kansas City. When originally developed in 1908, it contained an elaborate pergola and shallow pool complex. In later years, everything was leveled, the pool was filled in and covered with asphalt, and a few pieces of playground equipment were installed. The park remained in this condition for several years.

An industrial area bordered one side of the park and gradually spread into the residential area causing deterioration of some residential units. Some of the neighborhood residents eventually became alarmed at the state of their neighborhood and were determined to halt any further deterioration. The park and recreation staff felt that they could contribute to these efforts by redesigning and reconstructing Columbus Square. It was decided that a comprehensive master plan was needed that represented the needs and desires of the neighborhood residents. They were to be involved in the planning from the very beginning of the process, and their needs were to take priority over budget limitations.

The department hired a design team consisting of a landscape architect and two architects, one of which was a resident of the neighborhood. The design team interviewed the area residents to determine needs and desires, and, from the results, developed criteria for the redesign. It was found that the residents considered the park to be a focal point so renovation of the park was to help reestablish pride in the neighborhood and stop further decline. The design criteria were reviewed and approved by the Board of Parks, and Recreation Commissioners, and a master plan was then developed. Although the estimated budget of the proposed plan exceeded the initial budget three and one half times, the Board of Commissioners approved the master plan



assuming that it would be phased, and that additional funding could be obtained (Corwin, 1972).

The previous examples have provided an indication of some of the unique aspects of neighborhood park redesign and how it develops. This will be further explained in the next chapter concerning the redesign process. Some other sources that deal with examples of urban park redesign, although not a complete list, include:

Jubb (1983)  
Laurie (1979)  
Madden & Love (1982)  
Nice (1983)  
Rendel (1983)

French stated that redesign should be thought of as a positive necessity in order for parks to change with society:

Park design [and redesign] ought to reflect the "natural" forces of the environment as well as the "social" processes of modern urban life. These become the determinants of form, and changing the "surface" of the park in our continuing search for proper form should alarm no one. It is in the loss of the park "itself" which we must guard against (1983, p.40).

The basic underlying purpose of a neighborhood park is to provide a place for the neighborhood residents to engage in leisure activities. The neighborhood park is a part of the city, and a place that brings people together for social interaction. Thus, it should reflect city life and, in order to do so, it must change as society changes. Since the current era of rapid social change will no doubt continue, urban parks will have to adapt to these changes in order to survive.

Chapter Five  
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THE REDESIGN PROCESS

The following chapter will involve the identification of a "redesign process" through the synthesis of literature from various sources.

The body of literature concerning neighborhood park redesign is relatively small, and existing documentation of actual redesign projects does not thoroughly explain the process that was involved. Although in some cases certain aspects of the process are mentioned, to this author's knowledge, a synthesized methodology does not exist--one which lists typical procedures, and what is involved in each step, and which can serve as a guide specifically for the purpose of neighborhood park redesign.

Randolph Hester's book, Neighborhood Space (1975), is an excellent source of appropriate information that can be applied to a redesign process. Although some of the project examples deal with redesign, the book is not geared specifically toward redesign and does not identify a redesign process as such. Hester does, however, diagram a design process and discuss important considerations involved in neighborhood space design and the part it plays in an ongoing community development process. The information contained in Neighborhood Space will constitute a basis for identification of the redesign process which will be supplemented by other sources.

The synthesized redesign process is meant to serve as a guide, and, as with any planning or design process, will vary depending upon influences such as the type and location of the neighborhood, the needs and preferences of the neighborhood, the unique problems encountered in each situation, and the philosophies and experience of the planner/designer. Regardless of how the process might vary, issues and factors will be identified that should be

considered in most all situations in order to achieve a successful neighborhood park.

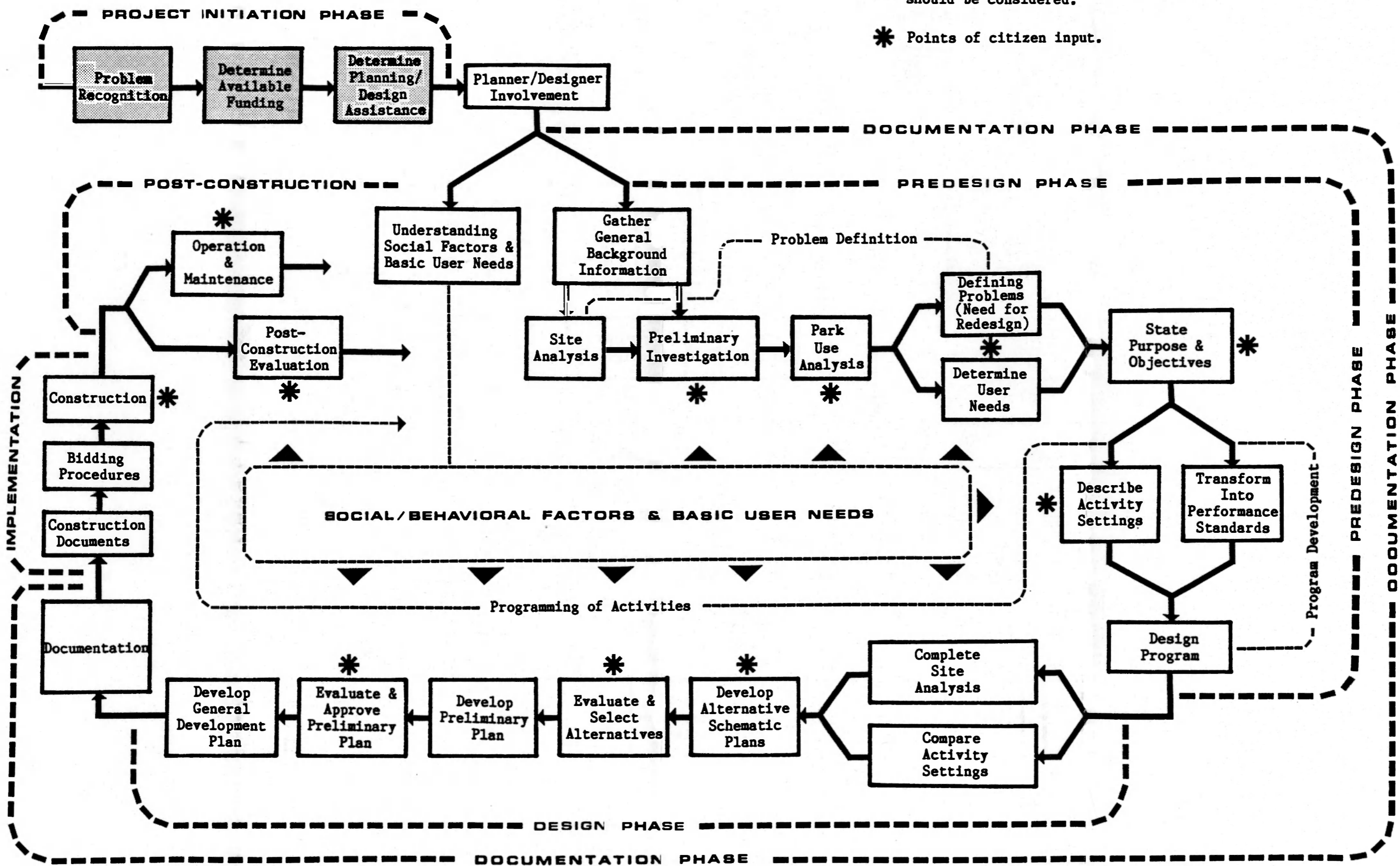
The term "redesign process" is a collective term that refers to the following phases involved in the redesign of an existing neighborhood park:

- Project Initiation Phase
- Predesign Phase
- Design Phase
- Documentation Phase
- Implementation Phase
- Post-construction Phase

A graphic representation of the entire redesign process, indicated as an ongoing process, is presented in Figure 1.

▲ Points where Social/Behavioral Factors and Basic User Needs should be considered.

\* Points of citizen input.



THE REDESIGN PROCESS

## THE PROJECT INITIATION PHASE [Darkened area in Figure 1]

Before actual planning can start, certain prerequisites are necessary in order to initiate the project:

1. Problem Recognition. The first step in the redesign process is recognizing that there is some type of problem with the existing park. [It is assumed here that the problem necessitates redesign in order to be corrected.] The city park and recreation agency may recognize that there is a need for the redesign of a certain neighborhood park and determine that it is a priority in relation to the development of the city's entire park system. In some cases, a group of neighborhood residents may get together to discuss the problem and determine that there is a need for redesign in order to improve the park. They can then approach the city park and recreation agency with the problem.

The project might also be initiated as a part of neighborhood or community redevelopment. In this case it is likely that a planner or designer has already been involved in helping the neighborhood determine its priorities for renewal or redevelopment, which can include recognition of problems that can potentially be solved through redesign.

2. Determine Available Funding. The city park and recreation agency can determine what sources of funds are available; including federal, state, and local; and how they can obtain them if they have not already done so. If the park agency does not have or cannot obtain sufficient funding, the neighborhood might seek private sources that may have an interest in helping the neighborhood.

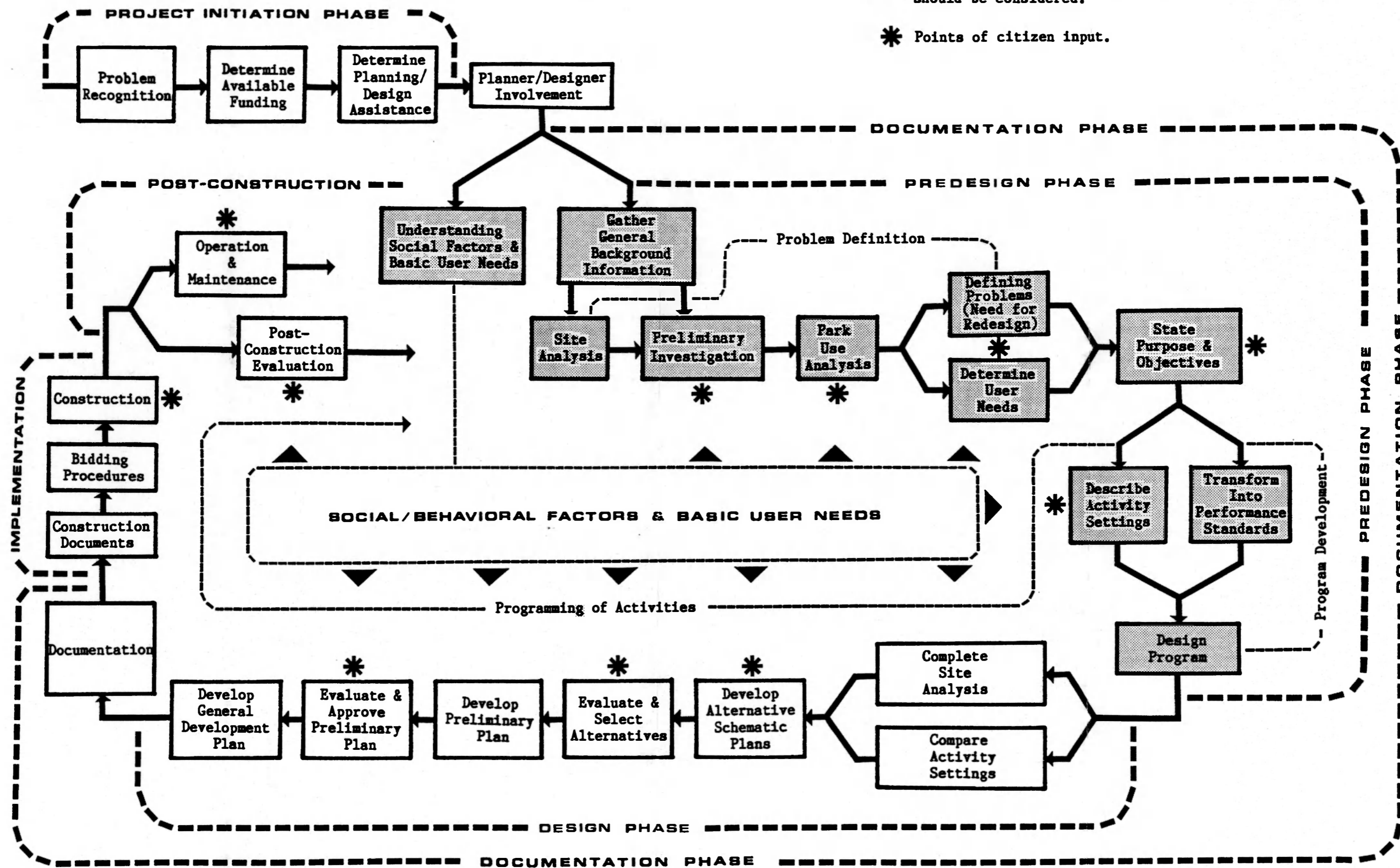
In some cases, if the park is not publicly owned and has not been donated to the city, it may be necessary to form a committee to find a sponsor for the project. A club or organization, or even the neighborhood itself can sponsor

the project through the entire process, including maintenance and operation after construction (Peterson, 1969, p.125).

**3. Determine Planning-Design Assistance.** After an available source of funding is located it should be decided which designers will be involved in the project. This depends upon who is funding and sponsoring the project. The city park and recreation agency may provide a staff planner/designer or hire a professional design consultant. If the park and recreation agency is not the sponsor of the project, the neighborhood or the sponsoring organization may select the designer. If the project is part of neighborhood renewal or community redevelopment, a designer may already be involved. If at all possible, it is ideal if the designer is a resident of the neighborhood or community to ensure accountability and continuing involvement in the project (Laurie, 1983, p.74).

▲ Points where Social/Behavioral Factors and Basic User Needs should be considered.

\* Points of citizen input.



THE REDESIGN PROCESS

## THE PREDESIGN PHASE [Darkened area in Figure 2]

After a designer has been selected, he or she can immediately begin the predesign activities.

1. Understanding of Social/Behavioral Factors and Basic User Needs. Before proceeding with any subsequent steps in the predesign phase, the selected designer, and anyone else involved in gathering information, must become familiar with the social/behavioral factors and the basic user needs that are based upon those factors. These are not design guidelines, but rather factors and concepts that influence the use of a space and which must be understood and considered in various stages of the redesign process. The following is a brief description of these factors and needs. A more detailed explanation, including their application throughout the redesign process, can be found in Appendix A and B of this study.

### Social/Behavioral Factors

The social/behavioral factors, hereinafter referred to as social factors, form the sociological basis of the basic user needs and take into account, not only what people do in a space, but also how people feel about and interact in that space (Hester, 1975, p.46). According to Hester (1975), the social factors include:

A. **Social Interaction Processes**---Various social interactions [social exchange and conflicts] among people, places, and facilities can be encouraged or discouraged by the design of a space.

B. **Territoriality and Dominance**---The efforts of people to control [defend and dominate] spaces can result in competition and conflicts among activities and users.



C. **Symbolic Ownership**---Symbolic ownership of a park refers to the residents' perception of ownership which is influenced by the various ways they relate to the park, and the value the park holds for them. A sense of symbolic ownership increases the use of a park and vice versa.

D. **Interaction Variations**---This refers to differences in how various groups of people socially interact in a space and how they use, perceive, and feel about that space. Interaction variations are based upon:

- social class
- life-cycle stage [age and family type]
- ethnic-cultural background
- life-style
- sex
- region of the country
- urban-rural context [size and location of the city within a region, and the location of the neighborhood within that city]

E. **Activity Variations**---This refers to differences in preferences for various leisure activities based on those same elements listed under interaction variations above.

F. **Usable Space**---A usable space is one that satisfies the minimum physical requirements that allow a certain recreational or social activity to take place.

G. **Comfortable Space**---This includes physical comfort--microclimates, pollution control, and comfortable and safe facilities--and psychological comfort which encompasses a balance of diversity and order as a means of achieving visual unity and activity unity.

## Basic User Needs

The basic user needs encompass the previous social factors and are common to most all users. They influence the use of a park and are based on the users' point of view concerning the reasons why one goes or refrains from going to a park, and what would make one go there more often (Hester, 1975, p.83). The basic user needs concepts as described by Hester (1975) include:

A-1. People One Wants To Do an Activity With---This includes desirable interaction among people whose presence is a positive factor.

A-2. People One Wants To Do an Activity Without---This includes seeking privacy and getting away from people or overcrowding. It refers to people whose presence is a negative factor.

B. Appropriate Activity Settings---Activity settings, whether fixed or adaptable, must be appropriate for the site and the neighborhood, and will vary according to social class, life-cycle stage, ethnic-cultural background, region of the country, life-style, sex, and urban-rural context. Flexibility in activity settings is a major consideration in order to accommodate changing needs and users.

C. Relatedness Through Interaction with the Natural Environment---This refers to the provision of opportunities that enable a person to related to the natural environment.

D. Safety---This includes the physical and social aspects of safety, which influence the use of a park.

E. Aesthetic Appeal---This is based on appropriateness of style and taste, and visual unity. Aesthetic appeal can influence use, but the

user's idea of appropriate beauty usually differs from that of the designer.

F. **Physical Comfort**---The physical comfort of the user will contribute to the use of a space and is influenced by site factors and facilities.

G. **Psychological Comfort**---The use of a park can be influence by the psychological comfort of the user which is experienced through:

- emotional release
- social reinforcement
- balance between old and new choices of activities

H. **Symbolic Ownership**---Symbolic ownership is likely to increase if residents have participated in the planning and design or redesign of the park, if it has been personalized by the residents, if one lives close to the park, or if other neighbors and outsiders view the park as a status object.

I. **Convenience**---The use of a neighborhood park can be influenced by convenience to its users.

J. **Policy on Use**---This refers to formal or informal policies regarding the use of the park.

K. **Cost**---The cost of transportation and admission to a facility will influence the use of that facility.

The basic user needs and related social factors take into account the "experience" of being in a park. Consideration of these needs and factors throughout the redesign process [i.e., problem definition, determining user needs, program development, design, and post-construction evaluation] will

result in a more successful and socially suitable park. The composition, relevance, and importance of each social factor and basic user need will vary with each neighborhood and each particular situation, and can be accurately determined only through direct citizen participation in the redesign process.

2. Gather General Background Information. General background information should be gathered in order for the designer to become familiar with recent park design issues and information, and to become familiar with the neighborhood itself. This includes:

- Information about similar types of projects and recent studies concerning design and social behavior.
- Existing demographic information about the neighborhood [i.e., race, income, home ownership, age groups, etc.]
- Existing survey studies about the neighborhood's recreational needs and preferences, as well as notes from previous public participation meetings (Butterfield, 1984, p.69).
- External factors that might influence the project [i.e., economics, politics, etc.]
- Existing information concerning the park itself--the original design, changes that were made, photographs, maps, plans, etc.

3. Problem Definition. The designer is instrumental in helping the neighborhood define relevant problems and thus determine why redesign is needed. In order to do this the designer must first become familiar with the park and the neighborhood residents. The understanding and consideration of the basic user needs and related social factors is very important in determining the problems and what is causing them. The possible lack of consideration for these elements in the original design of the park may be a

major reason why redesign is needed.

**Site Analysis**---It is important that the designer first become familiar with the overall physical condition of the park before studying park use. This includes analysis of physical aspects in terms of appearance, accessibility, safety, approximate age and condition of facilities, carrying capacity, unusual wear-and-tear or traces of vandalism, existing utilities, and related off-site factors (U.S.D.I., 1980, pp.50-51). It should also be determined if there are significant historical aspects of the park, or if the existing character of the park is of value.

**Preliminary Investigation**---Before appropriate questions can be asked of the residents, the designer must also become familiar with the uses of the park by making general observations of activities and how they relate to the physical aspects of the park. The general observations can be written on a plan of the park, supplemented by drawings or sketches (Madden & Love, 1982, p.4).

The designer can then informally talk with opinion leaders and other residents of the neighborhood who are familiar with the park to obtain their opinions and views of the problems. When discussing the problems with residents, it is helpful to have a small scale plan of the park that can serve as a reference, and on which notes can be written and sketches drawn (Hester, 1985, p.80).

**Analysis of Park Use**---After some of the main problems and issues have been identified from the site analysis, the preliminary observations, and the collected opinions, it can be determined what questions need to be asked, what type of information must be gathered, and what types of data gathering techniques and methods of analysis are most appropriate in

order to better understand the problems and determine the related causes (Madden & Love, 1982, p.4).

Techniques that can be used for gathering data in a park use analysis include:

- Activity mapping---mapping where and how activities occur, who participates in them, the social interaction that occurs, and the relationship among the activities, the social interaction, and the physical setting (Hester, 1975, pp.148-159).
- Counting---gathering numerical data about people and activities [uses].
- Tracking---following the circulation paths or movement patterns of users.
- Trace measures---what people leave behind, and signs of wear from use or vandalism. This can be more thorough than the trace measuring done in the physical site analysis. Time-lapse filming can be used to supplement such techniques as activity mapping, counting, and tracking, and in situations where an area must be viewed over a long period of time (Madden & Love, 1982, pp.24-44). Time-lapse filming was successfully used by Whyte (1980) for the purpose of studying the behavior of people in urban spaces.
- Interviews and questionnaires---[on-site, off-site, by mail, or by telephone] to determine attitudes, perceptions, and motivations of residents. They can also be used to determine why a park is used or not used, or how people would like to use it (Madden & Love, 1982, pp.37-42).

After determining what techniques are most appropriate to use, a thorough analysis of how the park is actually used can be done depending on available time, money, and personnel. A "workplan" should be developed

that includes a time schedule and the personnel needed to gather and analyze the information (p.4). The analysis of park use could be considered as a post-construction evaluation of the existing park.

**Defining the Problems [The need for redesign]---**A neighborhood meeting can be held in which the results of the park use research and site analysis are presented and discussed. Annotated plans of the park, and sketches and diagrams should be used to aid in presenting the results, and in analyzing and describing the problems. It is also possible that the identification of some problems could surface during this meeting that had not previously been discovered through other research techniques or discussions.

If time, money, and personnel are not sufficient, or if the particular situation does not warrant the previous types of research, a neighborhood meeting might be the main source of determining problems and related causes. During such a meeting, plans of the existing park can be used as a reference for everyone to see. Notes can be written on the plan, and, if necessary, rough blow-up sketches can be drawn to describe the problems as suggestions and opinions are expressed. These same plans can also be used as references during program formulation and design (Hester, 1985, p.80). Thus, the findings of the site analysis and park use analysis can also become part of the design program.

The previous procedures are essential to a redesign project in order to develop more accurate definitions and descriptions of the problems [why redesign is needed], and a better understanding of the problems by everyone involved. This is a critical step in development of solutions. In addition, the information gathered from meetings, interviews, and questionnaires can

overlap and supplement the following procedure of determining user needs.

4. Determining User Needs. [sometimes called survey and analysis]. The social factors and basic user needs should be important considerations in this step of the process, thus giving the findings more of a sociological basis, which results in a stronger and more appropriate design program.

The meeting that was held to define the problems can be a starting point in determining the needs and preferences of that particular neighborhood and what the residents think the park should be. Other subsequent public meetings can also be held for the same purpose. Although public meetings can help determine needs and preferences that cannot be determined through questionnaires and interviews, the meetings should be considered a supplement to, not a substitute for, questionnaires and interviews. Those who are motivated enough to attend the meetings may not constitute an accurate representation of the entire neighborhood (U.S.D.I., 1980, p.43).

Questionnaires and interviews, either in person, self-administered, by mail, or by telephone, can obtain information from residents concerning needs, preferences, values, and feelings about the park. Mailed questionnaires, however, are biased to those who are motivated enough to fill out and return them. As with any survey technique, the types of information needed and the methods of analyzing the data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews must be determined before appropriate data can be gathered (Hester, 1975, pp.142-148). In some cases, residents of the neighborhood or civic groups can help conduct interviews and analyze data.

It is important to remember that different neighborhoods will have different needs and preferences, and that the needs and preferences of the entire neighborhood must be determined, including those of adolescent groups, the unemployed, ethnic minorities, low-income households, one-parent families,



and the handicapped (Walker & Duffield, 1983, p.10). Data gathering techniques must also consider the "nonusers", and determine why those people do not use the park (Gold, 1972).

The responses obtained from interviews and questionnaires can be adequately analyzed by tabulating percentages, and by ranking the responses (Hester, 1985, p.80). The results of the questionnaires and interviews, and those of the meetings, can then be distributed throughout the entire neighborhood.

5. Statement of Purpose of the Park and Objectives. A public meeting is held to present and discuss the results of the data analysis. Based on the results of the problem definition, neighborhood meetings, the user needs analysis, and the goals of the community development plan or city recreation plan, the designer should assist the neighborhood in defining the purpose of the park and establishing objectives. The purpose is related to the goals of the city recreation plan and to what the entire neighborhood wants the image of the park to be. The objectives are more specific, and indicate directions that should be taken to achieve the purpose of the park (U.S.D.I., 1980, p.58).

6. Program Development. The basic user needs and related social factors should be a major consideration in this step of the redesign process. The program expands upon the previously stated objectives and is based on the definition of the problems [results of the site analysis and park use analysis] and the activities determined by the user needs analysis. It is important that user needs be correctly interpreted in order to describe appropriate activity settings which will be translated into design. Assurance that the interpretation of user needs is correct and appropriate can be achieved only through direct citizen involvement.

Meetings held for the purpose of program development and other subsequent meetings in the redesign process may sometimes be run more efficiently if citizen participants include primarily neighborhood representatives or neighborhood groups rather than including all residents, depending upon the matters that are to be discussed (Hester, 1975, pp.130-141). However, any residents who are interested in attending particular meetings should not be discouraged from doing so.

**Describe Activity Settings**---Development of the program begins with the descriptions of activities and appropriate activity settings based upon stated needs, preferences, and social/behavioral considerations. Also at this point, it can be determined what facilities or areas of the park are to remain and what facilities or areas are in need of change. The existing character of the park, if it is of value and worth retaining, should also be an important consideration in describing the activity settings. In addition, recreation personnel may become involved at this point in order to program activities and events that are to occur after construction of the park.

Description of the activity settings can be done in words, but it may be more appropriate and understandable to the residents to describe activity settings with annotated sketches, on which notes are written, to identify design implications and explain interaction patterns. It may also be helpful to refer back to the annotated plans that were used in the problem definition stage. The descriptions of each activity setting should include the residents' needs, preferences, and opinions; and essential physical factors, social factors, and interaction patterns that are relevant to that activity (Hester, 1985, p.83).

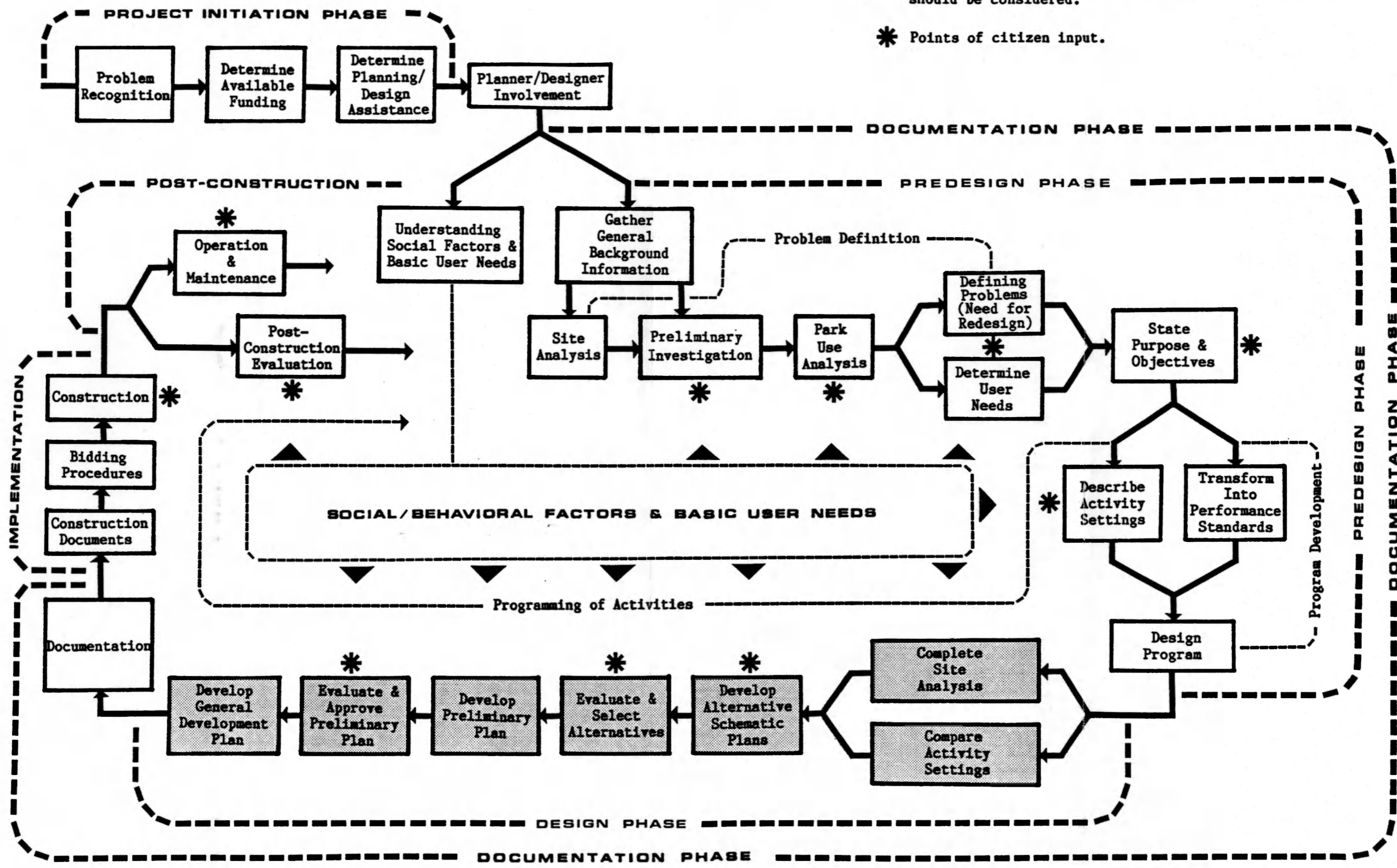
Transform into Performance Standards---The information included in the descriptions of the activity settings should be transformed into performance standards or performance criteria. Activity settings are listed separately and, next to each one, sentences are written that describe in detail for whom and what each setting needs to function; and where, when, and how each setting is expected to function. Specific spatial and dimensional requirements should also be included (Hester, 1985, p.84).

A similar method of transforming activities and settings into performance standards is illustrated in Randolph Hester's Neighborhood Space (1975, pp.117-120). It is in the form of a performance standards checklist which takes into account how the requirements of each activity relate to basic user needs and social factors.

The activity setting descriptions and subsequent performance standards form the design program, which helps to generate designs, and aids in selection of alternatives and post-construction evaluation. After the residents agree on a design program, it should be approved by the city park and recreation department or park board.

▲ Points where Social/Behavioral Factors and Basic User Needs should be considered.

\* Points of citizen input.



THE REDESIGN PROCESS

## THE DESIGN PHASE [Darkened area in Figure 3]

The design phase involves the physical arrangement of facilities and activity settings described in the design program. Again, it is important that the basic user needs and related social factors are given consideration in this phase of the process. Although procedures in the design phase will vary depending on the situation, the following steps form a logical sequence:

1. Complete Site Analysis. If the site analysis conducted in the predesign phase was not a thorough one and did not include all of the elements of a typical site analysis, it is expanded upon and completed at this point.

2. Compare Activity Settings. The designer should compare each activity setting with every other activity setting to determine compatibility and incompatibility between each activity in accordance with the purpose and objectives of the park, and the problems or conflicts that need to be resolved (Hester, 1985, p.84).

3. Develop Alternative Schematic Plans. Schematic diagrams are drawn which indicate the compatibilities and relationships of one activity to another and to the entire set of activities and areas. The diagrams are then transferred onto a plan of the site with consideration given to alternative ways that the changes can fit onto the site and into the existing areas or facilities that are to remain; and also how the changes fit into the existing character of the park if that character is of value. In addition, the suggested physical changes and implications stated in the design program can be expanded upon and studied further in the development of schematic plans. The resulting schematic plans, sometimes called conceptual plans, should also indicate approximate spatial requirements. The schematic or conceptual plans can also

be annotated to indicate design intentions (Butterfield, 1984, p.71, and Hester, 1985, p.84).

In some cases, the residents can participate in developing alternative schematic plans under the guidance of the designer. The degree to which residents are involved in actual design depends somewhat upon the level of controversy and conflicts that may occur among user groups.

**4. Evaluate and Select Alternatives.** A meeting of residents or neighborhood representatives and park agency officials can be held to present and review the schematic plans. In this step, it is the responsibility of the designer to aid the residents in evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. It may also be helpful to allow the residents to write comments directly on the plans, which can encourage feedback from those who are less vocal (Hester, 1985, p.82). When residents are involved in selecting alternatives, controversy should be expected, but citizen involvement in this step is essential and helps to encourage feelings of ownership and responsibility (Gold, 1980, pp.220 & 221).

When an alternative is agreed upon, which sometimes includes revisions, the next step is to transform it into a preliminary design.

**5. Develop Preliminary Plan.** Based on the results of the review session, and guided by the revised schematic plan and the design program [activity setting descriptions and performance standards], a more detailed preliminary design is developed. In some cases, depending upon the complexity of the project, alternative preliminary plans may need to be developed, but in most cases one plan is sufficient. It may also be possible for residents to provide input concerning the more detailed design decisions involved in this step of the process, as well as input from park agency personnel. A preliminary cost estimate should also be included.

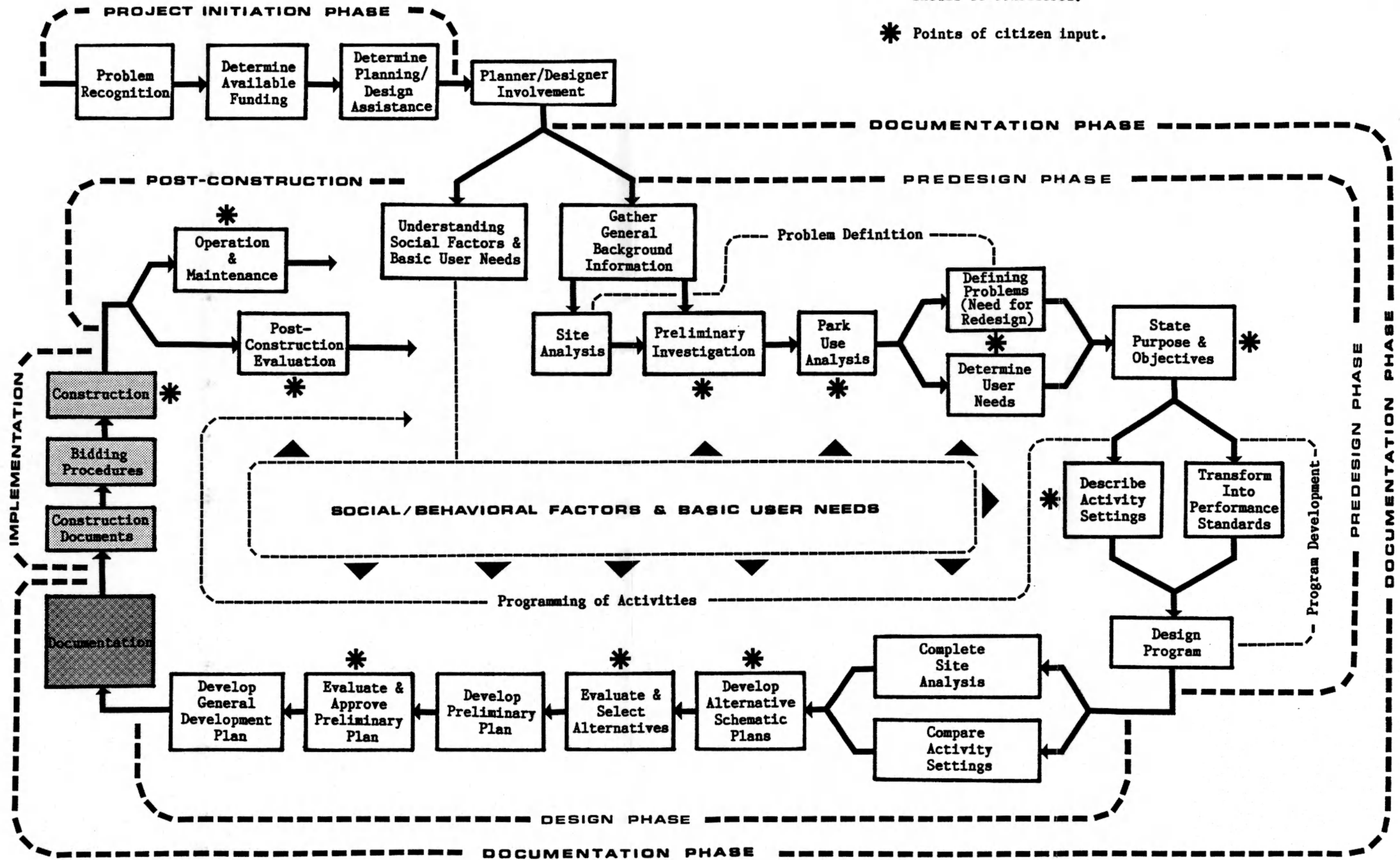
After the preliminary design is developed, reduced copies of the plan can be circulated throughout the neighborhood to receive feedback from the residents who cannot or will not attend the meetings (Hester, 1985, p.84).

6. Evaluate and Approve Preliminary Plan. A meeting is held to present and review the preliminary plan. The designer again assists the residents in evaluating the plan or plans by referring to the activity setting descriptions and performance standards. If any activity settings or performance standards have changed up to this point, the changes should be noted in the design program in order to provide an accurate guide for post-construction evaluation (Hester, 1985, p.85). In evaluating the plan, the designer should provide opinions and suggestions, but should also listen to the opinions of the residents, keeping in mind that it is they who will use the park, and their needs are the first priority. The preliminary plan is then approved by the residents and park agency representatives, either as is, or under the stipulation that some revisions be made.

7. Develop General Development Plan. After the approval of the preliminary plan, refinements and necessary revisions are made and a general development plan is produced which includes the size, form, capacity, location, and orientation of all use areas and facilities, in addition to a cost estimate. If it is necessary to phase the general development plan, the high visual impact aspects of the plan should be included in the first phase in order to retain the interest and support of the residents. The general development plan must then be approved by the park agency or park board.

▲ Points where Social/Behavioral Factors and Basic User Needs should be considered.

\* Points of citizen input.



THE REDESIGN PROCESS



#### THE DOCUMENTATION PHASE [Dark gray area in Figure 4]

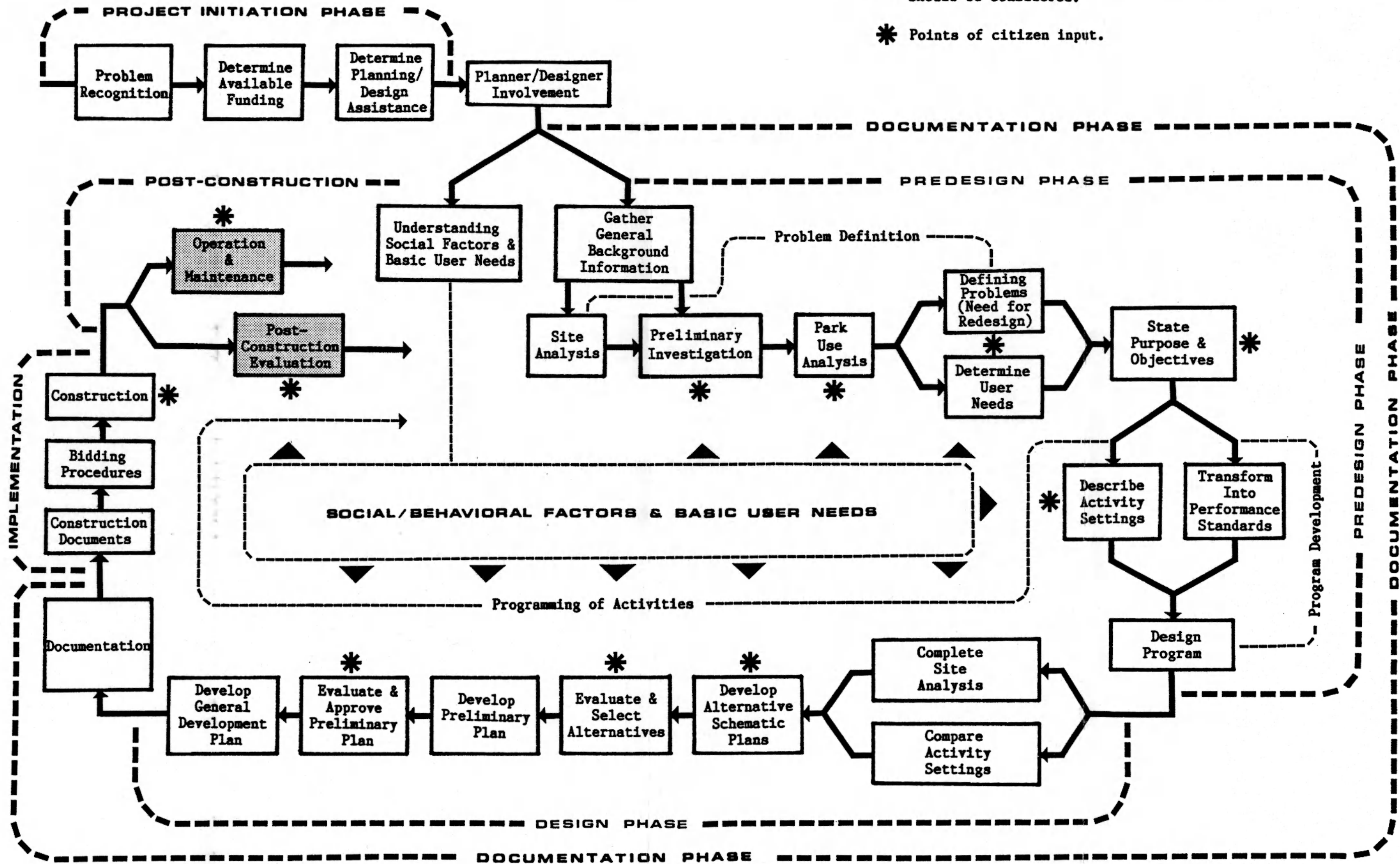
It is important that aspects of a redesign project be documented because redesign helps to determine past mistakes and how these mistakes affect park use. Studies that involve the analysis of park use and problems resulting from inappropriate park design constitute significant research and contribute to the body of knowledge concerning the relationship between design and behavior. It is ideal that the entire process be documented as a reference for similar projects but, at the least, designers should document historical aspects findings that involve social/behavioral aspects as they relate to design. In actuality documentation would begin at the outset of the project [pre-design phase] and continue through the design phase. Information would then be formally synthesized at this point to be used as a future reference and as a source of information available to other design professionals.

#### THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE [Light gray area in Figure 4]

The implementation phase consists of: [1] preparation of construction drawings, specifications, and contract documents; [2] competitive-bid procedures for the construction contract in which public advertisement of park development is made and is open to any contractor; and [3] the physical construction of the park by the contractor (Christiansen, 1977). During construction of a redesigned park, care must be taken in working around existing facilities, utilities, and areas that are to remain. Residents of the park may also be involved in the construction of the park to encourage a sense of ownership.

▲ Points where Social/Behavioral Factors and Basic User Needs should be considered.

\* Points of citizen input.



THE REDESIGN PROCESS

## THE POST-CONSTRUCTION PHASE [Darkened area in Figure 5]

1. Operation of the Park. Programming, maintenance, and management of the park are important factors in the post-construction phase. Appropriate programming of activities that emphasizes the recreation experience will contribute to the success of the park. Activity programming is a procedure that is ongoing after the park is constructed, but it usually has its beginnings during program development, and continues throughout the process.

Proper maintenance is also a contributing factor in a successful park. The more the neighborhood residents become involved in maintaining the park and sponsoring programs and activities, the better are the chances the park will be a success. Whitaker (1971) explains that "members of the community can be linked in a common feeling of interest and possession by being asked to play a part in helping with the running of their park" (p.32), although many times, community involvement in management and maintenance is easier said than done.

2. Post-construction Evaluation. Although most design and redesign processes end with the construction of the project, a post-construction evaluation of the park should be given more consideration. Kaplan (1980) explained that it is usually not done because no one is willing to sponsor it:

The architect is off doing the next project; the client has no funds for such an activity; and the user, eager to let it be known that the product has its shortcomings, is in no position to sponsor such an assessment (p.494).

Post-evaluation is necessary in order to determine if people are using the park the way it was intended, to determine their behavioral patterns inside the park, and to determine if the problems were solved successfully. Hester (1975) stated that the purpose of post-evaluation is to determine the performance and success of designs in terms of social suitability; that is,

"how people behave in them, and how people feel about and interact in them" (p.162). Therefore, the social/behavioral factors and basic user needs are important considerations in this step of the process.

Kaplan suggested that post-evaluations are useful in two ways: [1] in the "generic information that is gained--in terms of applicability to other settings at other times", and [2] "in terms of a better understanding of the existing facility and its needs and improvements" (1980, p.505). Therefore, post-evaluation contributes to the development of a theoretical base for planning and design of parks. It is also a means of making redesign an on-going process, whereby it can be determined when and where changes in the park are needed in order to accommodate changing needs.

The activity setting descriptions and performance standards that make up the design program can be of tremendous help in post-evaluation by providing a guide, and acting as hypotheses concerning how the park settings should function (Hester, 1985, p.85). The techniques used in park use analysis described under the "problem definition" step can also apply to post-construction evaluation. Post-evaluation then becomes the park use analysis and site analysis in the predesign phase of an ongoing redesign process in which continuous change can occur, if necessary. Post-evaluation is also beneficial in contributing to the designer's knowledge and skill.

The redesign process, as well as the degree of citizen involvement will vary in each situation according to the following:

- the complexity of the project
- experience and philosophies of the designer
- the type and location of the neighborhood
- the interest and motivation of the residents
- the needs and preferences of the neighborhood

- the reasons why redesign is needed
- the level of controversy and conflicts
- the problems encountered throughout the process

Many aspects and considerations of the redesign process can also apply to planning and design of new parks.

Preliminary conclusions concerning the redesign process will be further explained in the next chapter.

## EVALUATION OF THE REDESIGN PROCESS

The purpose of this evaluation is to obtain a better understanding of the redesign process and to determine its feasibility in actual practice.

### Methodology

The evaluation of the identified neighborhood park redesign process includes an analysis of the following topics:

- differences between the planning process for new parks and the identified redesign process
- similarities and variations between the identified redesign process and the redesign procedures identified through the interviews
- the importance of citizen involvement throughout the redesign process
- the roles and responsibilities of the designer
- problems that can occur throughout the redesign process

The evaluation was conducted in two parts: [1] an evaluation based on the information derived from the literature, and [2] an evaluation based on data collected through personal interviews.

### EVALUATION BASED ON LITERATURE

The first evaluation was based on an analysis of certain information derived from the literature--information directly relating to redesign, and information not specifically concerning redesign but which could be applied to some aspects of redesign. In analyzing this information, the identified redesign process [Chapter Five] was compared with the process for new park

development [Chapter Three] to determine differences and unique aspects of the redesign process. To analyze the importance of citizen involvement, the roles and responsibilities of the designer, and problems that can occur throughout the redesign process, information from the literature was compiled and organized in each respective category.

#### **EVALUATION BASED ON INTERVIEWS**

The second method of evaluation was based on data collected from personal interviews which were guided by a questionnaire.

**The Questionnaire.** A questionnaire [Appendix C] was developed for the purpose of obtaining input and feedback from planning/design professionals concerning the feasibility of the identified redesign process in actual practice, the major aspects involved in neighborhood park redesign, and the problems that can occur throughout the process. The majority of questions were open-ended in order to allow for more voluntary responses and better discussion. Thesis committee members then reviewed the questionnaire for clarity and content. It was also pretested on an individual who was project manager and designer of a recent community park redesign project. After suggestions and the results of the pretest were considered, minor revisions of the questionnaire were made.

**The Interviews.** The interviews were limited to the Kansas City metropolitan area to allow for relatively easy accessibility and for the purpose of conducting the interviews in a short period of time. A series of phone calls had been made prior to questionnaire development to determine potential participants for interviews. These calls were first made to several park and recreation departments of the Kansas City area who, in turn, provided referrals to other park agencies and design firms in the area. Those selected

represented a cross section of professionals who had been involved in neighborhood and community park redesign and included:

- three landscape architects affiliated with two private practice firms
- two park planners/designers affiliated with city park and recreation departments
- one superintendent of parks affiliated with a county park and recreation department

The selected participants also represented involvement in a variety of project locations including the inner city, the central or middle city, the inner suburbs, and the outer suburbs. While the questionnaire was being revised, these participants were again contacted to schedule appointments and to explain the purpose of the interview and the study. Prior to the interviews, letters were also sent to participants to reiterate the purpose of the interview and to act as a memorandum concerning scheduled appointments. The interviews were taped in order to ensure thorough and accurate transcription of responses.

**Analysis of Data.** After the interviews were completed, the tapes were reviewed and responses obtained in each interview were written on individual questionnaire forms. In order to analyze this information, the responses to each questionnaire were compiled and organized under categories pertaining to the identification of a process involved in redesign. This included important factors and considerations, citizen involvement, the roles and responsibilities of the designer, and problems that can occur.

**Conclusions.** After the interview evaluation was completed, the two evaluations were then compared and synthesized in order to reach conclusions concerning the feasibility of the redesign process in actual practice in terms



of the following:

- unique aspects and variations of the redesign process
- the importance of citizen involvement
- the roles and responsibilities of the designer
- problems that can occur

Final conclusions then summarize the issue of neighborhood and urban park redesign.

### Evaluation Based on Literature

The following evaluation of the identified redesign process includes an analysis of the following topics:

- differences between the planning process for new parks [Chapter Three] and the redesign process [Chapter Five]
- the importance of citizen involvement throughout the redesign process
- the roles and responsibilities of the designer
- problems that can occur throughout the redesign process

### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR NEW PARKS AND THE REDESIGN PROCESS

In comparing the process of planning a new neighborhood park [Chapter Three] with the process of redesigning an existing neighborhood park [Chapter Five], differences can be considered in two ways. First, there are the differences in phase content, or what is involved in the phases of each process. This does not include differences with regard to the sequence of steps in the phases of each process. It would be inappropriate to analyze differences in this manner because the sequence of steps can vary from project to project, even though it is the same type of project and involves the same

type of process. Secondly, there are the differences in the purpose of each process--what is to be accomplished through each process.

Differences in Phase Content. Everything that is involved in the phases of the planning process for new parks is also involved in the redesign process [with the exception of site selection]. The redesign process, though, contains certain procedures that are different or not included in a typical planning process for new parks. Therefore, the following discussion of differences between the two processes in regard to phase content will focus on the unique aspects of each phase of the redesign process.

1. Project Initiation Phase. Problems concerning the park are recognized by residents of the neighborhood or by park agency personnel, and it is suggested that these problems need to be solved through redesign. [In contrast, new parks are often developed in accordance with a comprehensive recreation plan that indicates where development should take place.]

2. Predesign Phase. This phase of the redesign process involves the understanding of the basic user needs and related social/behavioral factors. The probable disregard for these in the initial design of the park may have caused some of the current problems which are necessitating redesign of the park. However, there is currently an increasing awareness of the importance of these social and behavioral considerations in new park planning and design. These basic user needs and social factors are considered throughout the redesign process.

A site analysis is conducted to determine the overall physical condition of the park, which is helpful in determining certain problems. Historical aspects are also considered, as well as the existing character of the park. In some cases of new park development, a site analysis might be conducted in

the predesign phase but it is not always necessary at that point. In redesign however, a site analysis in the predesign phase is essential.

General observations and an analysis of park use are also conducted, and meetings are held with the residents to determine specific problems and discover the related causes of these problems. During program development and based on the site analysis and park use analysis, it may be determined which aspects or elements of the park are to remain the same and which ones are to be somehow changed or completely removed.

**3. Design Phase.** Actual design work involves the arrangement of physical changes to the park, and how these fit into the existing character and possible historic elements of the park. At this point, the suggested physical changes and redesign implications stated in the design program can be expanded upon and studied further.

**4. Documentation Phase.** Although documentation is not unique to the redesign process, the information that should be documented is unique. Certain redesign projects are suitable for documentation because historical aspects may come into account, past design mistakes are identified, and resulting problems are addressed. Therefore it is important that the redesign process, or significant parts of it be documented for future reference.

**5. Implementation Phase.** The only unique aspect of the implementation phase of redesign is in the actual construction of the changes to the park. Utilities, facilities, and areas of the park that are to remain can cause difficulties in implementing changes.

**6. Post-construction Phase.** Post-construction evaluation is not unique to the redesign process but is necessary in order to determine if the

solutions to the stated problems were successful. Post-construction evaluation also provides the means of continuing the ongoing process of redesign.

Differences in Purpose. The differences in purpose refer to differences in what each process is attempting to accomplish. In the process involved in new park development, the purpose is to anticipate and prevent or minimize potential problems and conflicts among users, as well as to solve physical problems. In the redesign process, problems and conflicts are already known or determined, and the purposes are to solve or alleviate them and to adapt to change. In addition, the solution of social problems is often a major consideration.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Citizen participation in the redesign process is a key factor toward achieving a successful neighborhood park. It provides residents with the opportunity to voice their opinions and contribute their various skills and backgrounds to the process. Its importance lies in the fact that "the community is the client" (Lawson, 1971, p.15).

Citizen involvement is essential in determining the specific needs, preferences, and opinions of the residents because each neighborhood is different and has its own set of needs and problems. The residents are instrumental in determining causes of problems that occur in the park and in contributing their knowledge of the behavioral patterns within the park. Residents can also help in gathering data concerning user needs such as conducting interviews and administering questionnaires. This can be of help because other residents may be more willing to respond to people they are

familiar with or can relate to, which can result in obtaining more accurate responses.

In order to appropriately accommodate user needs, they must also be correctly interpreted in program development and design. This can only be done through citizen input throughout the process, which results in a more successful design that reflects the users' values rather than those of the designer. When residents also participate in the design phase, the range of alternatives increases and decisions can be based on a more comprehensive consideration of all the relevant facts (U.S.D.I., 1980, p.43). In some cases, depending upon the conflicts or problems that are to be solved, residents may become involved in making actual design decisions.

Residents can also be involved in construction and maintenance, and play a part in management of the park and its activities. This can be beneficial by helping to create jobs and skills but it is also beneficial in another way--it creates a sense of ownership and pride in the park, thus, increasing use and support of the park. Gold (1976) stated that "people will use, respect, and identify with parks they have helped design and build more than with those where no direct citizen participation is possible" (p.38). In this way, the residents can achieve a feeling that they have actively participated in the future of their neighborhood.

Citizen involvement can help residents have a better appreciation and understanding of what is involved in the process. It can also result in organization of the neighborhood and, thus, a stronger "sense of community". This can help the neighborhood achieve other changes and goals in that the process provides the means of accomplishing changes and improvements to the neighborhood park, and then becomes a stepping stone for an ongoing process of neighborhood development or redevelopment (Hester, 1975, p.128, and Lawson, 1971, p.17).

Citizen participation in helping to develop and maintain neighborhood parks is not only important for the previous reasons, but it is also becoming more of a necessity. This stems from a recognition that the government can no longer be expected to do everything, and that it is limited in solving many human problems dealing with recreation because of fiscal constraints and higher priorities (Gold, 1976, p.14). Marshall stated that through citizen involvement, "people become more willing to do for themselves what they otherwise expect others to do for them" (1983, p.43).

Citizen participation is thus an essential element of the redesign process. If residents are involved at the very outset of the process, the chances are better of alleviating or curtailing problems throughout the process as well as after the park is built.

#### **THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNER**

The form of the neighborhood park and the outcome of the redesign process are influenced by the designer and the way he or she carries out the process. Therefore, it is important to discuss the designer's roles and responsibilities that contribute to a successful process.

The designer should become involved at the very outset of the redesign process, at least starting with the predesign phase, in order to become familiar with the neighborhood and to ensure continuity throughout the process. As William Johnson explained, "designers do their best design when they're also involved in the planning issues; planning is casework which leads to better design" (Clay, 1983, p.65).

The designer should assist the neighborhood in determining problems and related causes which includes visiting with the residents as well as studying the park and how it is used, how it is misused, or why it is not being used.

An essential responsibility of the designer is knowing and understanding the basic user needs and related social factors that influence use of a park and which should be applied throughout the redesign process. In the past, the major emphasis has been on aesthetics while the social factors that make a neighborhood park socially suitable and usable were ignored. Hester (1975) explains:

...designers have been guilty of a kind of physical design determinism, ignoring social factors and expecting a space to be used if it is aesthetically pleasing and provides a variety of settings (p.37).

The designer must also determine the needs, preferences, and opinions of the residents. A significant way to obtain this information is to organize neighborhood meetings and utilize them skillfully. It is imperative that the designer become familiar with the social patterns, culture, preferences, and life-styles of the people who are going to use the park (Gray & Greben, 1974, p.51). During meetings, the designer must listen and learn while leading the residents and exposing them to the redesign process. For many of the residents it may be the first time they are exposed to design, and the designer can help increase their understanding and appreciation of what is involved in the process.

The designer should also assist the neighborhood in establishing objectives and a purpose of the park--what the residents want the park to be and the role that the park plays in the neighborhood and the entire city. This also encompasses the necessity and importance of the designer's involvement in program development. The more actively the designer is involved in the predesign phase, the better he or she will be able to successfully interpret user needs and transform them into a design program.

In developing the design program and design plans, the designer must realize that there will most likely be a difference between the factors that he or she

considers to be most important and those that the residents consider most important. The designer is responsible for accommodating the users' needs, and should not impose his or her values and life-style on the neighborhood. However, this does not imply that the designer should not provide input. There must be a certain level of respect between the designer and the neighborhood residents. The designer should respect the opinions of the residents, and tactfully provide suggestions and opinions based on his or her expertise. Therefore the designer must provide guidance and determine a middleground between the values of the residents and appropriate design. When this situation is handled with discretion and mutual understanding, the chances are better that there will be mutual respect. It is also the responsibility of the designer to suggest innovative ways, if appropriate, that user needs can be met, rather than relying on stereotypical or conventional means.

Throughout the various stages of the redesign process, it is important for the designer to seek input from park and recreation management and other personnel. This should also include communication with management to make them more aware of the problems concerning neighborhood parks.

During the redesign process, conflicts and differences of opinion are likely to occur among user groups, and between residents and park agency officials. This is when the designer must act as mediator in helping to resolve conflicts and facilitate decision-making throughout the process.

Because there is a relatively small body of literature on park redesign and the procedures and considerations involved, it is suggested that the designer document the procedures and findings related to a redesign project for future reference. The designer should also play an active role in post-construction evaluation of the redesign. Although this is most often



neglected, it can help increase the designer's knowledge and abilities. When post-construction evaluation is included, it affirms the designer's view of the redesign process as that of an ongoing process.

In summary, one of the major roles of the designer is to encourage and direct citizen involvement in the redesign process. Citizen involvement is a valuable element, but as Laurie explained, it should not be "an excuse for inadequate design of low quality, nor should it satisfy the most vocal element at the expense of others" (1983. p.74). This is where the designer is responsible for guiding and directing the residents throughout the process and ensuring that the quality of the park is a desired objective.

#### **PROBLEMS THAT CAN OCCUR**

As with any planning or design process, problems are bound to occur for various reasons. If federal funds are requested, delays can occur because of the red tape involved in obtaining financial assistance and putting the funds to use. Problems in communication can occur when the planner/designer is working with neighborhood residents. The planner/designer may be unfamiliar with and have trouble understanding the residents because their preferences, income, background, and life-style are different from those of the planner/designer (Hester, 1975, pp.174-175).

There may also be problems in obtaining feedback from the residents and motivating them to get involved in the process. If, in the past, the city park and recreation agency has not been very responsive to the neighborhood, the residents might be apprehensive or even hostile toward a planner/designer who is affiliated with the agency. Problems can also arise if planners/designers try to impose their own values onto the neighborhood rather than being responsive to the values of the residents.

During meetings, conflicts can occur among different user groups. These are more likely to occur in inner city neighborhoods where the age groups, social classes, and ethnic minorities are more diverse. Residents can also have their differences with park and recreation officials in terms of opinions and values. Although these conflicts may sometimes cause delays, they can be beneficial, influential, and informative to everyone involved.

Delays can sometimes result in a loss of citizen interest and motivation. In addition, citizen interest may decrease somewhat after the park is completed, especially concerning voluntary maintenance and operation. If some of these problems, conflicts, and delays can be anticipated, they can be more easily dealt with. Even though citizen related problems are inevitable and may cause delays, citizen participation in the redesign process is essential toward the achievement of a successful park.

Sometimes, in order to save time and money, the problems, needs, and values of the neighborhood are not adequately assessed which can cause problems and conflicts throughout the process. Sufficient and appropriate data gathering in the predesign phase can help prevent or decrease some potential problems and conflicts, thus saving time and money in the long run. It can also be relatively simple and inexpensive compared to the costs of developing an inappropriate and inadequate park that is not used (Madden & Love, 1982, p.2).

Conflicts may also occur because the planner/designer's view of the process may differ from that of the residents. The planner/designer may see a clear beginning and end to the process. The residents, on the other hand, may see it as part of an ongoing process that includes maintenance and operation and leads to additional changes as they are needed (Hester, 1975, p.111). Consideration of these aspects complicates the process but planners/designers must also view the process in this way and realize the importance of post-

construction evaluation and continuous accommodation of user needs.

### Evaluation Based on Interviews

The following section consists of an evaluation of the redesign process based on the results of personal interviews with professional planners/designers who have been involved in neighborhood or community park redesign. This evaluation is based on an analysis of the following topics:

- similarities and variations between the identified redesign process [Chapter Five] and the redesign procedures identified through the interviews
- the importance of citizen involvement throughout the redesign process
- the roles and responsibilities of the designer
- problems that can occur throughout the redesign process

### SIMILARITIES AND VARIATIONS

To determine relevant similarities and variations concerning unique aspects of the redesign process, the redesign procedures identified through the interviews were compared with the identified redesign process discussed in Chapter Five and the unique aspects of the redesign process discussed in the Evaluation Based on Literature. The following interview results are discussed in terms of the unique aspects of the redesign process.

1. **Project Initiation Phase.** It was found that the park and recreation department is usually the first to recognize that there is a need for redesign. The individual park and recreation departments are constantly trying to keep their parks updated and thus periodic checks are made to determine if major problems exist in each park. In addition, maintenance

personnel sometimes notice problems within individual parks. Occasionally, residents may notice problems and contact the park and recreation department with a complaint.

2. **Pre-design Phase.** Although the participants interviewed suggested that they were not completely familiar with all of the social/behavioral factors, some of these factors, to a certain extent, were taken into account in redesign projects. The extent of consideration, however, was found to vary among participants. One participant stated that functional considerations were the main focus and that social/behavioral factors were very seldom considered. Others stated that social factors were, to a certain extent, subconsciously applied in actual design work. In playground redesigns, children are provided with chances to make decisions, chances to use their imagination, spaces where they can be alone, and spaces that encourage learning experiences. Another participant mentioned that the major emphasis in redesign or design is on the "experiences" in the park and consideration for the various reasons why people go to a park. It was also mentioned that the designer becomes more aware of relevant social/behavioral factors through citizen participation.

A site analysis in the pre-design phase is conducted to determine the condition of facilities and the physical problems within the park. At this point it is sometimes a brief, informal analysis instead of a thorough and complete site analysis which is later conducted in the design phase. In some cases, however, a complete site analysis is conducted in this phase which is also used in the design phase. The site analysis also takes into account historical aspects and the existing character of the park.

In conjunction with the physical site analysis, direct observations of existing activities and uses and on-site discussions and interviews with users

are also significant aspects of the analysis procedures. It was found that these observations and discussions are usually very informal rather than systematic because of time constraints but, nevertheless, these park use analysis techniques are sufficient in determining major problems in most neighborhood parks. At one time, a more formal park use analysis was conducted in some of the parks in Kansas City, Missouri by a New York based research corporation. The Project for Public Spaces corporation used time-lapse filming in a number of parks to determine how they were actually used. Public meetings are also held to determine and discuss problems. Many times the on-site discussions, interviews, and public meetings which are used to determine problems, simultaneously serve the purpose of determining user needs.

Program development is based on determined user needs and the results of the site analysis and park use analysis. The design program takes into account not only activity descriptions, but also the elements of the park that are in need of change and those that are to remain, including historic elements and existing park character.

**3. Design Phase.** Interview participants stated that the most unique aspects of redesign in relation to the design phase are those of designing around historical elements and existing uses, and making changes fit into the existing layout and character of the park. It was also stated that the relevance of these aspects varies with each project.

**4. Documentation Phase.** It was found that most redesign projects are not formally documented. Informal documentation is usually done in the form of a summary report or by keeping records in a file or notebook. One interview participant mentioned the Columbus Square redesign in Kansas City, Missouri

which had been documented as an article in Parks and Recreation magazine. It was also stated that federally funded projects are sometimes documented, especially if historical aspects come into account.

5. **Implementation Phase.** Interview participants stated that a unique aspect of the implementation phase was the contractor's difficulty in working around facilities and structures that are to be saved. Another response was in regard to the rehabilitation of older structures and facilities that is sometimes necessary in order to make them accessible to the handicapped.

6. **Post-construction Phase.** It was found that a formal post-construction evaluation was seldom, if ever, a part of redesign projects. Most post-construction evaluation is done informally through simple observations. Park and recreation agencies occasionally conduct on-site interviews as well as assessments to determine if the park is being used as intended, but design consultants have less opportunities for post-evaluation. Although interview participants stated that the lack of time and money often discourage post-construction evaluation, they agreed that it should occur more frequently.

**The Purposes of Redesign.** The purposes of redesign are to solve or alleviate determined problems and to adapt to change. The participants interviewed gave a number of responses in regard to the causes of the problems that necessitate redesign. It was mentioned that deterioration of parks is sometimes necessitating redesign. Some of the older parks in the Kansas City area that are deteriorating and becoming outdated have been or are now being redesigned. Vandalism was also stated as a cause of deterioration. Some parks are also becoming outdated because neighborhood populations change which, in turn, cause changes in attitudes and recreational needs and preferences. Another reason for deterioration is that budget cuts and

declining federal aid programs have contributed to less maintenance and less improvements and upkeep.

In addition, some parks that were developed 15 to 20 years ago or later were done so with little or no citizen input and therefore do not meet the needs of the people. A number of small neighborhood parks in the inner city had to be redesigned because of poor initial design which was not responsive to the recreational and social needs of the neighborhoods.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

All participants interviewed felt that citizen involvement is an essential element of the redesign process and that this involvement should begin at the very outset of the process. They stated that the citizens are the ones who will use the park and it is important to the citizens to have a voice in what is done to their park.

It was found that citizens are usually involved in determining problems within the park, and in providing input concerning opinions, needs, and preferences. Although user needs surveys are sometimes administered by mail and telephone, public meetings and on-site discussions and interviews are the most frequent means of citizen involvement.

With regard to setting goals and objectives of a park, design consultants may involve the citizens in this activity with additional input from the park and recreation department. However, when the park and recreation department takes the responsibility for redesigning the park, the goals and objectives stated in the city recreation plan apply to each individual park. Citizens are not directly involved in program development. Their indirect involvement is in the form of stated needs, preferences, and opinions upon which some of the program is based.

Citizen involvement was also found to be a necessary part of the design phase. Citizens are mainly involved in evaluating and approving schematic and preliminary plans but citizen participation in making actual design decisions is very rare. Most interview participants said that they would rather develop a plan and then present it to the citizens than have citizens actually help with the design. One participant mentioned that there had been a few occasions in which residents roughly diagrammed schematic plans that were used in redesigns of vest-pocket neighborhood parks in the inner city. Most citizen input concerning design however, was said to be in the form of requests and suggestions during evaluation of plans.

Occasionally organizations or neighborhood groups become involved in construction by donating equipment or labor. They have also been involved in maintenance and informal sponsorship of activities. Although it is still relatively uncommon, volunteers sometimes help with clean-up, and some park departments occasionally contract out maintenance responsibilities to neighborhood groups. The Kansas City, Missouri park department is making efforts to involve more citizens in maintenance in order to help stretch the budget. On the other hand, the park department of Overland Park, Kansas is not encouraging citizen involvement in construction or maintenance because they are legally liable if injuries occur.

As previously stated, interview participants agreed that citizen involvement in the redesign process is essential. They stated that the public is increasingly demanding accountability from public agencies and public designers. This means being responsive to citizens' needs and giving them a voice in what is done to their park. One of the design consultants interviewed stated that citizens are more likely to get involved in redesign projects because they already have strong feelings and opinions concerning what the park should be and how it should be used. Some of the participants



also mentioned that citizen involvement gives residents the feeling that they are part of their park, thus encouraging a sense of ownership and consequently decreasing vandalism. Most participants agreed that, even though it is time-consuming and causes problems, citizen involvement in the redesign process results in a successful product and pays off in the long run.

## THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNER

All of the participants interviewed felt that the designer should play a part in predesign activities, especially in program development. Designers affiliated with park and recreation departments are usually involved in predesign activities but design consultants are normally hired after a program has been developed. It was mentioned that even at that point there is always the potential for expanding upon the program and holding meetings with citizens before starting to design.

The interviews resulted in responses which indicated four major roles of the designer: a listener, an educator, a mediator, and a sociologist. The following explanations were given by the participants: [1: Designers must be good listeners. Since they are designing for people, they must listen to what the people have to say and be responsive to their needs. [2: Designers must also be educators and provide guidance. Citizens usually do not have a strong feel for design but they have a feel for uses and arrangement of uses. Designers must educate the citizens concerning appropriate design and how design and function can work together. This calls for professionalism and tact in communicating with citizens and guiding them through the redesign process. Designers should also educate the citizens about legal and technical aspects that are influential and relevant to each project. [3: Designers must be mediators. During meetings and presentations they must resolve conflicts

among the parties involved, pull everything together, and help the parties reach a consensus. [4] Designers must also be sociologists. In designing for the public, designers must concentrate more on social behavior and dealing with people. The process is sometimes more important than the design, and recreational experiences should be emphasized more than recreational facilities.

#### PROBLEMS THAT CAN OCCUR

Most of the problems in the redesign process that were mentioned by interview participants are related to citizen involvement. Most participants stressed that, although it is a necessary part of the redesign process, citizen involvement adds difficulty to the process. One participant stated that citizens have a very selfish attitude in that they don't look at the entire picture and how things work together. They are only concerned with how they are affected by what is being done which causes many disagreements and conflicting opinions. There are always those people who don't like what is being done and the conflicts and disagreements make it difficult to reach a consensus. Another participant reiterated the fact that the many meetings that must be held with citizens can cause delays and slow down the process. But he also stated that some delays can be prevented and meetings can be organized more easily if representatives of the neighborhood are involved rather than a large number of citizens.

In contrast to problems occurring because of much citizen involvement, it was also found that sometimes there is not enough citizen involvement. One participant, in discussing parks in the inner city, stated that very few people come to the public meetings. People sometimes lose interest quickly and those that attend one meeting often don't return for others. There are

also problems in getting enough citizens involved in helping to maintain and operate the park. Another participant explained that there is not enough feedback from the people who use the park the most and for a variety of reasons. More feedback is usually obtained from the special interest groups who are organized and who concentrate on one specific activity. When a number of these groups want their own spaces, conflicts occur because separate spaces cannot be provided for all of them. Additional conflicts can occur between citizens and the designer because the citizens may want to incorporate certain things in a park that are sometimes inappropriate.

A frequent response in the interviews was in regard to the lack of sufficient time and money to accomplish desired tasks in a better manner and on a more frequent basis. The lack of time and personnel also discourages recreational surveys from being done more often. In regard to recreational surveys and determining user needs, it was mentioned that it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between a true recreational need and a "fad". In addition, results of surveys quickly become outdated in the more transient communities.

Most participants felt that redesign is more difficult and characteristically has more problems than new park design. A major problem in this regard is that of working around remaining elements of the park and making everything fit together. This applies to both design and construction. One participant mentioned that there are also problems and conflicts in dealing with park administration and management. It was felt that they place too much emphasis on doing things the easiest, fastest, and least expensive ways possible, which can be detrimental to the quality of the park.

Conclusions concerning the preceding evaluations are discussed in the next chapter.

## CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER STUDY

### Preliminary Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on a comparison and synthesis of the Evaluation Based on Literature and the Evaluation Based on Interviews, and concerns the feasibility of the redesign process in actual practice in terms of the following:

- the unique aspects and variations of the redesign process
- the importance of citizen involvement
- the roles and responsibilities of the designer
- the problems that can occur

Because the interviews were conducted in the Kansas City metropolitan area, the conclusions are somewhat limited to that area. Information from other cities or regions of the country could modify the results and conclusions.

### UNIQUE ASPECTS AND VARIATIONS

The following conclusions concerning the unique aspects and variations in the redesign process are discussed in each separate phase.

1. Project Initiation Phase. Although there are times when the residents are the first to notice a need for redesign, it appears that a neighborhood park redesign project is most often initiated by the park and recreation department because of a desire to keep their parks up to date. Continuous renewal of parks should be a significant aspect of any city recreation plan.

2. **Pre-design Phase.** Consideration of social/behavioral factors is not unique to the redesign process, but the influence of these factors may surface more often and may be more apparent in redesign because some of the problems within the park may have been caused by disregard for social needs. There should be a better understanding and application of social/behavioral factors throughout the redesign process and they should not be taken for granted.

The most unique aspect of the redesign process is the park use analysis that is used to determine problems and existing uses. The degree of formality in the approach to park use analysis will depend upon the complexity of the redesign project, the complexity of the problems within the park, and the time and money available for executing this procedure. At any rate, park use analysis is an essential element in determining problems and thus, should be conducted in a careful and organized manner, even if only on an informal basis. The same holds true for the physical site analysis. It is essential in the pre-design phase of redesign projects in order to determine physical problems with facilities or areas of the park, and in determining historical aspects and character of the park. The extent to which the site is physically analyzed in the pre-design phase depends upon the complexity of the site and the time available.

In a redesign project, site analysis can overlap with park use analysis, and user needs can be determined in the same public meetings or on-site interviews that are used to determine problems within the park. Therefore site analysis, park use analysis, and determination of user needs can be overlapping activities in the pre-design phase. This can save time and money if these methods are well organized and carefully planned in advance. Finally, the design program should take into account not only descriptions of activities and activity settings, but also elements that are in need of

change, elements that are to remain, historical elements, and character of the park.

3. **Design Phase.** The unique aspects of the design phase involve fitting the changes into the existing character of the park and designing around and within existing uses and historical elements. This is where the designer is challenged to solve the existing problems and, if appropriate, expand upon the design program through innovative solutions. Of course the extent of change and the relevance of park character and historical elements will vary with each project according to the age of the park, the location within the city, and the problems related to the park.

4. **Documentation Phase.** Although the documentation phase is not unique to the redesign process, the information that should be documented is unique. Formal documentation may not be feasible or even necessary in many cases, but unique and relevant information that can be applied to future projects should in some way be made available for easy reference. The most relevant and informative types of information related to redesign are historical aspects, past design mistakes and how they were addressed, and findings that involve social/behavioral aspects as they related to actual design.

5. **Implementation Phase.** Unique aspects of the implementation phase include working around existing utilities, structures, facilities, and areas that are to be saved, and rehabilitating older facilities and structures to meet handicapped requirements. These aspects can sometimes cause problems and delays in construction.

6. **Post-construction Phase.** Although post-construction evaluation is not unique to the redesign process, it is the best way to determine if the implemented redesign solved the problems and was successful. More efforts

should be made to conduct some form of post-construction evaluation. In a manner of speaking, post-construction evaluation sets the redesign process in motion if it is done after the construction of a new park. If, through post-evaluation, it is determined that changes to the new park are needed, the redesign process has begun. When it is conducted after the construction of a redesigned park, it comes full circle and acts as a link to the predesign phase of an ongoing redesign process.

**The Purpose of Redesign.** The purposes of the redesign process are to solve or alleviate existing physical or social problems or conflicts and to accomplish an adaptation to change. It differs from the process involved in new park development in which the purpose is to anticipate and prevent or minimize potential problems or conflicts.

In conclusion, the lack of time often necessitates short cuts, informalities, and overlapping of activities in the redesign process. Although formal and systematic procedures are ideal, some procedures can be done sufficiently on an informal basis and in a short period of time. This, of course, depends upon the complexity of the project and the complexity of the problems necessitating redesign.

The unique aspects of the identified redesign process in Chapter Five are similar to those of the redesign procedures identified through the interviews, although there are variations in the degree to which those aspects are dealt with. The degree of importance and relevance of those unique aspects will vary with each project in relation to the following:

- the complexity of the redesign project
- the experience and philosophies of the designer
- the type and location of the neighborhood

- the interest and motivation of the residents
- the needs and preferences of the neighborhood
- the reasons why redesign is needed
- the problems encountered throughout the process

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Citizen involvement is an essential element of the redesign process and should begin at the very outset of the process [problem definition]. Citizens must be involved in determining problems within the park; voicing needs, preferences, and opinions; and evaluating and approving schematic and preliminary plans.

Although citizens are not usually directly involved in establishing a purpose and objectives for the park or in program development, their involvement in these activities is usually not necessary if needs and problems were accurately determined. Citizen involvement in evaluating plans will help discover any discrepancies or problems that have been overlooked. Citizens rarely participate in making design decisions during actual design work because it is usually not necessary when all the relevant and appropriate information has been accurately determined prior to the design phase.

Citizen involvement in construction and maintenance of the park is important but relatively uncommon. Although there should be more participation in construction and maintenance, legal liabilities of public agencies and citizen apathy curtail efforts toward achieving more involvement.

When citizens are involved in the redesign process they become more aware of what is involved in the process and how other needed changes within their community can be accomplished. Citizen involvement can also foster a sense of ownership and pride in the park, thus decreasing vandalism and increasing use



and support. It is a key factor in achieving the successful redesign of a neighborhood park. In addition, its importance is increasing as citizens are becoming more concerned about their neighborhoods. This increasing realization of the importance of citizen involvement will, in all probability, continue to grow in future years. It requires voluntary devotion of time from both citizens and professionals and even though some conflicts may arise, citizen involvement will contribute to a successful and socially suitable neighborhood park which will far outweigh any problems or disadvantages associated with citizen involvement.

#### THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNER

Designers are instrumental in determining the form of the park and the outcome of the redesign process. It is therefore ideal if they are involved in the predesign activities. The designers must know and understand the neighborhoods with which they are working and the problems that are involved within the park. It is the designers' responsibility to respond to the needs of the people and not impose their values and life-style on the neighborhood residents. The designer must provide guidance and determine a working relationship between the residents' values and appropriate design.

Designers should determine the major purpose of the park, which influences the form and function of the park. If appropriate, designers should also be innovative in developing a park form that reflects the times. Designers must also know and understand the social/behavioral factors and basic user needs that influence use of a park, and they must apply these throughout the redesign process including predesign activities. The general disregard for these considerations in the past is a major reason why some parks are now in need of redesign. The social factors and basic user needs

can also apply to post-construction evaluation which should be done more frequently by designers, even though time and money constraints make it difficult to plan and accomplish. When designers include some form of post-construction evaluation, they are ensuring the continuity of an ongoing redesign process.

In addition to design responsibilities, there are four major roles that designers must provide. They must be good listeners, they must be educators and provide guidance, they must be mediators among the people involved, and they must be sociologists. These roles, when applied with skill, organization, and tact can result in a successful redesign process and thus a successful and quality park.

#### **PROBLEMS THAT CAN OCCUR**

The redesign of an existing neighborhood park characteristically involves more problems than new park development. The problems that arise throughout the redesign process occur for various reasons, but many of them are related to citizen involvement. Some of these problems include conflicts among citizens, designers, and park administration. Other problems relate to citizen apathy or a loss of interest as the process evolves. Citizen involvement is essential however, and the resulting conflicts and differences of opinion can be informative to all people involved.

The lack of time and money is always a problem that causes constraints throughout the redesign process. This should not, however, result in insufficient or careless execution of methods or procedures which could, in turn, result in additional problems or delays throughout the process. If sufficient and appropriate methods and procedures are conducted at the very outset of the process, many problems can be prevented or alleviated.

Problems, delays, and conflicts are inevitable throughout the redesign process, but if they can be anticipated they may be more easily dealt with.

Although citizen involvement causes problems, it is essential and will pay off in the long run. The problems that occur throughout the redesign process will vary with each situation and must be dealt with accordingly. The designer, therefore, is instrumental in solving or alleviating many of these problems through his or her skills as a listener, a mediator, an educator, and a sociologist.

### Final Conclusions

In conclusion, there are differences between the redesign process and the process involved in new park development. Although the content of each phase of the redesign process is basically the same in each project, there may be variations in the means of accomplishing each phase. The degree of citizen involvement and the problems that occur throughout the redesign process can also vary with each situation. However, as soon as the designer becomes involved in the process, his or her roles and responsibilities remain constant with each project. The designer is the guiding force behind the successful execution of redesign.

Because of deteriorating parks, changing populations, changing user needs, increasing leisure time, energy and transportation problems, and less money available for new park development, neighborhood park redesign will become an increasing concern in American metropolitan areas. It is therefore important to study the redesign process and the related considerations and factors that contribute to its success and the success of the park.

The days when urban parks could survive with very little justification are gone. In the past fifty years, the major reason for the existence of many

urban parks was to meet recreational demand or to serve as necessary open spaces in the crowded cities. Improvement and redesign of neighborhood parks can contribute to the quality of the urban environment, and thus, enhance the quality of urban life, but this reason alone is not sufficient to compete with other public agencies for funding. The improvement of society will have to be a reason for the existence of parks. In neighborhood park redesign there must be an emphasis on the quality of the recreation experience--both physical and social experiences in the park--which must focus on human development in terms of physical and mental well-being. Thus, neighborhood parks must provide for the social as well as the recreational needs of the people. They must respond to social needs and societal change, and, whenever possible and applicable, play a significant part in helping to solve some of the social problems of the times. Neighborhood park redesign cannot in itself solve social problems, but it can set the stage for other necessary changes.

In order for many neighborhood parks to survive, they will have to undergo redesign to adapt to changing needs and attitudes. These needs and attitudes, both social and recreational, can only be accurately determined through direct citizen participation in the redesign process. Therefore, the whole key to successful redesign is citizen involvement. It is essential because a neighborhood park is for the neighborhood residents, and those residents are the clients. Accurately determining their needs and attitudes in this changing society may result in a change in the traditional purpose and function of the park and consequently in its form. Each situation is unique, and the form of the park should reflect that situation.

Neighborhood parks and other types of urban parks which are redesigned in the present era may again need to undergo redesign in the future. Herein lies the importance of an ongoing redesign process. However, if they are presently redesigned with a more sensitive awareness of basic social and behavioral

needs as well as recreational needs, and with an emphasis on quality and flexibility, changes may not have to occur so often or be so severe.

## Recommendations for Further Study

Since there is a relatively small body of literature concerning urban park redesign and since redesign will continue to increase in American cities, the issue should be further investigated.

**Additional Investigation.** This study was limited to one metropolitan area, thus, information from other cities and regions of the country may result in varying conclusions concerning redesign procedures and approaches to the redesign process. This could involve comparisons of actual case studies and could also include studies of many different types of urban parks and open spaces.

**Post-construction evaluation.** Case studies of redesigned urban parks can be researched by post-construction evaluation to determine successes and failures. The reasons why a park was redesigned should first be determined, then the park can be evaluated to determine if the solution is successful, if use has increased, and if the park is being used as intended.

**Historical Considerations in Redesign.** If an historically significant urban park undergoes redesign, there should be a set of guidelines to follow. Historical elements of park design can be studied and design criteria can be developed to guide urban park redesign projects that involve historical aspects. This can include how to design around and within historical elements.

**Redesign vs. Restoration.** The issue of whether to restore an historically significant urban park to its original design, or redesign that park can be a topic of study. Both sides of the issue can be investigated and presented including pros and cons and comparisons of case studies.

**Social/Behavioral Considerations.** Since social/behavioral considerations in urban park redesign and design have, many times, been taken for granted or neglected, further study concerning this topic is of importance. Research can study how people feel about and interact in a park. Studies can involve variations among various user groups according to social class, life-cycle stage, ethnic-cultural background, life-style, sex, region of the country, or urban-rural variations.

**Citizen Involvement in the Process.** Since citizen involvement is a key factor in achieving a successful urban park redesign or design, more research on this subject can be conducted. It would be valuable for designers to know more about how to encourage citizen input throughout the process and how to best facilitate and mediate citizen involvement. Information could be obtained from various designers who have had experience in these matters.

## Appendix A

### SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL FACTORS

The social/behavioral factors form the sociological basis for the basic user needs, and take into account, not only what people do in a space, but also how people feel about and interact in that space (Hester, 1975, p.46). The social factors, as described by Hester (1975), and supplemented by other sources, include:

- \* Social Interaction Processes
- \* Territoriality and Dominance
- \* Symbolic Ownership
- \* Interaction Variations
- \* Activity Variations
- \* Usable Space
- \* Comfortable Space

1. Social Interaction Processes. Various social interactions can either be encouraged or discouraged by the design of a space. Conflicts can arise over competition for the use of a space, but by spatially separating conflicting uses and users, conflicts can be reduced without sacrificing accommodation of needs. Social exchange among users, and social exchange between different cultures or types of users--"acculturation"--can be encouraged or discouraged in accordance with the arrangement of seating areas and other spaces. For example, seating arrangements may provide face-to-face [inclusive] interactions, thereby encouraging cooperation among users of the space. However, an inclusive setting excludes people in the leftover space [exclusive setting], which can, at times, result in conflicts. Benches arranged side by side or too far apart also discourage cooperative social



exchange. Settings that act as observation points foster indirect social interaction between the users of a space and the observers (Hester, 1975, pp.46-49). As Gray and Greben stated, "the really significant problems in our country lie in the area of human interaction. It is in these relationships that human development takes place" (1974, p.47).

Children's play areas can also be designed for social interaction by providing some spaces that allow for competition, some that encourage cooperation, and others that accommodate observation (Hester, 1975, pp.49-51). Play areas should encourage learning experiences and interaction with, not only the physical world, but also with other children. Therefore, "they should be designed as play environments rather than play things" (Brauer, 1972, p.15). The interaction among people, places, and facilities should occur, not only apart from each other, but also in connection or conjunction with each other. This is what Friedberg called "interplay" (1970, p. 163).

2. Territoriality and Dominance. These two terms are often collectively referred to as territorial dominance which denotes the interrelationship between territoriality and dominance. Territorial dominance refers to the efforts of people to control [defend and dominate] spaces, which results in competition and conflicts among activities and users. The extreme form of this is "turf" dominance by gangs in dense urban areas (Hester, 1975, pp.51-53). In regard to turf dominance, Friedberg (1970) stated that "teenagers need a special place somewhat separate from the mainstream of society, but not excluded from it" (p.108).

Some types of conflicting or undesirable behavior will probably occur no matter how the park is designed. However, this behavior can be controlled by careful and thoughtful design, thus occurring where it is directed, while being discouraged in other areas (Butterfield, 1984, p.71).

Two components of territoriality are personal space and privacy.

**Personal space**---This aspect of territoriality is identified by spatial distances between people, and classified into four categories that can be applied to different interaction situations that are desired: [1] intimate distance, 1/2 to 1-1/2 feet; [2] personal distance, 1-1/2 to 4 feet; [3] social distance, 4 to 12 feet; and [4] public distance, 12 feet plus. Resourceful utilization of these various spatial zones can encourage use. However, unwanted violations of these spatial zones can sometimes be threatening to people and result in conflicts; thus discouraging use of a space. These distances will vary according to life-cycle stage (age and family type--such as a family with young children), ethnic-cultural background, and personal factors (Hester, 1975, pp. 53-56).

**Privacy**---This other aspect of territoriality is usually related to personal space. Privacy refers to spaces where one can be alone or away from a crowd. It provides opportunities for self-evaluation, emotional release, or private communication with another person. The need for privacy becomes more significant as the neighborhood becomes more dense and crowded (pp.56-57). A lack of spaces that provide privacy can discourage use of a park.

**3. Symbolic Ownership.** Symbolic ownership of a park refers to the residents' perception of ownership which is influenced by the various ways they relate to the park, and the value the park holds for them. A sense of symbolic ownership increases use of a park which, in turn, increases a sense of symbolic ownership. Symbolic ownership is composed of three elements: ownership, status objects, and symbolic space:

**Ownership**---A perception of ownership increases when one is involved in the design process, and when it is felt that the park meets one's special needs, Thus increasing use and a sense of symbolic ownership (Hester, 1975, p.58).

**Status objects**---The residents have a need for objects or spaces that give them a feeling of importance; of having a park comparable to those of the neighborhoods of higher social status, or having a park or facility that is a status object to outsiders (p.58). As an example, when the residents of an inner city neighborhood in Decatur, Illinois were asked what they wanted the image of their park to be, they replied that they "wanted a design equal to those provided for higher-income neighborhoods, and they wanted it to provide a sense of identity and place" (Butterfield, 1984, p.69).

**Symbolic space**---Symbolic ownership increases when a space has acquired symbolic meaning for people. A space can have symbolic meaning because of an activity that frequently occurs there, or because of a specific group that frequents the space. A space can also be symbolically significant because people have used and enjoyed the space, personalized it, and maintained it. In some cases, an object, facility, or area of a park can be considered symbolic because of its historical significance, in which the residents usually take great pride (Hester, 1975, p.60). [It should be kept in mind here that the major objective is redesign of the park rather than preservation or restoration.]

It is possible that certain aspects of some older neighborhood parks might be historically significant and valued by the residents. Of course the best way to determine if an object, facility, or area of a park has symbolic meaning to the residents, is to acquire direct citizen input.

An older park that is in need of redesign may also hold symbolic meaning

because of its basic character or sense of place. In order to meet present-day needs, changes must inevitably occur, but they should reflect and fit in with the valued character of the park and allow that character to survive.

Besides the symbolic significance of physical aspects, a park may serve an historical role also, such as one that has "served as a point of reference and continuing interaction for the community" (Laurie, 1979, p.41). These historical roles should be considered, and retained whenever possible and appropriate.

4. Interaction Variations. This refers to differences in how various groups of people socially interact in a space and how they use, perceive, and feel about that space. Interaction variations in a space are dependent upon primarily social class [income] and life-cycle stage [age and family type-- such as a family with young children]. Other factors that are either influenced by, or considered in combination with distinctions in social class and life-cycle stage include:

- ethnic-cultural background
- life-style
- sex
- region of the country
- urban-rural context [size and location of the city within a region, and the location of the neighborhood within that city] (Hester, 1975, pp.62-71)

Walker and Duffield reiterate that "attitudes to open space will be influenced by the social and cultural backgrounds of the individuals concerned, and also by their professional training" (1983, p. 7).

The above elements will vary with each neighborhood, influencing social and behavioral patterns and thus, creating the individual character of each

neighborhood. Disregard for these variations can result in a socially unsuitable, poorly planned, and unused park.

5. Activity Variations. The differences in preferences for various leisure activities will vary according to different groups of people based upon:

- social class
- life-cycle stage
- ethnic-cultural background
- life-style
- sex
- region of the country
- urban-rural context

Neighborhood parks that are designed based on standards and assumptions that all neighborhoods need and want the same activities may suffer from underuse (Hester, 1975, pp.74-76). Each neighborhood is different and has unique needs and preferences. When these needs and preferences are determined through user surveys and citizen participation in the redesign process, it then becomes unnecessary to rely on conventional standards.

6. Usable Space. A usable space is one that satisfies the minimum physical requirements that allow a certain recreational social activity to take place--size, slope, linearity, light, openness, affect of microclimate, provision of special props, and compatibility with adjacent activity settings. The use of a space may be discouraged if that space does not meet the minimum requirements of an activity. However, if a space satisfies all the minimum requirements but continues to be underused or misused, variations in neighborhood needs and characteristics may necessitate alterations in space

requirements or accepted standards (Hester, 1975, pp.76-77). Activity and facility requirements must relate to the needs, resources, and characteristics of each neighborhood or community and, in order to be appropriate, citizen feedback is essential (Gold, 1973, p.187).

7. Comfortable Space. In addition to designing for physical comfort in a neighborhood park [i.e., microclimate, pollution control, and comfortable and safe facilities], the psychological comfort of the users must also be an important consideration. Psychological comfort encompasses a balance of diversity and order as a means of achieving visual unity and activity unity.

#### Visual Unity

Diversity allows for a wide range of visual experiences in terms of spaces, forms, textures, colors, and views.

Order provides security, and organizes the diversity of visual experiences. Although diversity is needed, it can sometimes contribute to feelings of confusion and discomfort if it is not ordered (Hester, 1975, p.78).

**Activity Unity:** In reference to unity of activities, diversity and order can be discussed in terms of intricacy and centering:

Intricacy allows for a variety or complexity of facilities, and of potential experiences or different reasons for coming to a park, such that new experiences can occur upon different visits (Hester, 1975, p.78). Friedberg stated that "complexity offers alternatives and choice and the tools of the growth process" (1970, p.30). Neighborhood life is made up of complexities and a neighborhood park should reflect those aspects of life. The result of these considerations should be a design "which can be interpreted in several ways and which can have several

layers of meaning,.. [and which] must provide for evidence of change and continuing experience" (Laurie, 1983, p.72). This does not imply clutter and confusion, but rather, an ordered complexity or intricacy.

Centering provides psychological security and order. The users of a space need diversity and must be able to make choices but, to a certain extent, the range or type of choices must be limited and diversity must be ordered to minimize uncertainty, confusion, and discomfort (Hester, 1975, p.78).

A neighborhood park should contain a place that is considered the center or climax. As Jacobs explains, "people try hard to create centers and climaxes to a park" (1961, p.105). The center should act as a gathering place or social focus; something that everyone can identify with to give the park a strong image or identity such as a fountain, shelter, pavilion, or sitting area (Gold, 1977, p.84). Chadwick explained the benefit of the park as a social meeting place:

The chief characteristic of tomorrow's park must be that it is, above all else, a meeting place. If we think not of club-house or park, but [rather] of the club-house in the park, then we are enriching our urban fabric, not dispersing its social [and visual] attributes (1966, p.373).

Moore and Jones also suggested that a neighborhood park should be a "place of congeniality" and a "contact point for conversation" (1981-82, p.322).

## Appendix B

### BASIC USER NEEDS

The **basic user needs** encompass the previously described social/behavioral factors, and are common to most all users. They are based on the users' point of view concerning the reasons why one goes or refrains from going to a park, and what would make one go there more often (Hester, 1975, p.83). They are, therefore, factors that influence the use of a park. The basic user needs as described by Hester (1975) include:

- \* **People One Wants To Do An Activity With or Without**
- \* **Appropriate Activity Settings**
- \* **Relatedness Through Interaction with the Natural Environment**
- \* **Safety**
- \* **Aesthetic Appeal**
- \* **Physical Comfort**
- \* **Psychological Comfort**
- \* **Symbolic Ownership**
- \* **Convenience**
- \* **Policy on Use**
- \* **Cost**

**1-A. People One Wants To Do an Activity With.** This includes desirable interaction among people, and encourages use of a park. It refers to people whose presence is a positive factor, even if one does not actually interact with them (Hester, 1975, pp.84-85).

**1-B. People One Wants To Do an Activity Without.** This includes seeking privacy and getting away from people or overcrowding. It refers to people whose presence is a negative factor, thus threatening one's comfort or safety,



and thereby discouraging use of the park (pp.84-85).

The concept of people one wants to do an activity with or without incorporates, to various degrees, all of the social factors previously explained. However, the most influential social factors involved are:

- \* social interaction processes
- \* territoriality and dominance
- \* interaction variations
- \* activity variations (p.87)

This concept and the related social factors are major determinants of the use and success of a park. As stated by Dattner (1977), "the test of a successfully planned park is one where every type of person feels at home without resenting anybody else impinging on him or her" (p.41).

2. Appropriate Activity Settings. Activity settings are determined by location and site characteristics. The location of an activity setting within a park must be compatible with that activity or the result will be underuse or nonuse.

Designers are usually concerned with the capability of a site to support certain activities. The designer describes activities in terms of site characteristics such as size, quantity, slope, openness, linearity, variety, domination of microclimate, props needed, and compatibility with other activities. However, the users' perceptions of site characteristics may differ from those of the designer and, if an activity setting is considered inappropriate by the users, they are discouraged from participating in the activity or using the space. People usually describe activity settings in terms of fixed or adaptable spaces. A fixed space directs and limits use of the space, and an adaptable space is flexible and does not dictate how the space is used (Hester, 1975, pp.87-92).

Although fixed spaces are necessary for some activities, single purpose facilities for an activity that is part of a "fad" should be discouraged. The activity will eventually decline and the facility will be unused. Flexible or multiple-use facilities and spaces can more easily allow for rapid change in user needs and behavioral patterns. If appropriate, multiple-use facilities should also accommodate night use and year-round use rather than only day time and warm weather activities. "A park whose content changes throughout the year brings an added dimension to the neighborhood" (Laurie, 1983, p.73). In regard to flexibility in redesign, French (1973) stated:

A restructuring of city parks must be drawn from the social fabric of today's urban conditions--with plenty of elbow room for the future growth and activities not even imagined today (p.25).

Bernard Tschumi, head of the winning design team in a competition for a 21st century urban park, suggests that the architecture and organization of public open-air spaces should be flexible in that they "should not confine or shape ideas, but reinforce and activate them--intensify them--producing heretofore unimagined events" (Holden, 1983, p.68). Therefore, neighborhood parks must be able to accommodate change, and reflect the constant transformation of urban neighborhood life. Parks that were designed in the past without considering that society would change are now in need of redesign because they cannot easily accommodate change. The importance of flexibility in neighborhood parks is also reinforced by the growing rate of transience and the ease of mobility in present society, which results in rapid changes in populations and users.

Regionalism can also be a significant influence on appropriate activity settings. When activity settings are determined with consideration for regional characteristics, the result can be a park with a stronger "sense of place". Thus, the character of a park should reflect not only the character

of the neighborhood, but also the character of the region by responding to its topography, climate, culture, and people (Cranz, 1982, p.250, and French, 1970, p.41). Consideration for the symbolism of the region and use of local materials can also play a part in determining appropriate activity settings (Laurie, 1983, p.74).

Appropriate activity settings can also contribute to the development of a positive self-image through activities that encourage both physical and mental challenge and risk-taking. The degree of challenge and risk involved should be in relation to the various levels of skill of the users, and can be incorporated in both physical and social activities (Gray & Greben, 1974, p.51). The development of a positive self-image is an important consideration when designing for the handicapped--the designer should consider "their abilities rather than their inabilities" (Dattner, 1977, p.42).

The previous considerations of flexibility, regionalism, and challenging activities suggest that innovation is needed in developing appropriate activity settings for the neighborhood parks of the present and future. Flexibility in design can sometimes result in a lack of style and lack of quality but innovative designers can aid in developing neighborhood parks that have style [an identity] without sacrificing flexibility or quality. Innovative park design should not, however, be done merely for the sake of innovation. The designer must know the needs and character of the neighborhood and respond to those in the design. Gold states that "there has never been a better time for innovation and demonstration in recreation planning and design, if we will try to understand and invent the future" (1980, p.255).

The concept of **appropriate activity settings** incorporates the social factors of **usable space** and **activity variations** which differ according to

social class, life-cycle stage, ethnic-cultural background, region of the country, life-style, sex, and urban-rural context (Hester, 1975, p.92).

The previous considerations in combination with direct citizen involvement can result in the most appropriate activities and settings for the neighborhood.

### 3. Relatedness Through Interaction with the Natural Environment.

Providing opportunities that enable a person to relate to the natural environment is an important consideration influencing the use of a park. Relating to nature implies a balance between a sense of being a part of nature and a sense of being apart from it. This relatedness can ease anxiety and foster mental health, deepen an awareness of oneself and of reality, and increase one's acceptance and appreciation of other people (Hester, 1975, p.92).

The concept of interaction with nature indirectly incorporates the social aspect of privacy which includes personal space. The natural environment is most often enjoyed in a private, personal space where one can be alone or away from a crowd. According to Walker and Duffield, the natural areas of urban parks are very popular because they provide "peace and quiet and the sense of space and freedom" (1983, p.10). Thus, the more urbanized an area becomes, the more important it is to provide a link with nature.

Natural areas can also be educational and foster an awareness of the value and importance of ecological systems. Relating to the natural environment is an important consideration because a lack of natural settings and opportunities to interact with the natural environment can discourage use of a park.

4. Safety. The physical and social aspects of safety can also influence the use of a park. Physical aspects of safety include proper location of

facilities and activity settings to prevent conflicts and potential hazardous situations, special facilities such as signs and barriers, and proper maintenance to prevent accidents. Lack of consideration for any of these physical aspects of safety can discourage use of the park. They incorporate the social factors of territoriality and dominance, and the social interaction processes (Hester, 1975, p.94).

Social aspects of safety include supervision and programmed activities. Formal supervision by police or park leaders and informal supervision by residents can help prevent crime and potentially unsafe situations (p.94). Programmed activities and special events that bring people into a park can contribute to safety, and thus help to deter crime. In some instances supervision and programmed activities might also discourage some types of legitimate activities such as seeking solitude or a private conversation. Supervision is influenced by the social factor of interaction variations, and programmed activities are influenced by the activity variations (Hester, 1975, pp.95-96). It can be added that the perception of safety is also related to the image and physical appearance of the park, as well as the behavior of the people in the park (Butterfield, 1984, p.69).

5. Aesthetic Appeal. The aesthetic appeal of a neighborhood park is based on appropriateness of style and taste, and visual unity. Aesthetic appeal can influence use, but the user's idea of appropriate beauty usually differs from that of the designer.

Most differences concern style and taste. Style is "that which is considered fashionable in a culture at a given time"; and taste is "an individual or group preference for a certain aesthetic quality" (Hester, 1975, p.96). How the neighborhood park looks is important to the users, but it must

be appropriate for the neighborhood and the preferences of the users. Designers cannot inflict their personal tastes or styles on the neighborhood when the residents are directly involved in the design or redesign process, because the residents want to decide what is aesthetically appropriate for their park. However, designers can use their knowledge of aesthetics to provide guidance and direction in determining what is aesthetically appropriate, and can innovatively apply aesthetic factors to what the users want (p.97).

The other aspect of aesthetic appeal is visual unity which includes the following:

A sense of the whole--when the user perceives that the forms, spaces, colors, and textures are complete, in harmony, and balanced.

Sequence compatibility--a sense of harmony in the three-dimensional linear views; not a single pattern, but rather a pattern that develops into other patterns viewed in various sequences.

Balance of stimuli--a balance between new and old visual experiences. Familiar visual experiences are necessary for a person to enjoy new visual experiences.

Cleanliness--the lack of the negative visual effect of trash and clutter (Hester, 1975, pp.97-98).

The concept of aesthetic appeal is related to the psychological aspects of the social factor, comfortable space.

6. Physical Comfort. The physical comfort of the user will contribute to use of a space, and is influenced by site factors and facilities.

Site factors--Weather factors such as temperature, precipitation, humidity, solar angle, and wind direction and force considerably influence the use of a park. The microclimate of a space can alter these

general climatic factors, and thus contribute to physical comfort, which influences use. Natural microclimates such as variations in topography, temperature, wind-speed, and vegetative cover can improve climatic conditions. Man-made microclimates that include shelters, building orientation, and placement of trees can also alter the climate. In addition, the lack of pollution, which includes water, air, surface, and noise pollution, can contribute to physical comfort (Hester, 1975, pp.102-104).

Facilities--Physical comfort can also be enhanced by facilities for physiological needs, safety facilities, and adequate means of getting to a park. Physiological needs can be met through facilities such as toilets, drinking fountains, ramps, benches with backs, and concessions. Safety facilities include guard rails, warning signs, soft surfaces, and rounded edges that are appropriately placed. In addition, use of a park may be discouraged if the means of going to a park are uncomfortable. For instance, a person may not use a park in the summer because the sidewalk that leads to it is narrow and unshaded (p.104).

The concept of physical comfort incorporates the social factors of usable space and comfortable space.

7. Psychological Comfort--The use of a park can be influenced by the psychological comfort that is experienced there. Psychological comfort can be experienced through:

Emotional release--to get away from it all, and release energy.

Social reinforcement--the feeling of being accepted, loved, or belonging to a group and thus respected as an individual.

Balance between old and new choices of activities--this refers to a

variety of activities whereby old, secure choices of activities are necessary in order for a person to enjoy new activities (Hester, 1975, pp.99-100).

The concept of psychological comfort encompasses some aspects of the following social factors:

- \* social interaction processes
- \* territoriality and dominance
- \* comfortable space

Psychological comfort can also be somewhat influenced by other basic user needs concepts including:

- \* people one wants to do an activity with or without
- \* relatedness through interaction with the natural environment
- \* safety
- \* aesthetic appeal
- \* physical comfort

8. Symbolic Ownership. When a sense of symbolic ownership is felt by residents, use and support of the park increases, and vice versa. Symbolic ownership is also likely to increase if residents have participated in the planning and design or redesign of the park, if it has been personalized by the residents, if one lives close to the park, or if other neighbors and outsiders view the park as a status object. The concept of symbolic ownership parallels the social factor of symbolic ownership (Hester, 1975, p.104).

9. Convenience. The use of a neighborhood park can be influenced by convenience to its users. Convenience is a balance between the availability



of an activity and the desire to do that activity. The major consideration is the distance from a person's home. It is influenced by time and mode of transportation and can be described in terms of actual distance and functional distance:

Actual distance--based on some unit of measure (feet, blocks, miles, etc.)

Functional distance--measured in relation to focal points, frequent destinations, and neighboring patterns (Hester, 1975, p.98).

The concept of convenience encompasses the social factors of comfortable space and interaction variations. Although the lack of convenience can be a reason why one does not use a park, it is obviously not a user need that can be accommodated through redesign.

The following two concepts are related more to reasons why one does or does not use a park than to actual basic user needs. Therefore, they are important considerations in analyzing park use or nonuse.

10. Policy on Use. Official rules and regulations regarding use of the park can either encourage or restrict activities and use of a space. Informal policies established by users can also affect use. These regulations and policies indirectly influence the following basic user needs:

- \* people one wants to do an activity with or without
- \* safety
- \* convenience
- \* symbolic ownership
- \* cost (Hester, 1975, p.107).

11. Cost. Cost of transportation and admission to a facility will influence the use of that facility. According to users, the lower the cost, the better (p.107). Since a major benefit of a neighborhood park is proximity to its users, transportation costs are not that relevant in influencing the use of a neighborhood park.

The previously described basic user needs and other influences on park use are based on the social factors and the users' point of view concerning park use. It was mentioned in the descriptions that certain social/behavioral factors are incorporated in each basic user need and, in some instances, that user needs affect other user needs. However, it is possible that other influences or relations exist that were not included. These can only be discovered through more research and direct user involvement in the design or redesign process.

Each neighborhood will differ and the designer must determine the relevance and importance of each basic user need in relation to solving the problem of each unique situation. This can be accomplished only through direct citizen participation in the redesign process. [These considerations should also apply to new park planning and design.]

**Appendix C**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT:

PRIVATE FIRM:

NAME:

POSITION OR TITLE:

MAILING ADDRESS:

PHONE:

DATE OF INTERVIEW:

This questionnaire concerns the process involved in redesigning an existing neighborhood park. Therefore, questions do not necessarily relate to specific case studies.

**1. PROJECT INITIATION PHASE**

(The questions in this phase apply to park department professionals.)

Who initially recognizes that there is a need for redesign of a park?

- the residents of the neighborhood
- the park and recreation department
- other

Are there any problems locating sources of funding? If so, what?

Are there any typical problems or delays encountered in initiating the project?  yes       no  
If so, what?

## 2. PREDESIGN PHASE

(Address the next question only to design consultants.)

At what point are you first involved in a redesign project?

at the very outset [problem definition]

(GO TO 2-A.)

determining user needs

(GO TO 2-B.)

program development

(GO TO 2-C)

the design phase

(GO TO 3-A)

### 2-A. Problem Definition

What factors are involved in defining the problems or determining whether redesign is needed?

opinions from citizens

informal talks

public meetings

questionnaires

interviews [on site, off site]

physical site analysis

direct observations of how the park is used (park use analysis)

other

If any of these activities are not done, what are the reasons?

insufficient time

insufficient budget

other

### 2-B. Determining User Needs

How are user needs determined?

public meetings

questionnaires

interviews

other

If any of these techniques are not included, what are the reasons?

insufficient time

insufficient budget

other

Are there any typical problems encountered in determining user needs?

yes                       no

If so, what?

## 2-C. Program Development

[including establishment of purpose and objectives]

Is a purpose or goal of the park defined?

yes                       no

Are objectives of the park established?

yes                       no

Are citizens involved in establishing a purpose and objectives?

yes                       no

Are citizens involved, in any way, in program development?

yes                       no

If so, how?

Are there any typical problems or conflicts encountered in program development?

yes                       no

If so, what?

Who is involved in the predesign activities?

professional planners

professional designers

other

## 3. DESIGN PHASE

Is the person or persons involved in the design phase, the same as those involved in predesign activities?

yes                       no

Explain.

### 3-A. Citizen Involvement in the Design Phase

At what points in the design phase is citizen input obtained?

development of alternative schematic plans

evaluation and selection of alternative schematic plans

development of preliminary plan(s)

evaluation and approval of preliminary plan

other

Are citizens involved in making actual design decisions?

yes  no

If so, how?

What is the designer's role in this case?

How is citizen input obtained?

- public meetings
- meetings with neighborhood representatives
- newspaper media
- flyers distributed throughout the neighborhood
- other

### 3-B. General Design Questions

Is the existing character of the park an important or relevant consideration?

yes  no

Are historical aspects of the park important or relevant considerations?

yes  no

Explain.

Are there any typical problems, conflicts, or delays encountered in the design phase?  yes  no

If so, what?

### 4. DOCUMENTATION PHASE

Is the process involved in redesign, or any unique aspects of it, ever documented for future reference or reference by others?

yes  no

Explain.

### 5. IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

In what ways have citizens been involved in construction of a neighborhood park?

What major problems or delays can occur in the implementation phase?

## 6. POST-CONSTRUCTION PHASE

Have citizens typically been involved in maintenance and operation of the park after construction?  yes  no

If so, in what ways?

Are there any major problems concerning operation and maintenance?

yes  no

Is post-evaluation conducted or considered?

yes  no

Explain.

## 7. GENERAL QUESTIONS

As you see it, what are the major roles that the designer plays throughout the process?

What are some reasons why redesign of neighborhood parks is needed?

Are there any unique aspects of the process involved in redesign of existing parks, as compared to the process involved in new park development that have not yet been mentioned?

yes  no

If so, what?

Are social/behavioral considerations (i. e., how people feel about and interact in a park) taken into account in any steps of the process?

yes  no

If so, at what points?

What is your opinion concerning citizen involvement throughout the process?

Do any problems or conflicts occur because of citizen involvement?

yes  no

If so, what?

Is there anything that could be done differently or better throughout the process of redesign?

yes  no

If so, what?

In what general location of the Kansas City metropolitan area are most of the neighborhood parks that have been discussed?

inner city or urban core

central or middle city

inner suburbs

outer suburbs

other

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A NEIGHBORHOOD PARK REDESIGN PROCESS:  
IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Department of Landscape Architecture

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1985

## ABSTRACT

Throughout most of United States history, urban parks have changed with the times. The rapid state of change that society is currently experiencing, changing social and recreational user needs, and deterioration of parks will influence the need for redesign of a number of existing urban parks including neighborhood parks. As a result, redesign of urban neighborhood parks is becoming increasingly important and is in need of more information. However, there is a relatively small body of literature that deals specifically with urban park redesign and the process involved. This study investigates the issue of urban park redesign, specifically that of neighborhood parks, and identifies a redesign process including influential factors and considerations as they apply throughout the process.

The identified redesign process was evaluated based on information derived from the literature and information obtained from personal interviews with professional planners/designers who had been involved in neighborhood park redesign projects. This evaluation involved: (1) a comparison of the identified redesign process with a typical planning process for new neighborhood park design, (2) a comparison of the identified redesign process with the redesign procedures that were derived from the interviews, (3) the importance of citizen involvement, (4) the roles and responsibilities of the designer, and (5) the problems that can occur throughout the redesign process.

It was concluded that there are unique aspects of the redesign process as compared to the process involved in new park development. However, the redesign process varies with each project in terms of techniques or methods employed to accomplish each phase of the process. Citizen involvement is an essential element of the redesign process even though it takes time and patience and can result in problems. The designer becomes the guiding force

behind the successful execution of redesign and is instrumental in solving or alleviating many of the problems that occur throughout the process by being a listener, an educator, a mediator, and a sociologist.