

March, 1990

City of Portland
BUREAU OF PARKS AND RECREATION
Mike Lindberg, Commissioner
Charles Jordan, Superintendent



**WILSHIRE
PARK
MASTER
PLAN**

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**The impetus for development
and one-half the funding for this master plan
was provided by
the Friends of Wilshire Park.**

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WILSHIRE PARK MASTER PLAN

Introduction

Wilshire Park is a beautiful recreation park located in the City of Portland between NE 33rd Avenue and NE 37th Avenue south of NE Skidmore Street. It was acquired by the City in 1940 and it contains 14.83 acres.

The predominant characteristic of the park is the majestic older trees that provide a uniform canopy over almost the entire acreage. The trees are mostly Douglas fir with deciduous varieties scattered throughout. Most of them have been limbed up providing a cathedral setting for facilities and park visitors. The park contains restroom and shelter facilities, play structures, combination soccer and baseball fields, walkways, picnic facilities, a wading pool, and open spaces. (See Appendix A - Site Character Photographs.)

The park is heavily used by thousands of families each year from the Alameda and Beaumont and Concordia Neighborhoods. The Wilshire Little League and the Grant High School girls' soccer and softball teams are longtime major users of the park.

Planning Process

Parks generally are developed and maintained over long periods of time. They are influenced by their surroundings and sometimes reflect the physical and social conditions of neighborhoods. These conditions at Wilshire Park are presently very good. The park and its surrounding neighborhoods are very attractive and the park is well maintained. Preparation of this master plan was spurred by neighborhood efforts to continue and even improve these current good conditions.

The master planning process involved gathering base information, making site visits, meeting with Parks Bureau staff and neighbors, and contacting Parks Bureau specialists in maintenance and planning. Site analysis maps and preliminary master plan drawings were then developed. The master plan was revised following public review and this supporting narrative report was prepared.

Three public workshops were scheduled to gather neighborhood and community input. The workshops were held in the Bethany Lutheran Church located across the street from the park at NE 37th Avenue and NE Skidmore Street. The January 24, 1990 meeting served to gather information and concerns. (See Appendix B.) The second workshop re-confirmed and elaborated on these priorities as it reviewed preliminary plans, recommendations, and improvement cost estimates. The final review workshop

was held March 5, 1990. The group provided final comments and offered enthusiastic support of the recommendations and plans. The neighborhood volunteer group, The Friends of Wilshire Park, discussed some projects it could undertake. Others were proposed to be handled by the Parks or other Bureaus as appropriate and financially possible. Since the workshop process was fundamental to master plan development, it is important to review public input.

Workshop Comments

Objectives identified in the workshops included:

- Improve safety and livability in the park and neighborhood.
- Improve usability of the park for all age groups.
- Create a "presence" in the park.
- Establish and maintain community involvement via the park.

Four major recommendations were identified and are included in the new master plan as top priorities:

- * • Improve lighting throughout the park and light the trails.
- Provide a soft surface "fitness" trail encircling the park.
- Remodel the shelter building to improve natural lighting and visibility into it.
- Other major feature modifications or additions to the park such as ball courts are not recommended as the park is very functional, attractive, and otherwise satisfactory as is.

Other recommendations were identified and are included in the master plan as secondary (but very important) priorities:

- Park closed times (12 PM to 5 AM) need to be posted.
- No parking signs (12 PM to 5 AM) need to be posted on streets adjacent to the park.
- Restrooms need to be locked during park closed times.
- Limb-up trees as needed in order to maintain visibility.
- Provide traffic study of adjacent streets (to include perceived need for stop signs on NE Skidmore Street at NE 37th Avenue to discourage speeding on NE Skidmore Street.)
- Provide handicapped access at walkway entrances to the park and to the drinking fountain near the shelter.
- Develop an educational program to encourage removal of dog debris and discourage other misuse of the park.
- Provide play equipment in the park for pre-school children.
- Provide exercise equipment and benches along the proposed "fitness" trail.

- Move picnic tables located along the edge of the park farther from the streets to discourage loitering near parked cars.
- Provide an automatic irrigation system for efficiently watering the entire park.
- Provide some type of turnstile or post barrier to slow bicycle traffic going in and out of the park at the south park entrance to Shaver Street.
- Increase the park watering budget or modify watering priorities to water the park more uniformly versus letting one end of the park (east end) go dry and brown as currently occurs.
- Provide buffer landscaping (design height of landscaping to preserve visibility) between private property on the south of the park and the proposed soft surface "fitness trail."

Program for Master Plan

Wilshire Park is currently "healthy" and functions very well. It is quite attractive with shady open spaces and areas for passive as well as active recreation. The neighbors enjoy the park and neither site visits nor workshop comments reveal a need for major modifications. However, there are a number of interrelated problems which reduce the otherwise high quality of the park.

Some problems are apparent just looking at the park grounds, others lie in how the park is used. As far as physical problems, there are ruts being worn in the grass where paths are needed, defacement of the pavilion and much dog debris. The adjacent homeowners also report disruptive use after hours and a variety of illicit activity including overnight stays.

Much of the undesirable activity is a result of poor visibility. Lower tree limbs still obscure some views into the area and the pavilion is oriented so that the interior is not visible from the street. There is also difficulty with cars parking along edges of the park which decreases natural surveillance by neighbors. Early morning and evening use is problematic because the lighting is generally ineffective. As a result, public perception of the park as "safe" and "inviting" is questioned and desired use reduced. The darker areas, pavilion and picnic tables closest to the street tend to become noisy teen hangouts after hours. More of a police presence and proper signing of parking and hours should reinforce proper use.

The positive way to dispel some of the negative behavior is to actually crowd it out by promoting greater use by other age groups. The track worn in the grass at the edge of the park indicates that many people already jog there. A better surface would protect tree roots and avoid mud puddles. Improved lighting of the entire park and a new circuit trail would extend the hours that the park has a voluntary "neighborhood watch." A fitness station, play equipment for tots, more benches along the paths, and improved handicapped access may further broaden user groups. Another safety related issue is

that traffic on N.E. Skidmore Street travels very fast. Some form of traffic control may encourage and protect people wanting to visit the park.

As far as the landscape itself, there is a need for more of a buffer between the park and the houses on its south border. Maintenance is generally good except that dog owners need to be educated to control and clean-up after their pets. Turf health and appearance would be improved by installing an automatic irrigation system. An automatic irrigation system would significantly reduce water and labor costs. Currently, part of the park is not watered due to the high cost of using the existing manual quick-coupler system and the budget for watering.

Maintenance of the fine tree stands is a longer term concern. Most of the park seems to have been planted at one time and these trees will tend to mature and then decline as a group. Although mixed age plantings are not as distinctive as uniform stands, it is important to plant new trees before dying ones actually need to be replaced. Otherwise, there will eventually be either gaps or masses of all new plantings.

Overall, Wilshire Park is both a centerpiece and a reflection of its vital neighborhood. It needs on-going attention, not a major rescue effort. The following description of the Master Plan shows how applying program requirements would shape the park's future.

Description of Master Plan

A major proposed improvement of Wilshire Park is the addition of a fitness path of woodchips over a gravel base. (See Appendix C for Master Plan and Site Details.) It should meander through the trees between 20 and 60 feet from park edges and the worn-in rut should be filled and re-seeded and it will eventually heal. A fitness station may attract more people but even walkers and joggers will increase activity level and provide more community surveillance. Since increased numbers of people will be passing near the backyards of homes to the south, a landscape buffer is proposed. It will better define that edge of the space.

Handicapped ramps into the park and asphaltic paving to the existing handicapped drinking fountain will improve accessibility.

- too low.*
- * Another major site-wide improvement is to replace the outdoor lighting system. The lighting standards can be informally alternated along paths but generally 150 watt high-pressure sodium lamps on twenty foot poles should be about 125 feet on center in order to provide a minimum of 1/8 foot-candle on paths. These recommendations and new lighting shown on the plans are subject to future final design.

Another major project is to remove the rear wall of the picnic pavilion as shown in the details (Appendix C). The ability of passersby to see through the structure should forestall much problem behavior. In addition, when the pavilion is no longer defaced

or even dangerous it will attract other users. Two picnic tables need to be moved away from the exterior of the park and more benches should be added along the new circuit path.

Several program elements (and workshop priorities) are not shown in plan. For instance, location and type of traffic control devices or signs with park hours and parking notices will be resolved by city bureaus. More substantial projects like the tot play area, irrigation and tree planting will require individual design consideration when funded. In particular, the tots play equipment needs special consideration of children's developmental and socialization needs. Behavioral research suggests that younger children also should have their own space, not just part of a playground, or larger children will supplant them. Other secondary priorities not shown on the Master Plan are education and publicity. However, local participation in early physical improvement projects should help generate the very awareness desired.

Preliminary Cost Estimates

The following are rough preliminary costs of the priority improvements recommended for Wilshire Park:

- Soft surface "fitness" trail, 3150 linear feet, 8 feet wide, gravel base covered with bark chips \$20,000
- * • New area lighting system (approximately 36 poles and fixtures), including new service system and removal of all lights and service. \$75,000 ✓
- Rehabilitation of pavilion building to open view through structure, including design fees. \$35,000

SUB-TOTAL \$130,000

Many variables involve estimating costs for the proposed secondary improvements. Most of them involve relatively small maintenance or capital improvement costs except for the proposed automatic irrigation system and the landscape buffer on the south side of the park. The tot lot play area could be \$5000 and up of ready-to-install equipment.

- Miscellaneous secondary improvements. \$20,000
- Automatic irrigation system. \$100,000
- Landscape buffer. \$40,000

SUB-TOTAL \$160,000
GRAND TOTAL \$290,000

Implementation

The priorities developed in the public workshops form a sort of shopping list ignoring very real financial constraints. It is obvious that improvements will need to be phased as funding is not immediately available. Help by the Friends of Wilshire Park may substantially reduce some capital requirements. The group is eager to work first on the fitness trail but might later assist in funding the pavilion remodel, the tot lot area development, or the landscape buffer project. They are currently considering education and publicity campaigns, possibly beginning with a project focusing on the dog litter problem. Depending on Park Bureau response, the Friends group might also help by locking restrooms at close of day and possibly performing other duties.

- * The Parks Bureau has primary responsibility for most of the recommended improvements. These will undoubtedly depend on staff and budget but top priorities are lighting, new trail, and pavilion remodel. Parks Bureau staff also will coordinate all improvement efforts and should request that appropriate city bureaus provide appropriate traffic controls and signs.

Priorities identified at the third public workshop for recommended improvements are as follows:

- * No. 1. Provide new lighting throughout the park and light the trails.
- No. 2. Construct a new soft surface fitness trail encircling the park.
- No. 3. Remodel the shelter building to allow visibility through it.
- No. 4. Provide play equipment in the park for pre-school children.
- No. 5. Provide landscape buffering between private property on the south of the park and the proposed fitness trail.

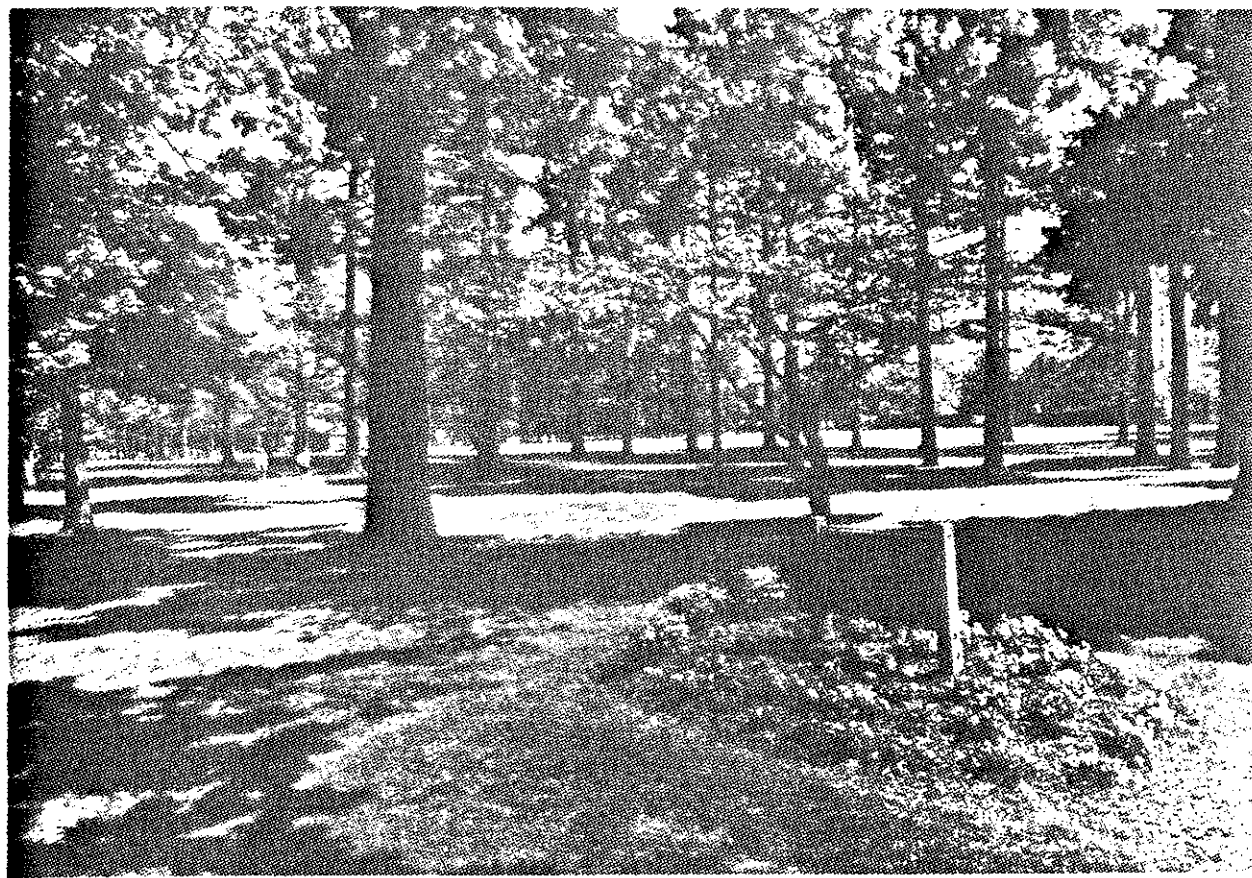
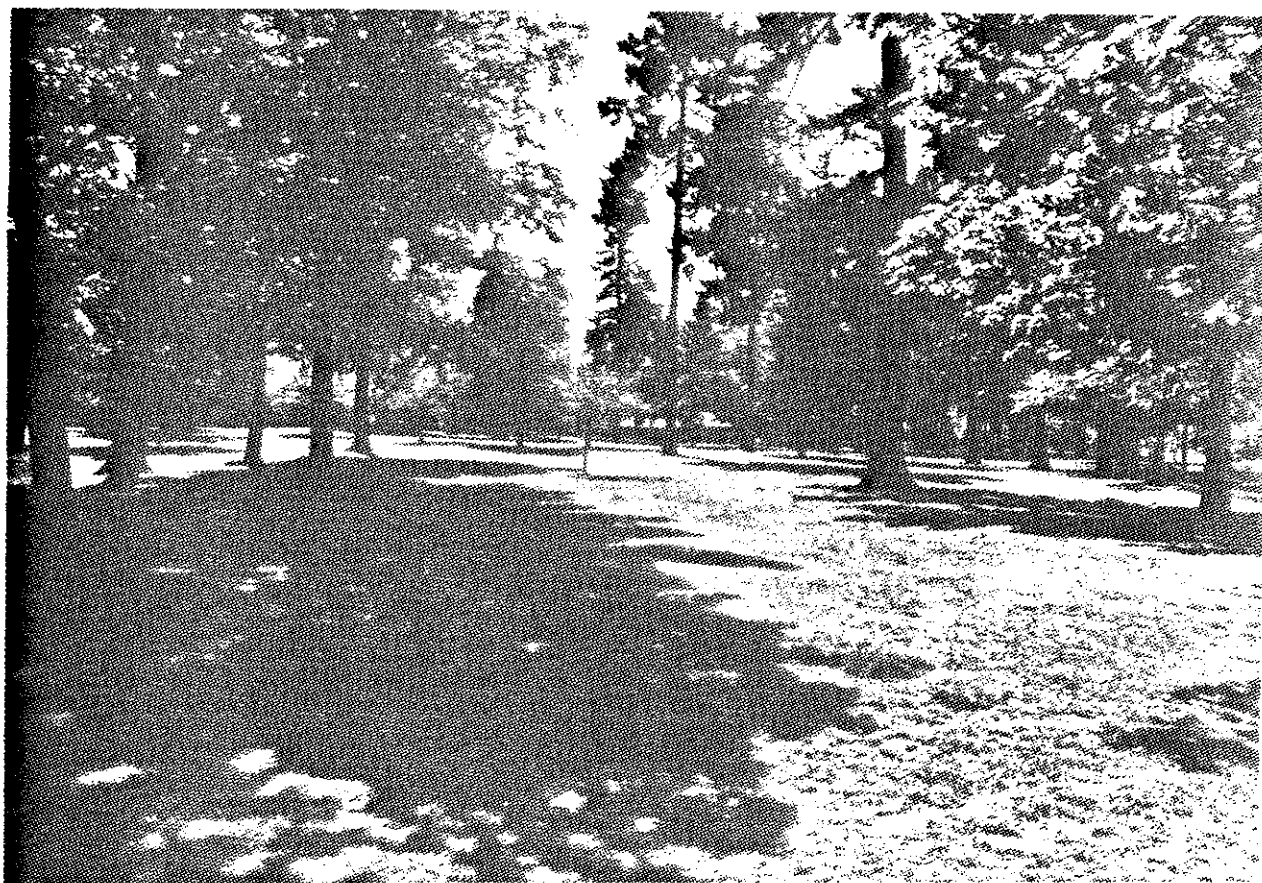
Most of the secondary recommendations proposed are expected to be implemented through regular ongoing operations, maintenance, and volunteer efforts.

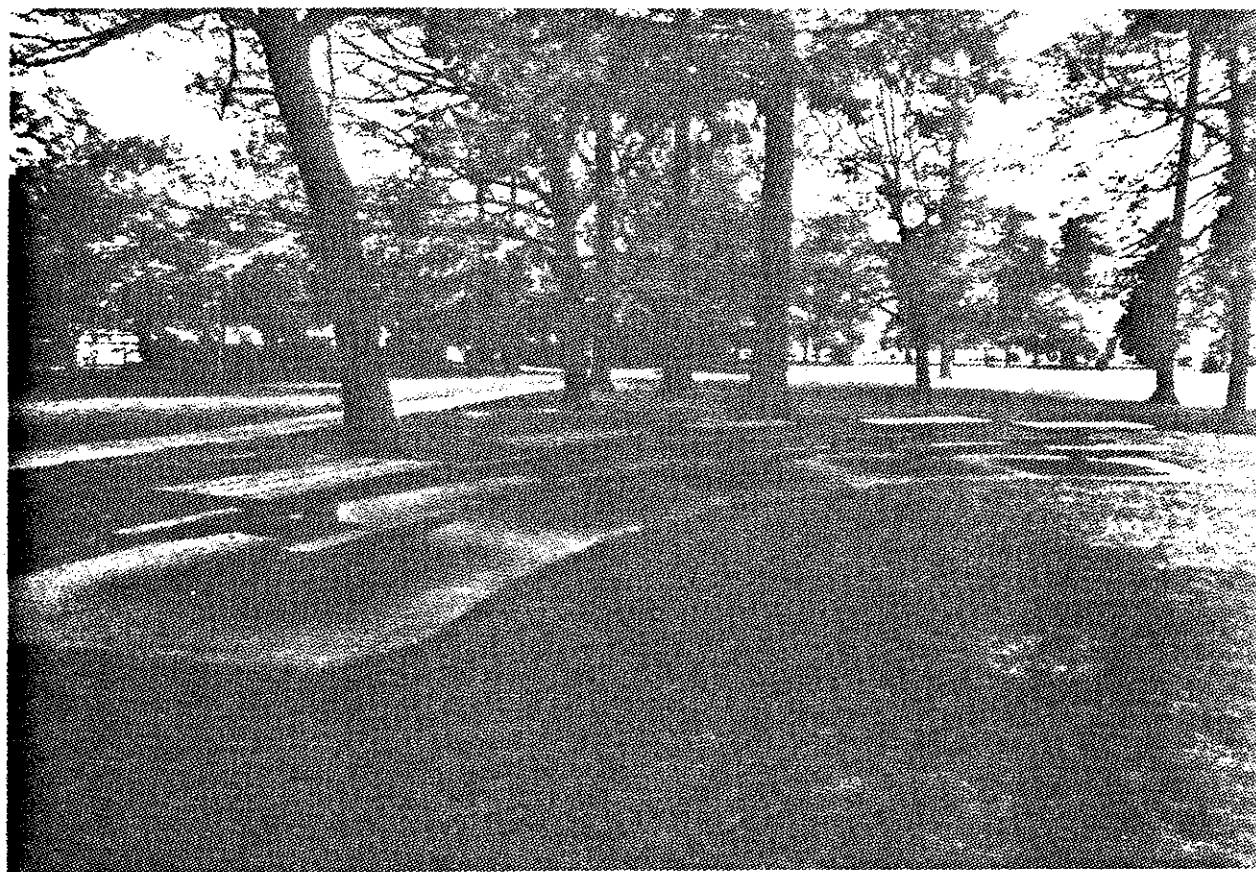
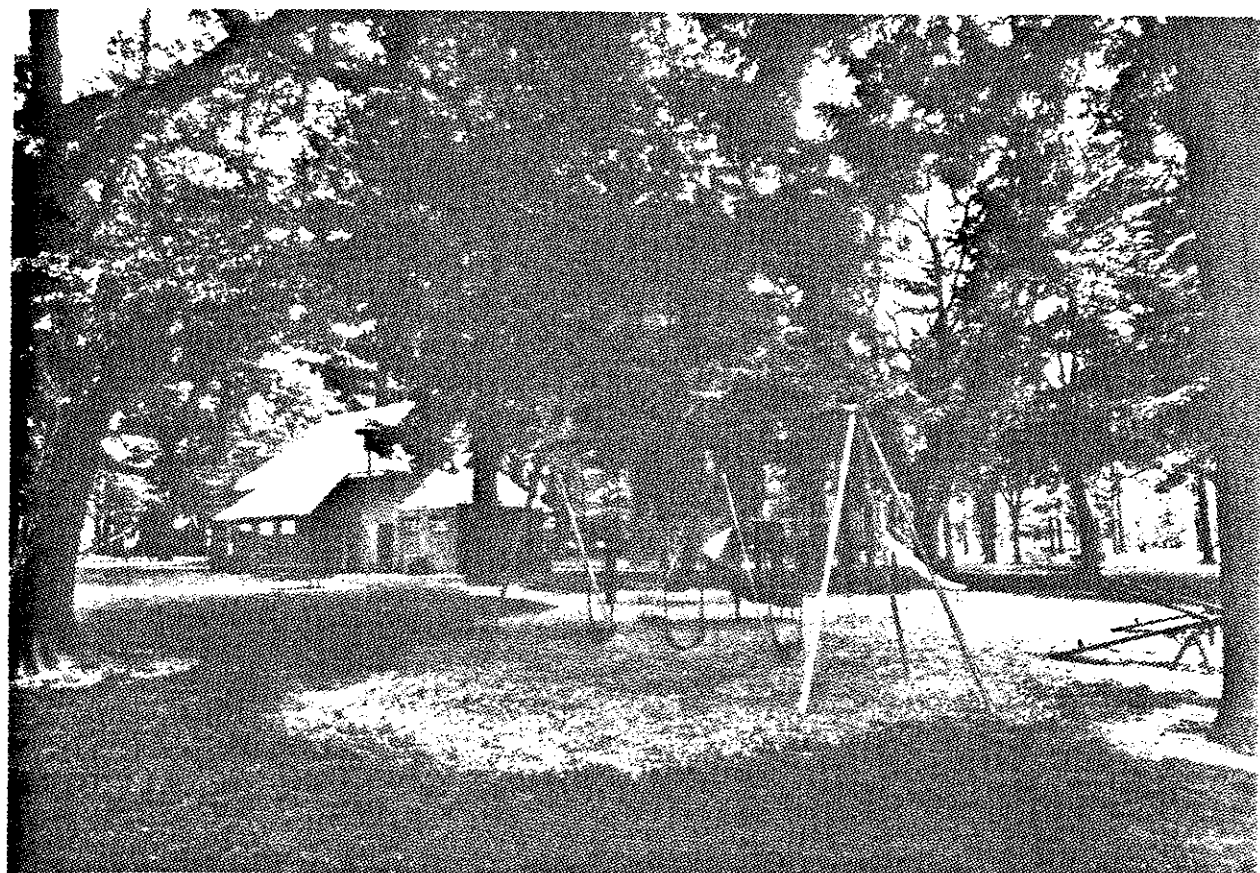
In general, the park is in good shape and the master planning process provides focus on how it can be improved. Through the workshops, the Park Bureau has learned of neighborhood concerns and the plan shows how to best fulfill community needs. Progress will depend on the continued participation of these interested citizens and the Parks Bureau who now have a master plan to guide their efforts.

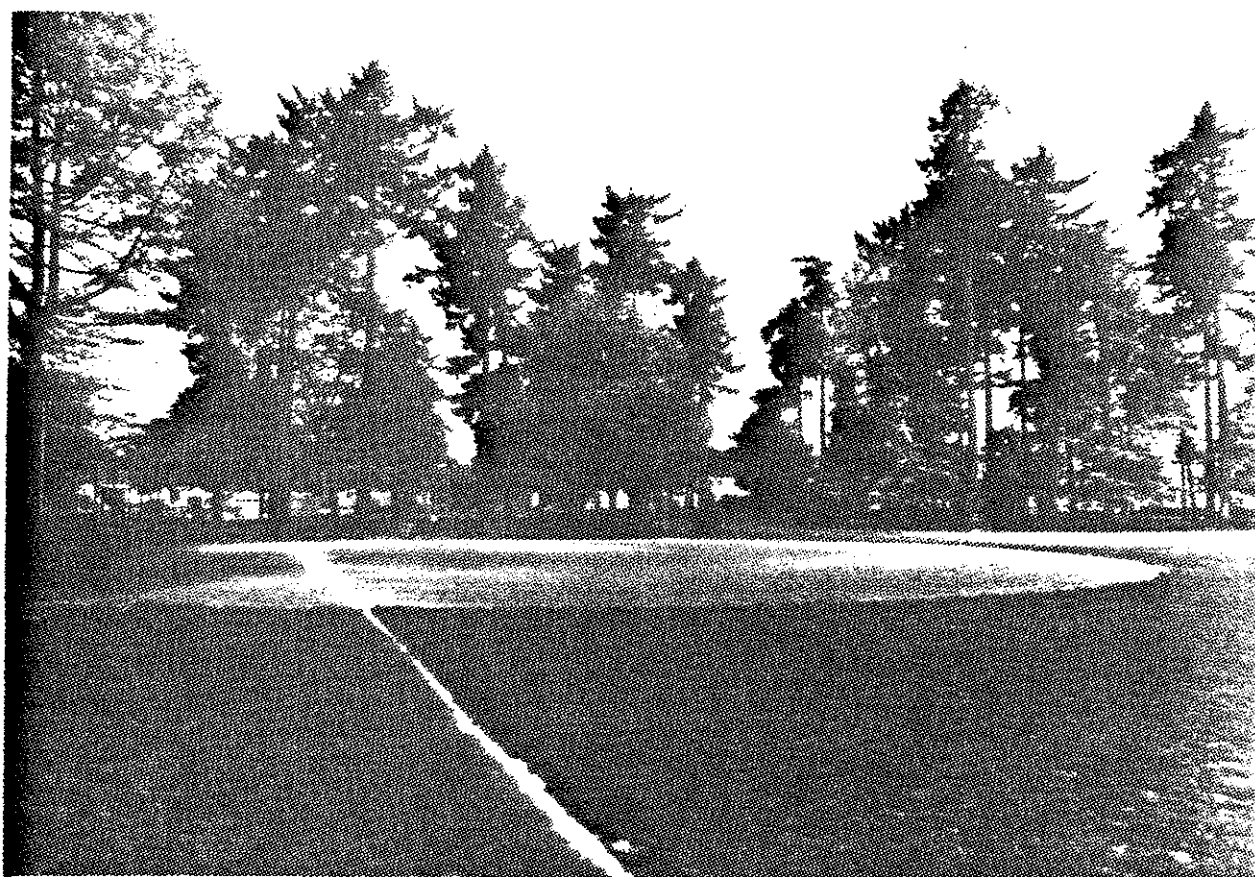
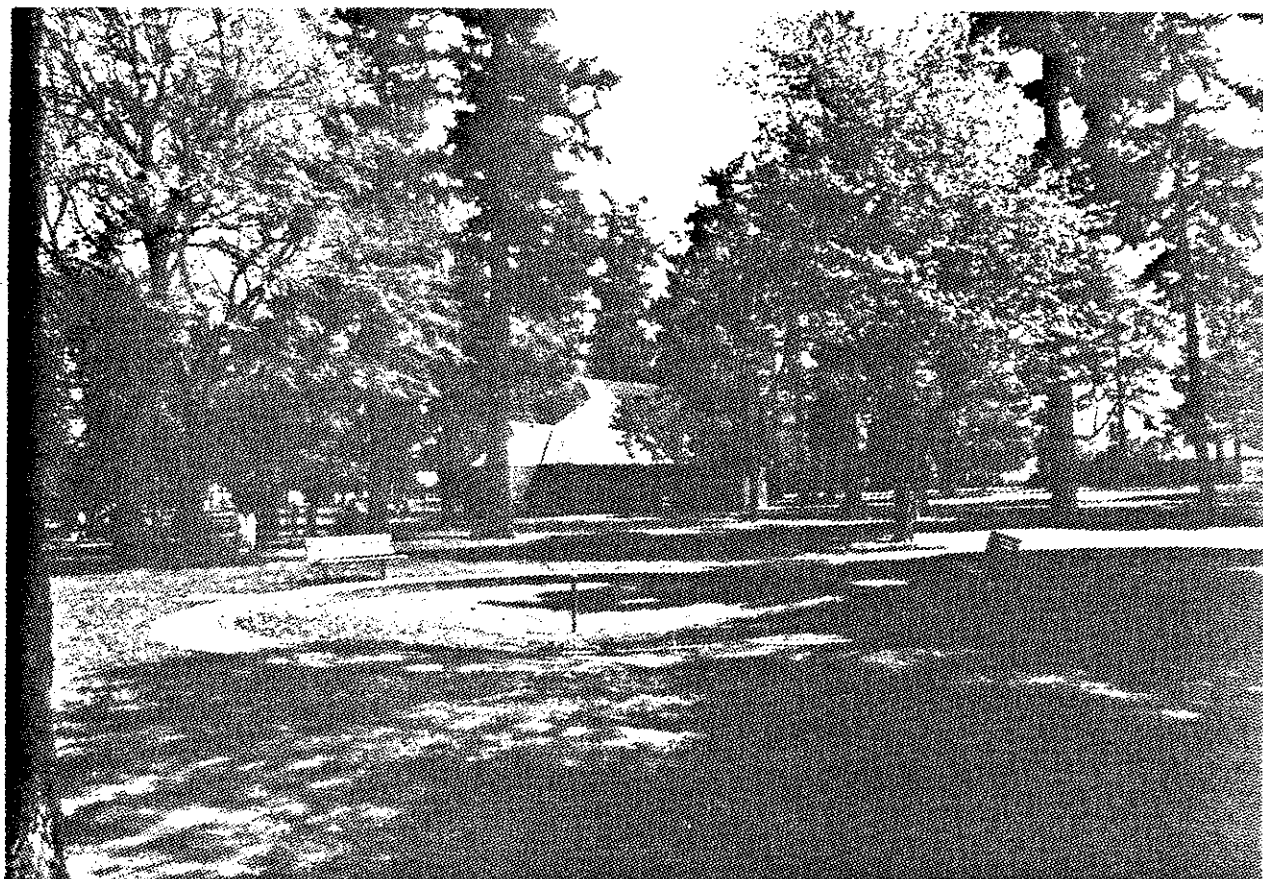
Character Photographs

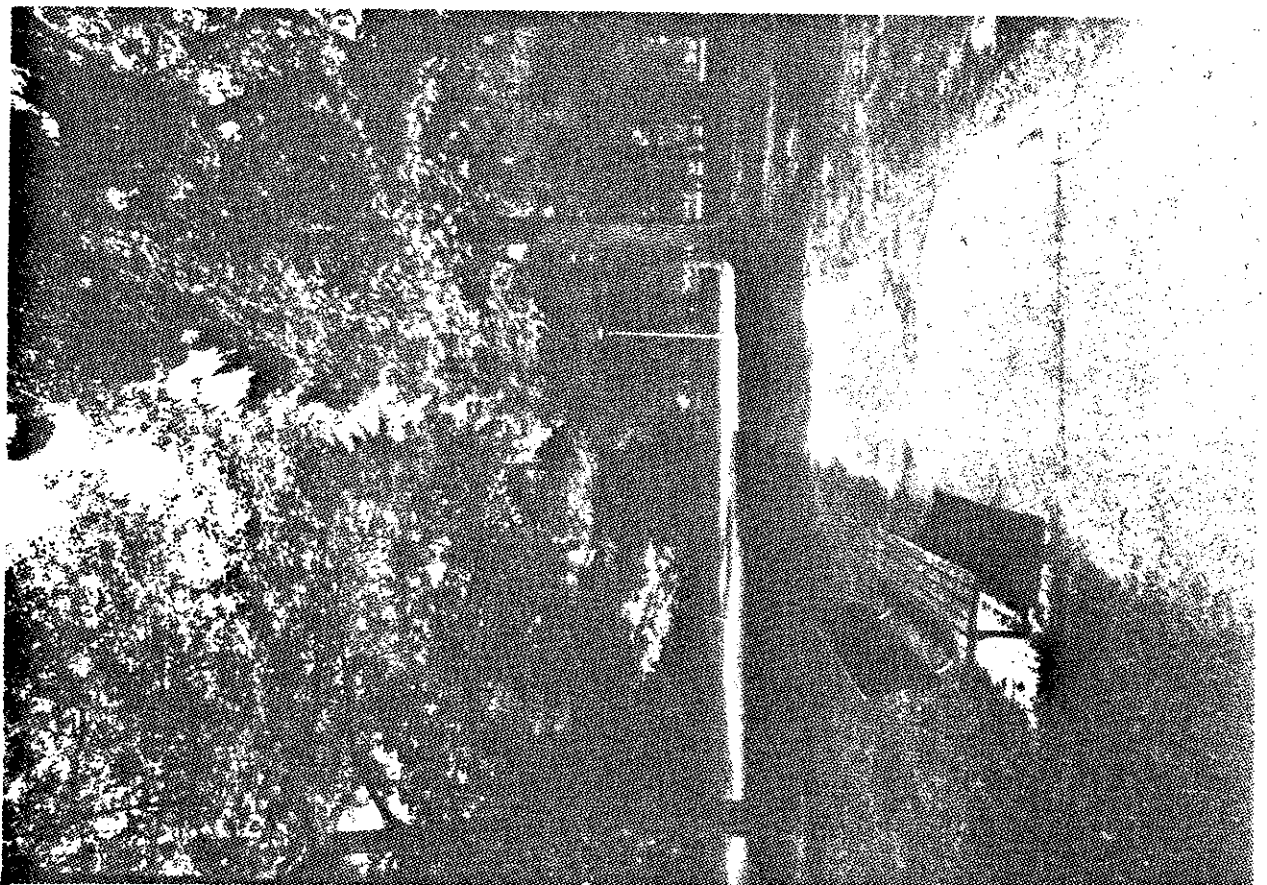
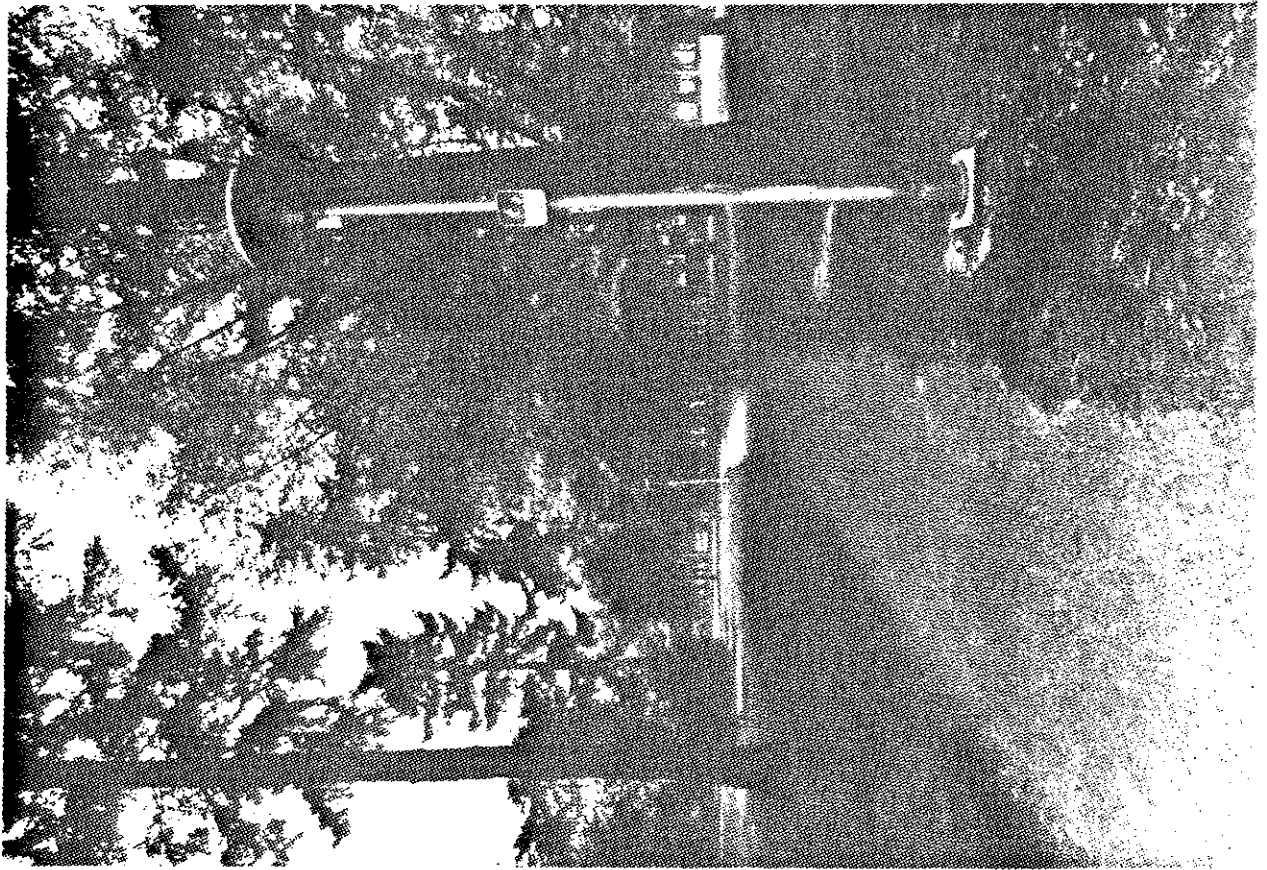
Wilshire Park 1989

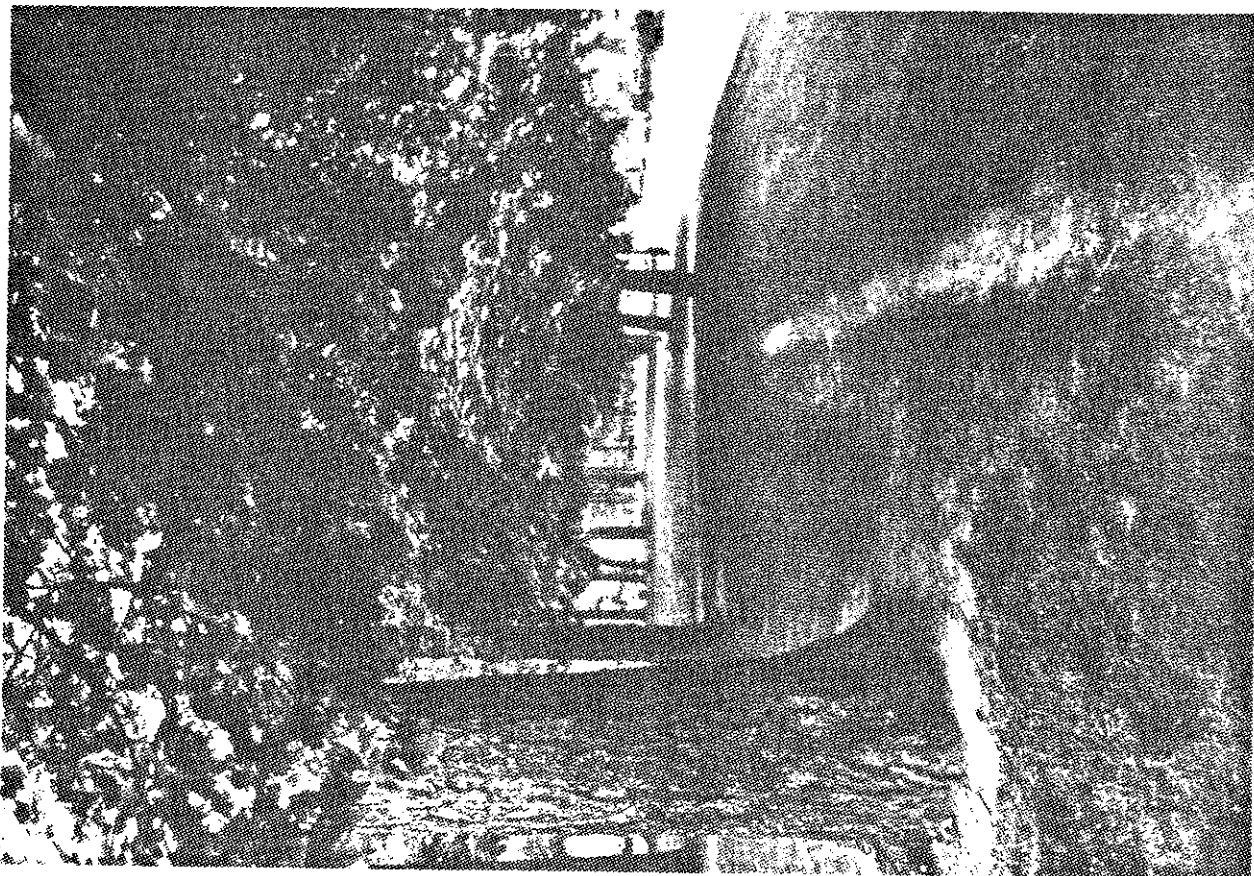
Appendix A











Workshop Notes

Wilshire Park 1990

Appendix B

WILSHIRE PARK PUBLIC WORKSHOP 1/24/90

Workshop Comments

Objectives identified in the first workshop included:

- Improve safety and livability in the park and neighborhood.
- Improve usability of the park for all age groups.
- Create a "presence" in the park.
- Establish and maintain community involvement via the park.

Four major recommendations were identified and are proposed to be included in the new master plan as number one priorities:

- Provide a soft surface "fitness" trail encircling the park.
- Improve lighting throughout the park and light the trails.
- Remodel the shelter building to allow visibility through it.
- Limit major modifications or additions to the park to the above three as the park is very functional, attractive, and otherwise satisfactory as is.

Other recommendations were identified and are included in the master plan as secondary but very important priorities:

- "Park closed" times (12 PM to 5 AM) need to be posted.
- "No parking" signs (12 PM to 5 AM) need to be posted on streets adjacent to the park.
- Restrooms need to be locked during park closed times.
- Limb-up trees not limbed-up in order to maintain visibility.
- Provide stop signs on NE Skidmore Street at NE 37th Avenue to discourage speeding on NE Skidmore Street.
- Provide disabled access at walkway entrances to the park and to the drinking fountain near the shelter.
- Provide an educational program to encourage removal of dog debris and discourage other misuse of the park.
- Provide play equipment in the park for pre-school children.
- Provide exercise equipment and benches along the proposed "fitness" trail.
- Move picnic tables located along the edge of the park to locations more toward the interior of the park to discourage loitering near parked cars.
- Provide an automatic irrigation system for efficiently watering the entire park.
- Pave the cross trail that leads from NE 35th Street through the park to NE 37th Street.
- Provide buffer landscaping (low in height in order to preserve visibility) between private property on the south of the park and the proposed soft surface "fitness trail."

WILSHIRE PARK PUBLIC WORKSHOP 2/14/90

Street lighting levee @ \$2,000,000.

Priorities

1. Replace worn out systems
2. Extend lighting
3. Add to parks without 1) Woodland, Powell, Laurelhurst)

Wilshire Park a good candidate for money.

Replacement scheduled for 1992.

- * City Parks set aside money for soft surface trail.

Motorized patrol on trail in p.m. Do patrol occasionally.

Lt. McNab, Portland Police - Design with limited patrol.

Material from trail to create berm @ buffer

Landscape buffer - Garden club

Transportation -

Stop sign @ North and South - 37th & Skidmore: no speed limit posted.

Parking issues: Cliff Newton, City of Portland Transportation

- Parking issues and standards
- No parking when park is closed
- Petition with 25% signatures from residents
- Postcard balloting and vote
- 50% ballots returned: 60% in favor, 30 days to establish signs
- Resident permit parking capital intensive
- Minimum block faces impacted by parking must be occupied nine months of the year
- Enforcement: Usually establish one side @ parks
- Establish signs @ parkside monitor and establish on opposite side if necessary

Loading @ Skidmore

- * Petition to establish signage @ neighborhood association meeting

Skidmore - ongoing transportation study -

Recommend study @ neighborhood

Motorized vehicles on path - education program

- * Play equipment for preschool children

Parks Bureau would like to see this happen

- * Crosspath - regravel, not paved

Fitness trail - erosion material?

WILSHIRE PARK PUBLIC WORKSHOP 3/5/90

Path has been regraveled

*Traffic Plan - recommend further study beyond stop sign @ 37th.

Input from Little League

Bicycles ride onto 35th & Shaver at high speed
Barriers @ entrance possible solution

Lighting - handled in bid process by City
Lighting 1) or equal with fitness trail in priority
Tot lot higher priority than lighting?

*Watering to be done more uniformly

Priorities

1. Lighting
2. Fitness trail - 1990
3. Pavilion remodel
4. Tot lot
5. Landscape buffer
6. Irrigation
7. Miscellaneous improvements

Petition submitted to City for "No Parking" signs.

Plans

Wilshire Park 1990

Appendix C

