

## **Miami Beach Community Park (Former PAR 3) Plan Number DRB17-0125**

### **Design Review Application -Final Letter of Intent (Revised 07/06/2017)**

The City of Miami Beach plans to develop the 19.4 acre former PAR 3 Golf Course located at 2300 Pine Tree Drive, Miami Beach, Florida as a natural passive public park that will open daily from sunrise to sunset. Proposed elements include a central lake; open meadow and informal open play field areas; landforms; unlit tennis courts (6) with a tennis facility building that includes an office, storage and restrooms; children's playground; dog park; boardwalks and pathways; security lighting; vita course and fitness cluster; community garden; planting with irrigation; and parking for approximately 90 cars.

The location of this Park creates significant opportunities and challenges. Surrounded by a single family neighborhood, Miami Beach High School, the Hebrew Academy, and the Youth Center, the Park space is unique in that it's one of the only large, open green spaces in the center of Miami Beach.

The park site is bound on the north by West 28th Street, the west by Prairie Avenue, the east by Pine Tree Drive and a combination of single and multifamily buildings, the Scott Rakow Youth Center and The Daughters of Israel Mikvah. To the south, the property abuts Miami Beach Senior High School, Miami Beach Public Works Department and the Hebrew Academy. To the north and west, there is a single family residential neighborhood. The Miami Beach Golf Course is one block to the west. In addition, there are numerous civic and cultural facilities, including the Miami Beach Public Library, Bass Museum of Art, Miami City Ballet, Miami Beach Convention Center, Miami Beach Botanical Gardens and Holocaust Memorial in close proximity to the park. The site is also served by public transit with two bus stops located along Pine Tree Drive. The park site is also well connected to the City's designated Prairie Avenue bike route in the northwest corner.

Analysis of the PAR 3 involved site research, analysis, and synthesis to generate a holistic understanding of the existing site conditions to determine the most appropriate steps to transform this site into a passive park to serve the community of Miami Beach. The PAR 3 site and the adjacent developed area were investigated to reveal spatial and contextual relationships between the future Park and its program development. The site analysis process revealed opportunities and constraints while informing design strategies derived from an understanding of this unique place, its history, materials, human, cultural, and natural factors. Synthesis of this information in tandem with client and community input is the framework for developing conceptual strategies for the Community Park design.

The history of the PAR 3 Site and the surrounding neighborhood was considered for both aesthetic inspiration and functionality. The former use of the site (in an abstract way) has provided inspiration to create bold landforms that recall the swirling and undulating geometries of the historical Golf Course, the first in Miami Beach and second in Miami-Dade County. In response to the history of the surrounding neighborhood's character and land use, the City will create primarily a passive park that preserves landmark specimen trees and pastoral spaces. Due to its location adjacent to two schools and the Scott Rakow Youth Center, the park provides a unique opportunity to inspire and educate our children about ecology and the benefits of land stewardship, as well as a place to play.

Past use of the site as a golf course, including the routine application of turf maintenance chemicals and other recent activities have prompted the need for environmental testing to be reviewed by the County's environmental regulatory agency RER/DERM. Based on the findings and recommendations of the recent Environmental Site Assessments, design elements have been incorporated into the proposed concept plans to mitigate the presence of arsenic found that exceed acceptable levels for park recreational use.

In addition to the history of the site, its surrounding uses, the existing specimen magnificent banyan trees, rubber trees as well as other native and non-native species of trees and palms have been considered as opportunities and landmarks for the design of the park.

The Park's design will not only provide a variety of recreational opportunities in a beautiful landscape, but it will also address and provide a sensible response to sea-level rise and climate change, so important in our community. We are taking an ecological approach to large-scale open space design in the midst of a coastal community, while celebrating our incredible diversity of flora and fauna here in South Florida.

The Mission Statement was established to guide the design process and create a Park Vision:

**“A Passive Park of natural beauty for community enjoyment and enrichment, reflecting our island’s culture and ecology, while serving as a model of sustainability, stewardship and resilience.”**

As a result of the site analysis and research, three principal underlying themes were incorporated to guide the design process.

1. **Reflect and Honor the Historical / Cultural context** of the site, recalling the sweeping Landforms and geometries of a Golf Course - only without the Golf! And preserving the already impressive stand of existing trees.
2. **Be Sustainable and Resilient** in its design and maintenance, esp. in terms of Ecology, Water Quality and Stormwater Management.
3. To be a place to **Reconnect and Learn about our natural habitat**, attracting people and wildlife, CREATING BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND ECOLOGICAL BALANCE.

The Park's location and surrounding land use were major factors in determining the appropriate locations for various park program elements as defined in the RFQ, which were fundamental in creating the overall character of the park. The most important site/land use factors influencing the park's design were:

1. Pine Tree Drive, a major artery with 4 lanes of traffic and additional turning lanes and public transportation and several Public uses close by (the Scott Rakow Youth Center, a Church to the North, The Mikvah and the Hebrew Academy, the Fire Station, a Hotel and Multifamily residential) as the vehicular, most active edge of the park, on the park's east side.
2. The single family residential neighborhood, Prairie Avenue and 28<sup>th</sup> St. to the park's north and west.
3. Two schools and the Public Works facilities. This area is a transition area and is addressed as such, creating a beautiful planting buffer between the school and the park and using the tennis courts as a screen to the Public Works Facility material storage and parking areas, along the park's south boundary.

One of the first challenges (not only physical but also economical) was the soil contamination. To address the challenge the excavation of a lake was used as one of the strategies to provide a source of onsite acceptable fill, and the creation of land forms are both ways to provide a suitable soil cap in which to mitigate and provide a barrier against the arsenic contaminated soils.

Based on these strategies the following park features were developed:

- **CENTRAL LAKE “Water Feature”**
  - Water is crucial to our sub-tropical ecology; shoreline habitats are the most biologically productive places on earth.
  - Central Water Feature (Fountain in the Plaza) – a focal point to unify park spatially and visually,
  - “reaches out” to 4 “corners” of the community.
  - Learn about our ecology walking the shoreline,
  - Create stormwater retention and improve water quality of the site,
  - Provides **BIO-DIVERSITY**, creating multiple habitats of flora and fauna.
- **BANYAN ISLAND**
  - Existing Specimen Rare Small Leaf Rubber Tree as a focal point,
  - Create a place of wildlife refuge birds, etc.,
  - Special observation area to enjoy vistas, water life, etc.,
  - Key feature also accessible through boardwalk by maintenance vehicle,
  - Natural stone rip-rap bank and stepping edge to water.
- **OPEN MEADOW/PLAY AREAS**
  - Surround the Lake and broaden the perception of open space,
  - Decentralized around park, allowing for functional/programmatic diversity; park users can fly kites, picnic, play ball, fly drones, etc. in different areas simultaneously,
  - Additional open play was sited along the SRYC to increase the possibility of open play for that facility.
- **HILLS**
  - Higher “hill” sited to maximize “sunset” views and other activities,
  - Forming an amphitheater for school open classes, small informal outdoor performance, or even a wedding ceremony with the sunset behind it,
  - To provide additional recreational open play, other types of opportunities and enhanced views of the park, sky and surrounding space,
  - Shape Lake “cut” into sculptural landforms while **HELPING TO BALANCE CUT & FILL**,
  - Cap existing contaminated soils.
- **PLANTING**
  - To preserve existing trees and add biodiversity, provide habitat and enhance visitor experience,
  - New planting emphasis on Native Trees, Palms, and to lesser extent, shrubs and groundcovers,
  - Add Flowering Tropical Trees and flower beds at Park Entries,
  - Provide shade and sun areas,
  - Planting selected for desired habitat (i.e. Littoral areas, hammocks, butterfly garden, lawns, etc.),
  - Minimize Fertilizer and Pesticide use, especially on Lawns.
- **DOG PARK**
  - Sited towards the East of the property in proximity to multifamily users,
  - Fenced, with Splash Pad,
  - Sited for mix of shade and sun,
  - Large Dog & Small Dog Areas.
- **TENNIS FACILITY**
  - 6 COURTS oriented N-S,
  - Tennis Office w/ Storage, Shade Structure & Grandstand,
  - 1 Bathroom (serves entire Park); FFE set at 9.0’ NAVD,
  - Easy access from both Schools: Miami Beach Senior High School, Hebrew Academy and Parking.

- **VITA COURSE**
  - 9 Station Vita Course and jogging trail on 0.5-mile Loop,
  - 1 Exercise Equipment Cluster,
  - Provides active edge to Park.
- **PLAYGROUND**
  - Elevate Grade to match elevation at SRYC, set higher than street for safety,
  - Equipment reflects the idea of transparency for safety (CPTED),
  - Designed to promote imagination, focus, challenge and to promote self-esteem,
  - Fenced for Safety,
  - Equipment to recall “the ropes” of the Banyan trees as well.
- **BOARDWALKS & PATHS**
  - Main Entries - NW corner at 28th St./Prairie Ave.; EAST side at Pine Tree Drive; SW corner at 28th St./Prairie Avenue (by High School),
  - Establish Pedestrian and Bike Linkages,
  - East Entry at existing Public Transit (Bus Stop) at Pine Tree,
  - Boardwalks designed to enhance access to water’s edge,
  - Other paths are designed to bring people up and around the hills,
- **PARKING, VEHICULAR & SERVICE ACCESS**
  - Main vehicular access (arterial connector) to the Park is on Pine Tree Drive,
  - Majority of off-street parking sited off Pine Tree Drive meeting all setback requirements. (75 spaces).
- **SAFETY**
  - Central Lake improves **Safety** by allowing for sweeping views and clean sight lines across the park, and sound carries over open water,
  - Landmarks and entry points at each Park “Corner” also creates a sense of orientation and a feeling of security,
  - Additionally, the City mentioned that this park may benefit by the City’s Park Ranger program, now being used in SPP and Flamingo Park and the use of Security Camera System.
- **SITE DRAINAGE CONCEPT**
  - The design of the site responds to imminent issues of storm water collection and sea level rise,
  - Create positive drainage towards the interior with the lake,
  - Large meadow-like spaces are created around the lake allowing for increased permeable areas.
  - Parking lots with pervious pavers for storm water improvement.