

Noe Courts Park
PARK IMPROVEMENT PLAN
Community Meeting #1 – May 15, 2013

Small Group Notes

Group 1

Opportunities

- Balance of kid/dog use needed
 - Separation opportunity
 - Dedicated pee zone?
- More dedicated play space for kids - older
- Small gathering space for families to picnic (5)
- Basketball well used - lower basketballs
- Beautify north edge
- Limit chainlink
- Trees on north side - create tunnel
- More space for children to play - older children
- More natural areas
- Informal ball area - 'clean'
- Increase square footage for play for kids
 - i.e., tennis court that only serves 2 people
- Lawn area – uninhabitable
- Picnic - grassy area desired for blankets
- Rarely see people in tennis courts - doesn't seem useful
- Need drainage - clay/water problems. Trash control - soil
- Restroom - yes!
- Connect playground to grass

Constraints

- ADA connection - "A" concept approved direction
- Noise - people hanging out
- 7-9 am, 4-7 pm dog time - people need to police their dog
- Tennis wall - echoes
- Time to divide
- More lighting - Elizabeth/Douglass corner problematic
- Number of homeless increased
- Perimeter planting clean up

Improvements

- Restroom harder to climb
- Bathroom location - less congested
- Shift basketball court to tennis location - allows continuous connection to lawn OR tennis area converted to play - fencing good as it protects from dogs
- Tennis backboard used
 - Multi-purpose, older
- Entry fence - eliminate

Group 2

- Dog and kid conflicts
- Ball games
- Lighting
- More lawn for people
- Keep basketball court
- Community needs to support all - kids, dogs, 50+, seniors
- Bike circuit - loop
- Separation between kids/people and dogs
- People drive to park to walk dogs

Group 3

- Place in lawn that's dog-free (sit and lie)
- Picnic tables
- Benches with wind protection and in sun. Current benches in shade
- Retaining wall at slope for wind protection
- Remove entry gates
- Lighting – discourages teen-age drinking in park
- No lights
- Homeless activity – concern with benches
- Teenagers allowed
- Accommodate smaller kids
 - Community gathering
 - Garden
 - Lawn for play
- Park hours?
- Resurface both courts
- ADA path for kid's scooters
- Remove part of gate at tennis court (dog use concern)
- West landscape strip dead space – how to make usable? Beautification
- Concern with graffiti access to house next to retaining wall
- Concern with off-leash dog vs. people in lawn area. Solution? Like terrace seating
- People don't use lawn, but a “a fact of life”
- Dance of shifting uses
- Like that bathrooms are easily cleaned – should also encourage more legit park use
- Improve sightlines for security
- Regulation signs
- Drinking fountain gets clogged. Better model?
- Decorative and playful elements on pathway

Group 4

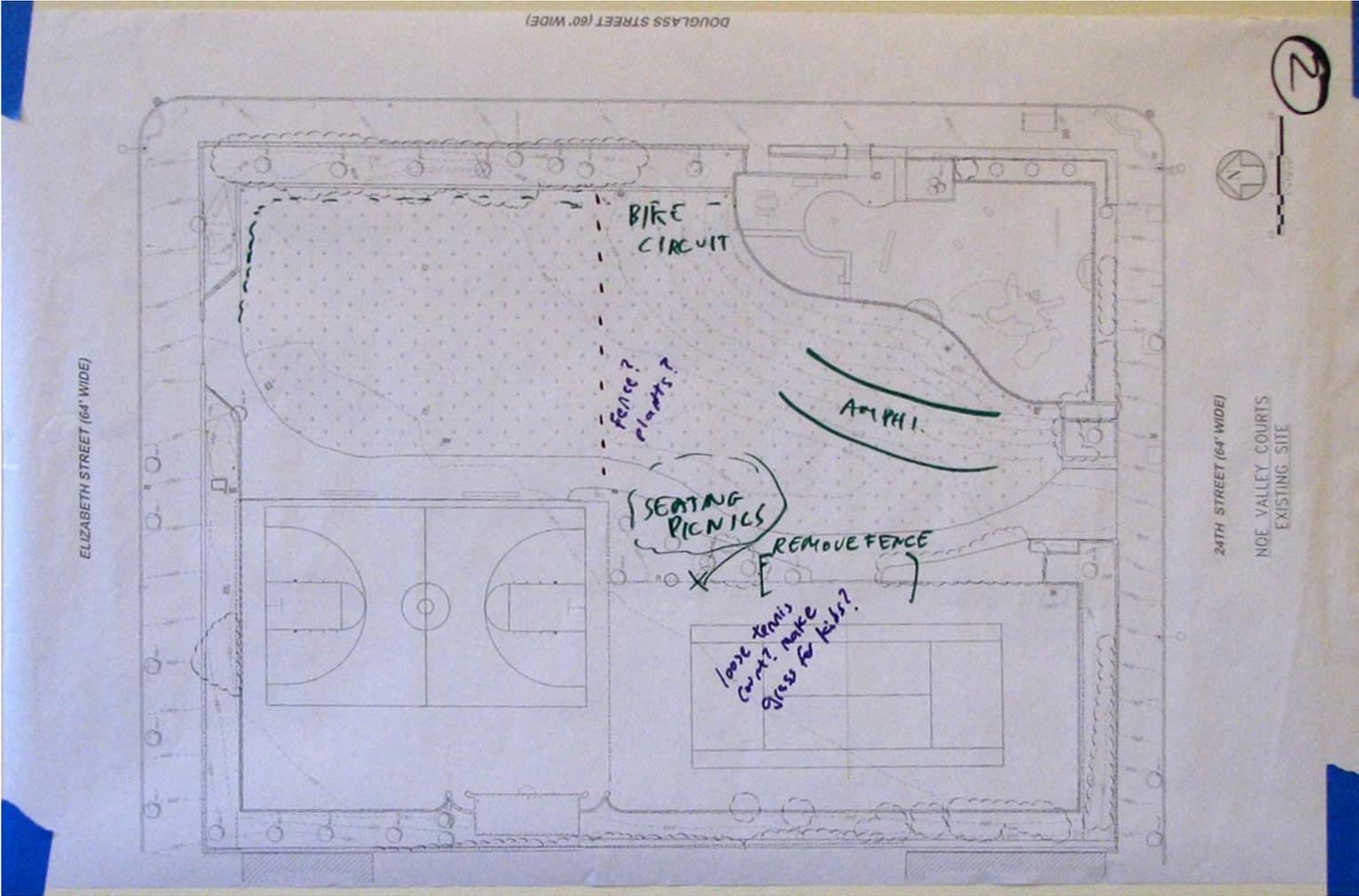
- Adult exercise (health)
- Grass space for people/space for dogs - issues
- Dogs interfering
- Native plants (*coff!*)
- Better trees, low maintenance
- More play equipment for older kids
- Better seating areas
 - More inviting
 - Some sun, some shade
- Tennis court underutilized - repair surface
- How to accommodate dogs - separate areas?
- Wind
- Picnic tables - flat area
- Combine courts
 - Multi-use courts?

Group 5

- Dog use is important
 - Need peaceful coexistence
 - Times for different uses
 - Dog/no-dog areas
- Eliminate tennis courts and move the basketball court (to where tennis courts are now)
- Plant with native grasses (like those used in center median on Guerrero) - save maintenance
- Need court space for all sports - don't lose that space
- Open area with wall
- Need walls or fencing for safety - don't remove entirely
- Picnic areas for locals are fine but - don't want this viewed as a destination park
- Concrete area at edge of lawn?
- Barrier needed
- Question: how do other park plans impact this?
- Question: are trees/relationship to position of water lines being considered?
- Don't exclude current users of the park
- Improvements must be easily maintained
- Having dog owners in park at all hours - enhances safety
- Lighting
 - Maybe lower rather than higher
 - Would discourage illicit uses
- New gate - the current one is not ADA-compatible
- Community should meet to develop rules
 - Set times for uses
 - Agree how to use
 - Keep welcoming to all users
- Dirt area? Hard to maintain. Fixing drainage will help
- Seating in both sun and shade; some seats with backs (better for seniors)

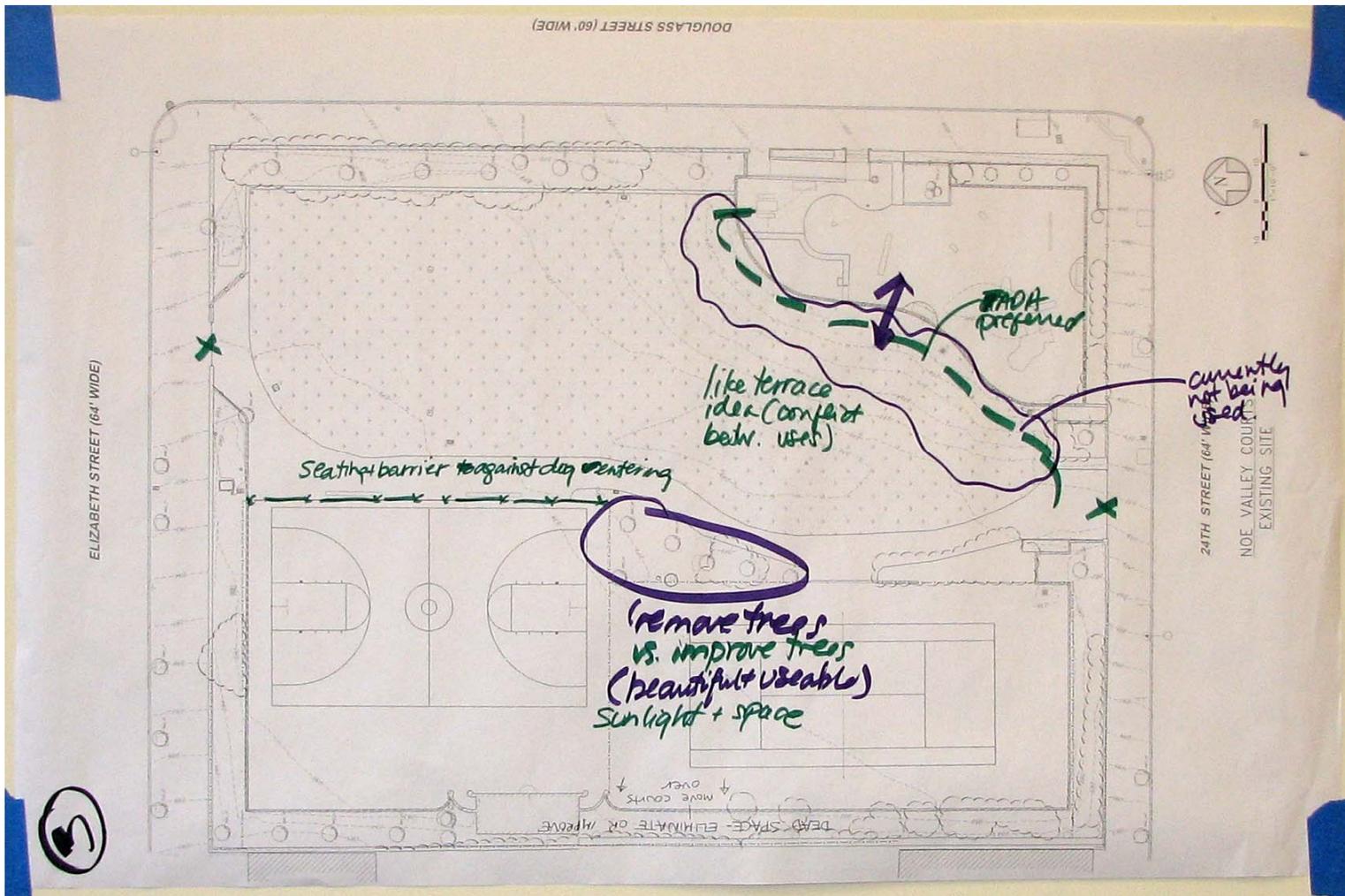
Small Group Maps

Note: Group 1 did not make any notes on a map.



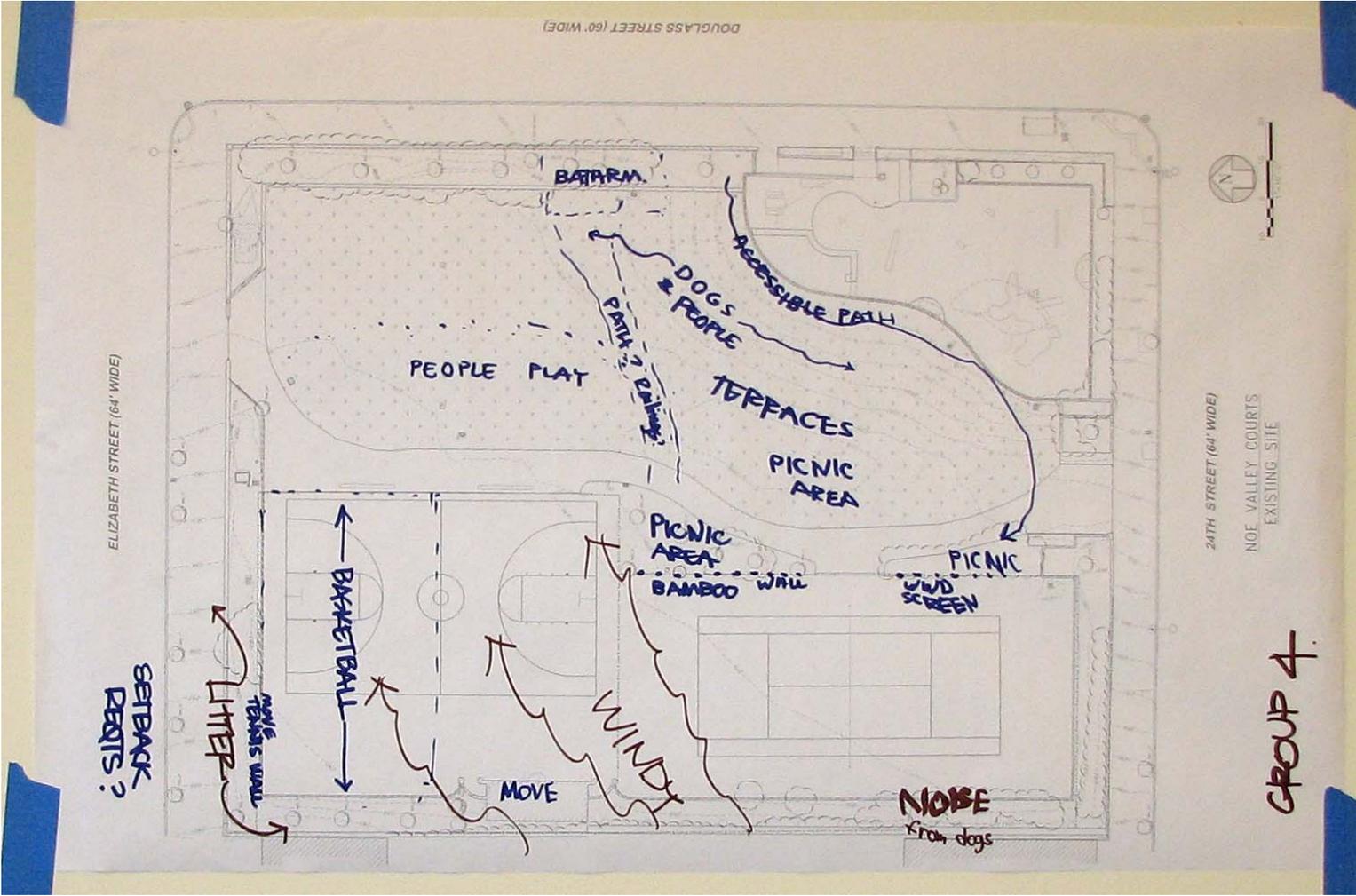
Group 2 - Map

Small Group Maps



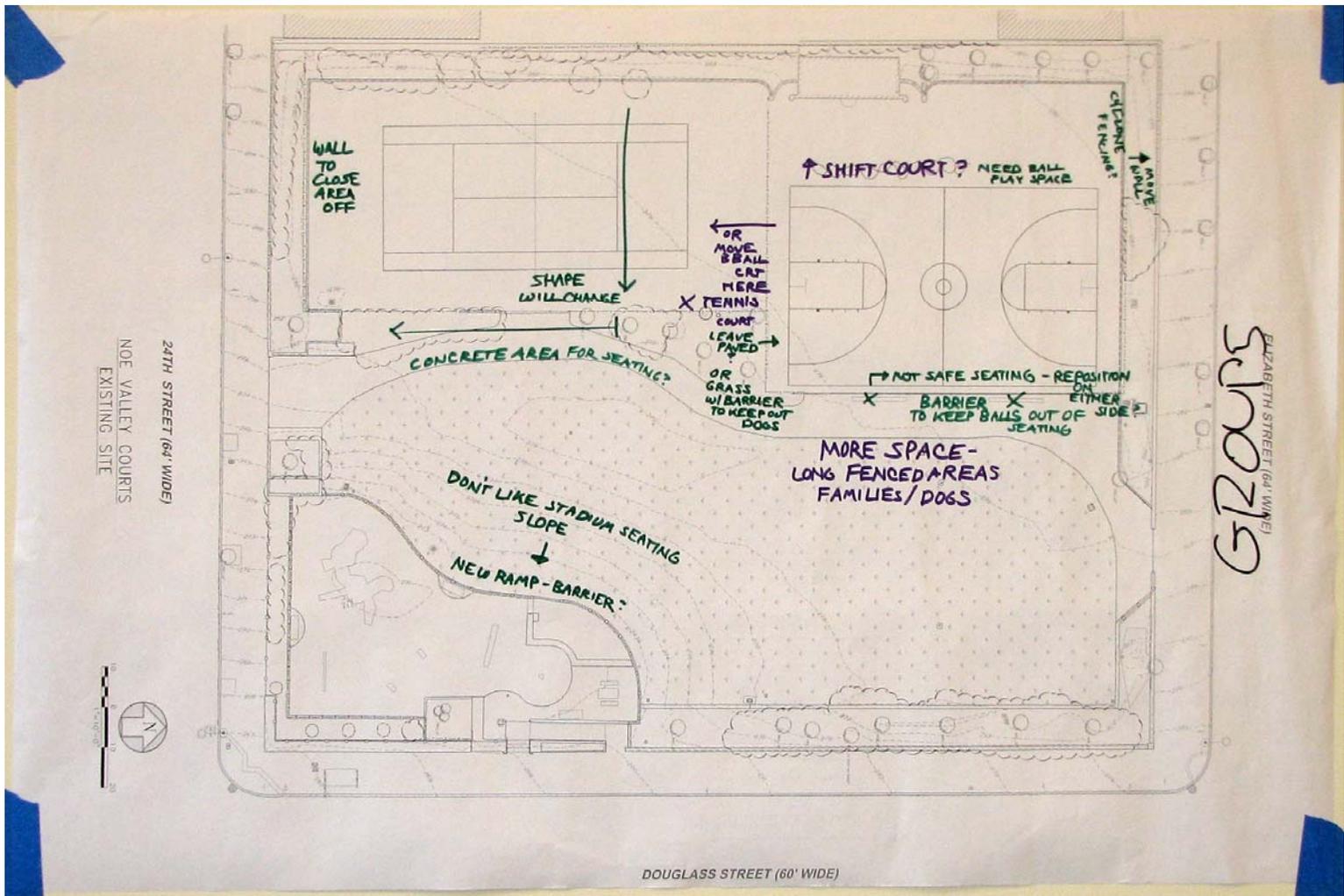
Group 3 - Map

Small Group Maps



Group 4 - Map

Small Group Maps



Group 5 - Map

Summary of Small Group Reports

- Make sure maintenance is do-able!
- Balance between places for people and places for dogs
 - Peaceful co-existence
 - Separation of people/kids and dogs space
 - Dog-free area on lawn
 - Shifting uses – if dogs are on court, leave when basketball players arrive
- Nighttime safety
 - Lighting
 - Discourage “less than savory” activities
- Some prefer not to have lighting added (immediate neighbors)
- Sporting areas/courts
 - Separate areas for different age groups
 - Make more multi-purpose
- Optimizing tennis court use
 - Resurfacing
- Tennis and basketball courts
 - Resurfacing courts – tennis courts in terrible condition, maybe would be more used if better
 - Lose tennis court for lawn area (human only)?
 - Tennis court needs to go – many others in area
 - Move basketball court one way or the other to free up room
- Value of tennis wall in terms of kids’ play
 - Need a fence – safety from traffic
- Remove gates on tennis court – discourage use as enclosed dog-run area
- Bathroom – make as easy as possible for ADA access
- Drought tolerant landscaping
 - Remove dangerous trees
- Accessible path
 - Preference expressed for Option A – winding path from playground to bathroom
 - Possible “Option C” – path encircling interior for wheelchairs and bikes
 - Usable by scooters
 - More interesting!
 - Add hopscotch lines or numbers to make more fun for kids
- Picnic tables
- Benches in sun (wind protection); current benches are all in shade
 - Retaining wall/slope for wind protection
 - Discourage homeless in park (don’t make benches too comfortable)
- More activities/accommodation for different age groups
 - Teenagers
 - Elementary-age kids 4-11 – not enough to do
- Set park hours
- Address dead space
 - Landscaping between houses and courts, discourage graffiti
- Lawn – path along edge if slope allows
- Terraced area on hill to discourage dogs
- People don’t use lawn

- “Flow of use” – self-policing community
- Like easy-to-maintain bathrooms
- Improve sight lines!
- Not a destination park – for current users and neighborhood

Comment Cards

1. What do you consider to be some important opportunities for improving Noe Courts Park?

- To not discourage any current park users from continuing to do so. If more people are to be attracted to the park, the “density” of the tennis area is too low to retain, given the small footprint of the park. (I realize these are two contradictory desires.)
- Improve grass but also have a separated area of grass for humans only. Keep a larger grassy area adjacent to basketball court and dog friendly area. More and varied seating – benches, picnic tables.
- To enforce the leash law.
- The single most important issue is the intersection of dog space and people space. We need dedicated space for people that is grassy. People, kids, etc. currently cannot use the grassy areas for any purpose whatsoever.
- Removing existing fences, clean up grass, add picnic and sitting area. Making an environment that felt safe and healthy for children and elderly.
- Improve the drainage
- Clear up the shrubs
- Maintain the multi-use area for families – including dogs.
- Split the park in half – maybe half of it for people and kids – the other half for dogs
- Increase ability to use the park outside daytime hours
- Use of grass area for sports (like volleyball)
- Dogs on leash – place for children to play outside of playground
- DRAINAGE!
- Better maintenance
- Resurfacing of basketball court
- Bathrooms
- Creating a lawn space for kids.
- Also, please keep the basketball court. Kids and adults use it a lot.
- Repurposing current tennis court – gathering area for people, remove fence
- Solving the dog issue. Tough because neighbors with dogs have a strong, great community but it keeps others away.
- Improve usability for elementary school age students. Make the ADA paths winding and gently sloped so kids can ride scooters on them. Add planting areas where kids can play in the flowers. Add terracing and chess table areas as described in the COF proposal. Better and more seating!
- Restrooms
- Drainage (I question the current plan). Well-system or pump? Drain!
- Containing the off-leash dog run that it has become. As a non-dog owner, I don’t see a place in the grassy area for me.

1. What do you consider to be some important opportunities for improving Noe Courts Park?

- Enlarging the kids area
- Add lighting (low level) along paths
- Lighting, limit hours of use
- Mix use area for kids/dogs
- Multi-use for all the neighbors. Remember all the people who use it now and why and don't drive them away. There is a way to add and include by sharing.
- Resolve conflicts between off-leash and others users.
- Resurface tennis court
- Make space for seniors
- Would be lovely to have a space I feel my family is welcome. Great opportunity for community space.
- Sustainable water treatment: infiltration, detention. Water garden, dry wells as an educational tool.
- Allow people to use park (dogs have made it uninhabitable)
- Is tennis court optimal use of space? Remove!
- Optimize sun to consider lit area for evening (safety)
- Beautify the gates and fence with craftsman-style gate and native plants as "fences"
- Provide more play space for children other than the toddlers served by the playground.
- Enhance the natural plantings around perimeter rather than removing them. We need more greenery, not less. Our kids need this!
- Clear trees/improve landscaping for more sun
- Improve quality and configuration of seating
- Segregated area for human only use, allowing other areas for dogs
- Increasing area for children to play
- Increasing area free of dogs that is clean and available to picnic and play in the grass.
- Things that are most useful to the people we want to live in the neighborhood. We should be making our neighborhood a more desirable place to live as a result of the improvements.
- Love the idea of it being a gathering place for local residents to go and meet one another and interact. It shouldn't be a "destination" park.
- Fixing the restroom is great.
- Landscaping/plants is great.
- Lawn needs better care and upkeep.
- Maybe a special area for dog toileting – leaving the rest of the park for running around.
- Provide access for non-dog use for people who want to enjoy the limited outdoor space without animals
- It is essential to make the park accessible to dogs. The dog park is the single most important builder of community we have in Noe Valley.
- To repurpose the tennis court, which is rarely used for tennis, into a multi-purpose play area for a wider range of users.
- Such a small pocket park should not have off-leash dogs dominating the entire lawn area. The rest of us would like to use a lawn area not smelling of pee and poo.

2. What are the most significant constraints or issues you think the Park Improvement Plan should address?

- Fences between sitting benches adjacent to basketball court, so that balls don't hit the folks sitting on the benches.
- The number of different uses for Noe Courts, and its small size. The number of off-leash dogs that use the park, which will ruin any lawn.
- I am afraid that as long as dogs are allowed off leash, any improvements made will be quickly ruined. Also, the same people currently not using the park will continue not using the park.
- Create more green space, remove the tennis court in favor of green space with no dogs
- Drainage
- Ability for multiple uses concurrently, especially dogs sharing space with people
- Dogs not on leash
- DRAINAGE
- Lights
- Take out tennis courts (take up 1/3 of park with very little usage)
- Moratorium on dog runs – why?
- Has to accommodate children and dogs
- Dogs – where should they be so others without dogs can use it as well.
- Places for older kids to play.
- Tension between off leash dogs and other users of the grassy area. Right now it's basically just a muddy off leash dog run. When you improve the drainage and add terraced areas you can sit on, more people (not dogs) will use the grass.
- Promise to main garbage control (closed)
- Promise to assist in rat control. (contained)
- Per above...that it is de facto an off-leash dog run. I'd be supportive of enforcement of the leash laws.
- Extent of OFF LEASH dog use; it dominates the current lawn area – would like to see it constrained, one way or another
- Need for shared space.
- Moratorium of off leash areas
- Drainage – how much is due to root intrusion
- Space – it's a tiny park.
- Cleanliness – park is filthy. Maintenance issue.
- Needs zoning – clean area for families (not whole park – just some of it)
- Grass not welcoming for humans.
- Usability, budget, durability
- Separation (safety from 24th Street)
- Get the dogs out (or contained)
- Continuously enhance multi-use opportunities; love the idea of seating that is elderly appropriate.
- Limited space, think about what uses attract the most people as opposed to tennis?
- Drainage
- Dogs off leash in huge numbers taking over ALL of the open grassy areas.

2. What are the most significant constraints or issues you think the Park Improvement Plan should address?

- Seating/gathering areas
- Dog use or non-use
- Enabling use of sloped area is critical – let's use the slope for something – stadium seating is great! Slide to get to kid's park?
- Ongoing maintenance – plants/grass, restroom, court surfaces, fences?
- Dog use/impact of dog use on the lawn – dog scratching and urine ruins the lawn, and having at least a portion of lawn where people could sit and relax and picnic where dog do not go – i.e., dog-free. Even when owners clean up poop, remnants remain, as does urine. So, having a separate area for dogs is very important!
- Find ways for non-parents and non-dog owners to use a space that, at present, is not.
- Drainage
- Native grasses
- Honor existing patrons
- We must respect the popularity of the park as a destination for dogs. Ignoring the hundreds of residents who bring their dogs to the park (and have for decades) will lead to neighborhood strife.
- Dog activities that make the lawn area, which is the largest park space, very user unfriendly. Need enforcement of dogs on leash.
- The chainlink fence made the park esthetically unappealing.
- Find additional money so the tennis courts can be renovated. That's the reason not being used because courts not being playable.

3. What other specific improvements would you like to see at Noe Courts Park?

- Take out the tennis courts. They are barely used. And even when they are, it's only two people, occasionally four.
- Lights at night.
- Drainage problems need to be addressed.
- Some lighting would add safety, and discourage night-time dog owners that don't "curb" their dog.
- Having it a designated off-leash time for example between 6-9 am and 5-8 pm daily.
- Better gardening
- Avoiding the urge to stuff more things into the park, like tables and tiers.
- I believe there are dramatically more people looking to use the park than dogs, and that humans should take priority over dogs in general.
- Drainage
- Lighting
- Resurfacing of basketball and tennis courts
- Put a fence up to divide the park, hedges to delineate people areas
- Path for ADA access to bathrooms should go around the perimeter of the park not up the slope
- LIGHTING! In late December, it is dark by 5 p.m. Self-contained solar lights with timers

3. What other specific improvements would you like to see at Noe Courts Park?

would allow park use later especially night use for tennis and basketball. Motion sensors could be used to deter vandalism.

- “Officially” allow off leash dog use
- Better policing at night from drinkers.
- Lawn space for kids
- Dog/no dog zoning. The green space is essentially a dog toilet. While most owners are good and pick up after their pets the total lack of children or families using this speaks to most people’s discomfort with playing, crawling or sunbathing on the grass.
- Picnic tables
- Keep basketball court area
- It looks so ugly – make it pretty (but that’s what you’re doing – so thank you!)
- Fix the broken lock/latch on the gate to the playground! Kids can push open the gate to the sidewalk!
- My 5 year old daughter begs for “big girl swings”
- Consider art or patterns on the ADA path – hopscotch squares! A maze!
- No off-leash dogs. Animal control weekly policing – to write tickets.
- Alternative surface to grass: mulch
- Restroom – I do love the neo-classical restroom design although I certainly appreciate the functionality of the contemporary design. Can we blend the two?
- Wind screen
- Enforcement of whatever restrictions exist or may be adopted in the future.
- More picnic tables/benches
- Keep basketball court and space for skating/biking
- Community session to develop community use “rule”
- Better plants (remove unhealthy, dangerous trees)
- Plantings that are attractive.
- Resurface tennis court!
- Nice to have more ____ (illegible)
- Nice to open up space – no gate etc.
- Elderly/non-dog people welcome – chess area great idea.
- I’d like to be able to enjoy with my toddler daughter and my dog.
- Better connectivity between playground and lawn access
- Get the dogs out
- Dogs in Noe Valley are there to stay!
- The kids will become teens – what do they want?
- Resurface court area (put basketball area where tennis court is)
- Multi-use hard top for kids instead of tennis courts
- More climbing trees
- More natural hide and seek spaces for older kids
- Resurface/repair the tennis court or dig it up and replace with grass/lawn
- Lighting for more winter use
- A large grassy area where families can picnic and children can play in the grass safely.
- Can we have things that draw people together? Move night in the park, grilling area, mobile

3. What other specific improvements would you like to see at Noe Courts Park?

- food/drink cart?, picnic tables
- What about a slide or sloped area to get to kids play area?
- Educational aspects for kids? That use the slope? Science education opportunity? Cal Academy or Exploratorium?
- Possibly make the ADA path decorative in some way that could either be pretty and/or create an increased play option for kids in the patterns.
- Multiple uses for areas. e.g. tennis court – if it is kept – is available for other uses too. Tennis court at certain times, basketball at another? Use time as an extra dimension for usages.
- Fix gate to kids playground
- I would like to see less shredding foliage near the courts. The fallen leaves make sports on the courts dangerous because people can slip on them.
- Lights for evening use.
- Get rid of chainlink fences (Elizabeth and 24th St.), gates
- More lighting
- Drainage
- Dead area on the northside behind the basketball net
- More gathering space for people (chairs/tables)
- Get rid of shrubs along Douglass Street
- More places for all age groups to enjoy. Picnic tables and lawns to use free of dog pee and poop.