MONTROSE POINT
SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Lincoln Park
Chicago, Illinois
AGENDA

Introductions
Review of Master Plan
Existing Conditions
Problematic Conditions
Pathways
Entries
Fencing
Water Feature
Landscaping
Other Potential Features
Discussion
INTRODUCTIONS

Chicago Park District

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REVIEW OF MASTER PLAN

Montrose Point
Site Improvements

Phase I
Implementation of
the Montrose
Point Master Plan

Lincoln Park
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Peggy Notebaert
Nature Museum
Chicago, Illinois
September 20, 2017
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Existing Conditions - Vegetation
Facilities Improvement Plan
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Management Units
5. vision

1. Entrances

Entrances are an opportunity to shape visitors’ perceptions of Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary so that they treat the habitat within with appropriate respect. Gateway features, clearly posted rules, and interpretive signage will mark the transition from the typical, urban park setting of Lincoln Park to the unique, world-class bird habitat within Montrose Point. Directional signage will be added to make it clear how the site is to be accessed. In order to prevent cyclists from riding through the park, accessible stiles could be installed at all entrances.

Primary Entrance

Features: A bird-themed, artisan designed and built gateway structure would highlight the unique habitat within. The section below provides one possible example of the type of structure that could be installed.
Location: Primary public access will be from West Montrose Drive.

Secondary Entrances

Features: Every entrance should have signage that welcomes visitors, provides interpretive information, and clearly communicates the park’s rules.
Location: The number of entrances to Montrose Point should be limited to prevent the creation of informal paths and protect the habitat. Most existing entrances will be maintained, but a few will be abandoned.

Entrances

Primary Entrance: Bird-themed, artisan designed gateway with identity signage
Secondary Entrance: Identity and wayfinding signage
2. Trails and Accessibility

The proposed trail system follows the alignment and layout of existing paths. Paths will be enhanced and stabilized according to use and accessibility. Some existing paths will be closed to create larger, contiguous habitat areas.

Primary Path: Crushed Stone (0.8 miles)
*Features:* Compacted, finely graded, crushed stone provides a stable, easy to navigate surface in wet and dry conditions. Stone or concrete block should be used to define the edge and keep the crushed stone in place.

Secondary Path: Mulch (0.6 miles)
*Features:* Wood mulch provides a soft walking surface that fits with the natural setting of Montrose Point and prevents excess erosion along foot paths. Mulch will need to be replaced every two to five years, but this may not be problematic since wood mulch is readily available to the Chicago Park District. Timbers can be used to define the edge of the mulch paths.

Trails and Accessibility

Primary Trails: 7’ wide, fencing, ADA compliant
Secondary Trails: 4’ wide, fencing as appropriate
3. Fencing and Edge Treatments

A wide variety of fencing materials are in use currently at Montrose Point. This plan proposes more durable types of fencing to define the perimeter of the area and to protect and control access to various restoration areas within the site.

Perimeter Treatment
Features: The perimeter treatment fencing is intended to identify the edge of Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary and to direct visitors to enter the site only at designated locations. Split rail fence is currently used to define the western edge of Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary. Precast concrete post and board fence would provide a more durable alternative in keeping with the current aesthetic.

Fencing to Define Trails
Features: Heavy manila rope suspended between wooden posts should be used to limit access to sensitive habitat areas. This type of fencing is intended to provide a cue to typical park users such as birders and photographers to respect these landscapes. Rope fencing like this is currently used to protect restoration efforts in other locations within Lincoln Park. The cross-sections on the proceeding page show how the rope fence could be located in relationship to the trails.

Rope fencing may not prevent illicit use of natural areas at Montrose Point. However, it will clearly mark which areas are appropriate for public use so that security personnel and other park users can easily identify when individuals are making inappropriate use of the park.
5. Open Water Element

The existing water feature, commonly referred to as the “bird bath,” provides an important component of the habitat as well as the visitor experience. The open water and adjacent wet landscapes provide water source for birds to drink and bath in, as well as varied soil moisture that supports greater plant diversity.

In order to sustain over time, the water feature and associated landscape should be stabilized and become reliant on local water sources and renewable energy. In terms of the physical structure of the bird bath, stakeholders suggested a prairie stream to create a variety of habitat conditions for diverse bird species.

Prairie Stream
Prairie stream will include an open water pond area surrounded by a wetland shelf with occasional limestone outcroppings to define the perimeter. The emergent wetland shelf will also serve as a safety ledge around open water. The pond should be deeper than the typical frost depth in the Chicago area (four feet) in order support aquatic life over winter. The pond and stream should be lined with clay in order to ensure that pond holds water. Other alternatives that could be explored during a detailed design phase include concrete and rubber liners.

Water will be pumped from the pond to the head of the stream via a solar powered pump. The stream should include shallow rocks and sandy areas for birds to interact with water. Birds and people will be attracted by the sound of water falling over riffles and shallow rocky areas along the stream.

Open Water Element (Expanded Water Feature)
Increased size
“Pond” and “stream” components
Improved user access with boardwalks over water
EXISTING CONDITIONS
Main entrance off of West Montrose Harbor Drive lacks presence and sense of arrival.
The arrival space beyond the main entrance, past the “Magic Clump” on the right, with the “Magic Hedge” on the left, and the meadow beyond, is open and inviting.
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The wide woodchip path on the east side of the Magic Hedge is the most heavily used path on Montrose Point.
A deadfall tree provides an excellent bird perch adjacent to the wetland.
The wildflower meadow is spectacular by mid-summer, and would only be improved with a smoother, more regular, all-season, ADA compliant walking surface.
Tree canopies span pathways and create natural ceilings above the paths and provide welcome shade.
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A dirt pathway and tunnel through the dense tangle.
Dappled sunlight and shade on the woodchip pathway and understory vegetation create an inviting woodland environment.
Tree groves act as thresholds and frame the view to the sweep of the southern meadow and the long view across the lake to the downtown skyline.
The perimeter wood chip pathways border the woodland and the “protected area” on one side and the stunning wildflower meadow on the other side, with views of the high-rise wall along Lake Shore Drive and the Chicago skyline.
Dune grasses and massive limestone blocks form the border between the perimeter concrete sidewalk and the Montrose Point Natural Area, on one side, and the Montrose Dune Natural Area, on the other.
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The butterfly meadow, which was seeded and plugged in spring 2017, has filled in well within less than one growing season.
PROBLEMATIC CONDITIONS
The main entrance is marred by visual clutter, with a proliferation of interpretive, informational, and regulatory signage in a variety of sizes, styles, formats, fonts, and mounting.
Dogs are prohibited within the natural area, and, despite extensive signage indicating that they are not allowed, they are a frequent and ongoing problem.
Bicycles are prohibited within the natural area, and, despite extensive signage indicating that they are not allowed, they are also a frequent and ongoing problem.
PATHWAYS

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Gravel (“Bike Trail Mix”) with Steel Edge

Visual – Blends will with natural settings
Environmental – Natural Material
Accessibility – Erodes with steep grades

Cost – Medium, primarily due to edging
Maintenance – Erosion, weeding, re-set steel
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Concrete

*Visual* – High glare

*Environmental* – Retains heat

*Accessibility* – ADA compliant, adapts to grade change

*Cost* – High

*Maintenance* – Minimal; 10-20 year life
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Asphalt

Visual – Blends will with natural settings

Environmental – Oil based material

Accessibility – ADA compliant, adapts to grade change

Cost – Medium

Maintenance – Minimal; 5-10 year life
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Asphalt

Visual – Blends will with natural settings
Environmental – Oil based material
Accessibility – ADA compliant, adapts to grade change

Cost – Medium
Maintenance – Minimal; 5-10 year life
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Woodchip (with no edge retention)

Visual – Blends will with natural settings
Environmental – Natural Material
Accessibility – Not ADA compliant; erodes easily

Cost – Low
Maintenance – Replenish every 1-2 years
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Woodchip (with timber edge retention)

Visual – Blends will with natural settings
Environmental – Natural Material
Accessibility – Not ADA compliant; erodes easily

Cost – Medium (Primarily due to Edging)
Maintenance – Replenish every 1-2 years
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Dirt
Remove or replace with alternative material
Desire paths
Remove and restore to natural condition with signage, barriers, and planting.
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LEGEND
- EXISTING WOODCHIP PATH
- EXISTING STONE PATH
- EXISTING DESIRE LINE
- EXISTING ASPHALT PATH
- EXISTING CONCRETE PATH
- EXISTING SITE ENTRY

Existing Pathways and Entries
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LEGEND

- EXISTING PATH LOCATION TO REMAIN

- EXISTING PATH LOCATION TO BE REMOVED

- EXISTING SITE ENTRY LOCATION TO REMAIN

- EXISTING SITE ENTRY LOCATION TO BE REMOVED

Existing Paths and Entries to be Removed
Proposed Pathway Alignment and Materials

**LEGEND**
- **8' WIDE ASPHALT PATH TO REPLACE EXISTING**
- **8' WIDE ASPHALT PATH IN NEW LOCATION**
- **5' WIDE WOODCHIP PATH TO REPLACE EXISTING**
- **EXISTING ASPHALT PATH TO REMAIN**
- **EXISTING CONCRETE PATH TO REMAIN**
- **PRIMARY SITE ENTRY**
- **SECONDARY SITE ENTRY**
- **PROPOSED WATER ELEMENT**
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Pathway Plan Enlargement
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Primary Pathway Section
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Secondary Pathway Section
PATHWAYS SUMMARY

Simplify Circulation

Remove Redundant Pathways

Remove Desire Pathways

Pave Primary Pathways with Long Lasting, ADA Accessible, and Low Maintenance Material (Asphalt Recommended)

Pave Secondary Pathways with Lower Cost Natural Material (Woodchip with Timber Edging Recommended)
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ENTRIES
Main entrance off of West Montrose Harbor Drive lacks presence and sense of arrival.
The main entrance is marred by visual clutter, with a proliferation of interpretive, informational, and regulatory signage in a variety of sizes, styles, formats, fonts, and mounting.
East of the main entrance is another, nearly redundant, entrance. This entrance should be removed for clarity, identity, and simplicity.
Further east is another, secondary, entrance. Due to the connection to the important perimeter path this entrance should remain.
On the south side is a secondary entry through the “revetment meadow,” which is a good connection between Montrose Point and the lakeshore, but lacks identity, sense of arrival, and signage.
On the east side is a secondary entry from the perimeter concrete walkway. It lacks identity, sense of arrival, and signage, there is extensive erosion, and the forked pathways are confusing. This entrance should be removed.
On the northeast is a secondary entry from the perimeter walkway. It lacks identity and signage. The limestone steps are good, and it provides a direct connection to the dunes natural area. Signage and identity improvements are recommended.
On the north is a secondary entry from the perimeter walkway. It lacks identity and signage. The limestone steps are good, but there is erosion on the path. Signage and identity improvements are recommended and measures to reduce erosion.
On the north is a secondary entrance to the Butterfly Meadow. This is an important entrance, but it lacks identity and signage. Signage and identity improvements are recommended.
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Proposed Entrances

LEGEND

PRIMARY SITE ENTRANCE
SECONDARY SITE ENTRANCE
PATHWAY NETWORK
Primary Entrance Plan: Indirect pathway to discourage bicycles, ADA compliant, tied into perimeter rail fence.
Primary Entrance Perspective: Overhead identity signage, indirect pathway to discourage bicycles, ADA compliant, large and visible symbols overhead summarizing prohibited activities, and detailed rules and regulations below.
ENTRANCES SUMMARY

Reduce the Number of Entrances

Establish One Primary Entrance

Reduce to Five Secondary Entrances

Bike Deterrent and ADA Compliant Entrance Design

Simplified Signage Highlighting Prohibited Activities

Comprehensive Signage Listing All Rules and Regulations
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FENCING
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Existing Rail Fence
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Existing Metal Post-and-Rope Fence
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Existing 4’ Wire Mesh Fence (Temporary Construction Fence)
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Existing Rabbit Fence
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Proposed Fencing

LEGEND
- WOOD POST AND ROPE FENCE (PRIMARY PATHS)
- PROPOSED RAIL FENCE (SITE PERIMETER)
- RAIL FENCE TO BE RELOCATED
- PATHWAY NETWORK
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Proposed Wood Post-and-Rope Fence
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Proposed Wood Post-and-Rope Fence With Painted Caps
Painted fence post caps could serve as a wayfinding device, for example, the “Red Trail”
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Proposed Wood Post-and-Rope Fence With Numbered Caps
Numbered fence post caps could serve as a location device, for example, “The sedge wren was last seen in the grass fifteen feet in from post #7”
FENCING SUMMARY

Rail Fencing Around Entire Site Perimeter

Wood Post-and-Rope Fencing Bordering All Primary Pathways

No Fencing Along Secondary Pathways

Potential for fencing to contribute to wayfinding and as a location device
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WATER FEATURE
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Existing Water Feature
Tall summer vegetation makes the water feature difficult to view.
The water feature is visible in spring before the plants grow to their mature size, but it is relatively small.
A nearby deadfall tree provides an excellent bird perch. The adjacent utility box is an eyesore.
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The adjacent woodland in the background provides an opportunity to conceal the water source of the expanded water feature.
Proposed Expanded Water Feature

- Boardwalk
- Dead Tree
- Stone Riffle, Typ.
- Shallow Pools, 2-6” Depth
- Short Meadow w/ Wildflowers
- "Pond" 4’ Depth Max
- Birding Blind (Future)
- Boardwalk
- Tall Meadow to Remain
- Asphault Path, Typ.
- Woodchip Path, Typ.
- New Trees

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Proposed Expanded Water Feature Perspective
The source or “stream” feeding the water feature could appear from the shade and depth of the woodland.
The water feature would have open water, stone weirs or riffles to create and define pools, and vegetated edges.
Terraced wetland pools provide bird bathing, drinking, and foraging opportunities.
A boardwalk over the source “stream” or the main body of the water feature would allow users to interact more closely with the habitat.
Area surrounding the water feature could be planted as a short grass meadow for greater visibility.
The water feature basin itself could be planted with a mix of sedges and forbs.
WATER FEATURE SUMMARY

Enlarged Water Feature Area

Range of Water Depths

Water Feature to be More Visible

Water Feature Source or “Stream” Begins at Hidden Location within Adjacent Woodland

Enhanced Bird Viewing and Perching Opportunities
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LANDSCAPING
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In progress: Butterfly meadow
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Current: Eurasian Meadow and Tallgrass Prairie Restoration
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Current: Tallgrass Prairie with Tall Forbs
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Vision: Shortgrass Prairie
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Current: Degraded Woodland
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Current: Degraded Woodland
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Vision: Open Woodland with Diversity of Structure and Ephemerals
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Current: Dense Woody Thickets

Vision: Phased shrub replacements
**Current:** Magic Hedge and Magic Clump

**Vision:** Ongoing invasives control by volunteers
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Current: Revetment Prairie and Foredune

Vision: Ongoing Management
LANDSCAPING SUMMARY

Butterfly Meadow creation – in progress

Central Prairies – reduced height, increased diversity

Invasive species management led by volunteer stewards

Phased shrub replacements as individuals age out

Strategic shrub placement to support pathway changes

Ongoing management of established habitats
OTHER POTENTIAL FEATURES
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Special Feature Opportunities
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Heavy Timber Benches at Nodes

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Fallen trees can provide an inexpensive natural sculpture and a bird perch, while also adding verticality to a meadow.
A birding tower could provide an elevated perspective from which it would be easier to view birds in the tree canopies.
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Overlook areas create destinations within the natural area.
A sculptural bird blind is both a birding amenity and artwork.
A leaking water pipe along the magic hedge provides a small, *ad hoc* water feature that is attractive to birds, and could be expanded into a greater feature if the path were realigned around the wet area.
NEXT STEPS

Seeking Funding Opportunities
DISCUSSION