

# Village of Cuba St. Francis of Assisi Park Improvement Plan Community Input Report



Presented to the Village of Cuba  
November 28, 2012

by  
Healthy Kids, Healthy Cuba  
and  
Step into Cuba

At the request of the Village of Cuba Council, Healthy Kids, Healthy Cuba and Step into Cuba have gathered additional community input regarding the proposed improvements to the Village of Cuba St Francis of Assisi Park. Previously, we had obtained community input through a series of meetings held in Cuba. Chance Munns, a landscape architect working with the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center, developed the community ideas into three maps with descriptions of the proposed improvements. At the request of the Village Council last fall, we obtained additional input from the Cuba community on the Park improvement plan via a mobile display placed throughout Cuba in the Spring and Summer of 2012.

Beginning in April of 2012, the display (pictured below) was set up at one of seven stops for a minimum of one week each, with most being two weeks long. Stops included the Cuba Independent Schools, the Presbyterian Medical Services clinic, the Eichwald Center, the Cuba Senior Center, Jemez Electric Co-op, the Library, and the Village Offices. An email address was also provided on the display for community members, but no input was received via email.



The Village of Cuba St. Francis of Assisi Park Plan Mobile Display

## THE COMMUNITY RESPONSE

The *Village of Cuba St Francis of Assisi Park Comments* form asked respondents to choose *yes* or *no* from the list of options shown in the table below. Circling *yes* meant that they felt it should be included in the plan, and circling *no* meant that they felt that option should not be included in the plan. Since many did not answer yes or no for some of the options, we have calculated a non-response as well. The results for the survey are in the table below. A total of 41 community members provided input.

Option	TOTAL n=41			PERCENTAGE		
	YES	NO	NO ANSWER	YES	NO	NO ANSWER
Plaza/picnic space	35	0	6	85%	0%	15%
One-mile loop trail w/half option	34	1	6	83%	2%	15%
Basketball courts	32	3	6	78%	7%	15%
Horseshoe pits	30	4	7	73%	10%	17%
Amphitheater	30	7	4	73%	17%	10%
BMX course	29	6	6	71%	15%	15%
Ropes course	29	6	6	71%	15%	15%
Rain water harvesting system	29	3	9	71%	7%	22%
Safe route to schools	29	4	8	71%	10%	20%
Mud Festival	26	6	9	63%	15%	22%
Boulder Play	26	8	7	63%	20%	17%
Additional parking	25	7	9	61%	17%	22%
Bus drop-off zone	25	9	7	61%	22%	17%
Apple/pear orchard	23	7	11	56%	17%	27%
Thai chi/yoga area	23	10	8	56%	24%	20%
Eichwald Center addition	23	11	7	56%	27%	17%

As shown, a plaza space and picnic area had the most positive response, followed closely by the trail loop with a half option, basketball courts and horseshoe pits, but more than half of the respondents responded yes for all the options on the list. Some of the responses however, may help prioritize the elements of the plan once there is a better idea of the funding required in order to implement the plan.

In addition to the yes or no responses to specific elements of the plan, respondents were given two additional questions:

- 1. Do you want to tell us anything about any of the ideas?*
- 2. What other ideas would YOU like to see as a part of the park plan?*

We have summarized the responses here and provided direct quotes from respondents in italics.

In general, there was a great deal of enthusiasm from community members for the proposed park improvements. Respondents wrote that it is a “*very good plan*” and that the ideas “*are really great*”, “*supercool*”, and “*flippin’ awesome*”.

*“I think it is about time something wonderful is being planned!”*

*“Any improvements for our community here in Cuba. We need change”*

*“Do it. Be about it. Stop talking. Actions speak louder than words.”*

*“The Park improvements are great. The only change I would make is smaller more intimate lighting.”*

Safety concerns were expressed by one respondent, who wanted to be sure that persons under the influence of drugs and or alcohol were not at the park.

### **ENGAGING CUBA YOUTH**

The greatest amount of input focused on the need to provide activities for the youth in Cuba. Many respondents strongly urged for more facilities and activities focused on Cuba’s youth, and that weekend activities in particular are “*a must for our kids*”.

*“Adding activities for youth and teenagers is a must.”*

*“More activities for the kids here in Cuba since it's suppose (sic) to be a community center!”*

*“... these kids have nil, nada, and squat to do here in Cuba! Seriously, the kids need this park more than the adults do!”*

One respondent wrote that the BMX course “*would be wonderful for the kids to get up and get out and play*”.

### **AMPHITHEATER**

One respondent suggested that an amphitheater be used to have movie nights at the park, while another suggested this be built at the Sandoval County Fairgrounds instead.

## **EICHWALD CENTER**

While the Eichwald Center addition had the most *no* responses, many still had suggestions for improvements to the Eichwald Center, including a better workout area with weights and a section for yoga, tai chi, karate, jazzercise or Zumba. Several also suggested an area that could accommodate classroom seating and a large conference room which could also be used for social events.

*"I love the idea of adding on to the Eichwald Center. A bigger building for festivities would be great"*

Many saw the Eichwald Center addition as a great way to engage youth in Cuba, and suggested *"a more teen-friendly Eichwald Center"* where groups and clubs for teenagers could meet and participate in various activities would really help Cuba. Specific suggestions included installing windows in the original Eichwald building and to upgrade the bathrooms. Some concern was expressed that the current bathrooms in the Center are not well maintained.

Another commented that the Eichwald Center is often closed, so there needs to be more facilities and opportunity for outdoor activities.

## **APPLE / PEAR ORCHARD and PLANTS**

There was concern about the water and maintenance requirements for a fruit orchard, and one respondent suggested that the orchard should be constructed only if there was a rain catchment system established. One person wondered if the water well at the park could be used for irrigation, and if not, thought it should be sealed off. Another suggested that if there was not adequate water for fruit trees, that another type of tree would be nice.

*"More trees will make magic for all plans and all users. Call me for help selecting native species for the Park. Nature trail for native plant species; add some small water pools and birds will come too, also reptiles!"*

## **WALKING TRAIL**

Some suggestions for the walking trail around the park included paving the trail, One respondent requested that the trail be mulched during rainy times, while another suggested a *"walking surface softer than concrete or asphalt to lessen impact on joints/bones and reduce the chance for injuries"*.

## **MUD FESTIVAL**

One suggested that the Mud Festival could be put at the fairgrounds, while another suggested improvements be made to the mud bog area. There was concern that the Mud Festival *"uses a lot of water"*, and also some question as to what that area could be used for in the spring, fall and winter, since the Mud Festival is only held in the summer.

## **PLAYGROUND & OUTDOOR FACILITIES**

Many wrote that there should be improvements made to existing outdoor facilities at the park. Suggestions for the playground included slides, a merry-go-round, tether ball, better swings, and more jungle gym type equipment. A few respondents noted that the volleyball courts and baseball field needed to be fixed and enhanced.

Suggested additions to the park for physical activity and recreation included an obstacle course, and a safe bike trail around the park and extending around the Village of Cuba. Seven of the respondents wrote that there should be a skate park, and two suggested creating a space that could be used for rollerblading, and the addition of tennis and racquetball courts was also suggested.

Water and grass were mentioned several times. Some would like to see a pond for swimming, fountains, bird baths, a waterfall and even a water park! Several respondents recommended building an indoor community pool, which would be open year-round, with one specifically suggesting it would enhance the Cuba Independent Schools athletic department. Respondents wondered if the open space would have grass, and further suggesting a *“grassed area to play football”*.

A few suggested having somewhere to cook outside in the picnic area, so perhaps some grills for community use could be installed. Another suggested that there be more tables and benches located throughout the park, aside from those located next to the Eichwald Center, to accommodate community members using other areas of the park. Another suggested that a community garden be located at the park, however with one community garden already in Cuba, with another planned at the Cuba Schools, that may be a need that is met elsewhere in Cuba.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Opportunities for economic development included a flea market, which was mentioned by several respondents, with a possible added benefit of reducing “traffic hazards” from the yard sales currently held on US 550. Another was to set up a more permanent space for the very popular Cuba Farmers’ Market, which just completed its third successful year at the Park. As the market continues to grow, both in number of vendors and customers, this may be a valuable part of the park plan.

One respondent stressed the importance of involving local business in the implementation of the improvement plan.

*“I would like to see local contractors and business involved instead of getting big outside companies. KEEP IT LOCAL! GIVE THE LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS A CHANCE!”*

## **SPECIAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS**

One respondent requested that Fourth of July fireworks be displayed at the park. Another felt that the park should be utilized for the Summer Food Program, which provides free lunch to children.