Sleepy Hollow Improvements Focus Group

Focus Group Participant Worksheet

Welcome! Thank you for joining this focus group. Your lived experience and ideas will help shape the future of Sleepy Hollow, so it is accessible and usable for everyone.

This worksheet gives you an overview of what to expect, what topics we will cover, and what supports are available. You may also use this worksheet to take notes, type down thoughts, or draw ideas - either during the focus group or ahead of time.

# What to Expect

* The focus group will last **2 hours**.
* We will take a **10-minute break halfway through**.
* There will be **different ways to participate:** you can speak out loud or use your preferred input method
* The session will be audio recorded so facilitators can review the transcript for themes.
* You can share as much or as little as you feel comfortable.

# Agenda & Notes

## 1. Welcome & Introductions (20 minutes)

The goal of this focus group is to shape Sleepy Hollow, a ski and sports park in Des Moines, IA, so it truly works for everyone. This is more than checking boxes — it’s about learning from your ideas, your stories, and your lived experiences.

### **Ground Rules**

* Everyone’s experiences and voices are equally important.
* Share the time so everyone has a chance to contribute.
* Speak from your own perspective.
* It’s okay to disagree — please do so respectfully.
* What you share will help guide project planning, but no personal names will be used outside this group.
* You are welcome to take a break at any time.
* Are there any other ground rules you would like to add?

**Additional rules:**

### **Introductions**

We’d like each person to introduce themselves and share either their best or most challenging outdoor experience.

* **My best outdoor experience was…**
* **My most challenging outdoor experience was…**

## 2. Arrival & First Impressions (15 minutes)

**What to Do:**

1. **Listen to the description of Athene North Shore Park:** An aerial view of a park facility with marked accessible parking spaces and a designated drop-off zone.
   1. **Accessible parking (circles):** Eight accessible stalls are distributed across the main parking lot.
      1. Six stalls are located at both ends of the front parking rows.
         1. Two stalls in the front row are positioned near a ramp leading to the beach and equipment rental on one side of the lot.
         2. Two additional stalls in the front row are near another ramp that connects to the playground and beach on the opposite side of the lot.
         3. Two stalls are directly in front of the event center/building centrally located in the park.
      2. Two stalls are located in the back parking row near a native planting sensory path.
      3. One stall is located near the accessible kayak launch on the west side of the park, adjacent to the equipment rental area.
   2. **Drop-off area (oval):** The circular drop-off loop is located directly in front of the Des Moines Rowing storage building and adjacent to the adaptive pontoon, kayak, and rowboat launches, all of which are positioned to the right of the drop-off zone. This area provides a dedicated passenger loading/unloading point serving all program elements, including building access, water-based activities, and the surrounding amenities.
   3. **Accessible restrooms (square):** Five single-user restrooms are located throughout the facility. The southwest corner includes an adult-sized changing table and push-button entry. The southeast corner features right-side transfer access. Three additional restrooms are located on the north side (rear of the building), each with left-side transfer access; two include baby changing tables.
   4. **Concession and equipment rental (triangle):** Concessions and the equipment rental window are located on the southeast corner of the building.
   5. **Event center (heart):** The central event center offers indoor gathering space for community events, rentals, and programming.
   6. **Playscape (star):** Includes climbing timber, an accessible merry-go-round, roller slide, see-saw, splash pad, elevated slide and lookout, raised sand bed, chimes, and a pulse button.
   7. **Beach (diamond):** A sand beach area connected to the main parking lot and drop-off loop by accessible ramps, providing direct access to the shoreline and swimming areas.
   8. **Accessible watercraft launches (plus sign):** Adaptive pontoon, kayak, and rowboat launches are located adjacent to the drop-off loop on the east end of the park. An additional adaptive kayak launch is located on the west end of the park, providing multiple entry points for accessible water-based recreation.
2. **Touch the tactile map of Athene North Shore Park at Easter Lake:**
   1. Explore the raised features on the tactile map to get a sense of the layout of the park.
   2. Use the legend to identify symbols for accessible restrooms, concessions, event center, playscape, beach, and watercraft launches.
   3. Notice how the accessible parking, drop-off loop, and pathways connect to each program element.
   4. Digital option: Google My Maps – [Athene North Shore Recreation Area at Easter Lake Park](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1F-8B3WBxNPGZX5wPRkwkmkhvlKoSA2U&usp=sharing)
3. **Reflect on the following questions:**
   1. What helps make arriving at a park or recreation space easy?
   2. What gets in the way?
4. **Listen to the description of Riverview Park:** An aerial view of Riverview Park and the surrounding area. A pedestrian bridge crosses the river, connecting the east parking area to the park on the west side.
   * 1. **Drop-off area (oval):** A circular drive is located directly east of the pedestrian bridge, providing a designated passenger loading/unloading zone with the shortest access to the bridge and park.
     2. **Accessible parking (circles):** Accessible stalls are located in the parking lot adjacent to the circle drive, also positioned closest to the pedestrian bridge.
     3. **Accessible restrooms (square): Adjacent to the drop-off area and accessible parking is accessible restrooms.**
     4. **Pedestrian bridge over the lake (diamond):** Connects parking to the park’s program elements.
     5. **Program elements (triangles):** On the west side of the river: large open lawn with a stage structure at the north end, walking paths, and a playground with shade structures.
5. **Touch the tactile map of Riverview Park:**
   * 1. Explore the raised features on the tactile map to get a sense of the layout of the park.
     2. Use the legend to identify symbols for parking, accessible restrooms, and program elements.
     3. Notice how the parking and pathways connect to each program element.
     4. Digital option: Google My Maps – [Riverview Park](https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1nn49eUtyq0LOmZpENvVn-Nb90cOOBpE&usp=sharing)
6. **Share your responses to these questions:**
   1. What helps make arriving at a park or recreation space easy?
   2. What gets in the way?

## 3. A Day in the Lodge Scenarios (20 minutes)

**What to Do:**

1. **Listen to each of these scenarios and imagine yourself in it:**
   1. You want to sign up for and participate in a ski lesson.
   2. You need to find and use the restroom.
   3. You want to learn about Sleepy Hollow’s programs.
   4. You are hungry and want to order food.
2. **Think about the scenario.** Imagine yourself in that situation.
3. **Share your responses to these questions:**
4. What would help make this scenario successful?
5. What might be hard about this?
6. What would make you feel welcome?

## 4. Break (10 minutes)

## 5. Slopes, Trails & Outdoor Activities (20 minutes)

**What to Do:**

1. **Think about being outdoors at a ski hill, trail or recreation space.**
2. **Share your experiences with these questions:**
   1. What helps you feel safe outside?
   2. What makes it easier to find your way on trails or slopes?
   3. Describe what you might want Sleepy Hollow to have so you could feel confident outdoors.

## 7. Inclusive Programs & Community (15 minutes)

**What to Do:**

1. Share your responses to the following questions:
   1. Which programs would you like to see at Sleepy Hollow?
   2. What kinds of events would make you want to come back often?
   3. Have you joined a program elsewhere that worked really well? What made it successful?
   4. For each of the following programs, what should be considered to make them successful and welcoming?
      1. Skiing
      2. Snowboarding
      3. Tubing
      4. Snowshoeing
      5. Curling
      6. Camping
      7. Retail store
      8. Dining / Concessions

## 8. Survey Discussion (15 minutes)

## 9. Prioritization Activity (15 minutes)

**What to Do:**

1. Listen as the list of possible Sleepy Hollow improvements are read aloud.
2. Vote on your top priorities.
3. After everyone votes, we’ll see together which priorities rise to the top.

## 10. Wrap-Up & Next Steps (10 minutes)

**What to Do:**

1. Listen as we share back the main themes we heard today.
2. Hear about the next steps: how your input will be used and when you’ll get updates.
3. Share any final thoughts
4. If you’d like, you can also submit typed feedback to [mollywuebker@uncurbed-access.com](mailto:mollywuebker@uncurbed-access.com).

**My Final Thoughts:**