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May 16, 2026

Mr. Jolon Clark
Executive Director
Denver Parks and Recreation
jolon.clark@denvergov.org

Re: Playground Renovation at the Park on Tennyson Street

Dear Director Clark,

I am writing on behalf of BRUN to request your support in prioritizing a renovation of the playground at 4131 Tennyson Street (formerly known as César Chávez Park), and to offer BRUN's resources and community organizing capacity to help make it happen as quickly as possible.

The playground is one of the most-used public amenities on the Tennyson Street corridor, and we believe it is overdue for a meaningful upgrade that reflects the needs of our growing and changing community. With the removal of the park's name recently gaining so much neighborhood attention, this is the ideal time to reinvest in the physical infrastructure that will define the park's future, starting with the playground.

The Current Situation

The park on Tennyson Street was rehabilitated in 1998, and to our knowledge the playground equipment dates at least as far back as that effort - making it approximately 28 years old. The Tennyson streetscape project in 2012 brought welcome improvements to the park's edge, opening it to the street and adding the plaza, benches, and pedestrian infrastructure. But the playground itself was not updated as part of that work, and it has not been materially improved since the park was built.

The equipment is showing its age, and more importantly, given Berkeley's growth over the last several decades and the influx of young families, the playground no longer meets the needs of the neighborhood:

- **Capacity.** The playground is consistently overcrowded, particularly on weekends and during community events. Berkeley's population has grown significantly since 2005, with substantial new housing along the Tennyson corridor, and the playground is often over capacity.
- **Age range.** The current equipment is designed primarily for younger children. Older kids have few meaningful play options, which limits the park's usefulness for the many families with school-age children in the neighborhood.
- **Accessibility.** The playground does not meet modern standards for inclusive, ADA-accessible design. Children with physical disabilities, sensory processing needs, or

mobility challenges cannot fully participate. Denver's own Game Plan for a Healthy City identifies equity and accessibility as core principles, and this playground falls short of that standard.

- **Condition.** After nearly three decades of heavy use, the equipment and surfacing show significant wear. This community takes pride in this park, and the playground should reflect that.
- **Industry Standards.** The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's Public Playground Safety Handbook and the ASTM F1487 safety standard, the two primary frameworks governing public playground design, have both undergone multiple major revisions since this equipment was installed. Equipment built to 1998 specifications does not reflect current best practices for fall protection, surfacing, entrapment prevention, or accessibility.

A Documented Safety Incident

Unfortunately, these conditions and safety issues have already resulted in the serious injury of a child. In July 2024, a six-year-old boy was seriously injured on the tire swing at the playground on Tennyson when the swing detached from its mounting while he was using it. The metal bolt struck his head, causing a laceration that required four staples and an emergency room visit. The family reported the incident to 311, and Council President Sandoval's office helped advocate for the removal of the faulty equipment.

The equipment was eventually replaced, but community members have observed the replacement swing falling again in recent months. This reinforces the case for a comprehensive renovation rather than piecemeal repairs.

How We'd Like to Partner

BRUN would like to work with Denver Parks & Recreation to explore a full playground renovation. Here's what we'd propose:

1. Moving this project through the capital improvement pipeline for evaluation and prioritization by the end of the year, with funding assembled through a combination of DPR's annual capital allocation and external sources including private foundation grants, corporate sponsorships, and community fundraising coordinated by BRUN.
2. That any renovation incorporates modern inclusive design standards - ADA-accessible surfacing and pathways, adaptive play equipment, sensory-rich elements, and structures that serve a broad range of ages and abilities.
3. That the playground renovation be considered alongside the process of renaming the park, so that the park's physical transformation and new identity can move forward together.
4. That the planning process includes meaningful community engagement with Berkeley residents and families.
5. A meeting with DPR staff to discuss the project timeline, available funding mechanisms, and how BRUN can contribute.

Why Now

Tennyson Street is one of Denver's most vibrant and important neighborhood commercial corridors. It draws visitors from across the city to its restaurants, galleries, shops, and cultural events, and it has been a model for the kind of walkable, community-driven Main Street that

Denver's planning framework aspires to. The park at 41st and Tennyson is the anchor of that corridor - the public gathering space that ties it all together. On any given afternoon, it attracts countless families who then visit surrounding businesses. A playground that's 28 years old and wasn't designed for the neighborhood Berkeley has become doesn't reflect the level of investment this corridor has earned, from both the city and the community.

The 2019 Game Plan for a Healthy City was built on the principle that safe, accessible, well-maintained parks are essential infrastructure for every Denver neighborhood. An updated, inclusive playground here would be a direct expression of that commitment. The July 2024 injury makes this urgent. A child was hurt because aging equipment failed. The community should not have to wait for another incident before action is taken.

With the park already going through a transition, there is a natural opportunity to pair the reframing of the park's name with a tangible, visible investment that the whole community can rally behind. There is ample room within the park's existing footprint, and in the areas immediately surrounding the playground, to meaningfully expand and modernize the play area.

We recognize the city's constrained budget environment. However, BRUN is committed to exploring the supplementation of city investment and, more importantly, to demonstrating the broad community demand that justifies prioritizing this project. We understand budget cycles require lead time, but given the documented safety issues and the momentum around the park's new name, we believe there is an opportunity to begin the planning and community engagement process now.

Partnership with BRUN

On April 21, BRUN's board of directors voted to establish a special committee dedicated to the Tennyson Park Renewal to organize and advocate for this project. The committee will bring together active Berkeley neighbors, including local PTA members and community organizers, and professionals with direct experience in previous park improvement projects in the area. We are prepared to organize community support through petitions and public outreach, coordinate with local media to raise the project's visibility, lead community engagement efforts, and supplement city funding through neighborhood fundraising and business sponsorships.

We are working to begin community outreach and engagement immediately.

Thank you for your consideration, we look forward to your reply.

Respectfully,

Scott Danenhauer
President, Board of Directors, Berkeley Regis United Neighbors

cc:
Council President Amanda Sandoval
Councilmember Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez
Councilmember Sarah Parady
Jill Mullen, Denver Parks and Recreation Advisory Board