



Genesee Valley Park West Master Plan

City of Rochester, Project #20042, NYSDOS #C006965

Advisory Meeting #1

Date: February 13, 2013, 2:00-5:00 PM

Location: Genesee Waterways Center, 149 Elmwood Ave, Rochester NY 14611

A. ATTENDANCE (see attached sign-in)

Name	Representing	Contact / Email
Sheila Bazil	Community	sheila-bazil@yahoo.com
John Curran	Community	jecurran@rochester.rr.com
Gloria Edmonds	Community	gloriaedmonds@yahoo.com
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David Hawkes	City of Rochester	hawkesd@cityofrochester.gov
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John Picone	City of Rochester	piconej@cityofrochester.gov
Joan Roby-Davidson	Sector 4 CDC	joan.sector4cdc@yahoo.com
Peter Siegrist	City of Rochester	peter.siegrist@cityofrochester.gov
Cindy Stachowski	Genesee Waterways Center	cstachowski@geneseewaterways.org
Mark Bayer	Bayer Landscape Architecture	mhb@bayerla.com
Zakery Steele	Bayer Landscape Architecture	zds@bayerla.com

B. INTRODUCTIONS / PROJECT UPDATE

1. PROJECT INTRODUCTIONS: Jeff Mroczek gave an overview of the project scope and introduced Bayer Landscape Architecture and the consultant team lead. Project partner is the NYS Department of State. Project is a master plan that does not include construction. Will contain recommendations for future development of the park, and be utilized in future funding requests and park improvements.
2. UPDATE / MEETING CONTENT: Discussion and overview of project scope, including waterways center, recreation use, important historic development of the park, presentation of selected inventory and analysis data. All project materials, presentations and meeting minutes will be placed on the City's project website.
3. PROJECT SCHEDULE: Project is year-long timeline, currently a few months into schedule. Wants to be flexible due to the large amount of data gathered on the park for inventory and analysis. Two public meetings will be held. The first public meeting will likely be held in late March (2013).

C. INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS PRESENTATION / HISTORIC REVIEW

1. CONSULTANT TEAM INTRO: Mark Bayer gave brief introduction and discussion of importance of knowing how the park evolved as a precursor to the program development phase. Plan will be a long-range plan, not being developed tomorrow, but will be a platform for funding and guiding future development of the park. Full team includes Bayer Landscape Architecture as lead, LaBella Associates for architecture and engineering, Bero Architecture for cultural landscape research, Moffatt & Nichol for waterfront/hydrology, Dr. Charles Beveridge for Olmsted-related research/guidance.
2. PRESENTATION – INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS: Zak Steele described the team's overall master plan process and inventory and analysis as the current phase of work. He presented the following data and overview of historic development of the park:

3. **CONTEXT OF THE PARK:** Presentation / discussion on the full context of GVPW, including the larger park system, nearby institutions, municipal context (many different adjacent towns/users), adjacent neighborhoods (19th Ward, PLEX, Genesee-Jefferson, University), demographics, land-use controls, regional trail circulation through park.
4. **FEATURES OF THE PARK:** Presentation / discussion on aspects of the park, including existing facilities and conditions, views to/from the park, vegetation, hydrology, natural resources, cultural landscape component.
5. **VIEWS:** Discussion of negative and positive views within the park and views to the park from adjacent areas. Possibility of opening up views, better framing of significant features, more views of the river. Better viewing opportunities for the regatta (Head of the Genesee) should be provided.
6. **CIRCULATION:** Discussion of internal and external circulation, pedestrian, bike and vehicular. Issue with access, buses and turning movements at Elmwood entry. Park as a major crossroads for regional trails / bike routes. Includes Genesee Riverway Trail, Genesee Greenway Trail, NYS Canal trail. Recent URM study shows highest use of all segments of the Riverway trail is in GVPW. Rochester Cycling Alliance is working on a "Multiversity" trails link (RIT, UR, MCC) hope to be incorporated into \$65m highway interchange should include biking infrastructure – "Access 390" project. Bike rentals would be a good amenity to provide, possibly at the Waterways Center. Signage and wayfinding is an issue in the park, with many through-riders on the canal trail stopping to ask for directions. The transition from canal trail to park trail could be more clear and easy to understand.
7. **AIRPORT:** Discussion of airport as major adjacent land use. Impacts other land uses and poses a challenge, but also an opportunity. Lots of nearby overnight travel stays could be an opportunity for recreation users of an enhanced park.
8. **FISHING:** Fishing is a popular activity but the park no longer supports specific accommodation for it. Limited signage and river-side fishing access trails do exist, but it's not part of the park program any longer.
9. **TREES:** Tree survey data was mapped for individual trees. Team looked at species diversity (heavily dominated by Oaks and Maples, though maples are an outlier due to many small ornamental Amur maples). Age estimates of trees completed using species growth factors. Park includes trees that were planted as part of Olmsted's plans, as well as a limited number of trees that were likely pre-existing prior to formation of the park (approximate 11 trees have been dated to 1850 and earlier). Many trees planted after 1991 ice storm (planted in 1993-1994).
10. **HYDROLOGY:** Review of potential flood areas, state wetlands, soils (water table), Moffatt and Nichol will be looking at interface of land and river edge, hydrology of river, dock use and designs.
11. **ECOLOGY:** Reviewed data relating to influence of Genesee River and ecological importance in the Great Lakes Plain ecozone, rarity of ecosystem, species diversity (bird, fish, mammal). Discussed influence of development / industry and pollution impact on quality and health of the river ecology.
12. **CULTURAL LANDSCAPE:** Noted as the first time a significant compilation of park history has been combined for the GVPWest using primary research sources. Reviewed the timeline of park development and features through time utilizing historic Olmsted drawings, aerial overlays, City plat/record maps, and photographic resources. Focus of presentation was on 1888 to present day. Full Cultural Landscape Report will include pre-history, Native American trail / crossroads, and Genesee Valley Canal / European settlement eras. Discussion of various multiple iterations of public / private athletic facilities, boat houses, canoe clubs, ice skating rinks, swimming pools within the park.
13. **ORIGINAL MASTERPLAN / OLMSTED DESIGN GOALS:** Olmsted struggled with the need for recreation infrastructure while wanting to maintain the park visual experience across the river from east to west. Research has found a significant amount of discussion between 1888 Parks Commission and Olmsted firm on where to place recreation infrastructure and buildings. Olmsted wanted to place them north of Elmwood exclusively. Olmsted finally gave in to pressure from the Commission and agreed to design recreation facilities south of Elmwood.
14. **OLMSTED IMPACT / IMPORTANCE:** Review of ordinal Olmsted goals for GVP and relationship to today's riverfront recreation use – noted as very far ahead of his time in using the river for public parks / enjoyment. Rochester is one of only four cities with full park systems

designed by Olmsted firm. Discussion was held on the importance of using this significant history as a platform for future funding and park improvements, similar to Buffalo's very successful Parks Conservancy. Design needs to serve a contemporary program, just as recreation movements and desires have changed over time, but the team believes this can be done using the history as a foundation for the overall master plan.

15. WATERWAYS CENTER / WATER SPORTS IMPACTS: Discussion on growing use of the Waterways Center and water sports facilities (river, canal, black creek). Park has an incredible location, very little wave action, ability to move to canal in high winds, all very positive for rowing. Events held at the park are strong economic development initiatives, such as Head of the Genesee regatta. Public livery / rental side is growing as well – nearly unlimited potential for recreating on the water at this location. This growth will be helped by long-term designed park improvements and updates.
16. MONROE COUNTY: Discussion on Monroe County Parks involvement with Genesee Valley park West – basically none at this point – GVP east and west are run as separate facilities. It was suggested that the project involve Monroe County Parks, Mark Quinn, Dave Rinaldo.

D. NEXT STEPS / UPCOMING MEETINGS

1. NEXT STEPS / PROJECT PHASES: Bayer Landscape Architecture to continue to refine and develop the inventory and analysis data to incorporate into complete report. Also beginning development of a program for future park improvements. This will include a investigation into recreation needs, current recreation use of the park, community input / desires, suggested program from analysis phase results.
2. UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETING: Public meeting to be held in late March to present park inventory and analysis and have the public help develop a program of improvements. Discussion on location and possible need for larger space. Date and location to be determined shortly and advertised by the City of Rochester.

-END-

Please notify Bayer Landscape Architecture of any errors or omissions to these meeting minutes.

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Project Manager
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Attachments: *sign-in sheet*

GENESEE VALLEY PARK WEST MASTER PLAN

Advisory Committee Meeting

February 13, 2013 - 2:00-4:00 P.M.

Genesee Waterways Center

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