

Genesee Valley Park West Master Plan

City of Rochester, Project #20042, NYSDOS #C006965

Public Meeting #1

Date: May 9, 2013, 6:00-8:00 PM

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

A. ATTENDANCE (see attached sign-in sheet)

PROJECT TEAM

Jeff Mroczek	City of Rochester	mroczekj@CityofRochester.Gov
Mark Bayer	Bayer Landscape Architecture	mhb@bayerla.com
Zakery Steele	Bayer Landscape Architecture	zds@bayerla.com
Makoto Hagi	Bayer Landscape Architecture	mh@bayerla.com
Mackenzie Sanford	Bayer Landscape Architecture	ms@bayerla.com

ATTENDEES

Val Nelson-Metlay	Doris Meadows
Susan Kloc	Don Metlay
Cherie T Balch	Colleen Snoddy
John Curran	Sylvia Pecursan
Dorothy Hall	Sharon Conheady
John & Elaine Epping	Lashay Harris
Rich DeSurra	Jon Schull
Douglass Holleley	Gloria Edmonds
Edward Cramp	Dan Serianni
Sheila Driscoll	Joan Roby-Davison
John Lightfoot	
Robert Terrell Jr	

B. MEETING AGENDA

- 1. INTRODUCTION & PRESENTATION:** Jeff Mroczek, project manager for the City of Rochester introduced the project. Zakery Steele, Project Manager for the consultant team (Bayer Landscape Architecture) gave a presentation on the project scope, process, and a selected inventory and analysis, including an overview of the park's development history.
- 2. QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION:** A Q&A session was held immediately following the presentation by the project consultant team. Questions, comments and discussion notes are transcribed in detail below.
- 3. OPEN HOUSE / MATERIALS REVIEW:** Meeting attendees were invited to review large display boards showcasing the park's PAST, PRESENT and possibilities for the FUTURE. The City and Consultant team was on hand to answer questions and take comments during this portion of the meeting. Notes and comments are transcribed below.
- 4. NEXT STEPS:** The City and consultant team will organize input from this public meeting and use it to further define the design program for the park master plan. Bayer Landscape Architecture will present the draft program to the Citizens Advisory Committee and begin to develop alternative master plan concepts. These concepts will be presented at a future public meeting for additional comments and input. The Public meeting attendees, the City, and the Citizens Advisory Committee will evaluate the alternative concepts and select a proposal to carry forward and revise into a final park master plan to be completed by the end of 2013.

C. Q&A NOTES, COLLECTED QUESTIONS & COMMENTS (comments have been organized by theme)

1. GENERAL / PARK USAGE

- a. Genesee Valley Park West is under-utilized, it needs to be heavily used.
- b. How are people using the park today? Are we tracking this usage? The consultant team has met with the Department of Recreation and Youth services to catalog all programmed events throughout the typical year.

Yes. The consultant team has met with the City Department of Recreation and Youth Services to catalog all programmed activities throughout the year. A month-by-month activity chart, including attendance, is presented on the "Present" presentation board and will be included in the report.

- c. Park activities should be recorded – tracking usage of vehicles parking where they should not be parking, garbage being thrown in the park. Cars are parked up on the grassy knoll near the picnic areas and grills. No respect or attention is paid to the rules or parking.

The Consultant team has spent a considerable amount of time in the park but cannot spend enough time on the ground to discern all use patterns. Part of the reason we have a Citizens Advisory Committee and Public Meetings is to receive input on these use patterns that may not be observable by the team.

- d. I am a long-time resident next to the park – for 50 years – and it is not as heavily used as it was years ago. We need to encourage heavier and wide-spread use again.
- e. Town of Chili and Gates should be involved in the community input process. Genesee Valley Park West is used by these towns as well.
- f. Discussion on how park land has been given to developers or used for non-park purposes. This needs to stop happening. Discussion on how and why the hotel happened and how to prevent something similar from happening in the future.
- g. Request for the City to be fully open about the details of this project and listen to constituents, no more lip service. PLEX suffered the consequences of the hotel deal and the loss of parkland.
- h. Restrooms for trail users and others passing through the park or using the recreation fields is critical. The port-o-potties are occasionally provided in the summer but they are awful and ugly and often get vandalized.
- i. The area north of the 390 flyover, south of the canal, west of the river, and east of Scottsville Road should be cleaned up and incorporated into the park.

2. CIRCULATION, TRAILS

- a. We used to be able to drive through from Plymouth Avenue, now it is a one way in and out. It's confusing. What will this plan do to draw more people to use the park? Part of this reduced use is related to the condition of the ballfields (north of Elmwood) and the reduced connectivity to the park from the north when Plymouth Avenue was cut off.

Brooks Landing Phase II Public Improvement project will be improving the connection between the Brooks neighborhood and Elmwood Avenue through the park along the former Plymouth Avenue. There will be two way access to/from the park from Elmwood Avenue north to a turn-around, but only a one-way southbound connection from the public access easement, through the hotel parcel, and south to the turnaround.

- b. Intersection at Elmwood to enter the park is badly designed and dangerous. It is very hard for people to cross and there is an issue with the traffic signal.
- c. The entry into the park is confusing from Elmwood. It's very dangerous and hard to understand.
- d. Need greater separation of vehicular from pedestrian. Vehicles often drive onto the internal park paths to access more remote locations.

- e. Trail users get lost and have to often ask for directions when cycling through, especially canal trail users. There are serious way finding issues that need to be resolved to make it more clear for trail users.
- f. Trail users have a hard time finding the Genesee Valley Greenway where it intersects with Scottsville Road. The trail system is disjointed. The Genesee Valley Greenway begins in GVP and extends to the south, off-road, until it meets Scottsville Road. From here it is on Scottsville and Ballantyne Roads for about a mile before it is once again off-road. From this point one can travel on the old rail bed all the way south to Sonyea, about 36 miles. Since you point out that GVP is the hub of all these regional trails it is imperative that the City reach out to the Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway, the town of Chili and others to complete this connection.

The Genesee Transportation Council's Regional Trails Initiative - Phase - Final Report and Action Plan from 2002 lists this connection as "Currently Under Development". It lists the implementing agency as NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation and shows funding of \$250,000 through a 1995 TEP grant and RG & E Consent/Court Order funding. It is unclear why this was not implemented. The GTC will be updating this plan, starting this year, and specifically looking at gaps in the regional trail system. This should be a priority gap to close.

- g. If trail network is improved it would help make the park more accessible without driving cars and would be heavily used.
- h. Genesee Valley Park West needs to be a gateway to the City from the south. City needs to work on connectivity with adjacent trails.

3. SPORTS / RECREATION

- a. Do not take the ball parks away.
- b. Ball fields need to be improved.
- c. A large baseball complex would feel very commercial. Would prefer a park-like setting with sports fields, not a large "complex".
- d. Water is settling on the baseball fields north of Elmwood Avenue and limiting their use for the neighborhood. This needs to be fixed now. It is a very important issue for the entire neighborhood and the ball fields are an important activity for the neighborhood youth.

The Brooks Landing project is developing design and cost alternatives for the improvement of the ball fields.

- e. Discussion was held on preference for small-scale "sand-lot" style baseball fields vs. base ball "complex" with facilities. One attendee preferred small scale baseball fields, another would like to see something in between small-scale "sand lot" and a major ball field "complex."
- f. Instead of having big bleachers for ball fields, why not incorporate grassed terraces like at the Saw Grass Gold Tournament.

4. WATER ACCESS / BOATING

- a. Would like to see more accessible boat launch for vehicles.

5. HISTORY / CULTURAL

- a. Enjoyed the historic park development presentation and the attention paid to the park's Olmsted legacy. Don't want to repeat the same mistakes of the past with continually adding new infrastructure to the park based on styles and trends that will end up looking dilapidated and going against the ideals of Olmsted's original design.
- b. Happy to see the significant work done on the historic research and the important Olmsted connection. New park features should really cherish the philosophy of Olmsted. Olmsted plans were beautifully drawn and it would be nice to see that level of work applied to this master plan.
- c. Need to restore Olmsted's vision, stop staying from it and ignoring it like we have in the past. Every decision we make should be based on that original vision. The City has ignored it for too long and we have to say 'no more please.'

The team has spent a good portion of time in this investigations phase to fully explore and document the park origins, development and Olmsted history. These findings will be used to inform the design while still meeting the needs of present day

and future users.

- d. Are there any other Olmsted Parks with 6-lane highways built through them?

The one that comes immediately to mind is Delaware Park in Buffalo. It is an Olmsted park and was divided in a similar fashion by the Scajaquata Expressway. The major difference is that the Scajaquata is at grade, not elevated like 390.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL / ECOLOGICAL / VIEWS

- a. Noise pollution from I-390 is bad. Would like to see something done to reduce this and make the park more peaceful. How can we reduce this noise? Would like to have areas that are quiet and meditative.

There is little that could be done in the park to reduce this expressway noise. Any likely solution would involve changes to the expressway itself (i.e. surface changes, noise walls...). Since this is a state facility, coordination with the NYS Department of Transportation would be required. This issue will be documented in this report and shared with the NYSDOT. When the NYSDOT next makes improvements to the 390 fly-over the City will be able to point to this report recommendation as a reason to address the issue.

- b. I envision beautiful nature as a background for sports and athletic fields. I would like to see special areas for preserving woodlands, old growth trees, and natural communities.
- c. Nearby developments like Brooks Landing removed lots of vegetation from the park and opened up awful views from the old Genesee Valley Canal and Rail Road corridor.
- d. Is the island sediment north of Elmwood Avenue going to be dredged out to remove the natural vegetation that has grown there? This should not be done. Leave the river natural.
- e. Keep the Genesee Valley Canal / old rail road corridor treeless and free from disruption from stripmall-esque development. How can we screen or buffer the views of the hotel development? Similar to the buffering from the trail to the ice rink.
- f. The tree inventory and age categorization are very interesting and should be used to inform the park design.

-END-

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

Zakery Steele, ASLA

Bayer Landscape Architecture, PLLC
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Attachments: *Meeting Sign-In Sheet (3 pages)*
 Written comments (1 page)
 Meeting Notice (1 page)

NAME

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COMMENTS? / WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IN THE PARK?

Sound barriers
on the highway

Bike to & from
the Gen Valley Greenway
w/out travelling on
Scottsville Rd.

~~Use~~ GURR corridor — keep it
tree-lined and free of disruption.
From strip mall-esque development.

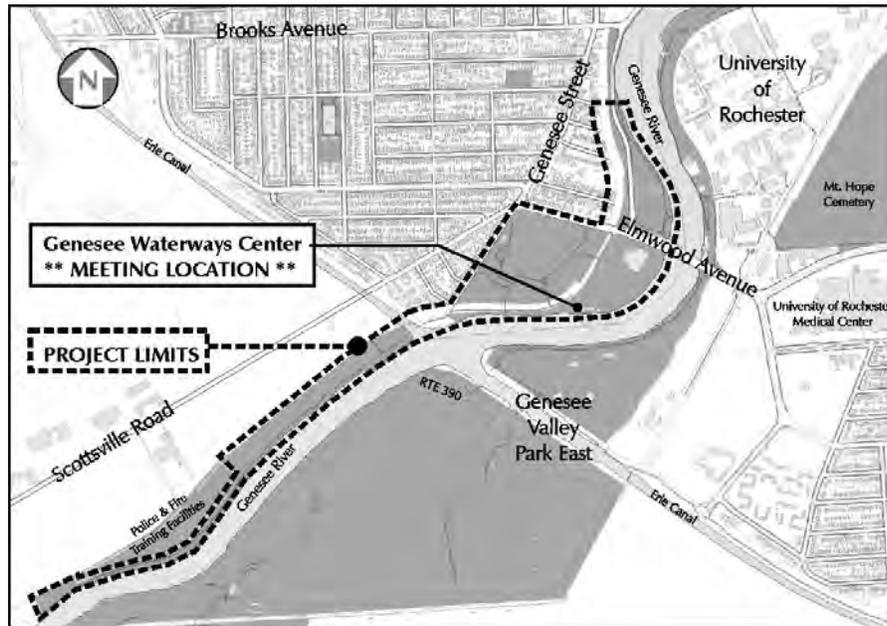


PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING NOTICE

Re: GENESSEE VALLEY PARK WEST MASTER PLAN
Project Limits: The entire portion of Genesee Valley Park west of the Genesee River.

DATE: Thursday, May 9, 2013 **TIME:** 6:00 – 8:00 P.M.
LOCATION: Genesee Waterways Center – Genesee Valley Park

The City’s Bureau of Architecture & Engineering will hold a public informational meeting to discuss the **Genesee Valley Park West Master Plan** project. The meeting will begin with a presentation by the design team to introduce the project and present their initial inventory and analysis findings. After an initial question and answer period the design team will break-out to various display board stations to discuss the project in a small group setting. The project design team will be available to explain the project, answer your questions and record your feedback. The City is particularly interested in learning how you use the park now and how you would like to see it used in the future.



Please attend this important meeting. We look forward to meeting you and welcome your comments. If you require special arrangements for the meeting (interpreters, facility accessibility, etc.) or further information on this meeting, contact: Jeff Mroczek, Project Manager, at 428-7124 or mroczekj@cityofrochester.gov.

James R. McIntosh, P.E.
City Engineer

