



Fact Sheet Frick Environmental Center

Scope of Project

- The rebuilt Frick Environmental Center replaces the old center which burned in 2002. The new Center is being built on the site of its original location in Frick Park, just off Beechwood Boulevard, in the park's northwestern corner.
- Designed as a living laboratory, the Environmental Center will provide children from all parts of the city with access to a world-class, state-of-the-art center offering hands-on, experiential environmental education programs. The new center will serve as the classroom base for programming that takes children out into the surrounding woodlands, streams, meadows and trails.
- The new Center will include welcoming indoor learning spaces, a public gathering and reception area, public restrooms and offices, as well as an amphitheater built into the hillside, landscape restoration, and gardens.
- The design will also restoration of the historic gatehouses and formal entrance landscape, creation of demonstration gardens, and the planting of more than 195 trees and 7,000 native plants in the surrounding woodlands and grounds.
- The footprint for the new Center is 6,000 square feet, the same as the old center that burned. A second floor and basement bring the total useable space to 15,500 square feet.
- The parking lot on the grounds will provide 44 spaces, the same number of spaces offered in the previous footprint. The new parking area will be constructed with a canopy of solar PV panels that will generate the electricity for the Center and collect rainwater, rather than creating runoff.
- A total of 2.5 acres was cleared at the perimeter of the 644-acre park to allow for construction. To ensure safe operation of equipment, a total of five acres is temporarily fenced off.

A Living Building

- After a public qualifications process, award-winning architecture firm Bohlin Cywinski Jackson was selected to lead a project team comprising artists, environmental restoration specialists, engineers and architects, many of whom have a deep familiarity with Pittsburgh and its parks.
- The new Environmental Center has been designed to meet the rigorous standards of the Living Building Challenge as well as LEED Platinum standards for energy efficiency. The new Center will incorporate a geothermal heating and cooling system, will fully support its own needs for water and energy, and will capture rainwater for irrigation.

Impact on Frick Park

Every feature of the Frick Environmental Center and surrounding landscape has been carefully designed to minimize impact on the surrounding parkland environment.

- Approximately 2.5 acres within the five-acre construction area will be cleared for construction. The remaining area within the construction zone is already open space. Construction will take place at a perimeter area at the edge of the 644-acre Frick Park, and will not impact interior woodlands.
- Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy staff and volunteers relocated and replanted native wildflowers in advance of construction.
- Restoration of the landscape and woodlands surrounding the Center will also include the installation of 7,000 native plants, and nearly 200 trees will be planted.

Public Input

- Since 2009, more than 1,000 people have been involved in a public visioning and planning process for the new center that included dozens of input sessions and meetings. Hundreds more participated in sessions held in earlier years.
- The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy is the private, non-profit partner of the City of Pittsburgh in this project. Working in close collaboration with the city, the Parks Conservancy will manage and operate the Center and the surrounding 115 acres of woodlands.
- The plans for the Center honor the vision the Frick family has established over the years in conjunction with its gifts of the park to the City.

Education Programs at the Frick Environmental Center

- Demand for science-based, experiential environmental learning has grown dramatically. At the Frick Environmental Center, children of all ages and from diverse city neighborhoods will have access to hands-on, experiential environmental education in a world-class facility.
- Frick Environmental Center classes are designed with teacher input to align with curriculum requirements in grades K-12 while maximizing time outside in the park, streams, meadows and trails.
- Classwork at the new Center will enhance and build on these experiences, with the goal of building a love and appreciation for the natural world in each child.
- The Center will enable the Parks Conservancy to reach more children and classrooms, and will also serve as the source of enriching family and public education and learning opportunities.
- For many children, participation in the Parks Conservancy's environmental programming in Frick Park is their first up-close experience with nature. For some, it is their only opportunity to experience the beauty of wildflowers, to discover and learn about the creatures living in our streams and woodlands, or to know the satisfaction of planting a tree.

Enhancing Community Enjoyment, Use of Frick Park

- The Environmental Center will provide children and adults from all parts of the city, and our region, with increased access to Frick Park. Park-user surveys consistently indicate that people want to feel there is “someone home in the park,” and want a place where they can readily get information to maximize their visit.
- The Center will have a public “living room” area, classroom and meeting spaces, and park information. There will be clean, full-accessible restrooms and places to get fresh water.
- The Frick Environmental Center is on track to open in 2016.

More information is available at www.pittsburghparks.org/environmentalcenter

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