

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012 UPDATE



ENVISIONING THE HISTORIC
REGIONAL PARKS AS CORNERSTONES
OF
A VIBRANT PARKS AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM
FOR A SUSTAINABLE 21ST CENTURY CITY
NOV. 2014

A Partnership of the City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy

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INTRODUCTION

A core value of life in Pittsburgh is the abundance of parks set among green hillsides and flowing rivers. Our civic leaders in the late 19th and early 20th centuries gave us this legacy as an act of foresight – toward economic growth and competitiveness, public health and well-being, and the simple pleasures of shared space and community spirit.

In recognition of this precious legacy, the **Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy** was founded in December 1996 by a group of citizens concerned with the deteriorating conditions of Pittsburgh’s parks. It is the Parks Conservancy’s mission to improve quality of life for the people of Pittsburgh by restoring the park system to excellence in partnership with government and community partners. In 1998, the Parks Conservancy signed an official public-private partnership agreement with the City of Pittsburgh to work together for the restoration of the city’s four historic Regional Parks -- Frick, Highland, Riverview, and Schenley. Within two years, a master plan was jointly produced, led by the City with support from the Parks Conservancy, with broad public involvement. Titled **Pittsburgh’s Regional Parks Master Plan -- A New Ethic of Stewardship**, its core concept is that successful park restoration balances the demands of current uses while preserving the park’s historic legacy and sustaining its ecological integrity. The planning effort focused on the four regional parks that existed at the time; in 2007, the City adopted a fifth regional park -- Emerald View Park -- which rings Mount Washington with a 235-acre interconnected system of parks and trails. It brings an expansive hillside and trail linear park to the previously underserved southern quadrant of the city.

In the years since completing the **Master Plan**, the Parks Conservancy has raised over \$70 million for improvements and park use has increased by 20%. Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, in 2009, encouraged the Parks Conservancy to extend the principles and practices exemplified by the Master Plan and capital projects into other city parks as time and resources permit. Based on historic significance, potential for impact on their communities, and geographic distribution, the Conservancy has identified the following parks for future initiatives: Arsenal Park, Baxter Parklet, Cliffside Park, McKinley Park, Mellon Park, Mellon Square Park, Phillips Park, Sheraden Park, Southside Park, West End Park, and Westinghouse Park. In addition, the Conservancy acts as a resource to Emerald View Park (under the Mt. Washington Community Development Corporation). The foundation for all of this remarkable progress is recorded in the 2000 **Master Plan**.

In 2010, as the city embarked on its first ever comprehensive plan, **PLANPGH**, it once again turned to the Parks Conservancy with a request to update the **Regional Parks Master Plan** as a more detailed, supporting

component of **PLANPGH**. The Parks Conservancy has self-funded this effort, re-engaging the original professional team from the 2000 **Master Plan**. Led by LaQuatra Bonci Associates, in conjunction with Heritage Landscapes, the team includes Strada, BioHabitats, and Perkins Eastman. The intention of the updated version was to supplement the existing 2000 Master Plan, with consideration of physical changes, lessons learned, and new ways of thinking in the four historic regional parks. In addition, the plan would explore how these ideas can be employed in other city parks. Finally, the updated plan would be incorporated into the City’s forthcoming *Comprehensive Plan for Open Space, Parks and Recreation*. The **OPENSOURCEPGH** vision defines “our city by our parks, greenways, and reclaimed urban wilderness. These lands serve as our common green space, weaving together all Pittsburghers and our neighborhoods through a **system of green that advances stewardship, equity, and our economy**. We care for our system to provide access to natural and historic assets, opportunities to be active and healthy, and places to play and celebrate.”

The effort to update the **Regional Parks Master Plan** began in early 2010 with a team workshop to analyze the performance of the original **Master Plan**, identify new opportunities, and outline the work process. In the summer and fall, the public was engaged through a series of park walks and mobile workshops. At a November charrette, the project team defined the framework and identified key initiatives. One key approach was to study the parks as overlapping systems of blueways (water), greenways (land cover), and grayways (circulation and infrastructure). The team also focused on how to improve connectivity among and within the parks, especially for bicyclists and pedestrians. Coordination with the **PLANPGH** effort was ongoing. A final work session took place in early 2011 to refine plans and develop concept designs for key projects. Now completed, this update of the **Regional Parks Master Plan** provides concept designs for key projects, recommends initiatives and programs, sets design and management standards, and provides guidance for day-to-day actions by volunteers and maintenance staff. This document should be viewed and employed as an amendment to the 2000 **Master Plan**, not as a replacement for that foundational document.



INTRODUCTION

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CREDITS

The **Regional Parks Master Plan Update** reflects the culmination of a nearly two-year collaborative process to update the 2000 **Master Plan**. Greatest thanks go to the citizens of Pittsburgh, who love their parks and who can not imagine life in the city without them, for bringing their insights and imagination to the planning process and for using their parks so well. This plan was well informed and enriched thanks to the participation of hundreds of individuals, in addition to user groups and community organizations.

This effort would not be possible without significant involvement by the City of Pittsburgh's Departments of City Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works, with whom our partnership has evolved and accomplished so much since the Parks Conservancy was established in 1996.

The following staff members are gratefully acknowledged for their contributions.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR OF PITTSBURGH

Luke Ravenstall, Mayor
Duane Ashley, Director of Operations

PITTSBURGH DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

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PITTSBURGH DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Pat Hassett
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Evan Jones
Bob Lackey
Bob Palmosina
Casimir Pellegrini
John Russo
Richard Wolford

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William Ferguson
Laura Fulmer
Phil Gruszka
Marijke Hecht
Melissa McMasters

Alex Palmer
Susan Rademacher, Project Manager
Richard Reed
Michael Sexauer

For providing considerable insight into the wants and needs of their constituents, we thank members of the Pittsburgh City Council, especially:

Patrick Dowd, District 7
Darlene Harris, District 1
Daniel LaVelle, District 6
William Peduto, District 8
Douglas Shields, District 5

For their ongoing, unstinting efforts on behalf of Pittsburgh's great park system, we thank our resourceful and visionary master planning team, who so enthusiastically reconvened a decade after their work on the **2000 Regional Parks Master Plan**:

LAQUATRA BONCI ASSOCIATES

Fred Bonci, Principal
Natalie Byrd
Jen Gallagher
Joe Hackett

HERITAGE LANDSCAPES LLC

Patricia O'Donnell, Principal
Greg DeVries
Carrie Mardorf
Peter Viteretto

STRADALLC

Michael Stern, Principal
Claudia Saladin

BIOHABITATS

Keith Bowers

PERKINS EASTMAN

David Hance

CHAPTER 1: REVIEWING PAST WORK

Design for Building on Success

PITTSBURGH’S REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN -- A NEW ETHIC OF STEWARDSHIP, 2000

In 1998, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and the City of Pittsburgh formed a partnership and began an intensive public process with the goal of restoring, enhancing, and protecting Pittsburgh’s great 19th-century regional parks – Frick, Highland, Riverview, and Schenley. The key objectives of the master planning effort were threefold -- balancing use, history and ecology. **Pittsburgh’s Regional Parks Master Plan -- A New Ethic of Stewardship**, published in 2000, recognized that while these parks, although wonderfully designed landscapes of immeasurable value to the citizens of the city and the region, were suffering from years of neglect, deferred maintenance, deteriorating landscapes, and the loss of historic character and significance. In this condition, the parks did not effectively serve community needs. It was evident that more effort and resources were required to reverse these trends and renew parks for today while respecting their past. Based upon a sound understanding of origins, evolution, conditions, park user survey results, and intensive public dialogue, the following goals were established for the 2000 *Master Plan*:

- Build public awareness and expand the constituency for the parks;
- Renew the landscape character and aesthetics of the parks;
- Re-capture the historic legacy of the parks;
- Restore human vitality and ecological integrity of the parks;
- Foster connections between the parks, the rivers and the city;
- Enhance visitor services;
- Provide a new model of management and maintenance; and
- Create a foundation for a sustainable future.

By adhering to these goals, many key objectives of the 2000 planning effort were met -- balancing the historic legacy of the four historic regional parks with their ecological integrity and the needs of modern users. With the addition of enhanced management, this was a strong compass and bold thinking at the time.

The results are clear – the parks have been improved and the quality of life for the people of Pittsburgh has been enhanced by 16 years of partnership between the Conservancy and the City of Pittsburgh. The four regional parks have reached a higher level of condition, and in many areas, an excellence unmatched since the early days of park building. In the decade following the plan’s completion, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy has garnered over \$70 million in private and public funds for park planning and renewal, carried out in partnership with the City of Pittsburgh. For several years after completing the Master Plan, maintenance improved due to the establishment of dedicated park crews. People have responded with renewed pride for our

parks, and most importantly, increased use and support. Growing volunteer programs for park stewardship have engaged more people to reinforce park ecology. And long-term issues, such as woodland and landscape restoration strategies, are being tested and monitored by trained and talented Conservancy and City staff. Ongoing initiatives to suppress invasive species, remove diseased trees, and enhance water quality serve as shining examples.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PARKS CONSERVANCY AND PARTNERS

What follows is a listing of the major planning efforts and projects successfully completed by the Parks Conservancy, the City, and other partners. (Detailed credits are provided in the appendix.) By monitoring the projects, we learn from past work and discover lessons to apply today and in the future.

REGIONAL PARKS OVERALL PLANS & STUDIES

- 1997, 98, 01, 02 BioBlitz Surveys
- 1999 Park User Survey
- 2000 Talent and the Parks Survey
- 2000 Regional Parks Master Plan
- 2000 Management Plan for Pittsburgh’s Regional Parks
- 2001 Best Practices in Parks Management
- 2002 Flora Survey
- 2002 Park Ranger Study



Frick Park



Schenley Park



Riverview Park



Highland Park

CHAPTER I: BUILDING ON SUCCESS

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012

2002 Regional Parks Trail Maps
2004 Parks Consolidation Report
2005/Revised 2009 Park Signage Standards
2006 Regional Parks Lighting and Bench Design Guidelines for Project Implementation
2009 Natural Areas Study
2010 Registered Voter Survey
2010 Natural Areas Plan and Monitoring System
2010 Deer Population Study
2011 Urban Tree Action Plan

FRICK PARK -- Completed Plans & Projects

Reynolds Gatehouse and Entry Restoration
Summerset Development
Nine Mile Run Stream Restoration
Trail Improvements
Blue Slide Play Structure
Park Signage
Natural Areas Restoration
Woodland Planting and Management
2004 White Tailed Deer Study
2005 Visioning Study for Environmental Center
2009 Business Plan for Environmental Center
2011 Community Engagement RAND Study
2011 Schematic Design for Environmental Center

HIGHLAND PARK -- Completed Plans & Projects

Entry Garden and Fountain
Microfiltration Plant
Babbling Brook
Seasonal Pools
Survey of Stream Physical Habitat Condition and Storm Impacts
Elm Grove, Lake Grove and Butler Street Trail Improvements
Park Signage
Natural Areas Restoration
Woodland Planting and Management
Reservoir 1 Planning

RIVERVIEW PARK -- Completed Plans & Projects

Perrysville Entry Walls and Visitor's Center
Chapel Shelter Building Rehabilitation
Chapel Shelter Landscape and Garden
Chapel Shelter Slope Invasive Control and Slope Re-vegetation
Mairdale Norway Maple Removal
White-tailed Deer Density Study
Snyder's Point Trail and Vegetation Management
Pope's View - Viewshed Management
Trail Improvements
Park Signage
Natural Areas Restoration
Woodland Planting and Management

SCHENLEY PARK -- Completed Plans & Projects

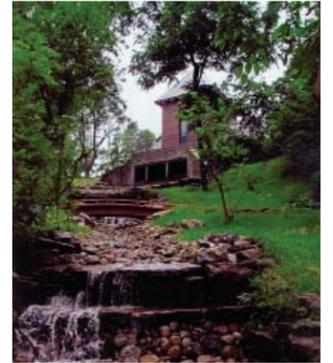
Schenley Park Café and Visitor's Center
Window on the Park Landscape
Conditions Study of Forest Vegetation
2004 London Plane Tree Study
Schenley Plaza
Mary E. Schenley Memorial Fountain and Landscape
Phipps Run and Trail
Bartlett Meadow



Schenley Park



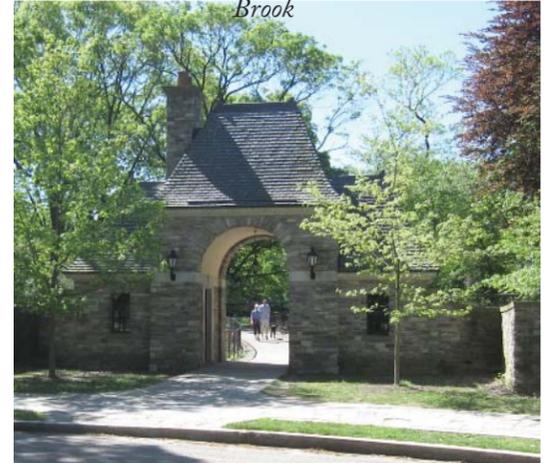
Schenley Park Café & Visitor Center



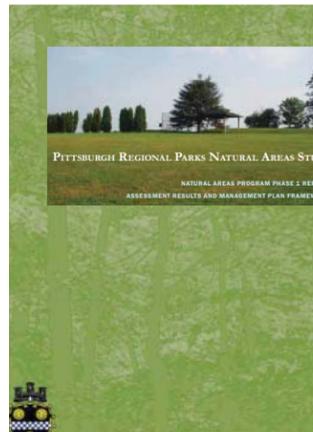
Highland Park Babbling Brook



Natural Area Restoration



Frick Park Reynolds Entry Gatehouse



Natural Areas Plan



Highland Park Reservoir #1

Panther Hollow Upper Trail, Meadow, and Drainage Improvements
Pool Meadow
Anderson Steps
Park Signage
Natural Areas Restoration
Woodland Planting and Management
Retaining Walls Restoration
Macro invertebrate Survey
Soils Field Sampling
Stream Geomorphic and Sediment Analysis
2011 Accessibility Study

Mellon Park -- Completed Plans & Projects

2001 Mellon Park Preservation and Management Plan
Rehabilitation of Perimeter Fence
Renaissance Garden Masonry and Fence Restoration

Interior Path Reconstruction
Walled Garden Restoration and Public Artwork

Mellon Square -- Completed Plans & Projects
2009 Mellon Square Preservation, Interpretation & Management Plan
2011 Phase 1 Restoration & Rehabilitation

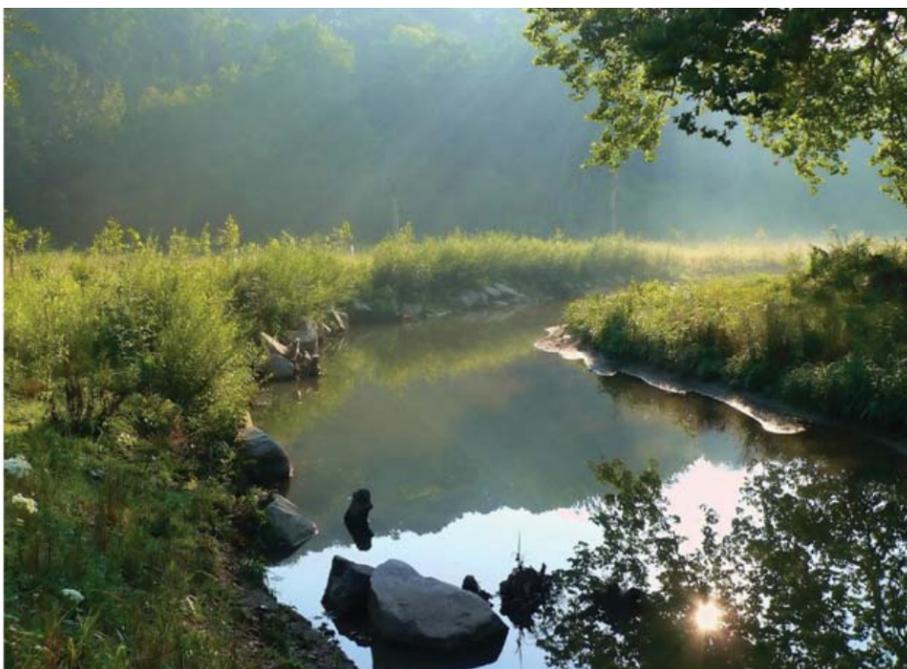
Hill District -- Completed Plans & Projects
2009 The Hill: A Village in the Woods Greenprint Plan
2010 Greenprint Project Proposals
Cliffside Park Rehabilitation Plan

BEYOND AN ETHIC OF STEWARDSHIP 2000 -- KEY RESOURCES AS BUILDING BLOCKS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Beyond the planning, capital projects, staff, and volunteer initiatives completed to date, a number of important studies and legislative efforts have reached fruition. These documents and laws inform future directions for our park system resources. They provide guidance to protect and preserve the parks which includes insight on how to enhance the ecology, use, beauty, and community commitment to these precious resources. These recent efforts inform this plan and aid in framing a number of approaches to implementation. The relevant legislation, plans, and studies are:

Natural Areas Study

One of the key recommendations from the 2000 Master Plan was to conduct an in-depth, scientific study of the ecological conditions in the parks and develop site-specific projects to improve the parks' ecological health. In 2005 the City of Pittsburgh Department of City Planning began the Natural Areas Study, led by Biohabitats Inc., which investigated soils, vegetation, wildlife habitat, invasive plant species and hydrologic conditions of each park. Completed in 2009, the resulting data informs park projects and ecological services monitoring efforts for years to come.



Frick Park's Nine Mile Run Watershed Initiative

This effort, noted in the 2000 Master Plan as a critical restoration project, has been successfully carried out by Nine Mile Run Watershed Association (NMRWA) with Biohabitats Inc. as lead consultant. Consistent with the physical reality of watersheds, the NMRWA works in the watershed beyond Pittsburgh's city limits, extending to Wilkinsburg, Edgewood, and Swissvale. NMRWA is a hands-on partner to the City, the Parks Conservancy, and community organizations in the ongoing maintenance and management of the corridor. Additional work in the watershed is recommended, such as reconstructing the Regent

Square Gateway and culvert, and enhancing the stream corridor at the Commercial Street crossing through the Frick park.

Panther Hollow Watershed Study, 2010 to 2011

An initial study of the complex elements of the landscapes of Phipps Run, Panther Hollow Run, Panther Hollow Wetland, Panther Hollow Lake, and Junction Hollow was prepared by Heritage Landscapes for project scoping in 2003. Following closely on that effort, a series of projects was undertaken in 2005-06, including: the Phipps Run siltation basin, trail, and bridge; the Visitor Center steps; Panther Hollow valley trail and drainage improvements; and the Bartlett Playground wildflower meadow. These projects laid a foundation for a thorough watershed planning effort. Initiated in 2010 and led by Meliora Environmental Design, this comprehensive study made detailed recommendations for restoration strategies that will effectively manage stormwater and recharge groundwater.

PLANPGH – Pittsburgh's Comprehensive Plan 2010 to 2014

Now underway, the City's 25-year vision plan provides opportunities to advance the parks and open space system, through several relevant components, including:

Open Space, Parks and Recreation -- Affirming the importance/value of the parks and open space system to the city's future, the Planning Department elected to begin with this component. Mutual coordination with the efforts represented in this Master Plan Update ensures that these plans inform each other. Both efforts are founded upon a city-wide strategy that reinforces the desired direction toward an integrated system of open-space connectivity throughout the city.

MOVEPGH -- This component is a transportation framework useful in addressing an integrated park and open space system. Establishing an extensive pedestrian and bikeway system is a strong element, relevant to effectively and safely connect the proposed park, boulevard, and greenways network to each other, to neighborhoods, and to the rivers. MOVEPGH consolidates all current planning efforts for multi-modal transportation corridors, complete streets, boulevards, bikeways, and trails.

PRESERVEPGH – This component addresses the integration of historic resources into a modern city. These resources include the historic landscapes of parks, commons, and boulevards that helped give Pittsburgh its shape and character. PRESERVEPGH's objectives are to document, commit to the preservation of, appreciate, and care for the wealth of historic resources within Pittsburgh. For purposes of the **Sustainable Park System**, applying such preservation objectives to historic parks and boulevards is very relevant to its success.

The **Master Plan Update** can contribute to PLANPGH by framing a vision for Pittsburgh's park system that informs the PLANPGH efforts and is widely integrated in its components. This contribution extends to include other components, such as DESIGNPGH and ARTPGH which explore urban design issues and public art strategies.

Greenprint – The Hill, A Village in the Woods 2010

This plan sets out a new model for re-inventing our neighborhoods – especially those challenged by high numbers of vacant lots, abandoned houses, crumbling infrastructure, and aging population – as state-of-the-art green communities. This plan grew out of the Find the Rivers! program which explored the history and landscape of the Hill District neighborhood and sought physical and natural ways to connect it to the rivers. The Greenprint proposed an innovative ecological and aesthetic structure to

CHAPTER I: BUILDING ON SUCCESS

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012

redefine the neighborhood, by developing an interconnected system of parks, trails, and green spaces that would characterize the Hill as a “Village in the Woods.” This framework would concentrate new development into the core of the neighborhood where infrastructure and topography support intensive construction. Green space becomes the economic driver as it weaves together housing, commercial development, transportation, the arts, and community services.



Greenprint – The Hill, A Village in the Woods 2010.

Larimer Vision Plan 2011

The Larimer Vision Plan, as for the Greenprint plan above, seeks to redefine the Larimer neighborhood, adjacent to Highland Park, as a green community, while dealing with significant land use problems including high vacancy rates and older housing stock. The plan, developed through months of community consensus building, repurposes vacant land as community green space and sets forth a vision for how sustainable urban strategies can contribute to the economic revitalization of Larimer. Green space is therefore not an after-thought but is the driving force for redevelopment.



The Larimer Vision Plan 2011. Image courtesy of STRADA, LLC

Hillside Preservation Legislation

In 2006, the City of Pittsburgh adopted legislation protecting the steep slopes that visually define the city. This legislation and the report that supported it, An Ecological and Physical Investigation of Pittsburgh Hillside, gave voice to the idea that steeply sloping, undeveloped land has beneficial scenic quality and lends a distinctive character to Pittsburgh. It shows how hillside contribute to both the visual appearance and ecological health of the city. The 2006 legislation codified the value of these green spaces, setting limits and conditions for development.

In addition, there are numerous planning efforts and initiatives that have and will influence the implementation of this **Master Plan Update**, including neighborhood planning efforts like the Homewood Children’s Village, as well as efforts on behalf of Emerald View Park and Three Rivers Park.

BUILDING ON MOMENTUM

The leadership of the Pittsburgh Park’s Conservancy and its partnership with the City of Pittsburgh, as well as community partners, has shown how the four historic regional parks can be reinvigorated -- to increase use and volunteerism, enhance amenities, and improve eco-systems. As evidenced by the catalogue of resources, the built capital projects, the City’s investment in PLANPGH, and the general public’s interest in parks and their benefit to public health and wellness, this is a perfect time to leverage that momentum into another decade of successful park system improvements.

This is a real opportunity to capture the imagination of the people of Pittsburgh, and the political, business, and philanthropic communities in creating an integrated park system. This **Master Plan Update** will position the four historic regional parks plus the new Emerald View Park to leverage current transformational neighborhood initiatives and contribute to PLANPGH’s comprehensive strategies.

The momentum focuses on these key elements:

- Achievements of the partnership between the City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, based on a clear vision from the 2000 Master Plan that has seen successful implementation and support.
- The first real opportunity to think outside the boundaries of our parks by understanding how natural systems can foster connections, by leveraging transportation improvements, and by identifying new parklands through the reclamation of forgotten landscapes.
- The trend toward more sustainable design practices, including innovative, green infrastructure techniques, ways to reduce impacts of the built environment, and the passion for restoring, renewing, and developing the ecological systems that enhance our quality of life.

CHAPTER 2: THE VISION

A Sustainable Regional Parks System

ENVISIONING OUR PARKS AND BOULEVARDS

Pittsburgh's rivers, hills and valleys define our urban landscape. We treasure the important collection of late 19th and early 20th century parks and boulevards, and the riverfronts, hillside and valley trails, and open spaces more recently added to this green framework. The historical development of this river city is mirrored in its array of large regional parks, neighborhood parks, open space parcels, boulevards, and medians. Unique local topography, soils, drainage, and waterways provide a shaping framework. Circulation patterns -- interstates, primary roads, neighborhood streets, bridges, railroads, and trails -- are the web for movement. Scenic vistas highlight this special urban place. Existing and envisioned parks, boulevards, streets, trails, bikeways, and open spaces are all components of a potential future system that achieves city-wide connections among all Pittsburgh open spaces. These connections are made by overlapping blue waterways, green open spaces, and circulation elements. This is the system -- Blue, Green, and Gray -- envisioned in the 21st century plan for the historic regional parks.

These historic regional parks are large, designed landscapes shaped for aesthetic, recreational, and environmental purposes and benefits. This plan envisions Frick, Highland, Riverview, and Schenley, plus the new Emerald View Park, as regional cornerstones of a vibrant system of parks, boulevards, and open spaces for Pittsburgh as a sustainable 21st century city. We envision the large parks fulfilling their roles as places of beauty for exercise and breathing space, with healthy grasslands, woodlands and streams, linked at multiple points to neighborhoods, and full of opportunities for community service and enjoyment by everyone. These parks are the flagships for our common wealth of public open spaces, a legacy from the past that we are strengthening for the future. This stewardship plan focuses on the four historic regional parks, in part, to mark a decade of progress in projects and initiatives, under the partnership of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and the City of Pittsburgh, and to chart a new course, informed by that inspirational work.

The rivers provide the critical linkage for the citywide system. A host of stakeholders has made considerable progress toward establishing "Three Rivers Park" as an urban waterfront park along the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers. Under development since 2000, Three Rivers Park is composed of several capital projects, including: North Shore Riverfront Park, Allegheny Riverfront Park, South Side Riverfront Park, and Point State Park. When completed, Three Rivers Park will provide continuous trails and green space along a more than 13-mile waterfront loop.

OPENSOURCEPGH, the Open Space, Parks, and Recreation component of PLANPGH, the City's 25-year comprehensive planning effort, is complete.

It is framed upon six goals that are highly relevant to parks and open spaces as core urban resources:

- Strengthen Pittsburgh's position as a regional hub and enhance its global significance.
- Provide equal access and opportunities for all to live, work, play, learn and thrive.
- Grow and diversify Pittsburgh's economy and its tax base.
- Foster a sense of citywide community while strengthening neighborhood identities.
- Capitalize on Pittsburgh's diverse natural and cultural resources.
- Respect and enhance the relationship between nature and the built environment.

The Open Space, Parks and Recreation component of PLANPGH provides an analysis of the park system and a vision for this system over the next 25 years, including inventory of available land in the city. The varied landscape resources of Pittsburgh are seen to include parks, greenways, woodlands, hillsides, community gardens, green-up and beautification sites, cemeteries, and private open spaces. The overall approach of the Open Space Plan soundly and effectively dovetails with the Regional Parks Master Plan.

Public open spaces are components of a valuable network of cultural landscapes, shaped by humanity and nature, which comprise the landscape of Pittsburgh. This plan operates at two scales: the city-wide system and its standards; and the regional parks cornerstones. The vision set forth flows from macro to micro, overall to detail, all of which enriches the whole. Achieving this vision requires a new appreciation for the potential of these components to shape and enrich the city. In this era of climate change and dramatic weather patterns, Pittsburgh can be a city that embraces its parks and open spaces as part of the solution, through the stewardship and ongoing extension of an urban system of green, blue, and gray.

TRENDS AND CHALLENGES | SURVEYING THE COMMUNITY

In the decade since completing the 2000 Regional Parks Master Plan, park use has increased by 20%, as revealed by comparing survey data from 1999 and 2009. The more recent study targeted registered voters living in the city with a phone survey, while the Internet survey was open to anyone. The purpose of the survey tools was to re-assess overall impressions of the conditions of the four historic regional parks, frequency and type of park use, opinions regarding the importance of continued funding, how parks add to quality of life, and basic demographic information.

CHAPTER 2: THE VISION

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A majority of voters have a positive view of most aspects of the parks, and strongly support increased public-private partnerships that would bring more funding to the city's parks. Fifty-nine (59) percent of city voters use the parks at least a few times per month, with greater frequency among families with children and in the summer months. The regional parks are used more often than the smaller parks, especially by people under age 45. Schenley Park is the most heavily used, followed by Highland and Frick Parks. The lowest use, at only 30% reporting visitation a few times or more annually, is of Riverview Park.

A significant finding reveals that the main reason people use the parks is for taking a walk and getting fresh air, followed closely by exercise and playing with children. A mere seven percent report the use of sports facilities as their main reason for using Pittsburgh's parks.

People are most positive about special events and walking/jogging paths, and also rate playgrounds, general appearance, picnic areas, and sports facilities at well above average. Low ratings for education programs may indicate a weak spot, and voters put expanding these programs at the top of their priority list.

Other high priorities are:

- Making park information readily available;
- Creating a park ranger program or other park security system; and
- Improving the trail system.

The polls show overwhelmingly that voters think the parks are important to their quality of life and to the city's economic development. They want park funding protected, and support expanding the city's partnerships with non-profit groups that can help manage parks and help pay for park enhancements.

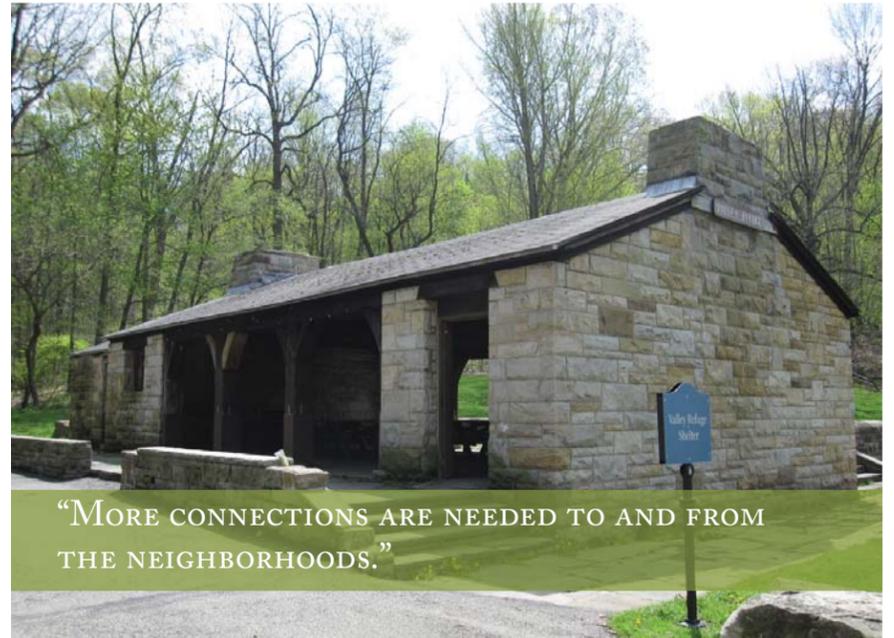
Despite their satisfaction with the current state of the parks, voters see room for improvement. Many have noticed a decline in the condition of park structures and facilities. Two-thirds would use the parks more if they were better maintained.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

A series of public events in the summer and fall of 2010 provided a framework for updating the 2000 Master Plan and for shaping goals that meet the expectations and needs of current users. Walks in the Woods and a series of workshops gathered feedback about the regional parks and their connections to the entire city park system. One participant's observation became a powerful rallying cry for these sessions: "Pittsburgh is a city within a park."

The following lists highlight comments by the public:

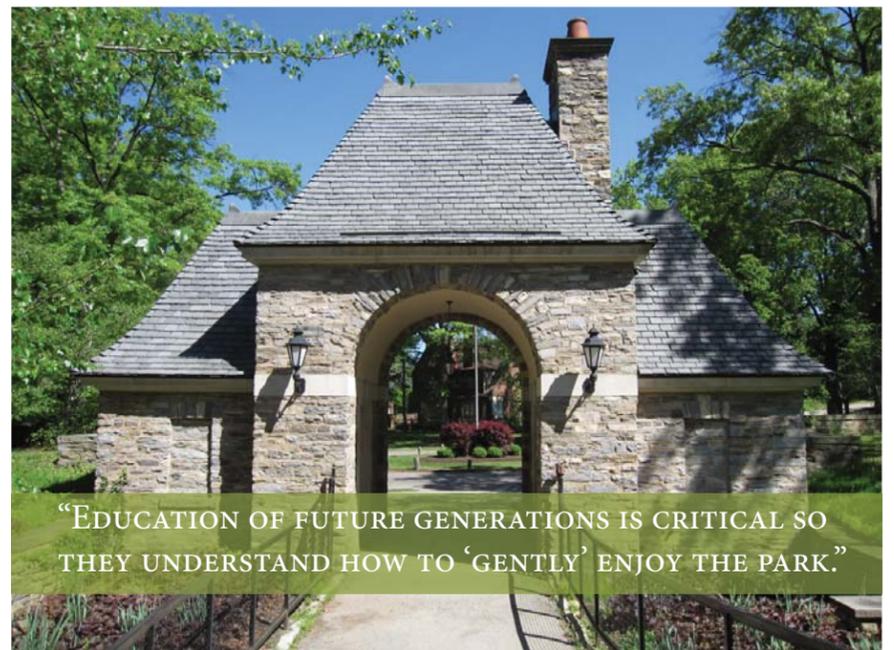
RIVERVIEW PARK



"MORE CONNECTIONS ARE NEEDED TO AND FROM THE NEIGHBORHOODS."

- Mixed feelings about the proposed soccer field and proposed community center based upon the physical limitations (contaminants and landslide-prone slopes) that will significantly increase costs, the lack of public transit access, as well as the presence of an existing activities building.
- Parks drives need clearly-defined vehicular, pedestrian and bike lanes.
- Concern about two-way traffic.
- Centennial Pavilion should be repainted a more natural color and moved closer to parking; add wetlands, and consider as relocation site for dog run. Snyder's Point needs a well-signed, attractive entrance, and development of an overlook.
- Pool is unattractive and difficult to access. Activities Building needs interior renovation and exterior improvements; could be expanded. Mixed feelings about removal of Davis Avenue Bridge due to lost connection with the park vs. the benefits of decreased traffic.
- Restore connection from Valley Refuge to upper Park – even if pedestrian-only.

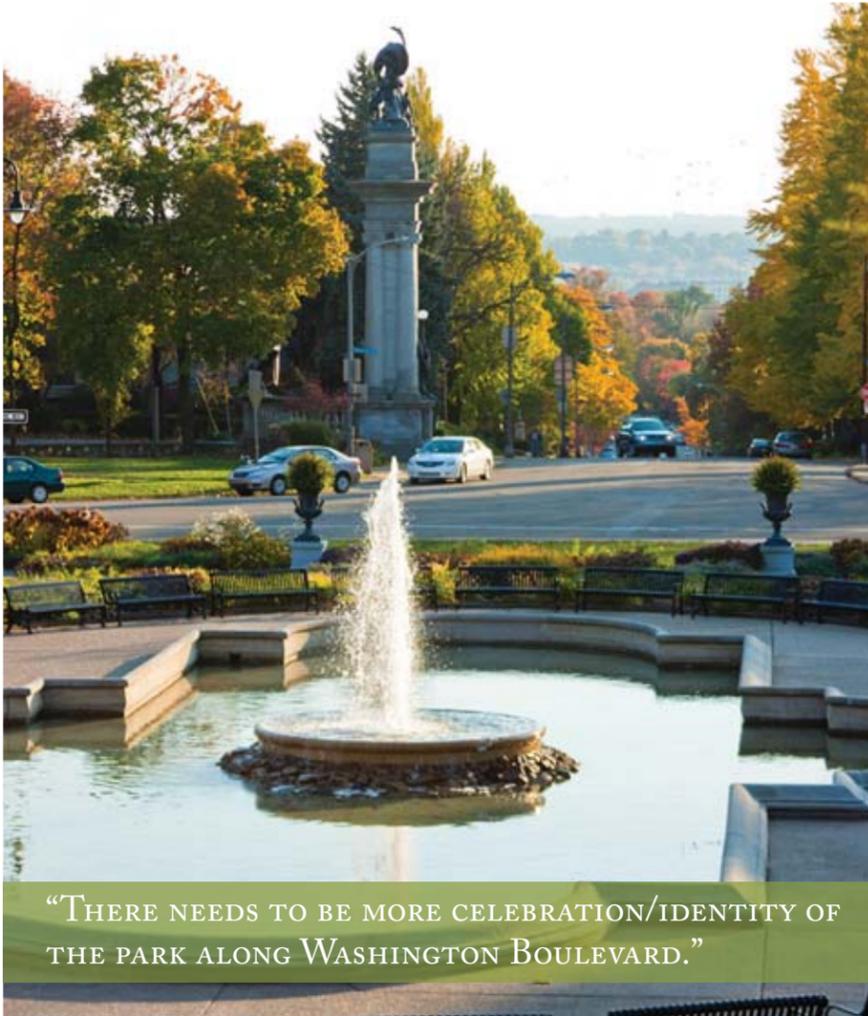
FRICK PARK



"EDUCATION OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IS CRITICAL SO THEY UNDERSTAND HOW TO 'GENTLY' ENJOY THE PARK."

- First priority should be woodlands.
- Problems of erosion and rogue trails.
- Concerns about off-leash dogs.
- Concerns about defining park edges.
- Need larger greenway connection to the Monongahela River.
- Difficulty of crossing Commercial Avenue.
- Reconstruction of Environmental Center should be a priority.
- Cross-walks and connections to neighborhoods are important.

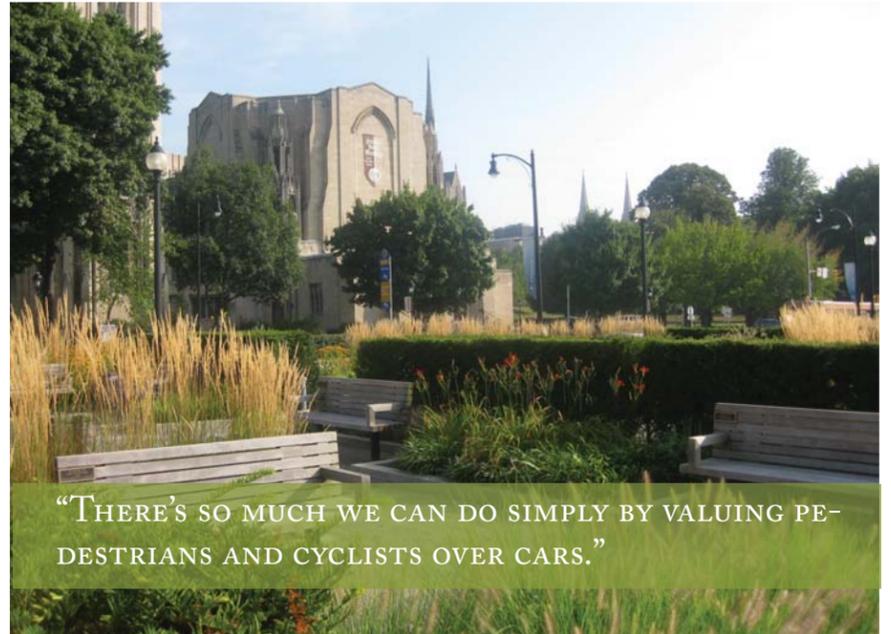
HIGHLAND PARK



“THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE CELEBRATION/IDENTITY OF THE PARK ALONG WASHINGTON BOULEVARD.”

- Reservoir #2 is a missed opportunity -- can it be publicly accessible?
- Positive feelings about the Zoo but negative feelings about parking, edges, neighborhood access.
- Need safe pedestrian and bike connections along roads.
- Acquire gas station on Butler Street, identify park entry.
- Need trail access through the King Estate that does not spoil natural features.
- Mixed feelings about ball fields.
- Need to address stormwater management along Washington Boulevard and strengthen its identity as part of Highland Park.
- Incorporate slopes along Negley Run and Washington Blvd.
- Farmhouse has potential for park programs; DPW facility by Farmhouse should be removed or improved.
- Concern about access and parking for ball field.
- Lake Carnegie a missed opportunity; bring back natural edge and uses.
- Renovate pool house, providing user amenities for parents; relocate DPW facility from within pool house. Remove DPW storage site across from pool; develop trail access and overlook to Allegheny River.
- Remove pavement at Mount Bigelow and provide user amenities, do not compromise view.

SCHENLEY PARK



“THERE’S SO MUCH WE CAN DO SIMPLY BY VALUING PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS OVER CARS.”

- Schenley Plaza has added value to the park.
- Improve tree bosque at Plaza.
- Enhance connection between Plaza and rest of park; upgrade fence/railing on bridge from Plaza.
- Pedestrian is second to the car throughout the park; critical need for safe pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, and bike crossings.
- Give better surroundings to the Bigelow monument.
- Need to retain public trail along slope between Phipps Conservatory and Panther Hollow Lake.
- Retain natural setting of lake and Panther Hollow; need access to Junction Hollow and trails.
- Redesign interchange at Boulevard of the Allies and Panther Hollow Road.
- Pool is invisible, unattractive, and difficult to access; underpass is in disrepair
- Hawkins monument inaccessible.
- Need walkway along Overlook Drive, access points to fields/tennis, user amenities.
- Concern about potential for two-way traffic on Overlook Drive.
- Need sidewalk and trail connections to neighborhoods.
- Golf course – reduce turf, provide safe pedestrian access through golf course.
- Restore Neill Log House.
- Restore Westinghouse Memorial and Pond.

CHALLENGES

Limited resources and unwieldy management structure are the key challenges that currently face efforts to achieve recommendations of the Regional Parks Master Plan. Best practices consistently include a number of factors that characterize well maintained, efficiently managed, and sufficiently funded parks:

- Unified park management with a clearly articulated mission;
- Consistent, dedicated funding for both capital improvements and general operations;
- Well developed and inclusive public programs that provide opportunities for public involvement with their parks;
- Management strategies that instill a sense of pride and caring among the staff responsible for maintenance and care;
- Clearly defined missions that capitalize on opportunities to generate revenue and instill an entrepreneurial sense within the organization;
- Opportunities for private sector support whether financial or through the use of volunteers;
- Up-to-date use of technology and information services; and
- Enforcement of park rules and procedures.

CHAPTER 2: THE VISION

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012

This plan reinforces the need to address a number of particular challenges and opportunities. Regarding **management**, the City houses park planning, maintenance, and programming in separate departments. This creates challenges in resource management, affecting visitor experience and limiting the potential of an integrated park system as envisioned in this plan. Inadequate and inconsistent funding has led to large reductions in budget and workforce. The pressures of providing park services under economic constraints can lead to short-term solutions and stop-gap approaches. Yet this presents an opportunity for the City and its partners to enhance the zone-based management and maintenance strategy that has performed so well in other park systems around the country. A new structure should emphasize quality park maintenance and care of natural resources. Among the tools needed to realize success are *park-based budgeting* and *performance-based maintenance plans* -- two tools that can be used to achieve success. New or renovated maintenance facilities should be the right size to support the operational needs of the specific regional parks they support, while larger maintenance complexes serving entire districts of the city should be relocated outside of parkland, perhaps utilizing vacant properties in commercial or light-industrial areas.

Park permitting should be matched to the landscape type or mission of the park so that it is not detrimental in terms of maintenance and management issues. Increased revenue may possibly be generated from the most popular facilities in the system; if so, these funds should be dedicated to maintenance of those facilities.

Non-profit managed efforts in the regional parks are considerable, but would benefit from enhanced coordination and support by the City. Its elimination of the former "Partners in Parks" office, for instance, impacts the available resource of citizen volunteers who can be trained to play a major role in controlling invasive plant species and managing erosion, although the City has now instituted a volunteer/service coordinator who can assist with policy and procedural issues, especially those related to union concerns.

Regarding **trees**, the impending loss to the tree population in the parks and open space system will be dramatic, as documented by the Tree Action Plan for the Regional Parks, recently completed by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy with the input of a broad consortium of City agencies, the Shade Tree Commission, and non-profit partners. The plan addresses hazardous tree removal, preservation treatment, and replanting with detailed cost estimates. It is a clarion call for a very high priority for funding in the short term. Without their woodlands, our parks will lose their historic character and also tremendous value in terms of wildlife habitat, human health, and environmental services, especially clean air and stormwater management.

Regarding **facilities**, a plan should be put in place to bring the parks into compliance with recent changes in the federal ADA legislation. The Parks Conservancy's recently completed study of accessibility in Schenley Park is intended to provide a basis for establishing a high-priority objective to achieve accessibility throughout the regional parks. A strategy is needed for sidewalk connections and road improvements to address safety, pedestrian access, parking, and stormwater management.

Due to their size, the regional parks are frequently a target of proposals for new facilities, including regional recreation centers, ropes courses, dog parks, and skate parks. Any new regional recreation facilities, such as indoor aquatic centers, should be developed with care and sited on lands in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and according to OpenSpacePGH's guidelines to ensure that any additional facilities be placed strategically and carefully.

PARKS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF COMMUNITIES

Parks are an essential part of the city's economic and cultural infrastructure. The American majority now living in metropolitan areas, need places of renewal in the experience of nature. Civic leaders increasingly understand that parks are necessities, rather than "amenities." Providing wonderful recreational opportunities, parks must be available to everyone.

Parks should rank as highly on the urban investment scale as roadways, arenas, and office development. Parks offer cities both a tremendous return on investment and a competitive edge. City parks and open spaces strengthen our communities, and make our cities and neighborhoods more attractive places to live and work.

Study after study proves that parks and open space increase the value of neighboring residential and commercial property, if well-maintained. Corporations choosing a new location look closely at the availability of park and recreation facilities as a key quality of life factor, as do people who are choosing a place to live. Parks entice tourists as well, boosting local businesses. Parks and green spaces improve public health. Strong evidence shows that when people have access to parks they exercise more, which increases health and reduces the risk of disease. Physical activity also relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety, improves mood, and enhances psychological well-being. Beyond exercise, a growing body of research shows that contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological health.

Green space renders huge environmental benefits to urban areas. Extensive acreage in woodland and meadow supplies rich wildlife habitat. Trees reduce air and water pollution, keep cities cooler, and inexpensively manage stormwater runoff. The woodland cover afforded by the historic regional parks alone -- some 900 acres -- is a key component of the city's stormwater management infrastructure. By developing that potential more fully, while also extending green infrastructure solutions into greenways and neighborhoods, parks offer a tremendous return on investment.

City parks and open spaces produce essential community development benefits, making neighborhoods more livable. Volunteer care for natural areas and gardens increases the sense of community ownership and stewardship. Parks offer recreational opportunities for all, including at-risk youth and low-income families. In fact, access to public parks and recreational facilities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and juvenile delinquency. Cultural events, environmental education, and other activities make parks significant venues for enrichment. Most importantly, parks give people a place to get together, and strengthen social ties. Out of this shared sense of community comes the confidence and vision for civic leadership and transformation.



A NEW VISION OF INTEGRATED SUSTAINABILITY

Rooted in the unique character of Pittsburgh, the plan for sustainable regional parks should honor both natural and cultural resources. The urban landscapes of Pittsburgh are cultural landscapes, the combined works of humanity and nature, as they were shaped and have evolved

over time. In this Master Plant Update we express the continuum of the past, recognize the challenges and opportunities of the present, and aim toward a resilient future for the park and open space system.

The resources of Pittsburgh's system can be discussed as individual elements. To a degree this is useful, but their integration into a greater whole should always be kept in mind. They are inextricably linked to each other. The sum of the public landscape is indeed more than the pieces of the quilt that make up our system. Key concepts revolve around the following:

- distinctive character of the land;
- interventions uniquely generated by place and systems;
- the critical resources of soils, vegetation and water;
- and community as means of integrating dwellings, businesses, schools, etc., with parks, greenways and boulevards.

Land is not only a foundation but also an inspiration shaped by natural and cultural forces over time. Frick Park is a marvelous example of a park landscape that was so well designed and cultivated that many of today's park visitors may not realize that it is not a "natural" landscape at all. The land is, in itself, a design guide for harmonious interventions and connectivity of the proposed sustainable park system of Pittsburgh.



The dramatic and varied landscape of Pittsburgh has shaped the city at every scale. This dynamic continues in the 21st century, as we apply the sustainable principles of limiting disturbance, reflecting native topography, and letting the land forms guide the organization of the systems that link parks, open spaces and neighborhoods throughout the city. This dynamic



calls for respecting related vegetation (Green) and water (Blue) systems, and evolving circulation systems (Gray) for multi-modal movement city-wide. Together the Blue-Green-Gray defines the basic concept of system integration for this planning effort.

Water is a precious resource to be honored, harvested, and reused as a natural system. The concepts (re-) emerging (often historic methods now forgotten) include rainwater harvest in cisterns, graywater capture from building pipes, and cleansing that graywater in biotic wetland cleansing systems. The restoration and conservation of stream corridors are also important aspects to consider. Wholesale manipulation of the few existing "natural" water systems should not be a design direction.



Soil is a biotic resource, often ignored by contractors, which should be protected in place and harvested in all areas of disturbance for stockpiling, amendment, and reuse. Conserving soil is a prerequisite of sustainable construction as defined by

the Sustainable Sites Initiative. (SSI is a national guidelines program that addresses integrated, holistic sustainability of landscapes.) Soils are also a source of habitat for insects and other soil-based life forms that are part of the food chain. The soil's functions in sustaining living systems are critical ecosystem services. Ignoring these functions can damage vegetation and should be avoided.

Vegetation is a living resource. Pittsburgh's parks and open spaces are home to a remarkable collection of trees that absorb vast amounts of stormwater, hold soils in place, yield oxygen, cleanse the air, provide shade and moderate the urban heat island, are sources of food and habitat for wildlife, and nourish the human spirit.

Harmony of people and land is the keystone of cultural landscapes. Cultural landscapes are the combined works of humanity and nature. The past decade has witnessed a significant shift in perspective -- from the ecological directive looking to an ideal time of the past, to a societal directive looking toward a green and sustainable future. This current direction promises a more profound harmony between land and people.

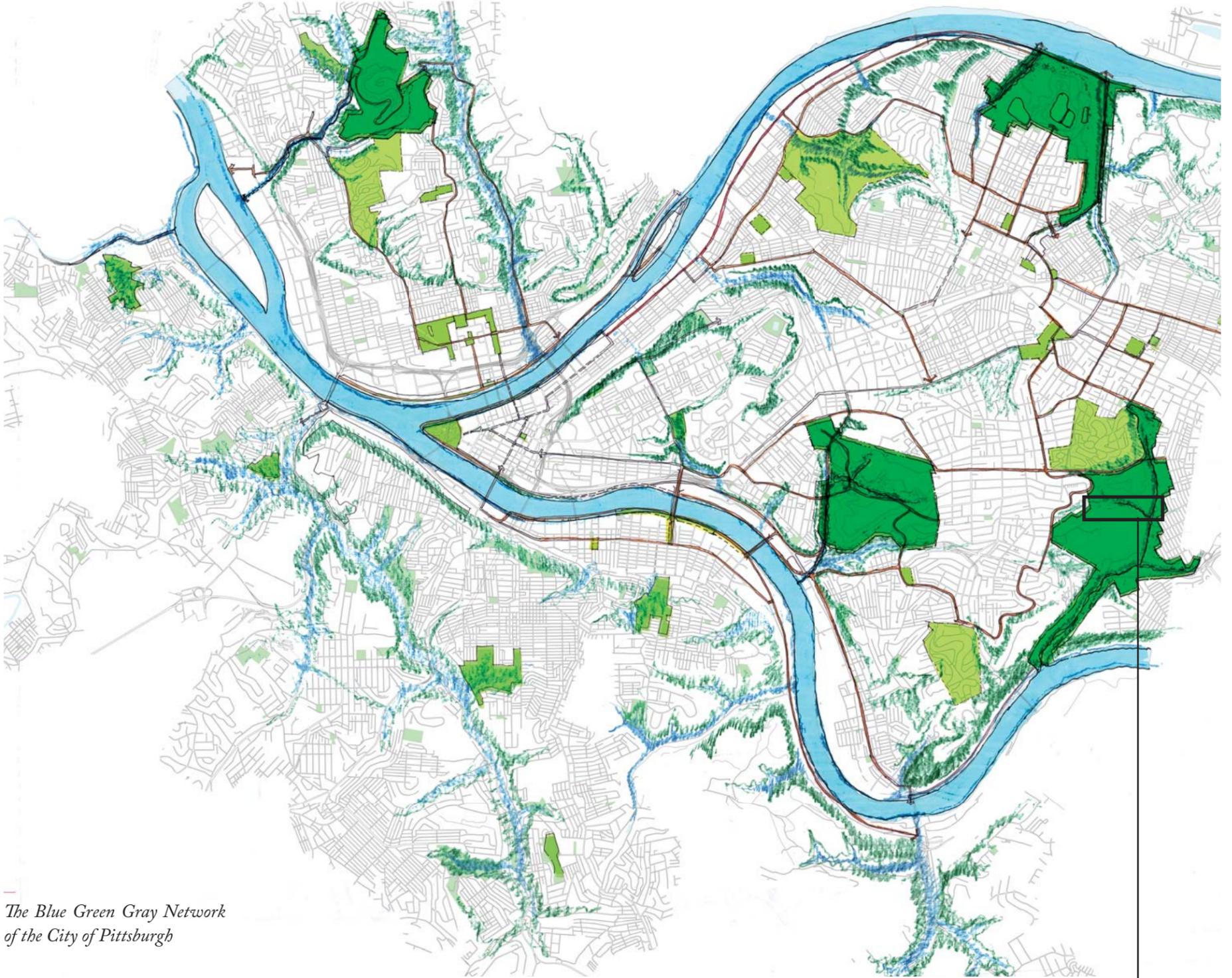
These constructs emerge both from professional practice and the perspectives of today's urban dwellers. As noted elsewhere, research tells us that parks, recreational resources, places of respite, trees, shady streets, and more, all have values that contribute to thriving, positive urban life. This plan respectfully addresses our regional parks as places of heritage, and at the same time applies contemporary best practices to enrich their sustainability and extend their value to current and future generations.

CHAPTER 2: THE VISION

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012

REGIONAL PARKS IN RELATION TO THE CITY'S PHYSICAL AND NATURAL FEATURES

To achieve the highest degree of sustainability, we need to understand how our natural systems of water, topography, soils, and vegetation influence our designed landscapes. Mapping these natural systems and studying them in relation to destinations and focal areas in our parks is critical to reducing impacts of the built landscape.



The Blue Green Gray Network of the City of Pittsburgh

NATURAL SYSTEMS WITHIN THE REGIONAL PARKS - FRICK PARK AS AN EXAMPLE: CLAYTON HILL AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER AS A TARGETED PROJECT

Understanding the regional natural system and applying it to site specific park projects has a tremendous influence on the resulting design. This understanding encourages creative thinking with regard to the use of sustainable measures to reduce impacts through Low Impact Development techniques, and to achieve sustainable infrastructure employing green design strategies.



Site specific blue green and gray systems

The components of Blue-Green-Gray that are a foundational element of this plan are discrete but intertwined. Each has particular aspects and qualities that are defined and described here.

BLUE

Lakes, ponds, and wetlands provide significant wildlife habitat and human enjoyment, and are enhanced accordingly. The most notable of these -- Panther Hollow Lake and Lake Carnegie -- were constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and are in need of renovations that enhance their natural character and function within the larger Blue network. Within park borders, streams are enriched through new plantings and vegetation management, improved through upland stormwater interventions and stream bed and bank improvements. Streams are extended beyond current park boundaries and accessed with well designed trail systems or new linkages among Blue-Green-Gray.

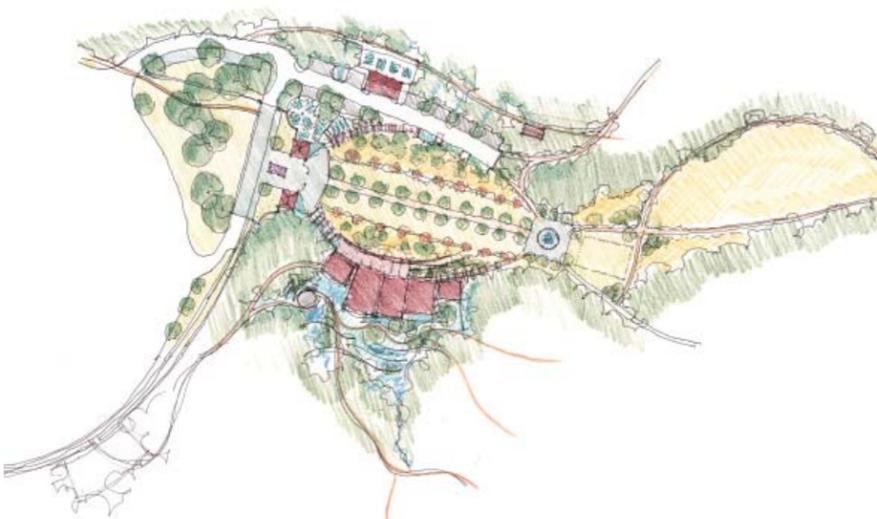
GREEN

Vegetation defines the Edges and Boundaries that reinforce park character. It also allows for permeability which assists integration with neighborhoods. Hillsides are most often covered with successional woodlands that require Ongoing Woodland Management to restrict invasion by non-native species. The loss of significant views within the regional parks and to distant scenes often robs park visitors of the rewarding experience of feeling connected to the landscape. These views must be identified and Vista Management practices applied consistently from year-to-year in park viewsheds to regain and maintain their attractive value to the parks.

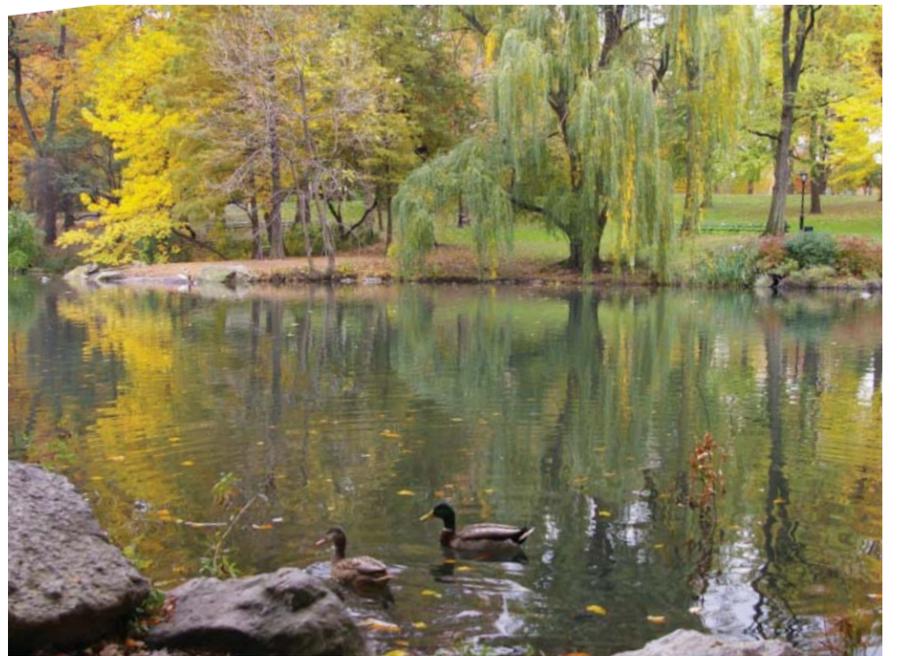
GRAY

Boulevards, streets, and trails reinforce connectivity to neighborhoods and adjacent landscapes. They are sized correctly for average daily use, separating modes of travel wherever possible, and encourage bicycling and walking for commuting and recreation. Streets are greened with street trees, bioswales and raingardens, and pervious pavement in non-traffic lanes. In combination, these treatments will create great streets between parks that heighten perception of the park system and encourage its exploration.

If new projects within the parks are designed with the Blue Green Gray networks in mind, each new park improvement can contribute to the enhancement of the broader natural systems that interlace our park landscapes.



CONCEPT SKETCH: Applying sustainable design strategies to the Frick Environmental Center



BLUE: Provide soft edges along functional streams, ponds, and lakes with designated access points for pedestrians.



GREEN: Preserve woodlands and enhance greenspaces such as lawn with meadows, shrubs, and woodland edge plantings to increase diversity and habitat.



GRAY: Think creatively about the pedestrian network for placemaking, "intertwining" with the green and blue systems to create sustainable public places.

CHAPTER 2: THE VISION

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012

A FOUNDATION OF VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Values and principles are both touchstone and underpinning for the work ahead. They provide a robust framework for considering each recommended action in this 2012 Master Plan Update. The Plan's 21st century context challenges us to improve upon the three-pronged approach -- balancing respect for the historic design of parks with best environmental and ecological practices while accommodating the needs of today's users -- that served as a yardstick for the 2000 Master Plan.

This updated Plan is framed by an expanded understanding of sustainability, applied at multiple levels to stewardship of the park system, and addressing the values of:

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP -- Supporting the vitality of park ecology, rich habitats, and the wise use of resources for energy efficiency, and reaching out to park users on these topics;

HISTORIC PRESERVATION -- Respecting the tangible historic, cultural landscape resources and the unique character of each landscape, and making history visible to park users through historic images and narratives;

SCENIC QUALITY -- Appreciating the inherited aesthetic beauty of public landscapes, returning diminished areas of parks to scenic landscapes that are beautiful, and pointing out scenic qualities to park users to enhance understanding;

HEALTH AND AMENITIES -- Recognizing and facilitating the vital public health role of parks by ensuring broad access for people of all abilities, and providing amenities that encourage everyday use such as restrooms, drinking fountains, benches, bike racks, and signage;

FLEXIBLE USE -- Providing opportunities in the landscape for varied recreation with an emphasis on flexible uses rather than single purpose landscapes, and making the array of uses visible and understood by the community;

FISCAL ALIGNMENT -- Transparent, realistic funding of plans and actions that provide sound outcomes, through appropriate and suitable maintenance budgets and project initiatives;



FUNCTIONAL & DURABLE LANDSCAPES -- Achieving a park system that works, is safe and which endures because of the original sound construction, as well as the design integrity and quality of future work, and which exhibits a high standard of craftsmanship, cohesive, well-tested park details, and durable furnishings;

EXCELLENT MAINTENANCE -- Park landscapes are cared for by people who are committed to the work and who are valued by the community as caretakers and stewards of public landscapes;

COMMUNITY SUPPORT -- Engaging all sectors of Pittsburgh to foster support and instill a sense of ownership, thereby growing the group of responsible users, partners, volunteers and staff.

The Master Plan Update's overall objective is to be holistic -- so as to integrate high-performing biological, cultural and structural systems. With it, we can achieve an appropriate level of sustainability for each targeted landscape or feature. This approach applies at every scale, from individual projects to specific parks to the entire system. By applying best practices and continually challenging what it means to be sustainable and resilient, we will reach balanced solutions that express the full range of values throughout our parks.



CHAPTER 3: THE STRATEGY

to Move Forward

The 2012 Sustainable Parks System plan has been undertaken to set the compass for our common wealth of public landscapes. It seeks an appropriate balance of historic preservation, aesthetic quality, diverse public use, functionality, fiscal responsibility, and maintainability to frame a vision that is harmonious with the past and innovative toward the future of these irreplaceable public landscapes.

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR CHANGE

New thinking involves applying strategies to motivate, inspire, educate and gain broad support for the coming decades of park, boulevard, and greenway advocacy and action. These are:

- **Work from Value-Based Platform** -- Test all projects and initiatives against the diverse values of environmental health, historic preservation, scenic quality and appreciation, diverse uses, fiscal alignment, functional and durable landscapes, and community support.
- **Be Opportunistic and Collaborative** -- Prepare for action, defining methods and means so the road map is clear and transparent. Seek resources, funds and partners to collaborate and get things done.
- **Extend and Integrate the Park, Boulevard, and Greenway System** -- Improve all we have and build new links in an interconnected Blue-Green-Gray network to enhance beauty, scenery, ecology, and uses. Expand educational and stewardship volunteer programs, strengthen ecological services, and make a greater commitment to funding the park system. Extend the City of Pittsburgh's multi-modal transportation efforts to connect parks as part of a comprehensive city-wide effort addressing streets, boulevards and repurposed vacant lands. Link the regional parks to smaller parks, greenways, the rivers, and new efforts such as the Allegheny Riverfront Green Boulevard initiative. Seek opportunities and creative development patterns while opening up land for park uses in shrinking neighborhoods. Recent neighborhood redevelopment plans are excellent examples of reclaiming and reshaping communities for a better quality of urban life.
- **Continue to Renew Frick, Highland, Riverview, and Schenley Parks** -- Apply the system-wide strategies as mentioned above to each park to guide capital improvements, enhancing the landscape character of historically significant sites and recreational spaces.
- **Reinforce Funding and Management** -- Improve management and maintenance of the park, boulevard, and greenway system by enlisting all available partners, developing diverse and stable revenue sources, and improving and extending the pivotal partnership of the Parks Conservancy and the City of Pittsburgh. Recommend that the City

and Parks Conservancy communicate prior to submitting funding plans and requests to the Allegheny Regional Asset District, jointly developing these submissions.

- **Universal Signage System** – Adopt one city-wide system.
- **Bolster Effective Maintenance** – Foster a diverse, sustainable system by positioning maintenance as a top priority. Reinvigorate dedicated maintenance crews that are guided by policies, procedures, and performance standards, and inspired by the **Master Plan Update**.
- **Inform and Celebrate** -- Let everyone know about what is happening and why, how it's being done, and by whom. Enjoy the work underway and after completion by celebrating milestones. Broaden public knowledge to increase respect for the **sustainable park system**.

The improvement of our park, boulevard and greenway system is a dynamic process that should be continually adapted to needs, best practices and opportunities. This new 2012 plan builds upon the success of the 2000 Master Plan to set a new level of excellence. That plan concentrated on the parks themselves. Now, we need to move toward systems-thinking to link parks, boulevards, greenways, and neighborhoods while continuing to improve the parks. This Blue-Green-Gray approach integrates all the stated values and addresses the targeted principles. This 2012 plan will apply current best practices with an enhanced level of integration and sophistication, based on knowledge gained over the past decade.

INNOVATIVE PLANNING STRATEGIES

The Master Plan Update calls for innovative planning and design strategies to address common issues in the four historic regional parks, and which can be applied throughout the city-wide park system. The four historic regional parks are site-specific designed landscapes, each with unique opportunities and challenges. However, the parks have a number of issues in common that are better addressed universally. It will be beneficial to find these common threads and strategically devise system-wide strategies to mitigate them. The key innovative strategies for this plan are:

- **Opportunities-based Priorities** – In recognition of a fluctuating funding environment and emerging partners, carry out initiatives in a rational sequence and a coordinated manner.
- **Eco-system Services** – Apply the Blue-Green-Gray network to influence the design of the built landscape. The plan uses these systems to organize the regional parks into landscape planning units. Each enhancement project will build upon the other to continually improve user amenities, habitat, and ecology.
- **Low Impact Design** – Applying sustainable, green infrastructure

CHAPTER 3: STRATEGY TO MOVE FORWARD

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012



2012 MASTER PLAN UPDATE: Artist sketch by Ed Dumont illustrating proposed meadow edges at lawn areas.



2012 MASTER PLAN UPDATE: Artist sketch by Ed Dumont illustrating sustainable technologies to clean and control stormwater.



2012 MASTER PLAN UPDATE: Artist sketch by Ed Dumont illustrating proposed green parking areas

strategies to park improvements will ensure that the parks will be impacted less by built landscapes. The effect will be to enhance ecosystems, habitats, and aesthetics, and to reduce park maintenance needs.

- **Effective Management** – Developing common institutional policies for managing everyday use can and should be uniformly and fairly applied to all parks. The goal is to gain public consensus and respect for issues of safety and health.
- **Enforcement** – Strategically develop an enforcement program to protect the park systems landscapes, enhance safety, and improve health.
- **Design Standards** – Define a consistent vocabulary of material, furnishings, and park elements to enhance aesthetics, establish character, and streamline maintenance.

These innovative strategies will provide a framework to systematically resolve ongoing issues related to our parks.

- **Boundaries.** In many parks, especially Riverview and Frick, the boundary between public park land and private property is not clear. Park boundaries and defined entry points need to be clearly marked to prevent private encroachment of back yards into the parks or vice versa, to prevent the creation of rogue trails, and to ensure adjacent park uses are properly screened and buffered from the parks.
- **Pedestrian Connections and Accessibility.** In many cases there is no sidewalk connection between parks and adjacent neighborhoods. This

is due in part to the parks being established before some neighborhoods grew up around them. This is not only unsafe, but has fostered the creation of “desire line” trails. Wherever possible, sidewalks or trails should be constructed from the adjacent public rights-of-way into the park, including accessible routes, and pedestrian cross-walks.

- **User Amenities.** Improved user amenities are critical to the success of parks and for the comfort of the users. This plan recommends that year-round restrooms be installed in all large parks. Appropriate location and security are critical to their long term sustainability.
- **Woodland and Landscape Management.** Data collected during the Natural Areas Study reinforced the idea put forth in the 2000 Master Plan that the regional parks are ecologically significant and contain large areas of intact habitat whose size and quality are not found often within a city. All of the parks contain natural drainage channels, stands of native vegetation, and relatively undisturbed soils that should be protected and enhanced. More importantly, the regional parks contain degraded stream channels, poor drainage systems, invasive plant species, diseased trees, and severely compacted soils. These need to be repaired to again contribute to the ecological services provided by the parks.
- **Maintenance.** Understanding that the regional parks are designed landscapes means recognizing their specific needs and providing for maintenance. All built features require maintenance and repair, and natural systems within a highly urbanized environment also need continual attention. The 2000 Master Plan recommended dedicated maintenance crews for each park. This approach has demonstrated that dedicated park crews play a critical part in the success of all recommendations and should be a foundational management strategy.
- **Management and Security.** The parks have become a playground for the residents of Pittsburgh, and there are many conflicting uses that happen daily in all parks – free-running dogs outside of sanctioned off-leash areas creating unhealthy and unsafe conditions for other users, mountain bikes that impact slope and landscape stability, and unpermitted recreation uses, among others. A mechanism for enforcement is critical. Resolving these conflicts is necessary for the safety, health, and stability of our parks and for the people who use them. Safety and security are often cited as reasons to delay or not consider various uses and improvements in the parks. The mechanism to improve park safety is related to enforcement needs.
- **Growing the Park.** There are numerous cases where property near or adjacent to the regional parks is also open space or has a common public use. Cemeteries, greenways, and steep slopes that are next to a regional park present an opportunity for protection and/or expansion

of the park. Conservation easements can be placed on sensitive lands, greenways can be expanded to connect to parks, and steep slopes can be acquired from adjacent property owners. The goal is to expand the physical and cultural reach of the parks, so their benefits can be shared by more of the city, and to protect lands that are important to the visual or ecological health of the parks.

The **Master Plan Update** will be implemented through three different types of action: Capital Projects; Staff and Day to Day Activities; and Volunteer Programs and Projects.

RESOURCES | REGIONAL PARKS AND THE CITY

Although this 2012 **Sustainable Parks System** plan focuses on the four original Regional Parks – Frick, Highland, Riverview, and Schenley – they are part of the larger landscape of the City of Pittsburgh. Blessed with a rolling, abrupt topography, the city appears green because of its many tree-covered hillsides. All five of the regional parks, including Emerald View Park, occupy some of the most breathtaking ridgelines and stream valleys in the city, offering distant views and dynamic landscapes within.

When the innovative, organizational framework of Blue, Green, and Gray systems is overlaid on these parks and the city as a whole, a tremendous opportunity becomes apparent. It offers a chance to rethink our park system as a series of landscape destinations linked through trails, streets, greenways, and water courses. Simultaneously, the connection interweaving neighborhoods, parks and streets with the larger regional open space patterns by way of our three rivers.

The regional parks, together with the riverfronts, are the defining major green spaces for our city. We have learned that in the last ten years that our regional parks cannot support the recreational needs for the entire city without taking a toll on their landscape character and sensitive ecological health. **When looking at programming, we must determine the appropriate uses to house within the regional parks and identify those uses that are better suited for community and neighborhood parks, or vacant lands.** In addition, Pittsburgh's demographics have changed dramatically. This allows underutilized neighborhoods and parks to be redefined and reborn, thus providing an opportunity to grow new parks for new uses, such as destination recreation facilities, urban gardens, and enhanced eco-systems.

Many great cities are defined by their park systems – Paris, London, Boston, Minneapolis, Cincinnati, and Chicago to name a few. The approach of this Master Plan Update, which sees regional parks as anchors in a larger system that incorporates both small and new parks, can elevate Pittsburgh on the national and international level as the new “City in a Park” of the 21st century.

RESOURCES | PARTNERS, ADVOCATES, AND SUPPORTERS

One of Pittsburgh's many success stories is the partnership between the Parks Conservancy and the Department of Public Works.

The Parks Conservancy has developed numerous programs and has trained hundreds of volunteers to help care for gardens and natural areas, supplementing the efforts of Public Works. While at the same time, Public Works has provided much needed resources for Conservancy efforts. For example, Public Works has provided topsoil, mulch, and stone, along with a skilled construction crew and equipment, for capital projects and trail restoration projects. These in-kind services help to decrease direct costs, to inspire confidence among private funders, and to foster a strong sense of partnership with tangible accomplishments. The Parks Conservancy has also underwritten professional development for park supervisors and staff, paying for training, conferences, and study to build their capacity to implement the level of management and maintenance required by historic urban parks. Consistent assignment of staff to park duties ensures that the value of professional development is realized.

Another key partnership has developed around the Urban Ecology Collaborative (UEC), a consortium of local organizations and environmental professionals linked to a national network dedicated to cultivating healthy, safe, and vibrant cities through collective learning and united action. Pittsburgh area partners include: Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Grow Pittsburgh, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Tree Pittsburgh, GTECH, PA Cleanways, PRC, Student Conservation Association, Earth Force, NAS, and TreeVitalize. UEC conducts workshops to engage residents in the environment, hosts forums, and trains Urban EcoStewards to adopt and care for green spaces in parks and public lands.

In its 15 years of existence, the Parks Conservancy has steadily grown in its commitment to environmental education as a cornerstone of the future stewardship of our parks and green spaces. Partnership with the City to deliver high-quality environmental education is developing new audiences through the public, private, and home schools. Together we look forward to creating an improved array of facilities for environmental education, starting with the new Frick Environmental Center.

Thousands of Pittsburghers are advocates for parks, whether through formal membership in the Parks Conservancy or affinity environmental organizations, as stewardship volunteers, or as park users and neighbors. Parks are personal and touch nearly everyone's lives. It is through the love of these resources, the vigilance for their protection, and their wise use that the parks will endure.

CHAPTER 4: THE PLAN

Regional Parks and the City

BEYOND THE REGIONAL PARKS

The 2000 Master Plan suggested the idea of connecting the three eastern regional parks to each other by formally developing their original boulevard connections and by finding ways to connect each park to the rivers. This river connection was accomplished in Frick Park by the dedication of new parkland along the Nine Mile Run stream corridor through the newly developed neighborhood of Summerset at Frick Park. Today, with the bicycling revolution that is transforming Pittsburgh into a bike-friendly city and the increased recreational use of our parks and neighborhoods for walking, there is a tremendous opportunity to build on this success. We can begin to think beyond park boundaries and find ways to accomplish broader physical connections. These new connections are not only for people, but also begin to identify and incorporate the city-wide natural systems in ways that improve the ecosystems and habitats of each park and the city in general.

BUILDING ON CURRENT INITIATIVES

Enhancing connections between the regional parks and the city requires taking advantage of three evolving initiatives:

- Applying our core planning approach to the **Sustainable Parks System** - integrating the Blue Green Gray that define “a City within a Park” to identify connections between parks, neighborhoods, and rivers.
- Capturing the momentum of the successful transformation of streets into a multi-modal, bike-friendly system and the leadership of Pittsburgh’s transportation planners to develop complete street systems – giving pedestrians equal access with cars, bikes, and other forms of alternative transport within a green infrastructure setting that sustainably manages stormwater.
- Establishing connections and growing parks by leveraging the opportunities to capture the vacant lands of the “shrinking city” as neighborhoods and industrial sites are redefined and redeveloped.

APPROACH TO BUILDING THE SYSTEM

There has been tremendous investment in our neighborhoods, parks and riverfronts in recent years. The 2012 **Master Plan Update** has developed recommendations to accomplish this long sought-after connectivity. The plan calls for the following initiatives to find a way to tie our parks together.

- Identify key connector streets and develop standards for “complete street systems” for main access routes to parks, park-related streets, and the historic boulevard system comprised of Bigelow, Beechwood,

and Washington Boulevards that interface with the parks. Complete street systems should be safe and convenient for all ages, abilities and modes of transportation while employing green strategies to handle water, air, and soil quality.

- Identify streets, such as Negley Run Boulevard in Highland Park, that can be reconfigured and transformed into park drives.
- Identify larger city-wide infrastructure and transportation projects that can provide connectivity beyond the parks, such as the inter-modal Allegheny River Green Boulevard initiative, among others.
- Identify the difficult connections -- among, into, and within the parks -- where better access is needed, including sidewalks, trails, bikeways, and public transportation.
- Identify key connection points, including new parks initiatives and regional trails that enhance the overall system.

GOVERNING POLICIES

The identification of physical and natural aspects of Pittsburgh’s landscape unveils the relationships that exist between the parklands. Land needs and capacities can be determined so that park services best serve their respective neighborhoods and the city as a whole.

Our historic regional parks are among Pittsburgh’s most valuable landscape assets. Their use must be carefully planned. Over the last 10 years, we have learned that these parks cannot be viewed as the sole land resource for new recreational facilities or other new uses without doing damage to landscape character and natural systems. These regional parks must exhibit a balance of uses to preserve what people most cherish – well-placed and well-designed activities immersed in a natural and healthy environmental setting. This 2012 **Master Plan Update** is a resource that will help preserve the heritage and landscape character of our great regional parks.

Pittsburgh’s population decline and economic rebirth as a service, technology, and medical hub brings opportunities to redefine our parks and determine where new or existing uses should be considered. For instance, the concept of a new Aquatic Center, Community Center, or Destination Sports Complex are ill-suited for location in the historic regional parks. Parking, traffic and service requirements may be detrimental to physical and natural systems, as well as visitor experience. Clearly, Pittsburgh needs new recreational facilities, particularly indoor facilities. The need for swimming pools in some parks, particularly in the regional parks, needs to be evaluated for removal or updating to appeal to today’s recreational users. There are also new ideas to embrace, most notably the trend to self-directed recreational opportunities in our park, the growing awareness of the role parks play in personal health, and the demand for enhanced natural systems.

What can the four historic parks ideally accommodate?

User surveys and the study of current recreational trends provide some guidance to this question. These parks, as historically envisioned and designed, provide balanced recreational opportunities and flexible landscape settings for all residents. To achieve our goal of reinforcing natural systems that will result in a richer, sustainable landscape experience, the following ideal uses are summarized:

<p>FRICK PARK</p> <p>Ideal Use: Natural park landscape, with a woodland and stream ecosystem at its core.</p> <p>Compatible Uses: Meadow and stream habitat corridors, trails, and outdoor learning spaces.</p> <p>Special Uses: The Frick Environmental Center; restoration of designated historic landscapes.</p> <p>Park Uses: Consistent with historic design of the park, situate open lawn expanses, playgrounds, play fields, and courts along the interface with neighborhoods at the edges or entrances to the park.</p> <p>Primary Needs: Continue to manage woodlands and streams and protect the park's edges and boundaries.</p>	<p>HIGHLAND PARK</p> <p>Ideal Use: Civic park landscape.</p> <p>Compatible Uses: Preserve steep slopes by enhancing woodland, meadow, and stream habitat corridors and trails.</p> <p>Special Uses: The Zoo, an institutional amenity and the PWSA reservoirs – both need better boundaries as well as improved integration within the park's landscapes – a recognition that these institutions exist within a park setting.</p> <p>Park Uses: Playgrounds, picnic facilities, small recreational fields and sports courts. Limited regional use such as the existing pool that needs to be upgraded as a neighborhood amenity.</p> <p>Primary Needs: Reclaiming its landscape character, improving connectivity and safety, and improved zoo interfaces with the park.</p>
<p>SCHENLEY PARK</p> <p>Ideal Use: Civic park landscapes interwoven by natural stream and woodlands along the valley corridors, such as Panther Hollow, to provide woodland experience within the city.</p> <p>Compatible Uses: Preserve steep slopes by enhancing woodland, meadow, and stream habitat corridors and trails. The golf course should be considered an environmental amenity that can enhance and grow the natural systems in the park.</p> <p>Special Uses: The institutions such as Phipps Conservatory and Schenley Oval's sports and recreational facilities, and large events such as fundraising walks.</p> <p>Park Uses: Playgrounds, picnic facilities, trails, and the existing pool, which needs to be upgraded with improved access as a neighborhood amenity.</p> <p>Primary Needs: Traffic calming and pedestrian safety improvements.</p>	<p>RIVERVIEW PARK</p> <p>Ideal Use: Nature park landscape, with a woodland and stream ecosystem at its core – the “Frick Park” of city's the northern region.</p> <p>Compatible Uses: Preserve steep slopes by enhancing woodland, meadow, and stream habitat corridors and trails.</p> <p>Special Uses: The ridge landscape as a civic spine for community gatherings and to support neighborhood amenities such as the playground; the Observatory as an historic park feature.</p> <p>Park Uses: Playgrounds, picnic facilities, a limited amount of small recreational fields and sports courts. Limited regional use such as the soccer field.</p> <p>Primary Needs: Hillside and landscape stabilization, erosion control.</p>

The Key Recommendation. Our four historic regional parks are precious designed landscapes, rich in history, landscape character, and natural systems. These landscapes cannot simply be thought of as empty land parcels that can be filled with the newest amenity or desired recreational facility. The placement of uses, either existing or new, must respect landscape character and must be designed in a way that mitigates damage to natural systems. When new facilities need to be located, the city's entire system of parks and open space should be considered. Proposed new regional facilities such as major sports complexes, aquatic centers, and community centers should be located elsewhere in the city-wide system in order to preserve the balance of natural areas and facilities in each regional park.

Key Policies. A set of policy guidelines must be developed to protect, enhance and manage our park landscape in an effective, sustainable way. The following points are recommended as core content:

- **Focus on appropriate uses within the park landscapes and locate new destination recreation facilities on suitable lands.**
- **Identify sustainable areas for off-leash dog use; enforce leash laws in all other areas of the parks.**
- **Explore relocation of existing fenced dog runs to more sustainable sites, with access to parking and drinking water.**
- **Limit maintenance facilities to small, park-oriented service centers. Relocate district-level facilities to commercial or light industrial areas of the city.**
- **Link expansion and improvement of existing park institutions, such as the Zoo and Phipps Conservatory, to a comprehensive strategy of improving and screening park edges and interfaces, reinforcing park settings, and enhancing natural systems.**
- **In rebuilding the park landscape and user amenities, incorporate state of the art sustainable infrastructure technologies that reduce impacts and reinforce natural systems.**
- **Avoid using the regional parks for new utility easements; seek green infrastructure solutions wherever possible for stormwater; place all wiring underground.**
- **Leverage partnerships to advance park quality and service, such as transportation improvements that can enhance accessibility and connectivity.**
- **Require all new projects to build in maintenance and management strategies for long-term sustainability and resilience.**

Awareness of the landscape capacity of our four historic regional parks is the key to determining what uses, if any, should be added, expanded, or even removed. Over time, these parks have become the city's primary landscapes for recreation, leisure, and cultural uses. They have been pushed to their limits in terms of physical development. Further development will cause additional landscape deterioration, loss of natural systems and habitats, and a loss of the parks' historic, civic nature..

CHAPTER 4: THE PLAN | REGIONAL PARKS AND THE CITY

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012

COMMON SOLUTIONS

PARK DRIVES RECONSIDERED

Many park-associated roads, designed and built prior to contemporary traffic engineering techniques, are oversized. The results of excessive roadway width and low traffic density are unsafe speeds and underutilized edge and median areas. Pittsburgh should reconsider the roadways that traverse its parks, taking advantage of the existing infrastructure to further park values and user experiences.

STRATEGIES

- Repurpose underutilized traffic lanes for multi-modal pedestrian and bicycle routes.
- Shrink or reduce oversized park drives through removal of unnecessary pavement to improve pedestrian access and safety, and to create areas for catchment and treatment of runoff.
- Improve intersections to slow down traffic and to facilitate safe pedestrian crossings and bicycling.



A separate bike lane along a park roadway in Minneapolis

INNOVATIVE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Currently, many Pittsburgh park landscapes shed precipitation unsustainably, eroding drainages, flooding downstream areas, reducing water quality, and limiting habitat integrity. If managed properly however, stormwater can become an important feature of the city's parks providing opportunities for environmental education and stewardship, as well as a more diverse set of ecosystems. In addition to overall efforts at revising the parks' hydrology, stormwater management may also be addressed at a smaller scale when considering project specific concerns, such as the design of roads, paths, and plantings.

STRATEGIES

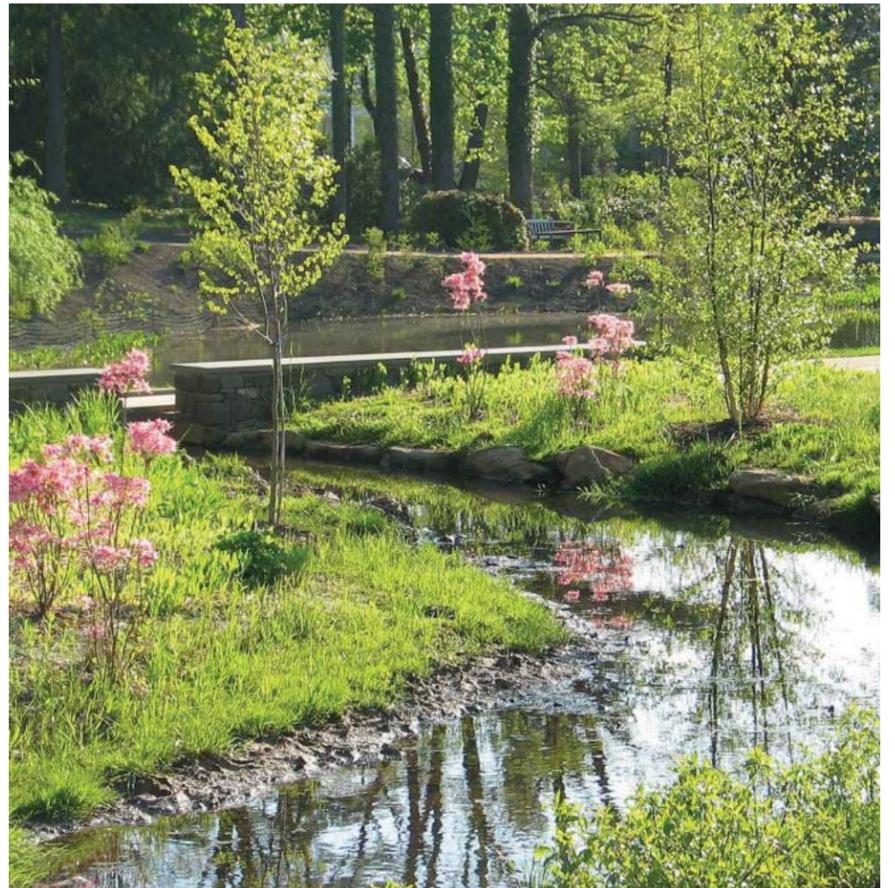
- Reduce quantity of runoff with rain gardens, bioswales, and stormwater wetlands, reducing pressure on downstream water bodies.
- Improve water quality by creating areas for infiltration and biofiltration, increasing watershed health.
- Restore and create regionally appropriate water-based habitats, adding to the city's biodiversity.
- Address issues of contaminated runoff from roadway deicing agents and off-leash areas.

BENCHMARKS

As established by the Sustainable Sites Initiative program:

- Rehabilitate or restore, and protect streams, wetlands, and shoreline buffers;
- Manage stormwater on site;

- Protect and enhance on-site water resources and water quality;
- Design rainwater/stormwater features to provide a landscape amenity;
- Maintain water features to conserve water and other resources; and
- Where appropriate, naturalize hard edges to lands, pond and streams to enhance landscape habitats, ecosystems, and quality.



Rain garden. Image courtesy of Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects

ENHANCE PARK LANDSCAPE TYPES

Landscape types are the components of the parks and are defined by natural communities. These landscapes, in conjunction with the human infrastructure, establish the setting and overall character of the parks. Landscape types should be diverse and include woodlands, streams and wetlands, shrublands, meadows, parklands, and gardens.

STRATEGIES

- Restore and enhance the quality of woodlands by removing invasive and diseased species, replanting woodlands and adding diversity with meadows and shrublands where appropriate.
- Make landscapes purposeful – where lawn is not needed to support recreational use or provide aesthetic contrast with wooded areas, replace with native meadows to enhance park ecologies.
- Restore stream, pond, and lake edges with proper slopes and grades to support habitats and water based ecosystems.
- Use low impact development techniques, such as storm water



Trail with native planting at edges.

catchment and treatment by using bioswales, rain gardens, and landscape infiltration techniques to reduce run-off and improve water quality

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT – PARK TREES UNDER SIEGE!

Over half of the 2000 acres that comprise Pittsburgh's historic regional parks is covered in dense urban forest canopy. The ecological health of this landscape is currently threatened with extensive tree loss due to invasive species, diseases such as Oak Wilt and Emerald Ash Borer, and deer overbrowse.

STRATEGIES

- Manage the deer population.
- Monitor tree health and remove diseased trees
- Continue to remove invasive species.
- Upon removal of invasive plant species, replant and restore woodlands and add diverse landscape types where appropriate, such as meadows and shrublands.
- Implement the Natural Areas Study, completed in June 2010 by the Department of City Planning (a major recommendation of the 2000 Master Plan Update), which calls for reforestation; stream, wetland and meadow restoration; invasive species management; soil rehabilitation, and stormwater management integration.



Tree analysis identifies Emerald Ash Borer

MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

A Management Plan for Pittsburgh's Regional Parks was completed in April 2000. It made recommendations to redefine and reorganize the fragmented approach to maintenance and management of the parks. The report's recommendations are still valid and this Master Plan Update embraces these original goals for the future.

OR STRATEGIES

- Restore park maintenance to a primary role in sustaining City assets.
- Implement a management structure that will be responsible for meeting the management goals outlined in the report.

- Continue and expand the existing partnership between the City and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy; develop new project initiatives to include maintenance and capital projects.



A Sketch of the ideal configuration and dimensions for a regional park maintenance yard, produced during a Master Plan Update charrette.

These were successfully implemented over the last ten years and the parks have improved. A recommitment to these original recommendations is critical for the future of our parks. Moving forward, a key management strategy will be the need to raise funds not only for construction projects, but for operations and maintenance as well.

OTHER SOLUTIONS IN COMMON

Other critical common solutions that should be considered are:

- **Improving accessibility** for all. The accessibility audit of Schenley Park should be a benchmark guide for future projects;
- **Enhancing user comfort** by providing adequate and clean restroom facilities in all regional parks at key locations;
- Increase support for maintenance by finding locations for **appropriate sized maintenance facilities** in each park; and
- **Ensuring public health** by appropriately siting dog runs, finding suitable locations for off-leash areas, and most importantly, enforcing off-leash laws.

CHAPTER 5: THE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEFINING THE SYSTEM

A. REGIONAL PARKS AS ANCHORS

The regional parks are anchors for a broader system of parks and open space. These parks have the significant size and distinct character to serve as anchors, with their variety of land forms and natural systems, popular user amenities, and abundant opportunities for leisure activities. They are superb models for showing how profoundly parks impact our daily lives for the better – with aesthetic, recreational, environmental, and economic value.

It is important to understand that all the Regional Parks share these common elements:

- **Natural Systems.** Each park has landscape components of ecological value that are in varying states of health, including stream valleys, wooded hillsides, and under-utilized, overlooked landscapes.
- **Designed Landscapes.** Each park shares a common landscape character of trees, lawn, meadow, and woodlands.
- **Adjacent Lands.** In some cases, parks are connected to other green spaces – schools, greenways, campuses, and cemeteries that possess compatible landscape characteristics.
- **Fragmented Accessibility.** Each park is lacking clear, safe pedestrian access routes to and through the parks from adjacent neighborhoods.
- **Poor Connectivity.** One key to the success of a city-wide park system is to figure out the ideal streets, trails, and corridors where effective, safe routes between parks can be accomplished. These connecting elements should be considered part of the park system.
- **User Amenities.** Each park has common use amenities, such as picnic pavilions, play grounds, trails, and signage. One component that must be addressed is the convenient location of safe, supervised, year-round public restrooms in all Regional Parks.
- **Maintenance.** Each park has common maintenance requirements that are the key to maintaining the value of capital investments and the level of services provided by the park.

These elements form the basis for the following recommended Common Initiatives for all Regional Parks and may be applied to all parks in the city-wide system:

- Define the system. Establish legal metes and bounds, or surveyed

boundaries.

- Base all plans on natural systems – Blue-Green-Gray -- to guide future park improvements and connections, and improve environmental quality.
- Grow the system. Identify adjacent lands and parcels that can be protected to reinforce the landscape character of parks and, as appropriate, find new lands to accommodate new uses that our Regional Parks cannot support.
- Apply the idea of sustainable landscape throughout all parks to lessen impacts, enhance landscape character, and habitat.
- Improve accessibility and connectivity within parks, to and from neighborhoods, and beyond parks. Adopt the idea of complete, green streets.
- Improve user amenities and develop park standards for park construction and site furnishings.
- Adopt preventative maintenance regimes.

KEY THEMES FOR THE HISTORIC REGIONAL PARKS

The following key park projects and day-to-day initiatives for each of the four historic Regional Parks should be completed over the next 10 years. Individual projects should be understood as part of the larger natural and physical systems, defined as Landscape Zones, which reflect the influence and application of the Blue-Green-Gray framework of sustainability that relates to the city-wide park strategy.

CHAPTER 5: THE RECOMMENDATIONS

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012

FRICK PARK

People and Nature – Finding a balance



The theme for Frick Park, considered our city's most pristine and natural park, is People and Nature – Finding the Balance. The park primarily consists of woodlands, in various stages of health. With the recent restoration of the Nine Mile Run Watershed, the park's landscape has become more diversified and ecologically sound.

Today, the challenge is to strike the proper balance between use and the natural landscape. Frick Park is one of our most accessible public open spaces with a multitude of trails and streets connecting adjacent neighborhoods to the park. It attracts walkers, bikers, and runners who welcome the opportunity to immerse themselves in the dense woodlands and meadows. It has long been a home of learning about nature, with programs hosted by the Frick Environmental Center and with more recent partners including the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, Environmental Charter School, Nine Mile Run Watershed Association, and Venture Outdoors.

However, this nearly pristine landscape setting has its moments of conflict between people, off-leash dogs, and erosion caused by trail blazing.

- **The Opportunity** – Build on the restoration of the Nine Mile Run Watershed and the completion of the Natural Lands Study in further developing the landscape character of the park.
- **The Issues** – Degrading environmental conditions due to loss of the tree canopy because of insects, diseases and deer population; off-leash dogs cause safety and health hazards; and proliferating rogue trails causing erosion and loss of vegetation.
- **The Needs** – Facilities for environmental education; continual monitoring of the woodlands; enforcement of the leash law and finding other venues and options for off-leash dog areas; and working with bicyclists to assist in containing and reclaiming rogue trails.

KEY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The following are the key site specific projects for Frick Park:

- **Environmental Center** – Construct a new Environment Center with indoor and outdoor learning spaces as Pittsburgh's headquarters for public environmental education.
- **Outdoor Learning Centers** – Create a variety of outdoor learning spaces to foster the idea of the Park as a classroom.
- **Clayton Hill** -- Restore the lost historic landscape by Innocenti and Webel, including the axial pathway, gatehouses, formal tree line, fountain, meadow, and viewshed; relocate the existing nursery.
- **Commercial Avenue Crossing** -- Parking improvements, trail connections, and trail head to the Nine Mile Run stream corridor; a safe pedestrian crossing and culvert improvements, restoring landscape character along Commercial Avenue. Potential partners are Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) and Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) who need to make sanitary sewer improvements to the area.
- **Riverview Hill** -- Restore the rolling meadow landscape and pathways as originally planned; and selectively manage woodlands to restore the historic viewshed of the Monongahela River valley.

In addition to these site-specific projects, ongoing initiatives (many established in the 2000 Master Plan) must be continued and enhanced.

- **Nine Mile Run Watershed** – Create another viable park entrance by completing the Frick Gateway at Braddock Avenue along with culvert reconstruction; review the proposal for the Summerset development's vehicular bridge over Nine Mile Run and make recommendations for its design to respect the Park's character and ecosystems; and make a "Blue" gateway connection to the Monongahela River, adding adjacent slopes and greenways to enhance Frick Park.
- **Woodland Management and Restoration** – Continue removing invasive and diseased species; and implement the recommendations

of the Natural Lands Study.

- **Trail and Drainage Improvements** – Continue the program to improve trails and drainage ways.
- **Develop a Perimeters and Edges Policy** to protect the park boundaries from encroachment, establish gateways, and remove rogue trails.
- **Formalize conservation easements and work** with adjacent property owners (such as Homewood Cemetery) to conserve and protect adjoining hillsides from development, preserving the park's landscape character and controlling its viewsheds.
- Introduce new works of public art, both temporary and permanent.



SKETCH IMAGE: *Outdoor place making for education and scenic beauty*



History of Frick Park

Helen Clay Frick, upon her debut in 1908, asked her father Henry Clay Frick to give Pittsburgh a park for the enjoyment of the city's children. At Mr. Frick's death in 1919, he bequeathed to the City of Pittsburgh some 150 acres lying south of his home, Clayton. Frick's will also set aside \$2,000,000 to establish the Frick Park Trust. Mr. Frick had not maintained this land, which was a mix of early farms and untouched woodland, so when it came into City ownership it was seen as primeval wilderness, a site fit to provide the visitor with experiences of unsullied nature.

Nothing seems to have been done until 1925 when the executors of his will began an aggressive program of land acquisition to create an area comparable to Schenley and Highland Parks. In 1925 alone, 190 acres were bought and sporadic episodes of land acquisition continued to 1936 when 84 acres were acquired from the former Pittsburgh Country Club. Most of the land added to Frick's bequest lay to the south of the original tract and included the upper reaches of the Nine Mile Run basin. A large, relatively compact body of land emerged from this sustained growth, but it was distinguished by two eccentric trails, one to the north along Reynolds Avenue, and the other curling to the southeast in the direction of Edgewood and Swissvale, beyond Pittsburgh's city limits.

By the date of Frick Park's opening, the Boston firm of Lowell and Vinal had produced a master plan. But by the Park's opening on June 27, 1927, Mr. Lowell had died, and planning work was transferred to the Pittsburgh engineering firm of Blum, Weldin and Company, with an unknown competence in park design.

A series of four entrances were developed from 1931-35, with their architectural features originating in the office of the renowned John Russell Pope. (This was the same period in which Pope was redesigning the Henry Clay Frick house in New York City for museum use as the Frick Collection.)

The first of these structures is the small entrance gate on Forbes Avenue at the west end of Fern Hollow Bridge. Nearby stands a simple cairn erected at the juncture of Beechwood Boulevard and Forbes Avenue. The other two entrance features -- the arched gateway at Homewood Avenue and Reynolds Street, and a pair of gate lodges forming the Beechwood Boulevard entrance -- neared completion in June 1935. As a group, these four structures in the Norman style, with their contiguous walls, remain the most distinctive built elements in Frick Park.

By January 1935, the Frick executors had retained the firm of Innocenti and Webel to design for the further development of the park. Among the most prestigious firms of landscape architects working in the United States, Innocenti and Webel had created a style that was distinguished by its spatial mastery and pictorial approach to siting landscape elements. Among their earliest proposals for Frick Park was a plan for two fountains at the base and top of Clayton Hill, completing the elegant complex of entrance lodges, walls, and the allee of trees.

Plans for further structures continued well into the 1940s, including a trail system, the ordering of green spaces, and plantings. The firm had slight involvement with the park in the 1950s; the association ended in 1957. Drawings were produced for the Bowling Green along Reynolds Street (1935-1938) where an elegant shelter was designed, and for portions of the Country Club land which was to house a Scouts Lodge and a Park Office (1943).

A deliberate design policy led to the removal of recreational facilities (such as the tennis courts inherited from the Country Club) to the park's periphery, in order to achieve the maximum sense of natural environment, through a sequence of pastoral and sylvan experiences. Sometime around 1940, Innocenti and Webel formed a partnership with landscape architect and Public Works Director Ralph Griswold. One of their goals was to eradicate baseball entirely from the park, in keeping with the growing emphasis on nature study as the park's principal mission.

Design standards changed significantly after the termination of Innocenti and Webel's involvement. A telling example appeared in the maintenance complex on English Lane. Designed in 1959 by the Pittsburgh firm of Wolfe and Wolfe, the International Style buildings are incompatible with the earlier work of both Pope and Innocenti and Webel, and the design quality demonstrates lowered standards in the context of its own period. The nearby "Blue Slide" playground was, on the other hand, carefully kept to the perimeter of the park by direction of the Frick Trust, so that it would not be seen from the park interior. The 1963 design was by the renowned firm Simonds & Simonds, and is notable for its multi-level plan and integration with topography.

CHAPTER 5: THE RECOMMENDATIONS

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012



1 CLAYTON HILL & THE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER



- Construct a new Environmental Center with indoor and outdoor learning spaces
- Restore the historic landscape including the axial pathway, gatehouses, formal tree line, fountain, meadow, and viewshed
- Relocate the existing nursery

2 COMMERCIAL AVENUE CROSSING



- Implement parking improvements, trail connections, and trail head to the Nine Mile Run stream corridor.
- Create a safe pedestrian crossing and culvert improvements, restoring landscape character along Commercial Avenue.

3 RIVERVIEW HILL



- Restore the rolling meadow landscape and pathways as originally planned.
- Selectively manage woodlands to restore the historic viewshed of the Monongahela River valley.

CHAPTER 5: THE RECOMMENDATIONS

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012

HIGHLAND PARK

Reclaiming lost uses – Lake Carnegie and beyond



Highland Park is a landscape that is defined by two major components – PWSA's reservoirs and water microfiltration plant, and the Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium. The goal is to allow these major civic entities to effectively function within the park while recognizing that they are part of a greater, significant landscape that must be protected and enhanced.

The park also has a significant, formal entry at the terminus of Highland Avenue and beautifully restored garden around a formal fountain, wonderfully rolling landscapes, and winding drives. Popular destinations include the Entry Garden, picnic shelters, the Super Playground, the bicycle track, community gardens, and pool. One major historic feature is Lake Carnegie, a concrete-edged lake that needs to be restored as a functional, ecological-based landscape element.

- **The Opportunity** – Reclaim as a major vista the poorly utilized park space now occupied by a Public Works storage site; restore Lake Carnegie as a natural component of the larger “Blue” system within the park; and renew the Heth's Run valley as a park gateway and greenway trail connection.
- **The Issues** – Work with resident institutions and organizations to integrate their planning, construction, and maintenance with the park and, in particular, to address the integration of their edges with the

park landscape; and to make closed areas of the park more accessible to the public.

- **The Needs** – Develop the ongoing working relationship with the Zoo to enhance the landscape interfaces; work with the PWSA to open, enhance, and refine the reservoir landscapes.

KEY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The following are the key site specific projects for Highland Park:

- **Negley Run and Washington Boulevard** – Including making Negley Run Boulevard into a complete street, adding stormwater management areas along its edges; complete the missing trail link along Washington Boulevard; improve ingress and egress points; create a gateway to the park at Heth's Run and Butler Street; relocate or buffer the police and fire facilities; add user amenities near the bicycle facility; continue to manage and enhance the meadow.
- **Stanton Avenue and Farmhouse** – Study repurposing and/or renovating the Forestry Building to accommodate the park maintenance division, depending on relocation initiatives by the Department of Public Works; improve the landscape character along Stanton Avenue; consider relocation of ballfield from farmhouse to Stanton Avenue; find a new use for the farmhouse and develop the grounds as flexible park space with open field and gardens; remove or screen and improve the DPW facility.
- **Lake Drive East and Lake Carnegie** – Restore Lake Carnegie with natural edges; rehabilitate pool house and pool; remove DPW storage site and create green space and overlook to restore the historic viewsheds.
- **Lake Drive West and Zoo** – Improve pedestrian access and safety; develop a joint strategy with the zoo to screen and enhance the edges of the zoo to improve the park's landscape character; improve pedestrian function and experience of One Wild Place; improve the intersection at One Wild Place and Lake Drive.
- **Super Playground** - Replace existing playground with imaginative and inclusive playground that respects the park's natural topography and cultural landscape.
- **Heth's Run** – Develop the play field, trails and river connection as originally planned, with enhanced stormwater strategies. Complete the trail connection to the King Estate and to Heth's Park, re-establishing neighborhood connections. Enhance Highland Park frontage along Butler and create formal park entrance with a clear gateway to Highland Park and a “park entry drive” with a public trail on the west side. Permit Zoo parking to expand, preferably through developing multi-level parking.
- **Reservoir 1 and Reservoir Drive** – Restore the public promenade to enhance the landscape experience; remove the circular road from Mt. Bigelow and provide user amenities; re-establish view corridors, and restore and enhance the hillside plantings; continue rebuilding historic walls and steps (Lake Drive, Bunker Hill) and restore the historic bridge underpass and trail from the Entry Garden to the

Zoo.

- **Reservoir 2** – Provide open public access; retrofit the cover to allow usable green space and water.

In addition to the site-specific projects, ongoing initiatives should be continued and enhanced.

- Promote an effective dialogue with the PWSA and the Zoo to develop a shared vision for infrastructure and landscape improvements.
- Woodland Management and Restoration – continue removing invasive and diseased species and implement the recommendations of the Natural Lands Study.
- Trail and Drainage Improvements – continue the program to improve trails and drainage ways.
- Locate a potential site for an off-leash exercise area.



A modern aquatic center in Piedmont Park, Atlanta.



History of Highland Park

When Pittsburgh created its water system in the 1870s, reservoirs were installed on several of the city's highest elevations. After the reservoir in the future Highland Park opened in 1879, it soon became a destination for people seeking open space and greenery. The creation of a park surrounding the reservoir acknowledged an already functioning recreational amenity. A second reservoir in the southwest quadrant of the park is thought to have been constructed in 1903.

Officially established in September 1889, Highland Park grew in size through acquisition of small parcels over a relatively long period of time. The piecemeal history of Highland Park development may well account for the apparent lack of design unity within the present park.

The 1890s were taken up with grading and the establishment of a system of roads, paths, and retaining walls. Many of the features that have historically identified the Park also were inaugurated in the 1890s. A zoo was developed in the northwestern quadrant and opened to the public in 1898. With the ensuing transfer of the few specimens kept in a tiny zoo in Schenley Park, the Highland Park facility became Pittsburgh's municipal zoo.

Other than the central reservoir, the other great identifying feature of the park is the grand entrance plaza at the head of Highland Avenue. The great gateways were installed in 1896; the bronze sculptures were the work of Giuseppe Moretti, but the designer of the architectural elements, notably the pylons of four clustered Ionic columns, is unknown. It was the finest public space in Pittsburgh and a first-rate example of the kind of municipal enrichment associated with the City Beautiful movement. Parks Director Edward Bigelow gave himself credit for the design of the garden plaza with its focal fountain.

The second important entrance was created in 1900 with the erection of the two bronze "Horse Tamers" at Stanton Avenue. Also by Moretti, these are near replicas of the so-called "Horse Tamers of Marly," important works by the French baroque sculptor Guillaume Coustou.

Just to the north of the reservoir, a small music pavilion was constructed on Mount Bigelow in the 1890s. Two major shelter buildings, constructed in 1902-1903, were the present Rhododendron Shelter, designed by Harry Summers Estep, and a lost shelter (presumably the Lake Drive Shelter), designed by Thomas Scott. Another building that has disappeared is the greenhouse that stood at the foot of the embankment along the eastern side of the reservoir. Reference to greenhouses begin in 1892, likely in several locations, although the definitive greenhouse was probably the one constructed in 1915 on the site of an earlier glass house.

On the northeastern slope of the park, an abandoned interim reservoir was further dredged to create Lake Carnegie in 1896. It was first apparently given over to boating; it was later stocked with fish, and in 1913, a diving platform was installed. This was supplemented or replaced by a swimming platform in 1915. The growing appeal of public swimming led to the conversion of the northern half of the Lake into a proper pool in 1932. In 1939, a service building was constructed next to the pool.

Elegant planning characterized the Griswold era in Pittsburgh's parks. The chief survivor of that period is the small plaza dating to 1934, with its retaining walls, stairs and walks, at the north end of Negley Avenue.

The early configuration of perimeter drives and bridges left the park's northern slope completely open to the view and almost within touch of the Allegheny River. However, the construction of the Highland Park Bridge around 1938 encroached on that edge of the park. The extension of Butler Street as Allegheny River Boulevard in the same decade created a wide barrier of paving and traffic between Highland Park and its neighboring river frontage.

Prior to the 1870s, the area of Highland Park area was farmed, with much of the terrain cleared. Early views of the hills around Lake Carnegie depict grasslands and meadows with a moderate scattering of trees. The development of ornamental planting focused on tree-lined major roadways and a heavy planting of trees throughout. Massed shrubberies appear in early views of the stone underpass. One of the great distinguishing features of Highland Park was the extensive and elaborate bedding of the entrance plaza. Not only were the walks and fountain pool lined by massed formal arrangements of tender plants, but the earthen bank of the reservoir was used as a support for further demonstrations of carpet bedding, with scrolls linking such features as the date and the seal of Pittsburgh.

CHAPTER 5: THE RECOMMENDATIONS

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012





1 NEGLEY RUN & WASHINGTON BOULEVARD RECOMMENDATIONS

- Including making Negley Run Boulevard into a complete street, adding stormwater management areas along its edges; complete the missing trail link along Washington Boulevard; and tie in to Larimer's future greenspace system.
- Improve ingress and egress points; create a gateway at Butler Street;
- Buffer the police and fire facilities; add user amenities near the bicycle facility;
- Continue to manage and enhance the Seasonal Pools and meadow.

2 STANTON AVENUE AND FARMHOUSE



- Study repurposing and/or renovating the Forestry Building to accommodate the park maintenance division, depending on relocation initiatives by the Department of Public Works;
- Improve the landscape character along Stanton Avenue;
- Consider relocation of ballfield from farmhouse to Stanton Avenue;
- Find a new use for the farmhouse and develop the grounds as flexible park space with open field and gardens;
- Remove or screen and improve the DPW facility.

3 LAKE DRIVE EAST AND LAKE CARNEGIE



- Restore Lake Carnegie with natural edges and stormwater function;
- Rehabilitate pool house and pool;
- Remove DPW storage site and create green space and overlook to restore the historic viewshed of the Allegheny River valley.

CHAPTER 5: THE RECOMMENDATIONS

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012

RIVERVIEW PARK

Discovering new destinations



- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1) Observatory Hill | 4) Mairdale Ave. |
| 2) Ridge, Chapel Shelter and Snyder's Point | 5) Woodland Restoration |
| 3) Kilbuck Valley | 6) Perimeter Edges |
| | 7) Centennial Pavilion |

Riverview Park parallels Frick Park in many ways, with its steep topography, narrow stream valleys, and wooded hillsides. However, there are two major differences: it is secluded due to the nature of the topography which makes access from adjoining neighborhoods difficult; and it has an extensive roadway system which, because of the unstable shale geological makeup of the park, is prone to failure due to landslides.

- **The Opportunity** – To slow the deterioration of hillside landscape by adding green infrastructure to the park drives; reprogram the civic ridge landscape with updated community center and play facilities; and re-program the Kilbuck valley for better use by repositioning picnic facilities and introducing stormwater management practices.
- **The Issues** – Geologic structure: erosion and deteriorating infrastructure; underutilization of the park; incompatible uses; accessibility.
- **The Needs** – Landscape stabilization; infrastructure rehabilitation, especially to control stormwater; updated user amenities; public awareness campaign to promote the park to a wider audience and usership.

KEY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The following are the key site-specific projects for Riverview Park:

- **Observatory Hill** – Restore the picturesque setting by reducing lawn, replanting trees along the drive, and adding meadows to diversify the landscape; work with Observatory/University of Pittsburgh to enhance their grounds in harmony with the greater park landscape; rehabilitate the park entry along Riverview Avenue, including restoration of the water feature.
- **Ridge, Chapel Shelter and Snyder's Point** – Improve pedestrian and vehicular access and parking throughout; renovate and expand the existing Activities Building as potential new Community Center; develop new imaginative and inclusive playground; study removal/renovation options for the pool; add native plantings on steep slopes; improve pedestrian connections to Snyder's Point.
- **Kilbuck Valley** – Remove or replace and screen maintenance facility; add shelters and other user amenities; improve the Grant Avenue entry; provide effective stormwater management; complete trail connections.
- **Mairdale Avenue** – Consider this as a location for a new, smaller Park Maintenance Facility with public parking and restrooms to serve the new soccer field; provide effective stormwater management.
- **Woodland Restoration** – Monitor and reclaim rogue trails; manage wildlife for ecological balance and woodland sustainability; control erosion.
- **Park Drives** – Recommend two approaches be studied: retain the current road configuration but narrow it to become a complete, green street accommodating safe pedestrian routes and stormwater collection and treatment areas; or convert the park drive to recreation-only use between the playground and Watson's Cabin, narrowing the pavement to accommodate a multi-purpose trail with stormwater collection increasing the area for landscape transitions to steep slopes. The latter option would require conversion of the primary vehicular drive serving neighborhood entrances and the Civic Ridge to two-way traffic. Install wayfinding and directional signage.
- **Restore Locust Grove.**
- **Watson Cabin** – Develop as a new trail head with a shelter that incorporates the cabin ruin; improve the grove landscape for educational camping use by partners such as the Boy and Girl Scouts or Venture Outdoors; rehabilitate restroom building.
- **Centennial Pavilion** – Improve access and parking; shift pavilion closer to the parking area; install meadow landscapes; provide for effective stormwater management; consider as relocation site for off leash exercise area.

In addition to the site-specific projects, ongoing initiatives should be continued and enhanced.

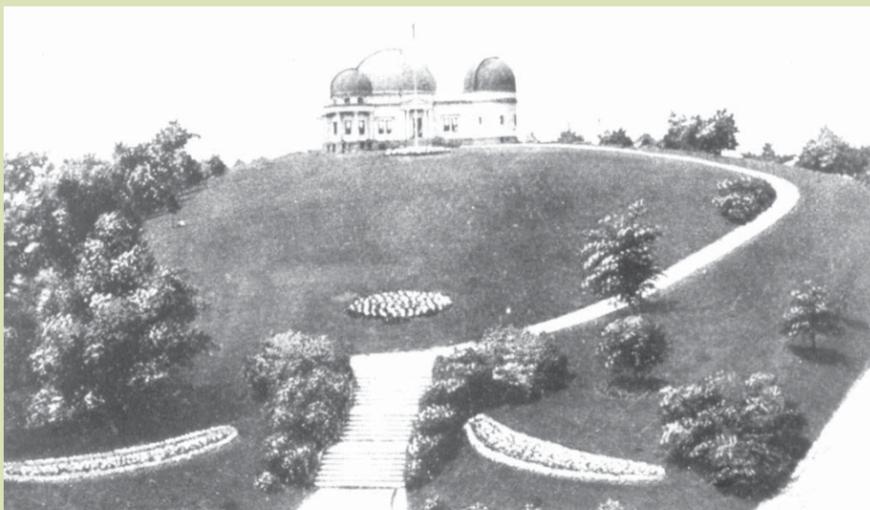
- **Woodland Management and Restoration** – Continue removing invasive and diseased species and implement the recommendations of the Natural Lands Study; reclaim rogue trails.
- **Trail and Drainage Improvements** – Continue the program to improve trails and drainage ways.
- **Perimeters and Edges** – Implement polices to protect park boundaries from encroachment.

Work with the City of Pittsburgh and City Parks to find a suitable location for the proposed community center.

An example of dedicated pedestrian trails in LOCATION, as proposed for roads within Riverview Park.



Stormwater management strategies are green techniques that rely on natural ecosystem functions to succeed.



History of Riverview Park

The impetus for creating Riverview Park appears to have come largely from William M. Kennedy, Mayor of the City of Allegheny, on the north shore of the Allegheny River. Allegheny had enjoyed a fine urban park, Allegheny Commons, since the late 1860s when the existing public common was converted to a highly ornamental amenity. But across the river, Pittsburgh had commenced its ambitious development of a parks system in 1889, when it had virtually no park land. With the stimulus of rivalry, the government and citizens of Allegheny determined to create a public recreation facility on a par with Pittsburgh's.

In June 1894, the City and citizen subscribers acquired some 200 acres of farmland from Samuel Watson. Most of the terrain was in pasture due to the farm's grazing cattle. There were no extensive stands of trees or heavy shrubberies. With little preparation of the land to serve as a park, the site was dedicated as Riverview Park on July 4, 1894. In all probability, there were only two buildings in the Park at that early date. One was Watson's Cabin, built early in the nineteenth century and subsequently converted into a picnic pavilion. The second was a chapel that had been moved into the park as a donation of the Watson Presbyterian Church (whose present Riverview Presbyterian Church stands on the Chapel's original site).

Charles Ehlers, Allegheny City engineer, is most likely to have laid out the system of roadways. Otherwise, there appears to have been little park development before 1907, when Allegheny City was annexed by Pittsburgh.

Although not part of the park property, Allegheny Observatory is a dominant presence. The structure's domes, its brilliant marble whiteness, and its commanding location on the area's highest point of land assure its visibility from beyond the park's boundaries. The Observatory was completed in

1900, while Riverview Avenue was finished shortly after in 1902, which brought the visitor quickly within sight of this unexpected vision.

A small zoo was sited at the foot of Observatory Hill just opposite the inner end of Riverview Avenue where refreshment stands clustered. Far down the slope and arranged along one of the drives, was the aviary. Two small shelters were built in the southeast and northwest corners of the Park. Below the Aviary was a small spring house (later replaced by a small chain of ponds in the bottom of the valley); near the Chapel was the Bear Pit with real bears. The site of the future swimming pool was filled with a large, apparently natural pond.

A spate of construction in 1913 appreciably increased the park's attractions, converting the Bear Pit to a picnic shelter, and erecting another shelter in the Wissahickon Valley near the park's northern boundary. A carousel was installed, using the same design as that in Schenley Park. The carousel building and the Bear Pit Lodge were designed by Thomas Scott, the architect for a number of Pittsburgh park structures in the years around the First World War.

The few known views of the Park in the first 20 years of its existence all depict an open, pastoral landscape. Such images convey the sense of simple, rustic recreation that, in the absence of extensive facilities, must have been the early park's chief appeal.

By 1915, the park had acquired tennis courts, baseball fields, and at least the beginning of a system of bridle trails. The signature horseshoe shape of the original swimming pool appears in a plat book plan of 1924. It was probably also in the early 1920s that one of the shelters built in 1913 was converted into the Wissahickon Nature Museum. This facility seems to have been the most extensive and ambitious of its kind in Pittsburgh at the time.

With the advent of Ralph Griswold as Parks Director and the availability of federal resources in the late 1930s, significant improvements were made at the park. The best documented example is the entrance area at the foot of Observatory Hill. Here the single run of stone steps was replaced by the present arrangement of a raised stone trough of water and curving stone stairs. Stone piers flanking the end of the Avenue supported hewn timber gates. Low retaining walls around a new stone park office building and a small wall drinking fountain completed this fine ensemble. Also dating to this era are several elegant shelters along Perrysville Avenue for trolley riders, accompanied by stone stairways into the park below. These structures exhibit the best design and construction qualities associated with Depression-era projects of the Works Progress Administration.

CHAPTER 5: THE RECOMMENDATIONS

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012





1 THE RIDGE, CHAPEL SHELTER, AND SNYDER'S POINT

- Improve pedestrian and vehicular access and parking; renovate and expand the existing Activities Building as potential new Community Center;
- Study removal/renovation options for the pool;
- Redevelop playground as imaginative and inclusive facility.
- Add native plantings on steep slopes;
- Improve pedestrian connections to Snyder's Point.

2 OBSERVATORY HILL



- Restore the picturesque setting by reducing lawn, replanting trees along the drive, and adding meadows to diversify the landscape;
- Work with Observatory/University of Pittsburgh to enhance their grounds in harmony with the greater park landscape;
- Rehabilitate the park entry along Riverview Avenue.



3 KILBUCK VALLEY

- Remove or replace DPW facility; add shelters and other user amenities;
- Improve the Grant Avenue entry;
- Provide effective stormwater management;
- Complete trail connections.

CHAPTER 5: THE RECOMMENDATIONS

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012

SCHENLEY PARK

Taming the car for more enjoyable recreation



- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1) Schenley Plaza | 6) Traffic and Pedestrian Improvements |
| 2) Flagstaff Hill and Phipps | 7) Overlook Drive |
| 3) Golf Course | 8) Prospect Hill |
| 4) Panther Hollow Watershed | 9) Woodland Mgmt |
| 5) Junction Hollow | |

Schenley Park is defined by the automobile more than any other regional park. Popular civic destinations such as the Schenley Oval Sports Complex, the extensive trail system, and Anderson Playground attract great numbers of park visitors. Its location between Downtown, Oakland, and Squirrel Hill places high vehicular demand on park roads. Adding to the challenge is Schenley's proximity to major institutions whose patrons use the park as a parking reservoir, especially Carnegie Mellon University, the Phipps Conservatory, and the University of Pittsburgh. The goal of this plan is to improve user experiences in the park and make it a safer environment.

- **The Opportunity** – Apply new transportation design standards and planning initiatives in coordination with the MovePGH component of the City's Comprehensive Plan to turn the major park drives into complete green streets.
- **The Issues** – Excessive parking for non-park uses, lack of direct accessible routes from the neighborhoods into the park, lack of safe routes within the park.
- **The Needs** – Coordination with the City of Pittsburgh and its traffic planners to leverage park improvements through infrastructure projects; collaboration with park institutions and neighbors such as Phipps Conservatory and CMU to solve parking issues.

KEY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The following are the key site specific projects for Schenley Park:

- **Schenley Plaza** – A major success that emerged from the 2000 Master Plan was the completion of Schenley Plaza. This Master Plan Update calls for developing an interactive art installation (temporary or permanent) in the garden plaza originally designated for that purpose; enhancing the tree Bosque along the Carnegie Museum and Carnegie Library frontage, restoring the Magee Memorial fountain, improving accessibility and pavement, and enhancing landscape character as an extension of the Plaza.
- **Flagstaff Hill and Phipps Conservatory** – Green Schenley Bridge with plantings, reduced pavement, and stormwater management to strengthen connection between the Plaza and the park interior while improving pedestrian/bicyclist experience; rehabilitate the Azalea Garden as a Woodland Garden; collaborate with Phipps Conservatory to improve parking and streetscapes, including a redefined landscape setting for the Bigelow monument; ensure public trail access along the Phipps perimeter overlooking Panther and Junction Hollows.
- **Reinvent the Golf Course** – Collaborate with Bob O'Connor Golf Course operators to reconfigure the course as a high quality executive nine-hole course with a three-hole children's course; assist in advancing the course's Audubon status as an ecologically managed landscape; improve pedestrian safety along Schenley Drive by making it a complete green street; provide for effective stormwater management to control run off in Panther Hollow; restore the Neill Log House and make it accessible; provide for an enlarged/combined park and golf maintenance facility.
- **Panther Hollow Watershed** – Restore the watershed as determined by ongoing Parks Conservancy studies; restore Westinghouse Memorial and Lily Pond, diversifying the surrounding landscape; and improve accessibility to Panther Hollow for park visitors and for maintenance.
- **Junction Hollow** – Extend Schenley Park into Junction Hollow; provide a pedestrian connection through the railroad corridor as a gateway to Panther Hollow Lake; provide connectivity to the Boundary Street neighborhood, Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), and the University of Pittsburgh; provide for a Boundary Street trailhead; provide for effective stormwater management and diversify the landscape; connect to the Monongahela River in collaboration with development planning for the ALMONO site.
- **Traffic and Pedestrian Improvements** to Schenley Drive, Panther Hollow Drive, Bartlett Street, Beacon Street, and Greenfield Avenue by City of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy in collaboration with various constituents, including CMU, Phipps Conservatory, Squirrel Hill neighbors, Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition, Race for the Cure, and Vintage Grand Prix -- Transform as complete green streets for pedestrians and bicyclists; upgrade intersections to control traffic speed and improve safety; develop neighborhood connections.
- **Overlook Drive** – Improve pedestrian safety along Overlook Drive; update user amenities with a new gateway pavilion housing restrooms

and concessions; improve relationship of ice rink facility to its park setting and circulation; restore recreational lawn areas; diversify the landscape with meadows; and provide additional pedestrian trails.

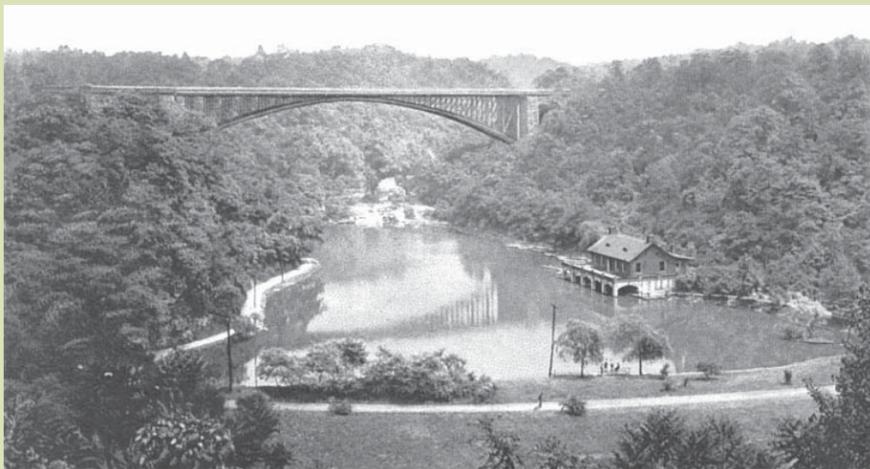
- **Prospect Hill** – Restore views through woodland management; add a new pavilion; make trail connections; and diversify the landscape with meadows.

In addition to the site-specific projects, ongoing initiatives should be continued and enhanced.

- **Woodland Management and Restoration** – Continue removing invasive and diseased species and implement the recommendations of the Natural Lands Study.
- **Trail and Drainage Improvements** – Continue the program to improve trails and drainage ways.
- **Schenley Drive and Circuit Road** – Continue restoring historic stone walls.



An example of the principle of separating pedestrian and bike use from the street, which should be applied to Schenley Park in response to community demand for safer and more enjoyable pedestrian and bicycling experiences of the park.



History of Schenley Park

Schenley Park became a reality in 1889, when Mary Schenley gave 300 acres to the City, thanks to the efforts of Public Works Director Edward Manning Bigelow. Mrs. Schenley required that the land never be sold and that the park bear her name. The City was also given the option of buying additional land and purchased 119 acres from her in 1891.

Early design efforts focused on reshaping the terrain in ways for scenic quality and ease of movement. Drainage and landslide problems were addressed by a series of stone retaining walls. Since Bigelow's master plan for the entire parks system called for linking boulevards, it was essential to provide easy routes into and out of the park via internal carriage drives and major bridges in the northwest section. It seems likely that Bigelow, who is also credited with the park's underlying design, had identified the plateaus and uplands as sites of potential attractions and laid out the traffic patterns accordingly.

The first major bridge to be completed (1897) was the single-arch stone Bellefield Bridge across St. Pierre Ravine. The second bridge crossed Panther Hollow (1897) with its signature bronze panthers by sculptor Giuseppe Moretti. Schenley Bridge was the third span to be built (1898), replacing an old wooden bridge across Junction Hollow and linking to the Park's earliest institution, the Phipps Conservatory (1893).

Once access was established, attractions and buildings proliferated. In 1894, the elaborate Electric Fountain was installed at the foot of Flagstaff Hill. The Casino opened in 1895, but the popular indoor ice rink and dance pavilion was destroyed by fire the next year. In 1898, the Band Shell was built at the end of the newly opened Panther Hollow Bridge. It was the first of several structures designed for the park by Rutan and Russell, including the elegant Veterans Memorial Shelter and an indoor shelter rehabilitated by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy as the Schenley Park Café and Visitor Center in 2002.

Throughout the Park's first quarter-century there was a massive campaign of planting, since the site was largely barren. To ensure the highest horticultural quality, Bigelow brought landscape architect William Falconer to Pittsburgh in 1896 as superintendent of the park and Phipps Conservatory. Falconer lined roadways with trees, clothed hillsides with mass plantings, and concentrated ornamental gardens near the Carnegie Institute and the Conservatory.

1907 saw the development of the Oval and race track; in 1908, the tufa stone bridges in Panther Hollow were constructed; and in 1909, Panther Hollow Lake was developed from a small pond. Recreational amenities continued to appear with the opening of the Stables in 1911, the Carousel and Golf House in 1913 (the course had already been expanded to 18 holes in 1899), and the tennis courts in 1914. This long list of projects reveals the planners' ambitious concept -- far different from Frick Park's refined but unsullied expression of nature -- to provide a park of maximum usability for all residents.

Schenley Plaza was the most significant development of the period from 1915-1935. The idea for filling St. Pierre Ravine for a large formal plaza first emerged in a 1911 report by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Pittsburgh Main Thoroughfares and the Down Town District. A competition for a memorial to Mary Schenley in this location was held in 1911, with the winning design by Victor David Brenner. A 1915 competition determined the design for Schenley Plaza itself. Won by Horace W. Sellers and H. Bartol Register, the Beaux Arts plan provided abundant parking, with landscape elements arranged by James L. Greenleaf. When the Schenley Memorial was dedicated in 1918 it rested atop the firm underpinnings of the now buried Bellefield Bridge.

In 1921, the City opened its first public swimming pool in the park. Toward the decade's end, a lily pond that Falconer had created was converted into the Westinghouse Memorial to the designs of architect Henry Hornbostel and sculptor Daniel Chester French. In the mid-1930s, New Deal resources helped complete trails and pedestrian bridges. Parks Director Ralph Griswold designed a large perennial garden near the Phipps Conservatory and an azalea garden at the crest of Flagstaff Hill. The greatest change, however, came when the Boulevard of the Allies was routed through the park in the 1930s, requiring construction of the Anderson Bridge and a cloverleaf intersection.

There were few developments after World War II, with the exception of alterations to Panther Hollow Lake. Its historic character as a naturalistic feature was destroyed when edged with stepped concrete coping, and the dilapidated Boat House was finally demolished during the 1970s. The tradition of providing recreational amenities was briefly resumed in 1974 with the opening of the Skating Rink.

CHAPTER 5: THE RECOMMENDATIONS

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012



1 TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS



- Make traffic and Pedestrian Improvements to Schenley Drive, Panther Hollow Drive, Bartlett Street, Beacon Street, and Greenfield Avenue by City of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy in collaboration with various constituents, including CMU, Phipps Conservatory, Squirrel Hill neighbors, Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition, Race for the Cure, and Vintage Grand Prix;
- Transform as complete green streets for pedestrians and bicyclists; upgrading intersections to control traffic speed and improve safety;
- Develop and improve neighborhood connections.
- Find an interim accessible parking solution to serve the pool until permanent improvements are made
- Enhance connections between Pool and Anderson Playgroud;
- Restore the Vietnam Veteran's Pavilion and landscape.

2 SCHENLEY PLAZA ENHANCEMENTS



- Enhance the tree Bosque along the Carnegie Museum and Carnegie Library frontage;
- Restore the Christopher Lyman Magee Memorial fountain;
- Improve accessibility and pavement;
- Develop temporary or permanent installation program for garden area originally designated for that purpose in the Plaza master plan.
- Enhance landscape character as an extension of the Plaza.

3 PANTHER HOLLOW WATERSHED



- Restore the watershed as determined by the Panther Hollow Watershed Management Plan and ongoing Parks Conservancy studies;
- Restore Westinghouse Memorial and Lily Pond, diversifying the surrounding landscape and improving its stormwater function;
- Improve accessibility to Panther Hollow for park visitors and for maintenance.

CHAPTER 6: ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE ENDURING IMPROVEMENTS

Over 12 years of experience in carrying out the Regional Parks Master Plan have shown the importance of focus on clear strategies for change. The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy must ensure that it remains a strong and effective partner to the City and the citizens of Pittsburgh. That requires attending to organizational needs, maintaining the quality of the investment, and increasing access to these parks as reservoirs of personal, social, environmental, and economic health for the region.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

When a project comes on line, for example a capital project, there are four steps:

- Confirm project is consistent with the Regional Parks Master Plan and the City's Comprehensive Plan;
- Raise money for the capital cost of improvement in collaboration with the City of Pittsburgh;
- Raise additional money to support the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy's operations to ensure the improvements are carried out on time and on budget; and
- Set up a Maintenance and Capital Fund and/or endowment to ensure the sustainability of the improvements in the future.

MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

To build on the 2000 Master Plan's Management and Maintenance Plan (see Chapter 7: Resources), we must ensure:

- Skilled park maintenance personnel that are dedicated to working in the park;
- Specified maintenance regimes to improve landscape conditions and the quality of visitor experience; and
- Streamlined maintenance programs that result in cost efficient operations.

ACCESSIBILITY

To realize its full potential to benefit public health and wellness, the park system and its key features must become more accessible. There are two key aspects to accessibility:

- Well-designed trail connections need to be established from neighborhoods to parks where currently there are poor to none. Public transportation should be provided to key destinations in the parks.

- Universal accessibility must be provided in as many areas as possible to allow the elderly, people with disabilities, parents with children, and other pedestrians to experience the full range of park amenities, programs, and benefits. This requires physical improvements as well as communication. (See Chapter 7: Resources -- Schenley Park Accessibility Assessment.)

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR PARKS AND BOULEVARDS

The following are tested and refined Best Management Practices (BMPs) developed in practice over the past decade. Detailed information for each practice or item being used is included in the digital publication of this Plan and compiled in a three-ring binder as a reference resource.

As a group, these practices and detail elements form a shared understanding of how well park improvements have performed, as refined in practice. As a work in progress, this resource records what is working and will continue to be refined through future testing, over time improving standards for landscape management, construction, and park furnishings. The following list is generally grouped by topic.

VEGETATION

- Invasive Suppression
- Woodland Tree Planting- whips 3-8'
- Park Tree Planting- 2 ½ " caliper
- Tree Planting- Bare Root 1 ½" to 1 3/4 caliper, Gel Coated Roots (HL from SF)
- Park Tree List (in lawn)
- Woodland Tree List
- Tree Root Path detail (Schenley Plaza)
- Woodland Understory and Native Flowers
- Meadow Establishment and Native Seed or Plugs
- Lawn Seed Mix, matched to site conditions- Soil and Light
- Rain Garden, Bio Swale
- Seasonal Pool
- Durable Perennials for Gardens
- Vista Management
- Soaker Hose irrigation
- Automatic Irrigation
- Exclosures for Deer Protection, small size and possibly large with different fence details

CHAPTER 6: INSURING SUSTAINABILITY

REGIONAL PARKS MASTER PLAN 2012

CONSTRUCTION PROTECTION

- Construction Interlocking Pads
- Temporary Construction Fence
- Tree Protection
- Small Back Hoe on Tires

SOIL & DRAINAGE MATERIALS COMPOSITION

- Root Zone Soil, also used as Event Turf
- Bridging Gravel
- Drainage Gravel
- Wood Mulch
- Structural Soil

PAVEMENTS & RELATED STANDARDS

- Sections for Path, Multi-use, Bike Trail Standards
- Bike Trail Standards
- Bicycle Lanes on road with separation
- Complete Street Standard
- Exposed Aggregate Concrete (Mary Schenley Fountain, Highland Park Fountain)
- Broom Finish Concrete
- Park Drive/Path Asphalt
- Gutter Detail
- Decomposed Granite Fines Path
- Limestone Gravel Fines Path
- Park Path -2B Gravel (5-7) Compacted for steep areas
- Stone-faced Pipe Culvert with Splash Pad Spreader
- Trail Underdrain or Culvert
- Stone Curb Local Sandstone
- Sandstone Paving (Mellon Park-McKeesport Quarry)
- Granite Cobble
- Granite Unit Paving
- Bluestone Unit Paving
- Trail System Steps

- Sandstone Random Rockface Wall
- Check Dams
- Water Bars R7 PennDOT
- Oversize splash basin at culvert outfalls

PARK FURNISHINGS & SMALL SCALE ELEMENTS

- Picnic Shelter, Brick or Stone, 4-6 Picnic tables
- Picnic Table
- No-Plumbing Restroom
- Wood & Iron Bench with Black Locust Slats or Recycled Slat Option
- Bluestone Bench
- Stone Seat Wall
- Lighting system
- Drinking Fountain with Dog Bowl
- Historic Dolphin Fountain Set on Granite Hexagon with Accessible Bowl Option
- Fountain Plumbing Vault
- Signage System
- Waste Receptacle
- Decorative Bollard
- Fluted Bollard
- Bike Rack
- Ramp Dual Height Railing
- 5% Ramp with 4 inch curb
- Chain Link Fence Black Vinyl (Mellon Park north edge)
- Iron Picket Fence (Mellon Park)
- Gate (Mellon Park for iron, possibly a few types)
- Roadside Guiderail
- Overlook Guiderail (Franny Reese Park, 4 inch grid for OSHA standard)
- Schenley VC Steel Railing, this was place specific and may not be reused, include as reference

