City Parks Forum Case Studies

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About the City Parks Forum

The City Parks Forum grew from a $2.5 million grant from the Wallace Foundation and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Through symposiums, case studies, briefing papers, technical reports, and a white paper, this project of the American Planning Association explored the future shape and role of urban parks — and the cities that contain them.

The 23 case studies gathered here began as case problems identified by mayoral fellows at one of six symposiums held around the U.S. from 1999 through 2002. Using program faculty expertise, grant funding, and most of all, considerable community resources, grantees addressed their park challenges in a variety of ways.

Common to all their efforts are the themes of public-private partnerships, community engagement, leadership support, and using parks to address other urban challenges. APA hopes these projects can serve as examples for others.

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December 2002
Windmill Hill Park Design:
Alexandria, Virginia

The Washington, D.C., metropolitan area is a region rich with history. For more than 200 years the national government's presence has created a mixed culture of community, ranging from short-term residents to life-long "inside the beltway" dwellers, and of all different economic, ethnic, and political backgrounds. Alexandria, Virginia, just across the Potomac River from D.C., is a microcosm of this situation. The challenge of providing parks that address the desires of such a disparate group is a formidable one.

First established as a park in 1945, Windmill Hill Park sits on former marshland that was filled in the 19th century. Its name comes from the wind-powered water mill that occupied the sandy bluff in 1843. The park was initially selected for a children's playground, as a result of a citywide open space study. In the late 1970s, the yacht basin on the east side of the park, which formerly housed a commercial marina, was closed when the federal government claimed the majority of Alexandria's waterfront. Redevelopment of surrounding land has resulted in the presence of two upscale residential townhouse complexes, both completed in the late 1990s.

The various housing types and income levels that are adjacent to the park have created pressure for park uses that have not entirely matched the city's priorities. The neighborhood would prefer quiet, non-programmed uses. The city envisions waterfront access for all citizens, including families and tourists. Another challenge is integrating the pieces that comprise the 3.4-acre park, which have been built over time without a single set of intended uses. There is a waterfront, natural resource use, dog exercise area, a playground, basketball and volleyball courts, a bicycle trail, and a picnic area, all within the site adjoining an upscale neighborhood.

Achieving a balance among all these priorities is a major design issue. Mayor Kerry Donley recognized that Windmill Hill Park was in need of a design process that included significant public involvement.
After creating a nine-member steering committee, appointed by the city manager, the city retained a planning consultant to facilitate this process. With the assistance of a City Parks Forum grant, the consultant facilitated a series of meetings. The first two meetings were design charrettes where the steering committee, city staff, and citizens discussed the design components, with the goal of reaching consensus on the final design.

As a result of the various opinions entering into this process, consensus was not reached quickly or easily. A total of four additional meetings and five draft designs were needed before reaching a design solution that satisfied everyone. The final design plan was approved unanimously by the steering committee, and submitted to the city council, which accepted the plan after amending it slightly. Now with a completed plan in place, staff will be able to research funding options from a variety of sources to make the plan a reality.

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April 6, 2001
Buck Boyle Park: Allentown, Pennsylvania

In 1982, Billy Joel sang about a restless place, where all the factories are closing down, where folks were "killing time, filling out forms, standing in line." Although his social commentary on the de-industrialization of Allentown resonated sharply with many in northeastern United States cities, the Lehigh Valley city has recovered to embrace a diversifying economy, growing population, and rekindled passion for its strong historical foundation of parks and recreation.

Allentown and its park system were the products of grand visionaries who held great aspirations for their "Park Place" of Pennsylvania. "Allen's town" was originally founded by former Philadelphia Mayor and Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, William Allen, in the 1760s. In 1900 General Harry Trexler established West Park as the start of an extensive natural recreational infrastructure that would serve Allentonians throughout the 20th century and beyond. The Trexler Trust continues to fund park restoration, maintenance, and expansion of the city's park system.

George "Bucky" Boyle Park is a crown jewel in Trexler's vision because it has been faithfully restored to serve former baseball legend Boyle's intended purpose: to reach underprivileged Allentown children through sports and make them good citizens. He intervened when the park first began to deteriorate in the 1950s as rough youth disturbed festivals and families. His efforts were recognized when then–Riverfront Park was renamed Buck Boyle Park in 1972, but Boyle could not halt the deterioration of both park and surrounding neighborhood when the economy soured.

A collaborative planning process began in 2000 with a Catalyst Grant from the City Parks Forum. This initiative was made possible by Mayor William Heydt's eager participation and the involvement of Congregations United for Neighborhood Action and Leadership Lehigh Valley. Financial support from the National Park Service's Urban Park and Recreation Recovery program, Pennsylvania's State Community Revitalization Grant, The Harry Trexler Trust, the City of Allentown, and the City Parks...
Forum realized a public stakeholder-driven process to bring recreation back to the park and surrounding low-income neighborhoods. New amenities include football fields, baseball fields, basketball courts, spray pool for younger children, and a new pavilion.

Mayor Heydt's participation in the City Parks Forum has placed Boyle Park at the forefront of a larger downtown revitalization project, Lehigh Landing. Adjacent to Boyle Park, Lehigh Landing is a mixed-use post-industrial development along the Lehigh River. Several turn-of-the-century industrial facilities will be renovated for the project, anchored by the new America on Wheels Museum. Over-the-road transportation exhibits have already been promised by the Smithsonian Institution, as well as Mack Trucks, headquartered in Allentown. The Lehigh Landing project will also include a river walk, a tie-in to the Delaware and Lehigh Canal and boating activities along the river.

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*May 11, 2000*
Graffiti Cleanup Program: 
Buffalo, New York

The Oxford English Dictionary defines graffiti as "a drawing or writing scratched on a wall or other surface; a scribbling on an ancient wall, as those at Pompeii and Rome." Graffiti has existed at least since the ancient Greek and Roman Empires. Over the years, graffiti has had both constructive and destructive connotations. Constructively, graffiti has been a medium used to spread social and political messages, and to advertise opinions and products. Some view graffiti as a legitimate form of artistic expression. However, graffiti can also be interpreted as destruction of someone's property — a form of vandalism and against the law in many places. "Modern" graffiti is essentially couched in the destructive interpretation: the public defacing of a surface using materials such as spray paint or permanent markers.

Buffalo, like many other cities around the world, has a spectacular array of public spaces that would attract many graffiti artists wishing to stake their claim. Declared "The Olmsted City" in 2003 by Mayor Anthony Masiello, Buffalo boasts five parks and connecting parkways designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in the late 1860s (about a decade after Olmsted designed New York City's Central Park). Supported over the decades of transition by a steadfast group that in 1978 became the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Land Conservancy, Buffalo's parks have been a sparkling jewel for the entire region, even as shifts in the economy and a lower manufacturing base have caused the metropolitan population to decline by nearly 15 percent since 1970.

In the early part of the 2000s graffiti became rampant in Buffalo, and city officials knew the time had come to make a stronger stand against its advance. The City of Buffalo joined forces with the American Planning Association to make changes. With support from a City Parks Forum-funded Catalyst Grant, in 2002 Buffalo hired John F. Barnes to serve as the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Land Conservancy's new graffiti prevention coordinator. He, in turn, has since enjoined an "army" of volunteers to act as graffiti watchdogs to work with Buffalo police and crack down on vandals painting bridges, sides of buildings, dumpsters, and benches.
Indications over the past few years indicate tremendous success. Cleanup efforts have been heightened within Olmsted's green network, and some of the most prominent graffiti artists have been arrested. These efforts have not been easy, however, particularly when a single can of spray paint can cause between $1,000 and $1,500 worth of damage. For a nearly bankrupt city, such a job is daunting. It is a testimony to Buffalo's community spirit and civic pride that the city would invest in a 25-year parks management plan with eyesore remediation as a key thrust.

The city is going to the schools to educate youngsters about what is acceptable art and what is not. Barnes's corps is also helping students understand that money spent cleaning up graffiti is money not spent on high school athletic equipment or youth programs. With the help of the American Planning Association and its own determination to preserve the Olmsted legacy, Buffalo is making a difference for the future of its people.

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July 18, 2002
Like most Sunbelt cities, metropolitan Charlotte has experienced substantial growth during the past several decades. Between 1960 and 2005, the population of the four counties that compose the region exploded from just 615,000 to more than 1.5 million. While impressive in its own right, a quick demographic analysis of Charlotte's population growth reveals an even more interesting trend that is not common among Sunbelt cities: an increasing percentage of Charlotte's metropolitan residents are living in the central, or core, county (Mecklenburg) where Charlotte is located. Between 1960 and 2005, the proportion of total metropolitan population in Mecklenburg County increased from 44 percent to 52 percent. Compare these numbers with same-period change in core county percentage of metro population in other Sunbelt cities: Atlanta (40 percent to 19 percent), Orlando (67 percent to 53 percent), Nashville (62 percent to 40 percent), and Richmond-Petersburg (40 percent to 19 percent). The message is clear: central areas, more than peripheral areas, of metro Charlotte face tremendous growth pressure.

The intense growth at the core of metropolitan Charlotte has provided the impetus for preserving greenspace and building green infrastructure near the center of the region, not just on the fringe. The Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department embarked on an ambitious update to its earlier 1980 and 1991 Greenways Plans to not only extend and create new greenway corridors, but also improve established corridors. The 2015 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Master Plan: Planning for Our Future made strong connections with the 1999-2009 Master Greenways Plan on the issues of accessibility and integration with neighborhoods and communities adjacent to the greenways.

The Little Sugar Creek Greenway includes a 12.5-mile trail that, once completed, will stretch from Cordelia Park just north of Charlotte's urban core to the southern, exurban end of the county near the border with South Carolina. The development of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway responds to the vital need for a more livable and sustainable community for all residents and businesses:
Provides an amenity for recreation, culture, and history
Protects and preserves the environment
Provides an alternative mode of transportation
Creates new opportunities for economic development
Connects diverse neighborhoods of Charlotte with a central corridor of open space
Improves a stream corridor with the worst water quality rating in North Carolina

However, visibility of the greenway is an issue, particularly since the Little Sugar Creek Greenway goes straight into the heart of Charlotte's business and commercial core. The greenway is supposed to link "uptown" Charlotte with a series of seven distinct communities or "reaches." Each reach of the greenway serves as an emerging or historic neighborhood, commercial, or retail area. Each community has its own distinct character and inherent attributes. The greenway was already established when Mayor Patrick McCrory participated in the American Planning Association's City Parks Forum. What the greenway needed, though, was a new master sign plan to inform, educate, and direct. Mayor McCrory and APA envisioned not only a new sign plan for Little Sugar Creek Greenway, but a model sign plan for all greenways in the Mecklenburg Park System.

APA, through its City Parks Forum, provided a Catalyst Grant for a Master Signage Package for the Little Sugar Creek Greenway. The plan will incorporate signs for every portion of the greenway, from the most urban core on the north end of the greenway to more exurban areas near the South Carolina border. Signs will include: neighborhood entrances, historical markers, directional signs, regulatory notices, trail head kiosks, environmental education tables, and mile markers. Signage is critical for information communication to help form the greenway's identity and critical for location identification as a safety measure. Through this grant, APA and Charlotte will help Little Sugar Creek visitors and neighbors find their way.

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July 18, 2002
Some metropolitan regions in the United States employ urban growth boundaries (UGBs) to control growth and development. In the State of Oregon, the law requires that each city or metropolitan area have a UGB in place. The boundary controls urban expansion so that only prescribed areas for urban services (roads, water, sewer, parks, schools, emergency response, enforcement) are inside the boundary and areas determined to remain farms or natural open space are outside the boundary. The intent of the UGB is to stem urban sprawl and increase land use efficiency.

The Santa Clara neighborhood in Eugene, Oregon, makes up the northwest portion of the city. Eugene's UGB serves as part of the boundary of the Santa Clara community. A municipal report, River Road/Santa Clara Urban Services Report, showed Santa Clara was underserved by parks and recreational open space. Therefore, in 1998, Eugene governing officials allocated a portion of the $25 million dollar bond approved by Eugene citizens to fund acquisition of property for a future community park in Santa Clara. After the bond passed, parks and open space staff analyzed a number of sites to locate the park. However, the most promising sites were on the opposite side of Eugene's UGB from the Santa Clara neighborhood.

The City of Eugene and Mayor Jim Torrey received a Catalyst Grant from the American Planning Association's City Parks Forum in 2002. The grant was intended to support a planning process towards the acquisition of a large community park for the Santa Clara neighborhood. The specific proposal included an expansion of the UGB for compact urban development that included a significant parks and open space component. The planning process included an economic analysis of the proposal and a significant community engagement process. The proposed UGB expansion formed the heart of the public debate, with loss of farmland and an expanded urban infrastructure being prime concerns. Despite the 1998 parks and open space bond passage, a 2005 community survey showed the community split down the middle between those that supported the park proposal, and associated UGB expansion, and those that opposed a UGB.
expansion for any reason. Although the process did not result in the acquisition of parkland, it did engage the community in a dialogue of planning issues that informs Eugene parks and open space planning efforts today.

The City of Eugene has since embarked on a new discussion with area residents to look at unique and alternative solutions for park services in the Santa Clara neighborhood. These discussions have resulted in efforts to build partnerships with other recreation service providers such as the school district and the YMCA. Additional funds have been secured for the purchase of land for a community park and acquisition efforts are currently focused on two large undeveloped parcels adjacent to an existing middle school. If successful in obtaining these parcels, the city and school district will work in partnership to develop shared facilities and maximize the land available for public recreation.

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Images: Top — Park sites. Source: City of Eugene. Bottom — Community meeting. Source: City of Eugene.

July 18, 2002
Trinity Trails Wayfinding System:
Fort Worth, Texas

Seeing a herd of longhorn cattle being driven along a river is not an image common to most urban waterfronts. If you find yourself in Fort Worth, however, you might be fortunate enough to see this when the Fort Worth Herd take their daily drive down Exchange Avenue to and from the historic Stockyards. The cattle often take a pit stop along the Trinity River, giving the visitor — and resident — a glimpse of what might have been in the past a common image in the city dubbed "Where the West Begins."

The Trinity River, which travels through the heart of Fort Worth, is a major natural asset to the city, with significant parkland acreage along either side. Adjacent to the central business district is the confluence of two forks of the river, North Fork and Clearfork; just below the confluence is the Paddock Viaduct, built in 1914 as the nation=s first concrete arch bridge to use reinforcing steel. The wooded bluff overlooking this confluence was the location of the original Fort Worth, and today is the site of Heritage Park, developed between 1972 and 1976 as a U.S. Bicentennial Project. The park consists of an overlook system and various water features.

This hub of river, history, and structure is an amazing and incredible venue; unfortunately, the bluff topography that creates the dramatic setting also makes it nearly invisible to pedestrians above. In fact, many people pass the vicinity unaware of Heritage Park's existence. There was a desire from Mayor Kenneth Barr to make a stronger connection between the downtown and the riverfront, to capture its natural beauty and economic development potential.

To assist in this process, the City Parks Forum gave a grant to Streams and Valleys, Inc., the nonprofit parks organization working to develop an overall master plan for the Trinity River, to create a "wayfinding" and signage system to link downtown and outlying neighborhoods to the river's greenbelt and existing system of parks and trails. Streams and Valleys retained a local planning and design firm to develop the system, which focuses
on a connection through Heritage Park, encouraging trail users to enter Heritage Park and enjoy its various amenities. The map developed by the firm details recommended routes from hotels and major retail/tourist attractions to the river, and includes the basic amenities of the entire trail system. In order to promote the new system, Streams and Valleys held a number of fun public events at the riverfront.

In addition to the maps, 10,000 of which were printed and supplied throughout the city, the firm developed a signage system to provide directional guidance to the river for pedestrians and motor vehicles. Approximately 25 signs have been installed throughout the downtown, southwest, and west sides of town, and additional signs will be erected at major intersections and crossroads as additional miles of the trail are completed in the east and southeast neighborhoods. As stated in Streams and Valleys' final grant report, the grant "has served as significant seed money to implement a long term wayfinding and signage system for the entire Trinity River Corridor."

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April 6, 2001
Central Oahu Regional Park Tennis Facility: Honolulu, Hawaii

Hawaii is unique in many ways. It is the only state composed entirely of islands. It is the most recent state to be admitted to the Union (1959). It is the southernmost state, and its climate is entirely tropical. Hawaii also sits in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and serves as a crossroads between North America and Australasia. Hawaii offers an exciting mix of cultures and experiences, and the City and County of Honolulu wants its park system to reflect the Aloha State's dynamism.

Tennis, a sport originally established in France and Great Britain and still very popular in the Western Hemisphere, is now exploding into Asia-Pacific countries. The International Tennis Federation views Asia as the next major opportunity for growth of the sport. The Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) season-ending championships are now held in Shanghai, China. The 100-year old Australian Open recently began to brand itself as the official Grand Slam of the Asia-Pacific. In 2004, the Chinese women's doubles team captured that nation's first gold medal in Olympic Tennis. Hawaii is anxious to capitalize on the growth of tennis among Asians and its strategic location as a tourist destination and midpoint between Asia and North America. This mindset helped drive Honolulu to promote tennis as a major focal point for the new Oahu Central Regional Park.

The American Planning Association, through its City Parks Forum, provided a Catalyst Grant for a Strategic Marketing Plan and Promotion Program for the Central Oahu Regional Park's tennis complex under Honolulu Mayor Jeremy Harris in 2003. Unlike many other Catalyst Grants, the money was not earmarked to support planning or construction. Rather, APA provided a grant to Honolulu so they could successfully promote the park as a world-class tennis facility, a bridge between East and West on the common ground of a nearly 130-year old sport whose popularity on both sides of the Pacific promises greater cultural interaction.
Honolulu used the grant to bring in The Hawaii Pacific Tennis Foundation to manage the Central Oahu Regional Park's tennis complex. Over the next three years, the foundation has promoted Hawaii's sports tourism industry, secured prestigious state and national tournaments to improve visibility of tennis in Hawaii, and supported residential recreational use of the facilities to build tennis as a more prominent sport in Oahu. In 2003, the complex was proclaimed one of 20 winners of the United States Tennis Association's (USTA) Facility Award. In 2004, the USTA National Junior Open was held at Central Oahu Regional Park for the first time. In 2005, the City and County of Honolulu diversified the park even further by building and dedicating the Veteran's Memorial Aquatic Center. The aquatic center, like the tennis complex, is now used for larger tournaments and competitions such as the Hawaii State Swimming Championships.

The Central Oahu Regional Park is an example of how a community can successfully develop a regional park for local residents and how parks can positively contribute to the regional and state economy. Even with all the facilities now featured at the park, there are plans to improve the park even further. As of August 4, 2006, there are plans to build Phase Two of the complex, including a stadium court for larger, more international tennis tournaments.

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Images: Top — Oahu. Middle — Project Site. Bottom — Tennis court.

July 18, 2002
Jackson Metro Parkway and Lake Hico: Jackson, Mississippi

Mississippi has unfortunately been the location of tragic events with national repercussions. In 1970, Mississippi National Guardsmen shot and killed two black students protesting U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. The shootings took place at Jackson State University, arguably the cultural anchor of the west side of Jackson, the capital and largest city of Mississippi. More than three decades later, community leaders in both West Jackson and Jackson have collaborated to remake Lynch Street, an artery connecting West Jackson and Jackson that was closed immediately after the shootings, into Jackson Metro Parkway. The public lands that comprise the parkway were the subject of an intensive community planning process led by Matthew Dalbey, AICP (assistant professor of urban and regional planning at Jackson State University), and David Perkes (associate professor of architecture at Mississippi State University and director of the Jackson Community Design Center).

The American Planning Association featured the work of Dalbey and Perkes in the Winter 2003 issue of Practicing Planner. Focused on the Jackson Metro Parkway, the authors’ primary conclusion was that the right-of-way should not be limited solely to a community greenbelt. Rather, the space had to be developed in a way that added value to the community. "Nurturing" and "knitting" are words the authors use throughout their discussion of the neighborhood’s needs. Interventions were not the answer, but rather cultivation of community vision.

The American Planning Association’s City Parks Forum and then–Mayor Harvey Johnson and his staff teamed in 2001 for a catalyst grant to plan and develop the new Jackson Metro Parkway to relink West Jackson and Jackson and to reopen Lake Hico to all of the Jackson public. Lake Hico is a human-made reservoir, constructed in 1957 to serve as a cooling pond (it still used in that capacity today by Entergy Mississippi). It was also open only to whites for recreational use. In 1968 Lake Hico was closed to the public for recreation, shortly after blacks began to use the lake, and it has remained closed to the present. Both former Mayor Harvey Johnson and current Mayor Frank
Melton have labored intensively to seek community support to reopen the lake to all people for recreation.

Jackson Metro Parkway and Lake Hico are indicative of the strong motivation in Jackson to rectify historical planning issues steeped strongly in racial tension. In both cases, insecurity prompted the immediate closing of major public infrastructure in the city, reducing the quality of life for all residents. Jackson's recent mayors have show strong proactive planning initiative to reknit these areas back into the community fabric. Critical support has come from the local academic and professional planning community, as demonstrated by the work of Dalbey and Perkes, along with the active participation of Jackson leaders in APA's City Parks Forum. The Jackson community has made incredible strides to reopen not only its infrastructure, but also itself to the world as a city that cares deeply about each of its own. The commitment of Jacksonians to their city is the necessary antiseptic to heal historical wounds.

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November 8, 2001
Rosedale Arch Site Improvements: Kansas City, Kansas

Parks are often the sites for a community to express its history, through the placement of statuary, sculptures, or other tribute pieces. Around the world, one of the most popular types of war memorials is the commemorative arch. While one likely thinks first of the most famous of these structures, the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, they can be found in the most unlikely of places, such as Kansas City, Kansas.

The Rosedale Arch, dedicated in September 1924, was designed as a "scaled down" version of that famous Parisian memorial. It was created as part of a memorial park to honor the "Rainbow Division," the 42nd U.S. Infantry Division, composed of National Guard units from 26 states and the first to arrive in France in World War I. This dedication occurred two years after Rosedale, a separate city, consolidated with Kansas City, Kansas. The arch sits atop Mount Marty, and it is lighted up at night, making it highly visible to the surrounding community.

However, this visibility does not translate into accessibility. While it was easily identified from afar, most people didn't know that the arch was located in Mount Marty Park. "There are no signs that say 'Rosedale Memorial Arch'," says Wendy Wilson, director of the Rosedale Development Association. In addition, the site didn't have adequate lighting, was accessible through only one road, and picnic facilities and walking paths were lacking. Finally, there was a perception that the site was neglected and unsafe. All these concerns pointed to the RDA's need for a new site plan.

RDA approached Mayor Carol Marinovich to see what could be done to renew public use and interest in the arch and its surrounding park. Through her participation with the City Parks Forum, Mayor Marinovich was able to secure a CPF grant for the RDA to pursue the renewal of the Rosedale Arch area.

In addition to a master plan for improvements being completed, brush and plant material around the retaining wall and a rocky outcropping was
removed, and several items were installed, including six permanent benches, three concrete pads for picnic tables, cultural resource style directional markers, seven bollard lights, a second flagpole for the state flag, a four-minute informational recording speaker box, and a bike rack. Students from the adjacent Rosedale Middle School did the brush cleanup work as part of a community service project.

The historic nature of the structure, which adds to its community value, also made the revitalization process more complicated, due to the need for all plans to be approved by the local landmarks commission and the state historical society. But the level of involvement and interest in the arch has sparked public interest in the site again, with features and editorials in the Kansas City Kansan and Kansas City Star. As the 80th anniversary of the Rosedale Arch's dedication approaches, the community is hopeful that this site will be recognizable at all distances and perhaps it will be just as celebrated as its "parent" in Paris.

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May 11, 2000
Greenprint Plan Challenge: Lincoln, Nebraska

For the early pioneers of the mid–19th century, Nebraska impressed with its sweeping vistas, low rolling hills, and vast open spaces. Those who sojourned along the Oregon Trail as it hugged the Platte River must have marveled at the seeming impossibility of abundance, future promise, and opportunity. For Willa Cather and her literary heroes, there was room to breathe out here among the tallgrass prairies and cottonwoods.

Today a different type of migration offers Cornhuskers a fresh perspective. While the state still offers an abundance of lightly developed or undeveloped land throughout its central and western counties, there has been a dramatic shift in population growth and concentration as Nebraska urbanizes. The corridor along Interstate 80, between Omaha and Lincoln, offers some of the fastest growth in the entire state. Relatively high urban densities in this relatively small region challenges the preservation of the open spaces that Nebraskans have always assumed would be there.

In Lincoln, the state capital and home of the University of Nebraska, and surrounding Lancaster County, the population has mushroomed. Demographers predict the number of residents, just 100,000 during World War II, will pass 300,000 early in the 2010s. Local concern about the need for park and recreation lands to serve the growing population, as well as strong desire to protect sensitive environmental features such as the rare Eastern Nebraska saline wetlands, has prompted a call to action.

The American Planning Association's City Parks Forum provided the jump start Mayor Don Wesely's staff needed to begin a strong cooperative process to produce a Greenprint Plan for the 2025 Lincoln/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan. Meeting the Greenprint Challenge, leaders from Lincoln and Lancaster County forged a robust partnership among organizations including the Sierra Club, the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, and the Wachiska Audubon Society. The coalition organized public forums and meetings to meet the challenge of a comprehensive open space plan that would integrate previously independent research and preservation initiatives.
The conceptual cornerstone of the Greenprint Plan is a set of "core resource imperatives" that are the highest priorities for parkland and preservation: saline and freshwater wetlands, native prairies, and corridors along the tributaries of the Platte River. These core resource imperatives were also pivotal in planning the Salt Valley Heritage Greenway around Lincoln. There is strong desire among the partnership to maintain sustainable urban development in Lincoln and equally sustainable, but rural, development in outlying areas of Lancaster County.

Lincoln/Lancaster County used a catalyst grant from The City Parks Forum to produce an approved 2025 Comprehensive Plan and integrated Greenprint Plan in 2005. Hand-in-hand with APA, the policymakers and residents of Nebraska's second-largest city are blazing new trails as pioneers on the frontier of open space conservation and sustainable parkland preservation.

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Portland Wharf: Louisville, Kentucky

Imagine 56 acres of riverside habitat within walking distance of downtown Louisville, with large stands of native trees and dramatic views of the Ohio River. Just two and a half meters under the ground surface lies an urban archaeological treasure: the foundations of the buildings and streets that were once the Portland Wharf, along with thousands of artifacts reflecting the area's heyday as a thriving river town. Once part of a larger community, this site is now separated from the Portland neighborhood by a floodwall and interstate highway. This largely residential historic district has some pockets of entrenched poverty and possesses excellent potential for revitalization.

In creating Louisville's newest waterfront park, Mayor David Armstrong's goal was to work through the Portland community, and the city at large, to design a park that would incorporate an appreciation of the site's natural beauty with a creative, interactive way to experience and remember Portland Wharf's history. An additional project goal was to recreate a physical connection between the wharf site and the Portland neighborhood. A larger vision for the park planning and development was that it would spur economic growth and community pride in the adjacent Portland neighborhood.

With the help of a City Parks Forum grant, the Portland Museum organization successfully energized and informed the community about the history of the site and its meaning to the Portland neighborhood. The museum mailed more than 20,000 postcards that included both cultural information and specific event announcements. The museum held six public outreach events, distributed 25,000 tabloid format newspaper reports about the site, and hosted a community charrette. That charrette, attended by the mayor and more than 100 residents, created the outline for the Park Master Plan. The museum continues its work to educate citizens about the Portland Wharf site and the surrounding neighborhood. Using the City Parks Forum grant as a portion
of a match, the museum was able to secure nearly $250,000 in additional funding to develop educational and interpretive plans for the new park.

Following the planning initiative for the new park site, the Louisville Development Authority has begun a study for commercial revitalization in the Portland neighborhood. A new organization, Portland Now, has formed, and residents are joining together to address common challenges. Nathalie Andrews, the museum's director, says, "Within the Portland neighborhood, there is not only enthusiasm but also a general feeling of a community on the rise."

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November 4, 1999
Penn Park Renovation: Madison, Wisconsin

Home to the University of Wisconsin, Madison's residents pride themselves on their quality of life. Their city consistently ranks in the top tier of polls for best places to live, work, be creative, and raise a family. Much of this could be attributed to the city's vision statement, which says Madison will be a place where:

- Diversity is valued;
- Freedom of expression is encouraged and protected;
- Everyone has the opportunity to realize his/her full potential;
- The beauty of the urban environment and natural environment is preserved.

This statement could be not better realized that in the effort made by citizens of South Madison to turn around Penn Park. Established in 1953 as a city park when it was purchased from Clifford Penn, it provided a place for recreational baseball and softball for the nearby residents. In the late 1960s it was reconstructed as a neighborhood park, providing a wider array of programmed uses such as playgrounds, ice skating, basketball, tennis, football, and a picnic shelter for the adjacent low-income housing residents.

As time progressed, however, the use of Penn Park for recreational activities decreased, and illegal activities such as drug dealing began to occur. This decline did not go unnoticed by the citizens of Madison. One particular park neighbor, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, expressed a desire to become actively involved in the renovation and renewed programming of the park. Their CDC, Genesis Community Development Corporation, approached Mayor Susan Bauman, who recognized the significance of Penn Park to the surrounding neighborhood. She also realized the importance of engaging the entire neighborhood in the planning process "to make Penn Park a stronger asset to the neighborhood and a more welcoming place for youth and families to come to and enjoy."
With a grant from The City Parks Forum, nearly 10 different community organizations and individuals, including the Boys and Girls Club, the Bram's Addition Neighborhood Association, and the South Madison Anti-Drug Coalition, participated in several group meetings and discussions about planning and improving Penn Park. These meetings resulted in the identification of 17 different improvements to the park, which were then presented to a neighborhood meeting where residents voted for their preferred long-term priorities. Finally, using budget estimates, the residents allocated funds to each item, to identify their final priority list. The Park Commission agreed to plan to implement the top five of the 10 proposed improvements, including creating a grass "front yard" to the park, relocating the playground to a safer location, and establishing better access to the park, all of which were funded by the CPF grant.

The park is being used much more now by the community as a result of these improvements, with 10 more playground dates in 2002 than the average from the previous four years. Special community events more than doubled in 2002. One important indicator did decrease — the number of police calls regarding problems in Penn Park. The perception of the park in the community is more positive, and the community continues to have discussions about how to further improve Penn Park. These efforts can only help to reinforce Madison's position as a top place to live, work, and be engaged in the community.

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May 11, 2000
Milwaukee's Beerline district once hummed with breweries and tanneries along the Milwaukee River. The good life supplied by heavy industry was captured in popular television sitcoms like Happy Days and Laverne & Shirley. Unfortunately, these same industries also brought the price of a degraded natural environment: dirty air, polluted water, and severe disconnect between people and the natural world. Like so many other cities in the Great Lakes region, Milwaukee has suffered significant loss of industry and manufacturing in the decades following those "happy days" of the 1950s and 1960s. However, industrial decline also affords city residents the opportunity to rekindle their relationship with the Milwaukee River and bring new life to its shores. Reinvigorating long abandoned land near the riverfront is breathing new life into Milwaukee's unsinkable spirit.

Kilbourn Park is an outstanding example of how reuse of riverfront land can bring urban populations back into intimacy with their natural surroundings. Located on a bluff descending from the Commerce Street neighborhood to the river itself, Kilbourn Park is not simply a place for local children to explore with their parents. Rather, The City Parks Forum and the City of Milwaukee have partnered successfully to reinstate Kilbourn Park as a true outdoor classroom for Milwaukee's youth.

Former Mayor John Norquist brought the challenge of revitalizing Kilbourn Park to the City Parks Forum. The result is the River Adventure Team kids (RATs), which have taken the lower Milwaukee River by storm. This program, initiated in part through a Catalyst Grant from the City Parks Forum, operates with the strong support of the Milwaukee Rowing Club (half from local Marquette University). Not only are the RATs taught swimming, water safety, canoeing, kayaking, and basic sailing skills, they are reconnected to a part of their world that had long been closed off and forbidden to their curious exploration. The foresight of the Children's Outing Association and the Urban Ecology Center also strengthened the initiative as the mayor strove to improve quality of life in his city. This collaborative process has been a vanguard for the entire Commerce Street
corridor, the Beerline redevelopment zone, and the areas around the lower Milwaukee River estuary.

Mike Wisniewski, senior economic development specialist with the City of Milwaukee, has cited Kilbourn Park's connection from the top of the river bluff to the estuary's shores as the lynchpin in the larger Kilbourn Landing project. Kilbourn Landing includes a series of capital improvements along the Milwaukee River to complement the ongoing revitalization of the Commerce Street corridor, including: (1) landscaping and trail development along the historic Kilbourn Park and Milwaukee Road rail corridor and (2) construction of a riverfront viewing terrace with a riverfront plaza and dock. These improvements, coupled with the extensive new urbanism approach to revitalization of Commerce Street and the rest of the Beerline district, have created a shining example of how both natural and urban revitalization synergistically lift an aging community. Mayor Norquist enthusiastically offers hope for other cities in similar situations as Milwaukee, lauding Kilbourn Park's success as "an idea that can be replicated virtually anywhere ... what creates valuable real estate is a sensible, sophisticated, easy-to-follow plan."

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*September 21, 2000*
Peavey Park Community Listening and Visioning Project: Minneapolis, Minnesota

The situation at Peavey Park was common to many parks in economically distressed urban communities. It symbolized many of the stresses facing its surrounding Phillips neighborhood. Residents were afraid to use the park because of drug, gang, and gun violence that plagued the north end of the park. Other barriers included crossing major arterial streets for access, as well as a barren, unwelcoming park landscape. As a symbol of the neighborhood, the park was also an ideal place to act in revitalizing the community. In partnership with Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton and the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board, Hope Community, Inc. led the charge.

Hope Community, Inc. was already working in the Phillips neighborhood to create housing and economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income families. The essence of their neighborhood vision is called Children's Village, self-described as "a dream of what a neighborhood can be when children matter." It calls for an overhauled neighborhood design that provides diverse housing, transportation, and public space opportunities that create a safe and stable environment for children. An important element of the plan is Peavey Park.

In addition to creating physical infrastructure, Hope Community, Inc. works to grow community leadership by engaging residents in decision making that affects their lives. In that spirit, The City Parks Forum provided grant money to enable Hope, in partnership with the city and park board, to assemble a group of community leaders to plan and conduct a series of 18 community listening sessions revolving around the Peavey Park and the Phillips neighborhood. Nearly 200 adults and children attended the sessions which were conducted in several languages to facilitate the participation of the diverse ethnicity of the neighborhood.

Following the listening sessions, Hope conducted several community visioning sessions. Working with an architect who attended both the listening and visioning sessions, residents created a concept plan to revitalize their park. Finally, community
members, many of whom had never before attended a public meeting, presented their plan to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. When the board approved the new park design, the Phillips residents clapped and cheered.

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November 4, 1999
Park Plan for Bell's Bend:
Nashville, Tennessee

Long an entertainment center for the world and inarguably the country music capital, Nashville sounds have evoked a fondness and longing for green fields and bucolic life within its audiences. The association between Nashville and the countryside runs deep, even among long-time residents. However, the allure of a relaxed, laid-back lifestyle of high quality and affordability has made Nashville an irresistible draw for multitudes of new residents. Metropolitan Nashville has more than doubled in population in just the last 40 years and is now close to 1.5 million. While Nashville political leaders have responded in groundbreaking ways, particularly by merging the governments of the City of Nashville and Davidson County, only recently has there been political initiative to plan for the preservation of the rapidly shrinking countryside.

The Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Department (Metro Parks) has well served greater Nashville for more than a century through its facilities and diverse programs in more than 100 parks. However, at no point in its long history had the department ever produced a long-range master plan for park development. The dearth of formal parks planning in Nashville changed recently under the auspices of Mayor Bill Purcell, who initiated the first ever Metropolitan Parks and Greenways Master Plan to guide his region's park system into its second century. Over the next several years, more than $260 million in park improvements or investments are planned, with $35 million in the first year alone. The investment represents the largest single appropriation in the history of Nashville's Parks Department. Why the sudden shift?

A change in direction for Metro Parks may have begun in the early 1990s with 808 acres of pristine open space on the Cumberland River, known as Bell's Bend. Nashville/Davidson County government had acquired the tract as a possible landfill, in reaction to the tremendous growth in greater Nashville's population. However, in 2001 government officials determined that there was no need for a landfill in the area. Bell's Bend was transferred from the responsibility of public works to that of the parks department. The dramatic new addition to the parks system prompted Mayor Purcell to undergo a case study of the
site and present it to the American Planning Association's City Parks Forum. The City Parks Forum, in turn, invested in Mayor Purcell's initiative with a $35,000 Catalyst Grant to kick-start the planning process for Bell's Bend. The planning momentum eventually encompassed all of the Cumberland River greenways and parks in greater Nashville and the first Metropolitan Parks and Greenway Master Plan was born.

The amenities and upgrades for Bell's Bend and the other parks in the system are impressive. The following are highlights of the 10-year parks master plan:

- Make improvements to every park (upgrades, repair, or replacement of existing buildings, sport fields, sidewalks, signage, and fencing)
- Acquire 2,200 acres of new parklands over the next 20 years
- Install playgrounds at all Metro area elementary schools
- Expand current greenway system to 200 miles of trails that will link parks, neighborhoods, and schools
- Build five new regional community centers and two expanded community centers
- Expand educational, environmental, teen, and cultural programming
- Improve operation and maintenance of park system
- Ensure all park facilities comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act

Nashville hopes that its planning efforts in Bell's Bend, facilitated by the American Planning Association, will establish a model park planning approach for future projects, and that the Metropolitan Parks and Greenway Master Plan will secure a greener future for the entire region.

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Images: Top — Bell’s Bend. Source: City of Nashville. Bottom — Land Use. Source: City of Nashville.

November 8, 2001
The City of New Orleans is home to beautiful architecture, world-renowned Mardi Gras parades, and wonderful restaurants. It is also home to more than 13,000 vacant lots. Mayor Marc Morial wanted to create a model for converting these blighted, vacant properties into neighborhood assets. The problem lots were creating multiple problems for his city: 1) many of the lots were tax-delinquent, 2) the city had to expend already strained resources to maintain the lots, and 3) dumping and illegal activity in the lots created unattractive and unsafe conditions, further perpetuating the economic decline of the neighborhoods in which many of the lots sat. One of these neighborhoods was Central City.

Located only a few miles from the Central Business District, Central City and Oretha Castley Haley Boulevard were once the heart of the African-American commercial district in New Orleans. The area is now afflicted by high vacancy rates and dilapidated buildings that serve as havens for drug addicts and vagrants, and a large number of vacant lots. However, the community does have a number of valuable resources. It is home to the Kids Café, a nonprofit project that serves inner-city children by providing them with free meals, nutrition education, and a safe environment; The Neighborhood Gallery, an African-American fine arts gallery; and Parkway Partners Program, Inc., a partnership program of the community and the City of New Orleans Department of Parks and Parkways.

Using a City Parks Forum grant, Parkway Partners set out to convert a vacant lot near the Kids Café into a neighborhood garden for children. After several false starts, the project was launched through the generosity of a long-time resident and business owner, who donated the use of a lot next to The Neighborhood Gallery. More than 50 volunteers joined together to build the garden, which is designed to reflect the principles of Kwanzaa. Through the collaboration of the gallery, the Contemporary Arts Center, and
local artists, a large mural was painted on the back wall of the garden and additional arts programs developed.

Today, a vacant lot that once grew weeds now grows hope. A volunteer mentoring program, led by Parkway Partners' Community staff, has been developed to provide area youth an opportunity to learn horticulture and life skills in a hands-on, teaching environment. The young gardeners grow a variety of vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Harvested produce is taken home by the children, taken to the Kids Café for preparation, or shared with senior citizens who visit the garden.

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November 9, 1999
In 1971, Walt Disney changed Central Florida forever. Despite steady growth from air conditioning, retirees, people escaping northern winters, citrus farming, and the space boom of the 1960s, Orlando and its surrounding communities had long been bypassed by the glitz and glamour of the Florida Gold Coast. Miami, Fort Lauderdale, and Palm Beach had been attracting tourists and new residents alike on their warm beaches for decades. But when Disney unveiled the new Walt Disney World on what had previously been a vast expanse of orange groves and swamp, Central Florida exploded. In 1970, metropolitan Orlando's population was just over 500,000; today it numbers two million. Orlando continues to be one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the United States, and many corporations and industries have joined the massive throngs who have permanently relocated to Disney's backyard. With such levels of growth, it almost seems impossible that one small neighborhood, seemingly older than Orlando itself, would look to a park to grant the wishes every other surrounding community seems to have enjoyed from the Magic Kingdom.

Parramore was a shining gem in pre-Disney Orlando for more than six decades. A strong black community thrived between the 1890s and 1960s with schools, theaters, shops, restaurants, hotels, and business services that catered exclusively to Orlando's black community. It was a time when everyone, from the plumber to the physician, lived and invested in the neighborhood and maintained a collective civic pride that could not be found in most other communities. Unfortunately, in the 1950s and 1960s outside forces began to unravel the strong social fabric woven by Parramore residents and business owners. Urban renewal projects designed to eradicate alleged "slums" were instigated. Interstate 4 sliced Parramore off from the rest of central Orlando shortly after Walt Disney World opened. Community pillars crumbled and long-time residents scattered. Drugs, crime, and poverty soon overran the neighborhood. Within the next two decades, Parramore became one of the poorest, most dangerous areas in all of metropolitan Orlando.
In 2000 Mayor Glenda Hood fertilized an already brewing grassroots initiative to resuscitate the Parramore neighborhood. Close proximity of the neighborhood to booming downtown Orlando and soaring land prices on the other side of the freeway prompted developers to consider Parramore as fertile soil for future redevelopment and investment. The City of Orlando and long-time residents welcomed renewed interest in their neighborhood, but there was deep concern about whether there would be an opportunity for development to take a different path so as to avoid a repeat of what residents had experienced after the 1960s. The search for a new approach led to Mayor Hood's participation in the American Planning Association's City Parks Forum.

APA's City Parks Forum provided a Catalyst Grant to Mayor Hood and the City of Orlando to initiate green infrastructure in the Parramore neighborhood. The purpose of green infrastructure for the neighborhood was three-fold: interrupt the monotony of urban hardscape with open water and greenspace; accommodate stormwater runoff from new redevelopment projects that were bringing new activity to the community; and invite future development projects with an open water feature unique to the central city. The new park and water feature would not only invigorate Parramore with a renewed sense of vitality, but they would also bring a fresh awareness of resources and environmental processes to central city residents who may have had little direct experience with the natural world. It is the hope of The City Parks Forum that future investments in green infrastructure will have a positive effect on Parramore and surrounding neighborhoods, and help in the community's return to health and prosperity.

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November 8, 2001
Nine Mile Run Stewardship Model: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Pittsburgh's newest park, Nine Mile Run, has been nearly 100 years in the making. Fredrick Law Olmsted, Jr. wrote of the site in 1911, "Perhaps the most striking opportunity noted for a large park is the valley of Nine Mile Run ... it is so excluded by its high wooded banks that the close proximity of urban development can hardly be imagined ... the entire valley from the top of one bank to the top of the other should be included, for upon the preservation of these wooded banks depends much of the real value of the parks." In addition to its desirable natural features, the property was ideally located along the Monongahela River and adjacent to Frick Park to its east.

Unfortunately for Pittsburgh, the greater portion of the Nine Mile Run park envisioned by Olmsted became a slag (a byproduct of steel making) dump for the business that ruled the city during the industrial age. Between 1922 and 1972 the slag pile grew to 20 feet high and covered more than 200 acres. Fortunately for Pittsburgh, Mayor Tom Murphy and other city leaders recognized a unique opportunity to recapture this riverfront site in 1997, when the Urban Redevelopment Authority purchased the property from Duquesne Slag. While the initial plan for the site was residential development, advocates resurrected the original Olmsted vision and included a 100-acre extension of Frick Park along the stream corridor. However, Nine Mile Run's natural resources had been damaged during the decades following 1911, and the 1997 valley required extensive environmental remediation, reforestation, and stream restoration.

Around the same time that city officials were planning to reclaim Nine Mile Run, a group of concerned citizens, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, were making plans to recapture the former beauty of Pittsburgh's four major parks. Through its connection to Frick Park and with funding from the City Parks Forum, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy took the lead in helping the city to investigate a stewardship structure to restore and manage the environmental resources of the valley.
To accomplish this goal, the Conservancy contracted with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council to review existing plans and agreements, as well as convene existing stakeholders and working groups, to formulate an organizational plan. The Council's recommendation, the creation of a watershed association, was enacted in Spring 2001. The fledgling Nine Mile Run Watershed Association includes both the City of Pittsburgh and upstream communities whose cooperation is critical to the health of the stream. The Watershed Association intends to be a model for urban watershed restoration. One of its first tasks is to support the city's partnership activities with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in creating a biologically sound ecosystem and stream restoration. In addition to serving this reclamation role, the association will serve as an information clearinghouse about the watershed and develop citizen participation opportunities around restoration, education, and long-term maintenance of the resource.

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November 4, 1999
When one thinks of Reno, first thoughts are commonly of gambling, Lake Tahoe, or "The Biggest Little City in the World." But Reno is now becoming better known as an arts and special events site, for programs like Hot Summer Nights, Street Vibrations, and Artown, a month-long arts festival in July that draws nearly 140,000. These events occur throughout Reno, from Virginia Street, which traverses the central casino area, to Wingfield Park, which is on a small island in the middle of the Truckee River. The lack of a centrally located special events site of sufficient size has limited attendance, the types of events, and the city's ability to become well known and respected as an arts community.

Reno came to The City Parks Forum to obtain assistance in identifying the best site for the new special events plaza. Among the issues that needed to be resolved were competing land uses, tax generation, and funding to construct and operate the venue, as well as the issue of moving events from the casino's front doors. With a grant from The City Parks Forum, the city partnered with Artown to develop a project to study the economic impact and functionality of alternative locations for the special events plaza.

An additional element was finding a location that could also house the "homeless" outdoor ice rink, purchased in 1996 and moved every year for various reasons. Setup and dismantling costs exceeded $100,000 every year, and annual attendance has ranged from 31,000 to more than 54,000, depending in part on the location.

The first step in the process was forming an executive committee from various cultural organizations to guide the process. Artown retained a consultant to determine the ideal location, based on tourism, economic development, benefit to surrounding property values, appeal to local residents, and multiple uses each site could provide. They met with more than 100 community leaders, conducted a large-scale planning analysis and plan of action process, identified potential facility locations and connectivity, and outlined potential funding sources.
The location identified as the best opportunity for community gathering was where Virginia Street crosses the Truckee River, Reno's "Cultural Crossroads." The site, on Virginia Street between the river and 3rd Street, provides sufficient space for special events, concerts, Artown events, and the ice rink. It also connects the "cultural string of pearls," eight cultural facilities interspersed and connected by public parks and the river.

The selected site was controversial, as noted by Mayor Jeff Griffin. It was the site of the former Mapes Hotel, a historically significant building that was demolished, at significant public cost, due to extreme deterioration. Local political opinion was against this site — it was thought that the cost to clear it for development needed to be recouped with a new hotel or other commercial establishment. However, the consultant's market analysis indicates that Reno has the public demand for the types of special events that may be held at the outdoor venue. The plaza is anticipated to provide a positive economic impact to the city via tourism dollars and increased adjacent property values.

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April 6, 2001
Cemetery Viability Project:
Rochester, New York

In today's concept of parks, cemeteries are not often considered part of a city's open space assets. But in the Victorian era, cemeteries commonly served as memorial parks — cultural resources that provided a park setting for paying respects to departed loved ones and for enjoying a respite from city living. Families would often bring a picnic and make an afternoon in the memorial park.

Rochester, New York, is home to one of these rare places. Mount Hope Cemetery, a 196-acre glaciated landscape with an esker and four glacial kettles, opened in 1838 as a municipal cemetery. An incredible cultural resource, Mount Hope has approximately 300,000 monuments and is the final resting place of Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglas, and other historic figures. In the 1970s, about two-thirds of the cemetery was added to the National Register of Historic Places based on the historic figures buried there and the impressive and rare Victorian architecture represented in the sculptures, tombs, and headstones.

However, maintaining memorial parks is a difficult and expensive task. To cover operation losses, the cemetery division of the city's department of parks, recreation, and human services in the past had received subsidies from the city's general fund, much like any other municipal parks operation. In 1982, however, due to constrained finances, the city established an enterprise fund with the intent of creating a self-sufficient operation requiring no subsidy from the city tax levy. But the cemetery was not able to generate enough revenue from plot sales to cover expenses, and the perpetual care funds for existing burials were not able to produce sufficient interest for continued upkeep. Mayor William Johnson wanted to reverse that trend.

In order to identify a solution to this problem, the city of Rochester, in cooperation with the Rochester Cemeteries Heritage Foundation, held a historic cemeteries conference, funded with a grant from The City Parks Forum. For three days, 62 participants discussed the specific issues facing historic cemeteries, toured Mount Hope, and brainstormed ideas to help Mount Hope as well as their own cemeteries.
The conference resulted in several fundraising and marketing ideas for Mount Hope to pursue; it also created the spark for the group to meet on an annual basis and continue their network of support.

Mount Hope also developed a brochure, "Your Adventure Begins Where History Never Ends," to market the cemetery on a regional and national level. With a strong emphasis on the historic interest of the park, and the serene park setting, the brochure has been designed to attract tourism on a broader scale than previous marketing efforts. It also provides people with contact information about genealogical research opportunities. Perhaps in the near future you will have an opportunity to have a picnic there and enjoy the tremendous beauty of Mount Hope Cemetery.

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September 21, 2000
Pioneer Park Revitalization: Salt Lake City, Utah

Since 1991, the Farmer’s Market in Salt Lake City’s Pioneer Park has offered city residents an opportunity to enjoy the Salt Lake Valley’s abundance. However, the market is also a symbol of the respite afforded to all since the first Mormon settlers arrived in 1847. From the early followers of Brigham Young to homeless residents today, Pioneer Park has refreshed and rejuvenated.

The people of Salt Lake City have strong feelings about Pioneer Park. Long after the growth of Salt Lake City had spread far beyond the original adobe fort built at the park's site for the earliest emigrants, passions about the significance of this 10-acre square in Utah's capital and largest city run deep. Some want to expand the Farmer's Market so that it covers the entire park on weekends, not just the north end. Some want more space allocated to independent artisans and craftsmen to share their creativity with consumers. Others pine over the wealth of archaeological treasures presumed buried beneath the grass and trees. Still others advocate the park as a continuing habitat for the many homeless in the city who have no place else to call their own.

Through all the voices that clamored to be heard, Mayor Rocky Anderson's pitch for Pioneer Park has risen above. He is a true believer in the park's power to draw people toward the site as it has done throughout Salt Lake City's history. With support from the American Planning Association's City Parks Forum, Mayor Anderson has championed the development of a grand park revitalization plan that would include a skating rink, water features for non-winter months, bocce courts, a dog run, basketball and volleyball courts, running paths, and numerous additional amenities. The City Parks Forum provided a catalyst grant to kick-start Mayor Anderson's vision of what the park could mean for his constituents, and the result was a collaborative planning process to generate a detailed improvement plan to reinstate Pioneer Park as a city gem.
While Mayor Anderson's dream has not yet come to fruition, a considerable amount of money has been gathered to begin implementation of the park's overhaul. The city council approved a $600,000 allocation despite overwhelming competing interests and a growing list of infrastructure improvements. Recently the city council provided an additional $400,000 in capital improvement funds for a total of $1 million to begin the new Pioneer Park. Funded improvements include perimeter pathways, which have proven successful in nearby Liberty Park, corner entry plazas, a dog park, bike racks, and infrastructure improvements. These steps, combined with increasing development interest along the Rio Grande Street corridor and in buildings near the Farmer's Market site, are encouraging a broader mix of patrons, from the homeless to artists to neighborhood residents walking their dogs.

Brigham Young planned a city from the security of the old fort at Pioneer Park nearly 160 years ago. He had dreams of a new community for his followers and their future generations. Mayor Anderson dreams of a future Salt Lake City himself, in which Pioneer Park once again becomes a nerve center for the Valley and its people. The American Planning Association is privileged to bridge nearly two centuries of planning innovation and community fortitude to benefit all Utahans and their progeny.

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November 8, 2001
International Park Design Charrette: Toledo, Ohio

Any history of urban America would involve a discussion of the importance that maritime transportation has had on the development of business and industry. Indeed, nearly every major city in the U.S. is located on a river or other navigable water body and grew as a result of the transport of goods and services. Today, these areas are being transformed from industrial sites to places for public access and enjoyment.

Toledo, Ohio, is no exception. With more than 200 acres of waterfront along both banks of the Maumee River, which feeds into Lake Erie, Toledo is a former shipbuilding city that is rediscovering its waterfront heritage. A major element of that effort was the creation of International Park, a 63-acre railroad yard site on the east side of the Maumee River, opposite downtown. This site was identified and acquired to be a public park; determining the best uses for the park was a little more complicated.

Existing structures on the site were converted to other uses — a maintenance facility building has become The Docks, a popular restaurant spot, and the city's department of parks, recreation and forestry occupies a smaller building there. The remainder of the site has had many "personalities," however. The city constructed a tournament-class outdoor volleyball facility, and funds from various donors have provided for a fountain located in the harbor, a gazebo, and other features. A riverwalk along the Maumee traverses through the park. Perhaps the best-known activity in the park is the International Festival of Lights, which occurs each December.

It became apparent that to revitalize its eastern riverfront area Toledo needed to develop a comprehensive vision and plan for International Park, one that connects the park to its surrounding neighborhood. With a grant from The City Parks Forum, Mayor Carlton Finkbeiner and his parks staff convened a one-day "Waterfront Strategies Forum" involving local interest groups, property owners, and potential developers to gather needed information for developing a strategic plan.
The data gathered at this charrette was then organized into various design and planning recommendations for International Park and presented in the form of a poster map depicting the findings of the process. Long-standing issues regarding site design and access were addressed, including a preferred pedestrian and vehicle circulation system.

The revitalization of International Park has grown even further than its immediate neighborhood; it has become part of a broader downtown redevelopment strategy, the Downtown Toledo Master Plan. This plan calls for the creation of a riverfront cultural entertainment district, of which International Park will be a key element. The planning effort in Toledo proves once again that waterfront revitalization continues to be a crucial element to the economic and social health of America's cities.

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Many metropolitan regions in the United States have grown beyond a single central city and adjacent suburbs to include multiple cities and far-flung communities across hundreds of square miles. It is difficult to build local identity in regions such as these, because the distribution and complexity of neighborhoods within the metropolitan area make it difficult for people to interact and share common interests. The Virginia Beach area of Virginia is no exception. Officially, the Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News Metropolitan Statistical Area has three core cities and an additional 13 independent cities and counties spread over two states. Numerous annexations, mergers, and consolidations resulted in the total disappearance of some communities and the birth of new communities, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, Virginia Beach and many other municipalities in the region do not offer a sense of history and place to residents and business owners that might otherwise be more prevalent in communities with greater contiguity.

Parks can often become the central gathering place for a community, to foster a stronger sense of commonality and self-identity. They are public spaces where everybody can congregate to pursue different interests and interact with one another. However, where communities are newly formed and rapidly growing, it may be difficult for parks to serve as community magnets without some help from civic leaders. Good marketing and site-specific design can facilitate the transformation of parks and other public gathering spaces into destinations that people recognize and embrace as their own.

The southeastern portion of the Virginia Beach metropolitan region was a prime candidate for a marketing and design intervention due to the newness of the communities, lack of identifiable community center, and extremely rapid growth. Both Chesapeake and Virginia Beach were created in the 1960s and have since grown into some of the largest cities in Virginia (220,000 and 440,000 respectively). Currituck County, North Carolina, bordering both cities to the south, is also growing explosively (more than doubling its population in the last 20 years) but lacks connectivity to the rest of North Carolina; Currituck has stronger ties to Chesapeake and Virginia Beach.
Collectively, the three communities have grown from less than 390,000 in 1980 to more than 680,000 in 2005. The State of Virginia and the City of Virginia Beach had been developing a 1,200-acre education and recreation campus called Princess Anne Commons to serve the new residents, but most people were unaware of the variety and locations of facilities the commons offered.

The American Planning Association and the City of Virginia Beach teamed up through the City Parks Forum to bring Princess Anne Commons into the spotlight, through both a new marketing brochure and a permanent gateway to identify the site. Under Mayor Meyera Oberndorf in September 2002, Virginia Beach successfully obtained a Catalyst Grant from APA to design a new marketing brochure for Princess Anne Commons and a new crossroads gateway for motorists entering the district. Information and maps direct potential patrons to the soccer complex, field hockey training center, picnic areas, baseball and softball diamonds, and the local YMCA recreational facility.

The goal of the Virginia Beach government and APA was to raise community awareness about the commons so that residents would begin to treat it as their recreational, entertainment, and cultural center. Out of a group of communities that had been artificially created under an onslaught of new arrivals to the region in the post-World War II decades, local officials wanted to carve a community niche where everyone would feel at home. Future plans for medical office facilities and more affordable housing would only further complete Princess Anne Commons as the nerve center for southeast metropolitan Virginia Beach.

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*Images: Top — Aerial view of the area. Source: City of Virginia Beach. Bottom — Rendering for project. Source: City of Virginia Beach.*

*July 18, 2002*