

Community Design Update Meeting Summary

March 10th, 2020 6 pm – 7:30 pm
Waterfront Elementary School



On March 10th, over 100 people from the community gathered at Waterfront Elementary School to see and comment on the updated design for Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park, as well as the proposed design for a new pedestrian bridge over I-190.

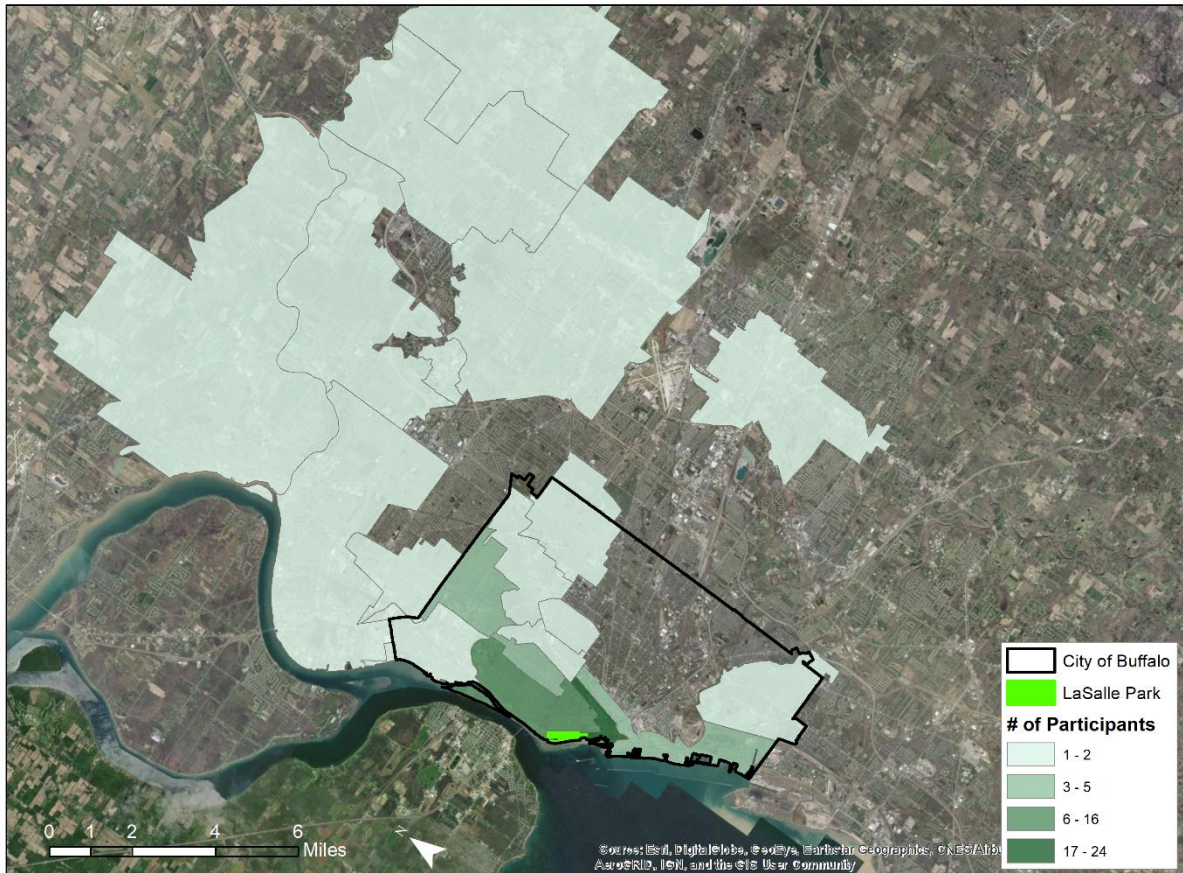
Attendees first heard from Bob Shibley, Dean of UB's School of Architecture and Planning, about the ongoing community engagement process that created a vision for the park that continues to inform design decisions. Andy Rabb, Deputy Commissioner for Parks and Recreation, gave a brief update on the projects that are currently underway for RCWJ Centennial Park or are planned for the near future. Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper presented information about shoreline resiliency and the importance of designing with nature to help encourage ecological vibrancy and stability along the park's shoreline. Schlaich Bergermann



Partner, a structural engineering firm based in Germany, presented their design for a new pedestrian crossing over I-190 that makes connections between the park and surrounding neighborhoods more accessible and comfortable. Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates also presented updates to the park's design that reflect both the community's ongoing input, and months of coordination with a large team of consultants examining technical feasibility of park features. Finally, Gardiner & Theobald, the firm selected as project manager for park construction, briefly overviewed the timeline of project progress for the next few years.

After the presentation, the audience was invited down to the stage to view the large-scale 3D model of the latest design for the park. All of the evening's presenters were available to speak with attendees to help answer questions and listen to feedback. Attendees were also given the option of leaving written feedback on a comment card. All of these comments (with some personal information redacted) have been transcribed on the following pages. A copy of the slideshow presentation is available to download at ImagineLaSalle.org.

What ZIP codes did meeting participants come from?



Comments Related to the Park Design Shown at the Meeting

The skatepark is great now it just could use lights, garbage cans, BBQ pit, maybe remove the rocks sticking out of the ramps that people cut themselves on. The skatepark is an amazing place and all I would like to see is improvements to make it a safer place.

Beautiful design.

Concerns/Needs/Wants: West Side Little League Football Organization has been part of LaSalle Park since 1963. The football area needs a building to be used for storage, bathrooms, concessions. We rent a storage unit all year round to accommodate our needs during our season.

I would like to have some lights put in at the skatepark. Some benches would be nice, a pavilion for shade and seating. A bar-b-que pit grill. A water fountain.

Very good flow with new layout. Skatepark could use new amenities such as benches, water fountain, lights, more shade (we lost our only source when tree died), year-round trash, BBQ pit/charcoal grill. it is a heavily used facility that has impacted youth all around Buffalo.

Think it looks amazing. Like that the park is going to be more lighted up and the bridge looks great. I believe the skate park is lacking lights. It's the most used part of LaSalle. Seats at the skatepark with shade. bathrooms and sources of water. BBQ pit.

Impressive - The Waterfront is great but needs some access other than rocks - "Stairs?" descending to the water - stepped & able to sit on

This meeting shows an extreme upgrade to the entire park, adding much needed improvements. The transportation issues have been addressed appropriately. My friends and I are excited to see the success of LaSalle continue to grow and impact the local community. However, as avid skateboarders, and advocates for the skate park specifically, we would greatly appreciate lights, water fountains, and a shaded area in the skateparks space as well. Thank you!

1. Design are gorgeous, great job so far.
2. What I do have a concern is the baseball field. We are going from 9 to 6, but only have 1 baseball diamond w/grass on the field.

Very impressed with the redesign of road and car accessibility. Very concerned the skatepark will not be expanded! Soccer, baseball, football, participants are accommodated to hundreds of people, yet current skatepark design only supports up to 20 people only MAX. Ralph C. Wilson Foundation teamed up with Tony Hawk

Foundation to build new skatepark in Lockport, could be good opportunity to bring more \$ and professional attention to LaSalle Skatepark.

Parking for boat access limited. Too many baseball fields. More picnic shelters. Put parking at the far end of the park at the condominiums.

The bus stop is not handicapped friendly. My wife cannot travel that distance with the uneven terrain. She can only walk about a block. There are many others with mobility issues that are poor and depend on public transit (think wheelchairs, MS, CP, walkers and even baby strollers). It would be better to have a bus follow the loop with a stop in the center of the park, and perhaps in front of the pool. Even better that people can flag the bus as they can do on main routes in the suburbs.

Love it - I say less ball diamonds. I say be aware of kids swimming and drowning. It happens every year on Niagara River. Also ice hardening and kids walking on and falling through.

Beautiful

Disappointed by the pullback of the lagoon but the semi-soft, curving shoreline is awesome. The area that was supposed to be the lagoon could maybe stand to be a little more interesting than just a lawn.

A work in progress - much improved - bathroom amenities? - usually not enough -

My wife and I have been observers since its inception and attended many presentations. We are both pleased with the progress and evolving design. We are especially pleased the Buffalo weather is directing the shoreline design. We live in Lakefront Commons adjacent to the park!

The more soft edges/shoreline the better. Try to extend soft edge northward to Col. Ward. Keep the lagoon and various inlets, great for kayaking and other small craft. Perfect ecological zones for wildlife, riparian habitats, etc. BURY THE UTILITY POLES!!! - What a way to waste the beautiful aesthetics if they remain.

Where is the dog park??

Other: We need to abate the sound of the I-190 especially the elevated portion.

I'm pleased with the updates. It is exciting to see the process being fine tuned. The bridge design is exciting and appealing. (Especially bringing the historical aspect of the pattern design). The park roadway is a much better plan than the current road.

I love the use of topography and sound barriers. Noise pollution in the park from the 190 is a big concern of mine. I think the flow of paths and traffic is nice - and all the trees. Overall, I really like the design.

Still not bathrooms and concession stand for the football field. All we need! Camp now in session every Sunday noon. Please come out and see us in action Aug. 1st

Very well done presented the many facets of such an enormous project. Waterkeepers info especially helpful.

Skatepark needs lights. Spots to sit so park isn't sat on. Something for shade, drinking foundations, and giant death rocks moved from edge of park.

The various park activities seem well integrated but still giving each their own identity. Liked the possible future relationships between the park and the lake. Looking forward to seeing the final details.

Things are moving along nicely.

Exciting. Very succinct explanation.

Love the layout. Need lights, water fountain, public bathrooms, 3 grills, and a pavilion for shade for the skatepark.

14ft bowl phase 3
Water fountain
Dog fountain by skatepark
Lights @ skatepark
Shade structure
Glow in the dark mosaic
Exposed aggregate walkway
More phases for SKATEPARK.
More dogs.

Why are there any cars allowed in the park? This is crazy!! NO CARS!!!
Also fewer trees to impede current residents views

Informative, shows a lot of work that has already gone into this process! Very exciting.

I would suggest moving the shelters which are shown as near the corner of Lakefront Commons cul de sac be moved closer to the middle of the park.

I like the design very much.

Impressive

Hold onto soft shoreline instead of concrete walls as much as possible. Don't reduce lagoon/inlet. Love that soft shoreline. Walking access is so important. Parking needs will change in future. Design for less parking. Shuttles?

Extensive sharing of information! The design is progressing along well thought out lines. Especially like the softened shoreline!

There is a gathering of very old, very large trees at the south end of the park. They are beautiful. Please retain them.

Ok/Nice/Incomplete -

I drove the park earlier this week - there are 2 dog parks and a lot of parking for cars. I don't have dogs - but these dog parks take a lot of room. Will they be in the new park or not?!!! Something to consider, they eat a lot of space.

Concerned about stability of shoreline even with improved elevation.

I love the focus on athletic fields. Would love to see the playground area expanded (The playground in the Outer Harbor attracts hundreds of children from WNY - and this could be the same if it is expanded. Also, I am not sure where all the cars are going to park?

It looks nice. I though earlier designs had sports fields on the 4th street side of the park. I also miss the lagoon/wetlands area from earlier designs. It sounded like a great resource for Blue Economy/Conservation students at Riverside High School (#208). Plantings???

[checkmark] skate

[checkmark] baseball

[checkmark] volley

[checkmark] splash

[no checkmark] parking

[no checkmark] topography

Looks like a pretty good design. Seems like a lot of baseball fields, volleyball courts with lights would be welcome. Make sure splash pad/water elements of playground is dynamic and more fun than just water squirting from ground.

Far fewer parking spots and vehicle road ways. Where there is vehicles make it as safe as possible.

Concerned about "inlet" - re:

- debris management

- continued use of existing ramp for 1. recreation, 2. training, 3. emergency response

- wave damage

I BEG you to please consider the 4 townhouses at the end of the cul-de-sac on Lakefront Blvd. As an owner, I have experienced vandalism due to the soccer fields & their guests. Please build up a burm to help w/noise and foot traffic/soccer balls. Additionally Please consider a real structured fence to keep the park from the homes. It is a safety/security issue that needs to be addressed. Feel free to contact me [REDACTED PERSONAL INFO]. It is unique to the 4 townhouses the issues we deal with. Thank you.

The entire park looks good, but the skatepark needs other amenities like lights, benches, year-round garbage cans, shade and water fountains. BBQ pits would be a big plus. The skatepark is a great place that is beloved by many groups of people.

How much parking is available on the 4th street side of the bridge?
I don't see the pedestrian and bike paths through the park. Please don't design only for playground and sports play.

I like the idea of new location for bus stop, promotes flow (more appealing). Would love "friendlier" fencing around Pumping Station, bushes?

Comments Related to the Bridge Design Shown at the Meeting

Great idea, will make the park easier to get to on a skateboard.
We love the new bridge, better lighting! My family has been part of this community for 30 years and LaSalle Park/Centennial Park is our future for generations to come. Thank you.
The skatepark is a vital part of the skateboard community. It has fostered many valuable relationships. Making it a more desirable place to hang out would be greatly appreciated.
Very intuitive design for a more than practical idea.
Think it's a great concept to make the park all at one.
Impressive - Aluminum??? * Bus stop on E. Side of 190 needs to be better designed/brought off road.
The pedestrian bridge is functional and symbolic of the great update to our beloved city. I believe it will bring more people into the public park, adding to Buffalo's beautiful waterfront atmosphere. An artfully prepared bridge in place of the current sub-par crosswalk will help enhance the experience for all types of park goers.
Very nice concept. Never in 100 years I thought I will see LaSalle Park so well designed.
Like design of bridge, how it will be partially covered but still let light in. Worried it will be too narrow. Will this demand too large of a budget? And limit design of rest of the park?
The variation in accessibility is great - I'm excited to see the final bridge design!
The distance between the bridge and LaSalle is so great, add another bridge between. Again, walking distances are too great for handicapped, elderly, infirm, general weak and of poor health.
Fantastic - the best ever.
Great
Beautiful, a simple playground should be included on 4th street.
What happens in winter? - What activities? Besides sledding??
The bridge concept is pleasing. Let's not "Break the Bank" on it!
What a great animal cage... Great crate! Stick to the land bridge, I know it's much more expensive, just find the money, the bridge can be done but while we acquire the funds...remember, there's always money.
Excellent! Other: The bike path between Erie St. and the Park is in poor condition. It needs to be redone - including removal of the Japanese Knotweed (GOATS!)
Excellent. As you add to the beauty of the architecture of our city by utilizing designs from the past but in a contemporary way. Is a great concept.
Love the design - simple, bright, artistic, but I think it should have designated pedestrian/bike lanes. If there are lanes leading into the bridge, they should be continuous across to avoid confusion.
Bridge is a great idea.

Love it - design is beautiful and access will be greatly improved.
Looks awesome
Liked the design relationship to Buffalo's architectural history. Found the design very unique.
Love the bridge design!!!
Bridge is spectacular. Could become an iconic symbol.
The bridge concept was pleasing
Presentation was very exciting forward thinking, and hope filled for this area.
Great if it can be properly maintained.
I thought it was very impressive.
Beautiful bridge design. Smart. Handsome. Can't wait to use it.
Positive, drastic improvement compared to existing structure.
Good
Lovely!
Love it
Bridge looks fabulous. Is it long enough to include [illegible] people people movers -small vehicle? Is there a restaurant/food service? Rest rooms?
The bridge design seems to match the local style well. I did, however, hope for more of a green bridge.
Love the look, the lighting, love how it's level with land, love the texture.
Excellent!
It's a little closed off with the pattern "cage".
Eliminate the 'pinch' point where the Niagara Street entrance to 190N collapses from four lanes to three lanes and expands to four line one quarter of a mile where the pedestrian bridge is being removed making room available to create a fourth lane dedicated to the Peace Bridge exit.
Love the design. Would like police surveillance cameras at each end, possibly at Porter and other southern entrances too. Call boxes.