



Executive Summary

This project is an example of what can happen when a community's leaders and citizens have the courage, vision and foresight to launch a plan that will benefit future generations. It is Northville Township's legacy of government and its citizenry working at their best to realize a single vision.

Based on the call for action, more than one thousand citizens spent a year participating in crafting the grand plan. The master plan that follows is a roadmap for a 30 to 50 year journey. The journey could be as modest as constructing trails for a walk in the woods or as complex as constructing recreational, educational and environmental facilities. The plan does not prescribe an exact process that must be followed in moving ahead; instead it provides placeholders for facilities when the desire and

resources become available. While the recreational needs of people have not fundamentally changed over the past 50 years, given the rate of recent technological and social change it is difficult to predict what may happen in the next 50 years. Setting aside the land and developing the master plan are the first steps in securing the Township's open space and recreational future.

BACKGROUND

In December of 2009, Northville Township sold bonds to purchase 332 acres of property formerly known as the State of Michigan Regional Psychiatric Hospital, for the purpose of preserving open space and creating future recreation amenities. The site currently contains a number of vacant structures, environmental contamination, an abandoned rail line, mature trees, rolling topography and access to the Rouge River.

During the winter 2010 semester, a group of graduate students from the University of Michigan's Urban and Regional Planning Program undertook this project for their studio project. The class gathered and reviewed data pertaining to the site, organized a

well-attended public workshop and developed a conceptual master plan based on public input.

In October of 2010, Northville Township invited professional design consultants to submit their qualifications to be considered for developing a comprehensive recreational master plan for the development of the former State Regional Psychiatric Hospital site.

After a competitive selection and interview process the Township selected Stantec Consulting Services of Ann Arbor, Michigan in association with G2 Consulting and AKT Peerless Environmental and Energy Services to prepare a recreational master plan for the site based on "Stantec's work on similar projects; particularly, (their) comprehensive approach to engaging the public." In addition, Stantec's ability to demonstrate a strong connection between site planning, engineering, development of accurate cost estimates and a track record of implementation were very important to the Township.

SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work called for a dynamic vision for the site to serve as a template for short and long term development and outlined the following tasks to be completed during the course of developing the project:

- Engage Township staff and officials to gain further understanding of the scope and objectives for the project.
- Review the data contained in the various environmental reports, the



language for the bond sale, the consent agreement pertaining to the adjacent commercial property, the University of Michigan's class project and public input received to date to gain a clear understanding of the conditions occurring on the site.

- Analyze existing site conditions to determine impacts for future development recommendations for phasing.
- Develop a creative and interactive process for engaging residents in the design process.
- Prepare 2-3 schematic design alternatives based on the analysis, public input and professional expertise.
- After a preferred alternative is selected, create a conceptual design plan which includes renderings and

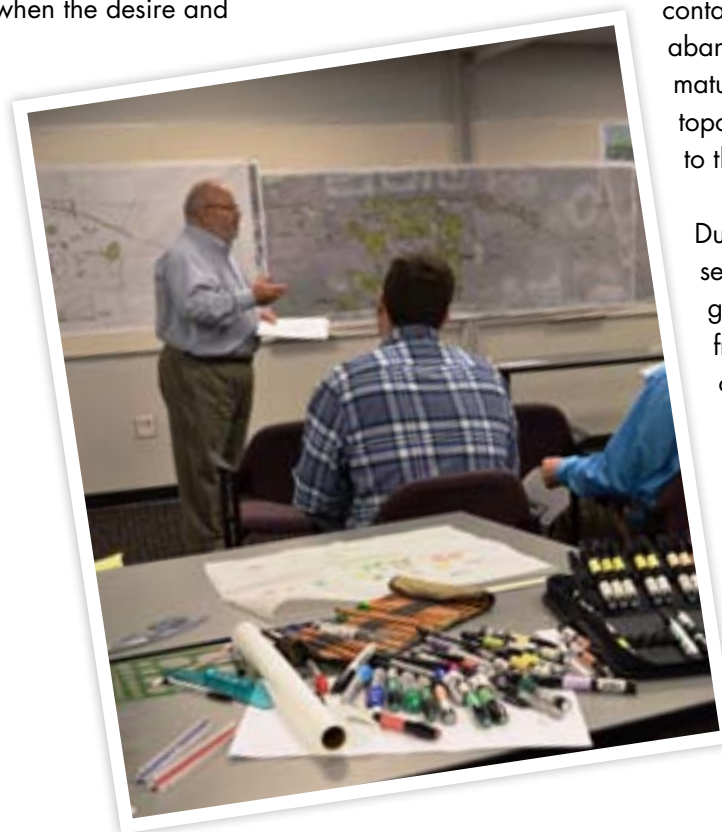
other details necessary to convey the design, identify phasing/priority recommendations and develop preliminary cost estimates for initial phases.

- Identify potential funding sources to implement portions of the plan.
- Evaluate and advance the use of sustainable planning, building, site and design practices.
- Present the conceptual plan to the public at a meeting hosted by the Township Board.

WORK PLAN

Stantec Consulting Services (SCS) embarked on a 12 month planning, design and public engagement process to develop a dynamic vision for the park. The multi-faceted approach included the following:

- Preparation of a mission, brand statement and logo to clearly identify the planning, design and public engagement effort in print, broadcast and social media.
- Organization of a project steering committee (Green Ribbon Committee) to review the work of SCS and interface with the Township staff and Trustees.
- Establishment of a project website, hosted on the Township's website.
- Consolidation of previously prepared studies, inventories and analysis.
- Joint meeting of the Township Board and the Green Ribbon Committee (GRC) to further discuss the goals and objectives of the planning, design and public engagement effort and review the preliminary site inventory and analysis findings.
- SCS working with Township staff developed a series of questionnaires to determine what the residents would like to see in the park.
- SCS working with Township staff hosted a two-day planning charrette to develop three schematic plans.
- After review and refinement by the GRC of the three schematic plans, a fourth was prepared to offer an alternate vision that incorporated revenue generating components.





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- The four schematic plans were presented to the Township Board and posted on the project website for review and comments for 30 days.
- Based on public input, the four plans were consolidated into a preferred plan accompanied by a phasing plan and cost estimates.
- Funding sources were identified to develop portions of the site in the short and long term.

THE MASTER PLAN

Based on site inventory and analysis findings and public input, the overall plan was divided into areas uniquely suited for development. Each of these areas had a set of environmental conditions that made them suitable for the specific program elements identified in the planning and design process, public meetings, questionnaires, visual preference surveys and staff input. The following describes each of the seven areas of the site.

Area "A" The Front Forty

This area of the site is parallel to 7 Mile Road and is essentially the gateway to the park. Adjacent to the road is a paved pathway with exercise stations that meanders through a mounded botanical garden. Portions of this area are also slated for wildflower and prairie grass demonstrations. The path would be suitable for walkers, runners and some cross country skiing in the winter. The entrance gateway would be a tree lined road that crosses a bridge flanked by two naturalistic ponds, suitable for ice skating when weather permits and

an aeration feature during the summer months. The entrance road will be on axis with a roundabout and an obelisk – monument. This iconic landmark feature will dominate the landscape and serve as a point of orientation. Behind the ponds is a sledding/tubing hill. The hill could possibly be constructed of inert building waste generated from the demolition of the buildings. Ideally the hill would have a rope tow and snow making equipment. In between the ice skating pond and the playground is a skate/tube rental shop with restrooms, a refreshment area and a fire place or wood stove.

Area "B" The Community Center

This is a combination of indoor and outdoor spaces and activities, including: indoor recreational and exercise pools, outdoor pool, a splash park and lazy river. The building includes: lockers, restrooms and multi-purpose rooms. Outdoor court sports include: two tennis courts and a basketball/multi-purpose court. Other activities include: a skate park, barbeque areas, walking, and running and hiking paths along and crossing a babbling brook. In front of the building is a drop-off area and associated parking. While trees will not have to be cleared to construct the community center, forest restoration is desired in adjacent woodlands and along the brook.

Area "C" The Hundred Acre Wood

Named for the Hundred Acre Wood in Winnie the Pooh, this wooded area is undisturbed and managed through a forest management plan. Proposed

uses include low impact hiking, walking and running trails on the existing and expanded trail network. Trails parallel the babbling brook with pedestrian bridge connections to other parts of the park. On the knoll is a rustic woodland shelter that could be used for informal picnicking, an outdoor classroom or simply a place to rest or get out of inclement weather. The trail network also extends to the waterfall, naturalistic pond and wetland area. Parking and access to the site is from Haggerty Road and will likely be one of the first areas of the park to be developed for recreational uses.

Area "D" The Great Lawn

The Great Lawn is expected to be one of the most heavily used areas of the park. This multi-purpose lawn is perfect for open recreational play, staging areas for events and races, band concerts or simply flying a kite. The Great Lawn is bounded by an alley of trees on one side and an existing wooded area on the other. The conservatory building flows into the Great Lawn and could possibly be a venue for outdoor dining or a beer garden in the summer months.

The Great Lawn could also be a venue for large pieces of commissioned environmental sculpture. For larger events, an area across the road from the Great Lawn is designated for grassed overflow parking. Walking, biking, cross-country skiing and running trails connect to the Great Lawn as well as to the rest of the park.

Area "E" Mountain Bike Park

This area's woodlands are in need of restoration due to some recent tree clearing and other impacts and the presence of non-native invasive species. Alternatively, this area would be suitable for a mountain bike course that could be developed in concert with the reforestation effort. There are some differences in terrain; however it would most likely be considered intermediate terrain with introduction of some challenging features. In addition to the mountain bike trails, the area should include a building containing restrooms, bike rentals, and storage for maintenance equipment as well as adequate parking. Some of the trails could be designated for multiple uses, particularly those that connect with adjacent neighborhoods.

Area "F" Energy Park

While a bit unconventional, this area could be one of the most exciting educational components of the park. The idea is not to generate a substantial amount of energy but to provide a platform for interpreting how we generate energy. The facility could include class rooms that are connected to a wind turbine, a solar field, and a geothermal system, as well as the existing oil and gas facility. Interpretive displays should be in and around the facility explaining how things work to give visitors a self-guided educational experience. Perhaps a monitoring station could be installed that would show visitors in real time how much power is being generated. Parking areas should be designed to accommodate school buses. Note the existing well is likely to be in operation for many years and access to the facility must be maintained at all times. Connecting walking, biking, cross-country skiing and running trails tie this feature to the rest of the park.

PHASING OF THE PLAN

Phasing of the development, to a large part, is dependent on remediating the site contamination which could take 5 to 10 years or possibly more. For purposes of phasing of the master plan, we have assumed that the central portion of the site where the buildings and site improvements are located could be segregated from the rest of the site and that lands to the east and west of the central portion could be gradually developed with some limitations.

COSTS AND FUNDING

As stated in the introduction, when dealing with such a long time frame for full implementation it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict final costs. Final cost will largely depend on what the community desires to do first and what sources of funds are available. Other factors include: volunteer labor, corporate, foundation and individual donations, and how aggressively and successfully the Township pursues various avenues of funding. Estimates of cost for park features have been included within this report mainly for purposes of planning and setting priorities.

FINAL THOUGHT

Frederick Law Olmsted, designer of Central Park in New York City, said:

"The Park throughout is a single work of art, and as such subject to the primary law of every work of art, namely, that it shall be framed upon a single, noble motive, to which the design of all of its parts, in some more or less subtle way shall be confluent and helpful."

It is our hope that this plan articulates your vision, embraces your enthusiasm, and gives you the tools necessary to bring your dream one step closer to reality.

Thank you.

The Stantec Design Team

