

Niagara River Greenway Commission Consultation and Review Form

Date of Submittal:

09-30-26

Project Registration Number (office use only):

Type of Review Required (please check one):

- ☒ **Mandatory Consultation for proposals seeking Greenway Funding**
☐ **Voluntary Review and/or Endorsement for proposals not seeking Greenway Funding**

PROJECT SPONSOR INFORMATION

Name:	City of Buffalo, Department of Parks
Mailing Address:	65 Niagara Square, City Hall Room 505
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14202
Federal ID#:	16-6002533
Charities Registration #:	

PROJECT TYPE (Please check only ONE)

- ☐ Trail Development / Improvement ☐ Interpretation / Cultural Monuments
☐ Ecosystem / Riparian Habitat Restoration ☐ Stewardship
☒ **Niagara River Greenway Placemaking / Public Access / Wayfinding**

FUNDING COMMITTEE

- ☐ Host Community Standing Committee ☐ Ecological Standing Committee
☒ **Buffalo and Erie County Standing Committee** ☐ State Parks Standing Committee
☐ Unsure at this time / N/A

TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED

\$ 350,000

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES

Source	Amount
Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority	\$ 250,000
City of Buffalo	\$ 50,000

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name:	Freedom Park - Playground
Location (include GPS coordinates if possible):	
Project Site Address:	3 Bird Island
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14213
Minor Civil Division(s):	
County:	Erie
Project Proponent Property Interest (own, lease, easement or other):	Own

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL

Name:	Stephen M. Buccilli
Title:	Interim Parks Commissioner
Business Address:	65 Niagara Square, City Hall Room 505
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14202
Work Number:	716-851-5853
Cell Number:	
E-Mail Address:	SBuccilli@buffalony.gov

PROJECT POINT OF CONTACT

Name:	Stephen M. Buccilli
Title:	Interim Parks Commissioner
Organization / Firm:	City of Buffalo - Department of Parks
Business Address:	65 Niagara Square, City Hall Room 505
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14202
Work Number:	716-851-5853
Cell Number:	
E-Mail Address:	SBuccilli@buffalony.gov

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Please attach material which responds to the following six items in the order that they are presented.

1. In a brief paragraph, describe the project and its purpose, how and when it will be accomplished, and why it is important.
2. Referring to the Niagara River Greenway Plan, clearly document and describe how the proposed project will advance the Niagara River Greenway vision including the goals, principles, and criteria that define that vision.
3. Define the budget for the total proposed project and include costs for the following:

Planning	\$ 23,625.44
Construction	\$ 594,374.56
Acquisition	\$ 0
Administration	\$ 32,000
Operation and Maintenance / Year	\$ Included in Parks O/M budget
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$ 650,000

Identify all sources of funding and the amount of funding expected from each source. Identify and quantify funds that are already on hand or have been allocated for the proposed project. Explain how the project will be operated and maintained.

4. Describe the measures taken at the local level to gain community and government support for this project (hearings, petitions, public surveys, resolutions of support or other methods). If this project has been cited or described in a local planning document or some equivalent thereof, attach copies of that documentation highlighting the sections that are relevant to the proposed project. Describe the role of municipal agencies, stakeholder groups, consultants, volunteers or others who will be involved in the proposed project.
5. Describe and document the environmental setting and existing conditions at the proposed project site. If you are not the owner of the property include a letter(s) or resolution(s) evidencing support for the project by the owner. Provide photographs, conceptual plans and drawings that show the site as it presently exists and how the site will change with the addition of the proposed project. Describe how your project will comply with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The existence of wetlands, significant upland and aquatic habitats, and plant or animal species that are classified as rare, threatened, or endangered should be noted. Explain how such natural resources will be protected and/or enhanced. Cite any relevant project-related studies.
6. Please attach the proposed project timeline, identify any relevant milestones, and provide an estimated date for project completion/opening. If funded, it is expected that the project sponsor or point of contact will notify the Commission of the project opening date as it nears completion. *(Note: This addition to the application was made September 2018.)*

PROJECT NARRATIVE

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

The proposed project will construct a new playground and activity area in the southern portion of Freedom Park. The improvement will provide a dedicated space for children and families to play, recreate, and gather while complementing the park's existing recreational uses, including fishing and community events held throughout the year.

The purpose of the project is to expand recreational opportunities at Freedom Park and enhance the park's ability to serve residents and visitors of all ages. The new playground and activity area will transform currently underutilized open space into an engaging community asset and provide opportunities for active play, social interaction, and family-oriented recreation. The project will build upon the park's existing functions while addressing the current lack of playground facilities.

The proposed improvements will be developed in coordination with the overall park plan and phased as funding becomes available. The project will strengthen Freedom Park as a welcoming community gathering place and provide a valuable recreational amenity for the surrounding neighborhood.

2. CONSISTENCY WITH NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY PLAN

Freedom Park lies completely within the Niagara River Greenway which follows the entire western edge of the City of Buffalo along the water. Both the Shoreline Trail and Empire State Trail also pass directly through the park.

3. BUDGET

The preliminary budget for the full park plan, based on initial layouts prepared by the playground manufacturer, is estimated at \$650,000. The project will be phased as funding becomes available.

Current funding includes:

- **Peace Bridge Authority:** \$250,000 awarded
- **City of Buffalo:** \$50,000 committed

The City of Buffalo is requesting an additional **\$350,000** to support implementation of the overall park plan and proposed improvements.

Any anticipated increase in ongoing maintenance associated with the improvements will be incorporated into the Department of Parks' annual operating budget.

3. TIME LINE

Development of the playground equipment and layout is pending receipt of full project funding, with design anticipated to be completed in early 2027. The Department of Parks anticipates construction procurement in April 2027, followed by shop drawings and fabrication of the playground equipment in June 2027. Installation of the playground equipment is anticipated for July–August 2027, with substantial project completion targeted for September 2027.

4. COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The Friends of Freedom Park demonstrate strong community support for the continued use, improvement, and programming of Freedom Park. As a community-based organization, the Friends of Freedom Park actively support the park’s role as an accessible gathering place for residents, families, and visitors. Their efforts help promote recreational opportunities, community events, neighborhood engagement, and the continued stewardship of the park.

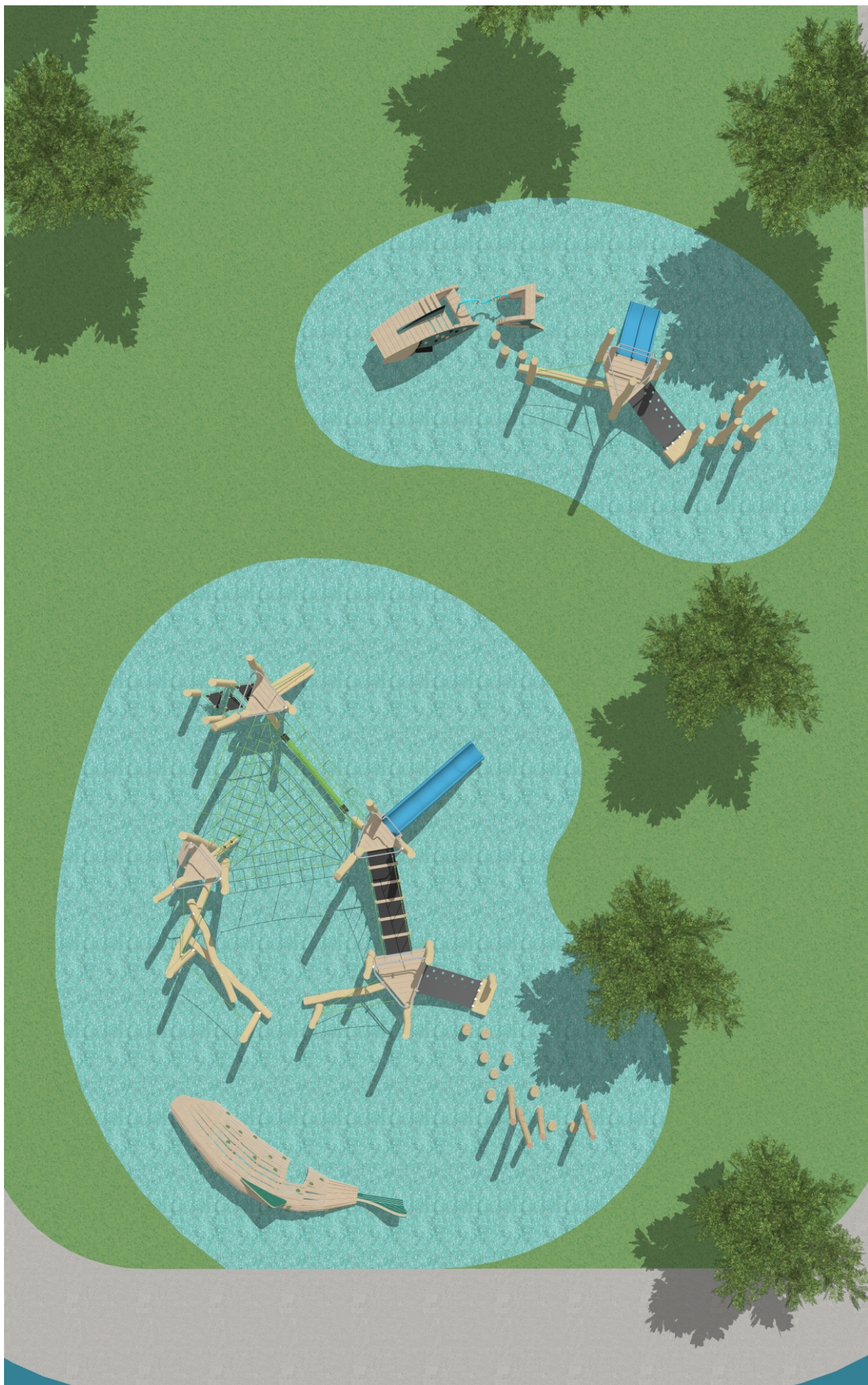
The Friends of Freedom Park recognize the importance of maintaining and enhancing the park’s facilities to meet the evolving needs of the community. Through advocacy, volunteer support, community outreach, and participation in park activities, the organization helps encourage positive and active use of the park. Their involvement reflects a sustained commitment to preserving Freedom Park as a welcoming public space that supports recreation, social connection, community events, and quality of life.

5. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Freedom Park is an actively utilized community park that provides open space and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors throughout the year. The park is used for fishing and hosts various community events and activities throughout the year, contributing to its role as an important gathering place for the surrounding community. However, the park does not currently have playground equipment, limiting opportunities for children and families to engage in structured play. The proposed playground improvements would enhance the park’s existing recreational functions and provide a dedicated, accessible play area to better serve children and families in the surrounding community.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Rendering and layout drawing
- B. SEQR
- C. Detailed Budget







DEPARTMENT OF PARKS

Stephen M. Buccilli, P.E.
INTERIM COMMISSIONER

SEQRA Type II Action Checklist

By the fulfillment of this checklist, it can be determined that the action at 3 Bird Island (Freedom Park) is identified as a Type II SEQRA action per 6NYCRR Part 617.5 (checklist updated as of 8/31/2018) and the action is not subject to review under SEQRA. These actions have been determined to not have a significant impact on the environment

The following actions are not subject to review under this part:

1. ☐ Maintenance or repair involving no substantial changes in an existing structure or facility (617.5(c)(1)).
2. ☐ Replacement, rehabilitation or reconstruction of a structure or facility, in kind, on the same site, including upgrading buildings to meet building or fire codes, unless such action meets or exceeds any of the thresholds in section 617.4 of this Part (617.5(c)(2)).
3. ☐ Retrofit of an existing structure and its appurtenant areas to incorporate green infrastructure (617.5(c)(3)).
4. ☐ Street openings and right-of-way openings for the purpose of repair or maintenance of existing utility facilities (617.5(c)(6)).
5. ☐ Repaving of existing highways not involving the addition of new travel lanes (617.5(c)(5)).
6. ☐ Maintenance of existing landscaping or natural growth (617.5 (c)(8)).
7. ☒ Construction or expansion of a primary or accessory/appurtenant, non-residential structure or facility involving less than 4,000 square feet of gross floor area and not involving a change in zoning or a use variance and consistent with local land use controls, but not radio communication or microwave transmission facilities (617.5(c)(9)).
8. ☐ Reuse of a residential or commercial structure, or of a structure containing mixed residential and commercial uses, where the residential or commercial use is a permitted use under the applicable zoning law or ordinance, including permitted by special use permit, and the action does not meet or exceeds any of the thresholds in section 617.4 (617.5(c)(18)).
9. ☐ Installation of traffic control devices to existing streets, roads and highways (617.5(c)(22)).
10. ☐ Information collection including basic data collection and research, water quality and pollution studies, traffic counts, engineering studies, surveys, subsurface investigations and soils studies that do not commit the agency to undertake, fund or approve any Type I or Unlisted action (617.5 (c)(24)).
11. ☐ Official acts of a ministerial nature involving no exercise of discretion, including building permits and historic preservation permits where issuance is predicated solely on the applicant's compliance or noncompliance with the relevant local building or preservation code(s) (617.5(c)(25)).
12. ☐ Conducting concurrent environmental, engineering, economic, feasibility and other studies and preliminary planning and budgetary processes necessary to the formulation of a proposal for action, provided those activities do not commit the agency to commence, engage in or approve such action (617.5(c)(27)).
13. ☐ Purchase or sale of furnishings, equipment or supplies, including surplus government property, other than the following: land, radioactive material, pesticides, herbicides, or other hazardous materials (617.5(c)(31)).
14. ☐ Designation of local landmarks or their inclusion within historic districts (617.5(c)(38)).
15. ☐ An agency's acquisition and dedication of 25 acres or less of land for parkland, or dedication of land for parkland that was previously, or acquisition of a conservation easement (617.5(c)(39)).

Project Description: Construction of playground within Freedom Park.

I hereby certify that all information is true to the best of my knowledge.

Stephen M. Buccilli
Name


Signature

09-29-2026
Date

Freedom Park Estimate \$650,000.00

\$	594,374.56	Construction
\$	23,625.44	A/E Design
\$	32,000.00	A/E Construction

Playground Prep & Landing

\$ 149,841.67

	Length	20	FT		
	Width	30	FT		
420.501130108	Poured-in-place	LS	1	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 120,000.00
304.12	Type 2 Subbase	CY	50	\$ 115.00	\$ 5,750.00
203.02	Unclassified Excavation and Disposal	CY	125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 15,625.00
207.21	Geotextile Separation Fabric	SY	66.67	\$ 10.00	\$ 666.67
605.1501	6" Dia Perforated Corrugated PE	LF	150.00	\$ 52.00	\$ 7,800.00

Earthscape Playground

\$ 419,800.00

	Log tower - Plastic Slide	EA	1	\$ 230,000.00	\$ 230,000.00
	Fish - Large	EA	1	\$ 64,000.00	\$ 64,000.00
	Jr. Critter - Fish	EA	1	\$ 29,000.00	\$ 29,000.00
	Log Stepper	EA	1	\$ 4,800.00	\$ 4,800.00
	Wobble Board - Round - Small	EA	1	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 22,000.00
	Moku Yama 4.1	EA	1	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00

Landscape Plantings

\$ 24,732.89

610.1403	Mulch for Planting Beds	CY	24.00	\$ 81.00	\$ 1,944.00
610.1404	Topsoil Special Planting Mix	CY	174.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 17,400.00
610.1602	Turf Establishment	SY	222.22	\$ 4.00	\$ 888.89
611.0171	Planting Major Deciduous Trees - 3" Caliper - Ball & Burlap	EA	6.00	\$ 750.00	\$ 4,500.00