

**NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY COMMISSION
CONSULTATION AND REVIEW APPLICATION**



CITY OF BUFFALO APPLICATION

**Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park
Buffalo, New York**

August 21, 2019

PROJECT NARRATIVE

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

Over the past year and a half 22 focus group members, 1,164 community participants and a team of local youth and technical stakeholders came together with the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA), University at Buffalo Regional Institute, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Buffalo Urban Development Corporation and the City of Buffalo to determine how Buffalo sees the future of LaSalle Park.

A conceptual plan was unveiled by MVVA in May of 2019 (See Attachment A).

Schematic design continues through this fall in collaboration with major partners such as the Buffalo Water Authority, Buffalo Sewer Authority, United States Army Corps of Engineers and Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, including local, State and Federal agencies with the focus on developing a world class public destination that serves the many cultural, athletic and recreational needs of Buffalo with increased water access and improved shoreline, edge habitat and overall landscape quality.

2. CONSISTENCY WITH NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY PLAN

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial 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.

The intent of this consultation and review is for the entirety of the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park conceptual design to be deemed as consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Commission.

3. BUDGET

Budget and phasing is currently being developed as part of schematic design work; however the following are pledged contributors:

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation - \$40mil construction/\$10mil for sustainability
Army Corps - \$4mil for LaSalle Seawall Rehabilitation
Tony Hawk Foundation/City of Buffalo - \$500,000 to complete skate park final phase
Waterkeeper/NYS ESD – Buffalo Blueway Site/\$TBD

Various other sources of funds/grants are currently being applied for in coordination with schematic design partners.

4. COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

University at Buffalo Regional Institute has developed a community engagement process that has been unparalleled for parks design and planning in Buffalo. The local, regional and elected representative community has been involved every step of the way through conceptual design and continues through schematic and design development.

For more information on engagement process and how to participate please visit Imagine LaSalle website: <http://regional-institute.buffalo.edu/project/imagine-lasalle/>

5. EXISTING CONDITIONS

LaSalle Park is approximately 91 acres and includes the city's busiest pool (Centennial Pool), its only dog park (The Barkyard) and its first skate park. LaSalle is also home to West Side Little League baseball, soccer and football, as well as various adult softball and kickball leagues.

In addition there are several major cultural events that take place annually such as the Hispanic American Festival, Funk Fest, World Refugee Day and the Buffalo Marathon. Complimented by people that just come out to look at the water, fish, jog, or take a walk around the park.

There is one concession/bathroom facility and seven picnic shelters rented continuously through the summer weekends. Access to the interior of the park is provided by a loop road that runs along the water and returns to Porter Ave along the back side of the park.

The park is flat and open having been built on landfill surrounding the Col. Ward Pumping station, which is the source of the city's water.

Each of these factors and concerns of current park user groups were discussed in detail through the Imagine LaSalle vision effort and continue as a part of design development

For more information please visit:

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/62141508/imaginelasallebriefingbook-final-singles>

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ATTACHMENT

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park Design Vision