

Whittier Peninsula
Proposed
Metro Park Plan



OH
307.3
W625w



- MAINTENANCE FACILITY
- PARKING AREA
- PROMENADE
- WETLAND BRIDGE
- WATER TOWER MAY REMAIN
- PARKING AREA
- PLAY AREA
- RESTROOM
- SHELTER
- BRIDGE AND NATURE TRAIL
- PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION
- RANGER STATION
- WETLAND
- PROGRAM AREA
- AUDUBON CENTER
- WILDLIFE OBSERVATION AREA

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CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN
FEBRUARY, 2004

METRO PARKS - COLUMBUS RECREATION AND PARKS - AUDUBON

PROPOSED METRO PARK - WHITTIER PENINSULA



SCALE: 1" = 500'

Whittier Peninsula Advisory Committee

PARK PROGRAM

MISSION

Audubon, Metro Parks, and Columbus Recreation and Parks seek to provide a natural area park on the Whittier Peninsula. The focus of this partnership will be environmental education, passive outdoor recreation, and the expansion of a quiet natural space near downtown.

VISION

Restoration efforts will transform the warehouses, impound lots, and old manufacturing sites back to woods, meadows, and wetlands. The river will continue to be the dominant feature of the site, serving as the backbone for the new parklands. The proposed Audubon Center will be located to take advantage of the site's existing wealth of avian life and will eventually be surrounded by the restored habitat areas and developed park areas.

A balance will be sought between areas for people and areas for wildlife. Environmental education will occur at the Audubon Center and throughout the site in programs, self-guided walks, and even in children's play areas integrated with the natural surroundings. The park's greatest teaching tool will be simply encouraging visitors to slow down and experience their environment.

The park and Audubon Center will serve the surrounding urban neighborhood, the proposed development on the Peninsula, and the greater Central Ohio area. The park will be connected to the city and adjacent neighborhoods by a variety of paths and roadways. The Metro Park on the Whittier Peninsula will be an integral component of the Downtown Riverfront, helping to fulfill a portion of the Riverfront Vision.

PARK PROGRAM

Components of the Natural Area:

- A. Scioto River / Riparian Corridor
 - 1. The park will focus on the river and riparian corridor, historically the best feature of the site.
 - 2. The riparian corridor shall be preserved and enhanced, with limited areas resculpted to offer views of the river without sacrificing the remote feel currently attained near the water. Note: the levy in its present condition is assumed to fall short of Army Corps technical requirements for flood control.
 - 3. The park will attempt to balance the amount of floodplain lost to development on the peninsula and will allow the majority of the park to flood.

- B. Wetlands
 - 1. Size: goal of 12 acres (14% of the site), pending results of further site investigation.
 - 2. River water will flow through the constructed wetlands, conceptually pumped in from the north and flowing through a series of cells to an outflow on the south.

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3. The wetlands will be a dynamic system integrated with the river, with water levels that may fluctuate.
 4. The wetlands will filter impurities from the water.
 5. Hands-on educational activities will occur in the wetland rather than the river to take advantage of improved water quality and opportunities to study natural processes.
 6. The plan will provide areas of open water that are aesthetically pleasing and consider views from the new development into the site as part of the wetland design.
- C. Forest
1. Size: goal of 15 acres (19% of the site)
 2. Riparian edge forest: efforts will be made to eradicate invasive non-native species and supplemental plantings will be added as appropriate.
 3. Floodplain and upland forest: blocks within the site will be planted with native trees.
- D. Meadows / Successional Fields / Edges
1. Size: goal of 8 to 10 acres (10 to 12% of the site)
 2. Meadows, edges, and successional fields will be retained to provide optimal habitat.
- E. 'Preserve' areas – maintain areas that are not open to the public on a daily basis where appropriate.
- F. Lawn areas / Public Use Areas
1. Size: approximately 25 acres (incl. Audubon site) – 31% of the site.
 2. Picnic areas, the Audubon Center exterior, and play areas will feature native plantings.
- G. General habitat improvements will occur throughout the park may include an osprey nesting platform, bluebird boxes, etc.

Components of the Public Use Areas (Visitor Services and Facilities)

- A. Audubon Center
1. A five-acre site will be shown on the conceptual master plan.
 2. Audubon will be determining specifics for the facility that may influence the final site selection.
 3. The building will facilitate nature education and will likely adjoin outdoor 'classrooms'.
 4. The facility should be easy to find.
 5. The Advisory Board wishes to minimize the building and parking footprint.
 6. Audubon desires a location in proximity to a variety of habitats.

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- B. Program Areas / Environmental Education
 - 1. Provide spaces for group education in various configurations.
 - 2. Provide self-guided interpretive signage throughout the park.
 - 3. Provide a small natural amphitheater program space.
 - 4. Create mini-habitats for educational purposes.
 - 5. Provide informal gathering areas and rest areas.

- C. Circulation
 - 1. Trails
 - a) Link to downtown riverfront venues and the overall Greenway system.
 - b) Provide a strong relationship with new Whittier development.
 - c) Provide access for emergency and patrol vehicles.
 - d) Create a hierarchy of types and uses.
 - i) Main promenade – 20 feet wide or two parallel paths to divide uses. Design to accommodate walkers, runners, bicycles, rollerbladers, strollers, and pets on leash.
 - ii) Greenway trail and linkages
 - (1) Multi-use trails will be 12' wide asphalt trails.
 - (2) Maintain the existing greenway connections, with the potential for a new or alternate route through the site.
 - (3) Provide bike racks, rest areas, and water.
 - (4) Consider a bridge to Dodge Park, potentially in conjunction with ODOT's 70/71 redesign.
 - (5) Pets on 6' leash permitted.
 - iii) Nature trails –
 - (1) 8' wide crushed gravel or grass trails.
 - (2) No pets or bicycles.
 - (3) Potential for cross-country ski use.
 - iv) Boardwalks and overlook decks in areas near the river or wetland
 - 2. Vehicular Circulation
 - a) Strive for a single gated point of entry for vehicles.
 - b) Accommodate city buses / provide bus stop(s).
 - c) Plan park roadway(s) to work with the Peninsula's overall existing and proposed circulation.
 - d) Design roadways to discourage repetitive 'cruising', yet consider park users who may never leave their vehicles.
 - 3. Parking
 - a) 150 spaces maximum; final quantity as agreed upon by MP and Audubon. Position to serve the park and the Center.
 - i) Configure as smaller 'pods' plus an area for overflow parking.
 - ii) Minimize the use of impervious surfaces
 - b) Provide bicycle parking.
 - c) Provide on-street parking along development edge.

- D. Site Lighting will be provided in the main public use areas. Minimize overspill into natural areas.

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- E. Water Access
1. Improve safety and restrict access adjacent to Greenlawn Dam.
 2. Retain historic use of the site for fishing; curtail trailblazing activities by providing decks.
 3. Keep parts of site quiet and remote. Preserve the right to limit access from the water.
 4. Improve/relocate the existing boat ramp. Review amount of trailer parking.
 5. Provide canoe/kayak access with an educational 'water trail'.
 6. Consider a paddleboat concession.
- F. Additional Facilities and Support Structures
1. Restrooms: Provide restrooms at the Audubon Center and at least one other location.
 2. Play Areas: Create unique play area(s) with designs that complement the environmental education mission.
 3. Provide open lawn areas for non-organized sports, kite flying, picnicking, etc.
 4. Provide winter sports as appropriate.
 5. Provide overlook decks/viewing blinds for wildlife observation and bird watching.
 6. Picnic Areas:
 - a) Provide sunny and shady areas. Relate to residential areas.
 - b) Provide one main reservable shelter (50 person suggested) plus several small family shelters. Cluster with restroom, play area, and parking.
 7. Link park to other active recreational facilities rather than trying to duplicate.
 8. Include a ranger station, located to reinforce official presence.
 9. The park will require a maintenance area. Consider locating near the existing elec. substation or sewer facility.
- G. Public Art – Provide interactive, site-specific installation(s) that interpret natural features of the site and potentially the utilities as well.

Operational Considerations

- A. Visitor Security / Park Operations Concerns
1. Provide open views within main use area so park visitors can see and be seen.
 2. Provide signage and logical use relationships; encourage good decision making by visitors.
 3. Consider a visible staff presence 24/7. Coordinate efforts between partners.
 4. Consider bike patrol.
 5. Fence park as a last resort BUT consider fencing as interim solution to security issues as park is being phased in and is adjacent to undeveloped land
 6. Park hours – seek a balance with desired uses

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- B. Policy Recommendations
 - 1. Alcohol – follow current Metro Parks policy (special permit only) – intention is no alcohol in the park with the exception of the Audubon Center
 - 2. Special Events – The Park Advisory Board supports holding special events compatible with the mission of the park.

- C. Environmental issues
 - 1. Remediate site contamination issues.
 - 2. Existing sewer facility
 - a) Explore ways to mitigate the odor issue
 - b) Advocate expanding sewer facilities on a site outside the Whittier peninsula.
 - c) Advocate and implement various methods to treat stormwater and mitigate combined overflow events.
 - 3. Implement clean-up plan for litter along the riverbank after rainfall events.

- D. City infrastructure
 - 1. Coordinate access to adequate water and sewer service for the park.
 - 2. Remove a portion of Whittier Street once proposed new roads are in place.

- E. Views: Develop the park with sensitivity to views to, from and within the site including the river, freeways, downtown skyline, and electric substation, etc. Screen undesirable views from the park but allow glimpses into the park as possible.