



### ***Overview of the Master Plan***

The Richardson Center Corporation (RCC) is a not-for-profit corporation whose mission is the rehabilitation of the National Historic Landmark Richardson Olmsted Complex, the former Buffalo State Asylum for the Insane. The 1870 historic campus is comprised of the H. H. Richardson-designed buildings and Frederick Law Olmsted-designed grounds. Taking place throughout 2008 and concluding with the final report early in 2009, the Master Plan will assess the Richardson Olmsted buildings and site, adjacent neighborhoods and, with a public process, create a plan for long term development of the historic buildings and grounds. The Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) process will run concurrently and the final document will be the Master Plan and GEIS.



## **Scope of Work**

There are seven major phases in the scope of work for the Master Plan.

1. Site Visit, Data Gathering, Review, Analysis and Critique.
2. Assessment of Current Economic Activities, Environmental Status, and Historic Standing.
3. Creation of a Market Development Plan.
4. Development and Assessment of Alternative Development Strategies.
5. Development of Environmental Impact Statement/SEQR Findings.
6. Advance Preferred Redevelopment Alternative.
7. Produce Final Redevelopment and Implementation Plan.

## **Team**

Chan Krieger Sieniewicz was selected as the Master Planning firm for the Richardson Olmsted Complex. Based in Cambridge MA, Chan Krieger Sieniewicz combines planning and urban design work with experience as architects, which results in a keen understanding of the technical aspects required for successful implementation of planning ideas. Other members of the Master Planning team are the University at Buffalo Urban Design Project (community outreach), Parsons Brinckerhoff (GEIS and permitting), Clarion Associates (economic modeling), City Properties (real estate development), Reed Hilderbrand Associates (landscape architecture), Bero Architecture (historic preservation) and Baer & Associates (cost estimating).

## **Community Advisory Group**

The Community Advisory Group is one component of the public outreach process facilitated by Bob Shibley of the Urban Design Project as part of the Richardson Center Corporation Master Planning efforts. Public participation should serve to inform the related communities, special interest groups, and various other stakeholders about the project and serve as a means for those communities to participate in the formulation of all aspects of the plans for the Richardson Olmsted Complex. The goal is to ensure broad community engagement in the Master Plan process as well as to ensure potential partner understanding, support, and commitment to the proposed project. The purpose of the Community Advisory Group is to:

1. Advise the Richardson Center Corporation regarding community values related to the Richardson Olmsted Complex Master Plan.
2. Facilitate the process of broad public engagement throughout the planning process. This includes convening public meetings as well as routine Community Advisory Group meetings.
3. Review the Master Plan products as they are produced, with public comments.

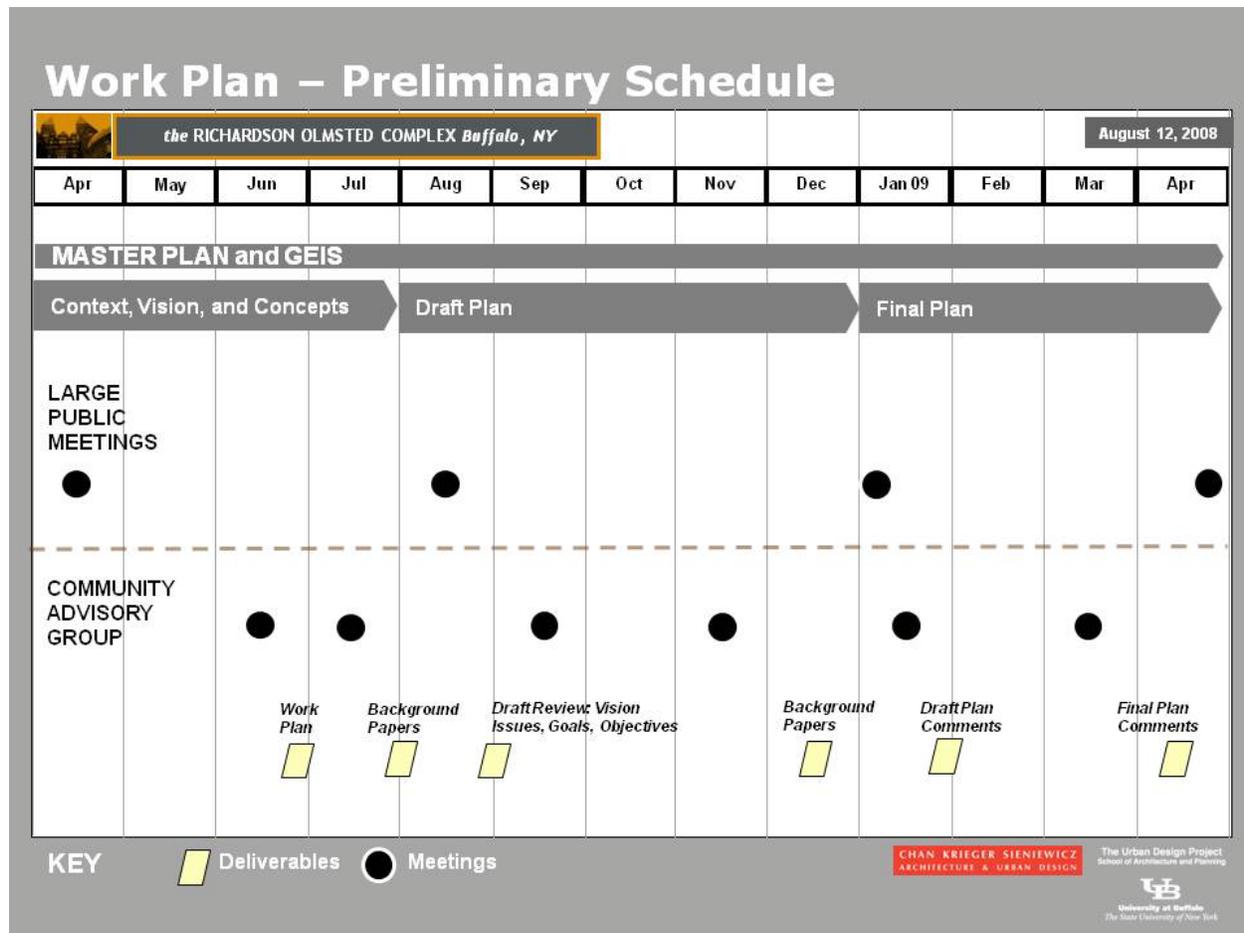
Work products of the Community Advisory Group will include review and feedback on the Master Plan products, a full work plan, background papers for the large public meetings, and three reports to the RCC (1 - Vision, Issues, Goals, and Objectives. 2 - Draft Plan Comments. 3 - Final Plan Comments).

The composition of the Community Advisory Group includes a variety of representatives of the surrounding community, physically adjacent organizations, and technical experts. The Community Advisory Group is co-chaired by Gregory M. Patterson-Tanski from the 4 The

Neighbors Block Club and Max Willig from the Grant-Amherst Business Association. The full list of representatives is in the table below:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Title</b>
Thomas Herrera-Mishler	Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy	Chief Executive Officer
Anne Harding Joyce (representative in place of Thomas Herrera-Mishler)	Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy	Board of Trustees
Louis Grachos	Albright-Knox Art Gallery	Director
Elaine Pyne (representative in place of Louis Grachos)	Albright-Knox Art Gallery	Director of Advancement
Dr. Cynthia Conides	Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society	Executive Director
Dr. Muriel A. Howard	Buffalo State College	President
Benjamin Christy (representative in place of Dr. Muriel A. Howard)	Buffalo State College	Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities
Ted Pietrzak	Burchfield-Penney Art Center	Director
Dr. Barbara Seals Nevergold	Buffalo Psychiatric Center	President of Board of Visitors
Michael McLean	Buffalo Psychiatric Center	Recipient Representative
Justin Azzarella	Elmwood Village Association	Executive Director
Max Willig	Grant-Amherst Business Association	Vice President
Bob Franke	Grant-Ferry Association	Executive Director
Dr. Stan Bratton	Network of Religious Communities	Executive Director
Gregory M. Patterson-Tanski	4 The Neighbors Block Club	Co-Chair
Harvey Garrett	West Side Community Collaborative	Executive Director
Ray Clark	Penhurst Block Club	President
Richard Mack	Black Rock Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance	Co-Chair
Heather Gring	Buffalo State College	Student
Francis Kowsky (Catherine Schweitzer Designee)	Landmark Society of the Niagara Frontier and Preservation Coalition of Erie County	Trustee Emeritus
Tim Tielman	Campaign for Greater Buffalo	Executive Director
Drew Eszak	Office of Strategic Planning	Interim Director of Planning

The Community Advisory Group has met twice already – once on June 16, 2008 and once on July 21, 2008. A preliminary work plan schedule for the Master Plan and the Community Advisory Group is shown below:



At the first two Community Advisory Group meetings, the group was asked “What will make the Master Plan a success?” Answers to the question are documented in this report. These answers are from individual representatives of the group, and do not reflect a consensus of the entire group. The group’s answers have been divided into four main categories of community issues that need to be addressed in order to make the plan successful:

1. It improves physical surrounding communities.
  - Become the foundation for neighborhood revitalization.
  - Create strong, safe, and pedestrian friendly connections to surrounding bike paths, neighborhoods, commercial areas, Delaware Park, and Buffalo State College.
  - Extend the vitality of Elmwood Avenue beyond the Scajaquada Expressway.
  - Complement and support existing community uses.
  - Be practical and ideological.
2. It benefits diverse neighborhood residents.
  - Increase the quality of life of its neighbors.
  - Fully represent all surrounding community types.

- Fairly represent community wishes and needs.
  - Create sustainable, long-lasting community partners.
  - Gain acceptance from all stakeholders.
  - Lift the spirit and morale of the surrounding community.
3. It rehabilitates the historic campus.
    - Articulate a historic ‘period of significance’ to rehabilitate the complex to.
    - Fully reuse the historic complex buildings.
    - Rehabilitate or interpret the Olmsted-designed landscape.
    - Respect the need and the right of the Buffalo Psychiatric Center to remain.
  4. It is completed!
    - Be flexible; allow for unforeseen changes over time.

The Community Advisory Group was shown a brief presentation of the initial analysis of reuse potential of the site and precedents for redevelopment and was asked for suggestions. The group overwhelmingly felt that the Master Plan should emphasize connections between the Richardson Olmsted Complex, surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas, Delaware Park, Buffalo State College, and nearby bike paths that could connect the complex to the region. The plan should increase the well being of people using the complex, including the Buffalo Psychiatric Center. Importantly, the group felt that the plan can generate confidence from the public by incorporating community suggestions and feedback.

### ***Other Major Studies and Works***

#### **The Urban Land Institute Advisory Panel Final Report**

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) Advisory Panel Final Report is comprised of its recommendations for reuse, rehabilitation and potential redevelopment of the historic Richardson Complex in Buffalo. The ULI recommendations will provide a “framework” for guiding a reuse plan for the site. The report is the culmination of a week of intensive work May 21-25, 2007 in Buffalo. After a week of touring the City and surrounding neighborhoods, intensive evaluation of the site itself, and interviews with nearly 100 community stakeholders and regional experts, ULI distilled the information down to recommendations that project sponsor Richardson Center Corporation and the community is considering. The final report expands upon the preliminary report presented at the end of the study week in Buffalo.

#### **Historic Structures Report**

The Historic Structures Report was recently completed by Goody Clancy. The report evaluates the historic integrity of the building complex and presents the following findings and recommendations:

The current site retains much of the original therapeutic setting and sense that motivated its creation 130 years ago. It is an intact site illustrating the evolution of the treatment of mental health in the United States from 1870 to the present. There are examples of the architectural manifestations of different psychological theory of the treatment of mental illness present on the site. These include Kirkbride’s ‘linear plan’, the ‘cottage plan’ of the early 20th century, and the contemporary Strozzi Building which is focused on in-patient services. This physical memory of the evolution in attitude is one of the most unique and character defining features of the site as a whole.

The unique significance of the site is defined by important interrelated elements: a remarkable collection of buildings by one of America's greatest architects, Henry Hobson Richardson; a great example of the distinctive 'Kirkbride Plan' typology; the development of mental health institutions in the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; eminent local and state architects; and the influence of persons significant within Buffalo's political and social history.

The Period of Significance for the site spans from 1870-1969. The start date reflects the finalization of this site for establishing the Buffalo State Asylum for the Insane by the New York State Legislature and the end date reflects the demolition of the three outermost male ward building on the west side, thus disturbing the original "Kirkbride Plan" layout.

The early buildings of the site are all equally significant. The Administration Building and the Wards – both brick and stone – form the core buildings. The core buildings are significant due to their level of intact original historic fabric and the story that their architectural design and implementation tell.

The core buildings are the most significant structures on the site, are generally in good (or at least repairable) condition. The exterior of the buildings are overall in good condition and all are considered by the HSR team to be viable candidates for rehabilitation. The stone Wards and the Administration building are in good condition overall, with isolated areas of deteriorated stone, mortar and roofing material. The brick Wards are in worse condition, with areas of the walls that are deteriorated to the point of collapse. The areas of collapse appear to be isolated and not affecting the overall structural integrity of the buildings. In general, the stone connectors are in good condition and the brick connectors are experiencing more deterioration and collapse. The viable reuse options might range from preserving the complex as a ruin, to rehabilitation for reuse. For these reasons, and others, the Richardson Center Corporation will have to have the latitude to be innovative to repair the buildings and find other uses for it.

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* are the guidelines used to characterize the appropriate treatment recommendations for the Richardson Olmsted Complex. The Standards provide a philosophical framework from which decisions about the appropriate treatment of the historic resources can be made, and provide options: restoration, preservation, rehabilitation. "Rehabilitation" is recommended for the core buildings on site. Rehabilitation is defined as: "*the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.*" This approach acknowledges the need for the site to continue to evolve and change and is the only approach that allows for alterations and additions.

### **Cultural Landscape Report**

Heritage Landscapes, Preservation Landscape Architects & Planners, recently completed the Cultural Landscape Report. The report evaluates the historic integrity of the building complex and presents the following findings and recommendations:

The landscape is important as a surviving example of a therapeutic landscape designed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. and Calvert Vaux of Olmsted, Vaux & Company.

The landscape of the Richardson Olmsted Complex is nationally significant based on multiple historical associations. Principally, the landscape is an example of the humane treatment of the mentally ill as a medical advance toward the use and incorporation of therapeutic landscapes for patient treatment. Additionally, the landscape is a recognized a master work of Olmsted and Vaux, as well as the first major collaboration between Olmsted and Vaux and Richardson. The landscape is also a contributing resource to the larger context of the Buffalo Parks and Parkways system.

Together, Olmsted and Vaux made contributions to the orientation and siting of Richardson's Kirkbride-style asylum building that would provide a more engaging landscape. Sited at an angle, the stepping wings of the asylum building framed a more public area to the south along Forest Avenue. The stepping wings also embraced the northern lands to create a more private therapeutic, service, and agrarian landscape to the north. The Asylum was sited at the outskirts of Buffalo adjacent to the grounds laid out for "The Park," now Delaware Park.

The design of the therapeutic landscape at the Buffalo State Insane Asylum was rooted in the concept that one's surroundings could directly be the cause and cure of mental illness. Therefore, calm and peaceful surroundings designed for these progressive mental institutions were believed to be curative and therapeutic for patients.

Evoked with popular landscape design styles for the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the therapeutic landscape was fashioned as one of curvilinear drives and open lawns with scattered trees and shrubs that choreographed a sequence of spatial relationships and views throughout the asylum landscape. A semicircular entrance drive from Forest Avenue provided ever-changing majestic views of the pastoral landscape and soaring twin towers of the Administration Building.

New buildings erected in areas of the therapeutic landscape altered spatial organization and views and resulted in degradation and disuse of the landscape. Other additions, buildings, and alterations to the landscape were not fully integrated into the historic landscape character, leaving the campus today with no clear unity with the style of historic features.

Today, the landscape of the site retains remnants of the original Olmsted and Vaux therapeutic design with fragments of curvilinear drives, open lawns and vegetative scenery that date to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some historic trees remain with segments of historic drives and walks, including the curved entry drive that form a skeleton of the former design. The southern landscape between the Richardson asylum building and Forest Avenue remain most intact as the public frontage.

The landscape preservation treatment focuses on bolstering historic landscape character and protecting historic trees, while accommodating current and new future use through changes

in built elements, vegetation, and furnishings, among others. In general, recommendations focus on:

- Respecting remaining historic features through sound stewardship.
- Enhancing historic character through replacement or recapture of character-defining features.
- Identifying appropriate new development with the historic fabric of the hospital.

### **Stabilization Efforts**

The RCC and its team of consultants are continuing stabilization efforts to prevent the further deterioration and vandalism of the complex. Roofs were sealed on the twin towers administration building and the adjacent ward, Buildings 45 and 10, and gaping holes covered on the roof of Building 39, the second building west of Rees Street. The structural shoring is complete on Building 43, the former female kitchen located behind the towers administration building, stabilizing the building from collapse and sealing the roof from further water damage. The roof of the connector between buildings 42 and 43 was also sealed, covering gaping holes that existed for years. The shoring of the collapsing connector link between Buildings 39 and 40 is progressing, the building permit was granted and the area is being prepared for work but has been delayed because of safety issues. Electrical designs are 60% complete and when installed and completed this fall will allow for exterior perimeter lighting and a heat detection system.

### **The Architecture and Visitor Center**

The RCC has hired Ralph Appelbaum Associates, a nationally known museum firm, and ConsultEcon to develop a Visualized Concept Study for the Architecture and Visitor Center. The facility will serve as a showcase and center for information and directions to Western New York's architectural and cultural assets.

### **Additional Resources**

Additional resources about the Richardson Olmsted Complex and the Master Plan, as well as a chance to comment about today's presentation, are available on the Richardson Center Corporation Website: [www.richardson-olmsted.com](http://www.richardson-olmsted.com). You may also send comments to [comments@richardson-olmsted.com](mailto:comments@richardson-olmsted.com) or call the RCC at 716-849-6070.