

Richardson Olmsted Complex Master Plan FINAL

Public Meeting

July 14, 2009

6:00 PM

Performing Arts Center at Rockwell Hall

The following report is a summary of the Richardson Olmsted Complex public meeting on July 14, 2009. This is the third public meeting held since work on the Master Plan began, following the August 12, 2008 and January 27, 2009 public meetings.

This report includes the following:

- The meeting agenda.
- A summary of the presentation of the Master Plan elements.
- A summary of the public input received at the meeting during the questions and comments period and those written on comment cards.

The following are attachments to this report:

- The full set of transcribed comment cards.

Agenda

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1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Overview and Updates
3. The Master Plan
4. Comments
5. Next steps and Closing Remarks

Richardson Center Corporation (RCC) Board and Community Advisory Group (CAG) Public Meeting Attendees

RCC

- ✓ Peter Atkinson
- ✓ Barbara Campagna
- ✓ Christopher Greene
- ✓ Eva Hassett
- ✓ Paul Hojnacki
- ✓ Monica Pellegrino Faix
- ✓ Richard Tobe
- ✓ Stan Lipsey
- ✓ Howard Zemsky

CAG

- ✓ Benjamin Christy
- ✓ Cynthia Conides
- ✓ Bob Franke
- ✓ Heather Gring
- ✓ Anne Harding Joyce
- ✓ Frank Kowsky
- ✓ Michael McLean
- ✓ Gregory Patterson
Tanski

- ✓ Tim Tielman
- ✓ Max Willig

Summary

Agenda Item: Welcome and Introductions

Discussion and Conclusions:

Richardson Center Corporation (RCC) Trustee Eva Hassett welcomed the nearly 150 community members in attendance and introduced the co-chairs of the Community Advisory Group (CAG).

Co-chairs of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) , Gregory M. Patterson-Tanski of the 4 The Neighbors Association of Block Clubs and Max Willig of the Grant-Amherst Business Association, reintroduced the CAG and provided an overview of its work on the Master Plan, summarized below:

How the Community Advisory Group was formed:

- Representatives were invited by the RCC Board to join the group.
- Potential Representatives were selected from lists of people from:
 - Urban Land Institute studies and interviews.
 - Previous public meetings.
- Additional representatives were added based upon recommendations from the Community Advisory Group.

Community Advisory Group representatives are from:

- Cultural Organizations
- Buffalo Psychiatric Center
- Community Business Organizations
- Community/Neighborhood Groups
- Historic Preservation
- City of Buffalo
- Buffalo State College administration and student body

The responsibilities of the Community Advisory Group include:

- Advise the Richardson Center Corporation regarding community values.
- Facilitate the process of broad public engagement throughout the planning period. This includes:
 - Convening three large public meetings.
 - Holding routine Community Advisory Group meetings – 7 since June of 2008.
 - Conducting deliberations with various constituencies.
- Review the Master Plan products as they are produced with public comments.

The Community Vision:

- The Community Advisory Group directed the preparation of a Community Vision report to inform the Master Plan efforts.
- The Community Vision report included seven community-held goals for the Master Plan:
 - Benefit the people living in adjacent neighborhoods.
 - Help revitalize and compliment the surrounding community.
 - Allow the site to be publicly accessible.
 - Provide a framework for rehabilitating the historic Richardson Olmsted Complex.
 - Better integrate the Buffalo Psychiatric Center with the Richardson Olmsted Complex.
 - Gain broad community acceptance of the Master Plan.
 - Implement the Master Plan!

Draft Plan Comments report:

- The second major report prepared by the Community Advisory Group addressed how well the Master Plan met the Community Vision goals.
 - The report is based upon CAG deliberations and public feedback and comments from the large public meetings and other correspondence.
 - Both the Community Vision report and the Draft Plan Comments report are available on the RCC website for download: www.richardson-olmsted.com

Agenda Item: Overview and Updates

Discussion and Conclusions:

RCC Trustee Barbara Campagna presented an overview of the RCC and its work. The RCC envisions “the rehabilitation of this National Historic Landmark . . . to be the crowning jewel of a mixed-use, multi-purpose civic campus of public and private activities” (Vision Statement).

The RCC has guided planning work for the Richardson Olmsted Complex, including the Urban Land Institute Report, Historic Structures and Cultural Landscape Reports, planning for the Architecture and Visitor Center, and the Master Plan. The RCC will now transition its work from planning to implementation.

Monica Pellegrino Faix, project coordinator from the RCC, presented updates on ongoing stabilization efforts.

- Phase 1 (2008-2010) - \$2.1 million
 - Brick buildings - Stabilize weak buildings and connectors to prevent collapse.
 - Brick and stone buildings - Seal roofs.
 - Site wide - Perimeter lighting & smoke detection.
 - Site wide - Maintenance and security.
- Phase 2 (2009-2011) - \$7.8 Million
 - Brick buildings - Seal open areas in exterior walls.
 - Stone buildings - Abatement and clean up.
 - Brick and stone buildings - Prevent water infiltration & ventilation.
 - Site wide - Maintenance, security and utilities.
 - Site wide - Address dead and dying trees.

The next steps in stabilization include:

- Prepare stone buildings to an intact, safe, and clean building shell - \$11.4 million.
- Mothball brick buildings – \$5.5 million.
- Landscape – \$2.0 million.

The RCC is also conducting a laser survey to gain precise measurements of the exterior of the complex and the interior of the Towers Administration Building. They will use this to create a 3D model of the Towers Administration Building for future design work.

Agenda Item: Master Plan

Discussion and Conclusions:

David Gamble of Chan Krieger Sieniewicz and John Kett from Reed Hilderbrand presented updates to the Master Plan.

They began by reviewing the Master Plan schedule that included three previous large public meetings, CAG meetings, and RCC Board meetings. The Master Plan is part of the rehabilitation process that includes the following activities:

- RCC Board formation in 2006
- Urban Land Institute Advisory Panel in 2007
- Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Reports completed in 2008
- Ongoing Phase 1 Stabilization
- Architecture and Visitor Center Concept and Feasibility Studies completed in early 2009
- Beginning Phase 2 Stabilization

Master Plan work was guided by the seven community goals listed above and the RCC’s baseline principles that include:

- Stabilize the existing structure
- Rationalize the site (parking/circulation)
- Prioritize the landscape investment
- Identify building reuse programs
- Establish public access

BASELINE STRATEGY

The Master Plan addresses the baseline principles by recommending the following:

- Focus rehabilitation and reuse on Building 45.
- Stabilizing the South Lawn and reviving the historic entry loop.
- Relocating parking away from the entrance loop on the South Lawn.
- Creating an east-west access road north of the buildings.
- Creating a new arrival and landscape on the north side of Building 45.

The entire baseline strategy will cost an estimated \$53.66 million and include:

Stabilization Work Item	Cost (\$millions)
Parking relocation	\$ 1.40
Emergency building stabilization	\$ 7.84
Landscape stabilization	\$ 2.00
Circulation systems	\$ 1.86
Landscape rehabilitation (immediate south & north)	\$ 9.50
Prepare Core Project for Development	\$ 11.36
Mothball remaining buildings	\$ 5.90
Architecture Center exhibit	\$ 5.90
Funds already committed	\$ 3.90
Building 45 replacement addition	\$ 4.00
Total	\$53.66

ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS

All programs in the rehabilitated complex can share a unifying identity and iconic image with which all users can equally identify – The Richardson Olmsted Complex, “The ROC”. The Master Plan identifies four alternative scenarios for rehabilitation. Each scenario builds sequentially from the preceding scenario.

- *Core Project:* The Core Project incorporates the Baseline Priorities. This includes rehabilitating portions of the landscape, landscape stabilization on the South Lawn, new northern east-west road and south entrance loop, relocation of Buffalo Psychiatric Center parking from the south entrance loop, and the Visitor Center, Architecture Center, Event and Conference space, and Boutique Hotel.
- *Expanded Core Project:* This includes the relocation of the Buffalo Psychiatric Center maintenance building to the north, landscaping along Rockwell Road, expanded landscape stabilization on the South Lawn, additional landscape improvements at Elmwood and Forest, and expanded programs in buildings adjacent to the core programs. These programs can include but are not limited to Buffalo State College academic, arts related uses, potential cultural partners, recreation/entertainment, office, Café/restaurant, bookstore/retail, and residential.
- *Full Reuse of Historic Structures:* This includes full rehabilitation of the South Lawn, landscape investment site wide (extending the character of the Olmsted Park system), a site wide circulation system, integrating the Buffalo Psychiatric Center recreation space, relocation of the Buffalo State College maintenance building to the north, temporary or permanent landscape in the northwest corner, for example, a productive landscape nursery, and compatible uses in all of the historic buildings.
- *Full Reuse and Landholding Strategy:* This includes a landholding strategy on 21 acres of the northern portion of the grounds for potential new development that approximates the existing campus in density and urban ambiance.

NEXT STEPS

The Master Plan team outlined the next steps in the planning process. They include:

Environmental Review / Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) - Opportunities for Public Comment

- Step 1: Scoping
 - Purpose: To identify issues to be addressed and how they should be analyzed in the GEIS.

- Opportunities: Public Scoping Meeting, written comments.
- Time Frame: A minimum 20-day comment period is suggested.
- Step 2: Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS)
 - Purpose: To document all potential impacts and possible mitigation measures.
 - Opportunities: Public Hearing, written comments.
 - Time Frame: A minimum 30-day comment period is required.
- Step 3: Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS)
 - Purpose: To summarize and respond to substantive comments on the DGEIS.
 - Opportunities: Written comments.
 - Time Frame: Comments may be submitted prior to the final project vote—which must wait until at least 10 days after the Final GEIS is issued.

ADDRESSING PUBLIC FEEDBACK

The Master Plan team addressed feedback from the January 2009 public meeting. A summary of the issues raised by the public in previous meetings and how the Master Plan has been revised to address them is below:

- Issue: Incorporating Mental Health
 - Master Plan strategies:
 - Continue dialogue with the Buffalo Psychiatric Center.
 - Rehabilitate the landscape as a sanctuary.
 - Provide public access to the grounds.
 - Create exhibition spaces identified in the ROC for mental health exhibits.
 - Develop programming opportunities (artists in residence).
 - Establish workforce development programs.

 - Issue - Neighborhood Redevelopment
 - Master Plan strategies:
 - Incorporate active building uses that contribute to the vitality of the neighborhood.
 - Stabilize the existing structure.
 - Rehabilitate open space that is accessible and connected to Olmsted's Park network.
 - Create opportunities for cultural, educational and artistic presence in the historic structures.
 - Coordinate planning with Buffalo State College, the Buffalo Psychiatric Center and the City of Buffalo.

 - Issue: Park-like setting + access
 - Master Plan strategies:
 - Create a continuous park-like setting connecting to Delaware Park.
 - Create multiple public access points to the complex.
 - Improve and create public access pathways through the complex.
 - Create opportunities for recreation in the rehabilitated landscape.

 - Issue: Parking solutions
 - Master Plan strategies:
 - Move surface parking to less intrusive locations.
 - Create well landscaped surface parking lots.
 - Create opportunities for on-street angled parking.
 - Leave open the option for structured parking.

 - Issue: Sustainability
 - Master Plan strategies:
 - Reuse existing buildings.
 - Minimize impacts on the landscape.
 - Create more impervious landscapes, including wet meadows for stormwater.
 - Create opportunities to serve the community; Traverse City Kirkbride-designed complex examples include community gardens, farmers market, event, public art, and lofts.
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Agenda Item: Comments**Discussion and Conclusions:**

The audience was given an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments regarding the Master Plan after the presentation. Audience members were also given the opportunity to write comments on comment cards. Many audience members offered positive remarks about the process, opportunities for public input, and the proposals in the Master Plan. A summary of all of the comments include:

Economic Development

- The local economic benefit of rehabilitating the complex will be increased if local contractors and workers are used throughout the process.

Architecture and Visitor Center

- The specific roles of the Architecture Center and Visitor Center should be addressed, especially since there are other visitor centers in the region.
- UB's School of Architecture and Planning would be a good partner on this project.
- A children's museum can be part of this project.

Impact on Surrounding Communities

- More specific recommendations and potential impacts for the surrounding community should be addressed by the Master Plan.
- A charrette with the surrounding communities can help address neighborhood issues.
- Neighborhood safety and security should be considered in the Master Plan.
- The rehabilitation and reuse of the complex may create noise problems in the surrounding community.

Circulation and Parking

- Alternative modes of transportation, including biking and walking, should be emphasized in the plan.
- Planning for parking can consider broader community needs and space.
- Parking for vehicles should be limited.
- Public parking can be a source of revenue for the ROC.
- If parking is provided on the complex, more of the neighborhood overflow parking may migrate to the site.

Safety and Security

- More specific recommendations for on-site security should be considered if the complex is opened for public use; cameras, call buttons, 'park rangers', etc.
- Off-site security in the surrounding neighborhoods is a concern, especially as violent crimes continue to increase.

Integration with the Treatment of Mental Health

- The design for the site should be conducive to the treatment of mental health.
- The Master Plan must be mindful of both patient and visitor needs for privacy.

Sustainability

- Green and alternative energies should be used in the rehabilitated buildings.
- Community gardens and the reuse of the green house for community agriculture can benefit the community.
- Treating storm-water on-site can have positive environmental impacts.

Recreation

- The complex can be connected to Delaware Park across Elmwood Avenue.
- Playgrounds can be constructed on the site to provide recreation opportunities.
- There can be opportunities for events on the complex grounds.

Next Steps

- The community is concerned about who will maintain the complex after existing funds are exhausted.
- Alternative funding sources other than public resources should be pursued.
- The community would like to know more about the GEIS process and how long it will take.

Agenda Item: Next Steps and Closing Remarks**Discussion and Conclusions:**

Eva Hassett closed the meeting by thanking everyone in the public for their participation in the Master Plan, and thanked the consultants, the Community Advisory Group, and the RCC Board members for their great work.

There are still opportunities for the public to discuss rehabilitation work with the RCC. Additional resources about the Richardson Olmsted Complex and the Master Plan, as well as a chance to comment about the presentation, are available on the Richardson Center Corporation Website: www.richardson-olmsted.com. The public may also send comments to comments@richardson-olmsted.com or call the RCC at 716-849-6070.