

**Roland Park Master Plan**  
**Green and Open Space Sub Committee**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Charrette, January 9, 2010**

The Green and Open Space Sub Committee broke into 4 groups and addressed the following issues: BCC, Stony Run, Water Tower and Linkages. Notes and next steps for each group follow. Louise Phipps Senft facilitated 'Next Steps' which are incorporated into each sub group.

**Notes: BCC Break-out Group**

Facilitator: Lynn Heller

Participants: Bebe Bass, Corni Douglas, Cynthia Pace, David Tufaro, Grace Brush, Louise Phipps Senft, Maggie Marra, Martha Marani, Mary Porter, Mary Page Michel, Steve Ziger, Will Marani

**Brainstorming of Uses**

- Pool:
  - Possible model: Bolton Hill swim/tennis club – pool, open space, playground all together
  - Expense: community has assets at current pool that we'd lose, cost of building new pool, would bring in sufficient revenue?
  - Relationship with Friends increasingly tense?
  - No: keep it green
  - Already have a pool, why the added expense?
- Tennis courts
- Community center – meeting/conference space, teenage hangout, nature center ? Revenue?
- Gardens, forest, pathways
- Small gathering places (benches? outdoor chess? fountain?)
- Athletic fields (low-impact – like St. Mary's Seminary fields)
- Urban farming – coop? seasonal or year-round? year-round would require a "hoop", or permanent structure; possibly profitable
- Art in the park (sculpture)
- Native plant nursery – possibly profitable
- Model of urban sustainability – native, little mowing, though not necessarily low maintenance costs
- Orchards (fruit-bearing trees)
- Beehives
- Playground
- Preservation of green space

- Concerts
- Reforestation (what did the land look like pre-golf course? Restore to original?)
- Tree “clumps” in central lawn (noise pollution, heat/sun, cozier)
- Relationship with Poly fields? Pedestrian access across Falls Rd.? (Poly fields already booked up)
- Housing
- Leave land as is (“we’re Roland Park, not Guilford or Homeland”)
- Dog park

## **Outcomes**

Note: See Steve Ziger’s design for illustration of the following outcomes.

### **Consensus:**

#### 1) Green space

Within the 17-acre parcel of land, all property north of the current fenced-in tennis courts should remain passive green space, with the following possible uses (see Steve Ziger’s design for illustration):

Using the five parcels identified in 2008, described below from north to south, east to west....

- Small Meadow – swingset?
- Big Meadow – sledding, dog park? Retain grass, or other ground cover? Reforestation along Falls Road
- Stream Valley – expand through reforestation, install foot bridge
- Central Meadow – Reforestation along Falls Road, athletic field on flat part at current sand traps, tree “clumps” with possible benches installed at various points, art in the park, walking path along easternmost border.
- Tennis Courts – landscaping at southwestern corner of property and along Hillside Rd.

#### 2) Housing

Housing should only be developed on a portion of the land (likely where the current tennis courts are) as a last resort if revenue is needed to preserve the remainder of the green space. (At roughly \$250,000 a lot, 4 lots would bring in \$1 million of revenue.)

#### 3) Connectivity

- A north-south walking path/trail should be developed along the eastern border of the 17-acre parcel, connecting Hillside Road to Edgevale Road.
- A wooden walking bridge should be build over the stream between the Big Meadow and the Central Meadow, through the Stream Valley.
- Strengthen pedestrian connection across Falls Road (connection to Poly fields, light rail, etc.), likely at southwest corner of property.
- A footpath should be defined at the north end of the Big Meadow close to Falls Road to connect to the alley leading to Harvest Road.

#### 4) Parking

Angled parking should be developed at southwest corner of property (where tennis shack used to be), with landscaping to create attractive gateway.

#### Current tennis courts:

There was much discussion about what to do with the land currently occupied by the tennis courts. Possibilities, from least amount of “hardscape” to most, include: beehives, orchard, urban farm, native plant nursery, playground, basketball court, tennis courts, community center, and swimming pool. When participants were asked to disregard the issue of cost and feasibility and vote on whether they’d ideally like to see it preserved as passive green space (which could include orchards, gardens, urban farm concept) or active green space (tennis, pool, community center, basketball, playground), the group was divided. Six participants voted to preserve it as passive green space, two participants voted for some active use (one person supported tennis courts, another supported a community center, both with the future possibility of a pool), and three were undecided.

Given the lack of consensus, the group agreed that the next step would be to research the financial implications of the proposed uses, not only for the tennis courts but for the entire property. The charrette group will provide the master planning leadership with several possible uses for the tennis-court portion of the property, along with associated costs and potential revenue.

#### Next Steps

- 1) Steve Ziger will develop new design incorporating the outcomes of the charrette.
- 2) Lynn will prepare notes from the charrette.
- 3) The group will collect data re: the financial implications of the various proposed uses.
- 4) To be discussed: community plan if Club House and remaining land became available for sale; possibility of a conservation easement on the property.

## **Notes: Stony Run Break-out Group**

Facilitator: Jackie Carrera

Participants: Helen DeClerq, Ralph Kurtz, Shelley Stenhert, David Locke, Roma Campanile, AJ O'Brien, David Carrera

The Stony Run Stream Valley was divided into three major segments for the purpose of the discussion:

- Upper: From Northern Parkway to Wyndhurst. Characterized as private, woodland
- Middle: From Wyndhurst to Cold Spring. Characterized as back of home, private, woodland
- Lower: From Cold Spring to Sisson where it meets the Jones Falls. Characterized as public, open space, more active recreation such as biking.

### VISION/BIG PICTURE

Stony Run can be viewed as a 'zipper' bringing all parts of the neighborhood together. The master plan should reinforce the following unique characteristics of Stony Run:

- Local green space
- School connector
- Neighborhood connector
- Green, environmentally sensitive connector
- Off road
- Connects people to nature
- Integrates nature into a scenic community

Primary Use By Segment – Biking (formal bike path) from Stieff to University; Walking/Pedestrian from University to Wyndhurst; Educational from Wyndhurst to Northern

### BIG IDEAS

- Expand activity at the Roland Park Pool to encourage gathering. Create a Nature Center along Lawndale.

- Improve access to trail from Cold Spring Lane by either purchasing the old bank building or parcels from Loyola College.
- Create bike connection at University Parkway

## BROAD, TRAIL-WIDE ISSUES

Design Standards, including signage - Should be in keeping with woodland feel.

Public Art - Public Art which heightens awareness of trail should emphasize nature if located on the trail. Major public art should be kept to Roland Avenue, BCC or places that can handle a crowd.

Seating - Benches should be placed in strategic locations

Signage/Maps- Signage with a woodland feel. Need mile markers, maps

Users - Trail should accommodate school children going to and from school, athletic teams from local schools, families, intergenerational users.

Biking - Bikes should formally be directed to use the Lower segment of Stony Run where a bike path (paved or not) should stretch from the Jones Falls Trail by the Stieff Silver Building north along the stream to connect with the roadway at University Parkway. From there it should follow University Parkway/Centennial Park north to Roland. No paved bike paths should be anywhere north of Cold Spring, though bikes should be permitted on the Middle segment of the trail (no paved path should be there). The conditions are unsafe for bikes on the Upper segment (narrow trail, steep cliffs). Currently, there is a barrier at the trail/ University Parkway connector which needs to be remedied.

This bike plan promotes/connects/support: Roland as a beautiful boulevard, commercial activity, connection to bus routes, connection to the Light Rail (which also needs resolution) and integrates with city bike plan.

Maintenance - Whole trail needs a funded maintenance plan to address water, invasives, etc. A conservation easement should be considered for standardization of care and its long term sustainability.

Collaborate with local schools to determine if they would see value in paying a fee to go toward mile markers, signage, infrastructure improvements in exchange for use of the trail for cross country or other sports practices (running course).

Host stewardship events.

Determine best governance and stewardship structure for maintenance and major decisions about the trail: Roads and Maintenance, Friends of Stony Run, a new entity focusing on parks and green space in Roland Park, Jones Falls Watershed Association, community associations. Who plays what role? How are they connected? Should there be an overarching group for stewardship of the trail? Coordinated group could better attract maintenance and capital improvement funds, provide better volunteer stewardship, keep compressive vision for the overall trail.

Schools - The trail is and should remain a connector and an asset for neighborhood schools.

#### SEGMENT SPECIFIC IDEAS: UPPER

Type of Trail – Pedestrian, walking, natural

Current Uses – Walking, dog walking, connector to schools, pool/community gathering spot at lower end

Barriers/needs – too narrow for bikes and wheelchairs; fear of crime (secluded); need for signage, mile or address markers to identify street crossings.

Desired – No bikes or wheelchairs - too narrow and dangerous especially by the section near the Friends’ scoreboard

#### Vision for Upper Segment

- No paving
- Create zone and improve pool area , businesses and parking lots along Lawndale as a community hub/destination. Consider Nature Center.
- Better connect schools to trail so they can use as educational and recreational resource. Create educational “hot spots.”
- Encourage multigenerational use
- Currently used by RPCS and Bryn Mawr
- Consider a conservation easement to keep unified vision and maintenance funds.
- Use park partnership agreement that community has. Recently had two large parcels transferred to parks to better connect the trail segments for public use (officially).

## SEGMENT SPECIFIC IDEAS: MIDDLE

Type of trail - Woodland/pedestrian/natural feel (not suburban like Columbia, MD)

Current Uses – cross country skiing, dog walking, walking, running

Cold Spring Lane Access – Need to create better access to the middle section of the trail at Cold Spring

Big Ideas - Bank building donated and used for community center or businesses to make money to maintain the trail. Explore Loyola's interest in officially donating the connector section.

Issues/ Barriers – Water and invasives. Currently the city dumps woodchips and community spreads on trail. Last less than a year.

## SEGMENT SPECIFIC IDEAS: LOWER

Type of trail –active, flatter, pedestrian (walking, running, biking)

Barriers

- Connection to University from trail for bikes
- Parking for Linkwood Park (current petition to move bollards and create more parking); meeting to be held on February 6, 2010

The section of the Lower Segment of greater focus for the RP Master Plan is between Cold Spring and University.

## NEXT STEPS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

- 1) Dogs – Dog use/ dog park
- 2) Determine best access plan for Cold Spring. Assess Loyola's interest in public use of their property on the trail just north of Cold Spring. Develop rendering based on best and most feasible use.
- 3) Determine governing/planning group for maintenance and future decisions
- 4) Explore funding options - Taxing Districts, Fee sources such as events, association dues, fee for trail by others (athletic teams).
- 5) If relevant, explore the effectiveness of the Department of Public Works as trail restoration experts.
- 6) Resolve storm water issues through Infrastructure committee.

**Notes: Water Tower, Linkages, General Topics Break-out Groups**

Facilitator: Jean Mellot and Suzanne Frasier

#### VISION/PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED AT THE CHARRETTE

1. Finish connecting Roland park by pedestrian and bike access ways (create a circular route which would include Stony Run, run between St Mary's and RPCS, and connect at the southern end at University Parkway) that would provide off street access to the green spaces and improve non-vehicular access to the public transportation. (Requires collaboration with traffic committee)
2. Create an inventory and maintenance plan for the paths and islands (working with Anne Lundy to assess current conditions and collect estimates already received for work needing to be done)
3. Define existing public outdoor areas and support additional areas connected to retail where appropriate. Enhance the town center feeling of the library/Eddies block, perhaps by adding benches in the median strip. (Requires coordination with commercial committee)
4. Define and enhance the gateways to the neighborhood.
5. Identify green space currently in private hands (includes large residential lots as well as institutional). Create a plan for improved relationships with the owners to allow public access when appropriate and for purchase of land and/or conservation easements when needed to preserve natural or recreational areas or to preserve public access. (Contact made with RPCS; needs further coordination with housing committee; and consideration of a land trust or forest conservation trust)
6. Consider redesigning commercial parking/landscapes to be more useful as gathering places and more environmentally friendly (Requires coordination with commercial committee)

#### TOPICS COVERED:

- Parks
- Playgrounds (where they are, whether public or institutional)
- Existing neighborhood foot paths
- Routes to green areas and impediments
- Cold Spring Lane

- Creating a route that would allow someone to circumnavigate the neighborhood
- Access to green space on the other side of 83
- Bike paths/routes
- Connections to other ex-neighborhood path systems
- Barriers to use of public transportation
- Need to reduce cars as means of access to neighborhood green/gathering spaces
- Gateways and signage
- Private property that borders public green space and paths

#### THINGS TO BE CONSIDERED

- Relationships with schools (including church pre-schools) to maintain neighborhood access to playgrounds
- Need to assess the current conditions of the paths and the islands currently owned and maintained by the neighborhood. Set some guidelines for renovation
- Obtaining right of way permission on private or institutional property for path completion
- Financial cost of path network
- Ownership, maintenance, governance of green spaces and paths
- Purchase and donation options for green space and large lots currently held by institutions and/or individuals
- How path network could enhance the use of public transportation and thereby reduce car usage
- Safety, particularly of children
- How much green space is actually part of residential lots – what would we be willing to do to help maintain? (photo)

#### NEXT STEPS

PATHS:

Needs:

- Connect to opportunities for public transportation
- Connect to green spaces inside and outside the neighborhood
- Add additional paths to allow someone to travel throughout the neighborhood entirely or mostly on public, off street paths (See Map for suggested routes)
- Bicycle paths
- Signage and marked entrances
- Maintenance

#### Costs

- Purchase of land or right of ways to connect and acquire additional path routes
- Reorganization of the access across Cold Spring Lane and Falls Road to increase safety
- Consideration of the establishment of a land trust
- Enhanced relationships with area institutions to maintain and increase access

#### NEIGHBORHOOD OWNED GREEN SPACES (including paths)

##### Needs

- Inventory of conditions
- Maintenance
- Guidelines for plantings
- Preservation of access
- Clarification of neighborhood owned right of ways and limitations
- Clarification of homeowner responsibilities when next to paths or green spaces

##### Costs

- Money for maintenance and rejuvenation of paths and islands
- Professional expertise, both legal and design – perhaps can get this donated
- Education of homeowners
- Outreach

## PUBLIC OPEN SPACES (Stony Run, Linkwood Park, Water Tower)

### Water Tower notes:

- Funding for the actual building is the biggest and most pressing issue
- The Friends of the Water Tower are working on getting funding to stabilize and repair the water tower. Future uses considered are as an observation tower, and using the surrounding green space as an events venue (beer garden, holiday events, neighborhood gatherings, etc.)
- Want to be included in the network of neighborhood trails so that it becomes a destination (note: already on the Roland Park bike path)
- Needs signage, status as a gateway to Roland Park
- Significant because it is the point where three neighborhoods meet
- Current friends group is limiting their efforts to the building itself, as DPW owns the green space, which is leased for a bus turnaround.

## PUBLIC GATHERING SPACES

### Needs

- Inventory
- Clarification of ownership and neighborhood access
- Formal agreements in some cases for access
- Neighborhood assistance and support of appropriate open air retail and food service

### Costs

- Administrative time
- Legal and planning advice
- Education
- Outreach

Submitted by

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