



STARK PARKS

QUAIL HOLLOW PARK MASTER PLAN

Summary Report

June 2017

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Stantec



Reveille

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the following Project Team members who contributed their time and expertise in effort to complete the Master Plan for Quail Hollow Park. This work would not have been possible without the leadership and support provided by Robert Fonte, SCPD Park Director, Sarah Buell, SCPD Projects and Administration Manager, and the entire Stark Parks team.

CONTRIBUTORS

We would also like to thank the community who contributed their thoughts, ideas, and time to the project and have helped shape the future of Quail Hollow Park. Their input, cooperation, and support have been vital through the Master Plan process.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	5
1.1	Letter from the Director	5
1.2	What is a Master Plan?	6
1.3	Park Volunteers	6
1.3.1	Cleveland Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA)	
1.3.2	Ohio Horseman’s Council (OHC)	
1.3.3	Quail Hollow Volunteer Association	
1.4	Executive Summary	7
1.4.1	Introduction	
1.4.2	Existing Conditions	
1.4.3	Design Process	
1.4.4	Master Plan	
1.4.5	Conclusion	
1.5	Work Plan	8
1.5.1	General Approach	
1.5.2	Needs Assessment	
1.5.3	Recommendations	
1.5.4	Implementation Strategy	
1.6	Project Timeline	11
2	BACKGROUND INFORMATION	13
2.0	Park Overview	13
2.1	Park History	13
2.0.1	Historic Timeline	
2.2	Past & Ongoing Planning Efforts	18
2.2.1	Stark County Park District Plans	
2.2.2	Regional Zoning and Land Use Plans for Future Development	
2.3	Regional Background	20
2.3.1	Demographic Trends	
2.3.2	Recreational Trends in Recreation	
2.3.3	Benchmark Projects	
2.3.4	Park Themes	
2.3.5	Community Amenities	
2.3.6	Community Connections	

3	NEEDS ASSESSMENT	27
3.0	Public Engagement	27
3.0.1	Public Survey	
3.0.2	Public Forum #1	
3.0.3	Public Forum #2	
3.0.4	Stakeholder Engagement	
3.0.5	SCPD Staff Interviews	
3.1	Existing Conditions Analysis	30
3.1.1	Site Organization	
3.1.2	Park Amenities	
3.1.3	Buildings	
3.1.4	Trails	
3.1.5	Park Environment	
3.1.6	Roadways	
3.1.7	Utilities	
3.1	Facility Inventory and Analysis	41
4	MASTER PLAN	43
4.0	Overview	43
4.1	Design Areas	44
4.0.1	Design Concept	
4.0.2	The Historic Core	
4.0.3	Manor House Area	
4.0.4	The Environmental Core	
4.0.5	Park Entrance Area	
4.0.6	Habitats for Pollinators	
4.2	Circulation	64
4.2.1	Vehicular Circulation	
4.2.2	Trails, Trailheads & Connections	
4.3	Utilities	72
4.3.1	On-Site Private Systems	
4.3.2	Public Systems	

5	OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COST	74
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6	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	75
5.0	Recommended Phasing	76
5.0.1	Phasing Recommendations& Sequencing	
5.0.1	Existing Conditions Plan	
5.0.1	Final Master Plan	
5.0.1	Phase 1	
5.0.2	Phase 2	
5.0.3	Phase 3	
5.0.4	Phase 4	
5.0.5	Phase 5	
5.0.6	Future Phasing	
5.1	Park Maintenance and Operations	86
5.2	Funding Opportunities	87

APPENDIX

See Table of Contents in Appendix.	
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.” . . to acquire, preserve and develop natural areas accessible to all residents of Stark County for purposes of passive recreation, conservation, education and outdoor nature appreciation.”

– SCPD mission statement



INTRODUCTION

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

We as a park district are proud to present this Master Plan for Quail Hollow Park to the community. We are confident that this plan ensures improved accessibility to and throughout the park, while protecting the environmental and historic legacy the Stewart family hoped for when the park was established in 1975.

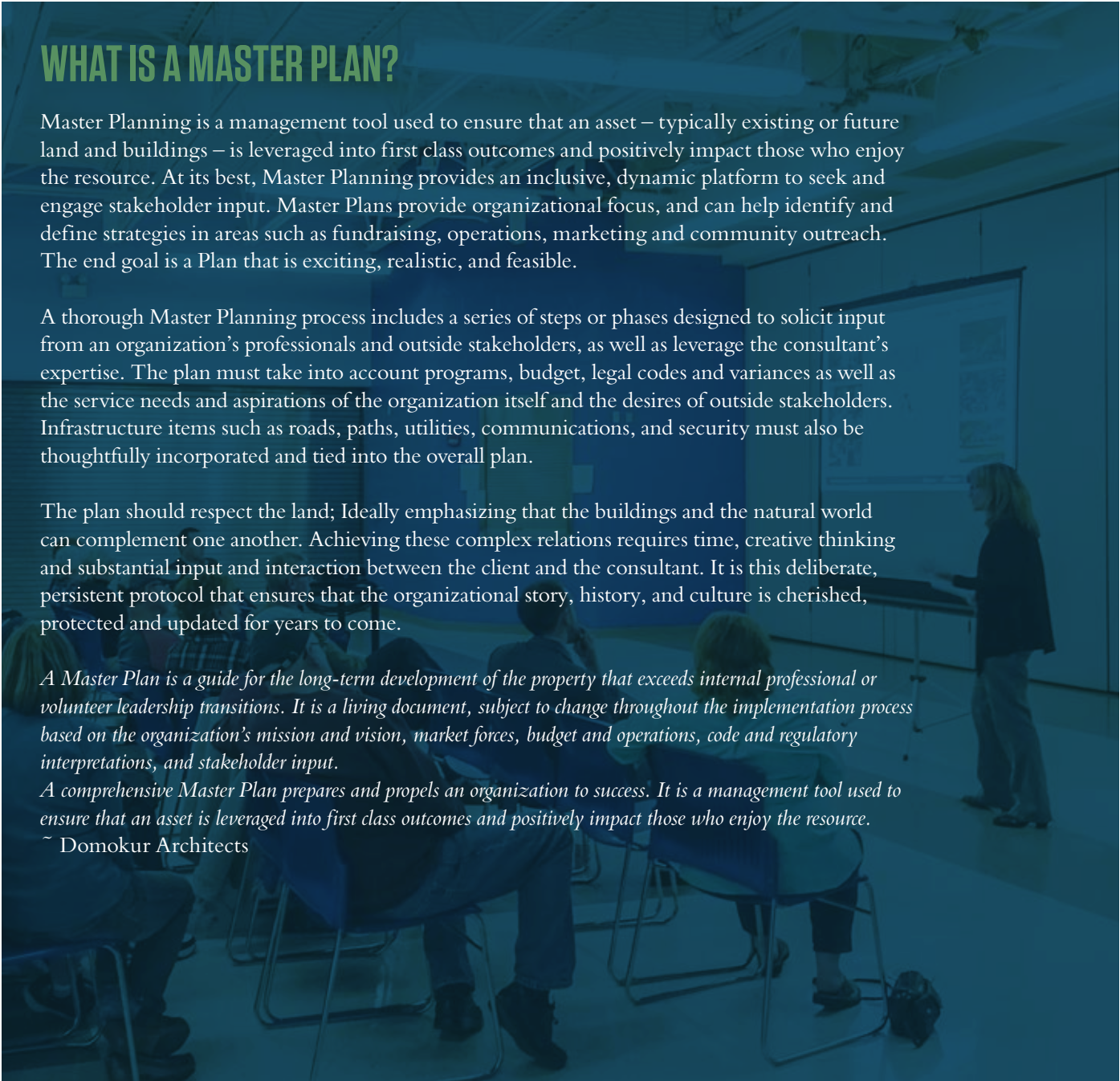
Stark Parks was thrilled to add the 701-acre Quail Hollow Park to the Stark Parks system in January, 2016, bringing the total number of parks to 14, trail miles to 110, and land area managed to more than 8,000 acres. Since that time, our staff, partners, volunteers and interested residents have been working diligently with our consulting team to create a plan for the future that reflects the needs of those who currently use and those who would like to visit the park.

Our goal is to maintain the historical integrity of the property, while improving the park’s trails and open spaces, to use feedback from public surveys to prioritize improvements, and to make this beautiful property more accessible for everyone to enjoy. Our hope is that the implementation of this plan leads to an improved natural space with more valuable opportunities for recreation, education, and relaxation that reflects the needs and wishes of the community.

We hope to see you out enjoying Quail Hollow Park for many years into the future!

Respectfully Yours,

Robert A. Fonte, Director



WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

Master Planning is a management tool used to ensure that an asset – typically existing or future land and buildings – is leveraged into first class outcomes and positively impact those who enjoy the resource. At its best, Master Planning provides an inclusive, dynamic platform to seek and engage stakeholder input. Master Plans provide organizational focus, and can help identify and define strategies in areas such as fundraising, operations, marketing and community outreach. The end goal is a Plan that is exciting, realistic, and feasible.

A thorough Master Planning process includes a series of steps or phases designed to solicit input from an organization’s professionals and outside stakeholders, as well as leverage the consultant’s expertise. The plan must take into account programs, budget, legal codes and variances as well as the service needs and aspirations of the organization itself and the desires of outside stakeholders. Infrastructure items such as roads, paths, utilities, communications, and security must also be thoughtfully incorporated and tied into the overall plan.

The plan should respect the land; Ideally emphasizing that the buildings and the natural world can complement one another. Achieving these complex relations requires time, creative thinking and substantial input and interaction between the client and the consultant. It is this deliberate, persistent protocol that ensures that the organizational story, history, and culture is cherished, protected and updated for years to come.

A Master Plan is a guide for the long-term development of the property that exceeds internal professional or volunteer leadership transitions. It is a living document, subject to change throughout the implementation process based on the organization’s mission and vision, market forces, budget and operations, code and regulatory interpretations, and stakeholder input.

A comprehensive Master Plan prepares and propels an organization to success. It is a management tool used to ensure that an asset is leveraged into first class outcomes and positively impact those who enjoy the resource.

~ Domokur Architects

PARK VOLUNTEERS

Since ODNR purchased the property in 1975, park volunteer groups have provided a vital role in helping to maintain the park’s historic buildings, gardens, and extensive trail networks.

Cleveland Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA)

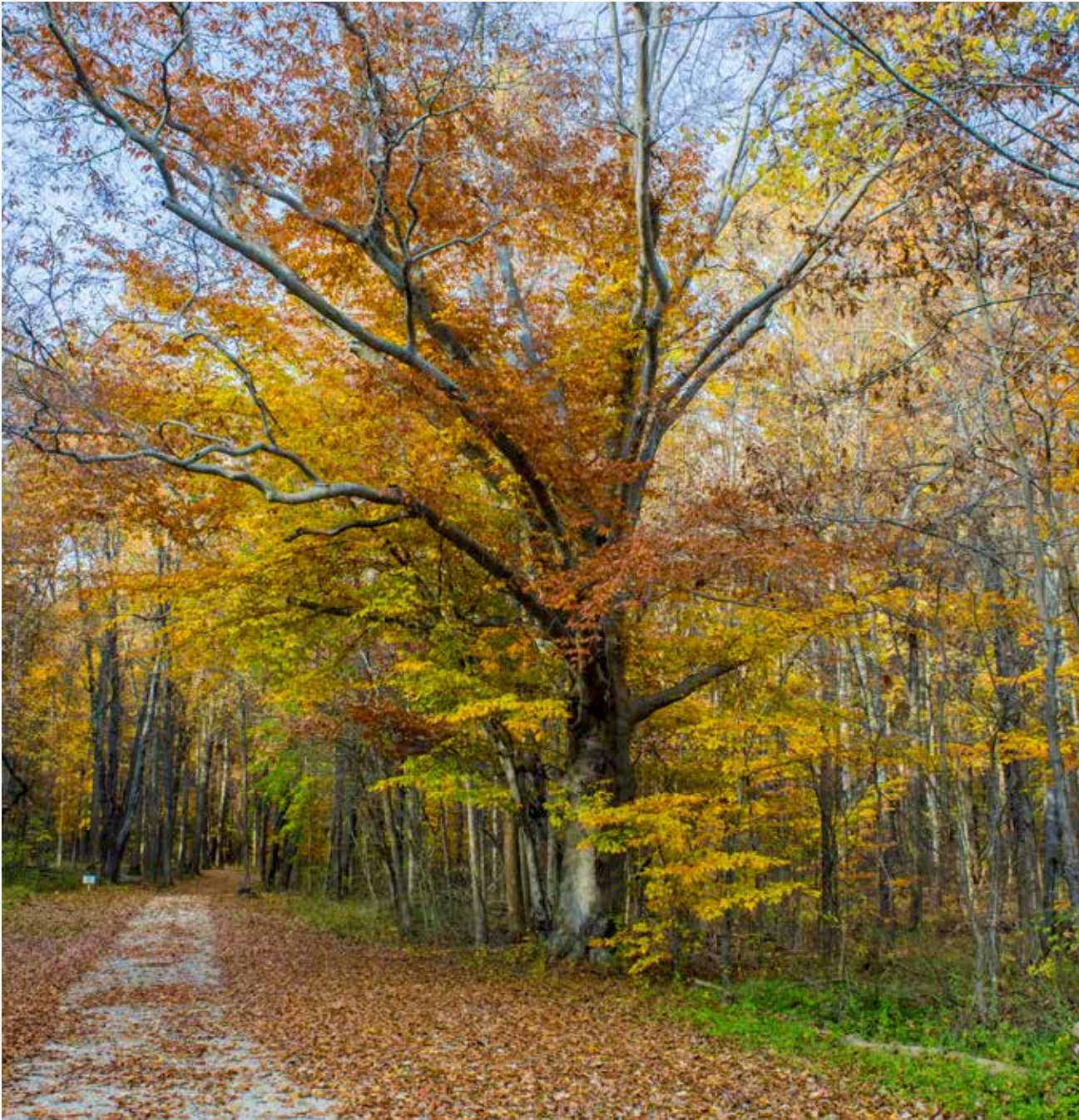
CAMBA is a group of Northeast Ohio mountain bikers dedicated to helping Cleveland live up to its potential of becoming one of the best urban riding locations in the United States. CAMBA encourages sustainable, low-impact mountain bike riding, volunteer trail work, cooperation among different trail user groups, innovative trail designs and management solutions. CAMBA builds trails, advocates, and sponsors group bike rides. CAMBA builds and maintains the mountain bike trails at Quail Hollow Park.

Ohio Horseman's Council (OHC)

The Ohio Horseman’s Council Inc. (OHC) is a non-profit corporation organized in the state of Ohio to provide a vehicle for equine owners and supporters to share ideas and suggestions for all horse related issues, through education, organized trail rides, and other social and service functions. OHC provides resources to promote the building and maintenance of bridle trails throughout the state of Ohio and provide financial resources and volunteer services to fellow organizations that support equine related activities. OHC supports the ongoing maintenance of the equestrian trails at Quail Hollow Park.

Quail Hollow Volunteer Association (QHVA)

Founded in 1982, the Quail Hollow Volunteer Association was created to not only preserve Quail Hollow Park, but also provide a variety of volunteer opportunities to enhance the park’s programs and site. The group contains a fine furnishings committee, a garden restoration committee and herb society and manages the operations of the Quail’s Nest Gift Shop, as well as various special events, such as the art, craft & herb festival. All funds generated from such activities are used, in return, to support Quail Hollow. The association supports Stark Parks in its willingness to assist the park staff, raise funds, and act as a link between the park and the surrounding community.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Located just north of the Village of Hartville and heavily forested, Quail Hollow Park acts as a natural escape from the largely rural and suburban surroundings and is often referred to as a “hidden gem.” At just over 700 acres, the property includes a historic core of buildings and gardens, two residences, a recreational area and small pond, an expansive network of hiking trails, mountain biking and equestrian trails, a small cemetery, and a wide variety of ecological zones.

Originally, a glaciated area dotted with vernal pools, lush wetlands, and verdant forests, it was developed for farmland in the mid 1800’s by the Brumbaugh and Rubright families. In 1901, the Stewart family began to consolidate the properties and eventually constructed the present-day Manor House which was completed in 1929. After housing three generations of the Stewart family, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) acquired the property in 1975. In 2016, the Stark County Park District (SCPD) took over management of Quail Hollow Park, making it the 14th park to be managed by the district.

Formerly known as The Stark County Metropolitan Park District, SCPD was established in 1967 and is currently celebrating its 50th year of operation. The District features over 8,000 acres of land, 14 parks, and 4 lakes, including Sippo Lake and Walborne Reservoir. They offer 110 miles of hiking, biking and horseback riding trails throughout Stark County, including 25 miles of the Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Their guided tours, nature and education programming offer numerous forms of outdoor recreation to nature lovers of all ages. As stated by Robert Fonte, the Director of SCPD, (Quail Hollow) “fits into our park model quite well.”

In September of 2016, SCPD retained Domokur Architects’ team, which includes Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. and Reveille, to prepare a Master Plan for Quail Hollow Park to meet the following goals:

- Evaluate...
 - how the park is used today
 - current national, regional, and local trends
 - community needs
- Assess...
 - the condition of all park amenities including buildings, site amenities, and landscape features.
- Prioritize expenditures based on...
 - the Park District’s mission and vision
 - ongoing staffing, maintenance, and operational costs
 - an estimate of probable construction costs
 - limited availability of funding
- Develop a quality resource that...
 - welcomes community members from all backgrounds
 - provides opportunities for recreation and re-creation
 - conveys the unique history of this park and the surrounding region



Existing Conditions

While the park is cherished by the community and functions well, various modifications and improvements are needed in order for Quail Hollow Park to operate at its full potential. At the earliest stages of the design process, it became evident that many, if not all of the facilities on site, would require a significant amount of modification or renovation to maintain current and/or any future operations. The historic buildings require structural and architectural preservation work, vehicular and pedestrian circulation needs to be improved, natural ecosystems require conservation, the character and history of the estate needs to be shared with the community, and additional amenities, including gathering spaces, are needed to serve not only the existing, but also the new and increasing demographic of park visitors.

Design Process

The process began with discussions with SCPD about their goals, priorities, and vision for the park. Concurrent with these discussions, the Design Team visited the site and walked the trails on multiple occasions to get a feel and full understanding of the site first hand. Through these site visits, Building Floor Plans, a Site Analysis, and Trail Analysis were developed to aid with the design process. Initial thoughts and priorities were then discussed through the public engagement process with community members, local business owners, neighbors, and park volunteers. It immediately became clear that the preservation of the natural, historical character of the site and facilities would be of the utmost importance.

Based on these analyses, findings, and conversations, the Design Team collaborated with SCPD to develop a dream list of projects that would fulfill the community’s needs as well as the mission of SCPD. A Benefits Analysis was then completed to compare the relative importance, potential impact, and achievability of each project with one another. Although several park concept designs were explored, the Design Team and SCPD quickly honed in on a single concept which became the basis for the Final Master Plan. This design concept was again vetted through the public engagement process and further evaluated with the development of an Opinion of Probable Construction Cost and Project Implementation Plan. An estimate for the Long-Term Operating, Management Budget provided further fiscal understanding.

Master Plan

The master plan establishes a vision that celebrates the unique historic heritage of the site, provides a focal point for environmental exploration and education, and enhances the park's connection to the surrounding community.

Similar to a bull's-eye that radiates outward, park activity is more active and intense, group-focused, and formalized near the center of the park around the historic buildings and pond area. Together, these areas create a destination. Whereas in the outer areas, park activity is more passive and peaceful, individually-focused, and informal. These regions allow for a more reflective experience and create the opportunity for discovery. The East/West extension of the main driveway that connects Congress Lake Road to Duquette Avenue and the North/South multi-purpose trail that follows the old farm lane to connect Swamp Street with Pontius Street connect the heart of Quail Hollow Park to the community.

At the heart of the park, the proposed design for the Manor House Area keeps people in center focus. By redefining vehicular and pedestrian circulation, it not only improves public safety, accessibility, and intuitive wayfinding, but more importantly creates an arrival sequence that builds anticipation and re-centers focus on the historic building complex. The site design strives to balance circulation, public safety, and access requirements with an intent to preserve the historic setting to the greatest extent possible. Building renovations preserve the Manor House and rehabilitate the Caretaker's House and Carriage House to maximize historic attributes as well as provide a Welcome and Interpretive Center, event spaces, public restrooms, offices, and meeting rooms to support the ongoing operation of the park.

Rehabilitation of the historic Little House provides an opportunity for volunteer group offices and small group public meeting rooms. Outside, the site will be developed to host a raised planter community garden in honor of the Stewart Family's wartime Victory Garden, an area for raising bees with a small education shed and children's playground, and small picnic area.

At the Pond Area, a multi-leveled pond and wetland habitat provide opportunities for fishing, wildlife observation, and environmental education. A large shelter and natural playground overlook the deepest area of the pond, while a new Nature Center takes advantage of the shallow southern extension and surrounding wetland areas. Between the two buildings, an open grass lawn provides space for relaxation and small group activities.

Surrounding these primary areas, the trail network not only provides necessary connections between point A and point B, but develops a trail hierarchy that is reflective of the bull's-eye design concept, the historic heritage and the unique natural environment. Pedestrian trails will provide opportunities to learn about the history of the site, to explore temporary or permanent community installations, to discover hidden pools and wetlands, to hike or run the trails, and much more. Specialty trails and a new trailhead for equestrians and mountain bikes provide good opportunities for new riders to explore the park.

Undulating throughout the park, proposed meadows provide not only much needed habitats for endangered species such as the endangered rusty patched bumblebee, but also a repeatable landscape form that links park amenities with one another and creates a unique attribute that can be identified with Quail Hollow Park.

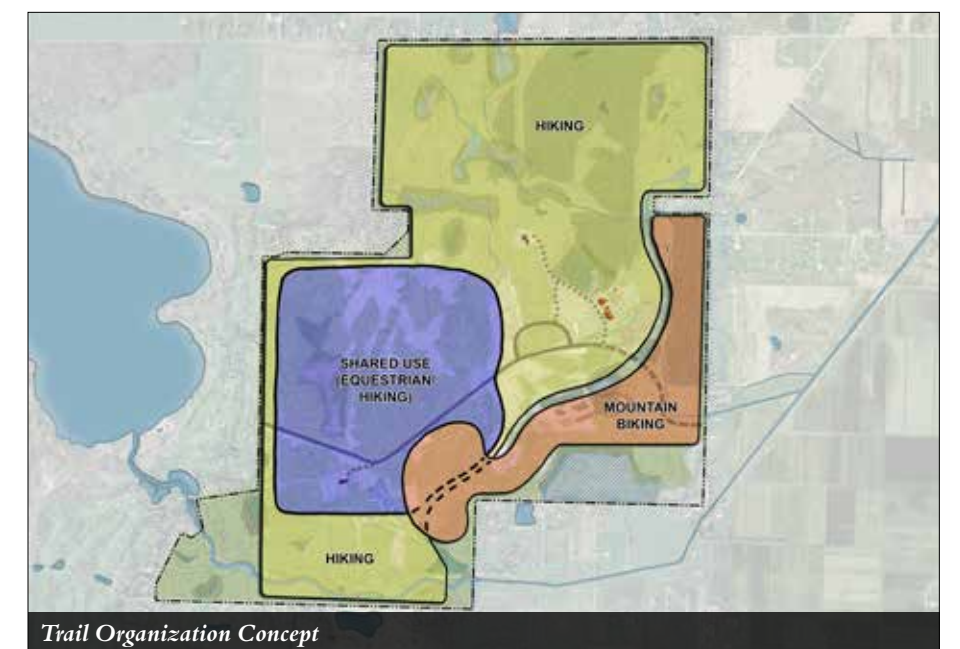
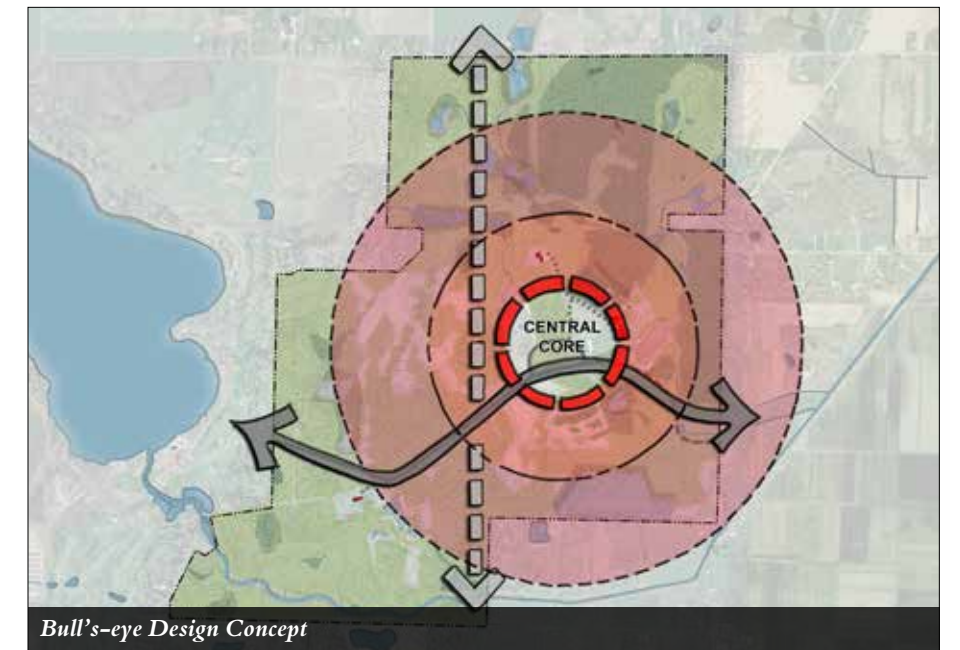
A Group Campground for 30 guests, new Maintenance Facility, and renovation of the Levitt House round out the remainder of the proposed improvements within the park boundary.

Beyond the boundary, the Master Plan provides recommendations to link the park with community amenities and SCPD's Trails and Greenways Master Plan via on-street bike lanes/sharrows or multipurpose trail connections. The plan provides two alternatives: a lower cost, minimal right of way solution and a more expensive, but generally safer alternative that focuses on multipurpose paths.

Conclusion

The Final Master Plan document represents the Design Team and SCPD's greater understanding of the existing character and full potential of Quail Hollow Park, and is a direct result of the collaborative design process. The Master Plan has the potential to create a powerful place that celebrates the community and the surrounding region, creates long-term memories, provides flexible, spontaneous places for art, events, food, and music, and allows for future growth and evolution over time.

The following pages outline the project improvements identified by the Project Team, prioritized in effort to meet the needs of Stark Parks and its responsibility to the community at large, while generating a deeper understanding of how the park is used today and how it could be used tomorrow.



WORK PLAN

General Approach

The Master Plan process was approached by the Design Team with a focus on interaction with the public, business community, local officials, and SCPD staff members. Preparation of the Master Plan was broken down into three primary phases: Needs Assessment, Recommendations, and Implementation Strategy. All three stages of the planning process were intended to incorporate significant input from diverse perspectives that would lead to a base of community support for its recommendations. This document is a product and reflection of that process.

The following provides a timeline of progress for each stage of the Master Plan Process. The intent of this timeline is to provide an accurate but brief glimpse of the tasks that went into the development of the Preliminary Master Plan Concepts as well as the Final Master Plan and its Implementation Plan.

Needs Assessment

The earliest stages of the Master Plan process began with the collection of data to better understand both the park district’s and community’s goals and objectives, to recognize the surrounding community and its significant features and, most importantly, to identify and analyze the existing conditions that make up Quail Hollow Park. At this stage, the Public Engagement process included meetings with individual stakeholder groups, a descendant of the Stewart family, and SCPD staff members, and also included online and distributed hardcopy surveys, and a public forum. Presentation materials from the forum were displayed at the Sippo Lake Exploration Gateway Center from January through March of 2017 to gather further community input. These findings helped direct many of the major decisions that provided a foundation for the design process. These findings have been further detailed in the Needs Assessment section of the Report.

Recommendations

Utilizing the results from the Needs Assessment stage of the project, the Design Team collected and refined a “wish list” of modifications, improvements, and potential additions to the park.

As part of this “wish list,” the Design Team completed a preliminary cost estimate for each modification/addition identified. Based off the existing deficiency and/or the level of need revealed during the Needs Assessment stage, each item was ranked in terms of its benefit/cost. The list was then segregated into multiple improvement categories based on the improvement cost and implementation time. These findings have been further detailed in the Recommendations section of the Report.

The Design Team then collaborated with SCPD to develop several alternative Concept Plans that strove to balance the prioritized wishlist with the opportunities and constraints presented by the existing site. Through several worksessions, the Design Team and SCPD developed a single Concept Plan that was presented at a second Public Forum for review and comment.

Implementation Strategy

Concurrent with the final design, the Design Team developed an Opinion of Probable Construction Cost, Implementation Plan, and Opinion of Long-Term Operating, Management, and Budget Considerations. Together, these documents provide SCPD with a snapshot that can be used to establish a funding and implementation strategy as each design element is realized.

The final plan reflects analyses of the existing conditions, benchmark and trends research, community, stakeholder, and SCPD staff comments, and a collaborative design process between the Design Team and SCPD staff members. These findings have been further detailed in the Implementation section of the Report.



Design Team Work Session



Site Visit with Stark Parks Staff

PROJECT TIMELINE

