



Northside Park Renovation - Questions and Answers

Will the high school programs continue to be held at the park?

- The Wheaton Park District has worked hard to involve Wheaton North High School and incorporate their comments and concerns into the plan. It is especially important to maintain the ability to utilize the park for the cross country meets that accommodate several thousand participants.
- We are aware that the size of these meets can have an impact on the traffic within the area. While not currently a part of the renovation plan, the Wheaton Park District is looking at ways of increasing parking capacity and circulation within the park. Improvements outside of the park will have to be done in cooperation with the City of Wheaton.

How will the renovated lagoon accommodate storm water?

- The design for the park currently includes plans to lower the existing weir a couple of inches to accommodate additional storm water flow that will result from widening the culvert at Main Street. The same amount of water will make its way to Northside Park; however the wider culvert will allow it to flow slightly faster. Lowering the weir will provide the extra storage to hold the water and maintain the water levels observed during storms under current conditions until it is eventually released downstream.
- The overall area that is currently water will remain roughly the same. There is some additional storage that must be provided to account for the construction that will occur during the renovation. This is proposed for the northeast corner of the lagoon.
- Given the overall area of the lagoon, it is anticipated that these minor changes will result in approximately an additional 10 acre-feet of storage.

Will the flood plain be changed?

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) manages the flood plain and requires extensive permitting for any changes. Currently there are no changes anticipated.

Will the lagoon be aerated?

- Aeration is important to the health of the lagoon to ensure that the water has enough oxygen in it to support fish and other aquatic wildlife. The weir will provide some aeration to the lower pond and supplemental aerators will be added to other areas if necessary.

Are any changes planned downstream at the Lincoln Marsh?

- The renovation work only includes two locations adjacent to Gary Avenue. These areas will provide compensatory floodplain storage and detention that are previous park district commitments. These areas will also be used as staging areas for dewatering of the dredge material from the lagoon.

Is it possible to trap sediment and debris from the water entering the lagoon?

- The compensatory storage area planned for the northeast corner of the park will be designed to collect sediment and other debris. This area will be accessible to equipment that can clean the area out on a regular basis.

Persons with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in this meeting should contact the park district's ADA Compliance Officer, Michael Benard, at the park district's Administrative Office, 600 S. Main Street, Wheaton, IL Monday through Friday from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Requests for a qualified ASL interpreter require five (5) working days advance notice. Telephone number 630.665.4710; fax number 630.665.5880.



Wheaton Park District

What can be done about pollution and illegal dumping within the park or upstream?

- The City of Wheaton occasionally does dye testing which can result in a harmless green color within the creek and lagoon that looks very similar to antifreeze. Any concerns within the park should be directed to the Park Services Center at (630) 653-5429 between 7am and 4pm Monday through Friday. If there is a concern outside of these hours, the Wheaton Police can be contacted at the non-emergency number (630) 260-2161.

Can the berm on the west side of the park be improved?

- This berm was created in cooperation with the City of Wheaton to prevent flooding within Pioneer Terrace. Any changes will have to be reviewed by the City of Wheaton. The Wheaton Park District will work with the City to explore options for maintaining the berm and incorporating the area into a long term planting plan for the park.

How big will the vegetated buffer be?

- A vegetated buffer adjacent to the water is necessary and beneficial for several reasons. It will prevent erosion, filter runoff, provide wildlife habitat, improve the aesthetics and discourage geese. The recommended size of the buffer to be most effective is 50' wide.
- DuPage County has agreed to allow the Wheaton Park District to vary this size so access to the lagoon is not impeded and the existing recreational uses of the park are maintained. This means that some areas may be as narrow as 8', although other areas may be as much as a 100' wide. The actual proposed width of the buffer was staked and not mowed during the summer of 2007.
- A plant height of 30" is recommended to discourage geese. The wide variety of plants proposed will vary from this height with some portions of the plants exceeding this height. The buffer is not anticipated to significantly obscure visibility as the bulk of the leaves will be below 30" and the slope towards the lagoon will help visibility. The buffer will be maintained regularly through mowing and/or burning. The buffer around the lake at the Morton Arboretum is a good example of what can be expected.
- Access to water will be available through paths, platforms, and stonework.

Is there a plan for replacement of the existing trees within the park? Will there be removal of existing trees?

- Our goal is to remove as few trees as possible during the renovation. Any trees that are removed will be replaced.
- Invasive species, such as buckthorn, will be removed as a part of the park district's ongoing efforts throughout Wheaton.

How will the project be financed?

- A previous referendum passed to refinance the park district's existing bonds and provide funds for this project. Currently \$6 million is available with an additional \$2 million that can be generated through levy per year without increasing the tax rate.
- Discussions about financing will be open and information will be available to the public throughout the process. Specific decisions have not been made yet, although we will actively seek grants to offset the local cost of the project.

Are there any public safety concerns with the additional bridges that are proposed?

- The bridges will accommodate the width of park vehicles and police cars. However, the park district will prevent normal vehicular traffic that could be a danger to pedestrians.
- The Wheaton Police have seen the plan and feel that the additional bridges will not create any problems that they cannot overcome.

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Wheaton Park District

What is the percentage of surface area of the lagoon that will be dredged?

- The percent of the surface area that will be dredged is approximately 60%. The area around Murray Island, extending up towards the south end of the Boy Scout Island will be the area's most improved. The top layers of silt will be removed, extending down to the peat.

How will the project improve the algae problem that exists in the lagoon?

- Several things will improve the water quality. The increased depth created by the initial dredging will allow for cooler water temperatures that are not as favorable for algae growth. The buffer and wetland plantings will help to filter out fertilizers that can increase algae growth. Finally, aerators will be added in several locations to ensure that the water has enough oxygen in it to support fish and other aquatic wildlife that will feed on plant material such as algae.

Will the grading affect existing plantings?

- In 2007, the park district marked out the proposed buffer around the lagoon and stopped mowing these areas. This was done to allow everyone to visualize the size of the buffer. The plants that have grown are primarily weeds. Many of these plants, which include some undesirable tree species, are taller than the proposed plantings that will be placed along the buffer.

The culverts downstream at the Illinois Prairie Path and the Union Pacific railroad tracks appear to be causing water to back up into the park and adjacent homes. Can anything be done to widen the culverts there?

- These culverts are not currently a part of the Northside Park renovation project. The prairie path culvert is on property owned by DuPage County.
- Widening the culverts would allow water to drain more quickly, but could result in additional problems for property downstream.
- The Wheaton Park District has made efforts to clear this culvert of debris that can cause it to back up and will contact the County to see if further improvements can be made.

This project is very expensive and seems to benefit regional storm water problems. Are the local residents taking on a burden for others?

- The existing problems are primarily upstream from the park in North Wheaton. We are trying to solve the problem within the regulations of DuPage County and not relocate the problem elsewhere.

Property was previously condemned along Gary Avenue for a storm water retention project that did not occur. What happened to that plan?

- The current team working on this project and our elected officials were not involved at that time. The project that we are proposing will improve the conditions within the park and the extent of flooding at Main Street.

When will the city be able to begin work on the Main Street Bridge?

- The bridgework can begin as soon as the park storm water improvements are to the weir and shoreline. It is anticipated that this will be possible in the spring of 2010.

How should we contact the county to request improvements outside of the scope of the project?

- You may contact Rob Sperl, the park district's Director of Planning at (630) 510-4975 or at the Park Services Center, 1000 Manchester Road. He will coordinate all related concerns and approach the county storm water committee with them.

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When will the buffer plantings be installed?

- Grading will be our first step in this process, followed by seeding if conditions are dry enough. Planting is scheduled to occur in the spring of 2010. Dredging will then be the last step and likely take several years. There should be little impact from the dredging on park operations.
- The design for the park currently includes plans to lower the existing weir a couple of inches to accommodate additional storm water flow that will result from widening the culvert at Main Street. The same amount of water will make its way to Northside Park; however the wider culvert will allow it to flow slightly faster. Lowering the weir will provide the extra storage to hold the water and maintain the water levels observed during storms under current conditions until it is eventually released downstream.

Has the dredge material been tested?

- The material has been tested and is very clean and nutrient rich. We will look at providing the material for local residents who wish to utilize it.

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