



Beryl Gaffney Park

FINAL REPORT

A P R I L 1 9 9 9

Anne Robinson
& ASSOCIATES

CORUSH
SUNDERLAND
WRIGHT



CITY of NEPEAN

BERYL GAFFNEY PARK

FINAL REPORT

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Anne Robinson & Associates
5430 Riverside Cr., Manotick, ON K4M 1G9
613-692-3934, Fax 692-4335, E-mail robinson@sympatico.ca
&
Corush, Sunderland, Wright
1960 Scott St., Suite 209, Ottawa, ON K1Z 8L8
613-729-4536, Fax 729-3018, E-mail csw@csw.ca



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*Anne Robinson,
Anne Robinson & Associates*

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Executive Summary

Project Purpose

In the fall of 1998, the City of Nepean contracted Anne Robinson & Associates "to advance a framework or strategy to develop Beryl Gaffney Park as a City-wide, family oriented park." Anne Robinson coordinated the project with Steve Sunderland, Landscape Architect with Corush, Sunderland, Wright and liaised with Bill Levesque, Director of Planning and Development, City of Nepean.

Project Process

Beryl Gaffney Park will not only reflect past traditions in Nepean, but anticipate future recreation interests and needs. The Project Work Plan was designed to:

- consolidate existing principles and data;
- analyze the recreation demands and trends;
- assess the site constraints and opportunities;
- characterize the community's preferences;
- develop a concept design based on the above;
- draft a strategy for development.

Pinciples from the Past

The *1982 Parks and Recreation Planning Guide* noted a shortage of City-Wide parks in Nepean and recommended acquisition of land for city-wide park development. In fact, purchase of some of these lands on the Rideau began in the 1970's.

Nepean's Open Space System has been built on:

- excellent planning - both short and long term planning, concept and specific design work;
- a hierarchy of parks - neighbourhood, community, City-wide spaces
- accessible (by foot, bicycle, car) and affordable, to all Nepean residents
- accentuation of the Ottawa, Rideau and Jock Rivers, connecting land and water resources;
- a linkage system - network of trails, linking major activity nodes;
- sound preservation, conservation and management practices.

Beryl Gaffney Park - Constraints and Opportunities

Beryl Gaffney Park is 39 hectares (96 acres) of land, stretching from the north bank of the Jock River to Barnsdale Road, between Highway 16 and the Rideau River. The Jock River enters the Rideau at the northerly end of the site and there is 1600 metres or almost a mile of shoreline along what is often called the back channel of the Rideau River. The soils are primarily Class 2 with a strong capacity to support vegetation. Coniferous trees including scotch, red and white pine, norway and blue spruce, cedar, larch and fir can be found and deciduous trees such as basswood, ash, maple, oak, black locust, birch, butternut, elm and beech are present. Erosion is a problem in some shore areas and the water depth varies significantly.

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Ninety per cent of the land is flat and ten percent is fairly steep topography. There is poor access to the water's edge but excellent views of the river and the dam. A wetland area, relatively calm water, riffles, agricultural meadows, mature vegetation in some areas and the early succession reforestation are attractive assets.

Another significant factor is the context of this park site to neighbouring open space, both in Nepean and in other jurisdictions. Within a 1 mile radius of Beryl Gaffney Park there are many hectares of open space including those in Nepean - Hearts Desire Park, Sachs Forest, the Monarch Golf Course, the Memorial Gardens, the Jock River Corridor, the Minto lands, and those lands under other jurisdictions, namely Long Island Park, Nichol's Island, Long Island Locks, Upton Collins Park and Jeffrey Armstrong Park

Demand and Trends Analysis

Demographic projections, recreation participation patterns and trends suggest the following:

- Nepean's current population is about 122,000 and its projected population in 2007 is 142,500 with most of the growth in the southern area of Nepean;
- an aging baby boomer population (almost one third of Nepean's population will be in the retirement, semi-retirement category by 2015);
- people will live longer and a greater percentage of the population will be 75 years+;
- walking, gardening, golf and bicycling will be popular outdoor physical activities;
- with the baby boomers retiring, they will have less disposable income and/or spend less on their recreation;
- increased ethnic diversity, more visible minorities in the community;
- emphasis on quality, service, experience, and simplicity;
- emphasis on environmental, ecological, cultural, historical aspects of recreation due to more urbanization, technological employment and aging of the population.

Park Characterization

Based on the above findings and research, a series of 95 slides were assembled, representing various activities (both organized and spontaneous), natural/ formal landscaping features, contemporary/ traditional designs, various water attributes, environmental versus more developed amenities. The slides were evaluated by staff, residents, leisure study students and Nepean youth aged 11-13 years. A total of 123 responses were tabulated. There was a strong consensus for the following activities in the future Beryl Gaffney Park::

- tobogganing/ pond skating/ cross country skiing
- winter hiking/ nature hikes/ outdoor walking trails/ exploring/ hiking
- canoeing/ fishing/ natural water area
- natural environment/ natural bird sanctuary/ natural habitat areas
- asphalt walking/ cycle paths/ recreational pathways
- picnicking
- children's play space

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Beryl Gaffney Park Design

After the integration of the relevant factors including Nepean's history of park development, projected population growth, outdoor activity patterns, community input and applicable opportunities and constraints, the following Principles were prepared to guide the development of Beryl Gaffney Park:

- Rural/ Natural - hedgerows, meadows, reforested areas; parking has rural character and not commercial
- Family focus for all ages - adventure play areas, picnicking, multi-use paths
- Simple Adventure - adventure play areas, foot bridges, stone walkways, tall grasses
- Preservation of Green Space/ Open Space, of the landscape, views to the river; space for the sake of space
- Accessible by foot, bicycle, car, and boat
- A place of escape from the neighbouring congestion, crowding, to be alone
- A place for assembly of groups in an outdoor setting
- A place for "unorganized" recreation, spontaneous activities
- Access to the Rideau River, a water orientation
- Linked Network - destination point and linked to Recreational Path Network
- Affordable - to build and for users
- Sustainable - to maintain

Specific Design Elements proposed to achieve these Principles include:

- ▶ trail network and linkages
- ▶ group/ family picnic area and outdoor amphitheatre
- ▶ canoe/ kayak rooftop access/ small boat rentals
- ▶ fishing opportunities
- ▶ adventure play areas for children
- ▶ channel ferry and wetland boardwalk
- ▶ reduced maintenance program; not a manicured look; some long grass areas

The Study reviewed and summarized the following relevant reports:

City of Nepean Parks and Recreation Planning Guide. 1982.

Jock River Landing Report. November, 1988. Torrance and Wright Landscape Architects

City of Nepean Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes. May, 1988. Wheeler Douglas Associates

Riverbend Park Opportunities and Constraints January, 1990. Project Planning Canada Limited.

Public Use of Naturalized Parkland. April, 1990. Corush, Laroque, Sunderland

Planning and Land Use Appraisal Report. September, 1991. Totten, Sims, Hubicki

Sachs Forest, Guidelines for Development of Parkland and Housing Adjacent to Parkland. February, 1995. Wheeler/ Douglas

Long Island Riverbend Parklands Concept Plan. June, 1996. Ecologistics

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Correction: P. 5 Dick Bell Park is 29.65 acres or 12 hectares; P.6 , 4th para should read "To date, the City invested over four million dollars in Andrew Haydon Park exclusive of land acquisition costs." P.7, Eliminate para. 1