

## 6. Beryl Gaffney Park Concept Design

A Design Concept is the synthesis of many factors to achieve the ideal functional composition for the site. The product is a skeleton concept, much like an outline for a book, only presented in a graphic form. Use units are illustrated in approximate size and form where they belong on the site. Traffic channels are placed where they are expected to be. The spatial structure is set. However, additional specifications and a myriad of details remain to be decided and implemented as the park is developed but these items will generally supplement, rather than materially change, the major commitments as illustrated in the Design Concept.

The character of Beryl Gaffney Park will be similar to Ottawa's Vincent Massey Park. It is not a Richmond Fenn, not a conservation area. It is a reflection of our times - an emphasis on ecological, sustainable development, evidence of Nepean's rural roots. Beryl Gaffney Park will capture the essence of Nepean's recently adopted motto, "City Living - Country Pleasures". The building blocks for the Design Concept are sketched below.

The User Slide Characterization indicated that Nepean residents were looking for:

- ⇒ spontaneous, unorganized recreation opportunities
- ⇒ naturalized theme but not a conservation area
- ⇒ activities like cycling, walking paths, walking trails, cross country skiing, canoeing, kayaking, boating (small), access to the river, picnicking, snack food, fishing, a place to escape, adventure
- ⇒ not commercial recreation

The site also has certain opportunities and constraints including:

- ⇒ the topography of the land is 90% flat and 10% steep
- ⇒ poor access to the water
- ⇒ impediments to circulation within the park including existing housing developments
- ⇒ mature vegetation and early succession reforestation
- ⇒ excellent views to the river and to the dam
- ⇒ features unique wetland, calm water (no big boats), riffles, agricultural meadows
- ⇒ problem with traffic noise from Hwy 16
- ⇒ opportunity for greenway connections along the Rideau and to greater open space network

The Underlying Principles of the Beryl Gaffney Concept Design are:

- Affordable - to build and for users
- Sustainable - to maintain
- Rural/ Natural - hedgerows/ meadows, reforested areas
- Family focus - all ages - adventure play areas, picnicking, multi-use paths
- Simple Adventure - adventure play areas, foot bridges, stone walkways, tall grasses
- Access to the Rideau River
- Preservation of Green Space/ Open Space, of the landscape, views to the river
- Access to the site by foot, bicycle, car, 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.

Implications of the Principles are:

- ⇒ preservation of space with no specific use, space for the sake of space
- ⇒ remove the car from the experience
- ⇒ parking has a rural character versus commercial
- ⇒ affordable park development, possibly phased
- ⇒ retain some vestiges of the rural landscape
- ⇒ creation of large areas for groups
- ⇒ adventure features
- ⇒ water orientation - small boat rentals, fishing
- ⇒ accessible - some asphalt paths
- ⇒ linked Network - destination point and linked recreational path network

Specific Ways to Achieve these Principles:

- ⇒ arrive by car, foot, cycle, or boat [walking, cycle and boat accommodations]
- ⇒ group/ family picnic area
- ⇒ canoe/ kayak rooftop access/ rental
- ⇒ fishing opportunities
- ⇒ adventure play areas for children
- ⇒ maintenance - reduced grass cutting

## 6.1. Changes to the Draft Concept Plan

The Draft Design was altered slightly to reflect the feedback received at the Open House and from the circulation of the Plan throughout the community. Additional buffering was added in the vicinity of Lockview Road to insulate the existing housing from the activities of the Park. The consultants strongly recommend, however, that the Group Picnic use remain in this general location as well as the related parking. The view of the dam from this particular area is one of the most spectacular vistas in the entire park. To disallow City of Nepean residents the pleasure and opportunity to leisurely enjoy this view would be most unfortunate and would compromise the public good for the private demands.

When the park is developed in this location, the City could consider possible restricted uses in this Picnic Area, perhaps not allowing BBQ's or limiting the size of the groups. There may be separation considerations that bias toward the north, and specific grading and vegetation solutions could be explored that will buffer the immediate residents from the park activities.

Further, the consultants strongly support the parking which is located just northwest of Lockview Road and the group picnic area. If parking is not located within easy access of this picnic area, the homeowners will be constantly frustrated by park visitors who don't wish to transport their bags any distance, and, despite no parking by-laws and threat of fines, will park on the neighbourhood doorstep. The parking has been specifically and purposely located in proximity to the picnic area to mitigate this anticipated problem. Removing the parking will only exacerbate the issue further.

### *Buildings on Site*

Any major building on the site will be located in the vicinity of the small craft boat dock. The view at this location, both up and down the river, is one not to be missed. The building indicated is fairly large. The consultants have not, however, specified its use. Several suggestions have been made such as the relocation of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority offices, a trail centre, food concessions, washrooms, wellness centre, boat rentals and/or interpretative centre. The City may contemplate a small collection of buildings reflecting a village sense or a larger "barn" concept that denotes the heritage of this area, one of Nepean's earliest settlement points.

This facility or group of amenities has the potential of ultimately generating revenues for the City but this revenue sourcing should in no way compromise the Underlying Park Principles. Instead the facilities and their services should be complimentary to the ideals of the Park. Small boat rentals, for example, make boating accessible to everyone. This activity is affordable, sustainable, ecological and provides simple adventure opportunities for a wide age range.

*Tobogganing*

While there was an expressed interest in the availability of tobogganing on Beryl Gaffney Park, the consultants are recommending that this activity not be provided at this location. The land is very flat and not naturally ideal for tobogganing. A manufactured hill would appear incongruent with its surroundings. Pond skating, on the other hand, can be simply and aesthetically achieved by grading efforts and is thereby much more conducive to the park's landscape.

*Fishing*

Fishing has been recommended. The consultants anticipated that this activity would occur in the river and identified several fishing dock locations. Subsequently, a fish farm was also suggested, possibly in the river. This idea warrants further detailed analysis, consultation with the respective regulatory agencies and scientists, to determine whether a fish farm is feasible. If fishing is facilitated, whether naturally or managed, the guiding principle is first and foremost, the respect and preservation of the species in the Rideau and their habitat.

**6.2. Implementation Plan**

While Nepean has been one of the most fiscally astute municipalities in the Ottawa-Carleton region, adopting a "pay-as-you-go" philosophy in the early '80's and reducing its per capita debt from \$209 in 1983 to 0 in 1997, the pressure of low assessment growth, an aging infrastructure and provincial downloading will challenge future Councils and administrations.

Capital expenditures peaked in 1990 and have decreased annually since that time, stabilizing in 1993-94 at about \$2.5 million. The land for Beryl Gaffney Park has been acquired by foresight and first right of refusal, not through subdivision transactions. Development charges have not been levied and there is therefore no allocated sum of money for the park's development.

The consultants suggest, however, that the design for this site is not an expensive design, especially as compared to Andrew Haydon Park. None of the expensive fill and contouring, that was an enormous expense with Andrew Haydon Park, will be necessary at Beryl Gaffney Park. Also, trails and parking lots could be stone dust for quite some time before moving to paving, which is more expensive.

Financing the development of Beryl Gaffney Park will take:

- ▶ the commitment of Council, establishing this park as a capital project priority
- ▶ partnership with the community to involve residents and groups in both specific park projects and in potential fundraising for the park
- ▶ the ingenuity and creativity of staff to access potential grants and investigate creative funding alternatives

Several Principles should serve as a guide in the strategy to develop Beryl Gaffney Park:

Phased Development

With limited resources, the park development program can be staggered over a period of time and done in various units. We suggest at the very least an entrance and parking area with some path construction should begin soon.

Encourage Partners in the Development of Beryl Gaffney Park

Special projects can be supported by Service Clubs, Schools, Environmental groups, Activity groups such as the Nepean Canoe Club or Horticultural Societies. Private sector corporations may be interested in some sponsorship and should be encouraged. Groups may be interested specifically in an intensive inventory of the flora and fauna and continued yearly monitoring of bird counts, fish habitat, fish stock and the like.

Some organizations may prefer to simply raise funds for the development of specific aspects of the site such as the amphitheatre, an adventure play area or section of trail.

School groups might take on special clean-ups, participate in the species inventory or help plant the orchard or wildflower meadow.

Low Maintenance, Ecological Approach

The design concept is considerate of maintenance loads and the uncut grass areas will be less of a burden to the park maintenance staff. Volunteer park initiatives and stewardship should also be encouraged.

**6.3. Preliminary Costing**

The following are Class D cost estimates for the development of Beryl Gaffney Park:

**BERYL GAFFNEY PARK COSTING FORECAST**

1.	Drainage/ Water Servicing	\$125,000.
2.	Electrical Service	\$120,000
3.	Lighting	\$300,000
4.	Landscape	\$250,000
5.	Bridge Structures	
	a) Hwy 16/ Jock River	\$ 75,000
	b) Creek Crossings (3)	\$150,000
	c) Suspension Bridge	\$125,000
	d) Vehicle Bridge	\$ 85,000
6.	Fencing	\$ 60,000
7.	Pathways	
	a) Asphalt	\$225,000
	b) Stonedust	\$ 88,000
	c) Woodchips	\$ 15,000
8.	Roadways	\$170,000
9.	Parking (260 stalls)	\$325,000
10.	Site Furnishings	\$100,000
11.	Signage	\$ 80,000
12.	Boardwalk and Stairs	\$ 75,000
13.	Channel Ferry	\$25,000
14.	Lookouts	\$250,000
15.	Buildings	
	a) Rental Centre/ Washroom (1)	\$375,000
	b) Washrooms (2)	\$600,000
	c) Picnic Shelter (4)	\$300,000
16.	Adventure Playgrounds (2)	\$ 90,000
	TOTAL	\$4,000,000