

## City Center Park Purpose and Need Statement

### Purpose

The purpose of the City Center Park (encompassing the parcel commonly known as Dumont Park and adjacent areas) project is to plan, design and augment a centrally located, passive-use community park using principles of ecological and accessible design. The project is intended to cultivate and enhance the park's natural setting and features as a contrast to the developing urban context that surrounds it. The goal is to serve the needs of local residents and workers, neighbors, visitors, and people of all ages who seek the benefits of passive recreation in a wooded environment, while maintaining the area's water quality and wetland functions.

### Need

1. **Provide passive recreational opportunities and design elements that enhance the use of the park and the health and well-being of city residents.** Currently this area has the feel of a remnant woodland, with narrow worn trails being the only indicator of its use, and there is little awareness of its presence beyond the immediate neighborhood. There is a need for more clearly identified trails, seating, and entryways to better define this woodland area as a community park. It is also important to listen to and respect the concerns of abutting property owners with regard to its use and access, in balance with the needs of the community.
2. **Improve connections to the surrounding area and make the park accessible and safe to all.** Access into the site is not currently ADA compliant, in part due to topography and wetlands at the site's perimeter, and access points are not defined. Accessible paths (with bridges/boardwalks as required) from marked entry points are needed to expand the use of the park to people of all ages and abilities. There is an identified need to connect existing neighborhoods to the south and future City Center development to the north with a path, which could potentially accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians. In addition to connecting existing and proposed paths, this new path should also connect to visitor parking, which should be provided within the City Center development. Proposed open space within the future downtown such as stormwater treatment areas should be incorporated into the park and park management where practical, as logical travel corridors between City Center and the primary park space. Personal safety and security within the park needs to be a focus of the final design.
3. **Enhance opportunities to enjoy natural features within the park and support its educational potential.** The site is home to a number of natural features, many of which lack appropriate awareness by visitors. Paths and overlooks should be located to bring these natural features (e.g. native trees and understory species, wetlands, etc.) into view, and educational programming opportunities should be supported with an interpretive/wayfinding sign system.
4. **Improve the user experience of the park in a manner that protects any sensitive natural or cultural resources that may be present.** The presence of Class II wetlands within and adjacent to the site dictate that any park improvements need to be responsive to the regulatory requirements for wetlands and their buffer zones, and wetland crossings and impacts need to be limited within these areas. The site is considered archeologically sensitive, and if artifacts are discovered through an archeological field survey, soil excavation may need to be avoided in those areas. Based on these factors and the fact that the original funding source for the purchase of the Dumont Parcel was from the Land and Water Conservation Fund program, the proposed recreational uses will continue to be "passive" in nature and soil excavation should be limited. In addition, Low Impact Design strategies should be employed for stormwater management in order to prevent increased flow into the wetlands or adjacent properties.
5. **Improve the ecological health and diversity of the site.** The land is overrun with a dense undergrowth of invasive species. As such, it will require a plan to enhance the natural ecology of the woodland and wetland areas and a management plan to support a healthy and dynamic natural park.