



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

### STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur  
Director

March 31, 2016

**REQUEST:** Patterson Park Master Plan

**RECOMMENDATION:** Adoption with the following amendment:

Insert language into the 2015 Patterson Park Master Plan to clarify that adoption of this plan will serve to repeal and replace the 1998 Master Plan for Patterson Park.

**STAFF:** Kate Edwards

**PETITIONERS:** Department of Recreation and Parks

**OWNER:** Mayor and City Council – Department of Recreation and Parks.

#### **SITE/ GENERAL AREA**

Site Conditions: Patterson Park is located at 27 S. Patterson Park Avenue on the east side of Baltimore City. It is a 133-acre public park that features significant historic architecture, landscaping, recreational facilities, and archaeological resources. Patterson Park is Baltimore's most intensively used large park, serving as a venue for Baltimore City festivals, markets, and other events. The park includes numerous amenities including; a swimming pool, ball courts and fields, a dog park, a boat lake, an ice rink, a recreation center, the Pagoda, and a community garden. The majority of the park land (112 acres) is bounded by East Baltimore Street to the north, Eastern Avenue to the south, South Patterson Park Avenue to the western edge, and South Linwood Avenue to the east. South Linwood Avenue separates this larger segment from the 20-acre Eastern Annex—serving as the annex's western edge, with the other boundaries including South Elwood Avenue to the east, East Pratt Street to the north, and Eastern Avenue to the south.

General Area: Patterson Park is surrounded by six densely-built row houses neighborhoods that are immediately adjacent to its borders: Patterson Place, Baltimore-Linwood (Patterson Park North and East), Highlandtown, Canton, Upper Fells Point, and Butchers Hill (according to Baltimore City's 2011 Neighborhood Statistical Area boundaries).

#### **HISTORY**

Patterson Park is the oldest park in Baltimore City, originally only 6 acres in size, donated by William Patterson in 1827 for a "Public Walk". The park grew over the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to reach its present size in 1908. The park's design, landscape, and built environment have been shaped by historic events that occurred there and by different eras of park planning ideals. The western portion of the park is the most historic area, with many historic buildings, such as the

Pagoda, a Baltimore City Landmark, historic walking paths, and remnants of Roger's Bastion, a fortification that was the eastern line of land defense in the 1814 Battle of Baltimore during the War of 1812. The park was redesigned several times over its history to meet the contemporary best practices in park planning, such as the City Beautiful movement and the American Recreation movement.

### **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

The request conforms to the goals and objectives of the Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically PLAY Goal 3, Objective 1: Maintain a Well-managed System of Parks and Open Spaces. The request conforms to the goals and objectives of the Baltimore Sustainability Plan, specifically GREENING Goal 3: Provide safe, well-maintained public recreational space within ¼ mile of all residents.

### **ANALYSIS**

The Department of Recreation and Parks has been systematically developing master plans for each of their major parks. The purpose of these plans is to provide long-range guidance for project implementation in the park. They have completed plans for Druid Hill, Wyman, Farring Baybrook, Carroll, Clifton and Herring Run Parks.

This Master Plan studies how the physical plan of Patterson Park can reflect and facilitate its mission and fulfill related community needs. It studies the Park's immediate and long-term physical, programming, and historic preservation needs. The final product is a road map that guides immediate renovations and additions to grounds, buildings, and infrastructure, as well as anticipated long-term park needs.

The Department of Recreation and Parks worked with a consultant, Mahan Rykiel, on the master planning process. The planning process actively involved six surrounding neighborhoods in addition to representatives from other nearby communities, City agencies, local organizations, and non-profits. The process included monthly steering committee meetings, three at-large public meetings, seasonal Park user questionnaires, focus groups, and online engagement.

The plan was reviewed and approved by the Baltimore Commission of Historical and Architectural Preservation with the following amendment: *Consult CHAP staff on all projects in Patterson Park, including those that aren't obviously historic in nature, such as grading, tree planting plans, planning the design of the Habitat Core, since these activities may impact historic landscapes and archeological resources (both known and undiscovered) in the park.*

Recommendations are categorized under five broad strategies:

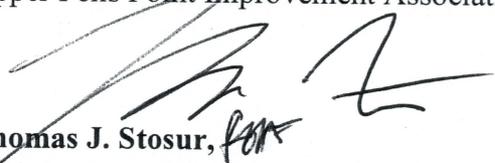
- Strategy I – Ecological at the Core: Systems, Performance, and Preference
- Strategy II – Protecting Assets: Maintenance, Enforcement, and Governance
- Strategy III – Big Moves, Significant Capital: Major Facilities and Their Relationships
- Strategy IV – Small Steps, Big Gains: Incremental Improvements
- Strategy V – Staging Success: Programs, Events, and Logistics

Staff finds that this Master Plan is sensitive to the preservation of the ecological, recreational and historic and architectural resources in the park, including buildings, landscapes, and archaeological sites.

Examples include:

- Designation of the western portion of the park, which retains significant historic integrity in landscape design, historic structures, and intact archaeological resources, as the “habitat core”, with minimal new construction and landscape alteration. The eastern portion of the park will be the “active core”, and will be the site of more active recreation, building construction, etc.
- Implement a maintenance strategy for buildings and structures in the park (Strategy II, pg. 46)
- Explore designation of the park as a Baltimore City Landmark, pursuant to City Council Bill 15-0511 (Strategy II, pg. 49)
- Construction of a new Recreation and Senior Center to be sensitive to historic character of Patterson Park, but not create an inauthentic “historic” appearance. (Strategy III, pg. 56)
- Enhance Boat Lake and Restore Promenade (Strategy III, pg. 60-61)
- Rehabilitation of historic structures, including the White House, Casino Building, Stables, Pagoda and Fountain (Strategy III, pg. 62-64)
- Continued utilization of Baltimore City standards for historic lighting in park (Strategy IV, pg. 66)
- Repair and enhance historic gateways and entrances into park and repair/reconstruct historic pathways using salvaged and historically-appropriate materials (Strategy IV, pg. 67-69)
- Add historical interpretative signage, including signage addressing archaeological resources, and self-guided historical trail paths (Strategy IV, pg. 70-71)
- Enhance tree and vegetation coverage, coordinated to ensure that key vistas and historic view sheds are retained and preserved. (Strategy IV, pg. 72-75)

Community Notification: Staff has notified Friends of Patterson Park, Banner Neighborhoods Community Corporation, Brewer’s Hill Community Association, Southeast Community Development Corporation, Southeastern District Police Community Relations Council, C.A.R.E. Community Association, Canton Community Association, Highlandtown Community Association, Patterson Park Neighborhood Association, Butchers Hill Association, Inc., and Upper Fells Point Improvement Association.



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