

Proposed designs for Irishtown Bend Park approved by Cleveland official: See the renderings



Irishtown Bend is steeped in Cleveland history.

CLEVELAND — With the stabilization of Irishtown Bend now underway, project planners gained approval of their concept designs of the proposed park from the Cleveland planning and landmarks commissions during a joint meeting on Friday.

The ambitious plan, first envisioned more than a decade ago, will transform a 23-acre green oasis hugging the Cuyahoga River adjacent to the Detroit-Superior Bridge, into one of the largest waterfront parks between New York and Chicago. The park and its riverfront trail will become the missing link that finally connects the Cuyahoga Valley National Park to Lake Erie.

“What’s a sort of empty hillside now can become a 25-acre park that will connect the neighborhood, the city, downtown, to the waterfront,” said Greg Peckham, Executive Director of LAND Studio, one of the organizations involved in the project. “From there, it will be able to connect people just about a mile up to Lake Erie, and 101 miles down through the towpath trail, through the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, and beyond.”

The park, which will span the hillside below West 25th Street and above the Cuyahoga River in Ohio City, will one day be a commu-

nity green space with areas for gathering, play, and exercise.

“We have a really interesting opportunity to create a common ground space for everybody that becomes a neighborhood park, a regional destination, and connects everybody to the region,” Peckham said.

Additionally, Katy Baumbach, Director of Marketing with Ohio City Incorporated, another organization involved in the project, said the park will be book-ended by public housing. Baumbach said Ohio City Incorporated has been working with the community to get feedback and ensure the park is a space that’s meant for everyone.

“Ohio City Incorporated has worked really closely with those residents to make sure that the park is a place that they feel welcome, and is an extension of where they live,” Baumbach said. “It literally is outside their door, so we want to make sure it is a place that meets their needs.”

Baumbach said the Ohio City neighborhood is one of the fastest growing in the area, and having green space for the community will be a valuable resource.

“We’ve added more than 2,000 units of housing in the last five years, and a lot of it is apartments,” she said. “The ability to provide greenspace for people who might not have that at their homes is something that’s really important to make sure that this neighborhood feels like a complete place and has a place where community can come together.”

Renderings show the park will include a café and welcome center, playgrounds, outdoor picnic areas, social justice garden in honor of communities who lived in the area before, an event lawn, storm water garden, and Irish cultural heritage site and archeological site.

In July, the Port of Cleveland approved the hiring of a Cincinnati-based construction company to handle the mammoth task of stabilizing and rehabilitating the Irishtown Bend hillside. The \$60 million project will not only go a long way into alleviating fears of the hillside falling into the Cuyahoga River, but it will help clear the way for the park to be built. Groundbreaking for the stabilization project took place in August, with completion scheduled for sometime in the next 18 to 24 months.

Once the stabilization work is done, planners from Plural Landscape Architecture and LAND studio envision construction of Irishtown Bend Park to begin sometime around August of 2025. The \$40 million project could then be completed by 2027.