

# Richardson Olmsted Complex Master Plan

Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting

July 21, 2008

7:00 PM

Polish Cadets Hall

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## CAG

✓ Justin P. Azzarella	✓ Harvey Garrett	Elaine M. Pyne	<b>Consultants</b>
✓ Dr. Stan Bratton	✓ Heather Gring	✓ Dr. Barbara Seals	✓ Elizabeth Cheteny
✓ Dr. Cynthia A. Conides	✓ Anne Harding Joyce	Nevergold	✓ David Gamble
✓ Benjamin Christy	✓ Francis R. Kowsky	✓ Tim Tielman	✓ Jajeon Rose-Burney
Ray Clark	✓ Richard Mack	✓ Max Willig	✓ Bob Shibley
✓ Drew Eszak	✓ Michael McLean	<b>RCC</b>	
✓ Robert Franke	✓ Gregory M. Patterson	✓ Eva Hassett	
	Tanski	✓ Monica Pellegrino Faix	
	Ted Pietrzak		

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## Agenda

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### Agenda

1. Introduction to the new CAG representatives (CAG – 5 minutes)
2. Summary of the last CAG meeting and related actions (CAG – 10 minutes)
  - Finalizing the CAG Work Plan
  - Progress on engaging constituents
  - RCC Web/CAG Wiki site
3. Initial analysis of reuse potential of the site and precedents for redevelopment (CKS – 15 minutes)
4. Preparation of background papers for the August 12 public meeting (CAG – 30 minutes)
  - Visioning, goals, and key community issues (describing and measuring a successful plan)
  - Preliminary review of Master Plan products
5. Review of the agenda for the August 12 public meeting (CAG – 30 minutes)

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## Summary

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### Agenda Item: Introductions

#### Discussion and Conclusions:

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) co-chairs began the meeting by introducing the two new members of the CAG:

- Dr. Stan Bratton – Executive Director of the Network of Religious Communities
- Heather Gring – Buffalo State College student

The CAG co-chairs also introduced two members of the CAG who were not present at the first meeting:

- Richard Mack – co-chair of the Black Rock Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance
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- Tim Tielman – Campaign for Greater Buffalo

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
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**Agenda Item: Summary of the last CAG meeting and related actions**

**Discussion and Conclusions:**

**June 16 2008 CAG meeting summary**

The meeting summary notes from the June 16, 2008 CAG meeting were approved as final.

**CAG Work Plan**

The CAG Work Plan was discussed and revisions from the first draft version were described. These revisions were suggested by members of the CAG. Additional suggestions for revisions include:

- The public meeting scheduled tentatively for December 2008-January 2009 should be held in early January rather than late December to avoid the holidays.

The Work Plan schedule was revised to reflect the schedule change, and the Work Plan was approved as final.

**Progress on Engaging Constituents**

The CAG discussed progress on engaging their own constituents and steps to be taken to get people to attend the upcoming public meeting:

- The CAG should help invite people to the meeting, covering a broad range of public representatives.
- However, the CAG should focus more on bringing people that can add the most value to the discussion at the meeting. The CAG should personally contact and invite their own constituencies, especially if there are specific people that should be in attendance.
- The RCC will distribute invitations to the public meeting to a list of over 400 community residents and past meeting attendees. The RCC will ask several groups to send the invitations to their own list serves. The RCC will use their Website to notify people of the public meeting, and ask for comments from the public. A press release will also be distributed.

The CAG felt that they needed to know more about the upcoming public meeting in order to invite the appropriate people. Information about the public meeting from this discussion included:

- The first public meetings were focused on background and inventory about the Richardson Olmsted Complex. The upcoming public meeting will be focused on how to plan for the site.
- The upcoming public meeting is the most critical public meeting for gathering public input before the plan is more developed. The public meeting will be used to gather information from the public including:
  - Community values
  - Desired results
  - Ideas to influence the Master Plan
  - What will make the Master Plan a success? (The success of the Master Plan will be based upon how we define the project to the public)

Several potential site reuse concepts will be presented to the public at the public meeting. Because a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) will be conducted as part of the Master Planning process, there is no preferred alternative.

**RCC Web/CAG Wiki**

The capabilities of the RCC Website and CAG Wiki site were discussed:

- The RCC Website has downloadable resources and a new “community” section with information regarding the Master Plan and ways for the public to make comments.
- The Wiki site is a private site for the CAG. It contains contacts, meeting resources, a discussion page, and working documents.

Members of the CAG expressed an interest in receiving hard copies of some of the larger documents posted to these two sites. The RCC should be contacted for hard copies, although they may not be available for some of the larger documents.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
-Post final CAG Work Plan on RCC Web	RCC/UDP	ASAP
-Begin personally inviting constituents to the public meeting	CAG	ASAP
-Email and mail the invitation to the public meeting to the list of past attendees	RCC/UDP	ASAP

**Agenda item: Initial analysis of reuse potential of the site and precedents for redevelopment**

**Discussion and Conclusions:**

David Gamble from Chan Krieger Sieniewicz (CKS) presented initial Master Plan concepts to the CAG. They have been asked by the Richardson Center Corporation to develop a plan for the total rectangular site; some of this site is actively used by the Buffalo Psychiatric Center and not identified as surplus property. This presentation included:

- Initial programmatic issues.
- Initial assets and challenges.
- Examples of similar successful rehabilitation precedents. (No decisions have been made about appropriate uses for the complex. The examples presented were meant to demonstrate rehabilitation potential only.)
- Five initial concepts for the Complex.
  1. Restoration of the South Lawn
  2. Site Focal Point: Centering Building AB (the towers)
  3. Create an Elegant Edge
  4. Extend the Olmsted Park System
  5. Northwest Quadrant

Comments and suggestions about the presentation included:

*Design*

- Connections should be planned and emphasized. These include physical connections with the surrounding neighborhoods, surrounding commercial districts, Olmsted parks, and the Buffalo State College (BSC) campus.
  - An area plan for the entire surrounding area may be useful.
  - A graphic showing the neighborhood context should be incorporated into the presentation, with connections illustrated.
  - Graphically show the connection between BSC and the complex and the connection between Olmsted's Delaware Park and the complex.
  - The proposed road connecting the BSC to the complex can be angled differently to avoid removing any buildings, and would create a better view shed between the two areas.
  - Graphically show neighborhood residents using the greenspace on the complex. This may help the public grasp what the potential can be.
- The Richardson Towers should be considered an architectural centerpiece to the landscape.
- The original entrance on Forest Ave should be restored.
  - This will create an approach to the towers, and help reduce the visual impact of the Strozzi building.

*Uses*

- Energy and excitement is needed to maintain momentum in redeveloping the Richardson Olmsted Complex.
  - Art galleries, performance space, music venues, classrooms, and an arboretum are uses that can generate energy and excitement. An event for the advisory group, like a picnic, at the site, may also help generate excitement amongst the public for the plan.

*Planning*

- Buffalo State College (BSC) is beginning a master planning process and has development plans concurrent with that process. BSC would like to work with the RCC. BSC must do certain things in the immediate future that may move faster than the planning process for the Richardson Olmsted Complex.
  - Members of the CAG expressed hope that the RCC and BSC planning process will inform each other.
- The five initial concepts for the Richardson Olmsted Complex presented by CKS should not be treated separately, but can be combined as one concept.
- The plan should increase the well-being of people using the Buffalo Psychiatric Center.
  - It should try to help reduce the stigma of "mentally ill", and involve patients in maintaining the site.

- The plan should include proposals for small projects outside of the complex boundaries.
  - Potential short term projects were discussed:
    - The fence around the Richardson buildings blocks public use of the complex, especially the pedestrian connections through the complex. Removing the fence, or portions of it, coupled with new pathways, may be a good first project.
    - Reopening the pathways beneath the towers will also provide the desired connections.
    - Temporary demonstration pathways on the complex could be a good short term project.
  - The plan should demonstrate confidence in the public that their input has been incorporated.
- Presentation*
- The presentation was a little overwhelming to some of the CAG members.
    - There was a lot of information, specific to design professionals, in a short amount of time.
    - One recommendation was to pace the separate concepts for reuse with a discussion with the public between each concept. The public could be asked what types of uses fit each of the concepts.
  - Some CAG members felt that the presentation concepts felt too final. The concepts need to be posed as preliminary, and should engage people that have not already been involved in the process.
  - The Northwest Quadrant concept needs more definition.
    - Its size and location make it an important component of the site.
    - The Northwest Quadrant concept may be incorporated into the other four concepts, rather than remain a distinct concept.

**Action items**

**Person responsible**

**Deadline**

**Agenda item: Preparation of Background Papers**

**Discussion and Conclusions:**

The CAG, with support from the Urban Design Project (UDP) will prepare background papers as part of the preparation for the August 12 public meeting. These background papers will include two main components:

- Visioning, goals, and key community issues (describing and measuring a successful plan)
- Preliminary review of Master Plan products

The new members of the CAG and representatives not present for the first meeting were asked “What will make the plan successful?” to build off of the previous list of responses. Below are the new responses.

1. Tim Tielman – The Master Plan must allow for flexibility or changes over time.
2. Richard Mack – The Master Plan should increase connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods. Black Rock and Riverside should be better connected to the Museum District so those neighborhoods can build from the assets. The Richardson Olmsted Complex pathways should be connected to surrounding pathways and bike trails.

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties were briefly presented to the CAG. There are four treatment approaches possible, including:

- Preservation
- Rehabilitation
- Restoration
- Reconstruction

Based upon the definitions of each of these approaches, Rehabilitation is the most accurate description of the Richardson Center Corporation approach. Because of the site’s historic designation, there are guidelines which must be followed when rehabilitating the site.

The CAG discussion regarding CKS’s presentation is described in the previous section of this summary.

Two questions were posed to the CAG to demonstrate the potential of the “clicker technology” that will be used at the public meeting. These questions and responses are below:

- What is the most important factor that will make the Master Plan a success?
  1. It improves the surrounding communities (58%)
  2. It benefits diverse neighborhood residents (5%)
  3. It restores the historic complex (25%)
  4. It is completed! (11%)

- You and your constituencies have been strongly engaged throughout the planning process.

1. Strongly Agree (28%)
2. Somewhat Agree (44%)
3. Neutral (22%)
4. Somewhat Disagree (6%)
5. Strongly Disagree (0%)

<b>Action items</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
-Prepare background papers for the CAG to review	UDP	ASAP

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**Agenda item: Preparation of Background Papers**

**Discussion and Conclusions:**

The draft agenda for the August 12 public meeting was described. Much of the conversation about the agenda and purpose of the meeting took place in previous parts of this CAG meeting and are described in other sections of this summary.

<b>Action items</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
-Review the public meeting agenda on the Wiki site and send comments to the UDP or RCC	CAG	ASAP