

MEMO



October 3, 2018

Kingston Open Space Plan Public Workshop Notes

On September 25, 2018, a public workshop was held at the Kingston Public Library to present an overview of the Kingston Open Space Plan, and solicit input from the public. After the initial presentation, the participants were invited to participate in table mapping discussions at three different tables. The following is a summary of the notes collected at each table.

Table One Notes: City Wide Map

1. **Rondout Creek.** Need access for paddlers, rowers, etc. The area along East Strand Street was specifically identified.
 - a. Trash cans and pickup needed along Kingston Point Rail Trail.
 - b. More trash pickup along waterfront.
 - c. Dock access needs to be upgraded in the area around TR Gallo Waterfront Park / Island Dock / Wurts Street crossing.
 - d. Island Dock – this peninsula should be made into a park.
 - e. Block Park – a walkway is needed here which connects the park.
2. **Esopus Creek.** Protect the floodplain here.
 - a. Remove debris from waterway so it can be used for paddling. Log jams block the way.
3. **Hudson River.** Waterfront promenade which follows river from Kingston Point Beach north to city line.
4. **Land for Preservation.** The currently undeveloped land west of the railroad tracks, in the vicinity of Wilbur Avenue, Chapel Street and Mason Hill Road – this land area should be preserved.
5. **Clearwater Park.** Bring back Clearwater Park.
6. **Lawton park property.** Bring back Lawton Park
7. **Rail Trail.** Complete the rail trail along the abandoned rail line.
8. **Cemeteries**
 - a. Houghtaling cemetery marker
 - b. Houghtaling cemetery at Pine Street Professional park
 - c. African-american burial ground on Pine Street

112 Spring Street, Suite 305
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866
Phone (518) 583-4335

151 South Main Street, Suite 200
New City, New York 10956
Phone (845) 499-2060

9. Industrial park. Need trails in open areas around Alcoa manufacturing plant

10. General Observations

- a. Need more playgrounds
- b. Need more pocket parks
- c. More benches that face each other

Table Two Notes: City Center Map

11. Lack of greenspace / playspace / street trees. The residential neighborhood generally between Route 32 and Oneil Street, north of Broadway has a lack of greenspace, park or street trees.

- a. This area would benefit from a local pocket park or playground.
- b. A park is needed on the block bounded by Oneil, Bruyn, Smith Ave and Downs Streets – Kingston Housing Authority property.

12. St. Mary's Cemetery. A former open field and playfield across the railroad tracks from St. Mary's Cemetery (owned by the cemetery) used to be used as a playfield. Now that cemetery is expanding into this area, that local greenspace is lost.

13. The Lace Mill. Propert at The Lace Mill, corner of Cornell Street and Progress Street – needs new plantings – very barren landscape right now and not attractive.

14. Kingston Plaza. This site generates a lot of traffic / activity and is a major local circulation hub. Many improvement opportunities here.

- a. Large parking lot – a lot of impervious area, could benefit from green infrastructure program to soften area, manage stormwater better.
- b. Need sidewalks which connect plaza to uptown areas.
- c. Should ideally have a vehicular + pedestrian connection from Albany Ave, crossing 587, to the back/side of Kingston Plaza. Currently have to drive all the way around through city to get to this plaza.
- d. Have 587 revert to highway, plan for greenspace

15. Esopus Creek. Need to open up parts along the Esopus for walking paths, outdoor enjoyment.

- a. Add more kayak launches, next nearest launch is quite a ways away.

16. The Greenline

- a. Opportunities to have small parkettes, green space along the Greenline. Potential for more formal park where Greenline comes out of tunnel to Kingston Plaza.

17. Academy Green

- a. This existing park space is underutilized. No one uses it. Opportunity to make this better and more interesting.

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- b. City removed benches to discourage homeless people from using it
- c. Was the subject of a green infrastructure proposal, but that didn't get funded.

18. Future Roundabout – Intersection of Albany Ave & Broadway

- a. Greenspace here will be lost, but maybe opportunity for new greenspace with future design?

19. Tannery Brook Stream / Twaalfskill Brook

- a. Much of these waterways have been covered / paved over. Need to daylight these streams.
- b. Program underway to “culturally daylight” the Tannery Brook by celebrating its path and drawing/artwork along route to make people aware of its presence.
- c. Emily Vail is doing Masters thesis on Tannery Brook.

20. Broadway

- a. General opportunity to provide some pocket parks along Broadway.
- b. Corner lot at intersection of Broadway and Henry Street – unpleasant corner. Could this high-visibility corner include greenspace? A pollinator habitat?
- c. Vacant lot on Broadway between Henry and Cedar – potential for urban park space.
- d. Parking lot behind Deisings Bakery, between Saccoman Lane and Green Line. Could put in a pocket park here, basketball courts, youth activities. Is all of this parking needed?
- e. Overpass for Greenkill Avenue, above Broadway. This area is ugly. Used to be able to get from Broadway up to Greenkill, but since they rebuilt bridge, cannot get up anymore. Should be a way to get up and down. People still climb up hill.
- f. Intersection of Broadway and Prince Street – Planet Wings. This is a high-visibility corner, opportunity for a park.
- g. Need more trash and recycling bins, benches.
- h. Students from Kingston High School often travel west along Broadway, and/or cut through YMCA across tracks to neighborhood beyond. Needs to be a safer route.

21. YMCA. YMCA has a community farm off of Susan Street. Working with landscape architect to expand farm and improve it.

- a. Potential for multi-use path which would connect from YMCA to cemetery in the south, running parallel to railroad tracks.
- b. Cemetery has many people who use it as a park for walking, outdoor enjoyment.
- c. Property behind YMCA – reportedly was identified as part of Brownfield Opportunity Area Midtown Forum, potential development by RUPCO as a park.

22. Rail Trail. Proposed rail trail which follows abandoned railbed along Greenkill Ave. Easements with adjacent landowners are needed.

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- a. Crossing at Wilbur Avenue is potentially an issue – bridge abutment was removed, grade change back up to railbed level from road.

23. Empire State Trail. Major new trail through city. Should look at trail route and identify areas for small parks along the path, places where people can stop and relax, and/or access points to get on/off.

24. Redevelopment. Industrial building and ballfields at South Clinton Ave and Greenkill – this property is planned to be redeveloped (“Metro”)

25. Active Railroad Line. Rail traffic is quite loud, shakes nearby houses in neighborhood. There needs to be a sound buffer along active rail line, with trees or vegetation to help mask noise.

- a. High school kids cut through path over railroad tracks by YMCA
- b. There needs to be a safe crossing for people to get from one side of the tracks to the other – it is a barrier.
- c. Many people use Wiltwyck Cemetery as an open space to walk, enjoy outdoors, like a park.
- d. Parcel adjacent to cemetery – between railroad tracks and Wilbur Ave – this is owned by the city. Is there potential to expand park-like setting of cemetery to here, provide connection across tracks to neighborhoods on the west side?
- e. Twaalfskill Brook runs through this area, gets buried. Should be daylighted.

26. Lawton Park Property. This property by South Wall Street was considered for a housing development years ago, but it never happened. Still undeveloped. Potential opportunity to make this into an actual park?

27. Pine Street

- a. Vacant flag lot property identified on map is believed to be a historic burial ground for African Americans. Potential for historic site / interpretive / recognition?
- b. Existing commercial/medical office development on Pine Street Professional Plaza. This is currently underutilized, has much more parking than it uses. Site could be consolidated / cleaned up to provide some of that as greenspace. Potential for Food trucks.
- c. Pine Street Professional Park – this site is believed to be historic burial ground.
- d. South Pine Street – there is an existing community garden at 27 S. Pine Street.

28. Interior Block Open Space. There is an interior block space bounded by Johnston Ave, Emerson, Main Street and Pearl Street – houses all around it with undeveloped space inside. Could this be an opportunity for a public space?

29. Community Garden

- a. There is an existing community garden in the vacant lot on Liberty Street, one block behind Library.

30. Henry Street / Pine Street neighborhood

- a. There is a need in this residential area for a local playground / park space with adult activities

31. Large lots on hill, southwest of Washington Ave

- a. This area has many large lots, undeveloped forested areas, Some vacant land. Would owners here be interested in conserving the land, protecting their privacy?
- b. Vacant parcel shown on map between Conway Place and Marius Street is not actually vacant – has a house on it.

Table Three Notes: City Wide Map

32. Esopus corridor

- a. Esopus Creek corridor has some active farm fields including the Native American Seed Sanctuary on an oxbow of the creek just west of the NYS Thruway <http://hvfarmhub.org/about/seed-sanctuary/>. (The Native American Seed Sanctuary project is an outgrowth of the Hudson Valley Farm Hub’s existing partnership with Seedshed, a non-profit run by the Hudson Valley Seed Company’s founder, Ken Greene. The opportunity to create a Native American Seed Sanctuary was realized with the Farm Hub’s pledge of land, equipment and staff, and made possible through Greene’s association with Rowen White, a renowned seed keeper, farmer, educator, and member of Mohawk Akwesasne tribal community.)
- b. Other fields further downstream west of the North Manor Avenue include some habitat near wetland and tributaries noted as fragile by a participant.
- c. Area in general very flood-prone. Consider encouraging native tree plantings/maintaining tree cover along stream bank as a riparian buffer (though may need to resolve any issues associated with tree cover with flood control berm located in the area.)
- d. Creek has river access on north side at Town of Ulster Park—could create additional access on south (city) side. Creek has tree/debris areas blocking canoe/kayak navigation that is problematic.
- e. Participants noted ongoing concern over creek water quality, especially turbidity related to upstream activities including operation of dam/impoundments at Ashokan Reservoir.
- f. Corridor adjacent part of O&W Rail Trail project.
- g. Concern over combined sewer overflows contributing to water quality problems. Continue to need to retrofit/upgrade storm and sanitary sewer system to address this.

33. Rondout corridor

- a. Includes low-lying relatively flat areas prone to flooding as well as very steep upland areas nearby. Erosion problems noted along northern shoreline at outlet to Hudson.
- b. River access provided by several marinas important to maintain. Participant noted there was additional demand for boat/marina access that was not being met due to limited supply of dock space.

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- c. Several larger parcels of primarily wooded land along upland areas along/near Rondout. Many of these have open space/habitat/scenic value. Several large parcels “private estates” in the area.
- d. Old hamlet of “Wilbur” at upper reach of Rondout in city perceived as physically disconnected from rest of city due to steepness of terrain and lack of pedestrian facilities (no sidewalks or publicly accessible paths along Wilbur Avenue).
- e. Historic area (Bluestone port, Fitch Bluestone Company Office, etc.)
- f. Former quarry upland area—steep, wooded, some river views, “ice caves”, bat habitat
- g. Downstream bike and pedestrian connections would be very good for residents of area connecting from Wilbur along waterfront to Strand Street out to Kingston Point.

34. Hudson corridor

- a. River very important habitat—concerns for water quality from discharge from storm sewer system and combined sewer overflows (where sanitary sewer combines discharge with storm sewer during major storm events, bypassing treatment facility). Of particular concern at Kingston Point Beach.
- b. Deep channel river access is potential to be recognized (e.g. at former Hutton Brickyard site off North Street).
- c. The Kingston-Poughkeepsie Deepwater Habitat (runs about 25 miles from near mouth of Esopus to Wappingers Creek) is one of the largest spawning areas for Atlantic sturgeon and is important for a number of species.
- d. Public waterfront access important—waterfront promenade (Kingston Greenline concept). Consider concept of continual connection north into Town of Ulster
- e. Lot of great views of Hudson River from this corridor.
- f. River shoreline habitat enhancements possible?

35. Other Streams

- a. Many participants interested in exploring options to “daylight” some of the streams that have been piped underground over the years; e.g., Tannery Brook.
- b. Concept of adding “green infrastructure” to urban environment; e.g., bioswales along drainage corridors, creating wetland treatment systems for stormwater runoff prior to discharge to receiving water, etc.. See <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/58930.html>

36. Street Trees, Parks Greenways, and Trails

- a. Interest in continuing to improve street tree management program in city—participants like the tree inventory and concept of infill of urban street trees
- b. Consider updating city code to address street trees (more adaptive to setting, conditions and neighborhood, adding and removing certain species, etc.)
- c. Many participants wanted to continue city effort to improve pedestrian and biking facilities to better connect neighborhoods with park, open spaces and other destinations.

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- d. Improve park connections (e.g., entrance to Hasbrouck Park “worst entrance ever” to a park—kind of invisible between two houses).
- e. Cornell Park could use natural play space, arts/performance space (solar band stand). Consider potential for community garden on land adjacent to park to north.
- f. Future pocket park opportunities exist around city—create sites that have nice street frontage and are highly visible from the street to enhance public safety. Green space and park space needed in neighborhood between Albany Avenue and Cornell Street.
- g. Opportunities to protect undeveloped open spaces—in particular larger blocks of open land (e.g. west side of NYS Rt. 9W west of East Chester Street).
- h. Need safe RR crossing near active rail line and Greenkill Avenue
- i. Encourage maintaining and adding pollinator habitat in all open spaces (e.g. species that support butterflies, bees, hummingbirds, etc.,) See <https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/About/National-Initiatives/Plant-For-Pollinators>

Results of Prioritization Exercise:

Resource Prioritization Exercise	
Local Resource to Protect / Enhance	Participant Score
Street Trees & Streetscapes	87
Trails & Bike-Hike Paths	77
Parks & Recreation Areas	57
Hudson River Shoreline	57
Urban Agriculture	51
Esopus & Rondout Creeks	49
Open Fields & Forested Areas	46
Historic & Cultural Sites	45
Wetlands, Ponds & Streams	36
Scenic Views	21

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