

THE 35TH ST WETLAND

An update to the VPA Board of Park Commissioners from the Ecological
Advocacy Committee

Oct 19, 2020



Little oasis in the middle of a neighborhood on the east side of town

Timeline

- **2017** –
 - Oct – MYSB Parks & Trails
 - Dec – Park Board Presentation
- **2018** –
 - July – VPA/ EAC site visit
- **2019** –
 - Apr – Back the Bend
 - May – ND Student reports
- **2020** –
 - EAC recommendations to VPA



Timeline of key events

2017- Oct



[Home](#) [Purpose](#) [Projects](#) [Your Voice](#) [FAQ](#) [News](#)

Additional Info

[Trust for Public Lands - Access Maps](#)
[Trust for Public Lands - Summary](#)

Future Acquisitions

Park Partnerships & Buildouts

■ □ □ □ Proposed

Exact location are TBD, but will be informed by Park Score, GRASP, SB Master Plan, Neighborhood Feedback, and feasible/available locations. Improve access and level of services to various neighborhoods. These improvements are in response to the Trust for Public Lands Park Score results that show areas of the city that lacked equitable access to park services.

Equity ● Ecology ● Neighborhood ● Econ Impact ● Recreation ● Safety ●

© 2017 South Bend Venues Parks & Arts | All Rights Reserved

Relevant background:

- Oct 2017 – resolutions 0007-2017 and 0008-2017, confirming and appropriating funds for the MYSB parks plan were approved VPA Board of Park Commissioners. Plan includes, acquisition and development of new parklands, with the goal to *“improve access in areas of the city where park services are lacking.”*

2017, Oct – the “pitch”



Figure 1

Relevant background:

- Oct 2017 - City resident Andrew Tucker contacts VPA Director Aaron Perri regarding opportunity to develop a park at 35th Street. Mr. Perri visits the site.
- **Figure 1.** Satellite image of the “35th St Wetlands” site (approx. 5 acres). The site is bounded by 35th St to the west, Washington St to the north, Logan St to the east, and Marshall Ave to the south. Nearby “neighborhoods” include, Park Jefferson, River Park, Jefferson Acres, Bercliff, and McKinley Terrace.

2017, Nov – zoning confirmation



Relevant background:

- Nov 2017 - Danielle Campbell, Assistant City Attorney, confirms the 35th Street site is owned by the city and zoned as SF1 (Single Family and w/o Family District), allows for public (active or passive) parks
- **Figure 2.** Parcel map for the area surrounding the 35th Street wetlands area, with US Fish and Wildlife Service wetland boundaries delineated (approximate).

2017, Dec – park board presentation

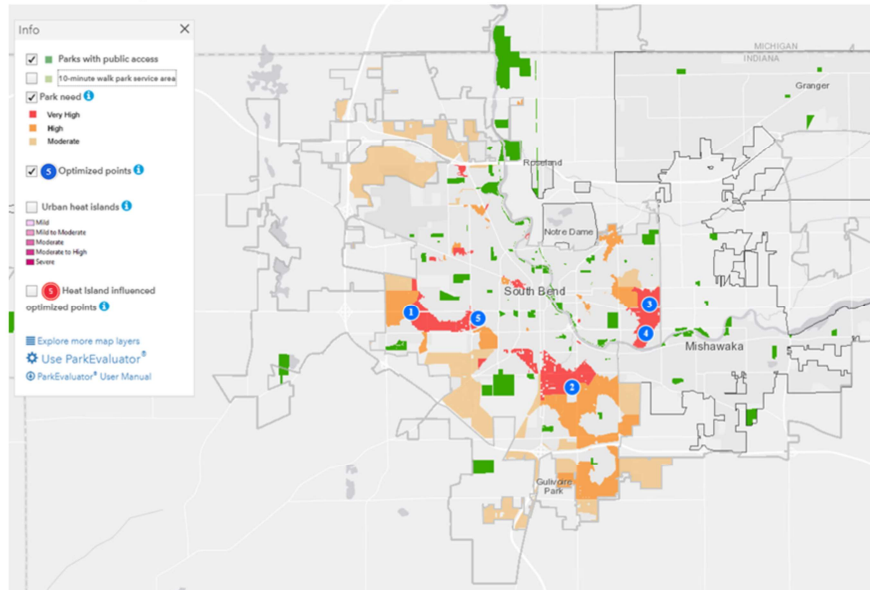


Figure 3

Relevant background:

- Dec 2017 – Mr. Tucker invited to present to the VPA Board of Park Commissioners. He outlined opportunities for a park at 35th Street and demographics of the area served based on the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) planning tools.
 - The presentation highlighted the TPL’s 10-minute walk campaign, which commits cities to ensuring that every resident has “safe, easy access to a quality park within a 10-minute (1/2 mile) walk of home by 2050” (<https://10minutewalk.org/>). Of note, Mayor Pete Buttegieg committed to joining the TPL 10-minute Walk Campaign in his “State of the City” remarks, March 2018.
 - At present, only 64% of South Bend residents live within a 10-minute walk of a city park (<https://www.tpl.org/city/south-bend-indiana>). Access to parks is especially lacking in a few key areas, including the 35th Street site, which is one of the areas classified as “very high need.”

- **Fig 3.** Trust for Public Lands ParkServe Map showing optimized points, numbered 1 through 5 for new parks (based on estimated increase in residents served within a 10-minute walk of the park). 35th St wetland is in the area designated as the #3 highest need area for new parks. Park “need” is based on the ParkServe Methodology, which assigns level of need based on a weighted calculation of three demographic variables: population density, density of children, and density of low-income households. Areas in red are designated as “very high” need.

2017, Dec – park board presentation

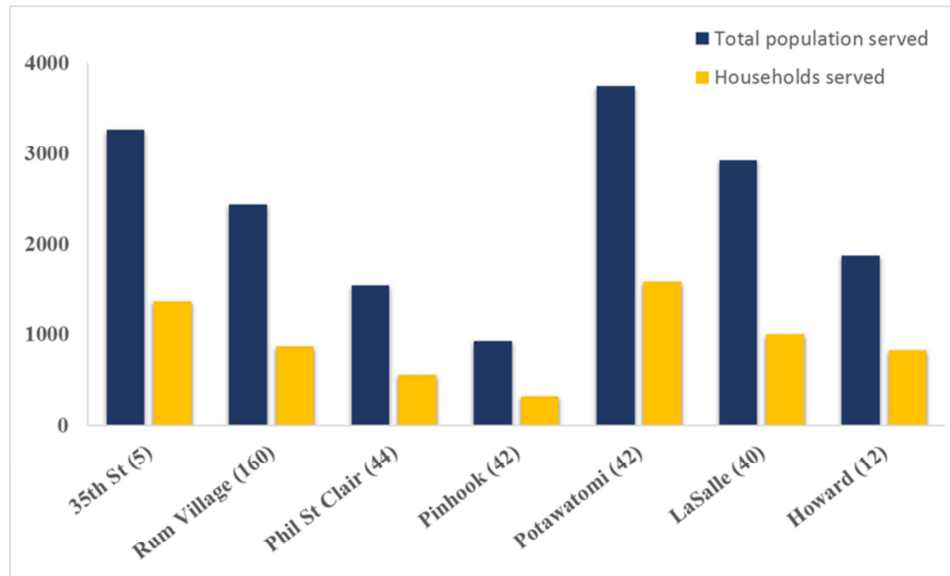


Figure 4

Relevant background:

- TPL ParkServe project area report indicates that a park at the 35th Street site would serve approximately 3300 individuals and nearly 1400 households. This is on par with some of the larger parks in the VPA system (**Figure 4**).



Relevant background:

- Dec 2017 presentation highlighted some of the native plants/wildlife. And painted picture of opportunity for a healthy natural area and a place to explore, play, relax, learn, connect
- The site currently functions as a storm water catch basin and is seasonally flooded. An approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ acre persistent wetland is present and supports a diverse community of wetland plants, including a handful of state of Indiana rare and threatened species. The wetland is surrounded by successional shrubs and mature trees on the upland margins. An area approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ acre in size on the south side of the property is regularly mowed by a City department. An electrical utility easement runs north-south along the east side of the property. The north and west sites of the property are heavily wooded. There are no defined parking areas or pathways.

Images (from top left to lower right)

Common pickerelweed

Carex atherodes (hairy leaved lake sedge)- state endangered, no records in ST Joe Co

Carex conjuncta (green headed fox sedge)- abundant at this site, but no other records of this plant in St Joe Co

Salix sericea (silky willow) usually found in bogs

Juncus effusus (lamp rush)

Elderberry

Common blue violet (NP)

Raspberry (NP)

2018, May – VPA draft plans

LEVEL 1 - RISK REGISTER				Project Name:	35th St. Wetland	DIST-EA	Project Manager	Patrick Sherman		
Risk Identification						Risk Rating		Risk Response		
Status	ID #	Type	Category	Title	Risk Statement	Current status/assumptions	Priority Rating	Rationale for Rating		
								Strategy	Response Actions	
Active		Threat	Organizational	Permitting	Project could require permits from multiple agencies which if not obtained could cause project delays and costs.	Most likely need permits from DNR and maybe US Fish and Wildlife.	High		Transfer	Whoever will do the work (internal vs external) will coordinate permitting with the proper agencies.
Active		Threat	Public	Security	The secluded and overgrown nature of the park could create additional security concerns.	Area does not have good visibility.	High		Mitigate	Ensure adequate lighting and visibility into the park.
Active		Threat	Environmental	Habitat	While rare plants provide educational opportunities, greater park use could result in damage to localized ecosystem.	There are a number of specific plants that are rare to the region.	High		Accept	Development and increased park use could actually decrease harmful public uses of park, i.e. off-road driving and dumping.
Active		Threat	Environmental	Invasive Species	There are a number of invasive species in the park that could pose a risk to the more rare and desirable plants.		Medium		Mitigate	Work with Horticulturalist on mitigation plans.
Active		Threat	Public	Adjacent Properties	There are a number of homes adjacent to the property that could be negatively impacted by increased noise and activity in the park.	Location proposed for playground structures is directly adjacent to resident properties and is across multiple 25' zones.	High		Accept	Work with Matt Moyers on directed community engagement sessions to get feedback on plans. Perhaps a fence on south side of proposed play area?
Active		Threat	Design	Flooding	Flooding in the property may cause damage to anything installed or developed within the property.	Numerous storm drains empty into the property and causes a portion of the area to flood on a regular basis. There is a portion that always has water.	High		Accept	Do not build any structures or paths within flood zone area. The possibility of simple or raised paths through area exists.
Active		Threat	Public	Trespassing	Continued trespassing on the property could be a threat to any development.	There is evidence that individuals frequently use the area for off-road motorized vehicles.	High		Mitigate	Signage? Bollards, Boulders, fencing in specific locations.
Active		Threat	Public	Dumping	The continued dumping of trash could create an unsafe or unwelcoming park environment.	The secluded nature of the property has created an environment that allows for easy dumping of trash, etc.	Medium		Mitigate	Installation of trash receptacles standard in a public park could help deter littering/dumping.
Active		Threat	Organizational	Parcel limits	The close proximity of unimproved privately owned properties may make it difficult to locate Park features.		High		Transfer	Survey? Look to acquire properties?
Active		Threat	Design	Access	If the park does not have adequate access from surrounding neighborhoods, the impact of park on immediate area could be lessened.	There is currently only one entrance into property. The property is surrounded on all sides by neighborhood.	Medium		Mitigate	
Active		Threat	Design	Street Crossing	Addition of access points around park could require additional crossing locations or traffic calming.	There are currently no sidewalks around property or in immediate vicinity.	Medium		Transfer	

Figure 5

Relevant background:

- **Figure 5.** “Risk register” prepared by Patrick Sherman, VPA Project Manager, May 2018, for a “Proposed New City Park at 35th Street Wetland”

2018, May – VPA draft plans

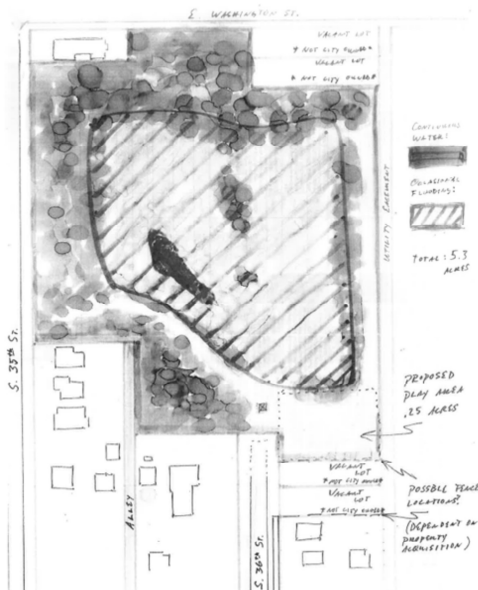


Figure 6

Relevant background:

- **Figure 6.** Preliminary drawing prepared by Patrick Sherman, VPA Project Manager, May 2018, for a “Proposed New City Park at 35th Street Wetland”

2018, July – VPA/EAC site visit



Relevant background:

- EAC discussed VPA draft plants. VPA/EAC site visit July 2018 ; creation of EAC 35th Street Wetlands subcommittee to consider opportunities for park planning and wetlands protection/restoration at 35th Street

2019, Apr – Back the Bend



Relevant background:

University of Notre Dame students participate in a beautification project at 35th St Wetlands as part of the annual Back the Bend event, with assistance from VPA Volunteer Coordinator Amy Roush on recommendation from Andrew Tucker and Patrick Sherman.

2019, Apr – Back the Bend



Relevant background:

University of Notre Dame students participate in a beautification project at 35th St Wetlands as part of the annual Back the Bend event, with assistance from VPA Volunteer Coordinator Amy Roush.

2019, Apr – Back the Bend



Relevant background:

Sign installed by ND Students as part of Back the Bend project to prevent unauthorized ATV use in the wetland, which had been damaging native plants and aiding spread of invasive plants.

2019, Sept – ND student project

Project Charter Document

Project Name: 25th Street Wetland
 Project Owner/Contact: Alicia Czarnecki/City of South Bend Public Works
 (aczarne@southbend.in.gov)
 Project Charter Version/Date: 08/03/2019

PROJECT OVERVIEW:
 The property located approximately between S 35th Street (East), E Washington Street (North), Logan Street (West) and Marshall Avenue (South) is a natural wetland and stormwater retention area owned by the City of South Bend. This property is located in an area where a gap exists in park availability, and offers an addition to the South Bend Parks portfolio that features potential for habitat restoration of a sensitive area, environmental remediation and stormwater management, and environmental education potential. Potential improvements to the property fall into two categories: 1) stormwater management and ecosystem restoration, and 2) addition of park amenities such as overlooks, a boardwalk, and nature play structures.

PRIMARY PROJECT GOALS/STRATEGIC PLAN INTERSECTION:

Goal	Strategic Plan Intersection
Stormwater Management	Ecological Stewardship
Ecosystem Restoration	Ecological Stewardship
Access Points and ADA Accessibility	Social Equity
Park Amenity: Overlooks	Health & Wellness, Neighborhood & Econ Impact, Eco. Stewardship
Park Amenity: Boardwalk	Health & Wellness, Neighborhood & Econ Impact, Eco. Stewardship
Park Amenity: Nature Play Area	Health & Wellness, Neighborhood & Econ Impact
Acquiring Additional Property for Park	Neighborhood & Econ Impact
Educational Components & Park Programming Opportunities	Eco. Stewardship, Neighborhood & Econ Impact

ESTIMATED PROJECT BUDGET:

Phase	Amount
Planning/Design	
Construction	
Total Project Budget	

CORE PROJECT TEAM/PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS:

Project Role	Project Team Member(s)	Responsibilities
Project Owner/Contact	Alicia Czarnecki/City of South Bend Public Works (aczarne@southbend.in.gov)	Client/Point of Contact, Design input and approval
Project Team	ND Civil Engineering Senior Design Group	Project Management & Coordination, Progress Meetings, Managing Scope and Budget, Schedule Tracking
South Bend Venues, Parks, and Arts	Patrick Sherman/John Martinez	Project Support, park programming and maintenance input
Ecological Advocacy & Community Involvement	EAC committee, Neighborhood (Steve Sass/Andrew Tucker)	Project Support, environmental management input, community input/engagement

Relevant background:

Modeled after a successful partnership for park planning at Pinhook between VPA and Rose-Hulman Inst of Technology University, EAC/Patrick Sherman reached out to Eric Horvath, Director City of South Bend Public Works and adjunct faculty University of Notre Dame regarding opportunities for project-centered learning opportunity for UND students. Notre Dame Senior Engineering Students subsequently develop draft designs and site plans as part of a senior capstone course co-taught by Mr. Horvath. Alicia Pellegrino (nee Czarnecki), South Bend City Engineer and EAC member, serves as project client and develops a project charter for the students, Sept 2019.

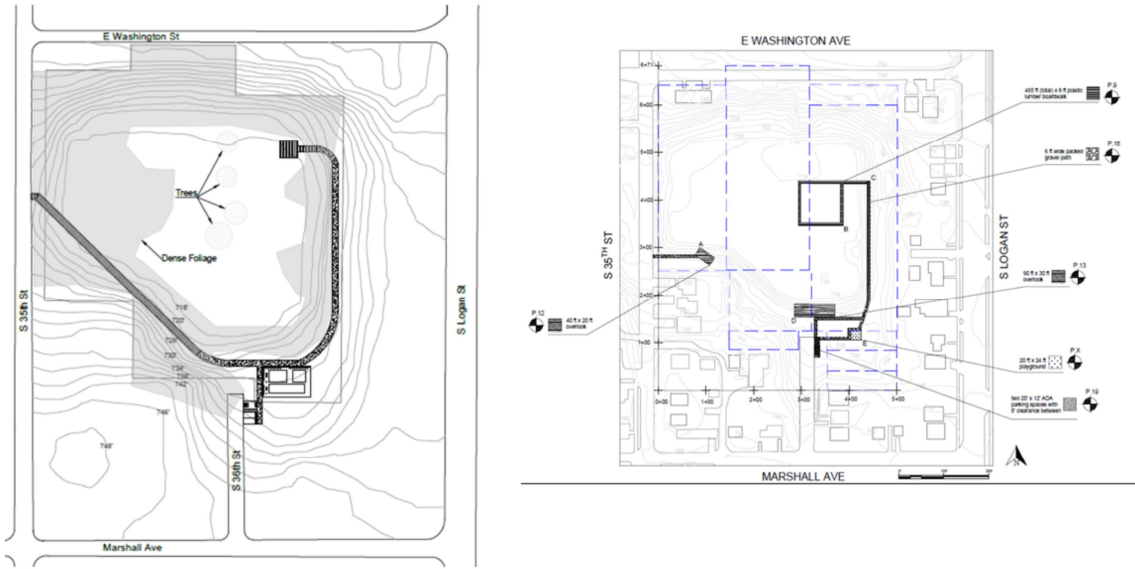
2019, May – ND student project



Relevant background:

University of Notre Dame Senior Engineering Students share final designs and site plans.

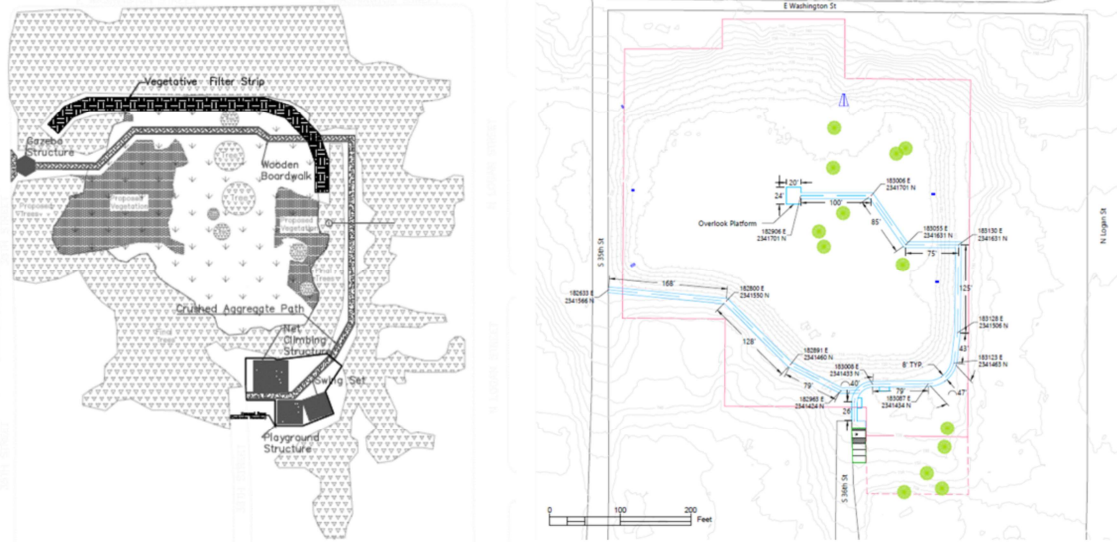
2019, May – ND student project



Relevant background:

University of Notre Dame Senior Engineering Students share final designs and site plans. Including boardwalk, pathway, play area design elements...

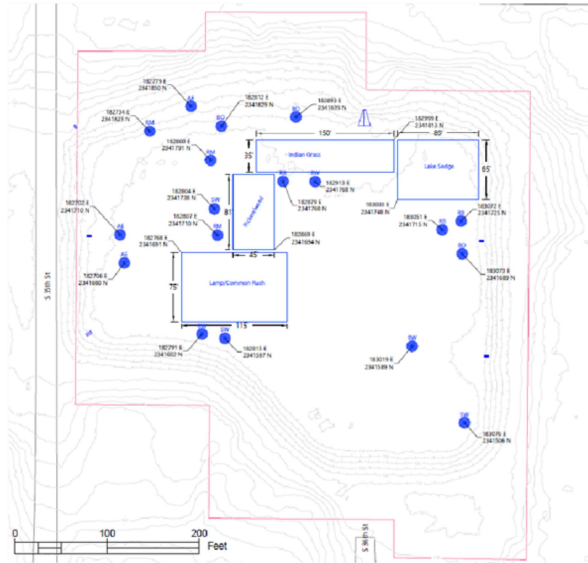
2019, May – ND student project



Relevant background:

University of Notre Dame Senior Engineering Students share final designs and site plans. Including boardwalk, pathway, play area design elements...

2019, May – ND student project



Proposed trees and planting areas are marked in blue.
See legend for tree species labels.
See page A-02 for existing flora. Proposed flora shall replace
existing ground cover where appropriate. All existing trees
shall remain and are not encircled with by the proposed
plan.
Coordinate System:
NAD 83 - North Carolina State Plane
EPSG: 4326

Symbol	Tree Type
AE	American Elm
BC	Black Oak
BW	Black Willow
RB	Redbud
RM	Red Maple
SW	Silver Willow

WETLAND WATERWORKS INC.

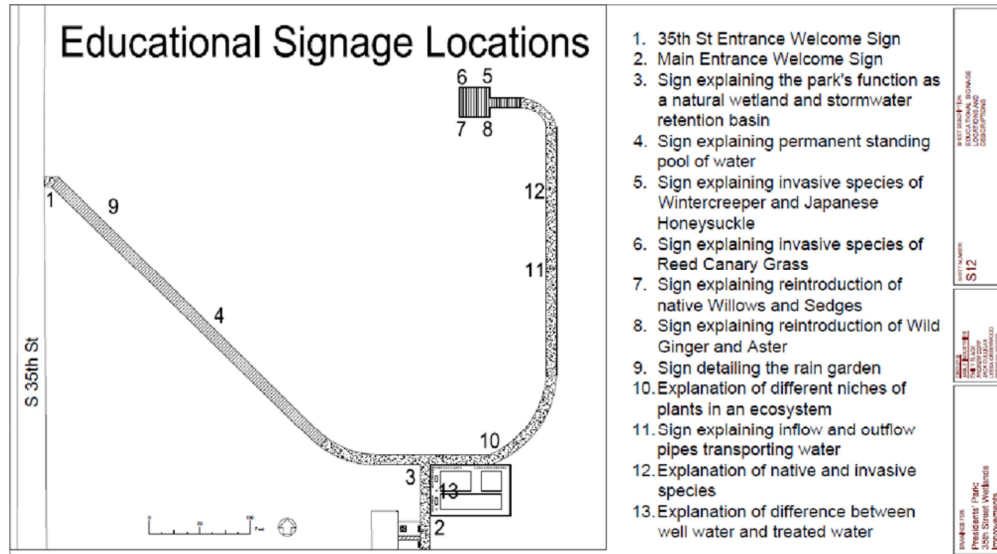
CLIENT	City of South Bend
PROJECT	30th St. Wetlands
REVISION	04-20-2002
DRAWN BY	JC
SCALE	1" = 10'

Site Plan: Flora Restoration | A-09

Relevant background:

ND student plans also include ecological restoration, environmental education, and stormwater management design elements.

2019, May – ND student project



Relevant background:

ND student plans also include ecological restoration, environmental education, and stormwater management design elements.

2019, May – ND student project

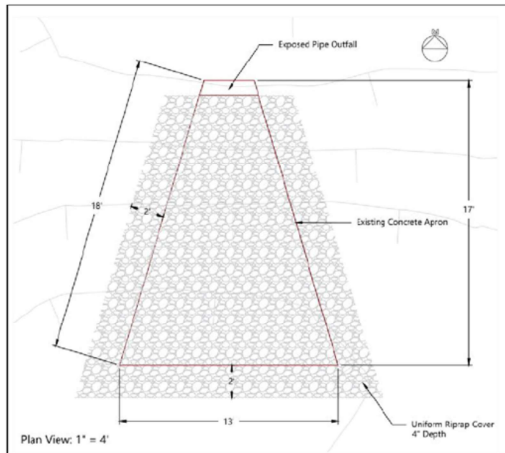
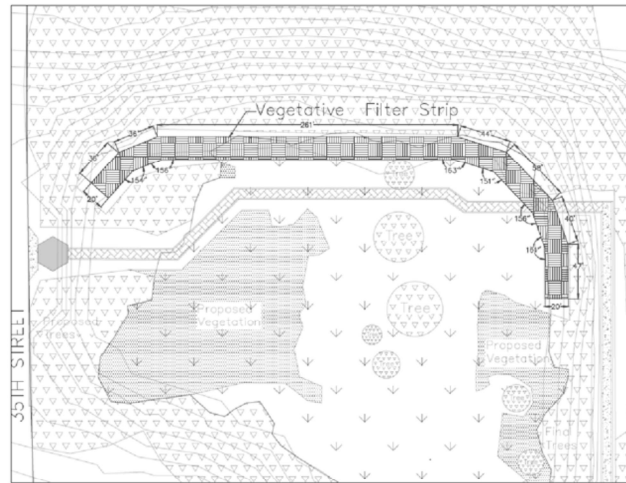


Figure 15. Dimensions For Rip Rap On North-End Outfall



Relevant background:

ND student plans also include ecological restoration, environmental education, and stormwater management design elements.

2019, May – ND student project

Group name	Students	Major design elements	Other
JABLE Industries (President's Park)	Leesa Greenwood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boardwalk (10' x 415'), pathway (asphalt, 10' x 715') & overlook design elements 2. Playground <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. standard, wood chips, benches 3. Parking (@ 36th St, 3 stalls) 4. Ecological Improvements <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Two-phase Invasive Management Action Plan, including invasive removal and native species plantings 5. Rain Garden installation for stormwater management 6. Signage/environmental education <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 14 signs highlighting various aspects of the park environment 	Invasive control methods; native plants specifications; signage language & design
FOCKT Engineering (Black Willow Wetlands)	Erika Kim Naomi Foster Chloe Ochocki Greg Campion Isabella Delgado-Castillo Henry Till	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water quality management <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Remove water pumping station, install bar screens on stormwater outfalls, remove concrete block, native plantings around outfalls 2. Boardwalk (8' x 455'), packed gravel pathway & overlook design elements 3. Playground <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Nature play (embankment slide, balance elements, climbing features), artificial turf, benches 4. Ecological Restoration <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reed Canary Grass management (intervention timeline, native plant options) 	Stormwater retention calculations; Reed Canary Grass control options; soil/geology characterization
Sterling & Associates (35 th Street Wetlands)	Madelyn Francesconi Michael Dillane Marcus Figaro Nathan Grundlach Grace McNamee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invasive species management <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. General concepts for assessment, response, monitoring 2. Vegetative strips <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. for stormwater management on north end 3. Boardwalk (8' x 500'), crushed limestone path (8' x 500') & gazebo elements 4. Playground <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Standard (slide, climbing, swings) 	Stormwater basin water quantity calculations; Invasive species removal protocols; alternatives analysis
Wetland Waterworks, Inc. (Miracle on 36 th Street)	Alexandra Mertz Lawson Tyrone Margarite Schwarz Britlyn Barnes Finnian Cavanaugh David Sholar	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking (@ 36th St, 4 stalls) 2. Playground/seating area <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Benches, picnic area, nature themed (swingset, climbing, obstacle course) 3. Boardwalk (8' x 995') and overlook elements 4. Invasive plant removal/restoration options 5. Stormwater management <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Rip rap matt and bar screens installation 	Invasive control methods; native plants specifications; stormwater drainage basin delineation and stormwater storage volume calculations

Relevant background:

Overview of University of Notre Dame Senior Engineering student design plans.

2020, Oct – EAC rationale

NRMP “topics of concern” and related opportunities:

- **Balancing recreational use with environmental responsibility**
 - city-owned and zoned for parks
 - a “top 3” and “very high need” area (per TPL ParkServe)
- **Increased public awareness and outreach**
 - an “oasis” of nature in an urban setting = a unique “nature park” focus as part of the VPA portfolio
 - Building momentum for nature...
 - Environmental education (immersion, programming, interpretive signage)
- **Protection of wetlands and restoration of native plants**
 - Saving a remnant...90% of Indiana wetlands are gone; 35th Street is one of a small number of naturally occurring wetlands in this part of town

Relevant background:

EAC reviews Notre Dame student plans. At September 2020 meeting, the EAC votes to prepare a letter to VPA Board of Park Commissioners outlining rationale for a park at 35th Street site and recommendations for park planning and implementation (letter submitted Oct 2020).

Rationale includes:

- Balancing recreation and environment
 - The area identified lacks park access and the 35th Street site provides opportunities for active and passive recreation (e.g. playgrounds and nature observation)
- Increased public awareness and outreach (for nature)
 - Nature park focus is consistent with recent efforts to highlight natural communities and biodiversity in South Bend (e.g. Howard Park bioswale, Pinhook native tree walk, Leeper Park river overlook)
 - Environmental education
 - comparatively young demographic of the area that would be

served by a park at 35th Street and proximity to a number of local primary schools (including McKinley, Nuner, St Anthony de Padua) suggests significant opportunities for environmental education and outreach to promote “an ethic of environmental stewardship” in the city of South Bend

- Wetland protection/restoration –
 - Historically, very few wetlands in this part of town, so 35th Street serves as refuge for local wetland plants/animals
 - Wetland protection/restoration especially important, considering that nearly 90% of all wetlands in the state of Indiana have been lost.
 - Properties that contain wetlands are designated “Sensitive Areas/Properties” in the VPA NRMP.

2020, Oct – EAC recommendations

"Delivering on a park that protects nature and inspires people will require a proactive and intentional effort by VPA to address existing threats to the ecological, aesthetic, and recreational value of the 35th Street wetlands"

- Invasive plant mitigation and restoration of the native plant community
- Stormwater management
- Trash mitigation
- Nuisance animal mitigation
- Environmental Education opportunities
- Ecologically neutral site design

Relevant background:

- Invasive plant mitigation and restoration of the native plant community
 - ***hire an environmental consultant to develop an invasive species management (esp. Reed Canary Grass) and native species restoration plan for the 35th Street Wetlands***
 - ***Volunteer-based invasive species removal efforts will be successful for some species (e.g. garlic mustard) and should be coordinated with VPA and community member leadership.***
- Stormwater management
 - Short term - ***1) installing trash screens on stormwater outfalls, and 2) managing erosion around stormwater outfalls***
 - Long term - ***map and develop a green infrastructure plan for the drainage basin that will reduce stormwater inputs to the 35th Street site***
- Trash mitigation
 - ***A solid-waste management strategy should be developed for the site***
- Nuisance wildlife mitigation
 - ***A program for feral cat population control should be developed for the***

site

- Environmental Education opportunities
 - ***VPA should strive to create a “nature park” experience at the 35th Street Wetlands that will inspire an ethic of environmental stewardship among local citizens.***
- Ecologically neutral site design
 - ***Park design and siting of all park amenities should ensure that the natural features and ecological function of the property are retained or improved***

Questions?



EAC will continue to offer support to planning and implementation efforts.

Questions can be directed to 35th Street Wetland Subcommittee members:

Andrew Tucker (ajtucker.28@gmail.com)

Steve Sass (steve.sass@gmail.com)

Alicia Pellegrino (apelleg@southbend.in.gov)

Additional information

2017 – Dec



Relevant background:

WNDU promotes the idea of a park at 35th St
(<http://www.wndu.com/content/news/Additional-parks-might-be-in-the-works-for-South-Bend-465052933.html>)

"As part of our focus on equity, I have committed to join the 10-Minute Walk campaign from the Trust for Public Land... our community will be safer, healthier, and happier..."

- Mayor Pete Buttegieg, March 2018



Relevant background:

- March 2018 “State of the City” address, Mayor Pete Buttegieg commits to join the Trust for Public Land’s (TPL) 10-minute Walk Campaign. The Campaign commits cities to ensuring that every resident has “safe, easy access to a quality park within a 10-minute (1/2 mile) walk of home by 2050” (<https://10minutewalk.org/>).