

Revitalization of the Durand Park



Durand Park Proposal

**Public Works Department
Planning and Economic Development Department
Recreation Department**

**Parks Operations, Asset Management, Recreation, Open space
Development and Park Planning Department**

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Executive Summary

Introduction & History

The Durand Park is named after Captain James Durand (1775 – 1833), a Hamilton politician and businessman who came from England in 1799. Captain Durand purchased a farm which would today be the land between James Street, Main Street, Wellington and Concession.

In 1815 because of financial problems and damages caused by war he sold his land to George Hamilton for \$3000.00. Hamilton was named after this same Mr Hamilton. If it were not for this sale, Hamilton would have been called “DURAND”.

Many years later, thanks to the work of the Durand Neighbourhood Association the Durand Park was created. The city first purchased the property in 1974 and the Durand Park opening was held in September 1975.

Since then, the DNA has raised and provided funding for a water fountain, playground equipment and the planting of trees though out the park. Not only did we fight hard to create the park; we are fighting hard to maintain the park.

In 2005, the DNA who held a very successful Durand House Tour contributed over \$4500.00 from funds raised to the city of the replacement of 6 redbuds and addition of 5 other trees.

In the summer of 2006, the efforts of the residents and the DNA with some assistance from the City led to a one day cleanup-up with a promise by the City to continue to provide us with a plan for regular maintenance service. To date maintenance has not been consistent.

In 2007 the DNA hosted the Grand Durand Garden Tour featuring 11 outstanding Durand gardens, attracting over 600 visitors and more importantly raising over \$8700.00 for Durand Park improvements.

In 2008, the DNA struck a Park Revitalization Committee to develop a proposal to the City that would address maintenance issues as well as a lack of upgrades to the amenities of the Durand Park.

The Issue

The Durand Neighbourhood Association (DNA) has many concerns regarding the Durand Park. It is not maintained to the standards expected by its over 12,000 residents. Many features of the park have exceeded their lifespan, and now require upgrading or replacement. In addition, the needs of the community have changed. The amenities currently provided are outdated and do not reflect current trends that we are seeing in other neighbourhood parks. As the Durand Park is our only public park, and is a defining feature of the neighbourhood, it is essential that it undergo a thorough revitalization to create the urban jewel it was originally to be when it was established in the mid 1970's. The purpose of this proposal is to bring to the attention of the City the necessity and importance to the neighbourhood of beautifying, maintaining and revitalizing the Durand Park.

Site Meeting – April 4, 2008

The Park Revitalization Committee met at the Durand Park on April 4th with Councillor Bratina, Rob Norman, Al Dore, Lawrence Stasiuk, Gary Makins, and Steve Ames. The purpose of this meeting was to identify our concerns to the City regarding the state of the Park.

Observations

- Poor maintenance of the planted beds contained in the berms at the north-east corner of the Park
- Irregular watering of the newly planted trees (paid for by the DNA)
- Poor quality tree pruning or no tree pruning
- Poor condition of the water fountain
- Unsafe play structures
- Uneven grassed areas
- Insufficient and harsh lighting
- Muddy paths
- Sand under the swing set (hygienic issues)
- Poor design of the entrance leading into the park at Charlton
- Lack of a defined entranceway to incorporate the Commemorative Rock at Herkimer & Park
- Junior play structures are outdated
- No play structures for Senior age children
- Poor quality, condition and placement of park benches
- Too few picnic tables
- Poor quality (rusted oil drums) for waste receptacles
- No recycling containers
- No water feature
- Lack of pathways

Next Steps

The Association developed a Survey Questionnaire for the membership, residents and seniors in the neighbourhood. A Student Survey was created for young Duranders who attend Ryerson Public School. Central Public students and their teachers in Grades 1 to 5 wrote persuasive letters, brainstormed and created maps with detailed drawings describing what they would like to see in the Durand Park. The results of the surveys follow.

Survey Results

DNA Survey Says ... Improvements	
<u>Member</u>	<u>Seniors</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park furniture (tables & benches) upgraded • More tables 7 benches • Improved lighting • Better play structures, more swings, larger slides, seesaws, splash pad, BB hoops, etc. • Replace sand with wood chips • Fenced area for dogs • Open space leveled • Pathways • Flowerbeds • Improved maintenance • Activities for older residents • Improved garbage cans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More benches & tables • Activities for seniors • Playground equipment • Grass leveled so it is easier • Swings
<u>Ryerson Duranders (Grades 6, 7 & 8)</u>	<u>Central Public (Grades 1-5)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monkey bars • More colourful • Regrade "field" • Remove rust • Nicer benches • Less dog poop • Exercise equipment • Soccer Nets • BB hoops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground equipment: zip line, larger swings, larger slides, monkey bars, seesaws, spinners, etc. • BB hoops • Soccer fields • Splash pad • Benches & tables

DNA Survey Says ... Top 5 Choices					
	# 1	# 2	# 3	# 4	# 5
Members	Benches/ Tables	Waster Containers & Gardens/ Horticulture	Improved Maintenance	Senior Play Equipment	Junior Play Equipment
Seniors	More Benches	Activites for Seniors	Playground Equipment	More Swings	Grass Levelled
Ryerson Duranders	Benches/ Tables	Senior Play Equipment	Waste Containers	Paths	Fitness Stations
Central Public	Colourful Playground Equipment	Sprinkler/ Splash Pad	BB Hoops	Paths	Tables/ Benches

Recommendations

Maintenance

- Retain and provide regular maintenance of the planted beds at the north-east corner of the park
- Or, remove the ground cover, weeds, and sucker plants in the planted bed at the north-east corner of the park and replace with grass
- Clean edging around planted beds
- Regular watering of all trees
- Mulch at the base of trees
- Appropriate pruning of trees & shrubs
- Service the water fountain or replace with a new fountain

To ensure that the ongoing maintenance and care of the Durand Park is sustainable, the DNA recommends that the City provide the park with 1 staff member for 1 day per week during the growing season.

Safety

- Replace all playground structures with updated and age appropriate equipment as specified by the DNA
- Regrade and resod the entire grassy area along the park fronting Herkimer Street to provide for a safe level open space for walking and playing
- Provide sufficient and appropriate lighting to illuminate the park as specified by the DNA (See Spectator)
- Remove the sand from the sand-box under the swing set and replace with wood chips
- Design a formal pathway to help both seniors and those with strollers and carriages a safe way to move through the park (pea gravel with cobblestone edging or a similar facsimile)
- Provide recycling containers
- Iron fencing around the perimeter of the park (Herkimer Street is a very busy arterial road and does not permit youngsters to use the open space for soccer etc)
- Traffic calming measures are needed for both Charlton and Herkimer to reduce speed and make the neighbourhood park safe for its users (e.g. two-way conversion, lane narrowing and provision of safe controlled crossing points) (speed limits of 30km)

The Durand Neighbourhood Association recommends that the safety items be addressed immediately. The DNA requests the opportunity to collaborate with the appropriate departments for play ground structures, the lighting, and the design and materials of the formal pathways.

Beautification

- Redesign the entranceway at Charlton & Park (to include paving materials and formal structures such as iron fencing or stone pillars...both found in the neighbourhood which would reflect the heritage urban Durand neighbourhood)
- To provide a landscape design at the corner of Herkimer & Park that would incorporate the Commemorative Rock celebrating the Durand Neighbourhood Association's 35 years
- To enclose the park with iron fencing in keeping with the historic neighbourhood
- To improve the signage at the entranceway of Charlton & Park
- To plant a continuous line of boulevard trees along Herkimer Street and Charlton Avenue

The Durand Neighbourhood Association requests the opportunity to consult with the Open Space Development and Park Planning Department and the Landscape Architects to create a design that is respectful of the heritage neighbourhood. We would also like input into the choice of plant material and the boulevard trees.

Amenities

- Replace the Junior Playground Structure (2008 Capital Budget)
- Purchase Senior Playground Structures
- Provide a water feature (splash pad)
- Build a sun shelter
- Replace park benches with those that would be in keeping with the heritage neighbourhood (iron frames)
- Increase the number of park benches
- To provide more picnic tables (we currently have?)
- To provide garbage receptacles

As this work requires considerable funding, the DNA requests that the City work with the Durand Neighbourhood and Councillor Bratina to develop a plan that would address and meet the requests by the neighbourhood for both funding and timelines in order to address maintenance, safety, beautification and amenity improvements.

Why the Durand Park Should Be Revitalized

- Durand is an inner city neighbourhood that is home to approximately 12,000 residents and children, many of whom live in high rise apartments. The Park provides recreation for low-income children and families and helps newly arrived families to meet their neighbours and to experience a sense of community.
- The Durand Neighbourhood is densely-populated, yet has a smaller proportion of public open space than any other Hamilton Ward or neighbourhood.
- The Durand Neighbourhood has seen a return of young families to the neighbourhood.
- Adjacent community parks in Kirkendall and Corktown neighbourhoods are too distant for easy access by Durand residents, especially our seniors and our children.
- Even though the Durand Neighbourhood Plan and other planning documents recognize our needs for more open space, we have not seen any new open space since the establishment of the park over thirty years ago. In fact, we are likely to lose our one chance for more park space, as the City is attempting to sell the St Mark's Church property.
- There are obvious obstacles in acquiring additional open space and therefore it is imperative the City recognize the importance of accepting our proposal to beautify, maintain and revitalise this beautiful urban park.

*** City Says...**

Planning & Economic Development Department Report

The City of Hamilton Planning and Economic Development Department Report dated May 28, 2008, regarding "City Initiative for an Official Plan Amendment and Change in Zoning for Lands Located at 130 Bay Street South - St. Mark's Anglican Church (Hamilton) (PED08128) (Ward 2)."

Page 8:

"It is recognized by staff that the Durand Neighbourhood has an existing parkland deficiency of 7.22 ha based on current City standards."

Page 15:

"There is an existing parkland deficiency of 7.22 ha in the Durand Neighbourhood. The Planning and Economic Development Department should continue to investigate potential sites for acquisition and conversion to parkland to reduce this deficit, and furthermore, they should rank the priority of the Durand needs relative to other neighbourhood needs in the City.

If the site is developed for housing with on-site parking, there would not be sufficient lands remaining for a public park. We recommend that the net proceeds from any sale of the property be returned to the parkland reserve fund."

Park Deficiencies In Durand				
Neighbourhood	Population	Parkland	Resident to Park Ratio	Amenities
Durand	11470	1	11470 to 1	NO
Kirkendall	8198	6	1366 to 1	YES
Strathcona	6648	5	1329 to 1	YES
Central	3893	1	3893 to 1	YES
North End West	1402	4	350 to 1	NO
North End East	3850	3	1283 to 1	YES
Beasley	6017	2	3008 to 1	YES
Corktown	7056	4	1745 to 1	YES

*Amenities include Recreation Centres, Tennis Courts, Soccer Fields, Baseball Diamonds, Swimming Pools, and Basketball Hoops etc.

Action

The Durand Neighbourhood Association requests that the Durand Park receives immediate attention and that the Association's recommended improvements be reviewed, approved and an implementation process developed in order that all users of the Park may enjoy the improvements as soon as possible. The Board of the DNA Exposure would be pleased to work directly with our elected representatives, city staff and outside experts as required in order to ensure success. We look forward to receiving feedback on our proposal.

Conclusion

The suggestions for improvements, some very modest, and others that will provide opportunities for future ongoing changes reflect the needs of the Durand Community. Our proposal and suggestions for improvements and upgrades to maintenance, safety, beautification and amenities appeals to a broad range of users which in turn makes for a great park because it makes for a greater number of users.

Going Forward

The Durand Neighbourhood Association is hosting their Annual General Meeting October 21st at 7:00pm (location to be announced). The Durand Park Revitalization Committee will deliver their proposal to the public at that time. We are asking that you attend this meeting with the City's plans for the Durand Park Revitalization.

Appendices

1. Durand Park Survey
2. Durand Student Survey
3. Map of Durand Neighbourhood Population
4. Park Measurements
5. Downtown Parks & Open Space