

WASHINGTON PARK



South Lakefront Framework Plan

1 INTRODUCTION

● Overview

The Chicago Park District (CPD) authorized framework plans for three historic parks: Washington, Jackson and South Shore Cultural Center. In an effort to define the changing needs of these parks, to provide a plan to enhance each of the parks' commitments to serving the neighboring communities, and to preserve the intended historic character, the CPD developed a Framework Plan for each park.

A team of consultants, led by SmithGroup JJR, worked with Chicago residents, community supporters and the CPD to develop a long-range plan for each of the parks. Through 10 public meetings, 13 focus groups, numerous steering committee meetings and community presentations, a collaborative plan was developed to address each park's issues.

Mission...

To preserve, enhance and manage our historic park resources as an integral part of our neighborhoods, our City and our region's recreational, cultural, environmental and educational experience.

● Objectives

The purpose of the Framework Plan is to outline recommendations that will guide land use and management over the next 10 years for Washington Park. Intended as a living, working document, the Framework Plan is a starting point for a long term process of change that will enhance and preserve the park's character, as well as anticipate future needs.

The framework plan will address the following objectives:

1. Improve park and recreation facilities for local residents.
2. Improve park and recreation facilities to accommodate regional and city wide events.
3. Involve local residents, concerned civic groups and institutions, park users and advisory council members, CPD staff, and elected and appointed officials in the planning process to achieve a joint vision for the future that will be promoted and supported by all concerned interests.
4. Recognize and respect the historic significance of Washington Park.
5. Upgrade the visual quality of park landscapes and facilities.

● Next Steps

Collaboration between CPD leadership, the community and park users needs to continue. Additional planning is warranted as ideas move to implementation.

The Washington Park Advisory Council and the Chicago Park District encourage your participation as this process continues. The Advisory Council meets regularly at Washington Park. For more information, call the Washington Park Field House at 312.747.6823



View to DuSable Museum



Washington Park, 1999

● Principle 5: Protect and Enhance Landscape Beauty

- Manage the landscape to reflect and build community appreciation and stewardship.
- Create a cohesive and compelling (predominantly naturalistic) planting design that will be one of the three dominant physical features, along with landforms and water elements.
- Respect the significance of water bodies and their visual and physical qualities.
- Provide more variety and quantity of plant material to provide greater visual, horticultural, ecological and educational interest.
- Establish landscape planting designs that will minimize the noise and visual impact of roadways and parking lots and that will screen and soften architectural elements.
- Examine support facilities (primarily Chicago Park District maintenance shops). Modify or relocate facilities that unnecessarily disrupt the landscape and park use.
- Balance the objectives of landscape management and design in the placement and distribution of understory species.

● Principle 7: Enhance Historic Features

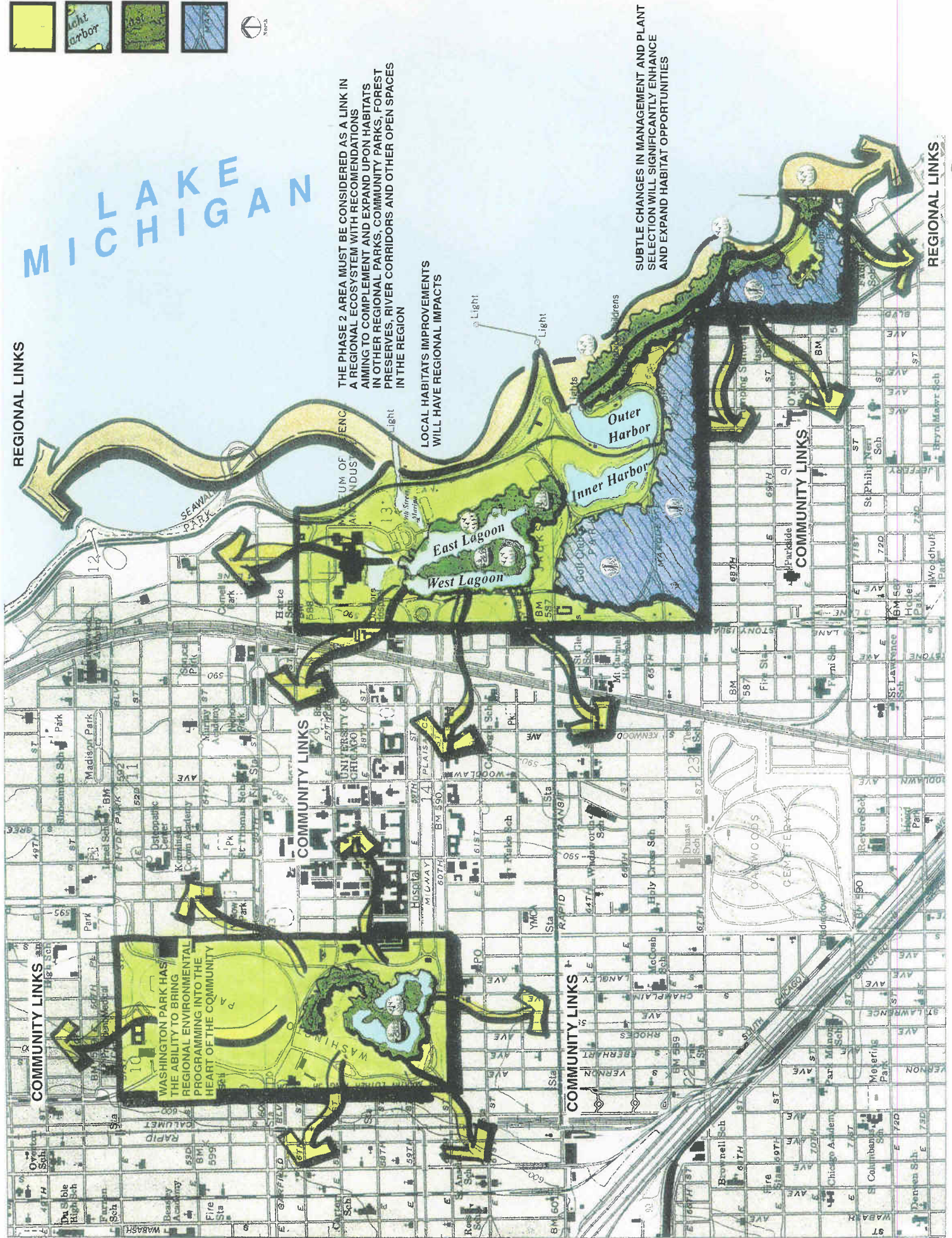
- Maintain and/or change the shape and size of each park parcel to enhance the environmental, aesthetic and recreational benefits, to provide better wildlife habitat, and to improve maintenance efficiency.
- Use an approach to landscape management and maintenance that considers the park's historic and ecological quality. Include consideration of environmental impacts in the management and design of recreational uses.
- Improve the water quality in Washington Park's lagoon system.
- Respect and enhance environmentally sensitive areas.
- Provide more variety and quality plant material to provide better, more ecologically sound wildlife habitat and greater visual, horticultural, and educational interest.
- Develop educational programs to increase public awareness and appreciation of the park's environmental features.

- Respect and enhance the park's historic character, and consider the park's historic significance as a key factor when evaluating changes to the park.
- Provide treatments for historic features that are consistent with the U.S. Department of Interiors Historic Preservation Guidelines.
- Locate and design new structures and features in a way that retains or enhances the historic fabric.
- Remove and/or redesign in a more park-sensitive manner those features that detract from the integrity of the historic character of the park, an area, or an historic resource.

- Consider the reuse of historic structures before developing new structures, when economically and structurally feasible.
- Consider the park's historic precedents for landscape form, landscape design, planting, circulation, and views when evaluating or designing changes to the park.
- Treat historic structures and features in a manner appropriate to their relative significance.



Historic Stables Building, Washington Park



- Park Land
- Lagoons and Harbors
- Natural Habitat
- Golf course

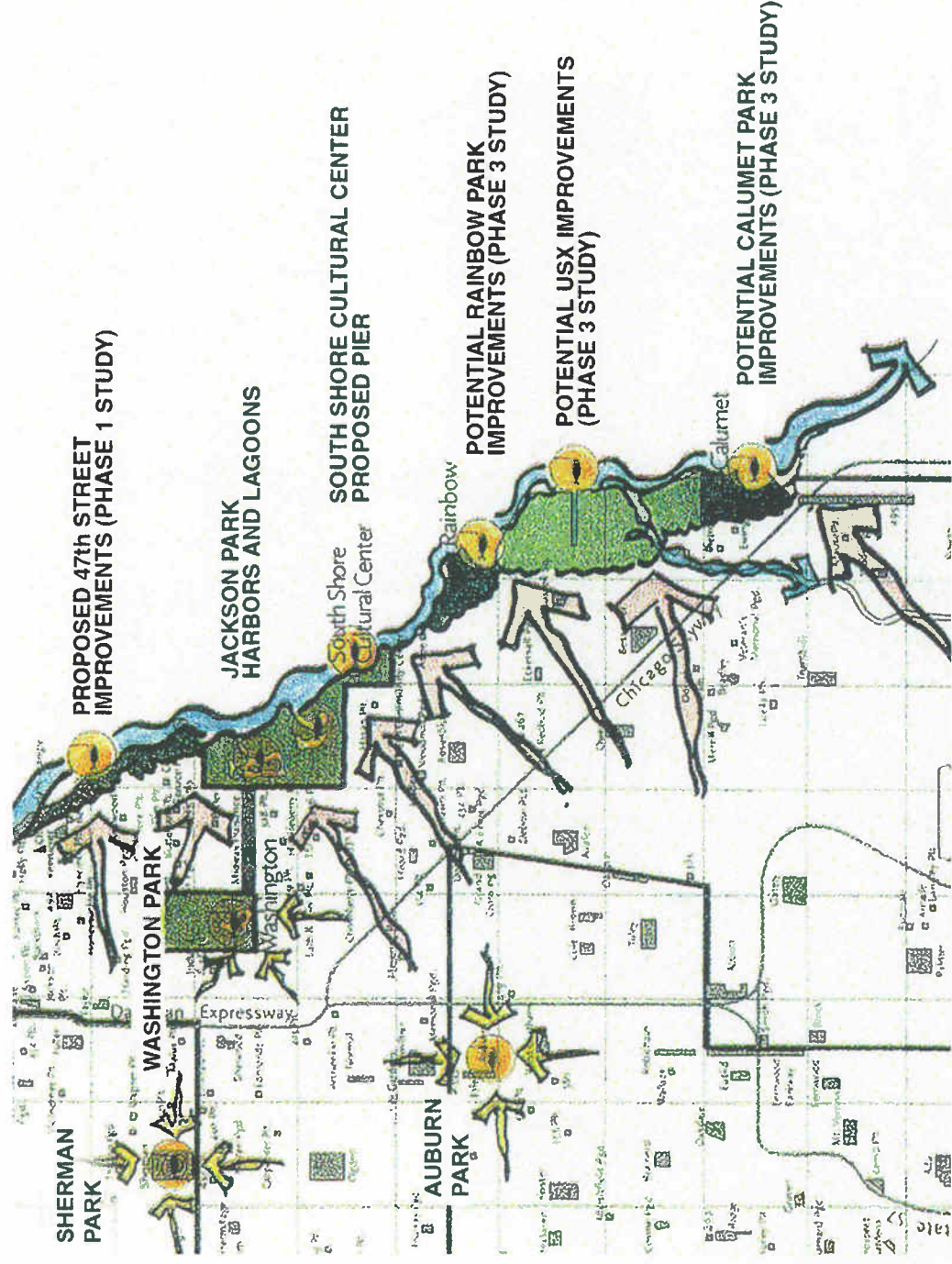
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General Recommendations

- 1. Balance System-Wide Athletic Fields/Sports Courts Needs:** Review community needs and capacity for athletic fields/sports courts to determine what belongs in the Washington, Jackson and South Shore Cultural Center parks and what belongs in community parks.
- 2. Develop Standards for Fishing Programs:** Create standards for both regional parks and community parks, as well as recommendations that build upon park specific opportunities, such as piers and islands.
- 3. Coordinate Fishing and Nature Programs:** Closely coordinate fishing programs with nature programs to maintain the appropriate balance of public fishing access, education and natural habitat along park water bodies.
- 4. Expand Fishing Programs:** Expand both regional and community fishing programs to provide a more diverse range of recreational and educational programming. All fishing programs should be assessed in aggregate to determine the optimal mix.
- 5. Balance Regional Boating Amenities:** Coordinate Washington Park recommendations with amenities offered at other facilities in order to create the optimal local and regional mix.
- 6. Coordinate Regional Boating Opportunities:** Bring together Washington, Jackson and South Shore Cultural Center park Framework improvements with regional improvements.
- 7. Develop Recreation Structure Rehabilitation Schedule:** Review buildings and develop a program for renovation or new construction based on current condition and needs.



Fishing at Washington Park



Park Fishing Network

● General Recommendations

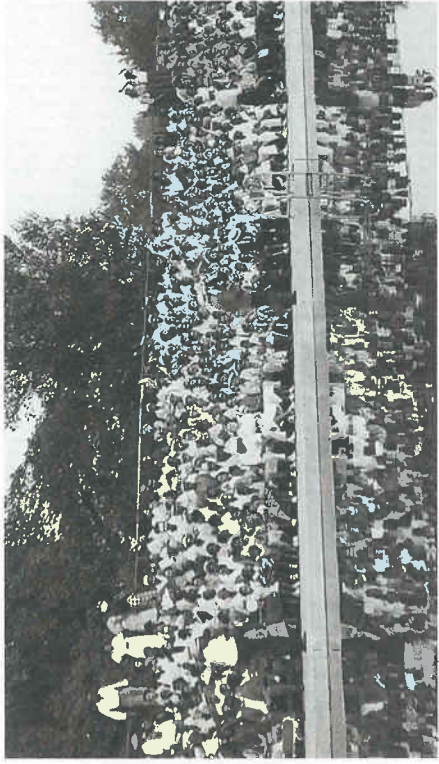
- 1. Develop an Integrated Regional Pedestrian/Bicycle System:** Connect Washington Park, Jackson Park and South Shore Cultural Center into a regional pedestrian/bicycle network that includes:
 - Regional park-to-park circulation, including Burnham Park, Rainbow, USX and Calumet Park.
 - Park-to-park circulation between Jackson Park, the Midway Plaisance, and Washington Park.
 - Tourism links to Navy and North Piers, Lakefront Museum Campus and Northerly Island (future), and Lincoln Park Museums.
- 2. Develop an Integrated Regional Cultural Transportation System:** Connect the three parks into a regional cultural network that includes:
 - Regional park-to-park circulation, including the Lakefront Museum Campus and Lincoln Park museums.
 - Park-to-park circulation between the Museum of Science and Industry, DuSable Museum, the University of Chicago and the South Shore Cultural Center.
- 3. Develop Safe Pedestrian/Bicycle Paths:** Develop and maintain well-designed and safe pedestrian/bicycle paths throughout the park.
- 4. Incorporate Appropriate Traffic Calming Techniques:** Include traffic calming techniques as a means of balancing competing demands to make Washington Park, Jackson Park and South Shore Cultural Center more friendly to pedestrians and cyclists.
- 5. Reclaim Park Land:** Washington Park, Jackson Park and South Shore Cultural Center have not always had good stewards. In the past, decisions were made to widen existing roads, like Morgan Drive, add new road connections, and create parking lots in the name of progress. Proposed circulation improvements for Washington Park include road narrowing to reclaim lost park land.
- 6. Respect Historic Context:** Washington Park, Jackson Park and South Shore Cultural Center have a proud historic heritage. Carefully consider historic context when proposing circulation alterations.
- 7. Implement Traffic Studies to Support Changes:** Washington Park, Jackson Park and South Shore Cultural Center have evolved from accommodating slower horse and carriage traffic to faster moving automobile traffic, often resulting in new and/or wider park roads. As opportunities to remove or narrow roads are proposed as part of the framework planning process, final evaluation should be based on appropriate traffic studies and additional community input.



Cycling in Washington Park



Walking in Washington Park



New Swimming Pool, Circa 1936

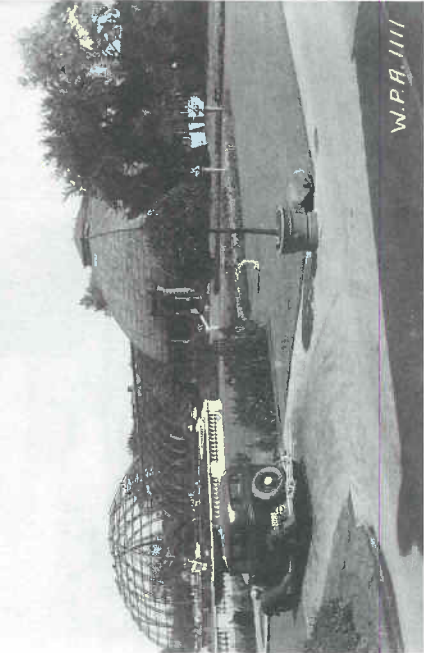
1936 Works Progress Administration (WPA)
As part of Washington Park's improvements funded by the WPA, the public speaker's forum is created on the west side of the park at 53rd Street, the Drexel Boulevard entrance is redesigned, the Refectory is remodeled and expanded, and two swimming pools, a wading pool and a grandstand are constructed south of the Refectory.

1955 A New Field House
The Field House is built in a similar design to other park field houses. Located on South Park Avenue south of 55th Street, it replaces 5 tennis courts.

1972 A New School
Walter H. Dyett School and Natatorium are constructed in the park near 51st Street.

1976 A Museum is Born
The former South Park Administration Building is turned over to the DuSable Museum of African-American History.

1992 Renovations
The Refectory and playgrounds are rehabilitated. The swimming pools and pool grandstand are renovated, and a water theme facility with a giant slide is built. The south addition to the DuSable Museum is constructed.



Conservatory at Cottage Grove and 56th Street (demolished 1937-1938)

1958 - 1961 Park Changes
The children's wading pond, installed in 1873 at South Park Avenue near 53rd Street, is filled in and rebuilt as a playground. The Superintendent's House, a residence for park executives since 1871, is demolished. In 1960, the sunken rose garden is removed. In 1961, the creek and casting pool, the northeastern-most extensions of the Mere, are partially filled in.

1990 Commemorating a Fallen Leader
The Open Ground is rededicated as the Harold Washington Common Ground; plantings and boulders with commemorative markers are installed.

1999 New Plans and Restoration
The Fountain of Time is under restoration. The Allison Davis Garden is planned. The restoration of the Mere, its creek and casting pool is planned and begun. The Park District commissions a Framework Plan to guide the development of Washington Park over the next 10 years.



The Refectory, Circa 1999

