

Kiana Ballo

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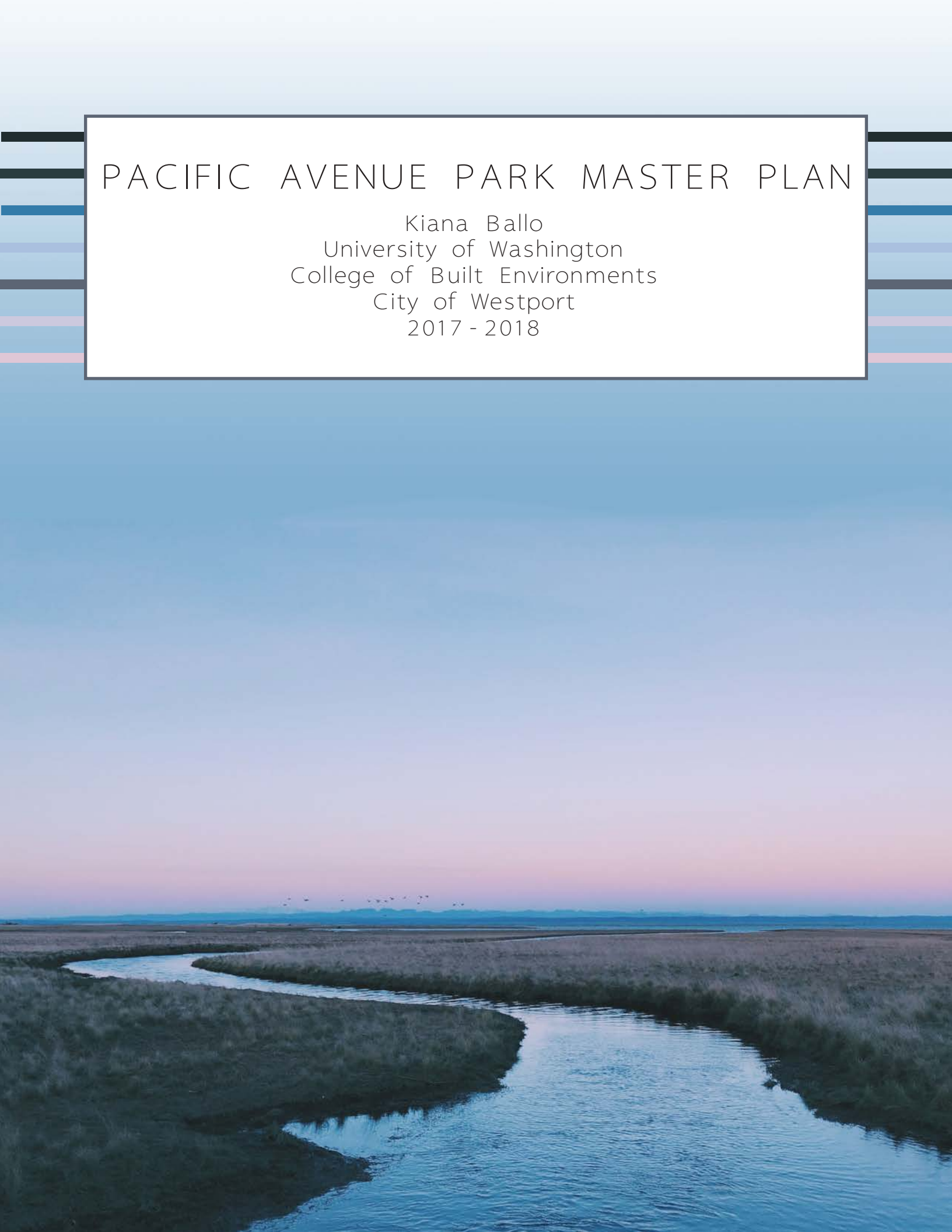
CEP Senior Project

Senior Project Final Report: Pacific Ave Park Master Plan

My project is a product of my internship at the City of Westport last summer where I worked as the Urban Planning Intern under the Public Works Director. I grew up in Westport on my family's oyster farm and I knew I wanted to go home for the summer to save money for my month long study abroad trip before school started. I knew I would be working on the oyster farm, but I wanted to make sure I did something else related to my school work. I called the city and asked if they would consider having me as an intern for the summer and they said sure. One of my first jobs at the city was to spell check the new City of Westport Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan, which was finalized shortly after I began. My mentor and the Public Works Director, Kevin Goodrich presented the idea of me doing my senior project on a proposal to turn a city property that had been zoned as a park (but is currently restricted to use by the city) into a public park. In the newly finalized parks plan it was dubbed Pacific Ave Property. My project ended up being a 23 page planning document called Pacific Ave Park Master Plan with three main foci; historical significance, community engagement, and ecological restoration.

PACIFIC AVENUE PARK MASTER PLAN

Kiana Ballo
University of Washington
College of Built Environments
City of Westport
2017 - 2018





W COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
College of Built Environments

Pacific Avenue Park Master Plan
Developed by Kiana Ballo for the City of Westport
September 2017-May 2018

Email: KBallo@uw.edu

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ABSTRACT: PACIFIC AVE PARK MASTER PLAN

This project aims to create a comprehensive park master plan for the transformation of the City of Westport, Washington's Pacific Ave property into a functional public park by utilizing principles of ecological restoration and community-based restoration. Within the recently finalized City of Westport Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan, the Pacific Ave property is zoned as a park, but is not currently used as a public park and has no intention of redevelopment by the city in the near future. The master plan is focused on research regarding site restoration with an assessment and incorporation of the needs of both the community and the City of Westport. The information gathered for this project through research and community engagement will be synthesized into a master park plan for the Pacific Ave Property that will be presented to the Westport City Council. The underutilized site has served many important uses throughout its history, and is located on the shore of the Elk River with a beautiful panoramic view of the South Bay and the Olympic mountains. With appropriate restoration, this site can be turned into a unique and valuable asset for both the city and the community.



(Photo taken by Westport Fire Department)

CONTEXT: PACIFIC AVE PROPERTY



The site itself is located at the end of Pacific Ave, a few blocks east of Montesano Street, the main road that runs north through the city. The property reaches to the shore of the Elk River facing west. The waterfront parcel is approximately one acre in size with a beautiful, sweeping view of the mountains, the south bay, surrounding wetlands and oyster beds. There is a trail running north along the east edge of the park and a gravel road running east toward the water on the south edge. The topography of the property is uneven, and it is generally sloped so that the lowest point is around half way on the south edge of the park. Currently, the site has two large burn piles, a few piles of large logs, and a couple piles of large pipes used for storm drainage. Due to erosion of the shoreline, there is a drop off about two feet down from the rest of the property with chunks of concrete and debris littering the ground. Throughout the site there is broken glass, miscellaneous garbage, unkempt grass and brush.



SIGNIFICANCE



The City of Westport recently finalized a new Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan in 2017. Although the Pacific Ave property is zoned as a park, there are no plans for the city to develop it. This plan outlines a proposal for the transformation of Pacific Ave property from a closed, vacant parcel into a public park that would be operated and maintained by the city. The plan focuses on site evaluation, restoration, and community engagement, rather than creating an explicit park design.



Priority Species Habitat Map

(Screen shot from <https://wdfw.wa.gov/mapping/phs/> 11/2/17)

An essential consideration in the development of the Pacific Ave Property is that it is surrounded by priority habitats for shorebirds, estuarine and marine wetland, and oyster beds. There have been 52 species of bird found in and around the park, as well as native shrimp and deer. It is officially classified as a Coastal Nearshore Priority Area by the Washington State Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. This project needs to take special consideration into the implications of PHS, in order to guarantee appropriate management and conservation environmental function of these priority habitats.

SITE HISTORY



Map of Westport Wharf extending from the Pacific Ave Property, 1891
(Map provided by John Shaw)

The Pacific Ave Property is historically significant to the city of Westport. It served as the original location of the Westport ferry dock until WWI. According to the Westport Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan, “The site is currently undeveloped and is the site of the first passenger ferry to dock at Westport. The sternwheeler Enterprise was owned and operated by the Chehalis Steamboat Navigation Company circa 1859.” Additionally, John Shaw, the manager of the Westport Maritime Museum, confirmed its original use for sternwheelers and ferries, and also provided information that the use of the dock at the Pacific Ave Property ended around 1912-1914, when the Aberdeen railroad was built and the road from Aberdeen to Westport was constructed.



The ferry dock was replaced with a service dock leading to the lamp post in the river that was used to help ships navigate the channel in the dark. The pilings that remain standing are remnant of this use. It was constructed in particular, to illuminate the way for the whaling boats traveling up river to reach the Pilchard Reduction Plant. Whaling was a thriving and prominent industry in Westport in the early 1900's and the Pacific Ave Property served as an important landmark and pivot point for all of the boats moving through the Elk River. The property remains a distinguished focal point for boats navigating through the river and some of the pilings from service dock are still standing to this day.

After the site no longer served as a ferry or service dock, it was turned into a dumpsite. There are remnants from the dump embedded in the ground; the most visible are the areas with concentrations of pieces of broken glass.



SITE INVENTORY

Native Species:

Sword Fern
Beach Grass / Crab Grass
Evergreen Huckleberry
Crab Apple Tree
Sitka Spruce
Pussy Willow
Shore Pine
Alder
Salal

Invasive Species:

English Ivy
English Holly
Knotweeds
Gorse
Hawkweeds
Himalayan Blackberry
Scotch Broom
Honeysuckle

Species Habitat Profile:

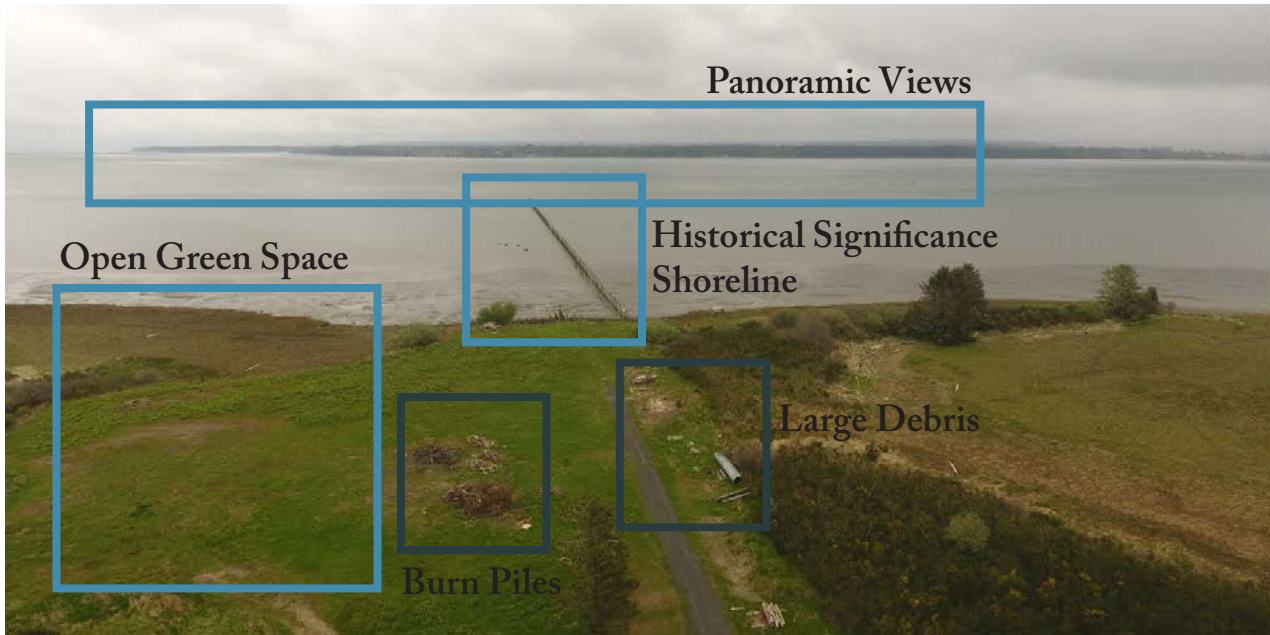
Shorebirds
Deer
Bald Eagle
Oysters

Soil Profile:

Ocosta Silty Clay Loam
Netarts Fine Sand



MAP OF ASSETS & DEFICIENCIES



Assets

Deficiencies

ASSETS



Historical Significance

The historical relevance of the Pacific Ave property to the development of the City of Westport adds value and meaning that connects the community to this location.



Open Green Space

For the most part, the property is flat, grassy open space. This is an optimal set up for a small park used for passive recreation.



Trails

There are two points of entree to the property; the first is an extension of Pacific Ave E that turns into a gravel road along the south side, and the other is a trail that extends past the property toward the airport.



Shoreline

The shoreline is a prominent feature of the property and it is an asset to the park, although it needs some clean up.



View of South Bay & Olympic Mountains

This site has stunning panoramic views of the surrounding wetlands, bay, and mountains. No matter where you are in the park, there is a view.

DEFICIENCIES



Debris

In general, there are various types of garbage, litter, and debris dispersed throughout the property. This includes beer cans, old clothing, plastic bags, a rug, food packaging, oyster shells, rubber tubes, rusty car parts, broken glass, chunks of old styrofoam, 2x4's, and pieces of concrete and asphalt.



Metal / Plastic Pipes

There are a few types of metal and plastic pipes in various sizes and conditions throughout the property. All of the following types of tubes will need to be relocated into a proper dump site.



Burn Pile

There is one large burn pile located centrally in the site with close proximity to the gravel road. This is where the city burns the yard waste.

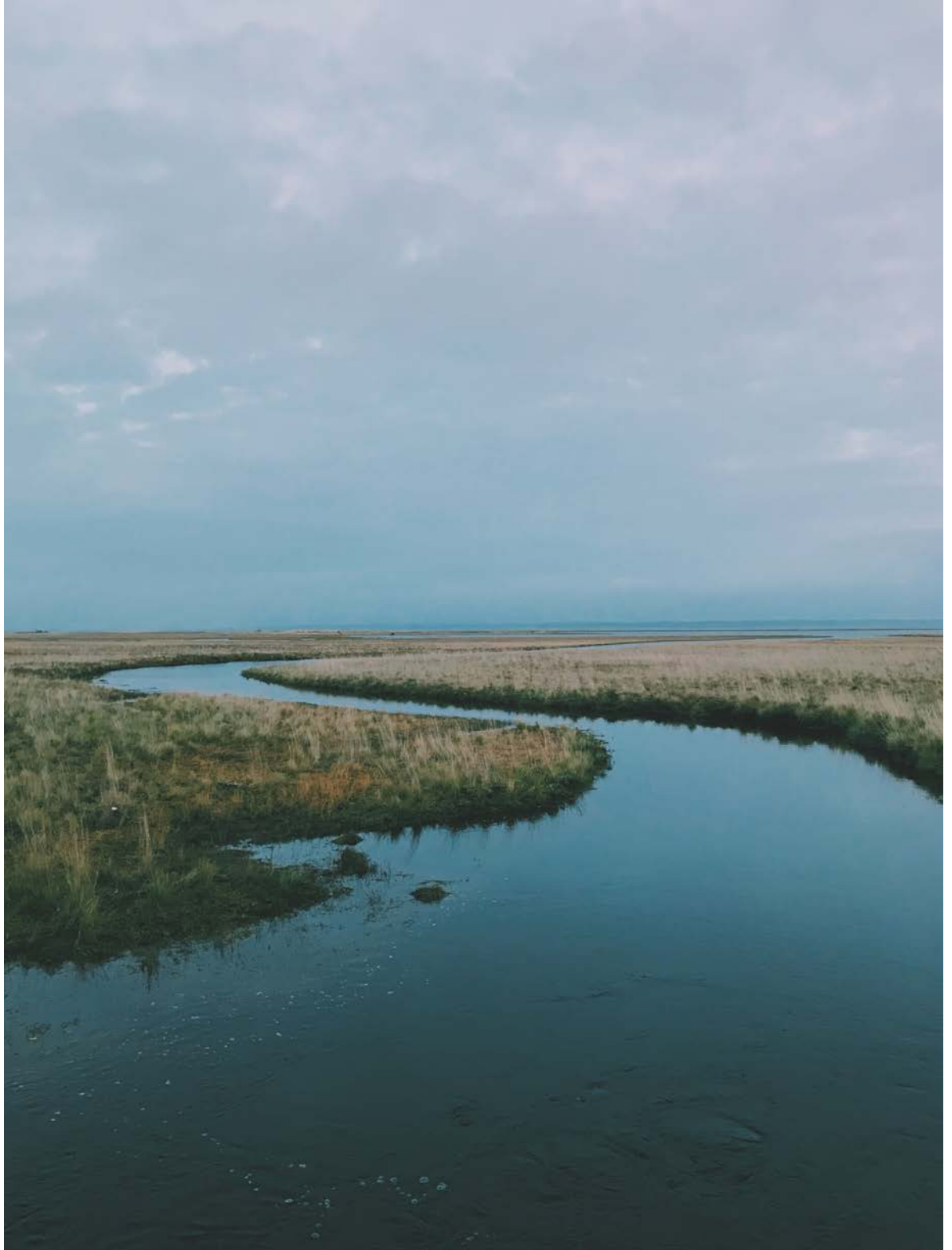


Logs

There are three concentrations of logs within the property, the approximate count for each pile is 14, 9 and 26. Additionally, there are many wood chips and miscellaneous woody matter surrounding the log piles.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Communication and outreach to the public regarding any city planning project is crucial in order to ensure that the needs of the community are met. Community feedback was gathered through surveys and discussion at three community meetings and one presentation to city council, held throughout the development of this project. The community meetings were held on January 26th 2018, February 26th 2018 and April 27th 2018.



Values

Preserving and protecting natural open space

Access to views and scenery

Walking and trails

Birdwatching

Public bathrooms

ADA Accessibility for parking and bathrooms

Concerns

Implications of opening the property as a park on the surrounding oyster beds

Safety of the property

Potential hazardous or toxic substances remaining from use as a dump site

RECOMMENDATIONS

History

- Remaining pilings are from the dock that was constructed to service the light pole in the river that helps boats navigate to the Pilchard reduction plant.
- Dock is grandfathered in and has potential to be submitted to Washington State Historical Society as a registered historical site. This opens up opportunities for funding and recognition.
- Important pivot point for whalers and train stations
- Coast guard buoy tenders.
- Focal point for boats coming up the river.

Signage

- Signage for native plants, birds and the dock.
- Historical society has shown interest in helping to develop signage.

Pacific Ave Park Committee

- Create a community group to assist in organizing and overseeing progress of the project.



Environmental Assessment Recommendations

- Results and recommendations from the basic level survey conducted by principal hydrologist from Robinson Noble Inc.

ADA Accessible Parking

- In order to ensure accessibility for all demographics of people, the park should include parking that complies with regulations set by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Community Clean Up

- By organizing a clean up event, people can earn volunteer hours while helping to clean up the small debris in the property.

Burnpile

Option 1: Relocate to Stafford Creek

- City loses small income created by charging residents for burning their brush.
- People have to drive with loads of branches that may not be secured and fall on people driving behind them.

Option 2: Relocate near the sewer department

- Room near sewer department.
- Purchasing or renting a chipper for the brush would additionally benefit the sewer department because they use the chips.

Bathroom

- Minimalistic, indestructible outhouse.
- Must be connected to city's sewer system.
- Ex. at Bottle Beach.

Safety

- Questionable activity at night within the property is currently unpatrolled.
- Police are unable to patrol the property currently since it is closed off by the gate, opening it to the public would allow them to include the park in their patrol.

Oysterbeds / Road Access

- Oyster growers currently use the road to access their oyster beds.
- Police patrol in the park would allow for more peace of mind for oyster growers that own the beds near the property

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- **Grays Harbor Conservation District**
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (From CoWCPRP)**
- **Washington Wildlife Recreation Program (From CoWCPRP)**
- **Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (From CoWCPRP)**
- **The Sierra Pacific Foundation (From CoWCPRP)**
- **Valerie Sivinski Washington Preserves Fund (Historic Preservation)**
- **Heritage Capital Projects Fund (Historic Preservation)**
- **Hart Family Fund for Small Towns (Historic Preservation)**
- **Preservation Services Fund - Eldridge Campbell Stockton Memorial Preserves Fund (Historic Preservation)**
- **1772 Foundation (Historic Preservation)**
- **National Trust Preservation Fund Grants (Historic Preservation)**
- **Certified Local Government Grants**



APPENDIX 1: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 2: KEY TERMS

Park Master Plan

According to the third edition of “Anatomy of a Park” by Bernie Dahl and Donald J. Molar, two professors of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture at Purdue University, “The master plan shows the essential organization of the part including commitments regarding circulation and major relationships.” (Anatomy of a Park: Essentials of Recreation Area Planning and Design.) In terms of my project, this means my plan needs take into account both the relationship of the property to the people who will use it and interact within it, and the relationship with the city because it will be in charge of maintaining the park. for the In addition to this book, I have analyzed a case study from the City of Mountlake Terrace Ballinger Park Master Plan. There are many similar concepts within the Ballinger Park Master Plan that are applicable to the development of my project. In the context of my project, my park master plan will focus on the ecological restorations and capital improvements that are necessary in order to transform the Pacific Ave property into a functioning public park.

City of Westport Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan (CoWCPRP)

This official planning document published by the city in 2017 contains fundamental information about the vision for the future of public parks system in Westport with descriptions, figures, and the plan for each park parcel.

City of Westport Comprehensive Plan

This official planning document revised by the city in 2013 provides the overarching, guiding principles and standards for all city projects. Information from this document will be essential in creating an appropriate plan for the site with the city’s vision in mind.

City of Westport Shoreline Master Plan

This official planning document published in 2017 has many resources regarding the restoration and management of the wetlands and waterline, which is a large portion of the focus of restoration at the site.

Priority Habitat and Species (PHS)

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) created the PHS program as “the principal means by which WDFW provides important fish, wildlife, and habitat information to local governments, state and federal agencies, private landowners and consultants, and tribal biologists for land use planning purposes. PHS is the agency’s primary means of transferring fish and wildlife information from our resource experts to those who can protect habitat.” (Priority Habitats and Species List) This is relevant to the Pacific Ave Property because WDFW has defined three types of priority habitat surrounding the site on all sides.

Ecological Restoration

As defined by Society for Ecological Restoration International Science & Policy (SER), “Ecological restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed” (The SER International Primer on Ecological Restoration). Restoration of the natural landscape is a large focus within the development of the Pacific Ave Property into a public park.

Community Engagement

Communication and outreach to the public regarding any city planning project is crucial in order to ensure that the needs of the community are met. Specifically regarding my project, the idea of public engagement through “community-based restoration” is defined in a paper written by Peter Leigh, for the Office of Habitat Conservation at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). He states in his paper discussing the importance of community-based restoration, “The practice brings communities together, promotes a conservation ethic, and develops a sense of place. By this action, humanity reconnects with the environment, often in meaningful ways, to heal a segment of an impaired earth.” (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Habitat Conservation)

Literature Review

Planning Documents

The City of Westport planning documents provide important context for the development of this project. Specifically, in addition to the City of Westport Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan, the Westport Comprehensive Plan and the City of Westport Shoreline Master Program provide important overarching policies, objectives and recommendations are essential to my master plan.

Some of the recurring themes in all three planning documents are: protection of natural assets and environmental function; encouraging opportunities for public access in an equitable and responsible manner; improving of quality of life for residents; respecting property rights; and promoting Westport's distinct history and character. Summarized in other words, the Comprehensive Plan provides this holistic vision statement, "To maintain and enhance the character of Westport's quality natural and physical environment and limited land area in a manner that provides for adequate protection without unnecessarily impacting the social, economic, and physical development of Westport." (*City of Westport Comprehensive Plan 2013 Revision*)

All three of the planning documents discuss the importance of protecting and preserving the natural environment in Westport. This includes a range of environmental assets; the City of Westport CPRP policy expresses a goal to "Encourage the preservation of high value scenic vistas, wildlife habitat areas, significant shoreline areas, and other natural areas." (*City of Westport Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan 2018-2023*) Beyond conserving the environment simply for its intrinsic value, it is crucial that preservation maintains the services and relationships within the delicate

natural ecosystem. In other words, Shoreline Master Program policy encourages planners to “Design new development located in shoreline jurisdiction to result in no net loss of ecological function.” (*City of Westport Shoreline Master Program: Environmental Designations, Policies & Regulations*) In addition to protecting the ecosystem, development of the natural environment should also take into consideration the impact on the people who interact with it. This idea is reflected in the Comprehensive Plan, stated explicitly “To protect the environmental amenities of the area to the extent that the attractiveness of Westport to tourists and the quality of life for residents is maintained and/or enhanced.” (*City of Westport Comprehensive Plan 2013 Revision*)

Public access is another significant topic considered in the City’s plans. From the overarching view of the CPRP, access needs to be inclusive and needs to “To provide high quality, low maintenance, convenient and accessible park and recreational facilities for all segments of the population and visitors to the city.” (*City of Westport Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan 2018-2023*) Specifically, the Comprehensive Plan requires ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessibility in order to ensure access is equitable for people with all different capabilities. Furthermore, public access needs to consider the rights and safety of people in and around the development. Policy from the Shoreline Master Program aims to “Increase the amount and diversity of public access opportunities to shorelines where consistent with the natural shoreline character, property rights, and public safety.” (*City of Westport Shoreline Master Program: Environmental Designations, Policies & Regulations*)

One last subject of discussion from the planning documents is the value of contributing to the small coastal town disposition that the City of Westport has

maintained throughout the years. Policy from the Comprehensive Plan strives “To preserve and reinforce the unique seaside character of Westport.” (*City of Westport Comprehensive Plan 2013 Revision*) This concept is applied in the CPRP in more detail, which proposes to “Encourage the acquisition or development of property which is historically, culturally or recreationally significant to the community.” (*City of Westport Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan 2018-2023*)

In order to ensure my master plan for the Pacific Ave Property is functional, I have incorporated the guiding objectives from the City of Westport planning documents with the fundamental master plan elements outlined in the City of Mountlake Terrace, WA Ballinger Park Plan and Anatomy of a Park. Although there are many differences between Ballinger Park and the Pacific Ave property, they share a similar type of shoreline ecosystem that requires ecological restoration. This is useful for providing an example of the many important elements that create a holistic master plan centered around restoration, including considerations like appropriate plant materials, utilizing existing resources and the delicate balance of needs and budget.

The Ballinger Park Master Plan provides a well-founded example of waterfront, wetland restoration project and provides the City of Mountlake Terrace’s approach to public engagement. In these two aspects, I can utilize the Ballinger Park Master Plan as a model for ecological restoration and as inspiration on how to involve and get feedback from the community. Although Ballinger Park is much larger and more urban the Pacific Ave Property, they have many similar physical characteristics. They are both located in sensitive wetlands with shoreline access, they both have similar vegetation and both provide important habitats for birds and wildlife.

The Ballinger Park Master Plan does many things well. It maintains an engaging, exciting, and concise rhetoric regarding the park and its relationship to the natural environment and the community. It provides a detailed and easy to understand outline of restoration processes with timeline, cost estimate, and funding sources. And the Ballinger Park Master Plan incorporates the community's needs and desires, which were established in three public meetings.

Restoration and Engagement

The purpose of restoration is to return something to a previous state. In the case of ecological restoration, it is “an intentional activity that initiates or accelerates the recovery of an ecosystem with respect to its health, integrity and sustainability.” (*The SER International Primer on Ecological Restoration*) Ecological restoration specifically refers to interventions in an environment that encourage it to return to a natural state, to a similar condition to before human influence. The process of ecological restoration is not simple or easy, rather it is specified by SER as “an indefinitely long-term commitment of land and resources, and a proposal to restore an ecosystem requires thoughtful deliberation.” (*The SER International Primer on Ecological Restoration*)

Ultimately, the people who will be impacted by my project are the people who live in the community. The people who know the most about the community's needs and wants are the people who live and work there, and thus it was essential for my project to include the community's feedback in the development of the Pacific Ave property. The City of Westport Comprehensive Plan explicitly states that all planning should “Encourage maximum citizen participation in all phases of the local government decision making and comprehensive planning process, especially by those groups who

have traditionally lacked access to the decision-making process.” (*City of Westport Comprehensive Plan 2013 Revision*) Involving the community in the planning process was essential in creating a space that fits the needs of the people it serves.

In SER’s discussion of restoration and engagement, it is specified, “Ecological restoration encourages and may indeed be dependent upon long-term participation of local people.” (*The SER International Primer on Ecological Restoration*) It is crucial to remember that the location of restoration does not exist in a vacuum; it has major influences on its surrounding environment and the people who live and interact with or near the site. “Restoration, community-inspired, offers reciprocity and redemption to give back to nature for what nature has given to us and for what we have taken from it.” (*National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Habitat Conservation*) Specifically from a restoration standpoint, working with community members is not only beneficial for the project itself, but it gives people an opportunity to be invested in their community, to identify and interact with their surrounding environment and to have a sense of self accomplishment.

Conclusion of Literature Review

As mentioned in *Anatomy of a Park*, “Good planning has to be flexible planning, with constant effort being given to turning problems into opportunities.” (*Anatomy of a Park: Essentials of Recreation Area Planning and Design.*) Throughout the process of carrying out a planning project, I have been faced with complications and challenges. I

learned to be adaptable as I became aware of issues and obstacles, responding to these matters as a chance for improvement and keeping in mind the many stakeholders that are impacted by the implications of my project. In order to develop a Pacific Ave Park Master Plan that promotes the benefit and satisfies the needs of both the community and the environment, I have incorporated the information from my research in balance with the ideals of the city and the input from the community.

Methods

In order to create a master plan, I needed to review existing conditions to understand what improvements and interventions need to be made. I wanted to gather as much information I could about the site itself, park master plans, park essentials, ecological restoration, and meaningful community engagement. This began with researching the process of creating a park master plan, gaining context from reading the official City of Westport planning documents (*Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and Shoreline Master Plan*), reading *Anatomy of a Park*, and utilizing case studies like Ballinger Park Master Plan. I followed this with research regarding the site history and evolution through interviews with knowledgeable community members and city officials. I did additional research focused on the best practices and tools for conducting public outreach and community engagement, as well as research involving the best site restoration methods for wetland and shoreline conservation. I conducted a site inventory for the Pacific Ave property to record the environmental condition of the site that includes rough debris / litter / garbage counts, soil conditions, vegetation (invasive and non invasive species), important physical

features (trails, shoreline, burn piles, etc), potential environmental issues, and relevant historical features.

To ensure my master plan appropriately meets the desires of the city and the community, I analyzed the needs and preferences of the property, the community, and the city. I began by assessing community needs and concerns through a survey, organizing multiple public meetings, a presentation to city council, and outreach on social media. Once I gathered feedback from citizens and the city, I incorporated their values and desires with the site inventory to create an assets and deficiencies analysis for the Pacific Ave property. I created a visual representation of the analysis by making a map highlighting the assets and deficiencies within the Pacific Ave Property. In order to get an accurate idea of the implications and scope of restoration, I contacted experts in the industry of ecological restoration to get their professional opinions and diagnosis.

The final portion of my methods was to develop a prioritized plan that organizes all relevant information about the site and proposes a strategy for restoration. This includes; a summary of the context and significance of the property; a site history; a site inventory; an identification of the property's assets and necessary improvements, accompanied by a map of the assets and deficiencies; a plan for the City of Westport on where to relocate the current activities they conduct on the property; recommendations for ecological restoration based off the professional hydrologist basic level survey; and a list of recommendations according to the feedback from the community. This final document also utilizes visual aids such as maps and pictures.

Reflection

I have enjoyed working on my senior project this past year. It gave me an opportunity to apply the knowledge I have learned in college to create something to give back to my hometown. Working with my community has been very rewarding, the people in Westport are so passionate about protecting, preserving, and promoting the liveliness of our small fishing town. Through this project, I have been able to work with my grandpa, my friend's parents, and people who have known me since I was in elementary school. Without the continuous support from my community, I would not be who I am today. I am proud to be from Westport and I am proud to present my project to the city and the citizens.

Beyond working with my community, my project gave me an opportunity to dive into the world of municipal planning, applying my communication, photography, digital design, presentation, and project management skills. I have learned through research and first hand experiences about park planning, the history of Westport, community engagement and outreach, ecological restoration, and native Washington environments. I have been able to work independently and I have maintained steady progress on my project throughout the year by constantly setting goals and reevaluating the direction of my project.

When I started working on this project, I thought I was going to be doing park design sort of work. Once I became more familiar with the Pacific Ave property's situation I decided this project needed to be more focused on restoring the property to a healthier condition, keeping the design interventions within the park to a minimum. I realized through talking with my mentor and from surveying residents at my community meeting that I needed to focus more on the history of the property and creating an

accessible, natural, open space for passive recreation, while minimizing the impact of the park on the surrounding priority species habitats. This was a large turning point in the progress of my project because now I had a solid direction for my work. I started by going through all of the Westport planning documents related to my proposal to ensure that the values of the city are incorporated into my project. I also began to reach out to the community, I ended up holding three community meetings, with one preliminary presentation to city council.

In the beginning, I felt overwhelmed with the complexity of this project. I knew I could do the history and community aspects of the project, but I felt under qualified to do the ecological elements of this plan that it desperately needed. I had no idea where to begin. I realized that I just needed to start somewhere and even if I did not start where I needed to be, I was at least one step closer to figuring it out. I began by researching ecological restoration and preservation of natural habitats.

I read several different state level planning documents related to planning to protect natural ecosystems including the priority habitat guides and shoreline management master plans. Although, most of the contents of these documents was not related to my project, I got a feel for what was important to consider in my plan and it also confirmed that I had no idea what I was doing. After I had researched restoration of other places and after spending a lot of time searching the WA Department of Ecology's website for resources but it came down to the fact that an environmental assessor / consultant needs to be hired in order to get accurate recommendations and estimates. I reached out to my mentor and organizations related to my project like the coastal planners group and I received a lot of feedback. I had a lot of people simply

commenting on my proposal and literature review, but Kevin also gave me the contact of the principal hydrologist from Robinson Noble Inc, an environmental consulting company that the city has been working with the past 20 years. After meeting with Mike the hydrologist, he agreed to volunteer a day of his time along with the city volunteering their backhoe for the day to dig some holes to conduct a basic level survey of the site. This was a huge win for me because now my plan will be backed with the recommendations of an expert not just a college student making stuff up.

Information I gathered from other people was by far my most valuable resource. The historical timeline I created was almost completely derived from discussions I had with community members, I learned about perspectives of my project from police, firemen, members of the historical society, the oyster growers who harvest outside the property, city council members, the mayor, lifelong Westport residents, and even the city land use planner who originally zoned this site as a park. I learned what they knew about the site, what they thought was important to consider in my project, what concerned them, what they envisioned for the property, and what they thought would be feasible for my project. People took my project and me very seriously, I received a lot of respect and support from strangers and people who have known me basically my entire life.

I ended up holding three community meetings that ranged in attendance from 11-24 people. I collected surveys and notes from people at the meeting so I could have a record of their thoughts and ideas. I advertised my meetings through facebook events and posting in the local newspaper, the South Beach Bulletin. I feel I did a good job of communicating with the city and the community and incorporating their desires and

concerns into my project, the response from the community and the city was full of interest and enthusiasm which I deeply appreciated.

I am proud of the photography and design work I did in my final report, I feel I accurately represented the important elements of this project in a visually pleasing way. Also, I think I was successful in holding myself accountable to my goals and deadlines, emailing people back promptly, and in remaining organized throughout the chaos of my project. Overall, I learned that it does not matter where you start, as long as you start and keep going you will get to where you need to be. I realized toward the end of my project that I had done a lot of work, but it did not seem that way throughout the year because I really enjoyed doing most of it. I am impressed with myself for doing what I set out to do. I feel lucky to have the opportunity to work on such a cool project, to work on something I am passionate about not only in giving back to my community, but in working on a planning project that incorporates so much rich history and environmental significance.

Next Steps

My next and final step in my project is to do my final presentation to Westport City Council on June 21st. They will vote after my presentation about whether they would like to pursue funding or not. After June 21st, either my year long journey creating this project will come to an end or it will be just the beginning of a long process. From my conversations with my mentor Kevin, if this project is pursued by the city, it will be about a five to ten year process before the property would be ready to be opened as a

park. I am nervous and excited to see how my presentation goes and to hear the city's opinions on my project.

If I had more time to work on this master plan, I would have looked more into the finer details and logistics of my plan including the cost of restoration, the cost of building bathrooms/parking, and a timeline for completion. As a non-professional and as a busy college student trying to graduate, I was unable to create an accurate estimate for these aspects of my project but I think they are essential and important elements of a good master plan. I think if I had the time and expertise to include these statistics, my project would be much stronger and more comprehensive.