

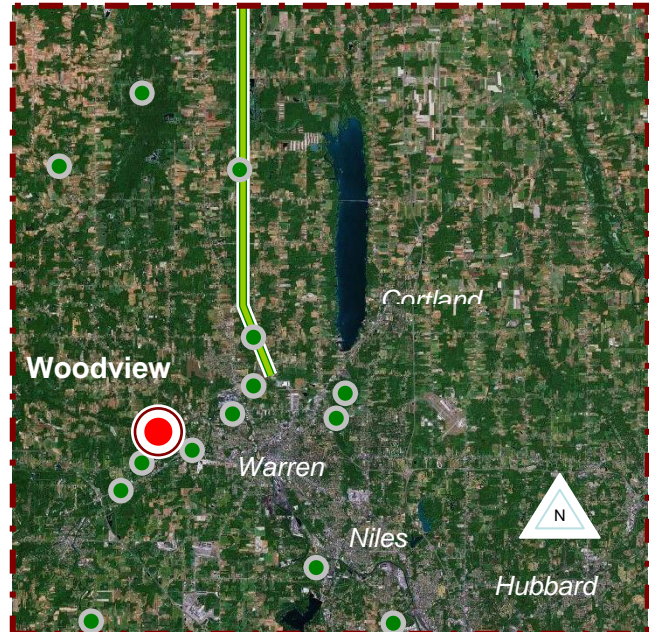


WOODVIEW PROPERTY

Introductions • History • Present Conditions • Future Development Plans • Implementation Strategies • Statistics

Introduction

Woodview Circle is a mostly wooded tract of land running along the Mahoning River, midway between Thomas A. Swift MetroPark and Canoe City. Almost five acres, the park has the potential to provide a lot of amenities to those traveling along the river. The park is also home to a variety of birds, including a seasonal stopping point for wild turkeys. Considering the land area, proximity to homes, and vehicle access requiring the use of residential roads, it would be best to have the property established as a river-access-only park.



History

The land known as Woodview Property was originally planned as a park beside the Woodview Circle residential subdivision. Thus in 1973, the B&K Land Company, the real estate development group responsible for the Woodview Circle residential development, donated the land to the Trumbull County Commissioners to develop as they wished. However, after accepting the donation, no further official action was taken, and the land dwindled into obscurity for some time. Over time, as the public land sat empty, residents of the Woodview Circle subdivision established a gathering area with a fire ring and walking paths. A few nearby property owners also began to landscape the eastern end of the property. When isolated reports of improper use of the land came to light, including excavation of the riverbank, some neighbors complained and County Commissioners bequeathed the property to MetroParks to develop and protect. The purpose of the donation was to assure that the land would be protected and made open to public use as was originally intended.

Woodview Property

- The approximately 4-acre site along the Mahoning River was originally planned as a park and could serve as a water-access only resting and picnic area for canoeists riding along Phase I of the Mahoning River Water Trail.
- Existing service road will be used only by Trumbull County MetroParks to maintain the site.
- Implementation includes site cleanup, establishment of a picnic area with cooking grills, appropriate signage, coordination with neighboring residents, and vegetative screening to protect the privacy of surrounding property owners.



Present Conditions

Woodview property provides beautiful views of the Mahoning River under the shade of a generous tree canopy. Short trails have already been established on the property by area residents and a depression at the park's northwest end provides a natural canoe launch, though improvements could be made to limit further erosion. Some construction debris exists near the south-western end of the property and would have to be cleared prior to opening the park. There are also several encroachments on the property from neighboring homeowners.

Nearby homeowners have expressed concern about possible mischief and traffic through their neighborhood. However, many were receptive to the idea of establishing Woodview Property as a water-access only park. Though there is a small service road which leads from the park to Woodview Circle Road, a residential street, there is no access to the property from a main road.

Flooding is also an issue in the area as the entire property had been submerged as recently as 2003. Part of MetroParks' responsibility in holding the land is ensuring that the floodplain land remains protected. A few adjacent property owners continue to encroach upon the park, an issue requiring immediate attention.

Future Development Plans

Woodview Circle has a great potential to serve those traveling along the Mahoning River Water Trail by offering a place to take time out and relax, picnic, and walk. In case of an emergency, canoeists would be able to access a public road. Future development would have to consider the removal of all debris from the property. Other development options could include extending walking trails, improving the canoe launch area, providing a rest area for canoeists, and planting trees to limit erosion. A landscaped buffer could also be



Primitive Canoe Launch at Woodview Property

installed to provide a buffer between the existing residences and the park to ensure privacy. Consideration must be made in that the land has been used by neighboring property owners for sometime and that citizens may desire to be involved in the park's future development, as many already have. It would be best to host a planning session during a regularly scheduled board meeting to finalize development plans.

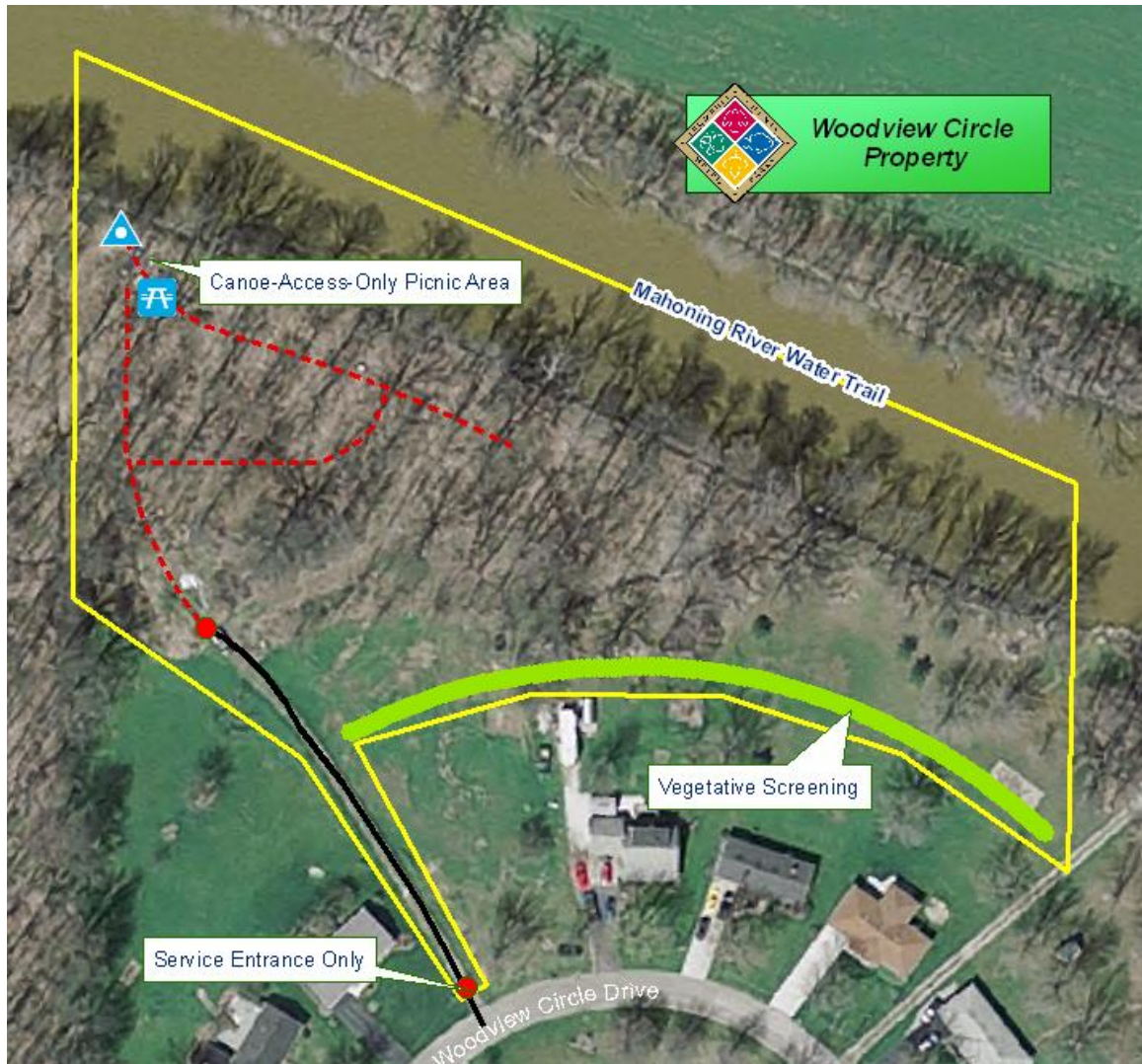


Restrict Vehicle Access

Considering the small size of the park and that the only present vehicle access is through the residential neighborhood of Woodview Circle, it is recommended that the access road remain closed to public use. With the park's location between Thomas A. Swift MetroPark and Canoe City MetroPark, the site would still serve as an excellent rest area for canoeists. Similar water-access only parks exist along the popular and heavily canoed Upper Cuyahoga River in neighboring Portage County.

Install Signage

In order to discourage trespassing by unwary park visitors, signage should be installed at each end of the service road alerting those in vehicles that access nor parking are permitted and to inform water-access visitors that they are nearing private property. These provisions will work to avoid confusion while also providing homeowners with peace of mind.





Boundary Delineation & Screening

Immediate action is needed to delineate the existing boundary between Woodview Property and adjacent property owners. Such action is important to making the land truly public and is essential to protect MetroParks from the many potential liabilities associated with private use of public lands. Property lines could best be established with vegetative screening, a fence of vegetation comprised of evergreens and other sheltering plants that will also serve to ensure the privacy of homeowners and park visitors alike. It would be best if residents could be queried as to what type of vegetation could be used.

Canoe Launch

The best location for a canoe launch appears to be the northwest end of the property where an existing trail and gentle decline to the water provides easy access. Picnic tables should be installed nearby with an informational stand or kiosk; however, items should be simple and minimal so as not to leave much to vandalize. An existing trail extends from the proposed canoe launch to the site's service road, which has since been blocked off to prevent people from parking and unauthorized access. Signs should be posted at each end of the service road emphasizing that no parking is permitted and to alert canoeists that they are entering a residential neighborhood.



Woodview Property Interior

Future Expansion

In terms of the more distant future, MetroParks could explore expansion opportunities as they arise. Increasing the length of existing trails would be a desirable attribute for canoeists stopping to stretch and walk. The park district should examine the prospects of attaining easements for walking trails along the undeveloped riverfront to the east and west of the existing trail. It may also be possible, with easement or land acquisition, to construct a parking lot with access to a main road. The land to the west of the park is privately owned while a four-acre parcel to the east is owned and managed by the Trumbull County Sanitary Engineer.

Additional Considerations

Should MetroParks find the property unsuitable for its purposes, however, it would be best to return the land back to the Trumbull County Commissioners so that it could be allocated to another agency. MetroParks could also place the property up for sale and deliver the property to the highest bidder. However, the Trumbull County Commissioners should be consulted prior to finalizing such a decision.



Implementation Strategies

With the help of a few service agencies to monitor litter, Woodview MetroPark would also be very easy to maintain without any funding. In such an event, MetroParks would especially benefit by collaborating with neighboring property owners to keep the property adequately policed.

Woodview Circle Implementation Checklist

Bold text indicates that the listed task is integral to completing other MetroParks projects. Full checklist available in appendix.

Phase I – Park Preparation

- Rename Property from Woodview Circle Canoe Park
- Notify Property Owners of Encroachments & Plans & Encourage Input

Phase II – Park Set-Up

- Plant vegetative screening along property line
- Refine canoe launch**
- Install ‘No Entry’ signage at each end of the existing service road**
- Remove existing debris**
- Construct kiosk / information board**
- Install picnic tables
- Install cooking grills

Woodview Property Statistics

Parkland Attributes:

Acreage: 4.86

Land Cover: Forest & Lawn

Surrounding

Land Uses: M.D. Res.

Topography Flat, Banks

* Riverfront – Canoe Access

* Construction Debris

Daily Traffic Counts:

Diehl South Rd / Park Rd: 778



View of the Mahoning River from the Woodview Property