

LYNWOOD PROPERTY

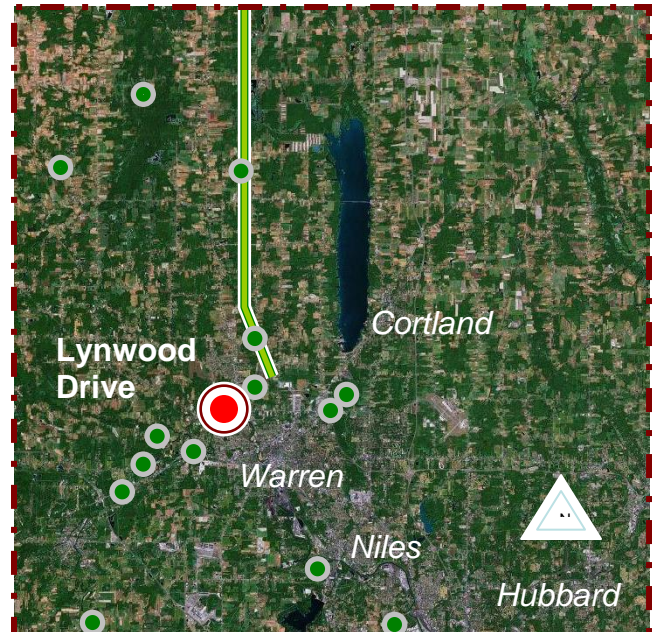
Introductions • History • Present Conditions • Future Development Plans • Implementation Strategies • Statistics

Introduction

MetroParks' Lynwood Property is a vacant residential city lot located off Lynwood Drive in northwest Warren. The narrow riverfront property measures one half acre, a significant portion of which is located underwater. The property presently serves as a community garden managed by the Northwest Neighborhood Association.

Area Attributes

Surrounding land uses include medium-density city residential and, along the adjacent riverbank, heavy industrial. As of 2008, traffic count data from the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments for Lynwood Drive was not available because the street was not considered a major roadway. The only access to the property is through a residential neighborhood. Nearby Burbank Park, for which improvements are in progress, has been established as a neighborhood park for some time.



Though impractical for park development, the property provides an excellent emergency access way to the Mahoning River. Additionally, with the support the local citizen group, the Northwest Neighborhood Association, the area could continue to serve as a community garden.

History

The property had originally been owned by Copperweld Incorporated and served as the base of a sluice with an accompanying service road. Similar to a low-head dam in appearance, the sluice consisted of a rocky wall that obstructed most of the Mahoning River, save for a small area of about twenty feet near an intake pipe that funneled the water into the factory campus to cool equipment and systems. When the factory closed amidst financial difficulties, however, the sluice served no purpose other than obstructing the flow of the river and artificially raising the water level, leaving it to be deemed a

Lynwood Property

- Less than a half acre, the residential city lot is currently leased to the non-profit Northwest Neighborhood Association Inc for use as a community garden
- The park district will continue to collaborate with Northwest Neighborhood Association into the future and may also seek to improve the site with signage
- The site was originally acquired for the purposes of removing a sluice deemed a safety hazard along the Mahoning River



public safety hazard. With the need to acquire stream bank mitigation credits, need for the sluice vanished. Additionally, with the need to acquire streambank mitigation credits for future construction projects, the Ohio Department of Transportation collaborated with the Trumbull County Planning Commission to restore the river to its natural state by removing the sluice.

The park district received the property directly from the Copperweld Corporation with the negotiating help of the Trumbull County Planning Commission, which had authored the deal. By attaining the property prior to the demolition of the dam, MetroParks was not only able to increase its inventory, but also acquired a fee for a temporary easement. Shortly thereafter, the dam was removed, and neighbors reported seeing lower water levels as expected. Additionally, a canoe launch had been created with the debris from the sluice; however, because of the property's close proximity to residential homes, ODOT and TCPC personnel reported that the canoe launch would best function as an emergency access point for rescue officials.

Present Conditions

The Lynwood property remains a vacant residential lot. Little evidence remains of the service road which once traversed the property. A small ditch along Lynwood Drive prevents vehicles from accessing the property with exception to a culvert, which has since been blocked with the installation of a steel fence. Emergency vehicle access to the canoe launch can be obtained via a neighboring residential driveway.



Lynwood Property in late 2007

Lynwood Drive is a part of the Northwest Neighborhood Association's (NWN) service area. The organization has been working to rehabilitate and police Burbank Park, located about a quarter mile from the park district's property. Upon hearing of possible plans for developing Lynwood Drive into a canoe park, residents and members of NWN expressed concern about the possibilities of crime and nuisance if the land was made into a public park. The neighborhood organization is also the group responsible for the restoration and upkeep of nearby

Burbank Park, a targeted site for a canoe launch along the Mahoning River Water Trail. MetroParks granted a lease to the non-profit corporation after members expressed a desire to see the land created into a community garden plot.

Developing the park into a recreation attraction is impractical because of its limited size. Additionally, its use as a water-access only rest area is incompatible with surrounding land uses, area aesthetics, and the hazard of a water-intake pipe located on the opposite bank. The existing canoe launch is in good condition but is only accessible via a private residential driveway. Neighbors petitioned to have a steel fence installed over an existing culvert near the property to



prevent vehicles from driving onto the lawn, though there have been reports of unauthorized access by boaters despite the obstruction.

Though the Copperweld Plant had closed, the facility reopened in early 2008 under new ownership. The once-dormant gray water discharge pipe located opposite of the Lynwood Property has become active again, creating concerns about the safety of the current and water quality for canoeists. Furthermore, large acid ponds exist on the property in close proximity to the river, in certain areas with less than 50 feet of earth in between.

Future Development Plans

Despite its simplicity, the Lynwood property has attracted the attention of many nearby residents who are very interested in its future. Trumbull County MetroParks has leased the property free of charge to the Northwest Neighborhood Association so that a community garden could be built and maintained. The park district will continue partnering with the non-profit corporation in re-evaluating any other future use of the site. The following items are additional enhancements that the park district may consider in coming years to further improve the site.



Establish Existing Launch As Emergency-Access Only

In order to make clear that the existing canoe launch is not to be accessed by anyone other than emergency personnel, MetroParks could establish an “Emergency-Only Access” sign on the ramp and place “No Parking” signs along the street.



Inspections & Warning Signage Along River Trail

The large gray-water discharge pipe that is presently in use by the neighboring steel factory should be inspected to determine if the pipe poses a safety hazard. Appropriate signs should be posted accordingly. Also needing attention are large acid ponds that exist along the opposite side of the northern stream bank, oftentimes with only 25 feet of separation between the acid ponds and the water of the Mahoning River. Warning signs should be placed alongside the streambanks and at the discharge pipe to ensure that canoeists stay clear of any potential danger. MetroParks could request that Warren Steel Holdings pay for any expenses related to signage and inspection, as the company owns the land in question and operates the water pipe.

Northwest Neighborhood Association Collaboration

The Northwest Neighborhood Association was very receptive to the idea of attaining an easement on the Lynwood Property to create a community garden. The organization proposed planting flowers along the river bank with garden plots near the road. The gardens would also feature a non-anchored storage shed to keep equipment and supplies for property upkeep.

Additional Considerations

There has been much debate within the park district about whether MetroParks should even retain the Lynwood Property. If the property becomes controversial and MetroParks decides that it must be relinquished, it would be most appropriate to return the land back to the Trumbull County Commissioners, the original donors, so that it could be assigned to another agency or organization.

Implementation Strategies

Implementation Checklist

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

Phase I – Mahoning River Water Trail

- Maintain existing canoe launch as emergency-access only**
- Inspect gray-water discharge pipe along the opposite riverbank, take appropriate action**
- Install Emergency Exit Only signage on launch if necessary**

Beyond Phase I – Monitoring

- Monitor annual agreement with North West Neighborhood Association to ensure productive use of the site

Lynwood Statistics

Acreage: 0.50

Land Cover: Lawn

Surrounding Land Use: Moderate-Density Res.

Topography Flat, Steep Riverbank

Riverfront – Canoe Access

Emergency Access to River

Former Site of Dam / Sluice

Daily Traffic Counts: Lynwood Dr., NW

Not Available – Residential Road