

Riverside Park

Unique Attributes

Riverside Park offers scenic views of the Niagara River and is the only Olmsted Park that provides direct physical access to the river, although the park is not directly adjacent to the Niagara River since it is separated from the river by the Niagara section of the New York State Thruway. To reach the river, park users and other pedestrians currently utilize the Irene Gardner Bridge to cross the highway.

Riverside Park is two parks in one—the historic north section designed by the Olmsted Firm and the southern section designed later. The historic section of the park included woodlands, the formal central gardens called the Concourse, and a meadow-like playfield. In the early 20th century, the southern section was added to

provide more active recreation facilities.

Key Missing or Lost Elements

- Pleasant and attractive water access (The park had direct river access via the historic footbridge crossing the noiseless waters of the Erie Canal which was a far different experience than negotiating the current bridge which spans the I-190).
- The central Concourse, including formal gardens and pavilion structures.
- The parks’ historic path system.
- The density and complexity of the historic tree planting design.
- The Minnow Pools. (See Figures 43-47)

Key Assumptions

Key assumptions include the need to remove or relocate the swimming pool, and relocate



Figure 43 – Historic view from the Concourse of a bridge over the Erie Canal to the Niagara River



Figure 44 – The Concourse has been lost with the addition of new structures

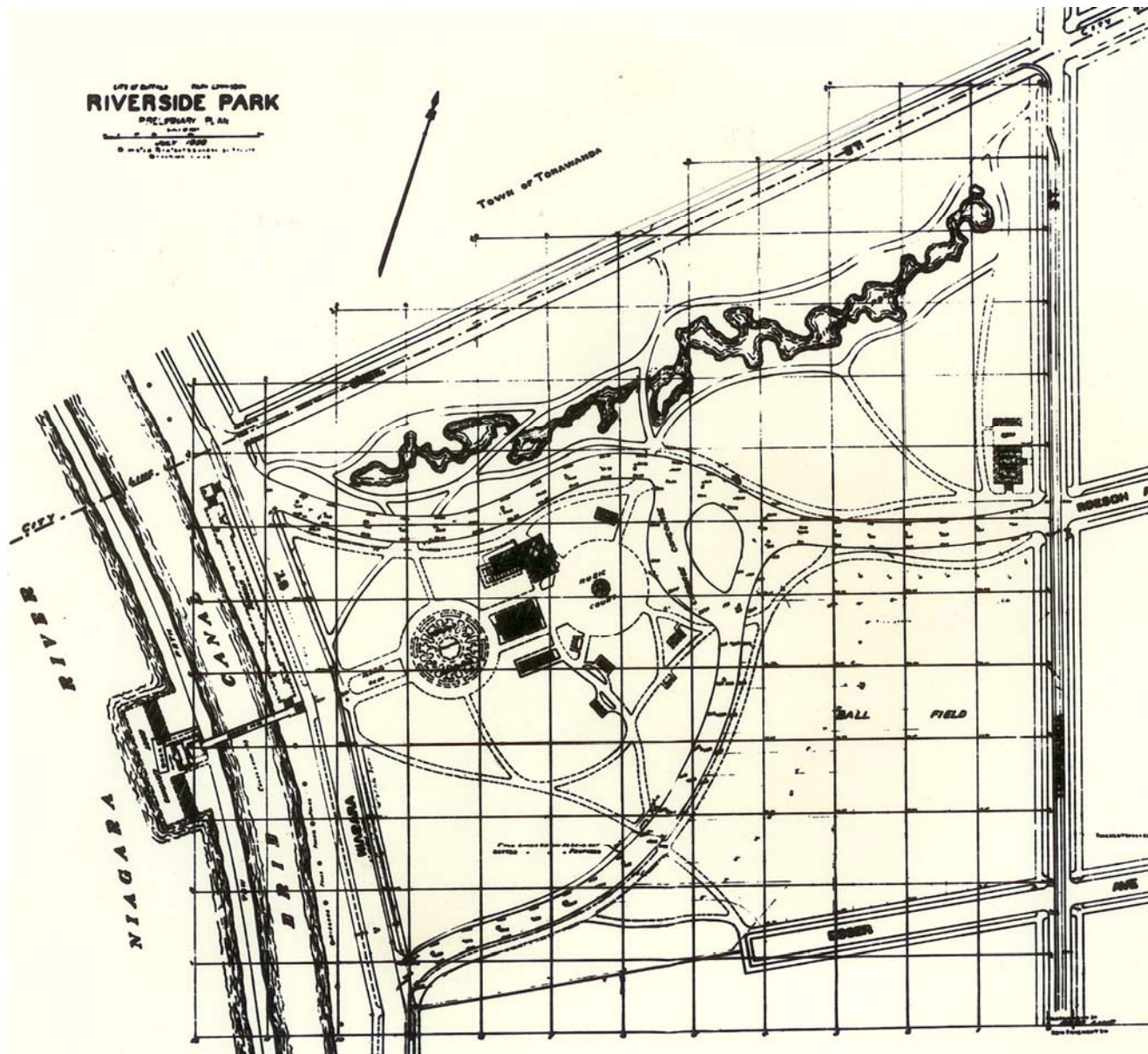


Figure 45 - 1898 Olmsted design for Riverside Park

the senior citizen center and the ice skating rink to property outside of the historic park. All three of these facilities are currently within the Olmsted designed northern section of the park.

Suggested Areas of Focus

Three high priority goals were set by the team as critical to the management and restoration of Riverside Park. These include:

- Re-establish the Central Concourse to its historic form and prominence as a focal point of the park.
- Re-establish the historic Olmstedian landscape and plantings throughout the park and especially along its edge.
- Reinforce the visual and physical connection of the park to the Niagara River.

Preliminary Recommended Projects

Individual projects are organized around three suggested focus areas, plus additional projects to calm traffic and improve recreational facilities.

Re-establish Central Concourse

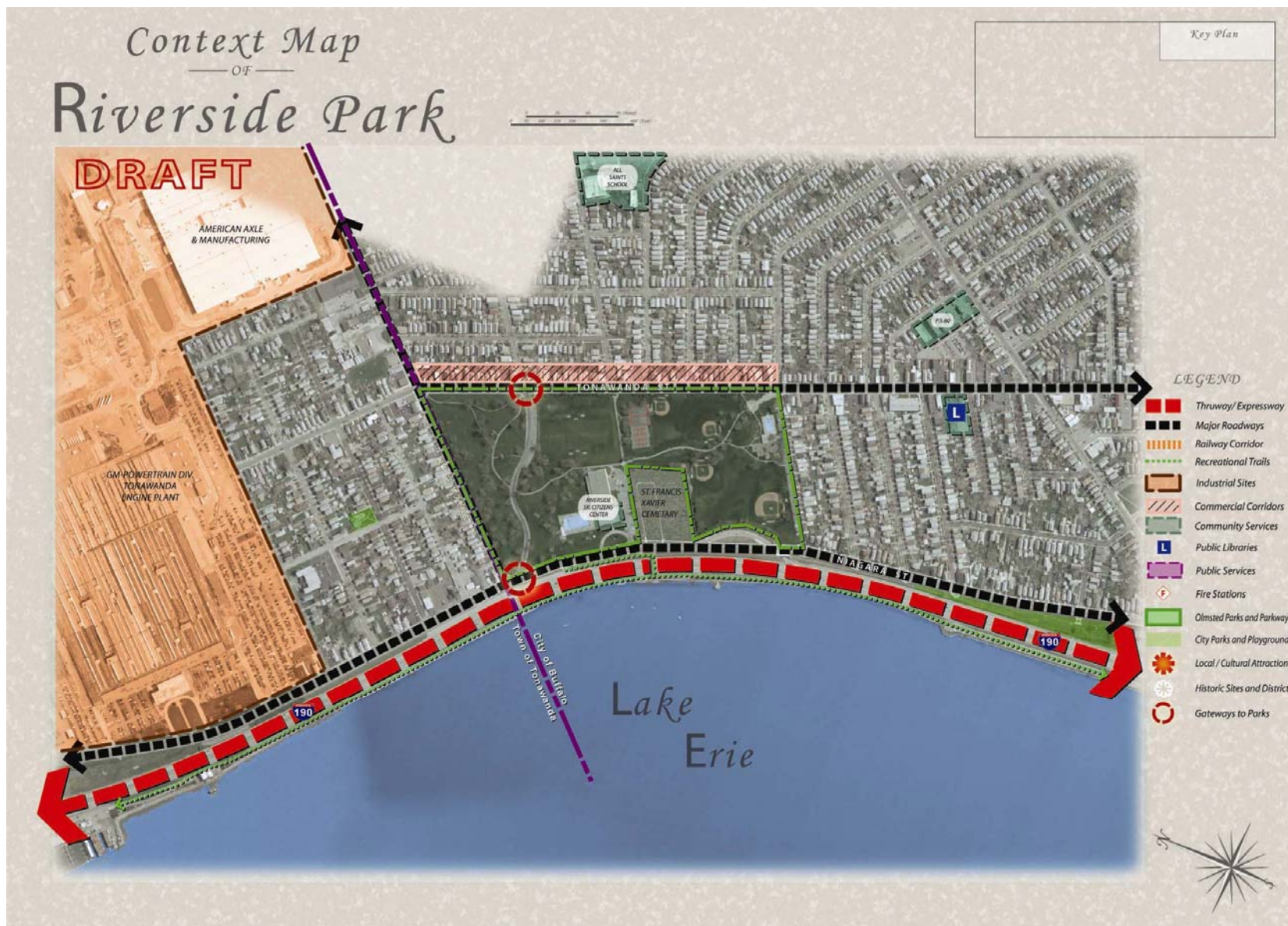
- Interpret historic Concourse gardens.
- Reinterpret the Gazebo/Bandstand.
- Relocate the Petofi Monument and War Memorial to the Concourse.
- Reinterpret historic Concourse carriage/vehicle Loop.
- Create a Picnic Grove at the Concourse.
- Relocate the swimming pool outside of the park.
- Relocate senior citizen center and ice rink outside the park.



Figure 46 – The historic Minnow Pools



Figure 47 - Interpretation of the Minnow Pools area is important to the revitalization of the park



28 **Figure 48**

Restore Historic Plantings/Improve Edges

- Buffer the cemetery with fencing and plantings.
- Restore historic plantings throughout park.
- Restore historic pathway systems.
- Add/reinforce gateways at park entrances and all edges.
- Reinterpret the historic Minnow Pools.
- Reestablish historic planting plan in woodland area

Re-establish River to Park Connection

- Relocate and redesign the pedestrian bridge on historic alignment.
- Establish a pier on the Niagara River at the new pedestrian bridge.

Calm Traffic

- Reconstruct Hotaling Drive.
- Construct bump outs In Crowley Street parking area.

Sustain Active Recreation Facilities

- Improve existing playground

(See Figures 48-50)

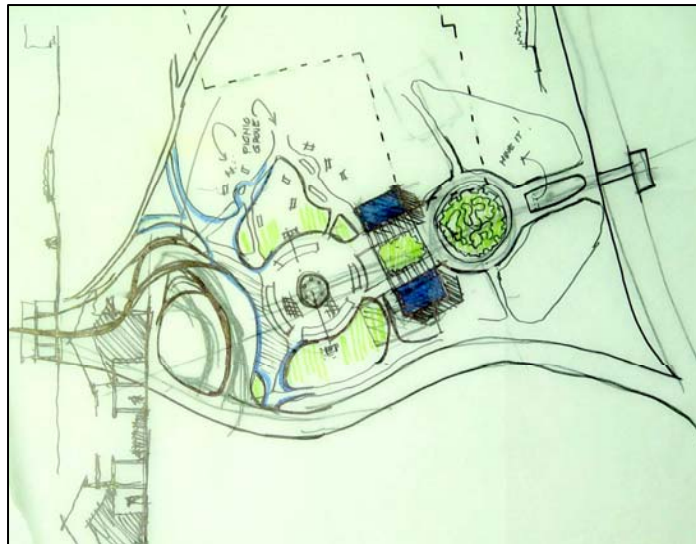


Figure 49 - Concept design for the Central Concourse

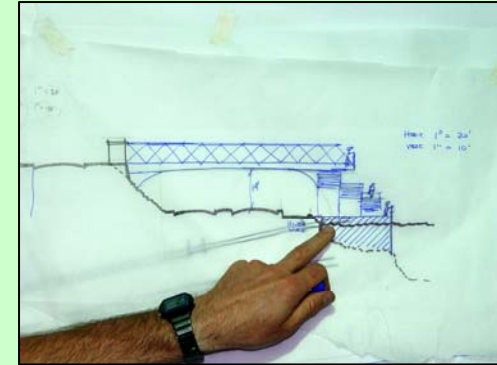


Figure 50 - A redesign plan for the pedestrian bridge