

311 Public Input and Process Timeline for Management Plan

In some respects, the development of the management plan for 311 North Ave dates back almost 20 years to a report called “Redevelopment of the Diocese Land.” This report was written based on a design charette and public meeting process that involved a variety of stakeholders.

If you are reading this, you are participating in the continual evolution of management plan process. This process has been underway while the Diocese owned the property (1850’s-2010) then when Burlington College owned the land (2010-15) and it continued when Eric Farrel purchased the land in 2015-16, and onward today as the City owns the land (2016-current day).

Below is a timeline that highlights key points of engagement when planning or public input was considered for the area now known as the 311 North Ave Park Area. Note, discussions and meetings prior to 2016 were in regard to all the lands formerly owned by the Diocese and Burlington College. When the City and Vermont Land Trust purchased the park, it created a new 12 acre parcel that was previously encapsulated in several parcels held by previous owners. This timeline brings us to date, and to the review of the 2021 draft management plan.

- **1850’s - 2001** - no known public input about the land at the time of this report.
- **October - January 2001** - Mayor Peter Clavelle called together a group of stakeholders to develop an administrative position on the Catholic Diocese Property. This process included a public meeting and a subsequent design charrette involving City staff, elected officials and consultants.
 - **Public Meeting** - held on October 3, 2001 to discuss resident opinions about the potential development of the Catholic Diocese property. After welcome and introductions, those attending were provided with information about the site including Site Characteristics, Zoning, Natural, Cultural, and Recreational Resources. About 20 people attended, mostly from Ward 3 & 7 NPA’s, and mostly from the surrounding neighborhood.
 - Meeting Summary of Public Input
 - More preservation of open space as you move closer to the lake
 - Development concentrated near the road
 - People would like a common playground
 - Most people like development on the orphanage parcel.
 - Mostly residential supported
 - Not much response to other uses.
 - Some mention of shared parking uses.
 - More open space.
 - Minimum: bike path/lake; Maximum: Sliding/Woods
 - Noone advocated no new development or full development
 - The existing walking path goes thru areas they like.
 - Access to lake is critical
 - Wild experience – Natural
 - View corridors
 - Concerned about traffic

- **Design Charrette** - held on October 4 2001 with the goal to build consensus among City departments and Commissions most directly influenced by the development of the Catholic Diocese property and to formulate a unified and coherent Administration position regarding the conservation and re-development of the Catholic Diocese properties on North Ave.
- The results of the public meeting and design charrette were used to develop the position of the Clavelle administration's on development of the Catholic Diocese property. **PRINCIPLES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIOCESE PROPERTY**
 - That housing of all types should be incorporated into the development, including housing that will serve a range of income types and that provide opportunity for homeownership as well as rental opportunities;
 - That there be generous amounts of open space, and that the open space should be open to the public;
 - That the entire waterfront area west of bikepath should be public;
 - That the public should have access to the beach area and to the bike path through property;
 - That the bluffs directly east of the bike path should be protected from any construction and development;
 - That the development be sensitive and protect significant natural features, especially the path and tree scape on the bluffs, as well as cultural resources, such as the old orphanage;
 - That neighborhood commercial uses that serve the local neighborhood be allowed and as a result, that consideration be given to allow currently prohibited uses;
 - That development of this property should enhance revitalization of Old North End (specifically commerce along North Avenue);
 - That the development should support alternative modes of transportation in order to minimize traffic impacts; and
 - That a modest amount of cemetery expansion may be allowed.
- **2010** - Burlington College Purchases Catholic Diocese Properties on North Ave. - all buildings and 33 acres of land.
 - **Fall 2011** - Timber and Stone was hired by the City, on behalf of the Conservation Board, to create a report detailing trail connection alternatives and improvements. This report was shared and discussed with Burlington College President Chrstine Plunkett on **February 28, 2012**. Plunkett expressed an interest in incorporating the trail considerations into their future planning discussions for the development of the property. The trail was included in iterations of design that BC was considering, however their efforts to develop their land eventually stalled as did the conversations about the trail. In discussions with Burlington College they only expressed interests in conserving the trail but not any adjoining areas for park space.
- **November 2014** -
 - Burlington College announces they will sell 27 acres of land to Eric Farrell
 - Mayor Weinberger releases a press announcement committing to a process to uphold values outlined in the 2001 Clavelle administration position.

- **January 2015** - Burlington Conservation Board, Parks Commission and City Council approve use of Conservation Legacy Funds to conduct public input regarding the former Burlington College Property, specifically in regard to Open Space and Park use values.
- **May-June 2015** - The Vermont Land Trust and City Convene a series of three meetings to discuss values of the community in relation to the Development Agreement and the prospective new Park Land. These meetings were:
 - May 19 - Integrated Arts Academy - approximately 100 people attended
 - June 13 - meeting with Association of Africans Living in Vermont - 35 people attended
 - June 18 - meeting with Old North End Arts and Business Association - 10 people attended
- **October 2015** - a Tree Management Plan is submitted by Eric Farrell to the Burlington Development Review Board. City Staff were not aligned with the plan specifically in regard to the methods and reasons that were proposed for cutting and clearing. This tree management plan was however approved by the DRB. City staff observed that in carrying out this plan, contractors hired by Mr Farrell did not use methods that aligned with the values and goals outlined in the City's Open Space Protection Plan. Subsequently, many of the areas that were cut and cleared by Eric Farrell still require significant attention and remediation due to the influx of invasive species caused by the disturbance.
 - **October 29, 2015** - The Conservation Board held a special on site meeting to review the proposed tree maintenance plan. Mr. Farrell explained at this meeting that his intentions were to only remove dead, dying, and diseased trees from the site and it would be done in the least intrusive way as possible. Park staff observed that the cutting and removals done in November and December 2015 greatly exceeded what was described to the Conservation Board at the site walk on 10/29/2015. On several occasions park staff had to ask the contractors performing the work to stop what they were doing. Specifically this was often in regard to wenching with a machine to remove downed trees. This practice creates extensive gouging and disturbance to understory plants and soils and leads to the growth of invasives.
- **February 9 2015** - 9 persons spoke at City Council Public Forum on the issue of the urging the Council to preserve as much of the former Burlington College property as Open Space
- **December 21, 2015** - City Council Reviewed and approved a Development Agreement between The City of Burlington, Champlain Housing Trust, Eric Farrell, and The Vermont Land Trust and [community members held a mock funeral, mourning the potential loss of wildlife corridors and other wild aspects of the Burlington College property.](#)
 - 35 community members spoke at the 12/21/2015 City Council meeting
 - Principles of the Development Agreement:
 - included conditions for the sale of some of the lands held by Eric Farrell to become City Property. In a memorandum to the City Council dated, The Mayor outlined several guiding objectives for entering into a Development Agreement with the parties listed above, many carried forth from the 2001 Clavelle guidelines:
 - A range of housing types should be incorporated into the development, including housing that will serve a range of income levels and that will provide opportunity for homeownership as well as rental opportunities;

- The final Plan should include open space, some of which may be required as part of the zoning process, but some of which may require consideration of reasonable compensation to the owner; the open space, including the waterfront beach area west of the bike path, should be open to the public; community gardens and the existing East – West connection to the Bike Path should be enhanced so as to increase the public access to the Waterfront from the Old North End;
- The bluffs directly east of the bike path should be protected from any construction and development;
- The development should be sensitive to and protect significant natural features, especially a path, and the tree scape on the bluffs, as well as cultural resources, such as the old orphanage;
- Neighborhood commercial uses that serve the local neighborhood should be allowed but not required and as a result, consideration should be given to allowing currently prohibited uses;
- Development of this property should enhance revitalization of Old North End, and commerce along North Avenue should be considered;
- The development should support alternative modes of transportation in order to minimize
 - traffic impacts;
 - The site plan should incorporate “sustainability” components, such as composting, stormwater management, food production, and energy savings where possible and appropriate.
- **February 2016** - City Council authorizes the Mayor or his designee to execute the Purchase and Sale and closing for 12 acres on the former Burlington College property. At this time the Vermont Land Trust purchased the property through a low-interest loan, and down payment monies made available from the City’s Conservation Legacy Fund. Over the next 3 years the City paid off the loan, and in 2019 became the fee simple owner of the 12 acre park land.
- **March 2016 - 2018** Burlington Parks Recreation and Waterfront Staff Secure Funding from a variety of sources to acquire the 12 acres of land.
 - \$500,000 - The Land Water Conservation Fund
 - \$500,000 - The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
 - \$750,000 - The Burlington Conservation Legacy Fund
 - \$500,000 - a private donation
- **June-August 2016** - The City encumbered the services of Whole Systems Design LLC, to work with the Community Gardeners on permaculture plantings and layout of expanded garden plots. These discussions lead to the planting of various fruit and nut trees, and various berries.
- **June 2017 - Archaeological Study** - Based on the results of the Phase I study, the UVM CAP determines that site VT-CH- 1210 does not contain potentially significant information and therefore, no further study is recommended. The proposed project will not disturb an archaeological significant site. Furthermore, the UVM CAP recommends no further archaeological testing is warranted within the remaining APE beyond site VT - CH - 1210 as proposed project construction will have no effect on archaeological resources.

- **Engagement at Conservation Board** - between 2001 and 2021 - discussion or mention of the 311 Park Land/Burlington College Land/Diocese Property has occurred at over 25 meetings. At times this has included public comment during public forum and included one official site walk on October 29, 2015.
- **Management Plan Draft Presented to Public for Review** - March 2021