

# Preliminary Needs Assessment & Improvement Concepts



## Corning Parks Strategy

Parks Steering Committee  
Meeting #4

November 20, 2019

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Nasser Civic Center Plaza



# Meeting Agenda



**10:00 AM**

- **Welcome**
  - Project Schedule
  - Meeting Purpose

**10:15 AM**

- **Needs & Opportunities Discussion**
  - Public Meeting #1 Summary
  - Stakeholder Focus Groups Summary
  - Community Survey Summary

**10:45 AM**

- **Strategies Discussion**

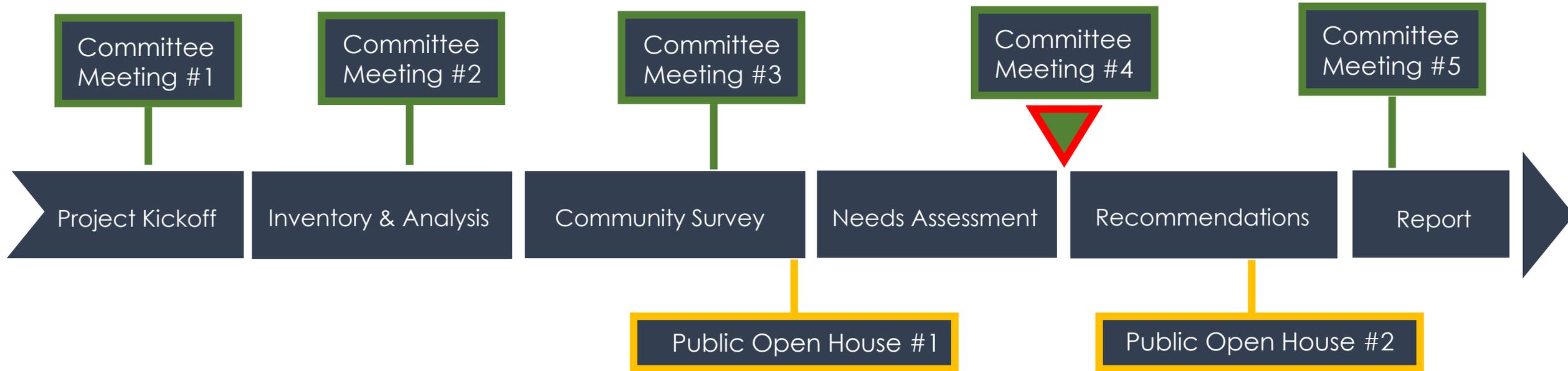
**11:00 AM**

- **Preliminary Improvement Concepts Discussion**
  - Parks System
  - Park Amenities
  - Individual Parks

**11:45 AM**

- **Next Steps Discussion**
  - Public Meeting #2
  - Development & Prioritization of Recommendations

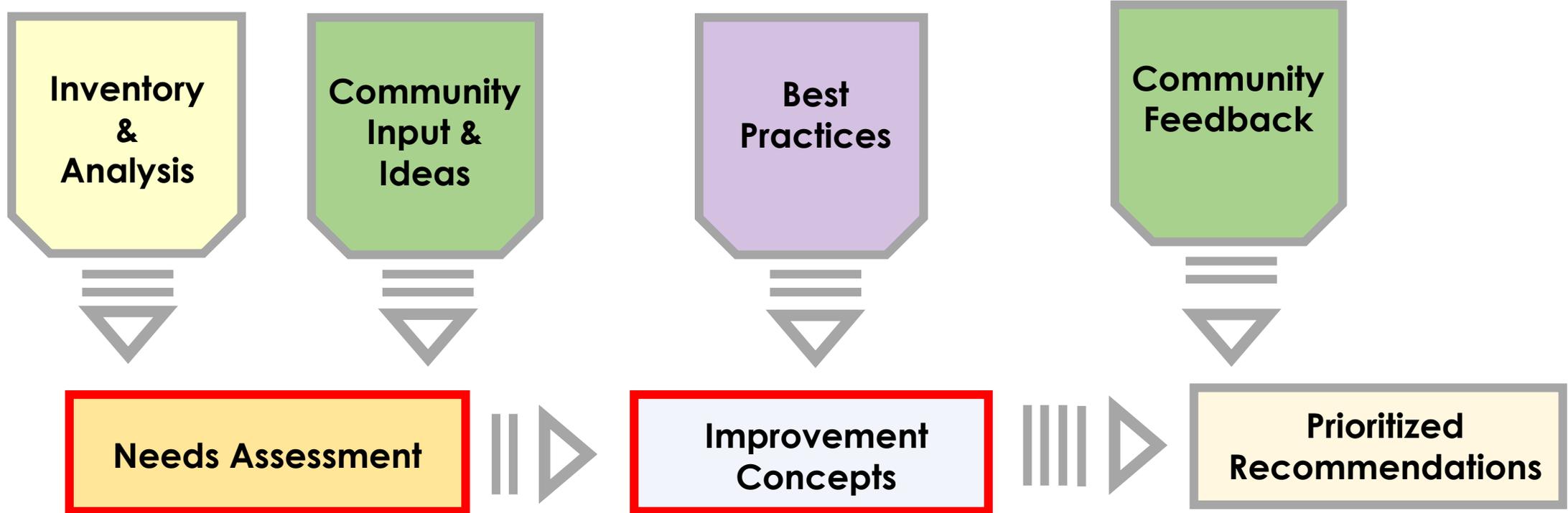
# Project Schedule



# Meeting Purpose



*Conversation about potential improvements*





# Needs & Opportunities Discussion

*Comparing findings from:*  
Public Meeting #1  
Stakeholder Focus Groups  
Community Survey

# Public Meeting #1 Summary



- August 20, 2019
- Estimated 80-90 attendees
- Input gathered from:
  - 8 Preference Boards
  - Project Comment Cards
  - Posters
  - Conversations



# Public Meeting #1 Key Takeaways



- Appreciation for approach to Parks Strategy
  - Low-cost improvements
  - Build upon strengths
  - Work with existing infrastructure
- Opportunities to increase parks usage
  - Awareness of parks
  - Reasons for visiting parks
- Balanced expectations for parks
  - Active & Passive spaces
  - Open & Planned spaces
  - Spaces for Youth & Elderly

# Public Meeting #1 Key Takeaways



## CONNECTIVITY

- High priority
- Active Transportation Network
- Support for river-side trail
- Interest in wayfinding
- Mixed support for Bike Lane

## DOG PARK

- 75% support for not-for profit organization
- Central location
- Concerns of noise, maintenance & safety
- William St. Park
- Willing to pay yearly fee

# Public Meeting #1 Key Takeaways



## COURTS & FIELDS

- More rectangular fields
- Strong interest in pickleball
- Some support basketball courts & baseball diamonds
  - Not in William St. Park
- Mixed interest in tennis courts

## POOLS / AQUATICS

- Contentious issue
- 60% in favor of closing one pool & opening a splash pad
- Worries of transportation & equity
- Splash pad pros/cons
  - More accessible
  - Caters to younger kids

# Public Meeting #1 Key Takeaways



## SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

HIGHER

PRIORITY LEVEL

LOWER

- Restrooms
- Playgrounds, Accessibility, Sustainability, Maintenance, Connectivity, Winter Sports
- Parking

## AMENITIES

HIGHER

PRIORITY LEVEL

LOWER

- Pickleball Courts
- Kids Bike Park, Wildlife Habitat, Music Stage, Nature Trail, Public Garden, Public Art Park
- Flight Center, Library, Climbing Wall, Outdoor Library, Skate Park, Food Court

# Focus Group Connectivity



## **ATTENDEES**

- NYSDEC
- Steuben County CVB
- Chemung River Friends
- Southern Tier Running Club
- STC Planning
- Scouts of America
- Five Rivers Council
- Rotary Club
- NYSDOT
- Gaffer District

- River Pathway
  - Regulatory, liability, and access management considerations
  - Longtime public support
- Support for Trail Connections
  - Between parks
  - To local trail networks
- Interest in improved wayfinding
- Maintenance collaborations
  - Businesses
  - Local organizations
  - Youth

# Focus Group Sports Courts & Fields



## ATTENDEES

- YMCA
- Corning Rugby Club
- Chemung Valley Soccer Association
- Corning Disc Golf
- Corning Christian Academy
- C-PP High School
- Pickleball Association of Twin Tiers

- Pickleball
  - Currently lack sufficient facilities
  - Growing & popular in mornings
- Disc Golf
  - Need to reduce conflicts at Denison Park
  - Growing & has available funding
- Rectangular Fields
  - Drainage issues at McKinney Park
  - Uneven Field at Stewart Park
  - Need for additional fields
- Tennis Courts
  - Rarely seen in use
  - School plans to build new courts
- YMCA
  - Currently Fully Utilized

# Focus Groups Pools & Dog Park



## **POOLS & AQUATICS ATTENDEES**

- Pathways, INC
- Amy's Sunshine Center
- Family Service Society

- Need one pool to remain open
  - Most popular activity at programs
  - Regional water quality issues
  - Need sufficient transportation
- Splash pad concerns
  - Harder to supervise
  - Worries of injuries
  - Caters to younger kids only

## **DOG PARK ATTENDEE**

- Peetie Dimitroff

- Potential solutions to concerns
  - Quiet areas
  - Safety protocols
  - Maintenance fund
  - Vaccination requirements
- William St Park
  - Connected to river trail
  - Improved restrooms
- For residents & visitors

# Survey Key Takeaways



686 Responses!

**99%** of respondents use City parks at least once throughout the year

Corning Parks and Recreational Demand Survey

The City of Corning is currently developing a comprehensive strategic development of its city parks. This survey is designed to understand impressions, needs, and desires for the parks system. While we appreciate your feedback, please note that you are not Thank you for participating!

1. How important are parks, recreation, and open space to the city?

- Very important
- Important
- Fairly important
- Not very important
- Not important

2. In your opinion, what are the most important benefits of parks (please select all that apply)?

- Improving physical health (e.g. health, wellness, and physical activity)
- Improving mental health (e.g. stress reduction and relaxation)
- Providing social spaces (e.g. picnics, gatherings, family events)
- Promoting youth activities (e.g. Summer Parks Program, etc.)
- Preserving nature and the environment (e.g. urban forest)
- Creating an economic impact (e.g. improving property values)
- Preserving historical and cultural amenities (e.g. historic landmarks)
- Other (please describe)

8. How often do you (or any members of your household) use each of the following Corning City Parks?

|                    | Daily                 | Weekly                | Monthly               | Yearly                | Never                 |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Carlisle           | <input type="radio"/> |
| Clark Center Plaza | <input type="radio"/> |
| Denson             | <input type="radio"/> |
| Hillside           | <input type="radio"/> |
| Houghton           | <input type="radio"/> |
| Mckinney           | <input type="radio"/> |
| Stewart            | <input type="radio"/> |
| Walker             | <input type="radio"/> |
| William St.        | <input type="radio"/> |

9. Please indicate how often you (or any members of your household) use Corning City Parks during each season.

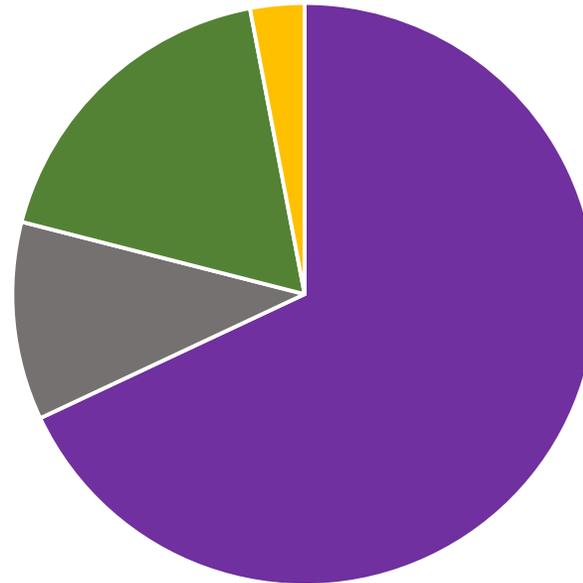
|        | Daily                 | Weekly                | Monthly               | Once or Twice         | Never                 |
|--------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Spring | <input type="radio"/> |
| Summer | <input type="radio"/> |
| Fall   | <input type="radio"/> |
| Winter | <input type="radio"/> |

10. Please indicate the time(s) of the day and week that you (or any members of your household) typically use Corning City Parks. (Please select all that apply)

|               | Weekdays                 | Weekends                 |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Morning       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Afternoon     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Early Evening | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| After Dark    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

11. In general, how aware are you of the Corning City Parks and their amenities?

- I am aware of all of the parks and their amenities
- I am aware of most of the parks and their amenities
- I am aware of some of the parks and their amenities
- I am aware of a few of the parks and their amenities
- I am not aware of the parks and their amenities



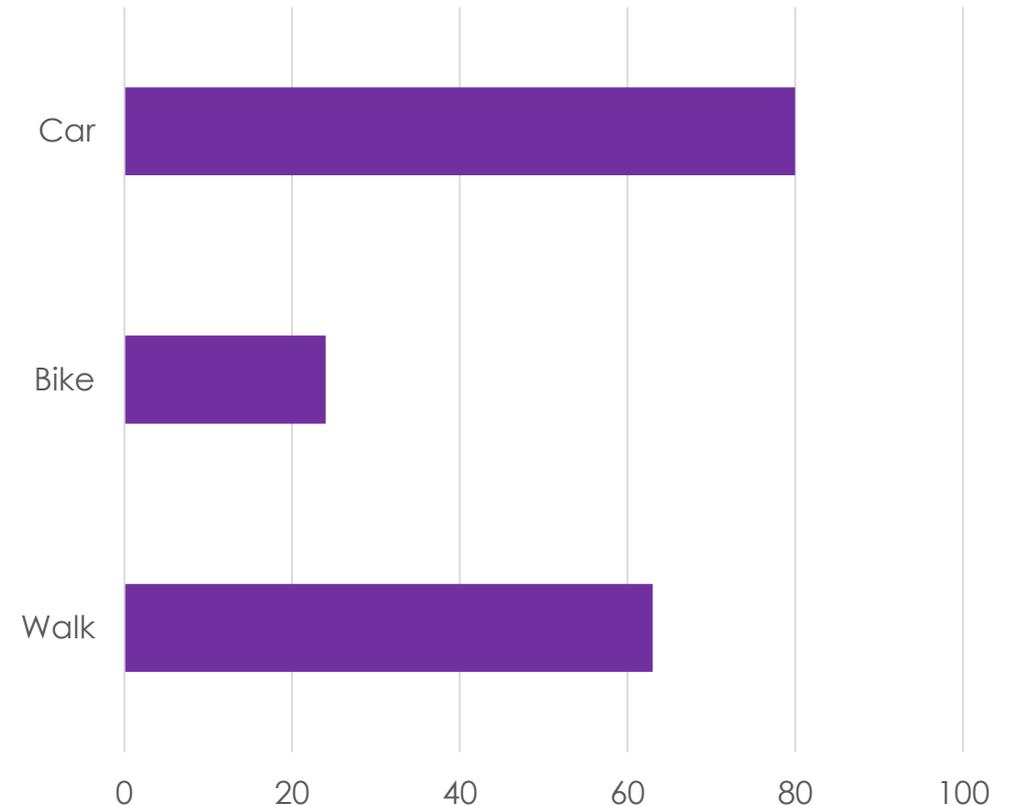
- Resident of Corning
- Non-Resident
- Non-Resident (Works in Corning)
- Non-Resident (School in Corning)

# Survey Key Takeaways



- Parks are 'very important' to quality of life in Corning
- Preference for mixed uses of parks
  - Active & passive recreation
  - Open & prescribed spaces
  - Natural & cultural amenities
- Active Transportation is a key method for accessing parks

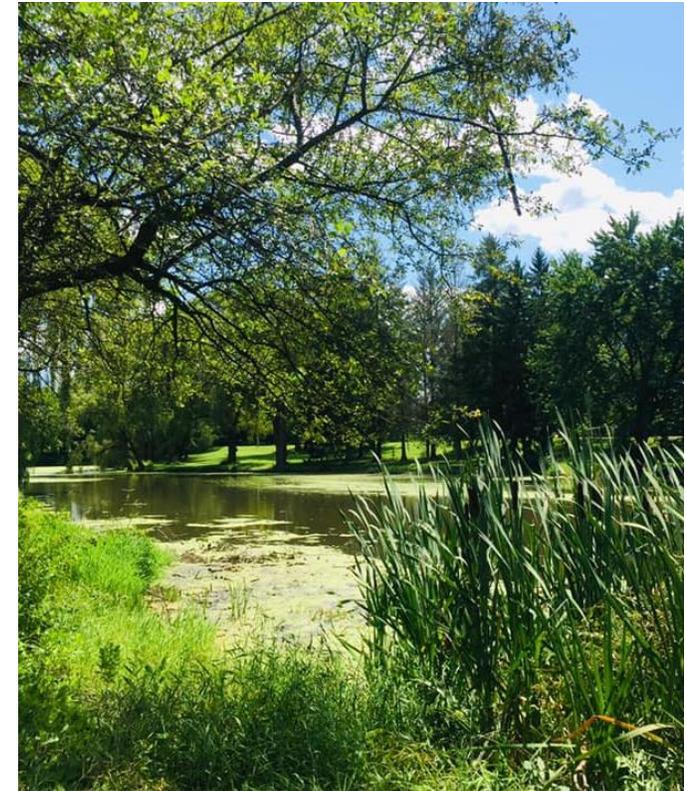
Typical Methods of Accessing Parks



# Survey Needs & Opportunities



- Opportunities for improving outreach
  - Word-of-Mouth is primary method of learning about parks programs
- Opportunities to increase utilization of facilities
  - Minimal parks usage in winter
  - Less usage on weekday mornings



# Survey Needs & Opportunities



## *Amenity Priority Improvements*

- Pools
- Restrooms
- Playgrounds
- Pavilions
- Nature Trail
- Courts
- Dog Park
- Splash Pad
- Garden
- Winter Activities
- Fields
- Seating
- Stages
- Public Art
- Concessions
- Open Space
- Skate Park
- Boat Dock
- Pavilions
- Pickleball
- Flight Center

**HIGHER**

*PRIORITY LEVEL*

**LOWER**



# Strategies Discussion

*Guiding principles for  
developing a parks  
system that is...*

***Sustainable***

***Connected***

***Economical***

***Balanced***

***Equitable***

# Strategies Overview



- First draft of 'threads' to guide project
- Developed through analysis of community, City, and stakeholder input
  - Enhance an existing robust system
  - Respond to local, regional, and national parks trends
- Will ultimately help guide prioritization of recommendations
  - Promotes realistic solutions
  - Easily-measured comparisons
  - Implementation over 10-20 years

# Strategies *A Parks System that is...*



## ***Sustainable***

- Responsive to a Changing Environment
  - Water quality issues
- Low-Maintenance
- High-Performance
- Low-Waste

# Strategies *A Parks System that is...*



## ***Connected***

- Pedestrian & Bicycle Networks
  - On-Road
  - Off-Road
- Wayfinding
- Community Outreach & Partnerships

# Strategies *A Parks System that is...*



## ***Economical***

- Best use of existing amenities
- Adaptive reuse
- Sustainable & maintainable
- Partnerships with community groups
- Creative funding sources

# Strategies *A Parks System that is...*



## ***Balanced***

- Variety of amenity types
  - Programmed & Unprogrammed Spaces
  - Passive & Active Spaces
- Well-utilized
  - All spaces within parks
  - All times of day
  - All four seasons

# Strategies *A Parks System that is...*



## ***Equitable***

- Basic amenities at all parks
- 'Flagship' amenities dispersed throughout City Parks
  - Lack of consolidation at one or two parks
- Amenities for all age & demographic groups
  - Low access costs
- Inclusive design & accessible facilities

# Objectives Discussion:



- What are your thoughts on the existing framework?
- Are there certain objectives you don't think should be included?
- Are there other words or phrases that describe your goals for the Corning Parks System?



# Preliminary Improvement Concepts

Amenities  
Individual Parks  
Parks System

# Amenities Pools & Aquatics



- Continue Operations at Denison Park Pool
  - Enhance existing facilities as feasible
  - Provide intermediate depth for 5-8 year olds
- Gradually phase out Stewart Park Pool
  - Currently too cost- and maintenance-intensive
  - Recommendation from 2017 Facilities Study
- Implement Splash Pad in Stewart Park
- Explore funding for summer parks shuttle for children
  - Grants
  - Combined pool admission/shuttle ticket

# Amenities Dog Park



- Encourage formation of 501 (c)(3) organization to develop dog park
- Evaluate specific location for dog park within William St. Park
  - Currently underutilized
  - Centrally located
  - Connections to river trail
  - Can be placed away from houses
- Ensure implementation of best practices for safety, liability, noise, maintenance, and access considerations
- Encourage establishment of yearly registration fee to cover maintenance costs and ensure vaccinations
  - Explore partnerships with hotels for day-passes

# Amenities Courts



- Restore selected basketball courts for use
  - Denison & Stewart Parks
  - McKinney Park?
- Decommission & explore adaptive reuse for William St. basketball court
- Create mixed-use pickleball courts on existing Denison Park tennis courts
  - Coordination with tennis courts at school
- Decommission & explore adaptive reuse for Stewart & McKinney Parks tennis courts
- Explore additional court space for pickleball facilities
  - Civic Center Plaza?
  - Continue working with Twin Tiers Pickleball group

# Amenities Fields



- Enhance rectangular field in Stewart Park
  - Remove backstop and mound
  - Expand length of field for rugby use
- Address drainage issues in McKinney Park fields
  - Alternative field surfaces
  - Underdrains
- Reduce field conflicts at Denison Park
  - Potential redesign of disc golf course
- Maintain 1-2 high-quality baseball-softball fields
  - Denison Park?
  - Non-City-Owned facility

# Amenities Playgrounds



- Continue conducting playground audits, and remove all unsafe or deteriorating facilities
- Ensure presence of accessible play equipment
  - At all playgrounds
- Implement 'nature play' areas where playgrounds are deteriorating
  - McKinney Park
  - Spread playgrounds out within park
- Add playground facility at Canfield Park
- Involve children in design process of any new play facility

# Amenities Skate Parks



- *[additional information to be added after meeting with Corning skatepark designer Justin Jewell on 11/19/2019]*
- Convert underutilized existing paved facilities
  - William St & Stewart Parks
- Implement phased plan for enhanced facilities
  - Create 'skate-friendly' areas within several parks
  - Promote skateboarding between parks

# Amenities Disc Golf



- Explore reconfiguration of disc golf facility in Denison Park
  - Reduce conflicts with other users and eliminate shared fairways
  - Redesign to utilize baseball-softball field areas in south end of park
  - Engage disc golfers to redesign course
- Implement 1-3 baskets in underutilized areas of other parks
  - McKinney, William St Parks?

# Amenities Restrooms & Lighting



- Focus on maintaining existing restroom facilities
  - When feasible, periodically update facilities
  - Keep open on structured schedule
  - Key community priority
- When feasible, install portable restrooms at parks without brick and mortar buildings
  - Coordinate with field reservations?
- Examine feasibility for restoring lights in at least one park
  - Promote additional use of park
  - Determine surveillance and enforcement capabilities
  - Potential solar lighting

# Amenities Discussion



- Which of these 'amenity improvement concepts' are you most excited about? Why?
- Which do you believe will be the most feasible? Least feasible?
- What improvement concepts do you think should be prioritized? Why?

# Individual Parks Canfield



## *Gentle Historic Restoration*

- Reference Canfield Park historic report for all design changes
- Reconstruct pathway system
  - Install steps in steeper areas
  - Where needed, construct new subbase and drainage system
- Add covered areas for seating
- Develop performance space & picnic area
  - Near downtown
  - View of valley
  - Formal park design
- Explore implementation of historic lighting

# Individual Parks Civic Center Plaza



## *Active, Four-Season Center*

- Develop a plan for public art installations throughout Civic Center, with themes such as:
  - Citizen Engagement
  - Downtown Life
- Evaluate interest in interactive public art installations
- Coordinate with Library to create educational public art
- Explore potential uses for ice rink during summer season
  - Pickleball?
  - Markets?
- Evaluate feasibility of community garden
  - High public support
  - 501(c)(3)

# Individual Parks Denison



## *Phased revitalization plan*

- Complete formal tree study to evaluate existing conditions
- Complete pond circulation & drainage study
- Reutilize concession stand
  - Has utilities & electric already
- Add parking using permeable pavement on west side of park
- Create historic trail and signage throughout park
- Improve walkability to park from west side
- Adaptively reuse lighthouse base
  - Public Art?
  - Community Partnership?
- Consider wildlife habitat areas along levee

# Individual Parks Hillvue Park



## *Peaceful River-side Park*

- Explore feasibility of community garden
  - Senior Center partnership
  - Reuse of old pavilion
- Consider implementing wildlife habitat & sustainable landscaping areas along levee
- Evaluate interest in summer events series



# Individual Parks Houghton Park



## *Calm, Central Green Space*

- Implement permeable pavement for formalized parking along east side of park
- Install enhanced crossing treatments at all intersections
  - Located in center of three roadways
- Investigate occasional drainage issues
- Explore potential for outdoor classroom



# Individual Parks McKinney Park



## *Master Plan to Reimagine Park*

- Commission & complete detailed soil study
- Investigate feasibility of kids bike park in old tennis courts
  - High levels of interest
- Construct short nature trail in wooded areas along western boundary of park
  - High demand
- Analyze conditions of old bathroom and perform remedial actions
- Install additional parking using permeable pavement along east side of park
- Resolve drainage issues within field

# Individual Parks Stewart Park



## *Re-Energized, Sustainable Facility*

- Remove backstop and mound for improved rectangular field
- Explore potential skatepark construction on old tennis court
- Implement sustainable landscaping to beautify park and reduce mowing load
- Establish base for youth 'flight center'
- Stripe Parking Lot
- Formalize and encourage winter activities
  - Sledding
  - Cross-Country Skiing

# Individual Parks William St. Park



## *Wholesale Revitalization*

- Decommission & reuse old basketball court
  - Skate Park?
- Analyze best location for dog park
  - Parking & noise considerations
- Promote community use to reduce undesired uses



# Individual Parks *Mini Parks*



## Achsinessink Memorial

- Seating Areas?
  - Crosswalks?
- Seasonal historic events?

## Walker Park

- Seating Areas?
  - Crosswalks?
  - Public Art?

# Individual Parks Discussion



- Which of the improvements to specific parks are you most excited about? Why?
- Which do you believe will be the most feasible? Least feasible?
- What improvement concepts do you think should be prioritized? Why?

# Parks System Connectivity



- Identified as Key Community Priority
- Determine Off-Road Trails & Connections
  - Link to local and regional trail network
- Improve On-Road Connections
  - Generate interest in pilot Bike Share program
  - Explore interest in Active Transportation Plan to enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Create amenity trails between parks
  - Workout trail, birding trail, children's trail

# Parks System River Trail & Access



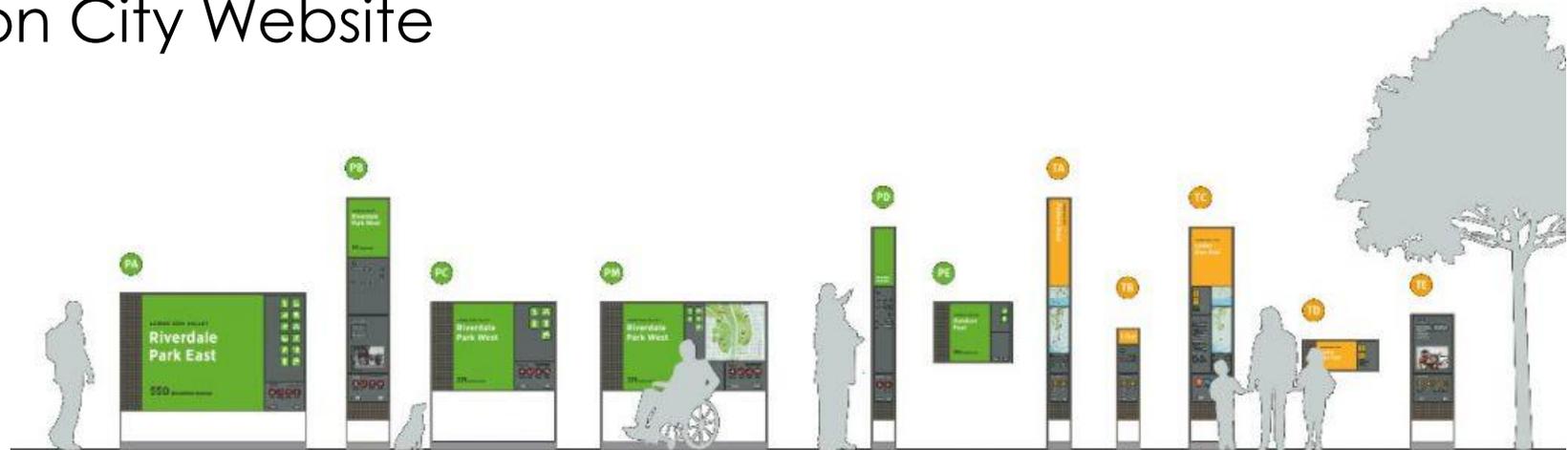
- Continue ongoing coordination to develop walking path along river
  - Examine maintenance, liability, and structural considerations
  - Continue discussions with NYSDEC & STC Planning



# Parks System Wayfinding



- Utilize existing park logos to create wayfinding system
  - Signage along main corridors
  - Post map of parks system in each park
  - Post map on City Website





# Parks System Maintenance



- Explore community partnerships to lighten load on City Staff
  - Rotary, Businesses, Eagle Scouts, Robotics Team
- Implement low-maintenance, high-performance landscapes
- Place all waste receptacles in easily-collectible locations
- Examine feasible partnerships and/or funding to establish recycling program



# Next Steps Discussion

Public Meeting  
Recommendations & Prioritization

# Next Steps



- Meeting Debrief
- Additional Stakeholder Meetings
- Public Meeting #2
- Development of Recommendations
- Implementation & Prioritization Matrices
- Steering Committee Meeting #5
- Draft Report

# City of Corning Parks Strategy

**Thank  
You!**

