

Partners in Public Design

OCTOBER 2023

CENTRAL PARK AND MAIN STREET REVITALIZATION PROJECT JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

This report outlines an extensive public engagement process conducted from April 2023 through August 2023 in which Johnstown residents guided the redesign of the City's Central Park and Main Street. Through this process, SCAPE Landscape Architecture has produced a concept design entirely driven by the creativity and values of the community. Because of this intensive engagement, the resulting park and streetscape are certain to become treasured public spaces.

MAY 31, 2023	OPEN HOUSE	4
	RESULTS FROM OPEN OPEN HOUSE SURVEY	6
	DESIGN PRINCIPLES	7
JULY 17, 2023	DESIGN OPTIONS MEETING	8
	DESIGN OPTIONS SURVEY	9
	CONCEPT DESIGN OVERVIEW	11
AUGUST 30, 2023	CONCEPT DESIGN UNVEILING	13
	PUBLIC RESPONSE	14
	"WE ARE JOHNSTOWN"	15
	COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS	16
	VETERANS	18
	YOUTH ENGAGEMENT	22
	FLOODCITY YOUTH DESIGN CONTEST	23
	YOUNG ADULTS	24
	PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	25
	ARTISTS AND MAKERS	26
	BUSINESSES	27
	CONCLUSION	28

LETTER TO TRIBUNE DEMOCRAT MAY 30, 2023

“If you design a good street you design a good city”

The City of Johnstown has \$17 million in federal grants to redesign and revitalize Main Street and Central Park. In order to make Downtown a vibrant and inclusive place, the Main Street Design Team needs to hear from you! On May 31 from 4 PM - 7:30 PM at 416 Main Street, there will be an Open House where you can share your ideas for the future of Main Street and Central Park. Come meet the design team and learn how places like Johnstown have made investments in their public realm for the benefit of all.

The City has hired SCAPE Landscape Architects to lead this effort. The founder of SCAPE Kate Orff was named to TIME Magazine’s most influential people list this year for her innovative work designing with natural systems. SCAPE’s recent work includes the Living Breakwaters, a series of oyster reefs off the shore of Staten Island that will reduce erosion from coastal storms; and the Town Branch Commons, a linear park that runs through Lexington, Kentucky.

Great public places spur economic growth, promote social resilience, and create neighborhoods with a high quality of life. Making great public places is a group effort. SCAPE is leading a team of experts in landscape architecture, transportation planning, stormwater management, public art, wayfinding, and civil engineering, but your participation process is critical to our success. This means sharing your individual aspirations while considering the interests of others including residents, business owners, tourists, seniors, and children.

We are inspired by Johnstown’s community of artists and makers, the stewards of the natural environment who are reshaping the City as a destination for outdoor recreation, and the visionary entrepreneurs who have been launching new businesses by the day. The energy is palpable, and has been made possible by the people who have been quietly tending to their homes, blocks, and neighborhoods. This is what makes Johnstown a model of a resilient city. After decades of losing jobs and population, as well as environmental degradation, Johnstown is moving forward. Businesses are thriving, buildings are being restored, forests are regenerating and the rivers are coming back to life.

This major investment in Johnstown’s infrastructure will build on this momentum and celebrate Johnstown’s enduring spirit of resilience.



MAY 31, 2023 AT THE JOHNSTOWN VISITORS CENTER ON MAIN STREET

We began our public engagement process with an Open House to introduce the public to the design team and the scope of the project. This Open House was the beginning of a conversation about what the project could do for Johnstown. In this conversation the design team learned more about Johnstown's particular challenges and aspirations for the future; and the public learned about public space projects in other places and a wider range of possibilities for Johnstown. Most of all, we aspired to create a warm and conversational atmosphere to build trusting relationships for the work ahead.

About 100 people came to the Open House, which was advertised in the local newspaper, on social media and through the City's pre-established Main Street Committee composed of local business and community leaders. In consultation with the Chamber of Commerce, we scheduled the meeting the day before the annual Showcase for Commerce, in which local businesses share their work.

We conducted two exercises, one around a big map of Main Street and another around four postcard stations.

Exercise 1 – What do you love/ not love about Main Street and Central Park?

We asked people to plant flags on a map describing their feelings about today's downtown.

- Diverse opinions, roughly equal numbers favoring pedestrianization and more parking
- Popular suggestions included a dog park, closing Gazebo Place to traffic, better wayfinding, free parking in garages, interactive fountain/splash pad
- Need a budget for maintenance
- Businesses should be open evenings and weekends - Night Markets, Taste and Tours
- Bump outs - pro and con - randomly placed
- Need for greater accessibility





Exercise 2 – What is in your Future Downtown?

We asked people to collect up to six postcards from four postcard stations: Activity, Connections, Nature, and Identity

- 36 boards of postcards were photographed, most with attendees, but a few were reluctant to go on record with their preferences
- Walking, more trees, murals and dining came out on top for each of the four categories
- These preferences were followed closely by biking, more plants and a water feature, industrial heritage and local craft, and playing, markets and festivals.
- Not a single response regarding driving
- Under Connections, we received write-ins for Path of the Flood and 9/11 Memorial Trails
- Activities represented the largest category
- Multiple attendees wanted an outdoor beer garden





DESIGN PRINCIPLES

INCLUSIVE

Can public space make Johnstown even more welcoming and friendly for everyone?

ACCESSIBLE

Can this streetscape be a model for universal design?

HEALTHY

Can the project promote health and wellness by creating a pedestrian friendly walking environment?

ECOLOGICAL

Can the region's incredible natural beauty be reflected in the design?

TRANSPARENT

Can the public design process build trust between government and community?

BOLD

Can the project strengthen Johnstown's position as an emerging center of creativity and innovation?

FUN

Can Main Street and Central Park be more fun than it has ever been?

MAINTAINABLE

Can we make public space that is easy to keep beautiful and safe?

RESILIENT

Can the project build upon the resilience of the people of Johnstown?

PROUD

Can the project honor Johnstown's history, especially those who have dedicated their lives to service?

FUTURE-FORWARD

Can we make a future Johnstown worthy of the generations to come?



JULY 17, 2023 ON GAZEBO PLACE

These concepts were illustrative of potential design directions. Our intention was to see which elements in the concepts people liked or disliked and to produce a preferred and combined concept design from that information.

**CONCEPT #1:
REGIONAL CATALYST**

CENTRAL PARK PLANS



- INVESTMENT**
 - Prioritize streetscape improvements along the whole corridor
 - Light touch in Central Park
- BIKE**
 - Two-directional bicycle facilities (bicycle lane + “sharrow” markings)
- PARKING**
 - Parallel parking on the south side only
- MONUMENTS**
 - Most Central Park monuments stay in place
- KEY FEATURES**
 - Widened pedestrian streetscape with a continuous bike lane

**CONCEPT #2:
CONEMAUGH GREEN LINE**



- INVESTMENT**
 - Evenly split Park and streetscape investment
 - Central Park is mostly new & emphasizes flexibility, simplicity
- BIKE**
 - No dedicated bike lane
- PARKING**
 - Parallel parking on both sides; selectively remove some parking for amenity space
- MONUMENTS**
 - Shift most monuments to a memorial grove within Central Park
- KEY FEATURES**
 - Maximize stormwater management on the street

**CONCEPT #3:
CENTRAL PARK HEART**

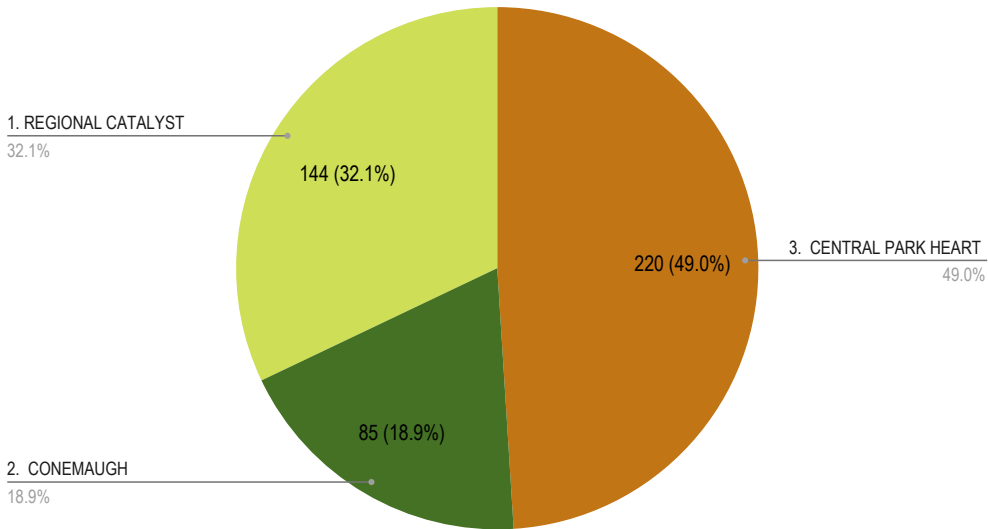


- INVESTMENT**
 - All-new Central Park is the main investment and catalyst for change
 - Light touch in the streetscape
- BIKE**
 - No dedicated bike lane - “sharrow” markings to welcome cyclists in direction of travel
- PARKING**
 - Most parking stays the same
 - Some parking becomes angled
- MONUMENTS**
 - Most monuments move to a new Veteran’s Memorial Park in another location
- KEY FEATURES**
 - Destination play program, new pavilion, and water features anchor the Park



The public response to these design concepts was unprecedented. Nearly 300 people came to the public meeting and 200 more filled out the online survey afterward. It can often be a challenge to engage people in important decisions about infrastructure, but not in Johnstown. People showed up for this in a big way to have their say in this project.

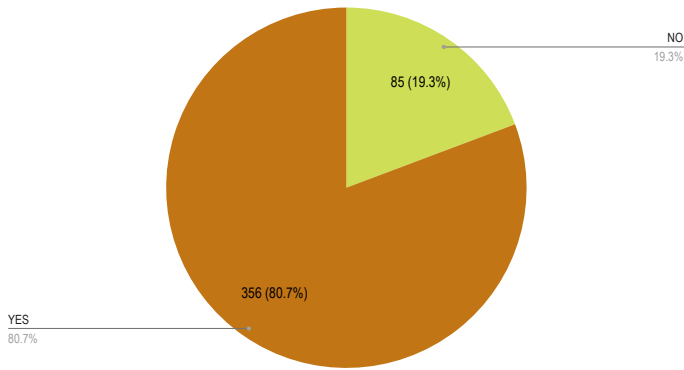
WHICH DESIGN CONCEPT DO YOU PREFER?



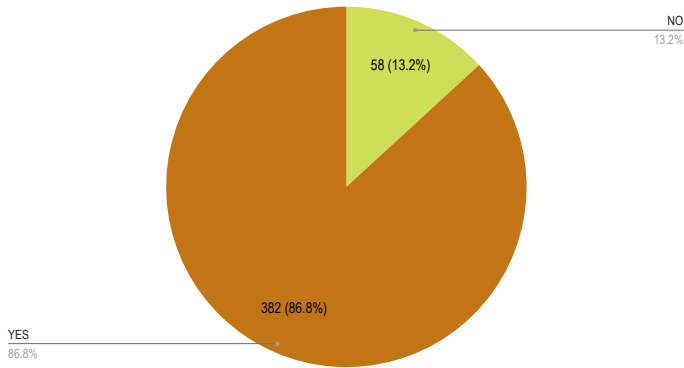
WHY DID YOU PREFER THIS CONCEPT?



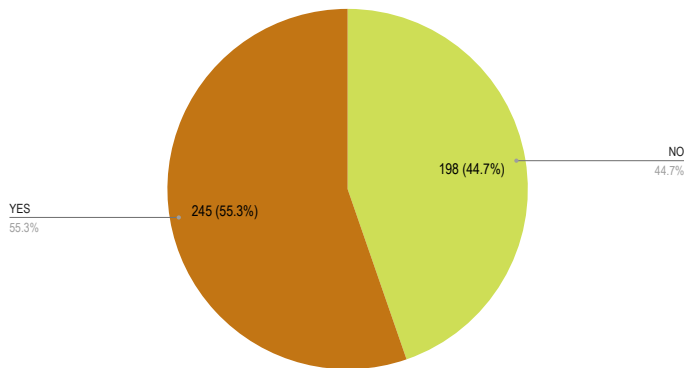
DO YOU WANT MORE NATURE ON MAIN STREET?



DO YOU WANT MORE ACTIVITY IN CENTRAL PARK?



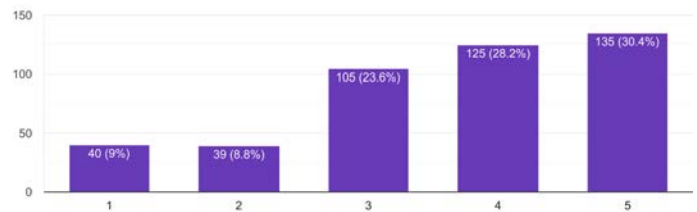
DO YOU WANT A BIKE LANE ON MAIN STREET?



A grid of 20 yellow sticky notes with handwritten feedback comments:

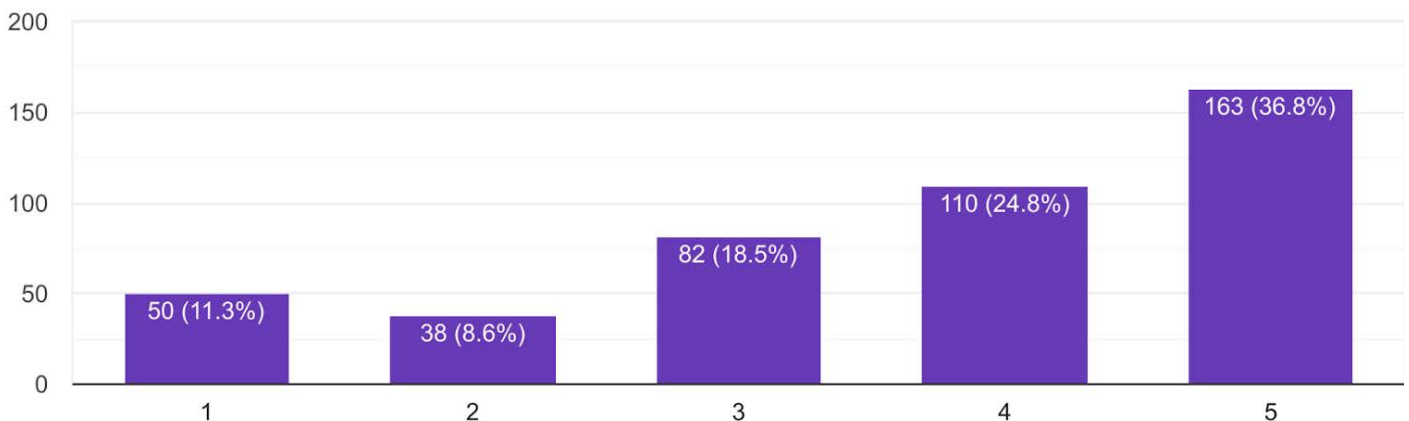
- More play area. Better aspects like adding water, trees, and plants. Memorials are being moved which is necessary to use the space to its maximum.
- More open for activities
- Water features
- It looks more modern
- No parking lost. The worst thing about going downtown is the parking. The water features seem like they would be a nice addition as well.
- Adding an additional green space memorial to a historic park statue, park for surrounding businesses and encourage people to hang out, sit and spend time in the area. Including water features to add to provide active healthy things.
- Has a more modern feel and things to do. I can see families hanging out here. Also, I'm not a fan of the gazebo.
- It promises an increase in those who walk and jog. Children to be active and outdoors. This is a great opportunity for the population to rediscover downtown. It is a great opportunity to add a variety of destinations.
- We need a change
- It's another place for kids to have fun. It also looks like it'll give the park the biggest change.
- I like the green space and no bike lanes
- The flexibility it allows
- The most improvement and change to really anchor new development & growth in our city.
- I like the play areas for kids, would hope that the water features can be played in too.
- Nice design
- It is the most transformative and has the greatest capacity for positive impact.
- I believe it will bring more people out and allow kids to play in a safer place
- I'm actually shocked to hear that you are considering removing the beautiful fountain. And moving monuments to another area. But... I like the idea of the diagonal parking and a water feature. We need stuff to do!
- I like the idea of a new pavilion and removing the monuments, while still giving decent attention to the street
- Offerings for all ages
- No parking lost. The worst thing about going downtown is the parking. The water features seem like they would be a nice addition as well.
- I like the water aspect, although I think they should find a way to make sure that at least some of government's statue stays in the park
- It's a flashin' area for families. The presence of children will also increase the monitoring of the space and hopefully keep the foot traffic safe and desirable. Unlike the area that regularly intrudes the bus station.
- I think this concept puts the freshest spin on the park and will attract people because it offers new features
- maintains performance space but incorporates border area
- It's another place for kids to have fun. It also looks like it'll give the park the biggest change.
- Water feature (splash pad?) for kids, improved gazebo
- New pavilion and the play program. Also moving the monuments will make for more space for events.
- Because the rest are for big city's central park has landscaping like the mountains around here
- For parking purposes, and I think it would give a nice "face lift" to downtown, especially during Thunder in The Valley.
- Nice design
- New pavilion new water features
- Better for community as a whole
- I like how this concept seems the most innovative to fix up Central Park.
- It is a new slate for downtown.
- Offerings for all ages
- We need something new and vibrant - the "heart" of CP has not for a long time. Health, family, encourage children to visit, make a play area and have a fountain and monuments to make downtown. There's just more for us where we live.
- I like the look of the new park
- Good parking. Entertainment opportunities. Bikers can still travel around the park just not inside, allows for 0 accidents
- I have a growing family and this park would be better for them

WHERE DO YOU LAND ON THIS SCALE: PARKING VS. PEDESTRIAN SPACE
444 responses



WHERE DO YOU LAND ON THIS SCALE: LESS CHANGE TO MORE CHANGE

443 responses





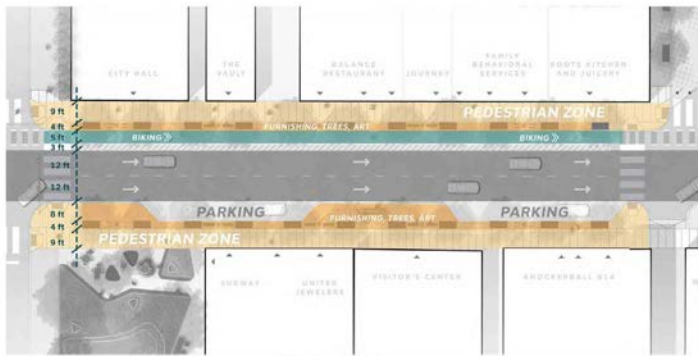
CONCEPT DESIGN OVERVIEW

There was clear majority support for a bold redesign of Central Park. There was also strong support for a bike lane on Main Street. We understand that Johnstown is not crowded with cyclists currently, but a bike lane through the center of town would send a clear signal that Johnstown is open for business as an outdoor recreation destination. When bikers and hikers start to come to town with the 9/11 Memorial Trail, Main Street will be a must-see destination.

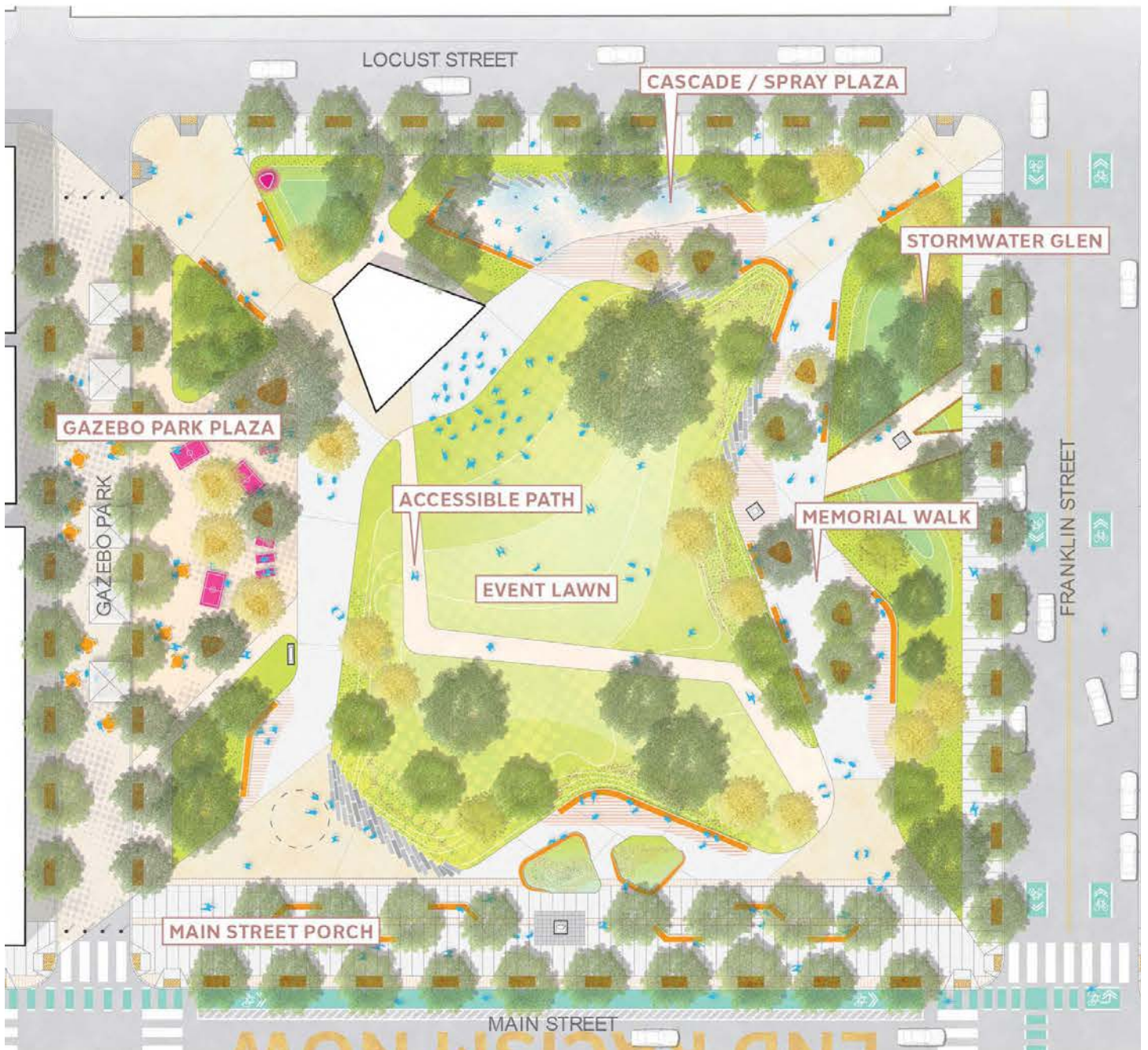
The resulting concept design for Central Park reflects the community's input and endeavors to make Central Park a family-friendly destination with a new accessible performance area in front of a gently-sloped lawn for seating and gathering. Other features include stone outcroppings, a stormwater glen on the Franklin Street side, space for children to play and an interactive water feature. Someone said to us they liked the idea of "bringing the landscape of the surrounding hills to the center of town."

There will be flexible, programmable space along Main Street and Gazebo Place will be partially pedestrianized for markets and special events. The Joseph Johns and Civil War statues, the Military Police Memorial, and the 1977 Flood Victims Memorial will stay in Central Park, but the Military Service Memorial will move to Sandyvale along with the Gazebo and Pasquerilla Fountain. Likewise some trees and plantings in the park will be kept while others will be removed to make way for new trees and planted areas appropriate for the new park and for ease of maintenance.

A lot of the work of this project involves updating the infrastructure, particularly stormwater drainage, utilities, lighting, and wayfinding. Improvements will be made to all sidewalks and crossings along the length of Main Street, with at least an 8' wide clear path for walking and rolling along easily beside others. Street trees will be replaced with appropriate species situated so that their growing roots do not disrupt the pavement over time. The two parklets by City Hall will be quieter spaces for small gatherings or office lunches and can accommodate public art.



SIDEWALK SECTION PERSPECTIVE





CONCEPT DESIGN UNVEILING

AUGUST 30, 2023 ON GAZEBO PLACE

Our intention from the beginning of the process was for our final meeting to be a celebration of the Johnstownians who came together to help plan this project. We wanted the activities to reflect our appreciation of the time, effort, and positive energy they shared with the design team throughout the summer. We also wanted to demonstrate how a more activated Central Park and pedestrianized Gazebo Place could feel. We invited the Evergreens, a band composed of two young women who exemplify the creative energy that is taking root in Johnstown today. Their music is as good or better than any indie rock band in Brooklyn, but they stay in Johnstown because their family, friends and fans are there and it's vastly more affordable. They make a living playing at various venues in the area. Rather than perform from inside the Gazebo, as most musicians have in the past, we asked the Evergreens to set up on Gazebo Place to test how a concert would feel with the musicians closer to the audience. We also invited DJ Zay Brick who closed our event with some classic dance music. We also offered a pop-up bike share to encourage people to experience riding a bike around downtown. We hosted an award ceremony for a Youth Design Contest with the Flood City Youth Academy.





PUBLIC RESPONSE

Because of our ongoing and extensive public engagement process throughout the summer, all of the major design moves – the bike lane, the activated park, the relocation of monuments – had already been embraced by the community by the time of the concept design unveiling. A common refrain we heard in-person and on comment cards was appreciation that the design team was able to integrate so much specific (and sometimes) contradictory information. The reviews we received on the comment cards were positive and optimistic. We also received very positive coverage from the print and news media.



- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <u>MOVING VETS MEMORIAL TO A MORE RESPECTFUL LOCATION</u>
SADNESS IS PART OF CREATIVITY | <u>a safe space for children families to gather</u> | <u>promoting inclusion</u> | <u>PARKING, ALLOWED TO USE EMPTY SPACE IS CHANGE OF PERMIT ONLY</u> |
| <u>Water feature</u> | <u>Fun place youth want to go to</u> | <u>people excited to draw to downtown</u> | <u>preservation of existing native trees; planting more trees</u> |
| <u>The concept hits them all</u> | <u>Every age and color can enjoy our</u> | <u>greenspace & entertainment marketplace</u> | <u>the park</u> |
| <u>PUBLIC ACCESS + minimal maintenance</u> | <u>minimal invasive change</u> | <u>A DEDICATED VETERANS PARK</u> | <u>Downtown "feel" experience with good covers, benches + lot of parking</u> |
| <u>Central Park renovation Making it more inviting</u> | <u>Revitalize Downtown Johnstown</u> | <u>maintaining the civilian history & making it event friendly</u> | <u>NEW LOOK</u> |
| <u>Accessibility</u> | <u>maintainance Keeping the history of the park</u> | <u>LIKE IT</u> | <u>LOVE THAT EVERYTHING IS SO INCLUSIVE AND INTENTIONAL. ESPECIALLY LOVE THAT ITS WELCOMING FOR KIDS SO</u> |
| <u>user friendly - lots of diverse surfaces reflected by plants/trees</u> | <u>everybody's enjoyment</u> | <u>accessibility</u> | <u>Revitalization of Downtown</u> |
| <u>Bringing Nature & Greenspaces into the Park</u> | <u>aesthetic & usefulness</u> | <u>Flexibility of space in order to make it a premier gathering place for activities and events</u> | <u>EVENT SPACE</u> |
| <u>Safety w/ transit center & accessibility</u> | <u>attracting more people downtown</u> | <u>To bring more creativity to Jinglehows</u> | <u>Waterfall</u> |
| <u>SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR COMMUNITY</u>
> CONCERN ABOUT BIKE LANE SAFETY. | <u>Better Central Park</u> | <u>keeping the water fountain</u> | <u>provide reasons for area residents and visitors to come downtown</u> |
| | <u>was the central part of activity coordination like the family friendly approach</u> | <u>changing negative impact of downtown</u> | <u>the changes in Central Park, as a destination</u> |
| | <u>fun & welcoming while keeping a Johnstown feel, local art</u> | <u>Sidewalk to avoid illegal wheelchair use that going the wrong way on a one way</u> | <u>being a veteran w/ PTSD I would like to have a meditation garden</u> |



"WE ARE JOHNSTOWN"

Our public art consultant Todd Stiffler and his collaborator Queen Poetri began an interactive mural called "We Are Johnstown."

Johnstown's future relies on those who care to make a difference.

Rejuvenated

REMEMBER OUR PAST AND HERITAGE

Kids - You are our future!

Renaissance!

THE CITY WITH A SPIRIT THAT WON'T DIE.

HOPEFUL

Bring on the Art "Music!"

Find the light in the darkest valley

"Be Innovative"

#Representation Matters!

Fight for positive change

Building Back Better

Our woodland trails all lead to Johnstown!!!

Park is Peaceful

WE WILL RISE

Keep moving forward!!

Accessible

Stay Weird

Keeping the past but moving to the future

JFDI

HOME

Moving Forward

history + future meets here in the present,

RENEW

Resilient

Community

Love John as we did

THANKS

Dream Big

Peace/color

Share Good News

Lift Each other up

I ♥ Johnstown or I ♥ John

If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change

Safer

Continuing

Where our History meets our Future

Johnstown Strong!

CELEBRATE

Inspire!

Colorful

Children Are Our Future!

Simply Incredible!

this town won't die

Building back better

NO FEAR! LET LOVE GUIDE US

HOPEFUL

Keep making things bright & beautiful

growing

Community

Johnstown Proud

I Love downtown it's where I live. Thank You for Making it beautiful



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS



LOCAL ARTISTS



JOHNSTOWN PRIDE



YOUTH ADVISORS



COMMUNITY DAY IN COOPERSDALE



COMMUNITY DAY IN ROXBURY



FARMERS MARKET



MEETING WITH VETERANS



NEW DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS



HIKING IN STACKHOUSE



JUNETEENTH



POLKAFEST



MORE POLKAFEST



BIKING AROUND HORNERSTOWN



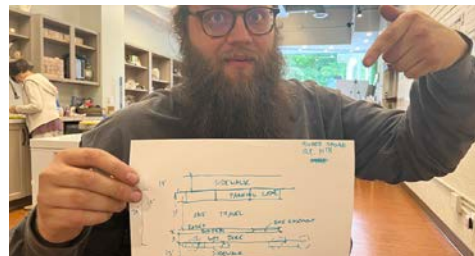
WITH LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS



AWESOME PEOPLE DOING AWESOME THINGS



MAIN STREET COLORING BOOK



BIKE ADVOCATES



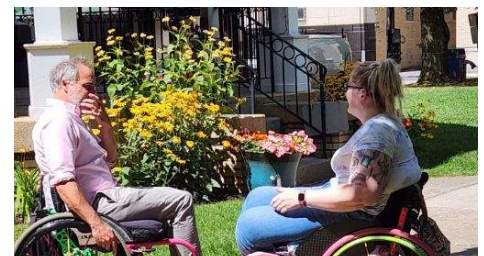
FOCUS GROUPS



FLOODCITY YOUTH ACADEMY



SANDYVALE PLANNING WITH VETERANS



ACCESSIBILITY TOUR WITH BARB ZABLOTNEY



At our Open House in May 2023, many Veterans, mostly older men, expressed anger about losing history, identity, and a special place in the center of the City to honor their service and sacrifice. Following the meeting, Councilmember Marie Mock sent an email exhorting the design team to listen to the Veterans. We reached out immediately to Chuck Arnone (city council member and head of the American Legion) and Tom Caulfield (president of the Conemaugh Valley Veterans Initiative), as well as younger, newly-arrived Veterans Sean and Jessie Mullen. Together we made a plan to conduct a series of meetings. Tom Caulfield suggested that the meetings could turn this situation from a threat to an opportunity to do something special for the Veterans who are a strong backbone of civic life.

We conducted four focus sessions with the Veterans throughout the summer. The first meeting was held in the lobby of the War Memorial Arena with about forty Veterans attending. We assured them that we were there to listen and that no decisions had been made. We established common goals. We floated the idea of relocating the monuments to Sandyvale Memorial Gardens, about one mile south of Central Park. The Veterans suggested and debated other locations including around the War Memorial.

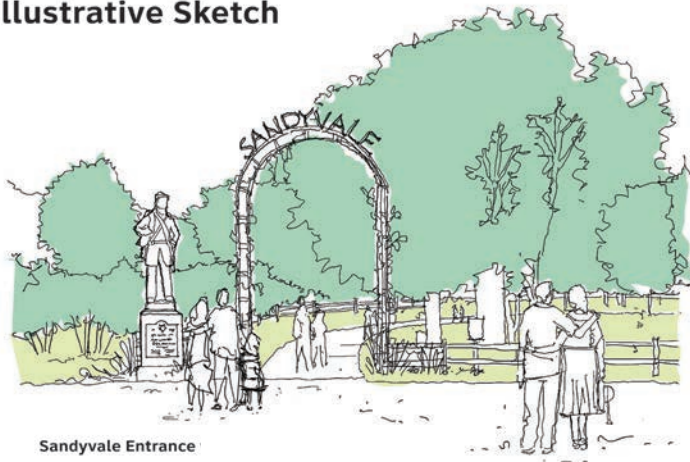
Two weeks later we had a second session with the Veterans at Sandyvale. Diana and Ron Kabo told us about the history of the place, improvements recently made and plans for the future. Sandyvale was originally Johnstown's cemetery and many of Johnstown's Civil War Veterans are buried there. David McCullough's book "The Johnstown Flood" begins at a Memorial Day celebration in

Sandyvale on the day of the 1889 flood. In the floods that followed, especially the 1977 flood, many of the tombstones were displaced. Recent restoration efforts have identified where there is hallowed ground and where park improvements can be made. Those improvements include a new restroom, community garden, greenhouse, dog run, extension of the Mayer Walking Trail, sensory garden, and Veteran's Circle in which trees symbolize each of the nation's conflicts. We learned that Sandyvale, which is walking distance to Johnstown High School and Bishop McCort High School, hosts outdoor learning sessions. The board of directors of Sandyvale welcomed the relocation of the Central Park monuments as a complement to their plans, including a 6-acre extension of the 12-acre park onto former industrial property and an interpretative museum. However, they were clear that they wanted the decision to be made by the Veterans.

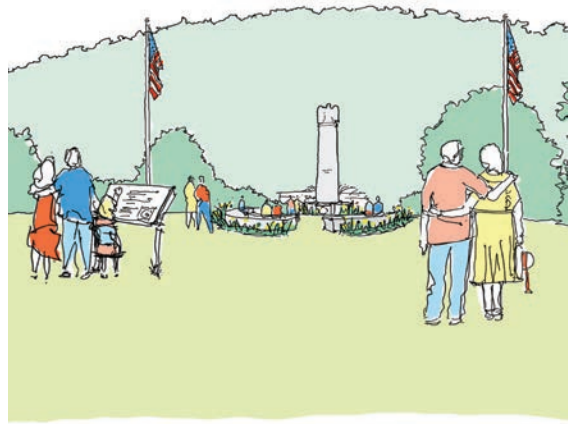
We met with the Veterans for a third time after the design options meeting. Tensions were high. The Veterans of the 28th Military Police had worked hard to have their monument to five fallen heroes placed in the park just three years earlier. The idea that the monument would now be moved was understandably frustrating to them. One Veteran, Gary Menett, collected a petition against the project with 500 signatures. We thanked Mr. Menett for this great effort of civic activism. Although concerned that he and others were representing the park re-design as a done deal while we were still actively gathering public opinion, we took the sentiment of the petition to heart.

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK IN SANDYVALE

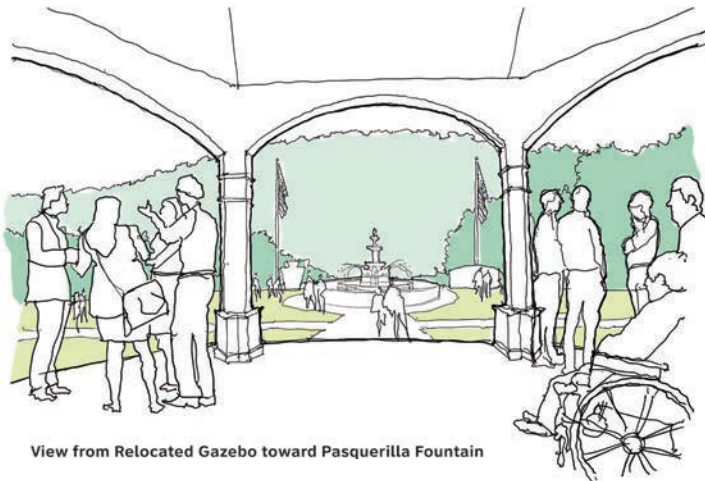
Illustrative Sketch



Sandyvale Entrance



Illustrative Sketch of Military Service Memorial in Sandyvale



View from Relocated Gazebo toward Pasquerilla Fountain



Goals from first meeting on June 28, 2023

- Respect
- Consolidate
- Secure
- Historic Setting
- Accessibility
- Education
- Interpretation / Bring it into the Digital Age
- Exposure/Visibility
- Reasonable Cost/Benefit
- Awareness of Veterans with Disabilities
- Provide Funding for Ongoing Maintenance
- Space to Grow
- Pride
- Publicity
- More Veteran Voices

The Johnstown Military Service Monument is owned and maintained Discover Downtown who voted to relocate the monument to Sandyvale just before our fourth meeting with the Veterans. Many Veterans feel uncomfortable that the monument had become de facto seating for the park's concerts. The base of the monument is infested with large black ants, which Tom Habercorn from the Kiwanis Club has made a personal mission to eradicate. John Polacek of JWF Industries also pointed out that the base is out of date. The obelisk, which is topped with carved bald eagles, sits on five polished granite blocks representing branches of the military, but is missing the 6th branch, the Space Force. The City has agreed to pay to relocate this monument to Sandyvale.

At the fourth meeting, we agreed to demands by the Military Police and Sons and Daughters of the Civil War (not Veterans but committed Civil War reenactors) that their monuments stay in the park. The Civil War monument, a bronze statue of an infantryman facing towards Richmond, was located in the park because of the park's history as a training ground for Union soldiers. The Military Police monument honors fallen service members, many of whom have families and friends in the area who have made it their routine to spend time at its location within the park.

The design of Central Park will be better because it honors this history. In addition to the Civil War and the Military Police Monuments, the 1977 Flood Victims Memorial and the statue of Joseph Johns will remain. The park, with only 1.25 acres, cannot accommodate future military monuments. A Veteran of the 458th Engineering Division of the Army is raising money for a monument now, and others have called to honor the significant service of other underrepresented communities. Sandyvale offers an ideal place for these future monuments.

TO BE RELOCATED



Johnstown Military Service Memorial

Discover Downtown (formerly Veterans Memorial), July 4, 1988

Tall granite pedestal with an eagle at the apex. Behind the memorial is an additional granite plaque listing all US wars which honors all service men and women from the past, present and future.

This monument will be relocated to the Veteran's Circle in Sandyvale Memorial Gardens



2088 Time Capsule



Fireman's Bell

This bell will be relocated to the Johnstown Firefighters Memorial Park, located at the intersection of Vine and Franklin streets downtown, which will also include, light bollards, signage, greenery and a sculpture made by the Center for Metal Arts.



Sylvia Pasquerilla Fountain

This fountain was donated to the City in 1993 by Frank Pasquerilla in the honor of his late wife Sylvia Pasquerilla. The fountain is planned to be relocated to Sandyvale Memorial Gardens with a new base, where it will serve as a centerpiece of the new Veteran's Memorial Trail. NOTE: Discover Downtown's Christmas Tree will stay in the park on a new foundation.

TO STAY IN CENTRAL PARK



28th Military Police Monument

28th Military Police Retired Association, August 8th, 2020

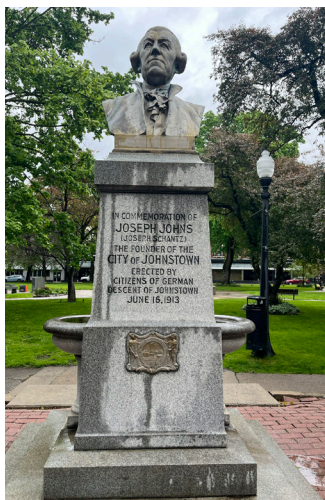
Granite stone in the shape of the Keystone, the emblem of the 28th Infantry Division/Pennsylvania National Guard. The monument honors the members of the 28th Military Police Company who died in the line of duty in Afghanistan, Iraq and on domestic deployment. The monument features the crossed flintlock pistols of the Military Police branch of service.



Colonel Jacob Campbell, Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) Monument to the 54th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, November 11, 2000

Replacing an earlier Civil War memorial, there is a life size bronze statue of a Union Army Infantryman. The 54th Regiment consisted of troops from the greater Johnstown area. The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is federally chartered and is the recognized legal successor to the Grand Army of the Republic.



Joseph Johns

Erected in 1913 by Johnstown Citizens of German Descent.



1977 Flood Victims Memorial

This obelisk commemorates the 85 people of Johnstown who lost their lives in the 1977 flood.

Next steps:

- Keep the Veterans involved. They are valuable allies who care deeply about the community and have already been defending the project on social media.
- The design team needs to identify the best place for a flagpole where people can gather for Veterans Day ceremonies.
- Veterans are eager to start planning Sandyvale, and will need planning and design support.
- The NAACP organized a temporary memorial for local Black Veterans for the 2023 Juneteenth Celebration in Central Park. Perhaps, there will be space for a dedicated memorial for Black Veterans in Sandyvale.

TO BE DETERMINED



Gazebo

This Gazebo was built on top of an existing bandstand in 1991 with money raised by the citizens and the Chamber of Commerce.



Morley's Dog



Johnstown Soldier's Memorial

Marine Corps League of Greater Johnstown, May 31, 1948

Granite monument in honor of all Americans who fought for a new world of freedom and peace. Carved on front of the memorial are the Marines raising the flag on Iwo Jima.



Getting young people involved in planning infrastructure has multiple benefits: civic education, reversing brain drain, and getting better ideas. Our initial hope was to hire local students to work part-time on community engagement, but we launched our effort too close to the end of the school year. We found other ways to engage with area youth including joining the Vision Together team for two family days, in Coopersdale on July 15 and Roxbury on August 12. At these events, we told families and especially young people about the project and worked with them on a “My Main Street and Central Park” coloring book.

In collaboration with the Flood City Youth Academy we held two environmental justice and urban design workshops in July. These socially-minded and creative young people (ages 8-16) were concerned about caring for the most vulnerable in the community and addressing racism. Many of these young people suffer from persistent poverty and stress at home and in school. (33% of Johnstown’s population lives below the poverty line, three times the national average.) There is increasing gang activity and gun violence in the neighborhoods. Many people attribute this to an increase in people from out of town moving into public housing. This is a systemic issue – HUD has been directing families living in elsewhere waiting for public housing to use Johnstown’s surplus of housing without providing support for schools and other services. Flood City Youth Academy plays an important positive role in these young people’s lives and is an essential service for their parents.

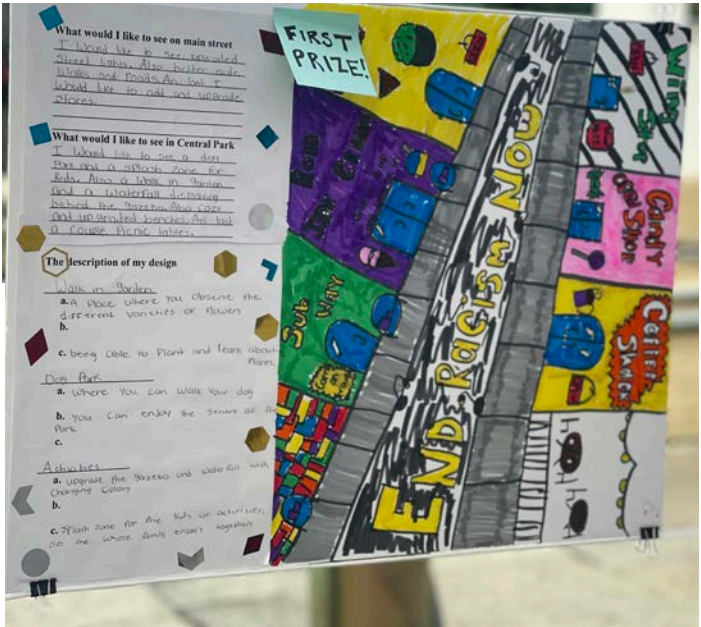
Next Steps:

- Continue to prioritize designing spaces for youth activities in Central Park. According to Quan Britt, who wears many hats helping Johnstown’s at-risk youth, Downtown is neutral ground and Central Park can be a haven for area youth to stay out of trouble.
- Find youth employment and training opportunities as the project progresses. Summer 2024 would be an ideal time to launch a Main Street Youth Ambassadors program in which high school students could go to public events in Johnstown’s neighborhoods and promote public involvement in the project.
- The City of Johnstown has been making efforts to engage Johnstown High School and Middle School students in civic affairs by establishing a Youth Advisory Council, coordinated by Jenna Cramer and Quan Britt.





At our youth design workshops we invited students to participate in a design context with cash prizes from Partners in Public Design and Sue Mann of the 1889 Foundation. Amy Bradley from the Chamber of Commerce helped to select the winners.



What Will Downtown Johnstown Look Like in the Future?
 When we talk about the future, people often think about technology (like flying cars and robots), but we also hope that the future brings greater ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE and better lives for everyone.

- Working alone or in teams, every young person who submits a Vision about Future Johnstown has the chance to win a cash gift card.
- \$300 (first prize); \$200 (second prize), or \$50 (up to 10 honorable mentions).
- All Visions should be posted on 18"x 24" poster board, made available at Flood City Fitness Academy.
- Your Vision can include drawing, collage, essay, poetry or anything else that will fit on a poster board.
- Each Vision should be delivered by 12:00 PM on August 30 to the Gallery on Gazebo on Central Park.
- Winners will be selected by local leaders and the design team for the Main Street Project. They will be looking for visions that include ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, UNIVERSAL DESIGN, ART and EXPRESSION.
- You can use this book to try out ideas at home and then make your final Vision on the poster board.
- Please write your name and age on the reverse side of the poster board, not the front.
- Anyone under 18 eligible. We will reserve 5 honorable mentions for under 12.



From the beginning of the project we prioritized engaging Johnstown’s young adults, so we were disappointed that few people under fifty attended our Open House in May. We wanted to get the message out that this project is for young people. This investment in public space aspires to reverse the brain drain and we were hoping to show young adults that Johnstown is becoming a great place to live. There is no need to move to another city when the amenities of urban life—fun things to do, good places to eat, places to socialize—are in your hometown where the cost of living is low and your networks of friends and family are in place. We discovered that there are a number of young Johnstownians who are buying into this idea but work needs to be done to include younger adults in public decision making. For example, only one City Council member, Laura Huchel, is under age 50.

Mike Hruska and Adeline Mischler, two young entrepreneurs, have been organizing happy hours for the growing community of young adults to build their networks and share their experiences. At one of these happy hours at the recently reopened food court at the Galleria Mall, about a dozen young professionals reported that they have been disappointed with past planning efforts in Johnstown. They cited broken promises, failure to connect past efforts with new opportunities, a concentration of power in just a few hands, and general lack of transparency. Some of them said that they expected this project to be more of the same, and that’s why they won’t go to meetings. We told them this was a mistake, if they want change, they have to show up and take power, no one is going to give it to them.

The following week we hosted a Happy Hour at Gallery on Gazebo. About thirty people came and shared their ideas about what the park could be for them and how the process could help rebuild the trust that had been lost in past planning efforts. Some of the priorities expressed were creating space for special events and concerts and allowing for simultaneity of events. For instance, there could be a space for kids to play while parents watch a concert. In addition, they asked that the new park be dog-friendly and that Main Street be bike-friendly.

Next Steps:

- Host another happy hour with Mike and Adeline before the next project milestone. Young adults can be powerful advocates for the project and for positive change in Johnstown in general. They should always have a seat at the table.
- Track local jobs created by the project. The project has the potential to create many jobs for people starting their careers.





Johnstown has a large senior population and others with mobility impairments due to frequent car accidents and a legacy of workplace-related injuries. Despite ADA and other laws requiring public spaces to be made accessible, there is very little enforcement, particularly in places where economic insecurity makes advocacy challenging. Discrimination against people with disabilities is pervasive and reflected in our built environment and in the way able-bodied people treat people with disabilities in public space. Making the park and Main Street wheelchair accessible should remain a top priority; it is impossible to make an inclusive space without addressing this injustice.

Disability advocate Barb Zablontney generously led a wheelchair tour of Central Park and Main Street and shared her personal struggles with getting around downtown. She invited the local television news to join so we could make our commitment to accessibility public.

Next steps:
As the next design milestone, host a focus group with Barb Zablontney, Michael Kiel, Shelly Kerchner (motorized wheelchair user) and Debra Jordan (visually impaired).

ACCESSIBILITY GUIDANCE

With thanks to Barb Zablontney
BA in Disability Studies and
Candidate for MA in Disability Studies, CCNY SPS

On Main Street

- Minimum 8' clear path on all sidewalks
- Safe and Accessible parking spaces at cross streets where possible
- Tree pits designed to prevent roots lifting pavement
- Curb ramps designed with least possible slope given spatial constraints
- Increased accessibility at signalized crossings, including LED beacons, audio cues, and haptic crossing buttons
- Surface of low end of the curb ramp flush with the roadbed

In Park

- All paths accessible to wheelchairs and free of obstruction
- Ample wheelchair and companion seating for all types of events
- Performance platform and water play areas wheelchair accessible
- Accessible path through lawn
- Detectable warning at planting edges

CURRENT CONDITIONS

The current conditions on Main Street and in Central Park create physical hardship for people with disabilities. Fixing these conditions will make downtown more welcoming for everyone.



Curb ramps are often too steeply sloped, even the 8.33% code minimum is challenging. They are also often too narrow, which doesn't allow people to cross together.



The transition from the curb ramp to the roadbed should be flush, but they degrade making it hard cross the street on wheels



Street trees don't have adequate room and for roots and are pushing up pavement



Sidewalks are uneven and obstructed light-posts and other street furniture



There is not enough safe and accessible parking downtown.



Central Park can be very challenging for events. The stage is not accessible and it can be hard to see. There isn't adequate seating and access to a restroom.



We talked to many talented artists, especially younger artists who are choosing to build careers in Johnstown because of the low cost of living and increasingly creative environment. Johnstown has always been a center for making things, but recent investments in the Center for Metal Arts and Made in Johnstown are ushering in a new era of creative making.

We hired local muralist Todd Stiffler to serve as a Public Art Consultant for the project. In advance of the Open House, we hosted a focus group with local artists at Galley on Gazebo. Members of the arts community are very supportive of the project and hope the project will employ their talents.

Next Steps

- Employ local artists in Percent for Arts programs with a local match from philanthropy for rotating art pieces. Having a mix of local and international talent will raise the profile of local artists and attract visitors.
- Norm Ed would be a great collaborator on a park feature, perhaps the water cascade.
- Center for Metal Arts and/or Made In Johnstown can help design and prototype streetscape elements, such as benches, signage, lights, etc.
- Some streetscape elements could be made in Johnstown, at JWF or another local manufacturer. This would be a huge public relations win. Every dollar spent to employ local people on this project will pay dividends in civic pride and create a downtown beloved by the community and a model for how infrastructure can provide real local economic benefit.





The biggest boosters for the project are downtown businesses and the civic organizations Vision Together, the Community Foundation and Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the Visitors Center. Throughout the summer we made efforts to meet members of the business community and patronized their businesses including Valley Printing, Lambcakes, Gallina's and numerous restaurants and bars. We had hundreds of informal conversations about the project. Some conversations had a very specific focus, like where it might make sense to plant new trees or provide accessible parking spaces. Other conversations focused more broadly on the City's long term strategic plan and restoration of the tax base.

Bob Eyer, the owner of a financial services business on Main Street, expressed concern that the revenue lost due to the rescission of Johnstown's "distressed city" designation would not be offset by future property taxes because the county tax assessment is out of date. This valid concern is clearly beyond the scope of this project but it may help explain some of the misgivings expressed about the City's future. It will take more than investments in infrastructure to get the City back to fiscal health.

In addition to these informal conversations, we conducted two focus groups with the business community co-hosted with the Cambria Regional Chamber of Commerce. At these meetings, we confirmed that the project will prioritize the needs and concerns of existing businesses.

Parking

Some in the business community also expressed concern about parking. Despite the City's abundance of parking, there is a widespread perception that it is challenging to park downtown. Both are true, the abundant parking downtown is not very accessible or affordable. The City and private business owners need to work together to create a parking plan. Every successful shopping-friendly Main Street has free public parking a few blocks away in a lot or garage. There are plenty of good models for how to do this, including in neighboring Ligonier. The plan should assess current and future parking needs, inventory all public and private parking spaces, and propose practical solutions, for example, buying surface parking lots and making them public or making improvements to existing garages.

Maintenance

Working together on a parking plan will help address other issues, like maintenance. Today Central Park is maintained by a mix of City staff and volunteers from the Garden Club, Discover Downtown and other groups. This project aspires to create a park that is easy to maintain, but maintenance needs will increase as the number of visitors and programs increase. Business Improvement Districts could help raise money to hire people maintain the sidewalks and plantings.

Next Steps

- The City should develop a parking plan.
- The City is investigating the feasibility of a Business Improvement District.
- The design team should conduct targeted block-by-block meetings with owners in a later design stage.
- The City should develop a combined open space plan. There are many public spaces adjacent to Main Street and Central Park that should eventually receive a mix of public and private investment, including:
 - Entrance to Point Stadium at the end of Main Street
 - Plaza at the corner of Market and Main in front of the State Theater
 - Abandoned plaza in front of Main Street East
 - Dog Park in an empty lot on Main Street
 - "Innovation Alley" next to Johnstown Future Works, an essential link between Central Park and the Stoney Creek Waterfront
- Connections to surrounding trails including James Mayer Trail, 9/11 Memorial Trail, Iron to Arts Corridor, Path of the Flood Trail, and The Incline Plane Hillside Trails



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MAIN STREET COMMITTEE

Frank Janakovic	Mayor
Sylvia King	City Council
Laura Huchel	City Council
Ethan Imhoff	City Manager
John Dubnansky	Community and Economic Development Director
Jared Campagna	Public Works
Alex Ashcom	Assistant City Manager
Rob Forcey	Vision Together
Melissa Komar	Johnstown Redevelopment Authority
Melissa Radovanic	Discover Downtown Johnstown Partnership
Mike Artim	Balance Restaurant
Bill McKinney	Carnegie Building Residential Developer
Sharon Honkus	Celestial Brides
Jeff Wilson	Flood City Fitness and NAACP
Darlette Haselrig	Johnstown Housing Authority
Charles Johnson	Stevens Memorial Church
Mike Messina	Chameleon Book Store
Michele Adams	Classic Elements
Ashley Flynn	Downtown Library
Michael Kiel	University of Pittsburgh and Hiram G. Andrews
Amy Buxbaum	University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown

And many thanks to
all including:

Bruce Wade	Jean Gleason	Ron Kabo	Chuck Arnone
Kaylee Kolonich	Mike Cook	Diane Kabo	Sean Mullen
Quan Britt	Jarrold Bunk	Barb Zablotney	Jessie Mullen
Mary Anne Rizzo	Jim Carthew	John Polacek	Ray Sheets
Cassidy Polacek	Jen Galiote	Bill Polacek	Gary Menett
Jenna Cramer	Joel Bezek	Doug Puchko	Chip Minemeyer
Todd Stifler	Lisa Rager	Maureen Puchko	Dave Hurst
Angie Berzonski	Alyssa Rouser	Sherri Rae	The Evergreens
Queen Poetri	Andy Fedore	Oscar Cashaw	DJ Zay Brick
Delaney Leis	Gillian Hurt	Mike Hruska	
Amy Bradley	Norm Ed	Adeline Mishler	Lisa Downey
Debra Orner	Sue Konvolinka	June Janakovic	Karen Isaias
Jennifer Tiffany	Bob Eyer	Mark Pasquerilla	
Jennifer Fisher	Rick Truscello	Tom Caulfield	and so many
Mike Kane	Barry Polster	John Brown	others...