

State of New Jersey
Brendan Byrne, Governor

Department of Environmental Protection
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Liberty State Park - Master Plan Summary

Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Parks and Forestry

Department of Treasury
Division of Building and Construction

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Addendum (1993)

Master Plan chronology from LSP archives

1977 – Draft state master plan completed

1977 - Draft federal Environmental Impact Study on LSP Master Plan elements circulated for comments by state and federal groups

1977 – 38 public hearings held on master plan in Jersey City, Hudson County and region

1978 – Federal Environmental Impact Study of Master Plan completed

July 31, 1978 – Master Plan completed, approved by state government for Green Acres funding and federal government for Land & Water Conservation Funds

Liberty State Park, Master Plan Summary

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The Greenpark

The core of Liberty Park is a large Greenpark, designed in the naturalist tradition of America's great pastoral landscape parks. The main attractions of the Greenpark are its gently rolling grasslands; its curving woodlands and clustered plantings; its water lagoons; and its wildlife wetlands preserves. The uses of the Greenpark will be many and varied, depending on the seasons and the interests of its users. The range of uses includes active and passive recreation for both individual and public enjoyment. Threaded throughout the Greenpark are picnic areas, walkways, trails, and bikepaths. Vehicular access is kept to a minimum for safety, service, and accessibility in off-peak hours. The Greenpark will appear to be completely natural in its varied plantings and land forms; it will indeed bring a sense of nature to the urban harbor setting.

The site of Liberty Park is now a derelict, irregular, rotting, crumbling landfill abandoned by previous technological uses. It is, in the words of New York Times critic Ada Louise Huxtable, "a sleeper of a landscape, awaiting one mammoth magic touch to awaken to great beauty". In reviewing this Master Plan of Liberty Park, Ms. Huxtable wrote: "If the plan is vast and visionary, it is also rational and organized, and it is very well begun. Liberty Park could be the most dramatic open space in the metropolitan region in the next century."

The Wetland Preserves

In two parts of Liberty Park's waterfront, large areas of wetlands will remain as wildlife preservations. The salt marshes have evolved as habitats for thousands of waterfowl and many species of mammals living in the marsh edges. The marine life and biological cycles are important features of the marsh which will become a vivid experience for people in Liberty Park, where boardwalk trails and observation points will be carefully located in the midst of the marshes. Interpretive Centers will provide information and orientation programs for visitors and will protect the wildlife preservations from crowding or other interferences. The original salt marsh habitats will be peaceful, educational, and spiritual oases in the midst of a great urban harbor park.

The Harbor Walk

The crescent walk along the harborfront will be the greatest attraction of Liberty Park. In a graceful curve along the water's edge, the tree-lined promenade will provide the most spectacular set of views of the New York harbor, its shipping, its monuments, its bridges, its skyline, and its diverse life. The walk will be delightfully scaled to human uses, including wind-screened picnic and sitting areas with close-up views of Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty, Lower Manhattan, and long-distance vistas of the harbor, from the Brooklyn Bridge to the Verrazano Bridge. The Harbor Walk will be well-lighted and patrolled, and it will serve as the waterside route of the Park's people-mover buses. Special features of the Harbor Walk will be the causeways across the two wildlife wetland preserves especially designed for the pleasure of fisherman, and a large grass amphitheater, The Bowl, designed for outdoor festivals and focused on Ellis Island. In the future, the Harbor Walk will be enriched by the addition of restaurants and other park related activities. By day or night, the Harbor Walk will provide Liberty Park's most stirring human experiences; it will be one of the most beautiful places in the metropolitan region, perhaps, in the nation.

In her review of this Master Plan of Liberty Park, Ada Louise Huxtable wrote, "This is a key site in the harbor's grand sweep --part of the real and symbolic entrance...This harbor promenade could be one of the urban area's greatest pleasures."

The Bowl

A gently sloping bowl of grassland, focused on the close view of Ellis Island, creates a natural amphitheater for many kinds of festivals and celebrations. The informal atmosphere, the sunny and wind-protected site, the spectacular views of the harbor, and the central location in the Greenpark make The Bowl a great attraction for outdoor concerts, sound-and-light shows, folk festivals, historical pageants, and harbor fetes.

Overlook 1976

On Flag Day, June 14, 1976, the first phase of Liberty Park was opened to the public. This initial Park element is a 35-acre landscaped overlook opposite the Statue of Liberty. On July 4, 1976, 30,000 people viewed "Operation Sail" from the Overlook. In the first year of its operation, the Overlook attracted more than 680,000 people, making it the most popular park in the State of New Jersey.

The South Embankment at Black Tom Channel

The south embankment will provide the most dramatic vistas of the Statue of Liberty and the entire harbor, from the Brooklyn Bridge and downtown Manhattan to the Verrazano Bridge and the lower bay. Overlooking the clean, open water of Black Tom Channel and Caven Point, the south embankment will be oriented outward, with scenic overlooks, grass mounds and amphitheater bowls, picnic areas and harborfront restaurants. The harbor boat trips to the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and Liberty Park's north embankment will leave from a pier on the south embankment. For more active recreation, there will be a fishing pier, a large marina, and a boat-launching ramp. The marina will serve 450 boats, with ample parking and services. The south embankment is conveniently located off Wolf Drive at Exit 14B of the New Jersey Turnpike.

The Marina

The Marina will contain berths for 450 craft, and will be serviced by utilities for overnight stays. There will be a restaurant for visitors and boaters, and various shops and stands catering to boating and fishing supply needs. The Marina will be operated by the State of New Jersey.

The Inland Watercourse and Boat Basin

In order to protect the Park's drainage system, and also to provide a naturalistic attraction in the inner reaches of the Greenpark, an inland water lagoon will be a major feature of Liberty Park. Like its counterparts in other pastoral parklands, the watercourse will be a delightful place, alongside the grasslands and forests, for picnics and strolling, for boating and sailing. The lagoon, or watercourse, will be a boat basin for sailing, canoing, and rowing. Rental boats will be available at the boat basin in the center of the Park and near a main parking and bus entrance.

The Innerpark Roadways and Parking

Liberty Park will be a place for walking, jogging, biking, and strolling without interference from cars and trucks. The vehicular access will be limited, but effective to serve the Park's needs for safety and maintenance. The Park will be free of cars during crowded hours and peak seasons, but at other times a pleasantly meandering drive will be available, with small parking convenience areas for small groups of picnickers, fishermen, and naturalists. The three main access roadways are located outside the Greenpark, along the north embankment (Johnston Avenue), the south embankment (Wolf Drive), and through the uplands areas. The innerpark roadways will accommodate thousands of cars, distributed efficiently around the perimeter. Access to the Park will be limited and controlled at three primary locations, in order to maintain the safety and well-being of the Park and its users.

The Restored Railroad Maritime Terminal

The Railroad Maritime Terminal, originally built for the Central Railroad of New Jersey, will be restored and adapted to many new uses. The major features of the building are its skylighted Waiting Room under a peaked roof and cupola, built in 1884, and its Train Sheds and Ferry Sheds, built in 1914. The restoration features a series of new skylighted Gallery Concourse and ramps, giving easy access to the Waiting Room and Ferry Sheds when they will be used for festivals of theater, music, and dance, and for exhibitions and restaurants. The Train Sheds will be an open and enclosed exhibition center and a Farmers Market. The old Train Concourse will be the Visitors Information Center for Liberty Park. The Terminal will be adjacent to the main arrival and departure landings for Liberty Park's harborboat trips to Manhattan, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and Gateway National Park.

The Terminal Plazas and Boat Landings

North and south of the restored CNJ Terminal will be beautifully landscaped plazas, harborboat landings, and scenic overlooks. The Terminal Plazas have unique, spectacular views of Lower Manhattan and the New York harbor. The Plazas will be the stage settings for festivals of many kinds: ethnic celebrations, national commemorations, local and regional fetes like "Operational Sail". From the Plaza's harborboat landings, boat trips will connect Liberty Park to the harbor's attractions, and from Manhattan, visitors to Liberty Park's Farmers Market, Festivals, and Greenpark will arrive at the Plazas by boat.

The Northern Embankment at the Tidewater Basin

The waterfront around the Tidewater Basin will be a continuous, landscaped public walkway, providing areas for sitting, picnicking, and sightseeing. Along Johnston Avenue, a series of sites will be developed to bring intensive recreational and park related uses into close relationship to Liberty Park, seeking to enliven and diversify the Park users' choice of amenities. In the short term, the development sites will be devoted to grassed areas for unstructured recreation, and to a unique park-like setting for mobile leisure and recreational vehicles, providing safe overnight housing for many Park visitors. In the longer term, the development sites will include grassed areas as well as some of the following park related activities: a seaquarium, exhibitions, and landscaped displays of marine life; an educational playground, such as a Sesame Street park; a Park lodge for overnight guests and conferences; Park support facilities and similar activities that are proper to the Park's public recreational purposes. The northern embankment is closest to the Paulus Hook and Van Vorst residential neighborhoods; linked across the Tidewater Basin by a pedestrian footbridge, the development of the embankment should be carried forward incrementally with the interactive participation of the residential neighborhoods' representatives.

The Morris Canal Historic Site

At the northern end of the Liberty Park urban development, the Morris Canal Basin is an historic site listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places. The restoration of the Little Basin and Canal Entrance will create a pleasant water basin, surrounded by green landscape and walkways, for informal recreation by the nearby Paulus Hook and Van Vorst residential neighborhoods.

The Uplands

The Uplands areas of Liberty Park lie between the New Jersey Turnpike and the inland watercourse; they are the closest areas to the Lafayette residential district of Jersey City. In the development of the Uplands areas, plans will be made for short term, almost immediate uses that respond directly to the evident needs for recreation space by the nearby residents; and plans will also be made for long term uses that respond to both the neighbors' interests and the regional and national citizens' interests.

In the areas along Phillips Drive that are closest to the Lafayette residential district, provision will be made for open space uses such as community playfields and community gardens. The inner parts of the Uplands area will be developed in response to broader community and regional interests; the development may feature a single use, or more likely, a set of mixed uses, such as community playfields, educational playground, amphitheater, and similar recreational facilities.

The major automobile and bus entrance to Liberty Park will be a landscaped drive entering the center of the Uplands area off Phillips Drive. The drive will provide access to the park service areas, support facilities, dispersed parking areas, and innerpark roadways. The view from the entrance will be dramatic and beautiful, framing the Statue of Liberty, rising over the naturalistic landscape of Liberty Park's water lagoon and greenpark.

Public Access to the Park

Public mass transportation brings Liberty Park within easy reach of an urban region of 16 million people. By automobile and bus, the New Jersey Turnpike at Exit 14B will be immediately accessible, and the street system of Jersey City will be directly connected to the Park roadways at three locations: (1) the Uplands entrance drive off Phillips Drive, (2) the north embankment (Johnston Avenue), and (3) the south embankment (Wolf Drive), entering the Park from the major arterial road paralleling the New Jersey Turnpike. By public rapid transportation, the PATH stations in Jersey City (Grove Street particularly) will be within walking distance of the Park's north embankment; a potential future transit station at Communipaw would give large scale pedestrian access to the Park's uplands areas. By boat, harborboat access at the south embankment and the Terminal Plazas at the north embankment will link the Park to Lower Manhattan. By foot and bike, for the neighboring residential communities, entrance into the Park will be available from four approaches: by a pedestrian bridge over the Tidewater Basin at Washington Street, serving the Paulus Hook and Van Vorst neighborhoods; and by footpaths along the Park's roadways connected to Johnston Avenue, Communipaw Avenue, and Wolf Drive, serving the Lafayette and other Jersey City neighborhoods.

Liberty State Park, Master Plan Summary
Long Range Development, Land Use Plan

Legend for the Land Use Plan

The Core

- 1 The Greenpark
 - 2 The Wetland Preserves
 - 3 The Harbor Walk
 - 4 The Inland Watercourse and Boat Basin
 - 5 The Bowl
 - 6 The Innerpark Roadways
-

The North Embankment

- 10 The Restored Railroad Maritime Terminal
 - 11 The Terminal Plazas and Boat Landing
 - 12] Park Lodge; Leisure Vehicle Park; Conference
 - 13] Center; Seaquarium; and Similar Uses
 - 14]
 - 15] Structured Recreation and Indoor Facilities;
 - 16] Courts and Rinks; Intensive Recreation Uses
 - 17]
 - 18 The Morris Canal Historic Site
-

The Uplands: Recommended Uses

- 20 Park Services; Parking; Picnic Areas
 - 21 Agricultural Farming Technology Center
 - 22] Community and Regional Recreation: Community
 - 23] Playfields; Community Gardens; Educational Playground;
 - 24] Ethnic Center; and Similar Recreational Uses
 - 25]
 - 26 Community Recreation: Playfield and Playground
 - 27 Park Lodge and Day Camp
 - 28 Existing Industrial Park
-

The South Embankment

- 30 The Marina
 - 31 Restaurants and Marina Services; Fishing Facilities
 - 32 Overlook 1976; Visitors Center; Boat Landing
 - 33 The Statue of Liberty Overlook
-

Liberty State Park, Master Plan Summary
Short Range Development, Land Use Plan

Legend for the Land Use Plan

The Core

- 2 The Wetland Preserves
-

The North Embankment

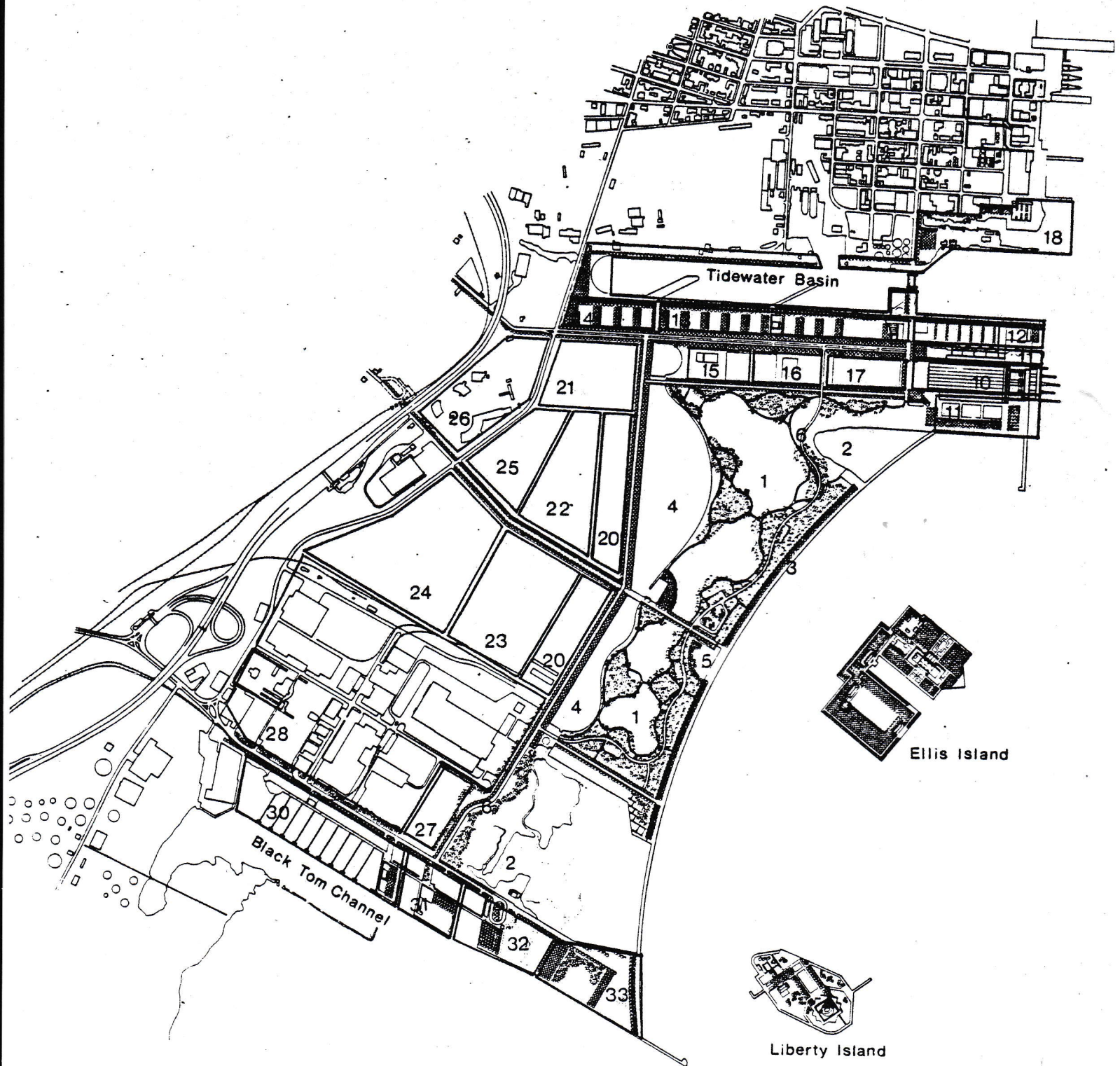
- 10 The Restored Railroad Maritime Terminal
11 The Terminal Plazas and Boat Landing
12]
13] Leisure Vehicle Park
14]
15]
16] Active Recreational Facilities
17]
-

The Uplands: Recommended Uses

- 21 Agricultural Farming Technology Center
24 Community Playfields
25 Community Gardens
27 Day Camp
-

The South Embankment

- 30 The Marina
31 Passive Recreation; Fishing Facilities
32 Visitors Center; Boat Landing; Overlook
-



FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT Liberty State Park Master Plan

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Land Acquisition	2.6	5.6	5.2	3.7	3.0	5.0	2.0			
Harbor Cleanup	2.6	5.5	2.9	1.0						
South Embankment	2.1	2.0	2.8	1.7	1.3	6.2	3.8	0.8		
Wildlife Preserve				0.1	0.8					
Marina					1.0	2.7	1.3			
Terminal Restoration	1.5	2.2	1.4	0.7	3.1	1.0		3.5	7.0	6.9
North Embankment			0.2	0.6	2.1	4.5	2.7	0.3	0.1	
Seawall & Causeways				7.0	8.0	2.0	1.0			
Greenpark				0.1	0.7		4.7	7.9	3.3	
Watercourse						2.6	3.2	2.0		
Tidewater Basin/Bridge					1.8	1.6		0.8	1.2	0.5
Upland Preparation			0.2	0.6				2.7	3.5	1.1
Totals: \$	27.1	12.0	20.7	0.9	5.0	27.3	10.5	18.0	16.7	7.8
Less: \$	14.5	39.0	5.4	12.6	10.0	78.5	Estimated Total Requirement	Federal Expenditures & Obligations	State Expenditures & Obligations	State Funds Reserved for Seawall
\$16.0 Annual Average	8.8	15.3	12.7	15.5	21.8	25.6	18.7	18.0	15.1	8.5

Costs in Millions of Dollars

LIBERTY STATE PARK
 PRESENT AND PROJECTED
 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

\$2,985,000

Present FY 1979
 Bureau of Parks
 Budget Appropriation
 \$8,801,199

Enforcement \$ 440,000	Salaries
Maintenance \$ 721,000	
Administration \$ 464,000 (1)	
Maintenance & Operations \$1,360,000	

\$ 500,000

Enforcement \$ 135,000	Salaries
Maintenance \$ 130,000	
Administration \$ 55,000 (1)	
Maintenance & Operations \$ 180,000	

\$ 250,000

Enforcement \$ 83,000	Salaries
Maintenance \$ 65,000	
Administration \$ 32,000 (1)	
Maintenance & Operations \$ 70,000	

\$ 150,000

Enforcement \$ 33,000	Salaries
Maintenance \$ 35,000	
Administration \$ 22,000 (1)	
Maintenance & Operations \$ 60,000	

FY'79 actual

FY'79 needs

FY'80 needs

FY1985
 Full Development

(1) Includes Program