

# VISTA PARK MASTER PLAN

RESTORING RECREATIONAL USE OVERLOOKING  
PATERSON'S HISTORIC AREA

Paterson, New Jersey



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(cover photo: G.Archimede)

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VISTA PARK MASTER PLAN  
**INTRODUCTION**

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Vista Park Site

Hinchliffe Stadium

Frank X. Graves Park

Frank X. Graves Park

Passaic River

JASPER ST

TOTOWA AVE

KEARNEY ST

MARION ST

TOTOWA AVE

Passaic Water Company (vacant)

RYLE AVE

RYLE RD



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# INTRODUCTION

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Over three hundred years ago, America's early industrialists harnessed the power of the Passaic River to create the new country's first planned industrial city, now the heart of Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park. The source of that power was the 80' drop in the Passaic River at the Great Falls where the river flows through a fissure in the resistant Orange Mountain Basalt composing First Watchung Mountain. Downstream of the Great Falls, the early city of Paterson grew up along the river adjoining the new industrial park.

The basalt cliff through which the Passaic River cascades at the Great Falls, continues along the north side of the river from the falls to Ryle Avenue, increasing in height from 77 feet to over 140 feet. It is a prominent feature in Paterson's landscape and a physical reminder of the city's history. Unknown to many contemporary residents is the importance of the cliff, and the plateau above the cliff, to the history of Paterson. Today, the land on the plateau above the cliff is in public ownership and is within the Paterson Great Falls National Historic Landmark (NHL) District. Much of the area is also within the boundary of Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park.

In 2016, the New Jersey Green Acres Program purchased an 8.4-acre tract that was the last piece of privately-owned land on the plateau adjoining the cliff. During the early 2000s, the property was the site of two unsuccessful residential development projects. In 2009 a developer constructed the first of several planned three-story buildings. From vantage points throughout the city, residents and visitors could clearly see the building, even during summer with trees in full foliage. From Overlook Park, a key site in Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park, the prominence of the site above the Passaic River 1,200 feet downstream rendered the building in full view to park visitors, posing a significant threat to the setting and character of the national park and NHL District. That project failed, and the building was removed. In 2015 there was

a second attempt to develop the property with 13 three-story buildings containing 156 dwelling units, which also failed. The state then acquired the property.

The New Jersey Green Acres Program acquired the property for purposes of providing a new public park in Paterson that will be part of a

The New Jersey Green Acres Program's mission is to achieve, in partnership with others, a system of interconnected open spaces, whose protection will preserve and enhance New Jersey's natural environment and its historic, scenic, and recreational resources for public use and enjoyment.



continuous network of public land on the plateau above the cliff, extending from the Great Falls to Ryle Avenue. The purchase also permanently protected the national park and the NHL district from the visual impact that its development would have, so clearly demonstrated by construction several years earlier of the first three-story building near the cliff edge on the plateau.

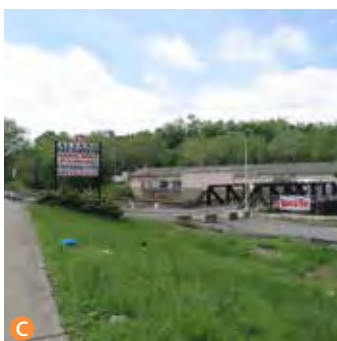
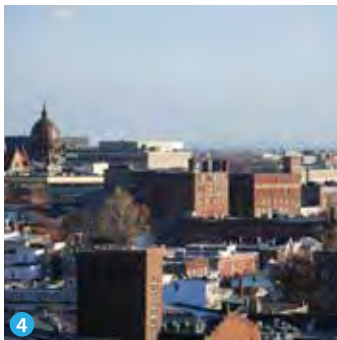
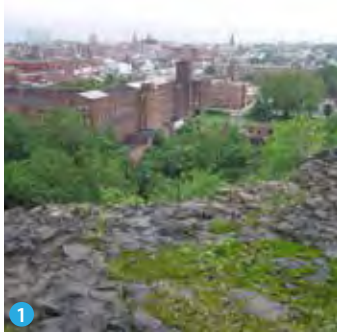
### Vista Park—A Partnership Park

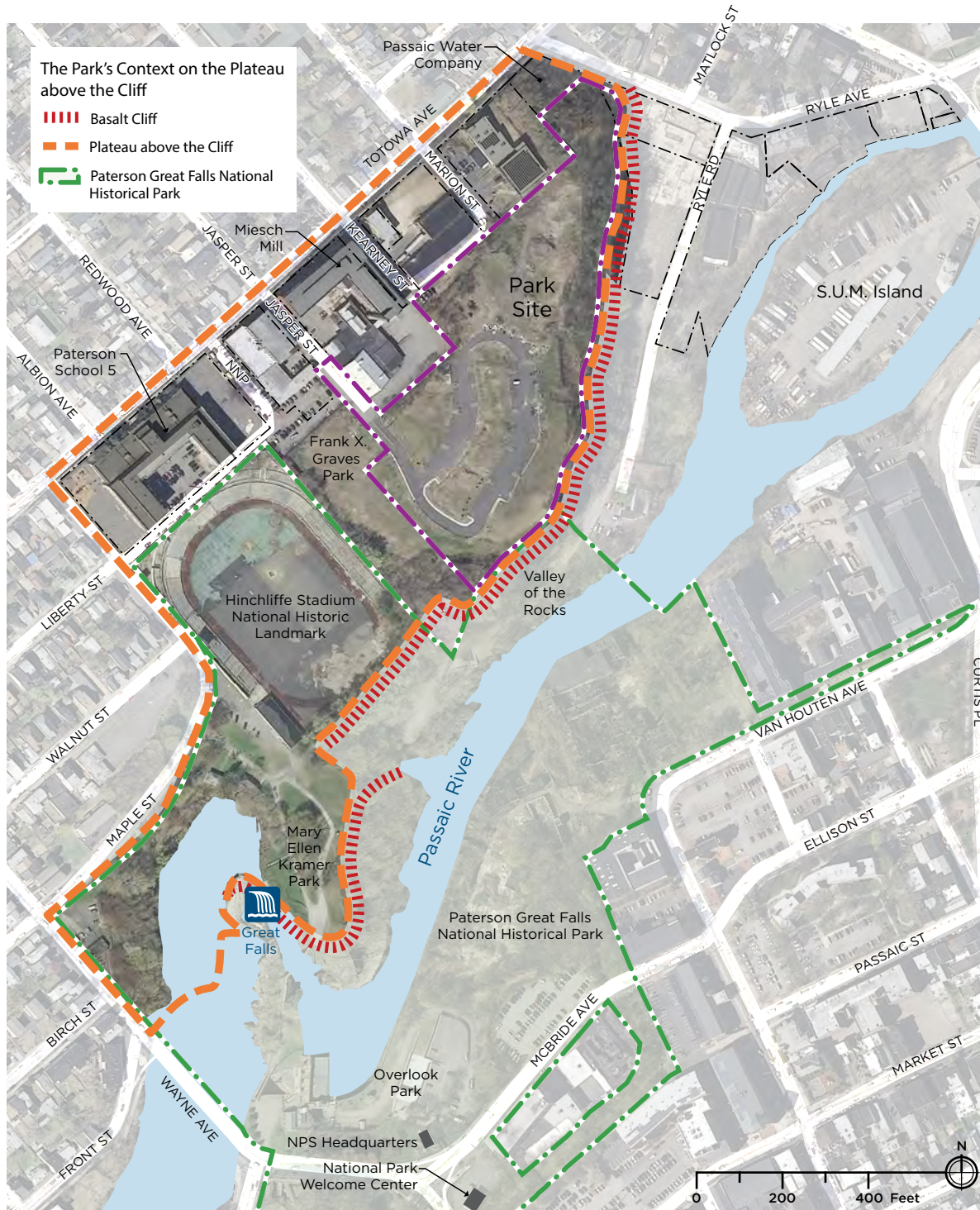
Vista Park—as the park is called for now—will be a partnership park, building on the model of the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park. Today, the national park has numerous partners who support a variety of park activities and operations, several with agreements with the National Park Service and many that are collaborative with less formal arrangements. At Vista Park, the lead management agency will initially be the city of Paterson, under an agreement with the New Jersey State Park Service, as the landowner. How the long-term partnership could evolve will become more apparent during the next phase of planning for Vista Park, once there is a preferred alternative and work progresses on securing funding for final design and construction.



In 2009, initial development of a condominium project (subsequently removed) revealed the visual prominence of the cliff and plateau from vantage points throughout much of the city, the NHL district, and particularly from Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park.







## VISTA PARK—ITS BOUNDARIES AND ADJOINING LANDOWNERS

Vista Park sits above the Paterson cliff, approximately 1,200 feet downstream of the Great Falls of the Passaic River. The site encompasses 8.4 acres, adjoining land owned by several public and private entities.

Adjoining the site along the cliff edge and along its east and west boundaries is open space owned by the city of Paterson. Along the east boundary, the site has approximately 40 feet of frontage on Ryle Avenue. Along the northwest boundary are parcels owned by the Paterson School Board, three private industrial landowners, the Passaic Water Commission, and the city of Paterson (within the Jasper, Kearney and Marion Streets rights-of-way).

### Current Management of the Park

The city of Paterson has assumed management of Vista Park for a period of five years, effective August 3, 2017. A management and use agreement between the city and the New Jersey State Park Service addresses general use of the property, general management, improvements, hazardous substances, regulatory compliance, signs, and other concerns. Some of the more salient requirements of the city for management include the following:

- promote maximum public use
- provide routine public maintenance
- maintain existing and future trails
- provide security
- make improvements, including a comfort station, a vista walk, and a parking area
- control invasive plants

Prior to making any improvements on the property, the city must submit an improvement plan to the state for review and approval.

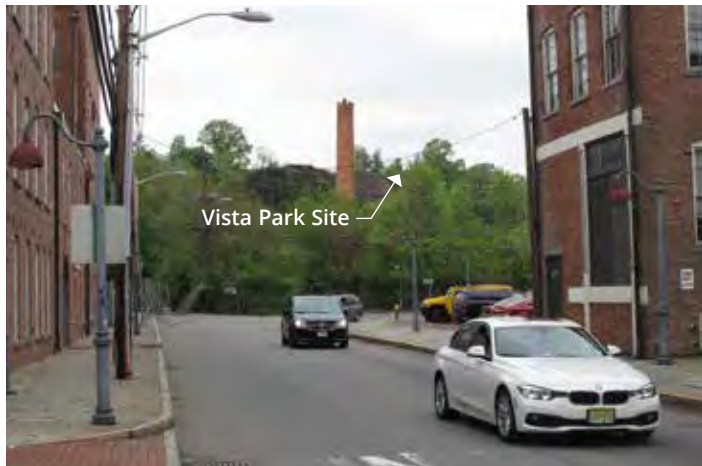


## PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

The purposes of the Vista Park Master Plan are:

- to explore alternative concepts for how Vista Park will provide a safe and sustainable outdoor learning and recreation experience for city residents, as well as for visitors to Paterson Great Falls National Historic Park and the Great Falls of the Passaic/S.U.M. National Historic Landmark District
- to ensure that the views of the city from Great Falls National Historical Park—which are fundamental to the reasons for which Congress established the park as a unit of the national park system—are protected from adverse impacts
- to ensure that the setting of the Great Falls of the Passaic/S.U.M. National Historic Landmark District is protected from adverse impacts
- to preserve and enhance the natural and cultural resources and values of the Vista Park property

The plan is needed to provide a management framework for the partners to move forward with opening the park for public use and for accomplishing the long-term vision for the park.



From top:

Industrial buildings adjoining Vista Park on its northwest boundary.

View from Mill Street in the national park and NHL district.

Left:

View down the Passaic River corridor from McBride Avenue sidewalk, above Overlook Park in Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park and the Great Falls of the Passaic/S.U.M. National Historic Landmark (NHL) District.

## PLANNING PROCESS

The Vista Park Planning Team developed four alternative concepts for Vista Park. To develop the alternatives for future use and management of the park, a design team composed of landscape architects and planners, hired through the National Park Service, assisted the planning team, gathering and analyzing necessary background information, meeting with partners individually, facilitating planning workshops with the full planning team, and synthesizing input.

The Vista Park Planning Team is composed of public agency partners that have expressed an interest in the future use and management of Vista Park:

- The state of New Jersey, as the property owner, has ultimate responsibility for how the property will be used and managed. The New Jersey State Park Service is the lead agency for planning and is responsible for overseeing management of the property. The New Jersey Green Acres Program, the entity responsible for providing funds to acquire the property, has an interest in the property as a new component of the urban park system that the state has supported through several projects in the city of Paterson.
- The city of Paterson has assumed management responsibility for the property through July of 2022, in accordance with the terms of a management and use agreement with the state. Much of the property is also within the Paterson Great Falls National Historic Landmark District, an area which the city has committed to preserve and protect as a resource of significance to the city.
- Passaic County is committed to working with the city and the state to expand and enhance the network of parks in Paterson. The county has made available open space funds for initial improvements to the Vista Park property.
- Paterson Public Schools is interested in using the park for educational programming and owns the nearby Hinchliffe Stadium property, through which potential trail access to the park would occur.
- In partnership with the city of Paterson, the National Park Service manages the adjoining Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park (NHP) and has an interest in what happens at the Vista Park property because views from the park of the cliff, and the plateau above them at Vista Park, are values that are fundamental to the park and, as such, are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

Several stakeholders joined the Vista Park Planning Team including representatives of the Ramapough Lunaape Nation, the Hamilton Partnership, and the New Jersey Community Development Corporation.



The Vista Park Planning Team meets on-site to discuss options for future development of the park.

## PLANNING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Issues

**Protecting Views from the National Park.** Views from Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park are fundamental to the national park (NPS 2015). As fundamental resources, the views must be protected because they are essential to achieving the purpose for which Congress established the park and to maintaining the park's national significance. From Overlook Park—a focal point within the national park—visitors have unobstructed views of the new park site from many vantage points. Pedestrians walking the sidewalks within the national park also have unobstructed views of the new park site from many vantage points. A primary reason for acquisition of the new park site by the state of New Jersey was to protect the national park from potential adverse impacts that could result from future development of the park site, such as the housing project proposed in 2015. Future development of the new park site must consider how the proposed visitor uses and facilities could affect views from the national park. Visitor facilities at the new park site should be set back from the cliff edge so that they are not visible from below. Nighttime lighting should also not be visible from below.

**Offering a New Visitor Experience that Complements Experiences at Other Parks.** The new park adjoins places in the national park where investments are underway or in various stages of design or construction to enhance public open space and offer new visitor experiences. These include Mary Ellen Kramer Park, Hinchliffe Stadium, Overlook Park, and the area immediately downstream of Overlook Park. The new park on the plateau should complement and not repeat the same type of open space and visitor experiences that are emerging for these areas. The park design must offer local residents and visitors to the national park an experience that draws people to the place to be in the outdoors, to play, to exercise, and to learn. An imperative is to create a park that will be used.

**Offering a Safe Visitor Experience.** Opportunities to experience the vistas from the new park site will attract visitors of all ages to the edge of the 80-foot cliff overlooking the city of Paterson. Treatment of the cliff edge must enable visitors to safely experience the view, including barriers to prevent accidental falls and to deter thrill seekers from getting as close as possible to the cliff edge where unstable conditions could exist or where they could slip and fall.

**Offering a Secure Visitor Experience.** Security at the new park site must ensure that visitors are protected from criminal activity. Park design should enable local law enforcement to patrol all areas of the park, preferably from a vehicle. If possible, the park's principal pedestrian walkways should accommodate law enforcement vehicles. Park hours of operation and lighting should consider how visitors would best be protected from criminal activity.



Issue: Visitors will be drawn to the cliff edge to take in the views, posing a safety hazard that must be mitigated by a secure yet attractive barrier.



Issue: The terrain adjoining Ryle Avenue is rugged and steep; a trail up to the plateau will require steps and switchbacks.

**Connecting to the Local Community.** People living or working within walking distance of the park will be its primary repeat visitors. Currently, city residents in the adjoining Totowa neighborhood have few parks within walking distance of their home or workplace. The new park will be a tremendous opportunity for these people to exercise, rest, and relax. However, many are unaware of the park because it is hidden on top of the plateau, obstructed from view by the steep wooded hillside, the large-scale buildings on Totowa Avenue, and Hinchliffe Stadium. Multiple points of pedestrian access to the park, along with wayfinding signage, are needed to help people become aware of the park and to access it on foot.

**Walking to and from the National Park.** Currently, there are no paths that connect the new park site with the national park at Mary Ellen Kramer Park or via Ryle Avenue and the Valley of the Rocks below. Safe pathway/trail connections are needed so that visitors seeking a longer more strenuous walking experience can walk to and from Overlook Park below the Great Falls.

**Finding the Park from Outside the Local Community.** Visitors from beyond the local neighborhood—particularly those from out-of-town who are visiting the national park—will have to navigate a complex network of congested city streets to reach Totowa Avenue. Once on Totowa Avenue, congestion and many visual distractions make finding the park entrance from Jasper Street a challenge. Jasper Street is narrow and obstructed due to the large mass of the Miesch Mill. Wayfinding signage and a clearly visible entrance onto Jasper Street from Totowa Avenue would assist those arriving by private vehicle with finding the park.

**Limiting Uses to Passive Recreation.** A recurring problem in some city parks is evolution of active recreation uses in spaces designed for passive use. In particular, pick-up soccer has taken over some park spaces, changing the character and intensity of the intended park use and precluding use of some parks by a broader range of residents. Care should be taken to design the open spaces in the new park to limit the potential for passive spaces to become popular for pick-up field sports.

**Managing Parking.** The state of New Jersey acquired the new park site for park purposes and seeks to limit the amount of parking on the property to what is needed for the anticipated program of passive recreation uses. The park site currently has a lower parking area (54 spaces) and an upper parking area (75 spaces), which when combined consume much of the land available for park use. The total 129 spaces exceed what is needed at the park.

In the future, if Hinchliffe Stadium is rehabilitated and reopened with 10,000 seats there will be a shortage of parking in the Totowa Avenue area. This demand could be met, in part, by using parking at the new park site.



Issue and Opportunity: Connections from Vista Park to Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park will require trail construction across adjoining lands owned by the city, Paterson Schools, and the National Park Service. Shown here is a potential trail connection along the Hinchliffe Stadium outfield fence.



Issue: The park entrance is difficult to find, especially when Totowa Avenue is congested during peak travel times, such as arrival and departure hours at the adjoining Paterson Elementary School 5.



Issue: Today, the meadow on the plateau is an open field with no mature trees for shade.

**Providing Shade.** The park site offers little protection from the sun. If play and outdoor exercise are a primary park emphasis, then park design should incorporate structures and landscape plantings that would provide shade.

**Managing the Park over the Short-Term.** Implementation of the master plan will take many years given current funding constraints. It could be five years before the partners can build anything. During that time, management needs to focus on providing some type of visitor experience so that the property does not remain empty and devoid of visitor use, beyond the current regular use of the site by teenagers from adjoining neighborhoods.

**Financing Future Management over the Long-Term.** Long-term maintenance of the property will be a recurring challenge. The New Jersey State Park Service does not have funds to maintain the property. Passaic County has provided Open Space Trust funds, including nearly \$100,000 to cover the costs of minor improvements outlined in the current management and use agreement for 2017 and 2018. The city has also contributed some funding. Future management strategies for Vista Park should seek creative options to reduce maintenance costs.

**Ensuring that the Park is Attractive to the City of Paterson.** Responsibility for future park management will continue to be with the city of Paterson. Moving forward, the city will bear a large burden in keeping the park open. The city's interest in doing that is uncertain until the new mayor has a chance to become more familiar with the project. The city is committed to investing in the raceway restoration and other areas of the national park. It is not clear where the new park on the cliff will fall in the priorities.

All aspects of funding and future use and management of the new park need to be flushed out, without construction documents and all the next steps. The city does not want another ATP Site that languishes for years and the city does not want to duplicate opportunities that are available elsewhere.

## Opportunities

**Vista Points.** For decades during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the plateau above the Passaic River was a hilltop destination for the local community and visitors from outside the area who came to see the Great Falls. The vistas from the edge of the 145-foot high cliffs drew people to the site then as they do today.

**Open Space.** The 8.4 acres of open space is a place of peace and quiet surrounded by the city's densely developed urban landscape. The large tract of open space offers an opportunity to create an outdoor recreation space where visitors once again could explore the plateau above the falls for a variety of outdoor recreation activities and relax with family and friends.



Opportunity: Since people began visiting the plateau above the Great Falls, the cliff has drawn them to its edge to view the landscape below—a landscape that has evolved from the native forest seen by Native Americans, to the city of Paterson and distant Manhattan skyline that we see today. (photo: G. Archimede)

**Existing Site Improvements.** Existing site improvements are available which if incorporated into the new site design would reduce public investment needed to develop the park. These include an entrance road, parking, sewer, water, electric, and telephone.

**Ruins of the Middle Reservoir Wall.** Ruins of the Middle Reservoir Wall remain in the southwest corner of the park site. These provide tangible evidence of the site's history as a place where technology once sustained a growing city and could anchor how the story of the Passaic Water Company—one of America's early public water companies—is told to visitors.

**Spoil Mounds.** Two spoil mounds rising twenty feet above the adjoining area could be incorporated into an adventure playground for older kids that includes long embankment slide sets and climbing features built into the existing terrain.

**Pedestrian Points of Entry from the Adjoining Community.** Public rights-of-way adjoining the park from which pedestrian access could occur include Jasper Street, Kearney Street, Marion Street and Ryle Avenue. In addition, the entire southwest property line adjoins public land within the Frank X. Graves Park, owned by the city of Paterson. Several of these locations would require construction of steps or a switchback trail.

**Potential Trail Connections to the National Park.** From the southwest corner of the park site a potential trail through the adjoining Frank X. Graves Park would link to the area outside the outfield fence at Hinchliffe Stadium, with further extension to Mary Ellen Kramer Park. Steep terrain in one location would require more complex trail construction, perhaps including steps or a few short switchbacks.



Opportunity: Middle Reservoir ruins offer the opportunity to tell the story of how the river, and local topography shaped by the river, enabled the Passaic Water Company to provide water to the growing nineteenth century city of Paterson. (photo: G. Archimede)



Opportunity: Marion Street and Kearney Street offer additional opportunities for pedestrian connections to the park.



Opportunity: Spoil mounds on the park site offer landforms that can be incorporated into park features, such as an adventure playground



## RELATED PLANS AND PROJECTS

Several plans have influenced or would be influenced by the plan for Vista Park. The following text briefly describes some of these plans and their relationship to the plan for Vista Park.

### Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park General Management Plan (GMP)

The Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park General Management Plan (GMP), finalized in 2016, establishes the overall management direction for the national park for the foreseeable future. It is the park's first GMP and provides the framework for guiding resource management, visitor experience, facilities and partnerships. During preparation of the GMP, the NPS consulted frequently and on an ongoing basis with federal, state and local agencies, tribes, partners, interested and affected parties, and the general public. The final plan, selected after considering three alternatives and comments received from the public, has four guiding principles (NPS 2016a):

- **Visitors will actively explore the entire park,** enjoying its natural resources and cultural landscapes for contemporary recreational pursuits while learning about how those resources fueled America's early industrial development. A multisensory experience will highlight connections among the natural world, the power and beauty of the scenic falls and the Passaic River, and Paterson's innovative role in the evolution of American industry and manufacturing. Natural and cultural landscapes will offer enhanced opportunities for scenic views, recreation, learning through interpretive and educational programs, and community building through special events.
- **Expanded visitor facilities and interpretive programming within the scenic falls and river area** will encourage a wide range of visitor activities focused on actively exploring the Passaic River corridor. The park's primary visitor contact station



will be in Overlook Park. The setting and exteriors of historic structures associated with hydropower production will be preserved and maintained in good condition. Natural resource management will focus on water quality and flow management, protection of geologic resources, preservation of the riparian forest, and protection of scenic views.

- **The raceway technology that supported Alexander Hamilton's vision for America's first planned industrial city** will be the focus of the visitor experience in the historic district. The NPS will provide technical assistance and collaborate with partners to explore options to rehabilitate and re-water all elements of the raceway system as a functional historic raceway landscape, where feasible. Natural areas in Upper Raceway Park and in areas adjacent to rehabilitated elements of the raceway system will be enhanced through removal of invasives and replanting with native plant species.
- **Collaborative efforts of NPS and partners** will rehabilitate the former Allied Textile Printing site as a community recreation area and provide greater access to the Passaic River. Green space, gardens, paths and innovative interpretive areas will be developed for fun, physical activity, relaxation and events. The Colt Gun Mill will be rehabilitated and select features of remaining structures and portions of select mill factories and ruins will be made safe and preserved as landscape features reflecting the site's industrial history or for interpretive purposes and other visitor uses.

The GMP also establishes four management areas within the national park and prescribes for each the desired future conditions and types of visitor experience/opportunities that NPS will seek to achieve.

Vista Park borders the national park at the top of the cliff and is clearly visible from many areas within the national park. The GMP identifies the views of lands adjoining the park—including the Vista Park site—as resources that are fundamental to the national park. One of the most important responsibilities of NPS managers is to ensure the conservation and public enjoyment of the park's fundamental resources that are essential to achieving the park's purpose and maintaining its significance. What happens at Vista Park in the future must be considered in the context of its potential to affect the national park's fundamental resources—either beneficially or adversely.

Land within the national park bordering Vista Park is within the Scenic Falls and River Management Area described in the GMP. The GMP summarizes the desired future conditions and visitor experience/opportunities within this area. Vista Park provides a buffer of protected open space/recreational land on the plateau directly above the national park's riparian forest downstream of the falls. Future management of Vista Park should seek to be compatible with and complement the management framework as adopted by NPS for the national park for the Scenic Falls and River Management Area.

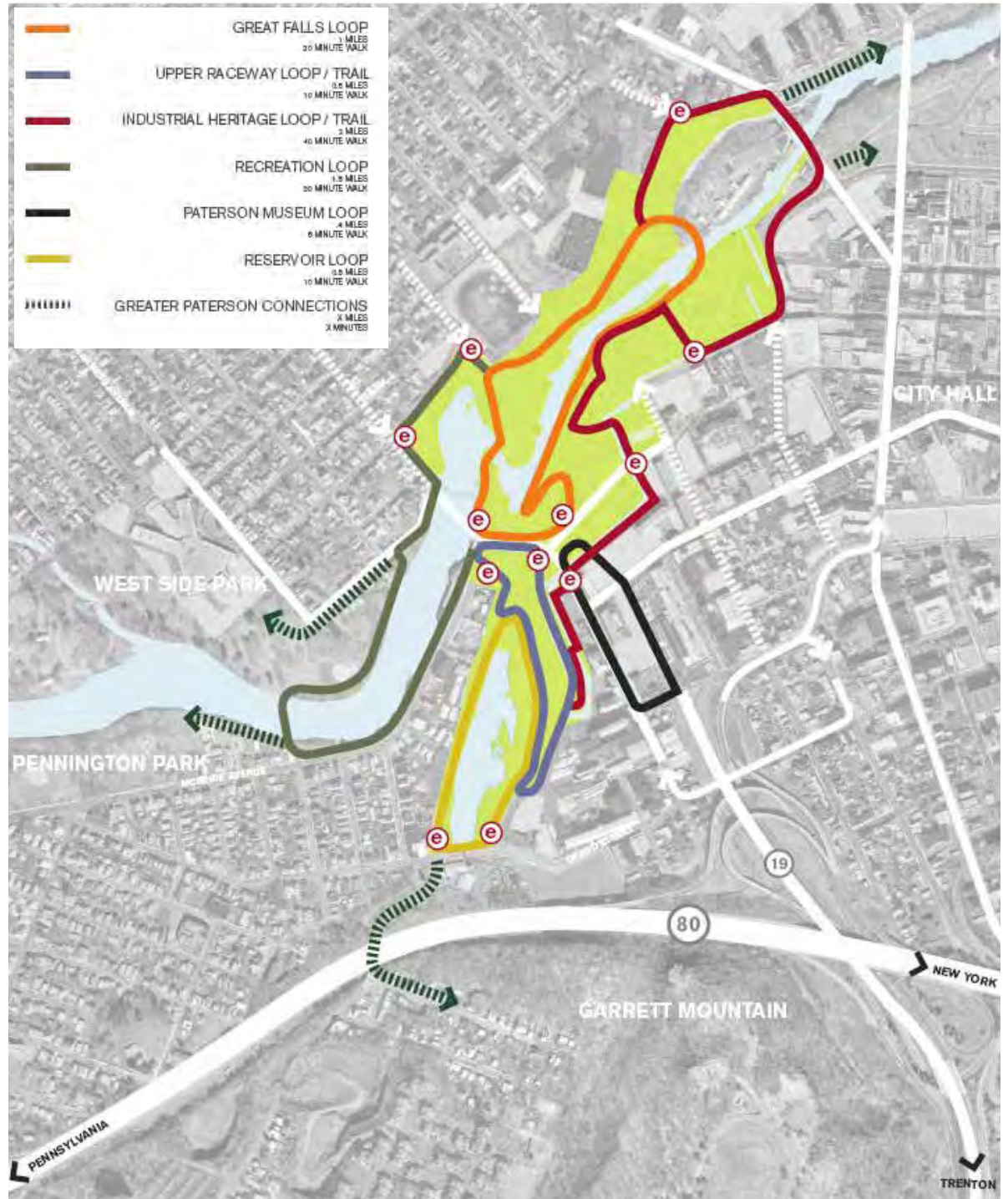
## Great Falls State Park Plan

The *Great Falls State Park Master Plan* (NJ DEP 2008) is the result of a design competition initiated by the state of New Jersey when the area now known as Paterson Great Falls NHP was a state park. The plan provides a general overview of the resources located within the park and outlines opportunities for redevelopment of the state park. The GMP for the national historical park incorporates some of the ideas from the state park plan. The *City of Paterson Master Plan* (Paterson 2014) states that, although never officially adopted by the state, the state park master plan presents several good recommendations for development and heritage tourism in the Great Falls area.

A primary concept from the state park master plan that remains popular with planners today is the trail network composed of six interconnected loops that provide passive recreation opportunities throughout the city's Great Falls Historic District. The Vista Park site adjoins areas where the plan proposed two loops:

- the **Great Falls Loop**, which would begin at the Great Falls Overlook and follow the Passaic River along the ATP site, and cross the river via a new pedestrian bridge to the Valley of the Rocks, and wind its way back through Mary Ellen Kramer Park
- the **Industrial Heritage Loop**, which would follow the Middle Raceway from the Lower Raceway behind Spruce Street, towards industrial heritage sites such as the ATP/Colt Gun Mill site, and several other mills. The path would then cross the Passaic River on West Broadway and connect with the Great Falls Loop.

The Vista Park site adjoins the original Great Falls State Park—today the national park—and offers an opportunity to create an additional loop trail that would take visitors from the plateau overlooking the river and the city, down to the river itself, where they would walk along its banks, experiencing its sounds and smells in a completely different setting, and then back up to the plateau.



## City of Paterson Master Plan

The city's recent master plan (Paterson 2014) provides a guiding vision for development and growth of the city. The plan identifies regulations for land development, design, and zoning, as well as goals for economic development. A general goal of the plan is "making recommendations regarding revisions to the city's current policies and ordinances regarding land use, housing, transportation, economic development, parks, and sustainability measures."

At the time the city prepared the master plan, the Vista Park site above the cliff was vacant, and plans to develop luxury townhomes on the property had recently failed. The city assumed that the property would likely remain in private ownership and envisioned it as one of three opportunity sites in the area immediately downstream of the falls, including Hinchliffe Stadium, S.U.M. Island, and the Vista Park site. The master plan offers two potential uses for the Vista Park site (Paterson 2014):

- A hotel and conference center are currently proposed as a concept for this site. The proposal calls for a large hotel and conference center to overlook the Great Falls and the city. The site is large enough to accommodate a hotel, and in a picturesque location. However, transportation access improvements may be needed to make the site more feasible as a hotel/conference center. Portions of the site could also be used as parking for Hinchliffe Stadium.
- Another potential use for this property would be to utilize this area as additional open space and recreation area around the Great Falls.

## Greater Spruce Street Neighborhood Plan

The New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC) completed the Greater Spruce Street Neighborhood Plan (NJCDC 2009) to investigate opportunities and potential for revitalizing the neighborhood surrounding Spruce Street and including Paterson Great Falls NHP and Vista Park. The plan generally seeks to identify actions needed to improve the desirability of Greater Spruce Street as a place to live, work, visit, and do business. Recommendations focus on empowering the community, encouraging lifelong learning, enhancing housing opportunities, restoring productivity, restoring parks and open spaces and adding more parks and open spaces particularly for play, improving the transportation system for all modes of travel, and strengthening identity and heightening awareness of the area.

At the time NJCDC completed the plan, planners assumed that the Vistas at the Great Falls housing project would move forward at the park site. As a result, the plan does not include any specific recommendations pertaining to the Vista Park site. Now that the site is to become a park, the open space and environmental conditions recommendations of the plan are more applicable. In this regard, the plan stresses the need for more and better play spaces for youth of all ages and creation of productive community green spaces.



The Greater Spruce Street Neighborhood Plan suggests use of Frank X. Graves Park, adjoining Vista Park, as a potential parking area for the future rehabilitated Hinchliffe Stadium.

The plan recognizes the importance of restoring Hinchliffe Stadium to provide the community with a needed venue for large-scale sporting events, as well as an additional field for school recreation programs and local sports team practices. The plan notes that providing parking for 10,000 seats is key to the stadium's future use. Among the plan's recommendations is possible use of nearby existing parking areas or vacant parcels for stadium parking, including the land bordering Vista Park within Frank X. Graves Park. The plan does not recommend possible use of Vista Park for Hinchliffe Stadium parking.

### Passaic County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan

The *Passaic County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan* (Passaic County 2014) presents recommendations for improvements to the Passaic County Park System and a vision for its future. While it does not specifically address use and management of Vista Park, the plan does provide the basis for management, maintenance, and improvements of county parks. These should be considered in the planning for the new park in Paterson.

#### Passaic County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan—Statement of Goals and Objectives

##### 1. Improve the quality of life of Passaic County residents.

- a. Facilitate access for all county residents to the Passaic County Park System.
- b. Provide a diversity of active and passive recreation opportunities.
- c. Promote active and passive recreation programs and facilities for the improved health of county residents.
- d. Focus efforts and resources to achieve a park system that is consistently clean, safe, and well maintained.
- e. Protect Passaic County's air and water resources, flora and fauna, and other important environmental features.
- f. Promote the use and availability of the park system to educate residents on the rich history and distinct natural and cultural resources within Passaic County.
- g. Provide sufficient assets in land, staffing, and equipment to accomplish the system's mission and achieve the vision.

##### 2. Increase the accessibility of the Passaic County Park System.

- a. Improve all county park, recreation and open space areas to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- b. Coordinate with public bus service and other carriers to facilitate access to county park, recreation and open space areas.
- c. Develop linkages between key areas of the Passaic County Park System, and partner to link the county park, recreation and open space areas with federal, state and municipal park and open space systems.
- d. Encourage municipalities to develop bicycle and pedestrian facilities that link residential areas with park, recreation and open space areas.
- e. Provide appropriate bicycle facilities, such as secure bike parking, in appropriate areas of the Passaic County Park System.
- f. Provide information to the public through a variety of suitable media on the available programs, events, and recreational opportunities offered by the Passaic County Park System.

##### 3. Improve communication and outreach.

- a. Maintain an ongoing planning and community involvement process.
- b. Provide users of park, recreation and open space areas with a facilitated means of communicating information (e.g., maintenance issues, facility needs, suggestions) with Passaic County.
- c. Open new channels of communication on park system facilities and offerings through use of the Internet, mobile applications, television, radio, and other technology.

##### 4. Improve the Passaic County Park System as a tool for economic development.

- a. Attract regional visitors by promoting the park, recreation and open space areas of the Passaic County Park System as destinations for day trips and tourists in the metropolitan area.
- b. Hold festivals and other special events within areas of the Passaic County Park System.

##### 5. Manage the Passaic County Park System as a key means for promoting the county's rich heritage and educating the public.

- a. Promote Dey Mansion, the Lambert Castle Museum, and other historic sites within the Passaic County Park System to increase visitation and raise awareness of the county's rich history.
- b. Provide guide signs to direct visitors to historic sites in and around the park, recreation and open space areas.
- c. Provide interpretive signage near historic sites located in the park, recreation and open space areas, and at strategic locations in Olmsted Brothers-designed areas.
- d. Coordinate with transit service to provide high-quality service within proximity to major historic sites.

## Passaic County Tourism Plan

The *Heritage Tourism Element of the Passaic County Master Plan* (Passaic County 2013) identifies actions needed for preservation, transportation, education, interpretation, and recreation planning to connect historically significant sites throughout the county. Major attractions in the county near Vista Park that are open for visitors include Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park and Paterson Museum. While Hinchliffe Stadium is included within the list of major attractions it is not addressed specifically in the plan because it is not currently open for visitors. Totowa Avenue is not recognized as a component of the Passaic County Byway Network so none of the recommendations pertaining to byways are applicable to the Vista Park area.

The plan's recommendations pertaining to the county's recreation and open space are generally applicable to Vista Park. The overarching strategy is to "use recreational resources and activities as a means to engage residents, attract visitors, reach out to young people, and interpret the County's heritage" (Passaic County 2013). Key recommended actions include:

- feature recreational resources as a key set of attractions within the county
- interpret and enhance trail systems
- work with communities to develop urban walking and biking trails
- support the implementation of interpretive exhibits and programming in county and local parks
- develop trail information online and through social media
- emphasize heritage and natural history programming for young people
- support events that feature recreational resources emphasizing heritage and natural history themes

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VISTA PARK MASTER PLAN

# HISTORY OF THE PARK SITE OWNERSHIP AND LAND USE

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# HISTORY OF THE PARK SITE OWNERSHIP AND LAND USE

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For centuries, the Great Falls of the Passaic River in Paterson have attracted visitors wanting to see the falls, to experience the power of the river, and to take in its sounds and smells. For centuries, the river has also sustained the community that grew up along its shores, providing power to fuel the economy and water for drinking. In the late 1700s, a tradition of recreational use emerged at the top of the falls, and on the plateau overlooking the falls, that continues today. Unknown to most current city residents, during the late 1800s and early 1900s, water drawn from the river filled a network of small reservoirs on the plateau, enhancing the recreation experience while also storing water for drinking and fire protection needed by the growing city of Paterson.

## PREHISTORIC ERA

Archeological evidence confirms that during prehistoric times, Native Americans visited and used the Great Falls area and adjoining Passaic River corridor, naming the area “Totowa” (Shriner 1890). At the time of European settlement, the Unami branch of the Lenape known as the Hackensacks occupied the area (Lewis et al 2012). Legends say that Native Americans fished at Bass Rock in the Valley of the Rocks and drove deer over Deer Leap Rock, a narrow ridge of land that was likely between today’s upper raceway (west of McBride Avenue) and the Passaic River (Nelson and Shriner 1920). The plateau above the cliff likely served as an excellent look-out for Native Americans wanting to observe movement of humans and animals in the Passaic River corridor below (Sergejeff et al 2005). It is unlikely that the plateau with its exposed setting, rock outcrops and limited water would have been the site of permanent or temporary camps (Sergejeff et al 2005).

## 17TH AND 18TH CENTURY

Two Labidist missionaries, guided by an Indian to the Great Falls in 1680, provided the earliest written description of the falls (Rutsch et al 1973). During the ensuing 17th and 18th centuries, the Totowa area remained remarkably unchanged. Marquis de Chastellux, a Frenchman visiting the falls in 1780 described the area in a letter much as it had been described a hundred years earlier (Rutsch et al 1973).

During the 18th century, Dutch-American families held the land along both sides of the Passaic River. The early Dutch settlers were mainly farmers who acquired large land patents from England and the New Jersey Proprietors (Rutsch et al 1973). The Totowa Patent of 1710 granted

Opposite page:

View of the Falls of the Passaic Painted by Paul Sandby in 1764 (describing the falls as between eighty and ninety feet in height and about eighty yards wide). (photo: Paterson Historic Preservation Commission)

to George Wilcox the land north of the Passaic River from "...the Passaic River back to the hills from Hamburg Avenue and northwest three and one-quarter miles to about opposite the mouth of the Peckamin River" (Rutsch et al 1973). Wilcox split the land into 100-acre tracts, giving or selling it to his family and friends. The colonists grew wheat, built the first planned road in 1707 to connect Dundee Lake and Pompton, and built a grist mill on S.U.M. Island in 1711. The population grew slowly.

By 1754, the land encompassing Vista Park had passed from George Wilcox to Anthony Brockholst to Henry Brockholst to Reverend David Marinus (Sergejeff et al 2005). Marinus was the first pastor of the Dutch Reform Church in Totowa, who owned the property until at least 1791. Because of the rocky terrain and numerous exposures of basalt bedrock, it is unlikely that much, if any, agricultural use occurred at the top of the cliff at the park site during the colonial period (Sergejeff et al 2005).

## REVOLUTIONARY WAR YEARS

During the American Revolution, the New Jersey Highlands northwest of Paterson offered a secure refuge from which the American army could base raids into the rest of New Jersey, as well as attack British naval movements on the Hudson River. The high ground along Garret Mountain and above the Passaic River provided lookout posts. Washington's encampments were located on the plains above the Passaic River, near Vista Park but not actually on it (Rutsch 1973). In Totowa, revolutionary forces used the level land above the river for training—land now occupied by Mary Ellen Kramer Park and Hinchliffe Stadium—which became locally known as the "Parade Ground" (Rutsch 1973).

## EARLY 19TH CENTURY

The plateau above the cliffs generally remained undeveloped throughout the early 19th century. Only the area adjoining the top of the falls changed, as tourists visiting the Great Falls arrived in increasing numbers, drawn to both the top and bottom of the falls. In 1827, Timothy Crane opened "Forest Garden", as a public "pleasure garden" for the residents of Paterson and its visitors, likely encompassing the land on the plateau at the top of Great Falls and the Parade Ground. Crane built the first bridge over the falls chasm to provide access to Forest Garden. He cleared the site and improved it with gravel walkways and landscaping, and constructed a tavern, an outdoor restaurant, and facilities for outdoor performances. While Forest Garden was clearly a commercial enterprise designed to make money, Crane apparently believed he was improving the landscape of his community and offering his neighbors, a large portion of whom were first-generation American millworkers, an opportunity to experience the natural beauty of the falls and the views (Geismar 2014). Public reaction to Forest Garden was mixed. Some felt it a "delightful scene of social gaiety and interesting contemplation" while many of Paterson's mill



Freeman, U.W. *Map of the Town of Paterson, New Jersey*. 1835. Retraced by the Works Progress Administration. Scale: 1 inch = 625 feet (approximately). Vista Park site outlined in red. (Sergejeff et al 2005)

and factory hands felt it was meant only for the elite, citing the one-cent toll required for using the new bridge (Geismar 2014). Crane operated Forest Garden until 1839.

In 1847, after the tavern at Forest Garden had remained vacant for eight years, Peter Archdeacon acquired the property. Archdeacon expanded the facilities, opened a small museum, improved the gardens, and took advantage of several natural springs on the property to create a small lake. The museum had on display Native American artifacts collected from the Great Falls area and Passaic River corridor, described in promotional literature as including "stone axes, chisels, corn-pounders, gougers, knives, and arrow tips, all of stone or silica, many of which are in a good state of preservation" (Geismar 2014). Renamed the "Cottage on the Cliff", the property remained a well-known tourist attraction for twenty more years.

Elsewhere on the plateau, land records from 1840 indicate that Abraham Godwin and Van Houten owned most of the land on the northwest side of the Passaic River, downstream of the Cottage on the Cliff, including the Vista Park site. Both families were long-time residents of the community, owning property in the area beginning in the mid-18th century. In 1840, there was no discernible use of the park site (Fries 2006).

A small cemetery owned by the Second Reformed Dutch Church of Totowa was established around 1850 on what became the south side of Liberty Street.

### THE PASSAIC WATER COMPANY YEARS (1850 TO 1908)

Land use on the plateau began to shift dramatically in the early 1850s when John Ryle purchased the Cottage on the Cliff and Parade Ground from Archdeacon, as well as most of the land extending downstream from the Cottage on the Cliff to Totowa Road. Ryle bought the Cottage on the Cliff and surrounding land with the intention to develop infrastructure for a new public water system for the growing city of Paterson, as well as to create a public park at the Great Falls and an estate for his family on the cliff closer to Totowa Road. Ryle set in motion his plan for Paterson's water system, a public improvement project that unfolded over thirty years from 1855 to 1885.

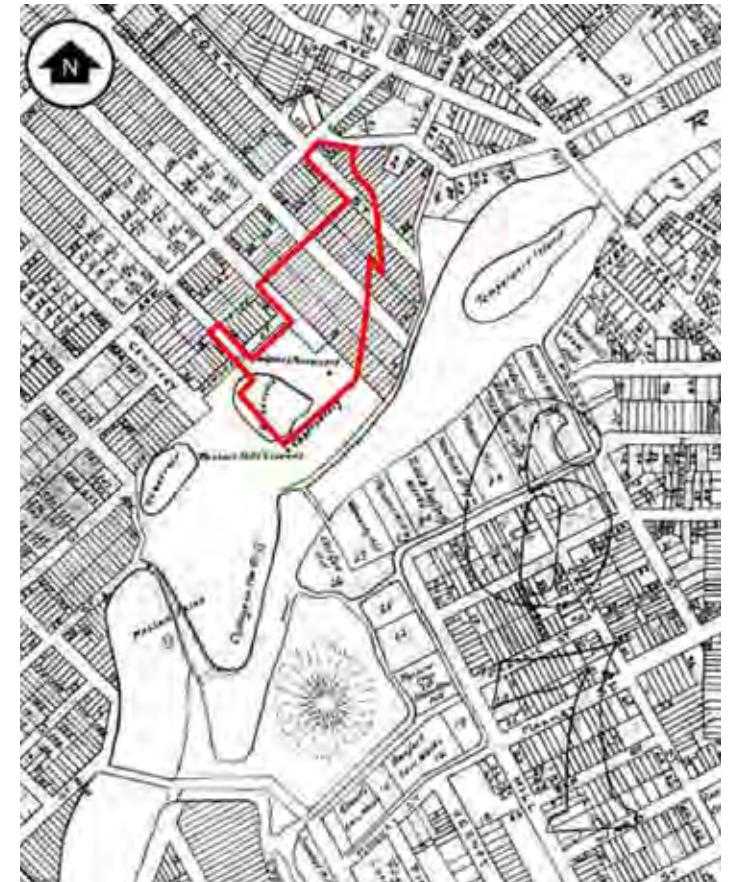
An enlightened industrialist and the "father of Paterson's silk industry", Ryle recognized early on that Paterson needed water not only for industrial purposes to serve Paterson's mills on the south side of the river, but also for fire protection and to satisfy the household needs of city residents (Sergejeff et al 2005).

**Passaic Water Company Phase I (1850 to 1860).** From 1850 through 1857, Ryle was the driving force behind establishment of the Passaic Water Company and the first phase of its development. Ryle's capital, mill facilities, and property were instrumental in establishing the

basic infrastructure required to extract water from the river, store it in reservoirs, and then distribute it via a system of pipes to city residents and businesses (Sergejeff et al 2005). Through Ryle's various land holdings on either side of the river, the Passaic Water Company was able to withdraw water from the river downstream of the Great Falls, independent of the Society for Useful Manufacture (S.U.M.); from this location, withdrawals did not affect the supply of water power needed to drive the city's mills.

With engineering assistance from Thomas D. Hoxsey, an original subscriber to the Passaic Water Company's stock, Ryle completed the first phase of water system development, including securing rights to water in the Passaic River (below the falls), installation of pumping equipment, development of storage capacity, and installation of a network of mains to distribute water. Around 1852 Ryle created the Lower or First Reservoir by enlarging the small spring-fed lake, created by Peter Archdeacon on the Parade Ground, to a reservoir with five-million-gallon capacity. Hydro-powered and steam-driven pumping equipment was installed on the river, behind the Colt Gun Mill. At night, the equipment withdrew water and pumped it across the river on a narrow bridge (the "Broomstick Bridge") and 70 feet up to the Lower Reservoir via an 18" pipe installed in a cleft in the cliff face. During the day, when the pump was not operating, gravity forced water from the reservoir back down the cliff to a network of concrete mains that distributed water throughout the city below. Water service commenced to the city south of the river in the fall of 1856 and, a year later, to Paterson's north ward on the northwest side of the river below the falls.

**Passaic Water Company Phase II (1860s and 1870s).** As early as 1860 the demand for water had exceeded the water company's capacity, prompting a plan to move its pumping operations above the Great Falls. In 1862, the company substantially improved the water system by installing a new intake and pumping station at the top of the falls, including a masonry dam to provide an intake basin and installation of a large water turbine to power the pumps located under the lip of the falls, with shafting to the pump house. Water taken from above the falls was pumped through a concrete transmission pipe to the Lower Reservoir. Prior to this time, the S.U.M. had resisted allowing the water company to draw water from above the falls for fear that it would jeopardize the water supply needed for S.U.M.'s industrial hydropower system (Sergejeff et al 2005). The new pumping facilities above the falls greatly simplified the water system's operation and expanded its capacity. While the new intake became the new source of water for filling the reservoirs, the water company retained the Gun Mill steam pump for use during low



From top:

Goetschius, J. H. *Map of Paterson, New Jersey*. 1870. Retraced by the Works Progress Administration. Scale: 1 inch = 500 feet (approximately). Vista Park site outlined in red. (Sergejeff et al 2005)

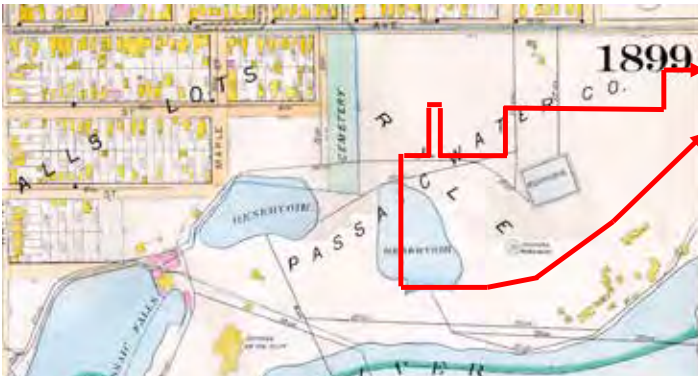
*Bird's Eye View of Paterson, New Jersey*. 1875. Park site outlined in red. (Sergejeff et al 2005)



flow periods when S.U.M. consumed all the river's flow so that no water was released over the dam.

In 1868 the Passaic Water Company completed the Middle or Central Reservoir with a twelve-million-gallon capacity. This enabled the company to store additional supply, reducing potential for service disruptions and increasing water pressure throughout the distribution system. Concurrently, an agreement with the S.U.M. ensured that the Passaic Water Company would have a supply sufficient for its purposes by enabling the company to withdraw water from behind a new higher S.U.M. dam, also built in 1868. The new dam enabled S.U.M. to withdraw a greater volume of water into its industrial power system, as well as ensured that the water company would have enough water to fill its two reservoirs.

In 1872, the Passaic Water Company purchased John Ryle's property on the plateau, encompassing the entire area between the Great Falls and Ryle Avenue (except for the cemetery on Totowa Avenue). The sale occurred shortly after Paterson residents failed to approve a referendum that would have enabled the city to acquire the water company. Ryle was mayor of the city at the time, and the largest shareholder in the company, considered two reasons why the referendum might have failed (Fries 2008). Voters might have also feared the tax implications of placing the water system into public ownership (Fries 2008).



To supply water to the Totowa area, the water company built the Totowa Reservoir on the newly acquired property in 1873. The reservoir enabled the water company to provide water to the rapidly expanding Totowa section of the city. The reservoir had a capacity of 1.5 million gallons and a surface elevation almost 30 feet higher than Middle Reservoir.

In 1880 the water system's three reservoirs had a combined capacity of approximately 18,860,000 gallons, or about three days' supply for the city at maximum use (Fries 2008).

**Passaic Water Company Phase III (1880 to 1908).** Phase III of the Passaic Water Company's development did not affect the water supply facilities and nature of public use on the plateau downstream of the Great Falls. Instead, beginning about 1880 the water company implemented major expansion of storage capacity and pumping capacity affecting the pump house at the top of the falls and land upstream and south of the river. With little room



From top:

View of the Falls and Forest Garden, 1882. (photo: Paterson Historic Preservation Commission)

Robinson, E. *Atlas of the City of Paterson, New Jersey*. 1899. Scale 1 inch = 150'. Vista Park site outlined in red.

View from the Falls of the Passaic River, cliff and plateau, c. 1890 (visible on the plateau are the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, a section of the Middle Reservoir wall, and the Totowa Reservoir wall (Sergejeff et al 2005)). (photo: Paterson Museum)

for expansion of reservoir capacity on the plateau, the water company acquired land for a new reservoir on the southeast side of the river on top of the Watchung Ridge, and two years later completed the Stoney Road Reservoir (today the Stanley M. Levine Reservoir). Simultaneous improvements included expanding the pumping capacity by building a larger pumping plant and raising the height of the dam across the lip of the Great Falls to increase the capacity of the intake pond from about 4 million gallons to 16 million gallons. These combined improvements enabled the water company to meet the city's demand for water into the early 20th century.

**Recreational Uses.** During the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, the tradition of recreational use on the plateau continued. John Ryle, a man with tremendous civic pride, originally planned to expand the public gardens created by Crane and Archdeacon at Forest Garden/Cottage on the Cliff. Ryle's vision for the plateau included a restored and enhanced public park and resort for "working people" at the site of the former Forest Garden/Cottage on the Cliff. The Lower Reservoir was to be a focal point within the park. After acquiring the property, Ryle closed the Cottage on the Cliff and set about rehabilitating the site, personally financing addition of landscaping, night-time gas lighting, statuary, walkways, and "promenades" around the Lower Reservoir. An ice house stored ice taken from the reservoir so that park visitors could enjoy ice cream and cold drinks. Further down the plateau, at the Vista Park site, Ryle intended to build a mansion for his family. Ryle started foundations for the mansion but never completed it due a financial downturn in 1857.

As water system facilities evolved, their design incorporated public walkways providing access to the water's edge around the reservoir perimeter and to the plateau's vistas. An observatory, located near the Middle Reservoir dam, enabled visitors to climb to a higher viewpoint at the edge of the cliff. A wooden staircase, likely near the observatory, enabled visitors to walk directly to and from the river. In 1868, shortly after the Civil War, a 63-foot monument was installed north of Middle Reservoir, at the southeastern end of Kearney Street. The Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument was a memorial to the men of Passaic County who died during the Civil War. The community soon named the plateau around Middle Reservoir "Monument Heights".



Top to bottom:

Images of the Cottage on the Cliff and adjoining Forest Garden area (rehabilitated by John Ryle beginning after he acquired the property in 1857), c. 1870. (photos: Paterson Historic Preservation Commission)

Top, left to right:

Stairs offering park visitors the opportunity to go to and from the river, c.1870. (photo: Paterson Historic Preservation Commission)

Postcard view of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument built in 1868 , c. 1910. (view looking east southeast toward Garret Mountain) (photo: Paterson Historic Preservation Commission)



Bottom, left to right:

(two images on left) Lower Reservoir image from sometime between 1854 and 1877 (prior to its enlargement and reconfiguration) showing its parklike setting and recreational use, as envisioned by John Ryle. (photo: Paterson Historic Preservation Commission)

Paterson residents enjoying Middle Reservoir, c.1880 to 1900. (photos: Paterson Historic Preservation Commission)

Observatory on the overlook viewed from across Middle Reservoir, c.1870. (photo: Paterson Historic Preservation Commission)



## THE 20TH CENTURY

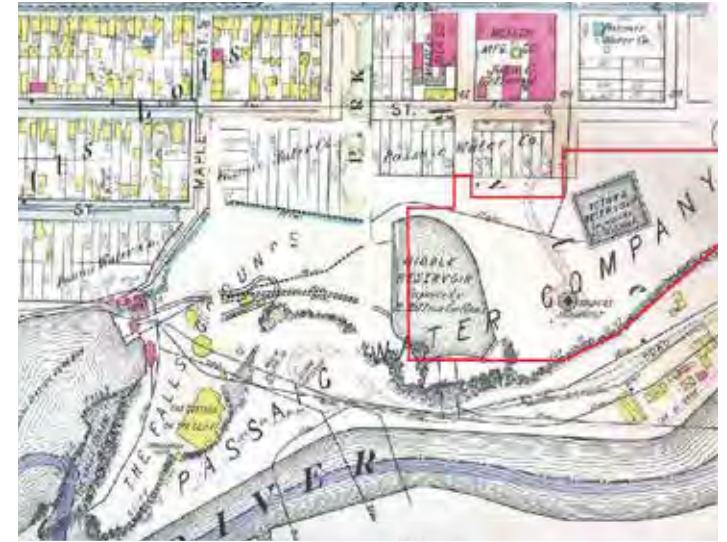
During the 20th century, the Passaic Water Company gradually withdrew from the plateau, removing components of its water system and selling off its real estate. By 1940, the city of Paterson had acquired all the land at the top of the falls and in the adjoining area historically known as the "Parade Ground" and "Forest Garden". The city redeveloped the properties retaining the tradition of recreational use. Meanwhile, the land west of Jasper Street changed dramatically as the Passaic Water Company removed Middle Reservoir and Totowa Reservoir and sold the land, except for a small parcel at the corner of Totowa Avenue and Ryle Avenue. As this land was sold, the tradition of recreational use gradually disappeared, although many local residents continued to visit the land along the cliff despite its being privately-owned and no longer legally open to public use.

**Passaic Water Company Phase IV (1908 to 1970).** At the turn of the century, the Passaic Water Company's concerns shifted from increasing pumping and storage capacity to providing clean potable water. By this time, water taken from the river at the falls was quite polluted, due to its location downstream of numerous industrial and wastewater discharges. In 1899, the water company relocated its main intake at the falls approximately five miles upstream to Little Falls. In 1902, the East Jersey Water Company built a new filtration plant at this location with the world's first large-scale rapid sand filter system (Fries 2008). From 1902 to the mid-1930s, regionalization of the water supply system and absorption of the Passaic Water Company into the Passaic Valley Water Commission gradually eliminated the need for the Passaic Water Company's pumping facilities and reservoirs on the plateau below the falls.

By 1939, many of the buildings at the pumping station complex had been removed, leaving the facility to function primarily as a metering station (Sergejeff 2005). The Lower and Middle Reservoir sites were redeveloped for new recreational uses. Hinchliffe Stadium was built on the site of the Lower Reservoir in 1932. Soon after that, in 1939, Middle Reservoir was removed and the area regraded, although a portion of its brown stone perimeter wall was left in place. At the same time Totowa Reservoir was abandoned, although its entire perimeter wall also left in place. Sometime in the 1950s or 1960s the Totowa Reservoir was filled in.

**Recreational and School Uses.** As the Passaic Water Company sold its land on the plateau the tradition of recreational use continued at the top of the falls and the area adjoining it.

- **Forest Garden Area (Mary Ellen Kramer Park)** From 1903 to 1916, the Passaic Water Company leased its property overlooking the Great Falls, near the former Cottage on the Cliff, for a saloon. Adjoining the saloon, an amusement park was developed in 1908 on the site of the Lower Reservoir; it included a roller coaster, Ferris wheel, miniature railroad, aerial swing, shooting galleries, and dance hall. The S.U.M. acquired the property in December 1916. It appears that the amusement park might have continued operations into the early 1920s. Eventually, the Forest Garden area was acquired by the city of Paterson and became Great

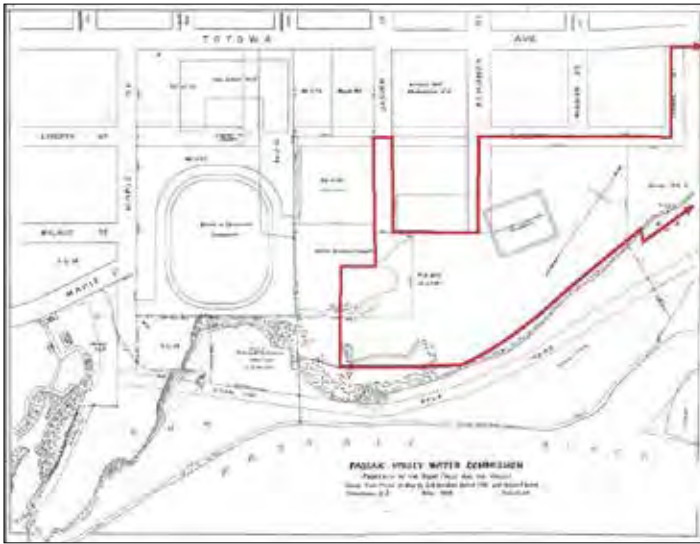


From top:

Mueller. *Map of Paterson*. 1915. Vista Park site outlined in red.

View of S.U.M Hydroelectric Plant under construction, 1912. The roller coaster at Falls Grounds, located on the plateau is visible on the horizon. (photo: Paterson Historic Preservation Commission)





From top:

Passaic Valley Water Commission. *Property at the Great Falls and the Valley*. 1939. Traced from a map of 1916 and revised. (Source: Passaic Valley Water Commission). Scale: 1 inch = 145 feet (approximately). Vista Park site outlined in red. (Segejeff et al 2005)

Hinchliffe Stadium event (possibly Thanksgiving Day, 1930). (photo: Paterson Historic Preservation Commission) (Geismar 2014)

Falls Park. During World War II the park was closed for strategic reasons and remained closed until the 1970s.

In 1971, Mary Ellen Kramer and a group of citizens solicited donations of time and services from contractors, individual residents, the city of Paterson, and others to transform the former Forest Garden area at the top of the Great Falls into Great Falls Park. After her death, the city renamed the park Mary Ellen Kramer Park.

- **Totowa Avenue Playground**

The cemetery on Totowa Avenue was conveyed to the city in 1912, the bodies relocated, and the property redeveloped as a playground. The playground was partly incorporated into the northeast corner of Hinchliffe Stadium, constructed in 1932, and partly incorporated into Public School No. 5, constructed in 1939 (Geismar 2014).

- **Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument**

Around 1920 the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument was at risk of vandalism and members of the Grand Army of the Republic requested that the county move the memorial to a safer location. Although the county and city intended to physically relocate the monument to Eastside Park, this was found to be impractical, so the monument was replicated and dedicated in Eastside Park in 1922.

- **Hinchliffe Stadium**

The city of Paterson constructed Hinchliffe Stadium in 1931/32 as the city's stadium to provide a venue for a wide range of athletics at a wide range of competitive levels, including high school, amateur, and professional events. The stadium hosted Negro National League and Negro American League games from 1933 through 1944, featuring the highest-quality players in Negro professional baseball, many of whom were later inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame, (NPS 2016). City residents also used the stadium for social, recreation, and cultural events for the working-class population well into the 1980s. Unable to attract attendance needed to generate revenues for operations and maintenance, the Board of Education closed the facility after the 1996-97 school year.

- **Paterson Number 5 Elementary School**

In 1939, the city constructed Paterson Public School 5 on Totowa Avenue, between Maple Street and Liberty Street.

- **Frank X. Graves Park**

Sometime after 1939, when the Passaic Water Company removed Middle Reservoir, the city of Paterson acquired the northwest portion of the Middle Reservoir site adjoining Hinchliffe Stadium, renaming it Frank X. Graves Park in the 1990s in honor of a former two-term city mayor.

**Industrial Uses.** The Passaic Water Company began to sell its land on Totowa Avenue in the early 1900s. Manufacturing uses developed along the south side of Totowa Avenue from Liberty Street to just south of Ryle Avenue. The Miesch Silk Manufacturing Company acquired the two-acre parcel between Totowa Avenue, Jasper Street, and Kearney Street and built Miesch Mill in 1909. The company manufactured silk at the mill from 1909 through the mid-1930s. Manufacturing continued at the mill throughout the 20th century.

In 1968 the Passaic Water Company sold the property currently encompassing Vista Park. The new owner extensively graded and filled the site and constructed two large cinderblock and corrugated metal buildings, one used for clothing manufacture and one used as a warehouse (Sergejeff et al).

## THE 21ST CENTURY

**Recreational Use and School Use.** The first two decades of the 21st century have seen a shift toward public investment in reestablishing the tradition of recreational use on the plateau.

- **Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park**

In 2011, Congress established Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park to preserve and interpret the natural beauty of the Great Falls of the Passaic River and the industrial, cultural, and recreation landscape which formed around it. Among the park's key resources are lands on the plateau, including Mary Ellen Kramer Park and Hinchliffe Stadium.

- **Mary Ellen Kramer Park**

The city of Paterson, with assistance from the New Jersey Green Acres Program, the Passaic River Coalition, and Passaic County, completed renovation of Mary Ellen Kramer Park in 2014/15.

- **Hinchliffe Stadium**

Hinchliffe Stadium was named a National Historic Landmark in 2013, and a year later Congress amended the boundaries of Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park to include the stadium. The Friends of Hinchliffe Stadium developed a rehabilitation plan for the stadium and are implementing the first phase of work while raising funds for the stadium's complete rehabilitation.

- **Frank X. Graves Park**

Frank X. Graves Park continues to be used as a site for a community garden and for hosting environmental education programs.

- **New Jersey Green Acres Acquisition**

The New Jersey Green Acres Program acquired 8.4 acres encompassing the former sites of Middle Reservoir and Totowa Reservoir (the Vista Park site) for the purposes of providing an additional area of permanent public outdoor recreation in the city of Paterson and for public enjoyment and protection of the site's natural resources. The acquisition permanently protected the site from future development and ensured that it will be maintained for public, passive recreational use.

**Industrial and Other Uses.** Beginning in 2005, there were two attempts to develop multi-family residential units on 8.4 acres on the plateau at the former sites of the Middle Reservoir and Totowa Reservoir ("Park Site"). These failed and were abandoned, after which the New Jersey Green Acres Program acquired the property in 2017.



Aerial Image Used for Marketing Property Sale, c. 1968. Approximate Park Site outlined in white. (photo: Paterson Historic Preservation Commission)



Warehousing being demolished at the Vista Park Site in 2007. (photo: G. Archimede)

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VISTA PARK MASTER PLAN

# NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT AND ACCESS

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Top row, from left to right:  
 Paterson Elementary School 5, two blocks from the park site on Totowa Avenue.

Mixed residential and commercial neighborhood opposite school.

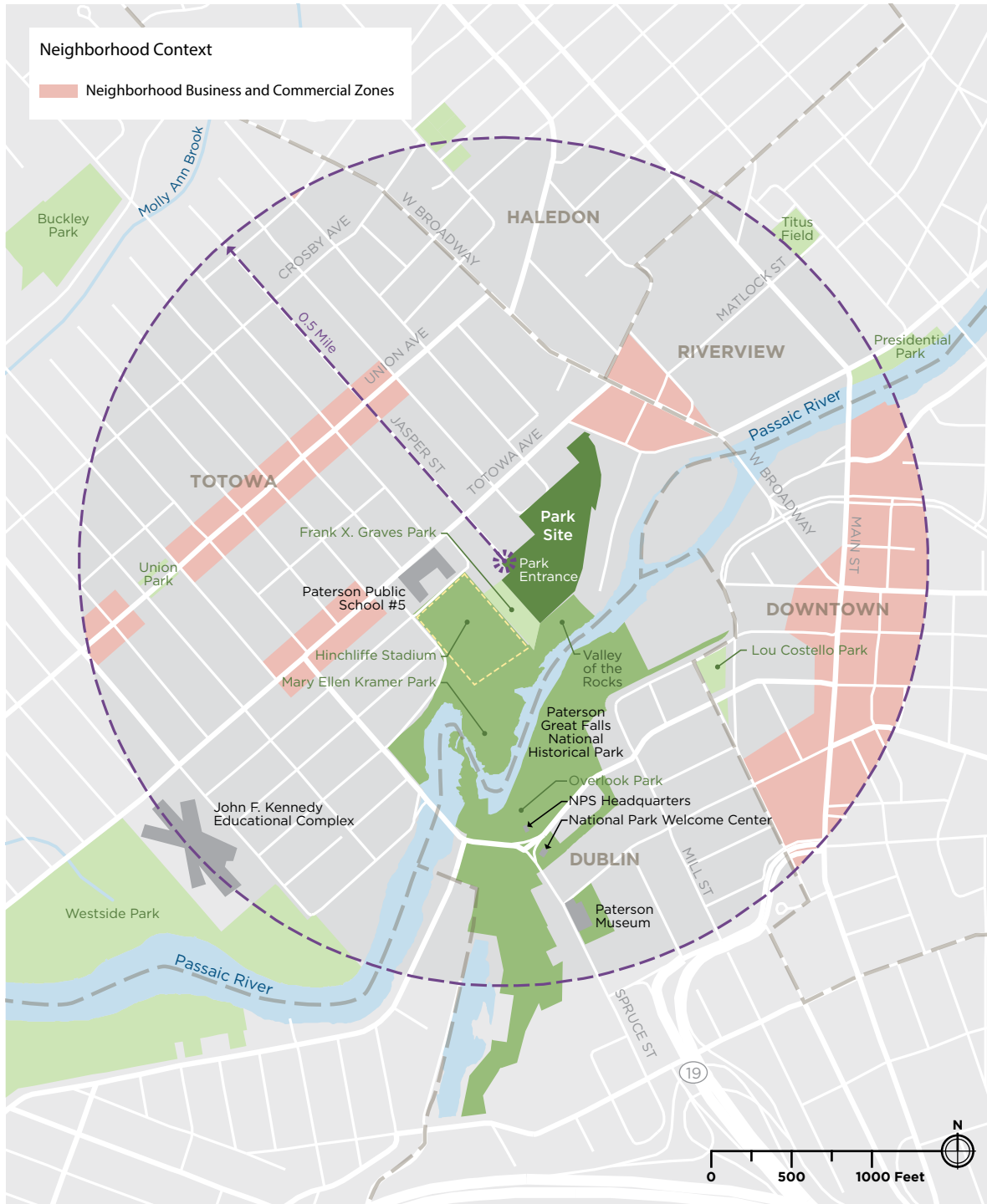
Totowa Avenue commercial district, four blocks southwest of the park site.

Middle row, from left to right:  
 Representative small commercial establishment on Totowa Avenue.

Totowa Avenue corridor looking southwest from Jasper Street at park entrance.

Totowa Avenue corridor looking northeast from Jasper Street at park entrance.

Bottom row:  
 Totowa Avenue corridor looking northeast, down to Ryle Avenue and West Broadway.



# NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT AND ACCESS

## NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

Today, the Vista Park site is located at the southwest edge of the Totowa neighborhood, a working- to middle-class neighborhood in the northwest corner of the city. The nearby neighborhood is mostly Hispanic with a rising Bengali population and a large minority of African-Americans. Residents are generally younger than other areas of the city and there is a large concentration of children (aged 5 to 17) (NJGIN 2011). Average household size is typically 3 to 4 people (NJGIN 2011). In 2011, median household income ranged from approximately \$34,000 to \$38,000 (NJGIN 2011).

The Totowa Avenue corridor adjoining the Vista Park site is predominantly a low-medium density residential area (one- to two-family structures) to high-medium density residential area (townhomes, apartment, multi-family residences). Paterson Elementary School 5 and the John F. Kennedy Educational Complex are the only nearby major institutions. Industrial buildings include the few along Totowa Avenue adjoining the Vista Park site. A section of Totowa Avenue between Wayne Avenue and Maple Street is a neighborhood business district offering small commercial establishments; occasional neighborhood commercial uses that serve local residents occur on corner lots along Totowa Avenue. Otherwise nearby commercial uses are concentrated in the community business district along Union Avenue one block to the northwest and in the commercial historic district along West Broadway a quarter mile to the west.

## ACCESS

In the Totowa area the streets follow a regular city grid. Major roads such as Totowa Avenue are two-way, while most of the perpendicular side streets are one-way. Traffic congestion is a common complaint of residents, employees, and business owners, particularly during morning rush hour and evening rush hour, and after school when the combination of normal traffic volume, school buses and school-age children and teens walking home gridlocks the community on both sides of the Passaic River (NJ CDC 2009). Analysis of crash data for 2010 to 2014 along Totowa Avenue indicates crash hotspots involving vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians at or near the intersections with Wayne Avenue, Sherman Avenue, and Albion Avenue (Paterson School 5).

### Vehicular Access to the Park Site

**Jasper Street Access.** Vehicular access to Vista Park is currently from Totowa Avenue via Jasper Street. Jasper Street is a city-owned and maintained two-way road with a 45' right-of-way. The paved right-of-way is 27.5 feet wide.

Approximately 450 feet south of Totowa Avenue, Jasper Street ends at a barricade. The barricade marks the beginning of the access road to the former Vistas at Great Falls Condominiums built in 2016.

### Other Public Roads Adjoining the Park Site.

- **Kearney Street.** Paralleling Jasper Street, Kearney Street is a city-owned and maintained two-way road with a 60' right-of-way. Approximately 210 feet south of Totowa Avenue, Kearney Street dead-ends at the base of a 20' cribbed retaining wall, recently constructed at the park property boundary.
- **Marion Street.** Paralleling Jasper Street and Kearney Street, Marion Street is a city-owned 50' right-of-way that has been reconfigured for use as parking for an adjoining light industrial building. The right-of way ends at the base of a steep slope that rises 25 feet up (15 to 20% slope) to the park plateau.
- **Ryle Avenue.** Ryle Avenue borders Vista Park on its northeast perimeter for approximately 40 feet. A concrete sidewalk with slate curb borders the road, along which there is a lane of parallel parking. Vista Park rises abruptly (30 to 40% slope) from Ryle Avenue approximately 80 feet up to the park plateau.

From top:

Jasper Street viewed from Totowa Avenue, looking southeast to the park entrance.

Jasper Street viewed from the park entrance, looking northwest to Totowa Avenue

Kearney Street viewed from Totowa Avenue, looking southeast to the park site at the top of the hill.



Marion Street viewed from Totowa Avenue, looking southeast to the park site at the top of the hill.

Ryle Avenue looking southeast from where the park site adjoins Ryle Avenue (on the right).







## Access


### Pedestrian Access from the Totowa Neighborhood

-  Primary Point of Pedestrian Access from a Public Right-of-Way
-  Other Existing Informal Points of Pedestrian Access



### Vehicular Access Road Type<sup>1</sup>

-  Principal Arterial
-  Minor Arterial
-  Major Collector
-  Local



### Parking

-  On-Street Parallel Parking at Jasper Street Park Entrance




### Bus Routes

-  New Jersey Transit Bus Route
-  Closest Bus Stops to the Park Site

### Proposed Bicycle Improvements<sup>2</sup>

-  Proposed Passaic County Bike Loop
-  Bike/Pedestrian Priority Corridor

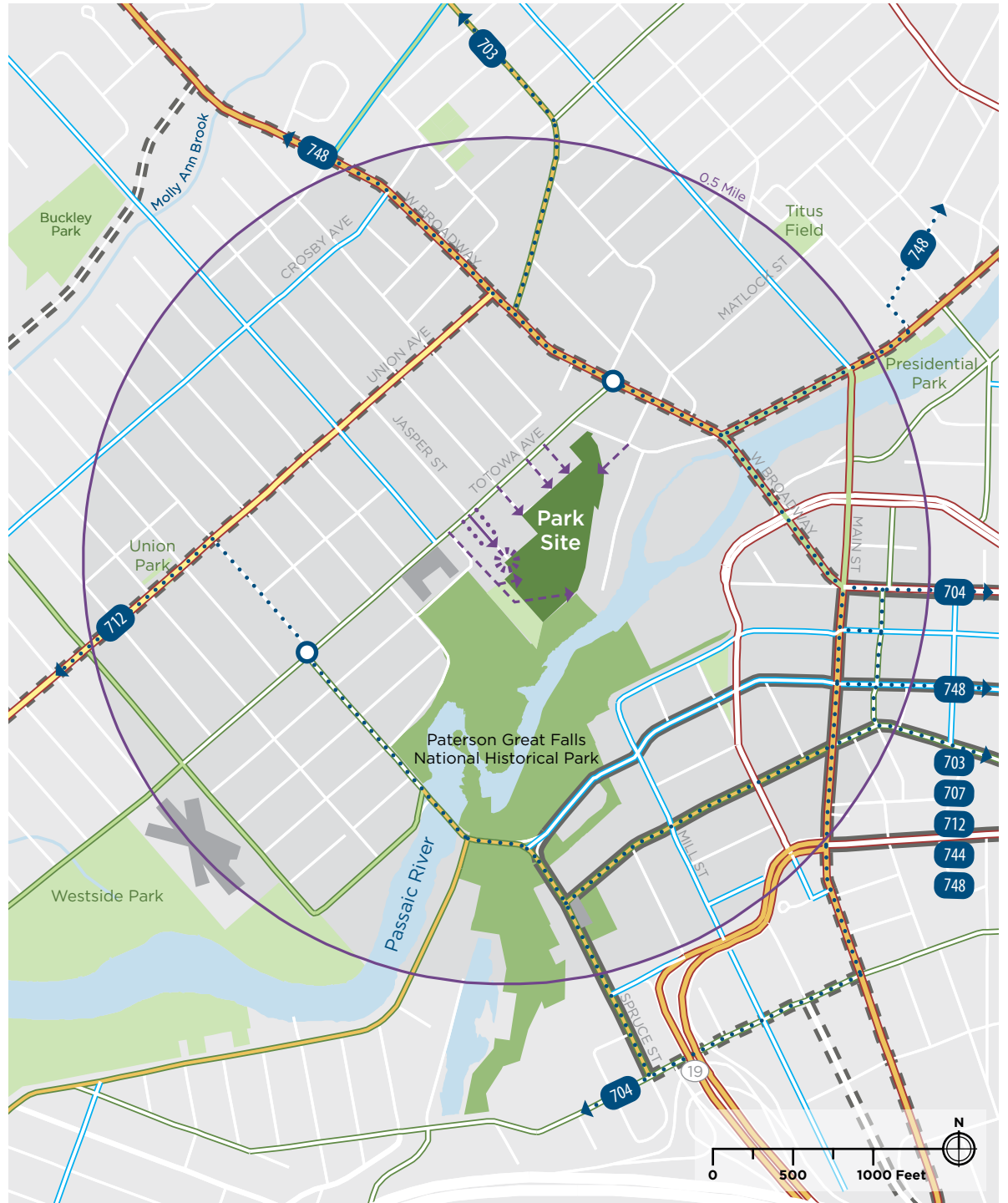
### Bicycle Access (on-road bicycle suitability)<sup>3</sup>

-  Most Suitable
-  Moderately Suitable
-  Least Suitable

<sup>1</sup> 2010 Functional Classification Passaic County, NJDOT, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> City of Paterson Master Plan, City of Paterson, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> New Jersey Bicycle Map and Resource Guide, NJDOT, 2017.



## PARKING

Public parking is generally in short supply and high in demand throughout the Totowa Avenue corridor. On Totowa Avenue and adjoining side streets, the city allows parallel parking on one or both sides of the street. Along Totowa Avenue and Jasper Street (at the park entrance), parking is not permitted on Monday from 8:00 to noon (for street cleaning) and on Sunday and Wednesday night after 6:00 PM (for garbage collection the next morning). On Jasper Street, parking is not permitted on Tuesday from 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM (for street cleaning).

Approximately 60 parking spaces are available next to Paterson Elementary School 5 for faculty and staff. This parking is on Liberty Street and on property owned by either the city or the school district that adjoins Frank X. Graves Park, between Liberty Avenue and Jasper Street at the park entrance. These spaces are available for public use when school is not in session.



Parking for Paterson Elementary School 5, adjoining Jasper Street at the park entrance (viewed from Jasper Street, looking toward Hinchliffe Stadium).

## PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

**Sidewalks.** Jasper Street offers the only sidewalk access to Vista Park from the Totowa neighborhood. On both sides of Jasper Street are six-foot-wide sidewalks, mostly asphalt with a slate curb and in poor condition.

Totowa Avenue has sidewalks on both sides of the street. Near Vista Park the Totowa Avenue sidewalks are generally in poor condition.

**Informal Trails.** Pedestrian access to Vista Park is largely via a network of informal trails developed and used by local residents, primarily teenagers. The informal trails connect to Vista Park from the adjoining Totowa neighborhood to the north and the Riverview and Haledon neighborhoods to the east. There are three primary points of entry, each of which requires



physical agility to climb over, between, and/or under obstacles, as well as climb up steep rocky slopes:

- **from Mary Ellen Kramer Park** following a path outside the chain link fence adjoining the Hinchliffe Stadium outfield, up a cleft in the cliff, to the former observatory site and the cliff edge along the remnants of the Middle Reservoir wall to the cliff edge
- **from Liberty Street to Frank W. Graves Park** following the chain link fence adjoining Hinchliffe Stadium and along remnants of the Middle Reservoir wall (with a side trail to the former observatory site) to the cliff edge
- **from Ryle Avenue** by crawling under the chain link fence and scrambling up the steep and rocky slope to the plateau, including squeezing between two adjoining chain link fence segments

Patched asphalt and concrete sidewalk along Jasper Street, typical of many sidewalks in the park vicinity.



From left:

Informal path from the plateau at Vista Park down to Ryle Avenue.

Informal path from Mary Ellen Kramer Park to the Vista Park site, outside the Hinchliffe Stadium outfield fence.



## BICYCLE ACCESS

There is no existing bicycle infrastructure in the Totowa Avenue corridor near Vista Park and very limited bicycle infrastructure in the Great Falls area. The transportation element of the city's master plan does not include recommendations for bicycle improvements in the Totowa Avenue corridor, although the plan designates Union Avenue (one block to the northwest) as a bike/pedestrian priority corridor (Paterson 2014).

Pavement conditions on many roadways are in poor condition, creating a difficult surface for bicycling. However, Paterson's urban street network is typically low speed, dense, and interconnected with few multi-lane roadways, which creates a dense, well-connected street network that provides a good foundation for a bicycle friendly environment (Passaic County 2016). A recent bicycle level of stress analysis concluded that there is a very low to low bicycle level of stress on Totowa Road, Ryle Avenue, and West Broadway in the vicinity of Vista Park (Passaic County 2016).

## TRANSIT ACCESS

NJ TRANSIT bus routes and several private transit ("jitney") companies serve the Great Falls area near Vista Park. Downtown Paterson is a hub for local and regional bus services at and near the Broadway Bus Terminal on Broadway one block west of Main Street (Paterson 2016). The primary transit corridors in Downtown Paterson are Broadway, Main Street, and Market Street.

No bus routes currently pass directly along Totowa Avenue near Vista Park. The closest bus routes to Vista Park operate along Wayne Avenue and West Broadway. The closest bus stops are approximately one-quarter mile away at the intersection of Totowa Avenue and Broadway (to the northeast), and at the intersection of Totowa Avenue and Wayne Avenue (to the southwest).



From left:

Steep climb up congested Totowa Avenue from the closest bus stop on West Broadway.

Closest bus stop to Vista Park, located on West Broadway, approximately ¼ mile from the Jasper Street park entrance.



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VISTA PARK MASTER PLAN  
EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

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Opposite page:

Orange Mountain Basalt exposed at the top of First Watchung Mountain at the park site.

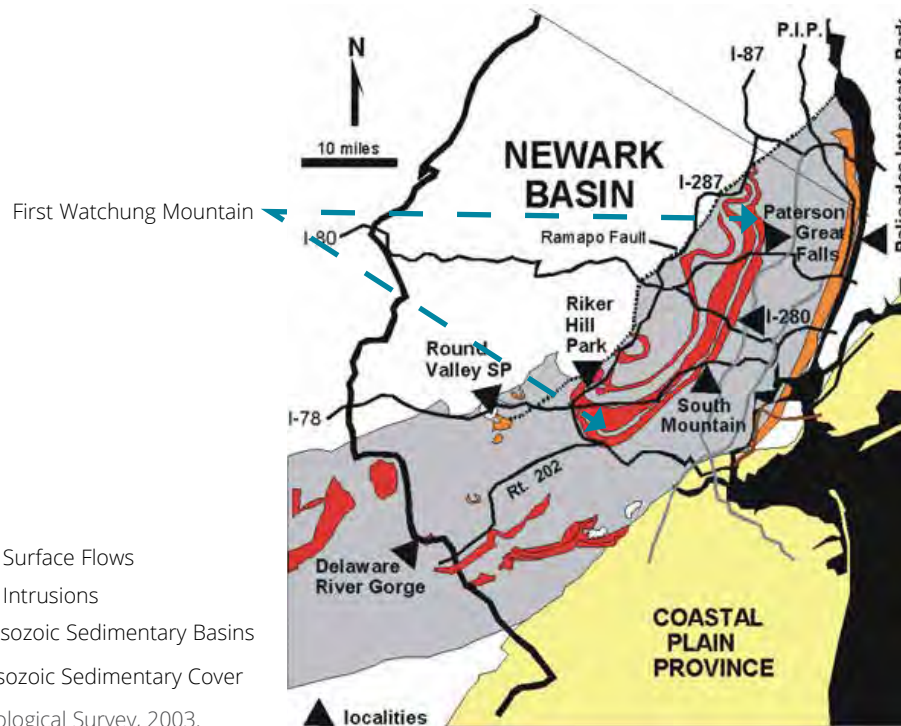
# EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### Geology

The Vista Park site sits on a ridge, known as First Watchung Mountain (Orange Mountain), which stretches some 48 miles from northern Passaic County to Central Somerset County. First Watchung Mountain is the easternmost of three parallel ridges in northern New Jersey that are visible from many vantage points and that offer sweeping views across the state to the New York City skyline.

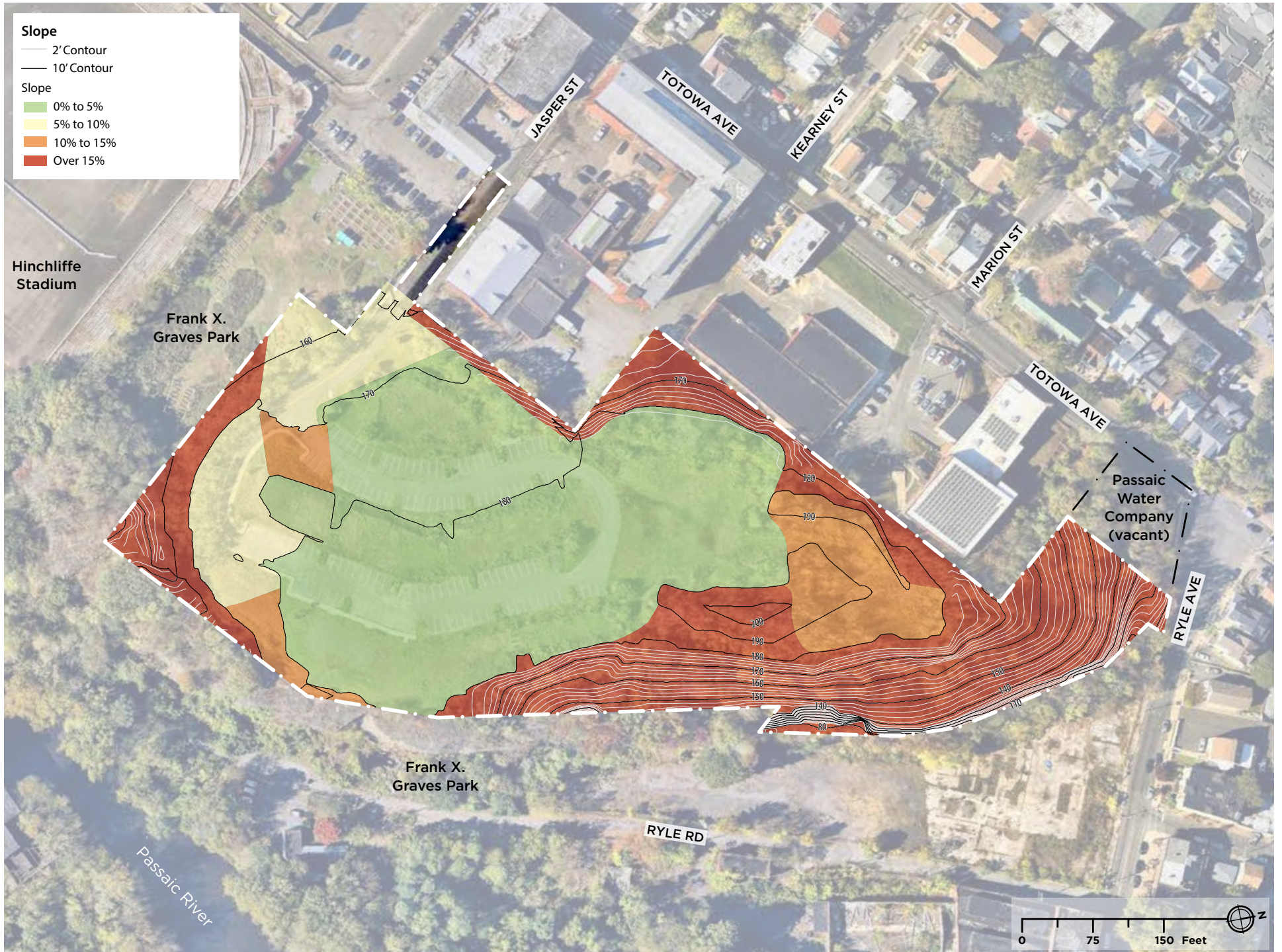
Volcanic and sedimentary rocks underlie the Newark Basin, as the region is known by geologists. The mountain ridges are composed of resistant basalt formed from cooled volcanic lava that flowed over central New Jersey during three major periods of volcanic activity in the Mesozoic era. Underlying the lava are easily eroded red sandstones and shales. Erosion of these tilted layers of alternately resistant and easily eroded rock led to formation of the three Watchung Mountain Ridges and adjoining lowlands visible today.



Within the city of Paterson, the Passaic River flows over a resistant ridge of the Orange Mountain Basalt (First Watchung Mountain). The water spills into a cleft in the rock formed by erosion of the underlying softer sandstone, leaving the edge of the undermined hard basalt protruding without support. The 80-foot high cliff that extends alongside the Passaic River downstream of the falls is a continuation of the hard basalt edge. This basalt underlies the plateau above the river, including the Vista Park site. Below the cliff, the basalt contacts the softer sandstone and red mudrock of the Passaic Formation.

Along the cliff edge and elsewhere on steeply sloping areas of the Vista Park site are areas of basalt outcrops visible on the ground surface.

Source: U.S. Geological Survey, 2003.





### Topography/Slopes

Most of the Vista Park site is composed of an open, gently to moderately sloping plateau (0 to 5 percent slope) that rises from the park entrance at Jasper Street (elevation 158') to the open area along the cliff edge (elevation 180'), where the drop onto the adjoining land owned by the city of Paterson is most sheer. Other than at Jasper Street and along Frank X. Graves Park, the Vista Park site's perimeter slopes steeply down from the plateau toward the river or the adjoining neighborhood along Ryle Avenue and Totowa Avenue. Two 20-foot high knolls (near the end of Kearney Street) are assumed to be spoil mounds and are the highest points on the site (elevation 197' and 205').

### Soils

Historic uses of the Vista Park site have destroyed the natural soils. Grading, with addition of fill material and clay, have created soils which the *Soil Survey for Passaic County* (USDA 1975) characterizes as Urban Land-Boonton Complex:

*Soil materials are mostly stoney and gravelly glacial deposits derived from shale, sandstone, basalt, and granitic materials. Depth to basalt bedrock under natural conditions ranges from 3 to 10 feet but is generally more than 6 feet. Stones, cobblestones, and gravel are common throughout the materials.*



Historic records describing Totowa Reservoir indicate that the reservoir walls—which were 20 feet high—were composed of clay and the bottom was “paved”. It can be assumed that earthwork to remove the reservoir mixed much of that material with the natural soils and spread it throughout the Vista Park site. Soil borings made in 2015 for two gently sloping locations on the Vista Park site show soil depths ranging from 8 to 10 feet (NewWORLD Engineering, Inc. 2015). Site field inspection has revealed that in some locations along the cliff edge, and on the steeply sloping land descending to Ryle Avenue, basalt bedrock is at the ground surface. Soils of the Boonton series, from which Urban Land on the Vista Park site is derived, have slight potential for erosion when the soil is cleared from areas with 0 to 8 percent slopes (UDSA 1975).

### Water Resources

No streams, seeps, springs, or wetlands are present on the Vista Park site.

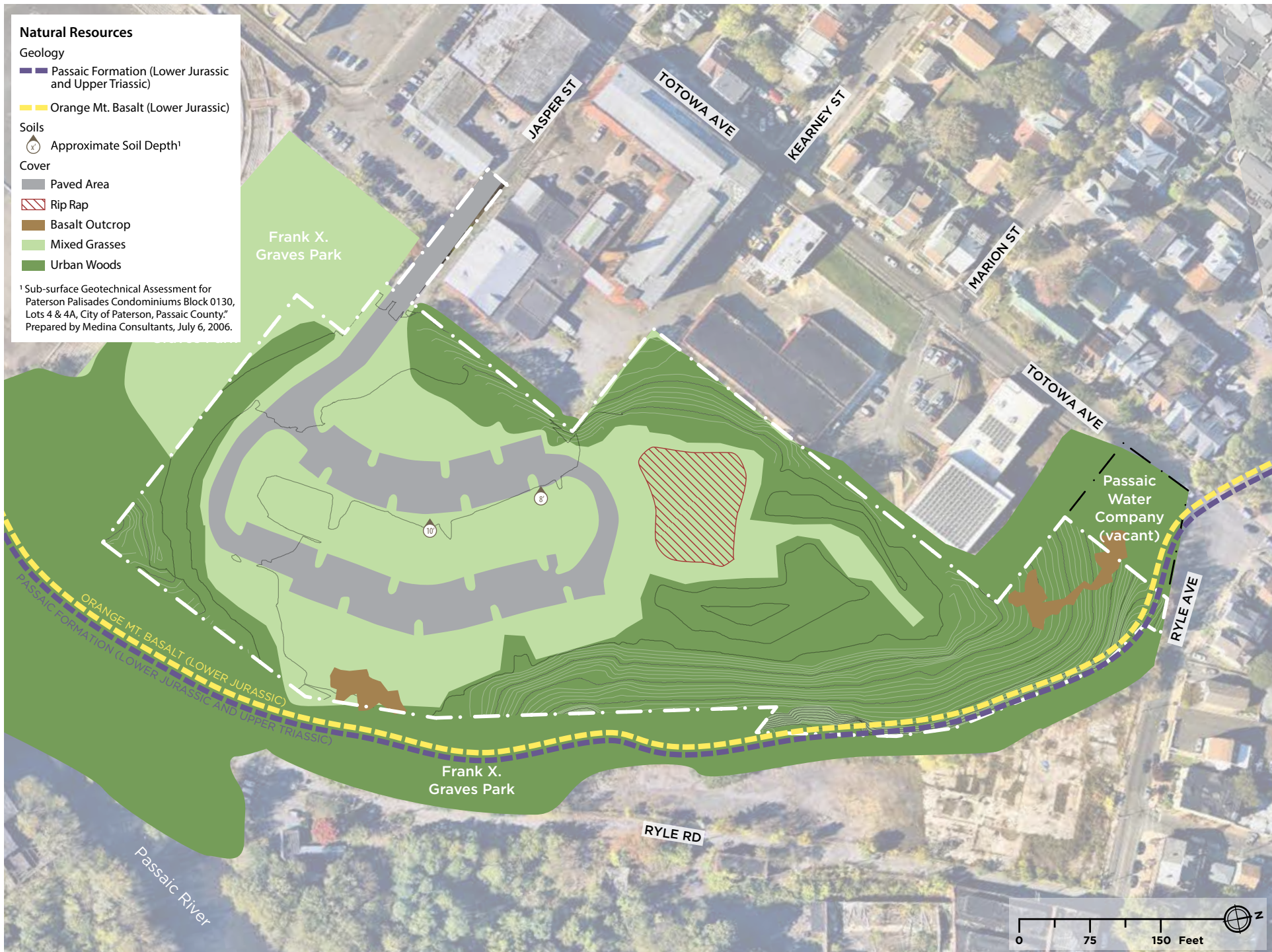
From top:

Soil borings and site excavation in 2005 revealed soil depths of 8 to 10 feet over much of the park site.

In the steeply sloping northeast corner of the park site, only a thin soil layer overlies the basalt bedrock.

Spoil mounds forming two knolls as high as 20 feet are near the northwest edge of the meadow on the plateau.







## Vegetation/Cover Types

Cover types on the Vista Park site generally fall into five categories:

- Paved areas include the entrance road, parking areas, and sidewalks for the former planned Vistas at Great Falls Condominiums.
- Mixed grasses characterize the areas adjoining the entrance road and parking areas. They were likely seeded during the past few years with a "Contractor's Mix" of grasses, such as tall fescue and annual ryegrass and left to grow with only an annual mowing to maintain an open field. Weedy herbaceous plants have become established along with the planted grasses.
- In 2017, small diameter riprap was placed in the open area of the site near the two knolls to address drainage problems.
- Urban woods occurs along the steeply sloping areas around much of the site perimeter. The forest ranges from very young in areas such as the knolls (spoil mounds) where it has been recently disturbed, to more mature forest in the steeper, more inaccessible areas. Because of recurring site disturbance, the woods has a mix of native and non-native species, is in poor condition, and has little understory for regeneration. Maple is the primary canopy tree.
- Basalt bedrock outcroppings occur along the cliff edge and in some of the steeply sloping areas dropping down to Ryle Avenue and Ryle Road.

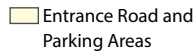
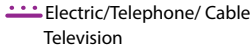
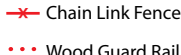
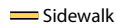


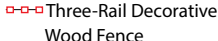

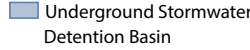
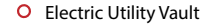
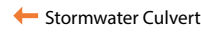
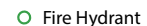
Left upper:  
Riprap in a small area adjoining the upper parking area has ameliorated wet soil/poor drainage conditions.

Left lower:  
Urban woods dominated by maple occurs along moderate to steep slopes adjoining the plateau.

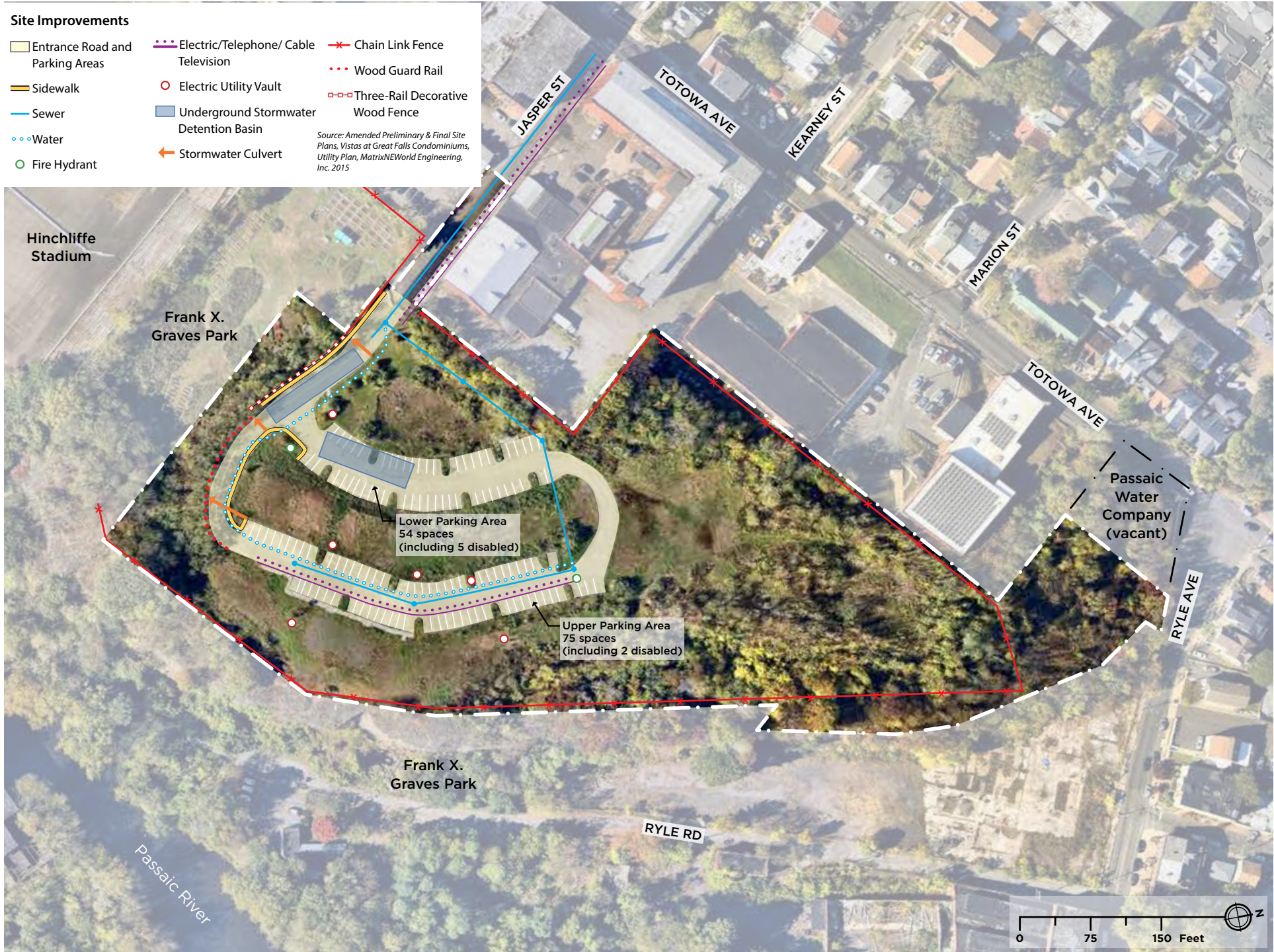
Right:  
Most of the park site is an open meadow characterized by mixed grasses that are mowed periodically.



**Site Improvements**

-  Entrance Road and Parking Areas
-  Electric/Telephone/ Cable Television
-  Chain Link Fence
-  Sidewalk
-  Wood Guard Rail
-  Sewer
-  Three-Rail Decorative Wood Fence
-  Water
-  Underground Stormwater Detention Basin
-  Electric Utility Vault
-  Stormwater Culvert
-  Fire Hydrant

*Source: Amended Preliminary & Final Site Plans, Vistas at Great Falls Condominiums, Utility Plan, MatrixNEWorld Engineering, Inc. 2015*





From top:  
Lower parking area with 54 spaces.  
Upper parking area with 75 spaces.

## SITE IMPROVEMENTS

### Site Roadways, Sidewalks, and Parking

The Vista Park site's entrance road begins at the end of Jasper Street. For the first 100 feet, until the road passes the turn to the lower parking area, the paved right-of-way is 30 feet wide. The first 30 feet of the entry road has a four-foot wide planted median. The road surface is composed of only the base coat asphalt layer. Curbs are Belgium block.

The lower parking area has 54 parking spaces, including two spaces for persons with disabilities. The upper parking area has 75 parking spaces, including five spaces for persons with disabilities.

A four-foot wide concrete sidewalk is on the west side of the road from the entrance to the turn into the lower parking area, and on the east side of the road from the lower parking area entrance to the upper parking area entrance.

### Site Utilities

The Vista Park site is served by public utilities including sanitary sewer, water, gas, telephone, cable, and electric. Most recent utility installations on the site occurred in 2006 when two large warehouses were removed and the initial sitework completed for the first of the two unsuccessful housing projects. Available information showing existing utilities as of 2015, when application for the second housing project was submitted to the city, is available from the Amended Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan – Vistas at Great Falls Condominiums, Existing Conditions (sheet 2 of 16) and Utilities (sheet 5 of 16) (Matrix NEWorld Engineering 2015).

**Sewer.** A combined sanitary sewer and drainage line extends from Totowa Avenue, under Jasper Street, to the park entrance. Shortly after the two-lane entrance road begins, the line turns northeast and continues parallel to the property line for approximately 200' feet. There it turns east and rises to the upper parking area, where it turns south and continues under the length of the upper parking area. Six manholes provide access to the sewer line.

**Water Supply and Fire Protection.** An 8-inch water main extends from Totowa Avenue, under Jasper Street, to the park entrance. The main continues up the entrance road and under the length of the upper parking area. Fire hydrants are at the lower parking area entrance and at the top of the upper parking area.

**Gas.** A PSE&G gas main extends from Totowa Avenue, under Jasper Street to the site entrance. Plans called for removal of the pre-existing line along the northwest property line and extension of a new gas line parallel to the new sewer line (described above) up to and under the length of the upper parking area. Confirmation is needed as to whether the demolition and new installation occurred.

**Electric/Telephone/Cable Television.** Electric/telephone/cable television lines are located along the edge of the upper parking area. The Utility Plan (MatrixNEWorld Engineering 2015) does not show an existing line that connects from Jasper Street to the upper parking area, although a “proposed” line might have been installed as drawn in the plan, generally paralleling the existing sewer line. Five utility vaults are adjacent to the upper parking area and one utility vault is at the entrance to the lower parking area.

### Stormwater Management Facilities

Stormwater inlets in the lower parking area convey runoff to underground detention basins beneath the lower portion of the lower parking area and beneath the entrance road. The basins discharge onto the ground near the west property boundary. Runoff from the upper parking area collects via inlets in the parking area and then flows beneath the entrance road to discharge onto the ground near the west property boundary.

### Other Structures

**Fencing.** Chain link fencing is along the property perimeter, except for a portion of the shared boundary with Frank X. Graves Park on the southwest. All the fencing is generally in poor condition. Along the cliff face the fencing is four feet high and is discontinuous where people have created openings to gain access to the cliff edge. Elsewhere the perimeter fencing is six feet high, with some segments topped with razor wire or barbed wire for additional security; people have cut numerous openings in fencing to enter the property from the adjoining neighborhood.

A short section of three-rail painted plastic fencing is installed along the southwest property line at the entrance to the park. This transitions to a wood guardrail as the road climbs up and turns left to the top of the plateau.



From top:

Cliff edge 4-foot high chain link fence.

6' chain link perimeter fence, showing one of many openings caused by vandalism.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Archeological Resources

**Prehistoric Archeological Resources.** Archeological evidence confirms that during prehistoric times, Native Americans visited and used the Great Falls area and adjoining Passaic River corridor. Early archeological surveys confirmed occurrences of two rock shelters and over 70 Native American sites in the general area (Schrabisch 1939). On the plateau above the cliff, there is one recorded pre-contact archeological site (Site 28PA0014) near Mary Ellen Kramer Park; this site is likely to have been destroyed (Lewis et al 2012).

Below the plateau, in the Valley of the Rocks, field study including excavations to bedrock in numerous locations recovered no Indian artifacts (Rutsch 1973). Despite these findings, historic accounts from the late 18th century note that Native American artifacts collected from the Valley of the Rocks were on display in a local tavern and then at the Cottage on the Cliff, and later transferred to the Museum Hotel in Paterson (Rutsch 1973).

While these sources, combined with the historic account of an artifact collection, indicate that Native Americans frequented the area, there is no evidence in the archeological record that they used the park site for permanent or temporary camps. There is little likelihood that they did so because of the site's exposed setting and rock outcrops (Sergejeff et al 2005). Even if there was Native American occupation of the site during prehistoric times, it is unlikely that archeological traces of any activities that might have occurred have survived the intensive earthmoving activities at the site that occurred when the Passaic Water Company constructed Middle Reservoir (1869), the Totowa Reservoir (1873), and a network of related transmission lines, as well as when the reservoirs were removed (1939 and the 1950s/60s, respectively), and when the site was redeveloped for warehouses in the 1970s, and for housing in 2016.

**Historic Archeological Resources.** Five late 19th-century features of historic archeological resource potential could be present at the Vista Park site.

- **Middle Reservoir**

The Passaic Water Company constructed Middle Reservoir on the plateau in 1868. Approximately 80 percent of the historic reservoir site is within the Vista Park site and the remaining 20 percent is on adjoining land, within Frank W. Graves Park, which is owned by the city of Paterson. In 1939, Middle Reservoir was removed and the area regraded, although a portion of the reservoir's brown stone perimeter remained in place. The wall remnants that remained on the Vista Park site were largely removed or buried when the site was redeveloped in 2016 for the Vistas at Great Falls Condominiums. The wall remnants that remain are in a state of significant disrepair.



## Cultural Resources

### Properties Nominated to the National Register of Historic Places

- Great Falls of the Passaic/S.U.M. National Historic Landmark District
- - - Great Falls of the Paterson - Garret Mountain National Natural Landmark
- Hincliffe Stadium National Historic Landmark (c. 1925)

### Properties Determined Eligible for Designation on the New Jersey State Register of Historic Places

- - - Ryle Avenue Streetscape (35 – 39 Ryle Avenue)

### City of Paterson Historic Districts

- - - Great Falls Historic District (official map boundaries being updated by the City of Paterson)

### Properties Recommended for Designation in the Paterson Register of Municipal Historic Places

- ① Miesch Silk Company Mill (468 Totowa Avenue) c.1909 - 1910)

### Other Archeological Resources of Potential Significance

- ② Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument Site (completed c. 1869)<sup>1</sup>
- ③ Observatory Site (completed c. 1860)
- ④ Passaic Water Company Totowa Reservoir Site (completed c. 1873)<sup>1</sup>
- ⑤ Passaic Water Company Middle Reservoir Site (completed c. 1868)<sup>1</sup>
- ⑥ Middle Reservoir Wall Ruins
- ⑦ Passaic Water Company Lower Reservoir Site (completed c. 1856)<sup>2</sup>

— Passaic Water Company Historic Transmission Lines <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sergejeff et al, 2005

<sup>2</sup> Geismar 2014

— Cliff

— Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park

- **Totowa Reservoir**

The Passaic Water Company constructed Totowa Reservoir on the plateau in 1873. The entire historic reservoir site is within the Vista Park site. Sometime in the 1950s or 1960s, the Passaic Water Company filled in Totowa Reservoir, likely bulldozing the upper part of the reservoir's clay walls onto the paved pool bottom. The pool surface elevation was 196 feet; the original pool depth is not known. Today, the ground elevation at the Totowa Reservoir site is 181 to 182 feet. Even with the loss of 10 to 15 feet of elevation due to recent site regrading, there is a slight chance that buried remains of the Totowa Reservoir remain below grade.

- **Water Transmission Pipes**

A network of pipes linked the Middle and Totowa Reservoirs to the pumping facilities at the falls and transmitted water from the reservoirs to the surrounding community. Some pipes could remain within the Vista Park site. Those leading into and out of Totowa Reservoir are the most likely to have survived (Sergejeff et al 2005).

- **Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument**

The Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument was located near the cliff in line with Kearney Street. When and exactly how the monument was removed is uncertain and there is no surface evidence of the structure (Sergejeff et al 2005). Grading and site preparation for warehouse construction in 1968 likely removed any traces of the monument. There is only a slight possibility that remains of the monument base and fragments of the monument itself may survive (Sergejeff et al 2005).

- **Ryle Mansion Foundations**

In the early to mid-1850s John Ryle began construction for his family estate within the park site, laying the foundations somewhere near the cliff. Ryle abandoned the project shortly after the financial panic of 1857 when he suffered significant financial losses. Documentary evidence is inexplicit about the precise location of the house site. There is only a slight possibility that traces of this brief building episode may survive (Sergejeff et al 2005).

## Historic Districts

### Great Falls Historic District

The park site lies partially within Paterson's Great Falls Historic District. As stated in the City of Paterson Municipal Code Chapter 483 (City of Paterson 2016):

*The intent of the Great Falls Historic District is to safeguard the heritage and history of the City of Paterson by preserving the cultural, social, economic, and architectural elements of this historic area of the City; to maintain and develop an appropriate and harmonious setting for the architecturally and historically significant buildings, structures and places in the City; to improve property values and strengthen the City's economy; to foster civic beauty and appreciation for the City's heritage; and to promote the use of historically and architecturally significant sites primarily for the education, pleasure and general enhancement of the citizens of Paterson and its visitors. The District was created to stop the demolition of the historic mill buildings in the area and to highlight elements of Paterson's industrial past and encourage rehabilitation. The Great Falls Historic District still has numerous attractive mill buildings that could be converted to market rate housing that attract a variety of income groups to the area special emphasis should be made for market rate housing in this area (in addition to existing income-regulated housing). In addition, the District encourages restaurants, stores and other uses and attractions that highlight the natural resource of the Great Falls, the architectural and historic character of the area and that encourage more tourism and activity in the area. Specific design requirements are intended to preserve the architectural integrity of the buildings and layout. (Section 500-2.1.L)*

The code establishes design review within the Great Falls Historic District by establishing the Historic Preservation Commission and empowering it to:

*Review and make written recommendations to the Construction Official on all applications for new construction, reconstruction, demolition, restoration, exterior or interior replacement, alteration or other work which would change the exterior appearance of any structure or site, including the erection or removal of signs and other improvements in the Great Falls Historic District, Downtown Commercial Historic District or within other historic districts or sites listed on the Paterson Register of Historic Places, that are referred to it from the Construction Official pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-111 and other provisions of the City of Paterson Zoning Ordinance. (Section 300-13.7.9.A)*

Design guidelines that appear in chapters 3 through 7 of the *Design Guidelines for the Great Falls National Historic Landmark District* (John Milner Associates 1999) provide the basis for review, pursuant to the code which states that the commission shall:



*Develop and, from time to time, amend specific regulations and standards for reviewing and approving any changes to structures in any historic site or landmark or within any historic district (Section 300-13.7.9.C)*

### **Great Falls of the Passaic/S.U.M. National Historic Landmark District**

The park site lies at the edge of the Great Falls National Historic Landmark District. The shared boundary between the park and the district crisscrosses the cliff edge.

The Great Falls of the Passaic/S.U.M. National Historic Landmark District is nationally significant for engineering from 1750 to 1924, with significant events occurring in 1791, 1864 and 1914. Important engineers and others involved in design and development of related engineering features of the S.U.M. Raceway System included: Alexander Hamilton, Phillip Schuyler, Pierre L'Enfant, Peter Colt, John Colt, and Thomas Marshall. The hydroelectric plant at the Great Falls is significant as an element in the progression of development of the water-powered system and of American engineering over the district's entire period of significance.

Land use and development activities on properties within the national historic landmark district are subject to the same design review requirements as described above for properties within the Great Falls Historic District.

### **Adjoining Historic Structures of Significance**

#### **Hinchliffe Stadium (National Historic Landmark)**

The city of Paterson constructed Hinchliffe Stadium in 1931-32 as the city's stadium to provide a venue for a wide range of athletics at a wide range of competitive levels, including high school, amateur, and other events. Planned during a multi-year stadium advocacy movement and the Jim Crow era of segregation, the large horseshoe-shaped stadium was constructed under the auspices of Mayor John Hinchliffe (NPS 2016).

The Olmsted Brothers prepared the preliminary plans for the stadium and athletic field. Fanning & Shaw Architects designed the stadium itself. Built into the natural slope on the north and east, the reinforced concrete oval stadium is a utilitarian structure with several decorative elements in the Art Deco/Moderne style which was popular in the 1930s. The original stadium had a seating capacity of 7,500, within 16 lower sections of 14 rows, and six upper tier sections of 14 rows, set around a horse-shoe curve. Five additional sections were constructed sometime between 1934 and 1953, increasing the seating capacity to approximately 10,000. Most of the stadium is built into the existing embankment or on man-made fill. At the southwest corner of the stadium, the stadium locker rooms and ancillary facilities are located partially below grade. The four main entrances, each with a ticket booth, are at street level at the northwest and northeast corners. A vehicular entrance was added at field level in 1934, soon after completion.



From top:

View of Liberty Street and the Hinchliffe Stadium facade under renovation in 2018.

Hinchliffe Stadium, a National Historic Landmark, is undergoing rehabilitation for reopening as a venue for sports events and community gathering.

Over the years, the city completed numerous stadium renovations. Multiple re-grading efforts occurred to address problems caused by the site's instability. The first re-grading project took place in 1935, soon after the opening of the stadium. In 1963, an extension of the field, requiring additional fill and a retaining wall, was undertaken; however, major repairs were required in 1983 due to settlement issues. During this 1983 repair, the last major renovation before the closing of the stadium in 1997, efforts to modernize were undertaken with the installation of Astroturf on the football field and a rubber and urethane-surfaced running track and a new drainage system (WASA/Studio A 2014).

The city of Paterson, through an agreement with the Board of Education, is currently implementing the first phase (\$1.5 million) of a \$30 to \$35 million stadium rehabilitation project. Phase 1 includes repair of the exterior façade along Liberty Street, restoration of the four ticket booths, new signage, and restoration of some stadium decorative features.

#### **Miesch Silk Manufacturing Company (eligible for the National Register of Historic Places)**

The Miesch Mill at 468-480 Totowa Avenue occupies the two-acre parcel between Totowa Avenue, Jasper Street, and Kearney Street. Built c. 1909, the mill is an excellent example of early twentieth-century mill construction in its massing and styling. The L-shaped four-story brick and heavy timber construction mill is 200' by 200' in size, with 26 bays designed in a utilitarian style of evenly-spaced colossal pilasters and segmentally arched 12-over-12 light central pivot style windows. Architecturally, the mill follows the typical linear form of turn-of-the-century textile mills, allowing for the reuse of line shafts to distribute on-site generated power to mill machinery and has excellent integrity of design and materials (Hunter Research, Inc. 2012). It is significant for embodying the distinctive characteristics of textile mill architecture with an emphasis on functionality and efficiency (Hunter Research, Inc. 2012).

The mill is also significant for its association with John C. Welwood and the John C. Welwood Corporation, a silk manufacturing conglomerate claiming in 1920 to be the largest ribbon business in the world. Operations at the mill demonstrated a counter-trend away from single-site, family-based silk weaving businesses toward conglomerate operations. This decentralization of business, along with technological advances, altered work expectations and conditions within silk mills, contributing to the strike of 1925 (Hunter Research, Inc. 2012),

#### **Ryle Avenue Streetscape (eligible for the National Register of Historic Places)**

The Ryle Avenue Streetscape (35-39 Ryle Avenue) includes three two-story single-family dwellings on the northeast side of Ryle Avenue.



Miesch Mill, adjoining the park entrance on Jasper Street, is eligible for the National Register.



Ryle Avenue Streetscape, opposite the park on Ryle Avenue, is eligible for the National Register.

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VISTA PARK MASTER PLAN  
FOUNDATION FOR PLANNING

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A place with spectacular vistas. (photo: G. Archimede)

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# FOUNDATION FOR PLANNING

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Foundation elements provide basic guidance for planning and management of Vista Park. The core foundation elements are the park's purpose, significance, fundamental resources and values, other important resources and values, related resources, and interpretive themes.

A primary benefit of developing foundation elements for Vista Park is the opportunity to integrate and coordinate all kinds and levels of planning from a single, shared understanding of what is most important about the park.



A peaceful haven that has been a destination through time and where technology once sustained a growing city (Middle Reservoir c. 1870). (Photo: courtesy Paterson Historic Preservation Commission)

## PARK PURPOSE

The park purpose states the specific reason(s) why the planning partners are collaborating to create the park.

The purpose of the park is to preserve, protect, and interpret for public enjoyment, recreation, and inspiration the regionally significant natural resources, history, and stories associated with one of the largest remaining open spaces in the city of Paterson. The purpose of the park is also to preserve and protect scenic vistas from within the nationally significant Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park.

## PARK SIGNIFICANCE

The park significance statements express why the park's resources and values are important enough to warrant public investment in acquisition of the site and future management of the site for public benefit. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and why it is important within a national, state, regional, or local context.

- **A Place with Spectacular Vistas.** The park sits on First Watchung Mountain, a cliff rising 145 feet above the Passaic River and the second highest point within the city of Paterson, affording spectacular panoramic vistas of the city, Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park, Paterson Great Falls National Historic Landmark District, and in the distance—some twelve miles to the east—the Manhattan skyline.
- **A Destination through Time.** For centuries, the Great Falls of the Passaic and the adjoining cliff overlooking the Passaic River—including the Vista Park site—have attracted visitors drawn to the dramatic setting at the top of the falls and along the cliff for community gathering, recreation, contemplation, and inspiration.

- **A Peaceful Haven within the City Today.** Encompassing 8.4 acres of open space directly across the Passaic River from Downtown Paterson, Vista Park today is locally significant as a unique haven of peace and quiet and community gathering for residents within the city's densely developed urban landscape.
- **A Place Where Technology Once Sustained a Growing City.** The park was the site of an integral component of one of America's early public water supply systems, developed by the Passaic Water Company—reflecting the city's tradition of innovation and entrepreneurial spirit—during the mid- to late-nineteenth century to provide water for household needs and fire protection to Paterson's growing population.
- **A Resource Fundamental to the National Park.** The plateau at the park is an essential component of the scenic vistas from key visitor access areas within Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park that are fundamental to the purposes for which Congress established the national park as a unit of the national park system.
- **Part of a Significant Regional Open Space System.** The park is part of a regionally significant network of high elevation, resource-based parks on First and Second Watchung Mountains—so named from the Lenape Indian word for “high hills”—preserved and protected through public and private initiatives for conservation purposes, and to provide opportunities for recreation as well as outdoor exploration and discovery for residents and visitors within the state's Gateway Region.

A place with spectacular vistas.



## FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to warrant primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Open Space and Natural Character.** The 8.4 acres of open space at the park support many recreational uses and activities for city residents and visitors within Paterson's densely developed urban setting. The natural character preserves and protects scenic vistas from within Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park.
- **Vista Points.** From numerous points within the park, city residents and visitors experience panoramic vistas of Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park, the city of Paterson, and the distant Manhattan skyline.
- **Experience and Enjoyment from Outdoor Experiences.** City residents and visitors connect with nature and with others, relax, and reflect in the out-of-doors in a relatively quiet and peaceful setting that is an oasis within the heart of the city.
- **Ruins of the Middle Reservoir Wall.** The remnants of the Middle Reservoir wall are the last surviving visible evidence of the Passaic Water Company infrastructure, one of America's early public water companies.

View down the Passaic River corridor from McBride Avenue sidewalk, above Overlook Park in Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park and the Great Falls of the Passaic/S.U.M. National Historic Landmark (NHL) District.



## OTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCES AND VALUES

The Vista Park site contains other resources and values that are not fundamental to the purpose of the park and may be unrelated to its significance but are important to consider in planning processes. These are referred to as “other important resources and values” (OIRV). These resources and values have been selected because they are important in the operation and management of the park and warrant special consideration in park planning.

- **Opportunities for Learning.** At Vista Park many stories can be told – stories of the places that can be seen from the park, stories of the region's natural history evidenced in the cliff and basalt outcroppings and views of Garret Mountain, stories of the site itself long-used for public recreation and public benefit, and stories about the power of water and our dependence upon it.



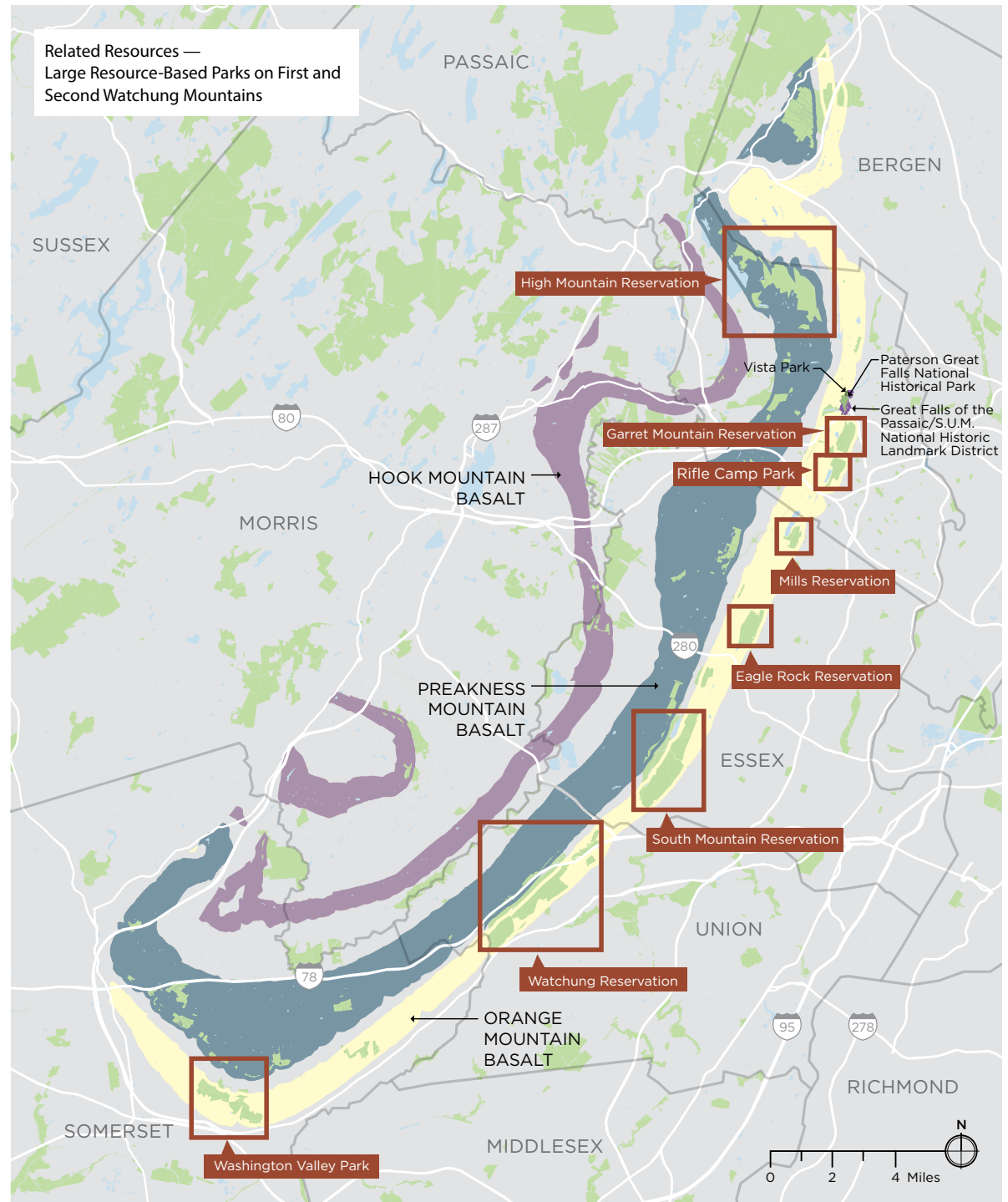
Ruins of the Middle Reservoir wall, showing corner seen in historic image on page 56.  
(photo: G. Archimede)



## RELATED RESOURCES

Related resources are not part of the park itself. They could be part of the broader context or setting in which park resources exist; represent a thematic connection that would enhance the experience of visitors; or have close associations with park fundamental resources and the purpose of the park. The related resource represents a connection with the park that often reflects an area of mutual benefit or interest, and collaboration, between the park and its partners or stakeholders.

- **Cliff.** The 130-foot high sandstone and basalt cliff—offering only harsh habitat for lichen, moss, ferns, grass and small trees growing in crevices—that sustains the open character of the cliff face and provides opportunities for vistas from Vista Park.
- **Resource-Based Parks on First and Second Watchung Mountains.** At the turn of the twentieth century, many counties in the Newark Basin launched visionary public programs to create county park systems, strongly influenced by Frederick Law Olmsted and his sons. These plans featured creation of large resource-based parks on the tops of First and Second Watchung Mountains, which today include Garret Mountain Reservation, Rifle Camp Park, High Mountain Park Preserve, Mills Reservation, Eagle Rock Reservation, South Mountain Reservation, and Watchung Reservation.
- **Paterson’s “City Beautiful Movement” Parks.** The city of Paterson acquired the 26-acre Westside Park and the 66-acre Eastside Park in the 1880s in response to citizen demands for parks and open space in Paterson. Eastside Park, designed by B.S. and G.G. Olmsted, and Westside Park, designed by John Y. Cuyler, reflect the popular Olmsted-style of design prevalent in major parks throughout the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- **Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park.** Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park preserves and interprets the natural beauty of the Great Falls of the Passaic River and the industrial, cultural and recreation landscape which formed around its endless source of power.



## PARK INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

### Introduction

Future interpretation at Vista park should speak to the site's continuum of use, focusing on the stories that are now absent in the existing interpretive programs at the national park and the national historic landmark district. Vista Park will be a place to orient visitors to a broad range of narratives, reflecting the diverse landscapes (both natural and man-made) that can be seen from the park, as well as the park's historic use as a destination with a spectacular view and a place of innovation where water was stored to provide drinking water that sustained the city and to protect it from fire. Native American stories, not well told elsewhere in Passaic County, should be told at the park.

### Interpretive Themes

Four primary interpretive themes are proposed for Vista Park that will be the basis for developing interpretive experiences:

- Primary Theme A: Spectacular Vistas and Inspirational Views
- Primary Theme B: Traditional Meets Sustainable
- Primary Theme C: Recreation, Play and Education
- Primary Theme D: A Place of Many Stories

### Primary Theme A: Spectacular Vistas and Inspirational Views

Providing several spectacular panoramic views, Vista Park's setting approximately 145 feet above the Passaic River offers visitors opportunities to experience the wonders of nature as well as the built environment, allowing for inspiration, respite and contemplation.

#### Sub Themes:

- **A Park with a View:** One of the Vista Park's most significant attributes is the spectacular vista that it offers of Paterson, Passaic County and the New York City skyline. Visitors can experience panoramic vistas from numerous vantage points.
- **A Peaceful Haven with the City:** Vista Park is a natural oasis providing access for contemplation and respite in a densely developed area.
- **A Place to Enjoy Outdoor Experiences:** Trails along the cliff, meadows and lawn, views of the Passaic River, and an open sky all offer opportunities for the public to engage in direct enjoyment of natural elements.

### Primary Theme B: Traditional Meets Sustainable

Over time, forces have shaped and used the local landscape in a variety of ways ranging from informal and formal gardens to engineered facilities harnessing the power of water, to amusement parks, to venues for community events. In addition to learning about how former Paterson residents and visitors experienced the plateau above the cliff, Vista Park fosters exploration of modern methods for environmental sustainability and resource management.

#### Sub Themes:

- **Designing Parks:** Paterson has a rich history of garden design and utilizing formal landscaping principals. Vista Park offers visitors a chance to learn about historic techniques such as those used by Frederick Law Olmsted and the City Beautiful movement as well as new approaches.
- **Environmentally Sustainable Practices:** Vista Park showcases several different innovations with the goal of increasing environmental sustainability from the use of native plants and pollinator gardens to educational programming about stewardship techniques.
- **Moving Water:** Water management played an important part in the site's history through its accommodation of early reservoirs and role in providing water to the growing city of Paterson. Today stormwater management, rain gardens and other practices on-site serve as a catalyst for interpretation.

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### Primary Theme C: Recreation, Play and Education

This rare and significant open space, contained within a densely developed urban landscape, offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities including unstructured play, educational programming and a peaceful haven for community gatherings.

#### Sub Themes:

- **Opportunities for Learning:** Vista Park has an important role in the community as a place providing diverse opportunities for outdoor experiences and environmental education in relation to natural resources, regional flora and fauna, and geology, as well as history and cultural events.
- **A Place for Play:** Specially designed playgrounds offer space where adults and children can play together while learning.
- **Access to Open Space:** Vista Park provides an important but limited resource in the city—a site where groups can gather outdoors for community celebrations and other social purposes.
- **Passive Recreation:** Vista Park is designed for people to participate in non-athletic, passive activities that allow for a variety of recreational opportunities.
- **Part of a Larger Network:** Vista Park is connected to other recreational opportunities in the local area such trails at the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park, Hinchliffe Stadium and above the raceway. In addition, several other regional city and state parks connect the park to a network of recreational opportunities.

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### Primary Theme D: A Place of Many Stories

For centuries, the Great Falls and the Passaic River itself have attracted people drawn to this unique landscape for its economic potential as well as its natural beauty. The new park shares these diverse stories from the earliest inhabitants to entrepreneurs utilizing their ingenuity to create a growing city.

#### Sub Themes:

- **The Power of Place:** The Great Falls and Passaic River have been destinations through time attracting diverse groups for a variety of purposes, from sustenance, to rest and relaxation, to economic gain. These natural wonders provide inspiration and continue to attract visitors today.
- **Native American Connections:** Vista Park provides an opportunity to tell the story of Native American communities giving credence to Paterson's original population. The Ramapough Lunaape People retain their ancestral connections to the region and still live and flourish there.
- **Where Technology Sustained a Growing City:** Innovations of John Ryle and the Passaic Water Company harnessed the river water to sustain the growing city of Paterson. The plateau above the cliff provided the topographic resource needed to make water available to the city.
- **Stories of People:** Views of the industrial landscape provide the opportunity to tell stories about the lives of immigrants who labored in manufacturing, mill owners, and how the local economy has changed over time. Many immigrants still settle in Paterson

today pursuing their versions of Hamilton's vision.

- **The Story of Water:** Sitting on the riverbank opposite the Great Falls, one of the country's earliest hydroelectric plants was used to supply electricity to Paterson's mills. From reservoirs providing the public water supply to a series of dams and raceways allowing for the rise of manufacturing, water has shaped the city from its inception.
- **Geology and the Landscape:** The Orange Mountain Basalt composing the cliff and plateau that are the foundation of Vista Park are part of a larger arrangement of landforms that shaped economic patterns in the past and are still embodied in recreational practices today.

## Park Audiences

While the park's audiences are quite broad, a few groups are more important to target, particularly during initial experience development. Interpretive programming, media, and facilities will be most effective in attracting visitors if shaped to address the interests and needs of these more important audiences.

The targeted audiences for the park interpretive programming are:

### Cultural and Heritage Travelers

Cultural and heritage travelers compose a large, affluent market potentially interested in the new park experience, particularly those living within 200 miles. These travelers are generally older, more educated and have higher household incomes when compared to other travelers. More than half of these travelers agree that they prefer their leisure activities to educational activities and nearly half spend money on cultural and heritage activities.

### Educational Visitors

Educational visitors of all ages are expected to be likely visitors, including:

- K - 12 student groups engaged in formal, curriculum-driven, on-site learning programs
- home-schooled students (and their parents)
- summer youth campers
- members of organized youth groups, such as scouts and church-sponsored groups
- college level groups
- life-long learners

Educators should be involved in program development to ensure that activities align with state and local curricula and that continuing

education units are available in conjunction with teacher professional development.

### Area Residents

Given the rarity of accessible, natural space in such a densely developed region, many area residents would readily enjoy learning and recreation experiences in the new park's setting. Those living within 20 miles are a target audience who would likely embrace an opportunity to discover places, participate in special events and festivals, or attend interpretive programs. These residents include individuals as well as different sized multi-generational family groups.

### Recreational Users

Visitors seeking outdoor experiences and adventures include people interested in a variety of outdoor activities that could be offered as part of the new park experience. Recreational users will find walking trails, spectacular vistas, water views, youth recreation, and wildlife watching opportunities. The outdoor performance space would likely serve as an appealing attraction given a unique locale in which to engage in these activities.

### Weekend Explorers

This audience is primarily composed of individuals living in New York City, Jersey City, and Newark and other nearby areas who want to take brief trips to explore the region, particularly to a place where there is a unique attraction and/or access to open space. The commute would likely entail a relatively short drive, less than an hour. Weekend trips would typically be timed to coincide with special events, celebrations or other tourist activities.

## Visitor Experience Objectives

Based on the purpose and significance statements identified, the primary interpretive themes, and targeted audiences for the new park's interpretative experiences should:

- Meet audiences "where they are," respecting the changing viewpoints, traditions, values, needs, interests, and cultural practices of diverse audiences, particularly how they interact with the environment, natural, and cultural resources, and with other people.
- Integrate multiple perspectives allowing for a diversity of opinion to be expressed through the creation of a safe space.
- Be developed in collaboration with diverse audiences, stakeholders, communities and cultures to broaden awareness of evolving meanings and relevance of a site's resources
- Enable visitors to experience the place in different ways:
  - cognitive experiences—people learn and make intellectual connections
  - emotional experiences—people feel emotionally connected to aspects of the place and people
  - participatory experiences—people participate in activities
  - sensory experiences—people's senses are engaged



School group learning about the national park during an NPS ranger-led guided tour.

### Relevant Existing Visitor Experience Opportunities

Vista Park offers a venue for the many ongoing interpretive programs in the Vista Park vicinity to host their programs and events. Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park (PAGR) is the most obvious potential partner. The Paterson Museum and the Paterson School District currently offer a significant potential for programming partnerships given their existing capacity, audience and content focus. NPS collaborates with both organizations on several initiatives. Expanding these relationships to incorporate visitor experience opportunities at Vista Park would offer a mutually beneficial relationship.

### Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park

Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park (PAGR) has a variety of different, existing visitor experiences that are related to the interpretive themes identified for Vista Park. Sites within PAGR present opportunities for appreciation of the natural landscape including picnicking as well as contemplation of the Great Falls and Passaic River. Activities such as walking, fishing, sightseeing, photography, and bird and wildlife viewing attract both the local community as well new heritage tourists. Mary Ellen Kramer Park and Upper Raceway Park allow for traditional, public park activities with paved walkways, connecting trails, seating and tables for individual respite or small group gatherings in a scenic setting.



Great Falls Youth Corps.

In addition to natural resources, several visitor experience opportunities are associated with cultural resources in and nearby the national park. Viewing the falls from Overlook Park or Mary Ellen Kramer Park are two of the most popular visitor experiences at the park. The Paterson Great Falls National Park Mill Mile tour is a self-guided experience focused on the story of the nation's first hydropower system, designed as a walking tour with a brochure or an auto tour with a downloadable audio tour app. This project gives an overview of PAGR while showing how innovation made Paterson a great manufacturing city.



School group awaiting educational program at Paterson Museum.

The Colt Gun Mill, Allied Textile Printing (ATP) site, complexes of mills and raceways, Alexander Hamilton's Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures (S.U.M.) Island all serve as local examples of the ingenuity and creative endeavors devised by Paterson's early entrepreneurs. Special events and activities interpret the historic structures, explore the national park's themes through experiential programs, guided tours and other ranger facilitated opportunities.

The interpretive staff at PAGR currently offer a variety of opportunities for the public at the national park as well as in city schools, at special events and through multiple outreach efforts. In addition, NPS has partnerships with

several local organizations, colleges and non-profit organizations that relate to the interpretive themes identified for the new park. A number of these efforts could be extended to encompass complementary educational programs at the new park, providing capacity and an existing audience for these efforts. Three full-time NPS staff, overseen by the Chief of Interpretation are supplemented by seasonal rangers, interns and volunteers who provide interpretive programming. A representative sample includes:

- PAGR hosts a Teacher Ranger Teacher with current participants involved in an engineering program that compares the raceway and hydroelectric plant.
- Robust programming exists with public, private and home schools including special initiatives such as an oral history project conducted with a 5th grade class and Passaic County Community College and the Testing the Waters in-class program.
- Partnerships with area colleges and universities, including Montclair State University and William Paterson University, allow for special projects such as STEM initiatives.
- Four different thematic tours/topical talks allow park visitors to explore local history and the natural environment.
- Recent social media efforts—Instagram, Facebook, etc.—have greatly expanded PAGR's interpretive reach.
- Outreach programs are coordinated at regional libraries, festivals, and several community events.
- Educational opportunities for young people and the public are offered through Youth Corps, Community Volunteer Ambassador, and formal Intern programs.

### **The Paterson Museum**

The Paterson Museum serves as an institution dedicated to preserving and displaying the history of Paterson as an important industrial center of the United States. It has a focus on education through its exhibits, collections, guided tours, classes, and travelling programs.

The museum has a variety of exhibitions on local history including a number directly related to concepts that could be interpreted in the new park such as industrial history, geology, Native American settlement, the development of the City, the Colt gun factory, and several others. It hosts a variety of thematic events and holds Native American themed performances. In addition, it organizes special exhibits utilizing its collections while addressing contemporary issues or topics such as Paterson Eco Chic, a show which tied material from modern businesses and local artists to Paterson's image as the "Silk City." In addition, the museum offers guided tours for school and community groups by appointment.

Located near the new park (155 Market St, Paterson, NJ 07505) it is closed Mondays and holidays but has frequent access and considerable hours being open every Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM and on weekends from 12:30 PM to 4:30 PM.

### **Paterson School District**

The Paterson School District has a close partnership with PAGR through several existing programs that happen on-site at the national park as well as in the public schools themselves.

The K – 12 curricula in the Paterson public schools offer several intersections with the interpretive themes identified for the new park. As a small sample:

- The 3rd grade Social Studies curriculum utilizes several units that directly relate to the stories to be told at the park. *People Build Communities, Communities Have History* and *Communities at Work* all explore community-based narratives and investigate local history in relation to social, economic and political issues.
- The same is true for Middle School; *Native Americans: Tribes, Land and Relationships with Government 1776-1900* is where the focus of Unit 4 for the local 8th graders.
- High School students have a curriculum on Environmental Studies that focuses on group projects in which the students must work with community partnerships and outside agencies. An emphasis is placed upon developing skills necessary for environmental studies careers.

### **William Paterson University**

William Paterson University is currently working on geology and oral history programs, including a STEM Academy. This “Day of Innovation” examines business and math through the university’s Small Business Association.

### **Great Falls Historic District Cultural Center**

Great Falls Historic District Cultural Center is a division of the Paterson Museum located on McBride Avenue that offers an orientation to the City through collateral materials, historic photographs and providing guidance to visitors. This visitor center contains short video segments about important events and historic figures as well as a shop with related books and educational materials. Open Monday-Friday 9AM-5PM and Seasonal Weekend Hours, Saturday/Sunday 12:30-4:30PM.

### **New Jersey Community Development Corporation**

The New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC) is a private nonprofit community development and social service agency, focused in the city of Paterson, with a mission “to create opportunities to transform lives.” NJCDC has entered into an agreement with the NPS to facilitate public access to the park and to foster knowledge of the core mission of the NPS. Through educational programs, the NPS works with the NJCDC to develop conservation-based educational programs for Paterson youth. In partnership with the national park, the NJCDC manages the Great Falls Youth Corps, a summer program for local high school students that works on projects to improve the appearance of the park and provide visitor services, including guided tours and general park information.

### **Passaic County Historical Society**

The Passaic County Historical Society was founded to “cultivate interest among individuals in the community at large in the history of Passaic County.” To that end, the Society operates the Lambert Castle Museum, maintains the Passaic County Historical Society Library, curates a large and ever-expanding collection of historic objects and materials, and reaches out to the community through special events, group tours, and education programs. The Passaic County Historical Society also regularly hosts lectures, concerts, and specialized programs. Located on the eastern slope of the First Watchung Mountain, Lambert Castle has been recently renovated and regularly host events and exhibitions such as New Jersey’s Women History Makers.

### **Montclair State University/Passaic Basin Eco-Explorers Summer Program**

Montclair State University is a public research university located in Montclair, Little Falls and Clifton, New Jersey. The Passaic Basin Eco-Explorers Summer Program in Environmental Science, Ecology and Computer Technology is a two-week, Monday through Friday program consisting of all-day sessions for middle school students, 6th to 8th grades. The program consists of visits to natural, notable sites related to the Passaic River and area ecology such as the Great Falls National Historical Park, important environmental infrastructure such as Newark’s Pequannock Water Treatment Plant, and visits to area forests, streams and lakes to conduct field studies such as Alfonso Bonsal Preserve and Branch Brook Park.

**The Passaic County Cultural and Heritage Council at Passaic County Community College**

PCCHC is the officially designated county arts, cultural and heritage agency, granting state funds annually to approximately 40 Passaic County organizations. Through its local arts and history programming, the PCCHC strives to reflect the diversity and preserve the ethnic traditions and cultures of its communities. PCCHC presents rotating exhibits of contemporary art by regional, national and international artists in three galleries. Paintings and sculpture are on permanent display in the historic Hamilton Club Building and are open to the public free of charge. Guided tours are available to schools, community groups and the public, and free Artist Talks and workshops are also offered. PCCHC is currently coordinating the Paterson Youth Photography Project at Oasis that involves students taking landscape photos. Paterson Youth Photography Project at Oasis is a non-profit that promotes art appreciation through photography workshops and exhibits.

**Ramapough Lunaape Nation**

The Ramapough Lunaape Nation is a New Jersey State recognized tribe descended from a Munsee-speaking subset of the Lenape, an indigenous people of the Mid-Atlantic region. The tribe offers periodic classes on Munsiiw/Lunaape instruction, an Algonquian dialect, as an effort to preserve and sustain the language as well as organizes and participates in pow wows to share significant cultural traditions with the public. The tribe has also been very active in environmental stewardship with efforts to protect the land and water.

**Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission**

PAGR partners with the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission on several stewardship related projects including generic clean-ups, Earth Day special events and work assistance for trails.

**City of Paterson Department of Parks and Recreation**

The Paterson Department of Parks and Recreation has assisted PAGR with getting children out on the water. The department provides permits for canoe programs, which are coordinated in conjunction with Rocking the Boat and Wilderness Inquiry.



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VISTA PARK MASTER PLAN  
MASTER PLAN

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## Vision for Vista Park

**Overview** In 2038, Vista Park is an oasis within the dense urban fabric of Paterson. Through the collaborative work of many partners, the park is a vibrant part of an interconnected, seamless network of public recreational land atop the cliff overlooking the Passaic River near the Great Falls. Vistas from the cliff's edge, the natural setting, and the aura of history combine to create a unique opportunity in the outdoors for city residents and visitors from across the state and beyond to understand and enjoy the nationally significant natural and cultural history of Paterson.

**Vistas** The park's setting, both dramatic and tranquil, inspires visitors in many ways. The open sky draws people to the cliff edge from which there are stunning views of the city and the distant Manhattan skyline.

**Natural Resources** The park's natural setting and resources—shaped and altered during the 19th and 20th century by the Passaic Water Company—have recovered. The park is a haven of wildness within the city's dense urban setting. The landscapes composing the park, ranging from lawn to urban woods are robust and healthy.

**Historic Resources** The remaining ruins of the Passaic Water Company's network of reservoirs and pipes that sustained the growing city of Paterson during the 18th and 19th centuries are preserved. These reminders of the past tell the stories of Paterson's history.

**Visitor Experience** Visitors to the park enjoy the many high quality experiences it has to offer—to be inspired by vistas, to explore history, to play or exercise in the outdoors, to feel tranquility and solitude, and to share peaceful experiences with family and friends. Park facilities and programs reflect a central theme focused on the inspirational vistas that provide a compelling setting for telling the stories of the natural world and former life in Paterson. Visitors are safe and secure.

**Economic Benefits to the City of Paterson** Visitors bring a boost to the local economy, creating opportunities for small business development and job growth in the Totowa area of the city. Regional tourism marketing efforts showcase the park as one of several Paterson destinations focused on natural and cultural history of national significance that are related to the landscape shaped by the power of the Passaic River.

**Partnerships** The collaboration of many partners, led by the city of Paterson, enables the vision for the park to flourish and succeed. Support from a diverse set of partners—public, private and non-profit—furnishes the financial resources and technical assistance critical to accomplishing and maintaining the shared vision for the park.

# MASTER PLAN

## MASTER PLAN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

Five sections compose this part of the master plan:

- **the Vision for Vista Park**—a statement describing Vista Park in 20 years—what the park will be like and how it will be sustained
- **guiding principles**—the focus of the park design and general design considerations
- **alternative concepts 1 to 4**—four concepts, each described by a general program of uses, a planting concept, and an illustrative plan
- **illustrative photographs of park spaces, plantings, and design details**—representative images of the uses and general types of plantings proposed for the park
- **interpretive media and programming**—a summary of how and where media and programming could be organized at the park

## VISION FOR VISTA PARK

The vision for Vista Park describes what the park will be like in 20 years. Accomplishing the park's purpose is the primary essential quality conveyed in the vision for the park's future. The vision also reflects the goals and desires for the park's future expressed by members of the Vista Park Planning Team who have been involved in the master planning process and who have expressed interest in how the park should be managed.

By embracing the vision for the park's future, the partners and the general public will share an understanding as to what the essential qualities of the park will be in the future. Working together, partners will use this vision as a guide to state the specific goals, objectives, and actions needed to make the vision a reality over the next two decades.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR VISTA PARK DESIGN

Early in the planning process the Vista Park Planning Team reached consensus on several general principles that helped shape the vision and guide development of alternative concepts.

**Potential Connections to Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park**

- Potential Vehicular Connection
- - - Potential Walking Connection
- Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park



**Guiding Principle 1—Enabling Public Access to the View**

The design for Vista Park should focus on reestablishing the site as a hilltop destination. The park's most valued resources are the vistas from the cliff edge. The "sacred zone" within the park is the edge of the cliff from which the views are most striking. The focus of all alternative future concepts should be to enable safe public access to the views. Nothing that happens at the park should detract in any way from the experience of taking in the views.

**Guiding Principle 2—Protecting Views of the Cliff and the Plateau from the National Park and National Historic Landmark District**

The Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park General Management Plan (GMP) (NPS 2016) identifies the park's resources and values that are fundamental to the park because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and to maintaining its significance. Among the park's fundamental resources are:

**Natural, Scenic and Industrial Landscape Views**—*The breathtaking views of the Great Falls and surrounding natural landscape allow a glimpse into the inherent beauty of nature in contrast to the manipulated landscape of the industrial city. The topography within the park provides visitors with panoramic views of the national historic landmark district's industrial landscape, reflecting settlement and industrial development patterns.*

Among the many purposes for state acquisition of the Vista Park property was to protect the site from future development which would adversely impact the natural scenic views of the Great Falls and surrounding landscape, recognized as one of the national park's fundamental resources. As such, a primary goal of any alternative future use for the park should be protection of the natural scenic and industrial landscape views from below, as seen from both the national park and the larger Paterson Great Falls National Historic Landmark District. Visitors to the national park and the district should have views of the Passaic River corridor and the palisades free of intrusions from developed visitor facilities or parked cars on the plateau within the Vista Park property; when viewed from below, "no one should see anything other than people's heads."

**Guiding Principle 3—Connecting Vista Park to the National Park and to the Community**

Visitors to Vista Park should experience a seamless connection with the national park. There should be a consistent theme in the way that the national park and Vista Park are developed that defers to NPS standards. Pedestrian connections should enable visitors to the National Park to walk from Overlook Park and the Welcome Center to Vista Park. While most national park visitors will start their visit to the national park at Overlook Park, the plan for Vista Park should account for the possibility that some visitors might prefer the option of going to Vista Park first.

**Guiding Principle 4—Offering Complementary Recreation Uses and Activities**

The program of park uses and activities, beyond those focused on the vistas, should provide opportunities for play, performance, and learning that complement other park and open space experiences offered at the national park and elsewhere in the city. The park should include flexible areas for small community gatherings, exhibitions, special events, and uses by nearby schools. Recreation uses should be passive and settings that encourage evolution of pick-up field sports, particularly soccer, should be avoided.

**Guiding Principle 5—Getting as Close as Safely Possible to the Cliff Edge**

Visitors should be able to get as close as possible to the cliff edge, providing their safety is secure. A barrier along the top of all exposed cliff faces should protect visitors from falling. The barrier design should deter visitors from climbing over it and should be resistant to vandalism by thrill seekers seeking to be even closer to the edge.

**Guiding Principle 6—Protecting Visitors from the Sun**

The park design should incorporate lots of shade through a combination of tree plantings and shade structures. Future management of the site should focus on nurturing and sustaining growth of shade trees.

**Guiding Principle 7—Managing and Restoring the Landscape**

Long-term management of the park landscape should focus on use of native plants, care of new shade trees, and restoration of the urban woods along the park perimeter. Planting design and selection of plant materials should seek to reduce future needs for routine landscape maintenance.

**Guiding Principle 8—Providing Safe Access and Parking**

Jasper Street should continue to be the primary park entrance and the only location where vehicles enter the park. Multiple points along the park's perimeter should provide pedestrian connections from adjoining city parkland and public streets. Connecting paths on steep terrain should include stairs and ramps, as needed for safe visitor access.

Parking should be designed to meet visitor parking demand, not including demand for parking associated with future events at Hinchliffe Stadium. The existing lower parking area should be retained to meet the park's parking needs. The upper parking area should be removed.

**Guiding Principle 9—Making the Park ADA Accessible**

Park design should maximize access to the views for visitors with disabilities. The flat nature of the site should enable ADA compliant access at relatively low cost when compared to most park properties. To the extent possible, at least one trail connection from Vista Park to the national park should be accessible for persons with disabilities.

**Guiding Principle 10—Providing Visitor Facilities**

A small building near the parking area should include a visitor contact station, restrooms, potable water supply, small office, and maintenance room. It would be desirable, but not essential, to also include exhibition space in the building.

**Guiding Principle 11—Providing a Secure Visitor Experience**

Design of the park should consider all aspects of policing an urban park. The park hours of operation should be dawn to dusk. Paths along the park perimeter should be paved and wide enough to enable police to patrol the park from their vehicle and have visibility from their vehicle into all areas of the park. Lighting should be nighttime friendly with no uplighting so that it is not visible from below the cliff and has minimal impact on the adjoining neighborhood.

**Guiding Principle 12—Orienting Visitors to the Park**

The visitor contact station should orient visitors to the park, the national park and the national historic landmark district. It should also provide information about other recreation opportunities, cultural events, and environmental education programs going on elsewhere in the city.

**Guiding Principle 13—Supporting Educational Programs**

Facilities should be available at the park to support educational programs, such as a learning garden and possibly a small amphitheater.

**Guiding Principle 14—Protecting and Interpreting Cultural Resources**

Remnants of the Middle Reservoir wall offer an opportunity to tell stories of the site's history. Park design should protect the remnants in place and provide for their interpretation through media and programming. Sites of the former Totowa Reservoir and Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument should be noted and interpreted.

## ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

Four alternative concepts for Vista Park illustrate different ways in which the vision for Vista Park could be accomplished. The Vista Park Planning Team developed the four concepts working collaboratively during three all-day workshops, with assistance from a team of planning and design professionals. Initially, the planning team considered alternatives 1, 2 and 3. Review and discussion recommended development of a fourth alternative that embodies components of alternatives 1 and 2. At this time there is not a preferred alternative.



### Concept 1—Play Room

- emphasizes a variety of play spaces including a challenge play area with large slides and climbing, plus traditional playgrounds and 'tot-lot'
- maximizes open lawn space
- minimizes pavement and built hardscape
- allows for passive recreation and small scale performance on picnic platforms/mini stages
- offers spectacular vistas from observation decks with binoculars



### Concept 2—Performance Room

- emphasizes a community performance venue which delivers flexible and expandable use of an open air pavilion for performances or exhibitions
- maximizes wooded areas and tree planting
- strikes a balance between hardscape and planted areas
- provides playgrounds, 'tot-lot', and areas for picnic and outdoor classrooms
- offers spectacular vistas from observation decks with binoculars

Concept 4 is a synthesis of concepts 1 and 2, developed at the suggestion of the Vista Park Partners and Stakeholders.



### Concept 3—Learning Room

- emphasizes flexible use space that can be used for outdoor classrooms, garden 'labs' or agricultural exhibits
- maximizes successional meadow planting and 'no mow' areas
- pulls main circulation away from the edge
- provides playgrounds, 'tot-lot', and a large challenge play area with slides and climbing
- offers spectacular vistas from tiered observation decks with binoculars and interpretative panels



### Concept 4—Play + Performance Room

- emphasizes a variety of play spaces including a challenge play area with large slides and climbing, plus traditional playgrounds and 'tot-lot'
- maximizes tree planting and arboretum-like character
- minimizes pavement and built hardscape
- allows for passive recreation and small scale performance on picnic platforms/ mini stages
- provides multi-purpose stage / splash pad integrated with play area
- offers spectacular vistas from observation decks with binoculars and benches



## Program of Uses



## Planting





# Vista Park Master Plan | Concept 1 - PLAY ROOM

## Concept 1 - PLAY ROOM

- Emphasizes a variety of play spaces including a challenge play area with large slides and climbing, plus traditional playgrounds and 'tot-lot'
- Maximizes open lawn space
- Minimizes pavement and built hardscape
- Allows for passive recreation and small scale performance on picnic platforms/mini stages
- Offers spectacular vistas from observation decks with binoculars

### LEGEND

- 1 RESTROOM AND VISITORS CENTER
- 2 OUTDOOR CLASSROOM/GARDEN LAB
- 3 EXISTING PARKING LOT
- 4 PICNIC PLATFORMS/STAGES
- 5 SLOPED MEADOW
- 6 PLAYGROUND/'TOT-LOT'
- 7 PLAY AREA WITH SLIDES AND CLIMBING
- 8 OBSERVATION DECK WITH BINOCULARS
- 9 RESERVOIR WALL
- 10 OBSERVATORY POINT
- 11 HIKING PATH WITH TIMBER STEPS
- 12 STAIR ACCESS
- 13 GATEWAY
- 14 PICNIC AREA
- 15 LOOP TRAIL
- 16 LAWN
- 17 ACCESS BRIDGE

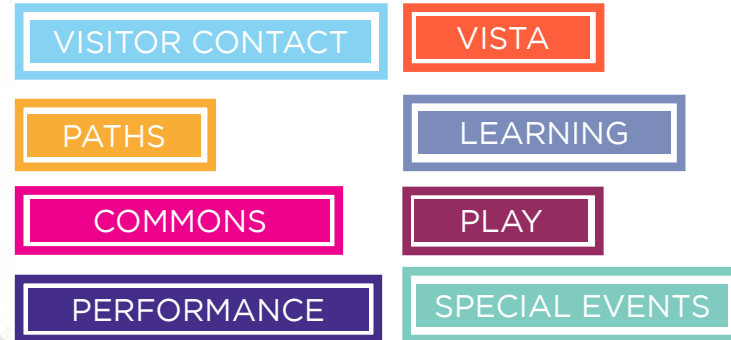
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Scale: 1"=40'





## Program of Uses



## Planting



# Vista Park Master Plan | Concept 2 - PERFORMANCE ROOM

## Concept 2 - PERFORMANCE ROOM

- Emphasizes a community performance venue which delivers flexible and expandable use of an open air pavilion for performances or exhibitions
- Maximizes wooded areas and tree planting
- Strikes a balance between hardscape and planted areas
- Provides playgrounds, 'tot-lot', and areas for picnic and outdoor classrooms
- Offers spectacular vistas from observation decks with binoculars

### LEGEND

- 1 RESTROOM AND VISITORS CENTER
- 2 OUTDOOR CLASSROOM/GARDEN LAB
- 3 EXISTING PARKING LOT
- 4 SLOPED MEADOW
- 5 LAWN SEATING
- 6 OPEN AIR PAVILION
- 7 OBSERVATION DECK WITH BINOCULARS
- 8 RESERVOIR WALL
- 9 OBSERVATORY POINT
- 10 HIKING PATH WITH TIMBER STEPS
- 11 STAIR ACCESS
- 12 GATEWAY
- 13 PICNIC AREA
- 14 PLAYGROUND 'TOT-LOT'
- 15 LOOP TRAIL
- 16 LAWN
- 17 ACCESS BRIDGE

10' CONTOUR INTERVAL

0' 20' 40' 80'  
Scale: 1"=40'





## Program of Uses



## Planting



# Vista Park Master Plan | Concept 3 - LEARNING ROOM

## Concept 3 - LEARNING ROOM

- Emphasizes flexible use space that can be used for outdoor classrooms, garden 'labs' or agricultural exhibits
- Maximizes successional meadow planting and 'no mow' areas
- Pulls main circulation away from the edge
- Provides playgrounds, 'tot-lot', and a large challenge play area with slides and climbing
- Offers spectacular vistas from tiered observation decks with binoculars and interpretative panels

### LEGEND

- 1** RESTROOM AND VISITORS CENTER
- 2** OUTDOOR CLASSROOM/GARDEN LAB
- 3** EXISTING PARKING LOT
- 4** SLOPED MEADOW
- 5** PLAY AREA WITH SLIDES AND CLIMBING
- 6** PLAYGROUND/'TOT-LOT'
- 7** OBSERVATION DECK WITH BINOCULARS
- 8** RESERVOIR WALL
- 9** OBSERVATORY POINT
- 10** HIKING PATH WITH TIMBER STEPS
- 11** STAIR ACCESS
- 12** GATEWAY
- 13** PICNIC AREA AND OVERLOOK
- 14** LOOP TRAIL
- 15** LAWN
- 16** ACCESS BRIDGE
- 17** SEAT WALL

10' CONTOUR INTERVAL

0' 20' 40' 80'  
Scale: 1"=40'





## Program of Uses

VISITOR CONTACT	VISTA
PATHS	LEARNING
COMMONS	PLAY
PERFORMANCE	SPECIAL EVENTS



## Planting

URBAN WOODS	
SHADE TREES	
LAWN	
MEADOW	
FLOWERING TREES	

# Vista Park Master Plan | Concept 4 - PLAY + PERFORMANCE ROOM

## Concept 4 - PLAY + PERFORMANCE ROOM

- Emphasizes a variety of play spaces including a challenge play area with large slides and climbing, plus traditional playgrounds and 'tot-lot'
- Maximizes tree planting and arboretum-like character
- Minimizes pavement and built hardscape
- Allows for passive recreation and small scale performance on picnic platforms/mini stages
- Provides multi-purpose stage/splash pad integrated with play area
- Offers spectacular vistas from observation decks with binoculars and benches

### LEGEND

- 1** RESTROOM AND VISITORS CENTER
- 2** OUTDOOR CLASSROOM/GARDEN LAB
- 3** EXISTING PARKING LOT
- 4** PICNIC PLATFORMS/STAGES
- 5** SLOPED MEADOW
- 6** PLAYGROUND/'TOT-LOT'
- 7** PLAY AREA WITH SLIDES AND CLIMBING
- 8** OBSERVATION DECK WITH BINOCULARS
- 9** RESERVOIR WALL
- 10** OBSERVATORY POINT
- 11** HIKING PATH WITH TIMBER STEPS
- 12** STAIR ACCESS
- 13** GATEWAY
- 14** PICNIC AREA
- 15** LOOP TRAIL
- 16** LAWN
- 17** ACCESS BRIDGE
- 18** PERFORMANCE STAGE/SPLASH PAD

10' CONTOUR INTERVAL

0' 20' 40' 80'  
Scale: 1"=40'



## POTENTIAL LIGHTING PLAN

- LEGEND**
- 1** ENTRY SAFETY LIGHTING
  - 2** POLE MOUNTED PATH LIGHTING
  - 3** RECESSED LIGHTING STRIP
  - 4** RAILING LIGHTING
  - 5** BOLLARD LIGHTING
  - 6** PARKING LOT LIGHTING



10' CONTOUR INTERVAL

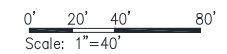




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## Lighting



## Vistas

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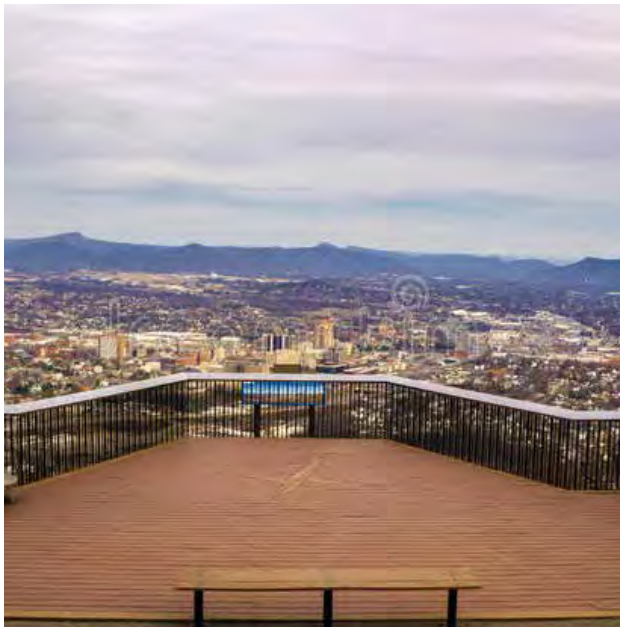
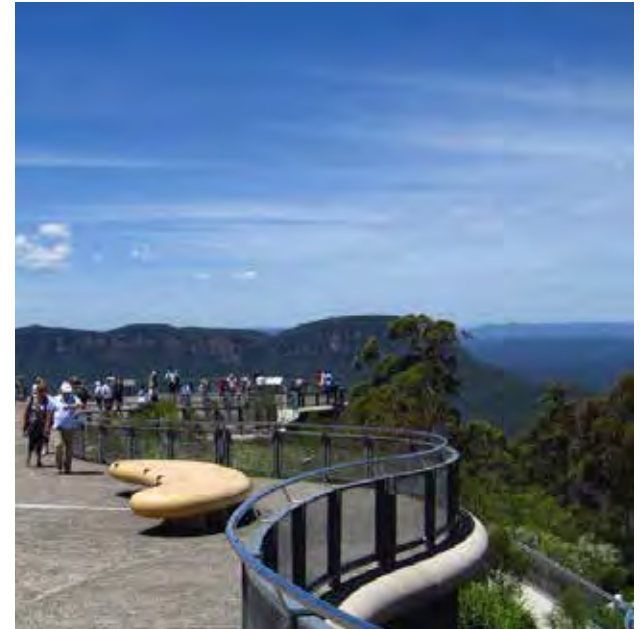
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## Vistas

# Paths

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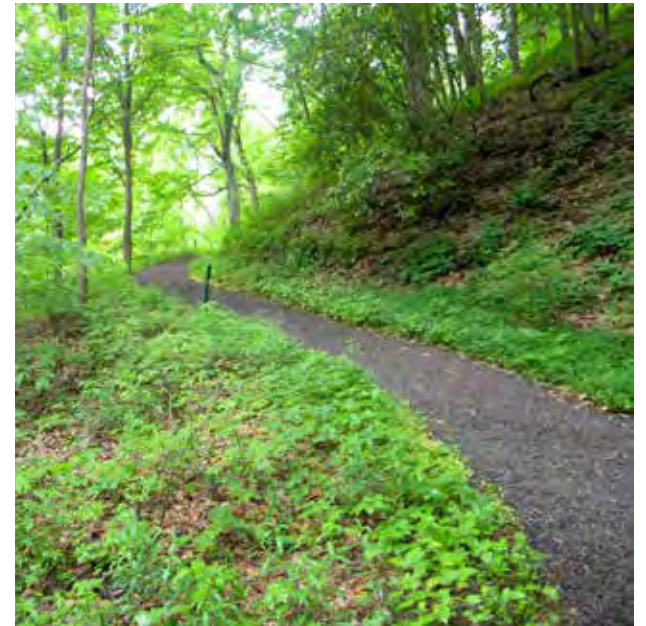
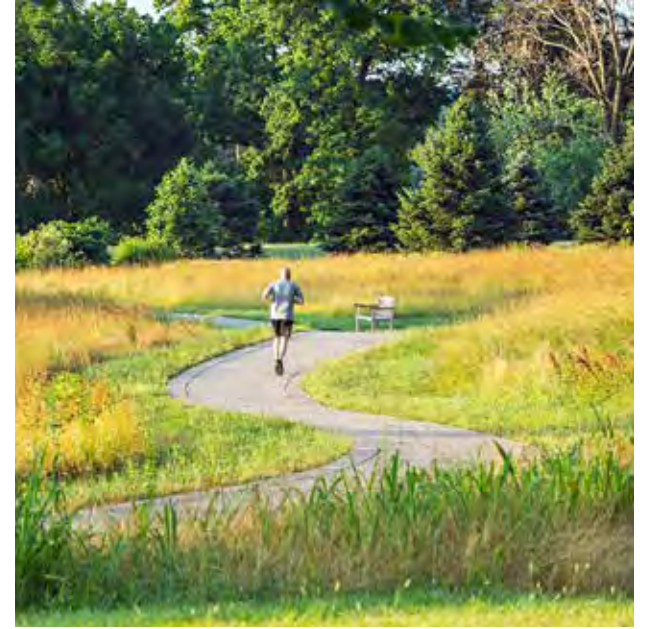


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# Paths



# Play

Photo credits:

Top row, from left to right: Medium.com, Youngparents.com, Kidsaandnature.com

Bottom row, from left to right: Play Structures, Play Structures, 356cincinnati.com



Photo credits:

Top row, from left to right: 365cincinnati.com, Gothamist, City of Richmond BC

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# Play

# Commons

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Photo credits:

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## Commons



# Learning

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Photo credits:

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# Learning



## Performance

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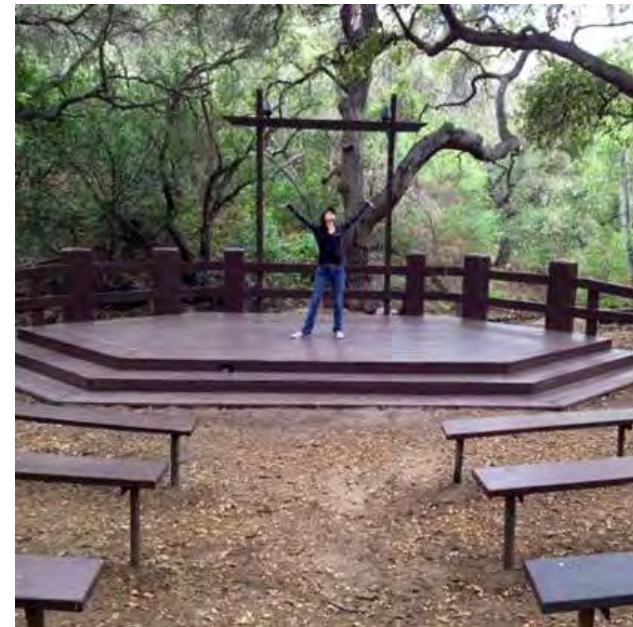
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## Performance



## Events

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Photo credits:

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## Events

## Visitor Facilities

Photo credits:

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Bottom row, from left to right: Outdoorproject.com, Ci.wheatridge.co.us, Sigfriedconstruction





Photo credits:

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Bottom row, from left to right: Outdoorproject.com, Varstella.site, Landzine

## Visitor Facilities



## Planting - Lawn

Photo credits:

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Bottom row, from left to right: Tripadvisor, Rhodeside & Harwell, Rhodeside & Harwell

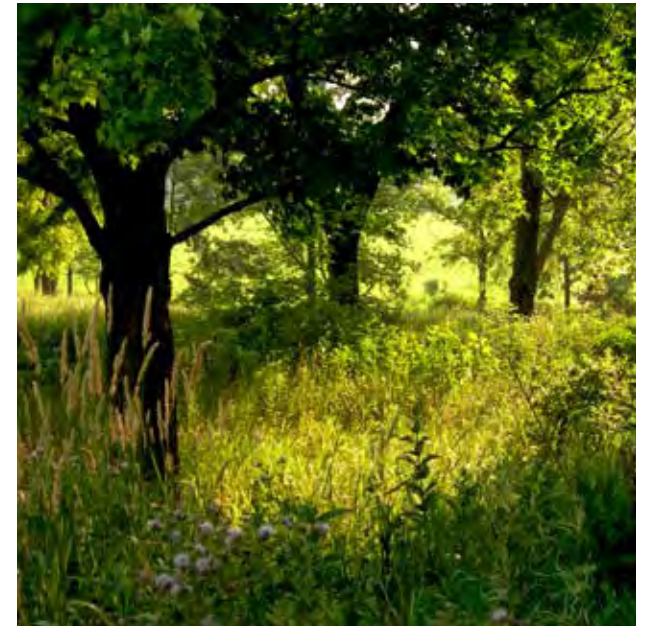


Photo credits:

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## Planting - Lawn



## Planting - Successional Meadow

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Photo credits:

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## Planting - Flowering Tree



## Planting - Urban Woods

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Photo credits:

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Bottom row, from left to right: Rhodeside & Harwell, Plantwise restoration, Plantwise restoration

## Planting - Landscape Restoration



# Stormwater Management

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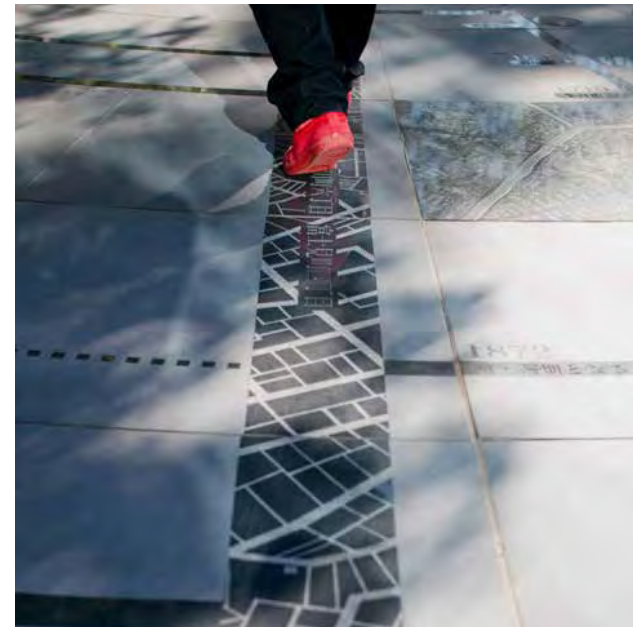
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Bottom row, from left to right: Robert Forloney, Robert Forloney, Landzine



## Wayfinding



# Interpretive Panels



## Interpretive Media and Programs

Interpretive media and programs will tell Vista Park's stories to different types of visitors at a variety of places in the park.

	Vista Park Interpretive Themes				Target Audience					Vista Park Places							
	Spectacular Vistas and Inspirational Views	Traditional Meets Sustainable	Recreation, Play and Education	A Place of Many Stores	Cultural and Heritage Travelers	Educational Visitors	Area Residents	Recreational Users	Weekend Explorers	Vista	Visitor Contact Station	Paths	Learning—Outdoor Classroom	Learning—Learning Garden	Performance	Play	Commons
<b>Interpretive Media and Programming</b>																	
Wayfinding Signage	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●				●	●
Interpretive Panels	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●
Exhibitions	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●		●				
Visitor Orientation	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●		●				
Permanent Interactives		●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●
Public Programming—Adults		●		●	●	●	●			●	●		●	●			
Public Programming—Children		●	●	●		●	●			●	●	●	●	●			
Public Programming—Family		●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●			
Festivals		●		●	●	●	●		●					●			
Special Events	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●					●			
Performances				●	●	●	●		●					●			
Docent Interpretation	●	●		●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●			●
Experiential Activities		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●		●
Interpretive Brochures	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●				●

## NEXT STEPS

The alternatives summarized in this master plan illustrate four potential concepts for future development of Vista Park. The New Jersey State Park Service will coordinate next steps in accomplishing the vision for the park. Recommended next steps include the following:

- Describe and implement a plan for sharing the master plan alternatives with the public and for involving the public in future planning for the park. Consider options from the NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program for funding to develop public information to spread the word in the community about the park.
- Develop and implement a landscape management plan for the property, with an emphasis on public safety, trash removal, controlling invasive plants, and enhancing the quality of the urban woods on the park perimeter. Involve the New Jersey State Forest Service and the NPS Olmsted Institute in developing the plan, as appropriate.
- Determine the ownership of land adjoining the park on the southwest corner of Totowa Avenue and Ryle Avenue; seek to add the property to the park.
- Determine the ownership of land within the right-of-way of Kearney Street and Marion Street where it abuts the park; address ownership issues, as necessary.
- Collaborate with the city of Paterson to jointly plan for Vista Park and Frank X. Graves Park.
- Collaborate with the city of Paterson and the National Park Service to develop a plan for future pedestrian connections between Vista Park and Overlook Park in Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park.
- Collaborate with the Paterson Public Schools regarding restoration plans for Hinchliffe Stadium and a long-term plan for parking at future events. As part of this collaboration, also address future plans for school property adjoining Jasper Street.
- Develop a strategy for funding refinement of the park master plan, final design, construction, and ongoing park operations.
- Refine the Vista Park Master Plan and complete schematic design.
- Complete construction documents.
- Complete park construction.
- Officially name the park.

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