



Reopening Wissahickon Park

A Community Partnership

16 March 2016

Project Update



Viabile options now exist to reopen Wissahickon Park

➤ Compatibility



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➤ Comparability

- Haverford YMCA ([Havertown PCP Superfund Site](#))
- B&GCGSL Herbert Hoover Club ([Carter Carburetor Superfund Site](#))

➤ Collaboration (ongoing)

- Legal examination (as led by Rob Fox of [Manko Gold Katcher Fox](#))
- Input to EPA on Proposed Plan and Remaining Removal/Remedial Tasks
- Next generation site planning and building design ([Simone](#) and [KBA+S](#))
- MOU ([Whitpain+NPVB&GCs+WRA](#)) to explore a shared indoor facility
- Accelerating fundraising efforts (private and public)



Updates as of 16 March 2016

Agenda...

- **Wissahickon Park – *Some Background***
- **West Ambler – *Legacy Challenges***
 - ⚙ **Flooding**
 - ⚙ **Brownfield Reutilization/Redevelopment**
 - ⚙ **Revitalization**
- **Viable Options**
- **Discussion**

- **Wissahickon Valley Boys & Girls Club
Component (*as presented in Fall 2015*)**



*Most slides are stuffed
with hyperlinks leading
to more information*

Wissahickon Park

Some background...



Circa 1960



For much of the 20th Century, Ambler was the “Asbestos Capital of the World” where a massive factory complex along the banks of the Wissahickon Creek (straddling Ambler, Lower Gwynedd, Upper Dublin, Whitmarsh, and Whitpain) churned out products including fireproof siding, shingles, and concrete pipes made with the “magical mineral.”



Boiler House

South Ambler Factory

Ambler Factory

Maple Street Pile

Ambler Piles
(aka “White Mountains” deleted from Superfund list in 1996 after 10-years of remediation)

Reservoir

West Ambler Factory

Whitpain Pile

West Ambler Alley



Circa 1940



Maple Street Pile

Reservoir

Former West Ambler Alley/Whitpain Pile & Closed Wissahickon Park

July 2008



In 2004, a developer proposed building a 17-story apartment building on top of the Maple Street Pile. Community opposition and concerns about asbestos waste led to a reexamination of BoRit and eventually listing of its 38-acres on the National Priorities List (NPL) as a 'Superfund Site.'



Legacy Challenges to West Ambler

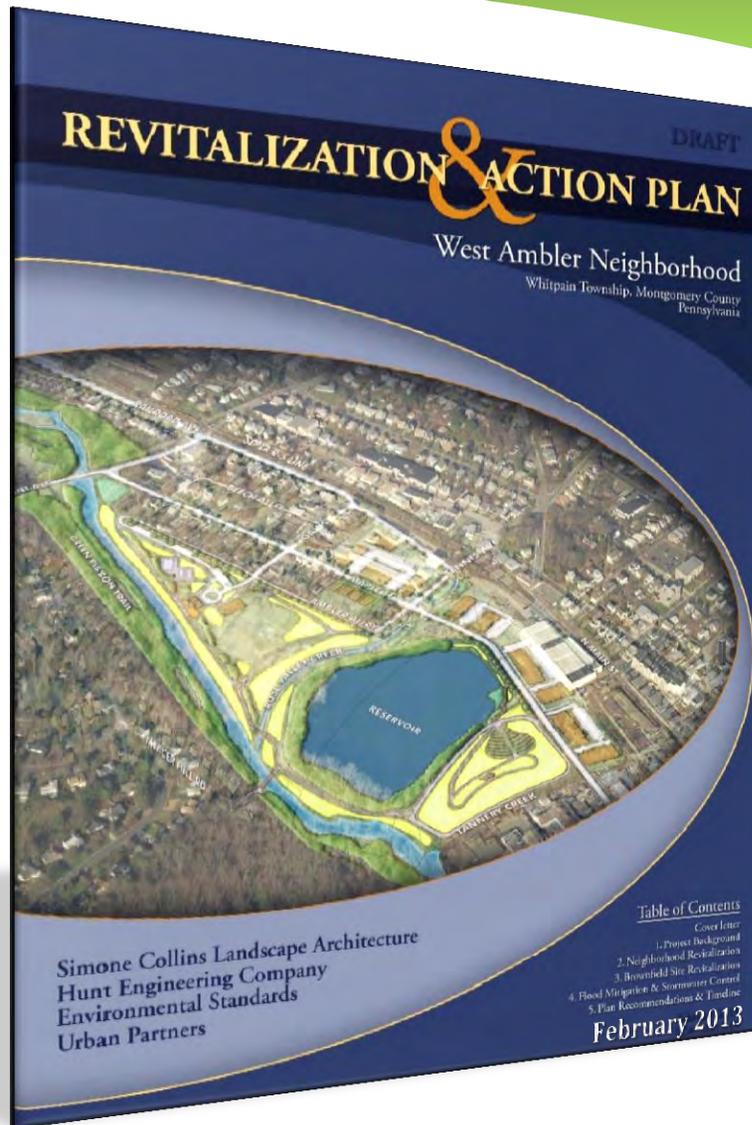


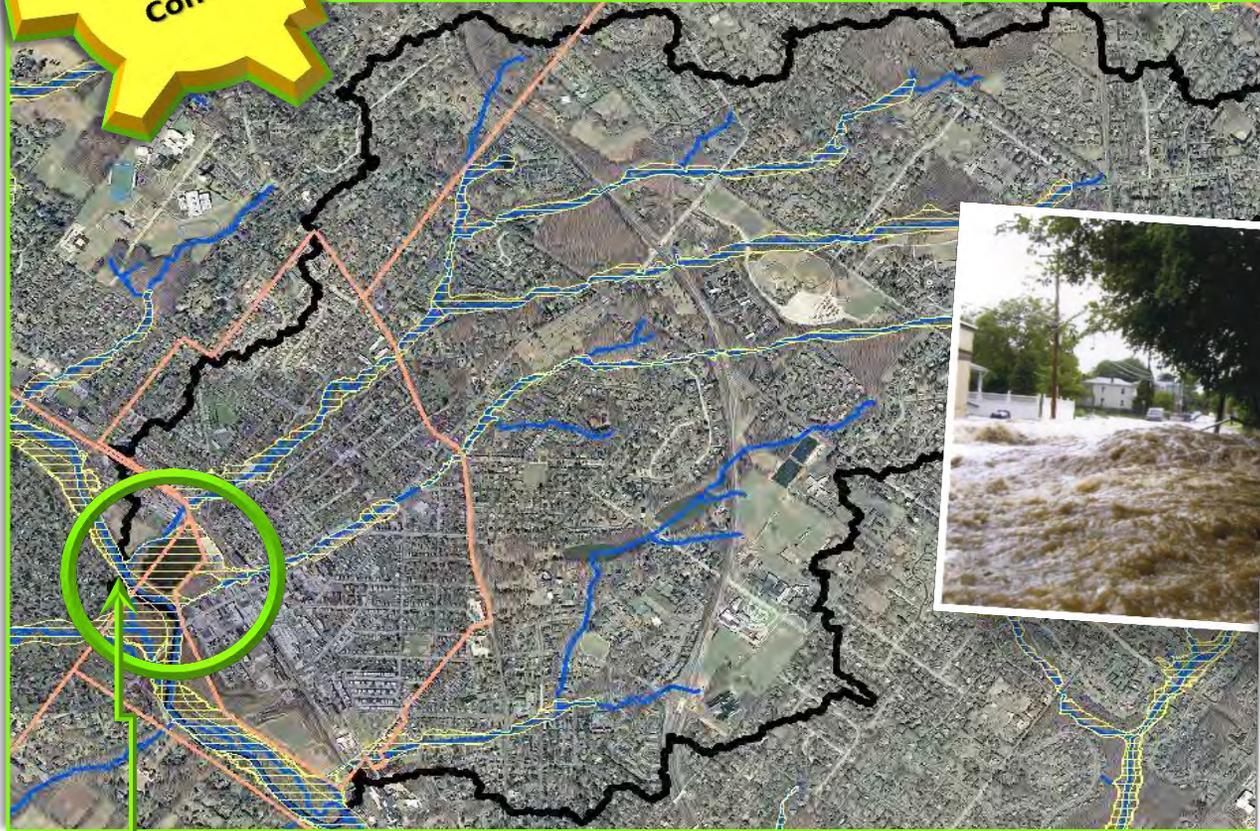
Figure 1.3 PROJECT GOALS. Whitpain's neighborhood of West Ambler faces several challenges to its' revitalization including flooding, major environmental contamination, and absent or aging infrastructure that has resulted in depressed property values and a quality of life that is not as positive as in other sections of the Township

Full plan here: <http://www.whitpaintownship.net/pages/westambler.php>





Maple Avenue Flash Floods



ROSE VALLEY FLOOD STUDY. Temple's Center for Sustainable Communities ([CSC](#)) [analyzed flooding issues](#) in the Ambler Area in parallel with a wider Wissahickon Watershed research project. As a result, **new flood maps have now been approved by FEMA.** All of the study's recommendations are reflected in the WAR Plan.



Flood Protection

Before



**Wissahickon Creek streambank
before stabilization project**

**Rose Valley streambank prior
to stabilization project**



Flood Protection

After



Wissahickon Creek streambank at completion

**Wissahickon Creek streambank
Geocell and rip-rap installation**



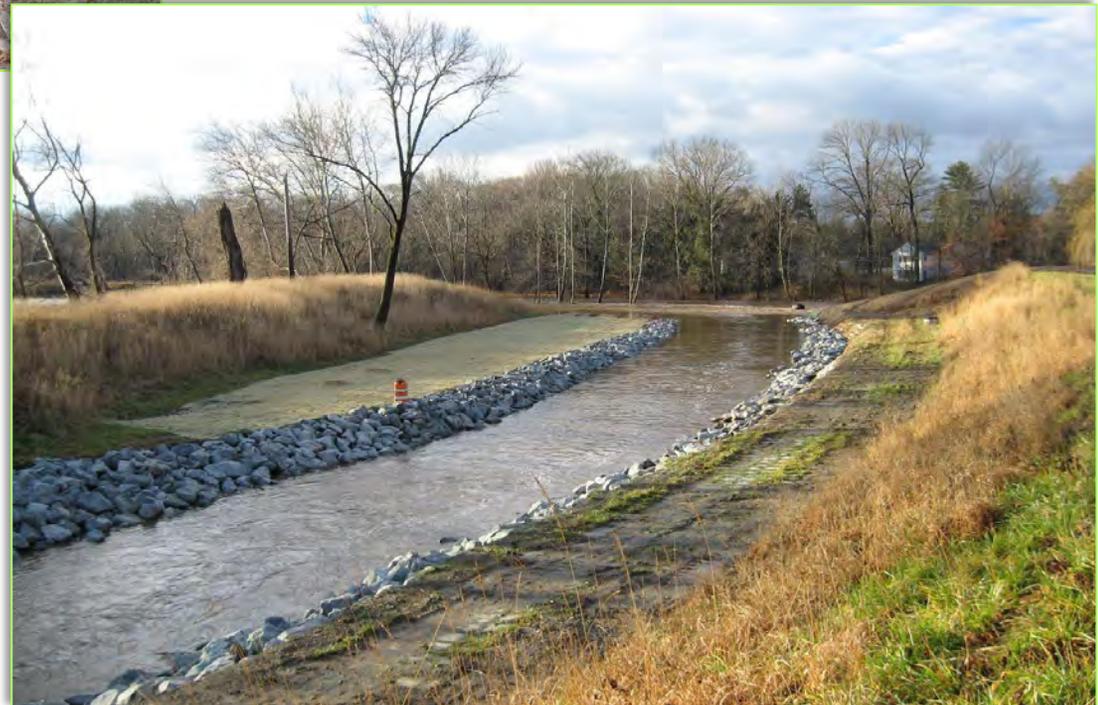
Flood Protection

Before



Rose Valley streambank at completion

Rose Valley Creek streambank during stabilization project



**Brownfield
Reutilization**

SUPERFUND
From **Discovery** to **Cleanup**

1. Site Discovery
2. Site Evaluation
3. NPL Listing
4. Remedial Investigation
5. Feasibility Study
6. Proposed Plan
7. **Remedy Selection**
8. Remedial Design
9. Remedial Action
10. Operation and Maintenance
11. NPL Deletion
12. Reuse

BoRit
(38-acres)

**Where
we're at
today.**



Betsy Lane



February 2016



**Wissahickon
Park**

Gross Area =
826,511 SF
19.02 AC

Net Area =
79,160 SF
11.00 AC

Betsy Lane



February 2016

Wissahickon Park

Before



West Ambler Alley (1963)

Wissahickon Park before EPA removal activity began (June 2008)



Health Risks

Before



Public Health Assessment

BOREIT ASBESTOS NATIONAL PRIORITY LIST SITE
AMBLEE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Conclusions	After reviewing the EPA's asbestos sampling in ambient air, soil, sediment, surface water, and air samples collected during ABS both on-site and off-site, PADOH concludes the following for the BoRit site:
Conclusion 1 (Off-site)	Based on a review of the 2008-2011 ambient air sampling data, current exposures to the off-site airborne asbestos levels are not expected to harm people's health.
Basis for Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The results of ambient air samples collected by EPA along the site perimeter and in the nearby community did not show levels of asbestos at levels exceeding EPA screening values for residential exposure. PADOH concludes that asbestos is not migrating off-site to the local community at levels that would harm their health.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">PADOH will continue to work with the local community, as well as EPA, to address potential community concerns related to the BoRit site. PADOH will consider reviewing additional data and issuing future public health documents, as needed.
Conclusion 2 (Off-site)	Based on an evaluation of ABS conducted off-site in residential areas and recreational walking trails, current exposures to the airborne asbestos levels (when off-site soils are being aggressively and vigorously disturbed) are not expected to harm people's health.
Basis for Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The levels of airborne asbestos detected during personal air monitoring and area perimeter samples while off-site soils were aggressively disturbed by simulating raking, mowing, jogging, hiking and children playing outside during lawn maintenance activities were low and less than the EPA's screening level for residential exposures. ABS attempts to simulate activities to evaluate exposure to asbestos in soil, if disturbed.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">If additional sampling off-site data becomes available, PADOH will review this data and issue future public health documents, as needed.
Conclusion 3 (Off-site)	Based on a review of the surface water samples collected on-site and off-site, exposures to asbestos in surface water are not expected to harm people's health.
Basis for Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">EPA collected surface water samples from the on-site reservoir and the Wissahickon, Tannery Run, and Rose Valley Creeks, which are adjacent to the site. Several of the samples exceeded EPA's maximum contaminant level (MCL) for asbestos in drinking water. However, the public is currently not using the surface water as a drinking water source and therefore this is not a completed exposure pathway.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">For people living near the site, occasional recreational exposures to surface water are not expected to be a public health concern.PADOH recommends periodic stream surveys and, as needed, the removal of visible pieces of asbestos in the Wissahickon Creek downstream of the site.

➤ **Public Health Assessment conducted by PA Dept. of Health (PADOH) and the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry (USATSDR) concluded (in part):**

#1 “Based on a review of the 2008-2011 ambient air sampling data, current exposures to the off-site airborne asbestos levels are not expected to harm people’s health.”

#5 “...on-site exposures to asbestos fibers when on-site soils and asbestos containing material (ACM) are aggressively disturbed could harm people’s health. Asbestos fibers show significant increases in on-site airborne levels when soils and ACM are disturbed through [activity based sampling] ABS while on the BoRit site.”

➤ **Full report here:**

<https://www.epaosc.org/sites/2475/files/january%202015%20PHA.pdf>

Removal Activity

Cleanup



Contractor crew collecting and removing ACM debris from Rose Valley Creek at the point where ramp will cross the creek (7/09)

ACM from the Wissahickon Creek ready for off-site disposal (9/10)



Protective Cap

Cleanup



Contractors lay geotextile fabric at the park, prior to adding clean fill to that area (11/15)

Contractors spreading clean fill over geotextile at the park parcel (10/15)



Protective Cap

Cleanup



View of recently planted shrubs along the park slope by the alley (10/15)

New curb area back filled to the proposed grade (3/13)



Protective Cap

Cleanup



06/18/2013 10:33

Whitpain Public Works crew installs new sewer line from Oak Street to the manhole location in the park (6/13)





November 2015



February 2016

More BoRit images here: https://www.epaos.org/site/image_zoom.aspx?site_id=2475&counter=260062



RESOLVED: Reopen Wissahickon Park

WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP

RESOLUTION NO. 1088

A RESOLUTION RELATING TO WEST AMBLER REVITALIZATION AND THE REOPENING OF WISSAHICKON PARK

WHEREAS, Whitpain Township's remains committed to the safe and successful revitalization of the West Ambler Village Area as detailed in the "West Ambler Revitalization & Action Plan" which was developed with broad community input throughout 2012 and 2013 and approved in June 2013 by the Board of Supervisors as an addendum to the Township's existing Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is currently in the process of completing an emergency removal action and will release in the near future a proposed long-term remedy for the 17.04-acre BoRit Superfund Site which straddles Ambler Borough, Upper Dublin Township, and Whitpain and includes the 17.73-acre Wissahickon Park in the West Ambler Village Area; and

WHEREAS, Wissahickon Park was a heavily used community park at the time of its closing in October 1984 due to the potential risk factors posed by asbestos-containing materials (ACM) present on the parcel; and

WHEREAS, the "West Ambler Revitalization & Action Plan" envisions a future use for the entire BoRit Site as an integrated public space that includes athletic fields and courts, a playground, trails, observation decks, public restrooms, parking, and potentially a Boys and Girls Club building to serve the surrounding community; should the final cleanup remedy lend itself to such uses and facilities; and

WHEREAS, Whitpain Township as owner of the Wissahickon Park portion of the BoRit Site wants to participate in this Revitalization Plan in coordination with EPA;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Whitpain Township – consistent with all of the requirements of the USEPA final remedy that are specific to the Wissahickon Park parcel and as to be codified in a future Record of Decision (ROD) – reaffirms its desire to see Wissahickon Park reopened for both passive and active recreational purposes to include but not limited to athletic fields and courts, a playground, trails, observation decks, public restrooms, parking, and potentially a Boys and Girls Club building to serve the surrounding communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Whitpain Township is committed to partnering with all of the neighboring communities and any public or private organization interested in helping to design, fund, construct, operate, and utilize Wissahickon Park to build value, enhance the quality of life, and ensure the health and safety for all who live in, work in, and enjoy the West Ambler Village Area and surrounding communities.

RESOLVED AND ADOPTED by this 20th day of May 2015.

WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS


Frederick J. Conner, Jr., Chairman

Alan D. Zueker, Vice-Chairman

Anthony J. Greco, Secretary

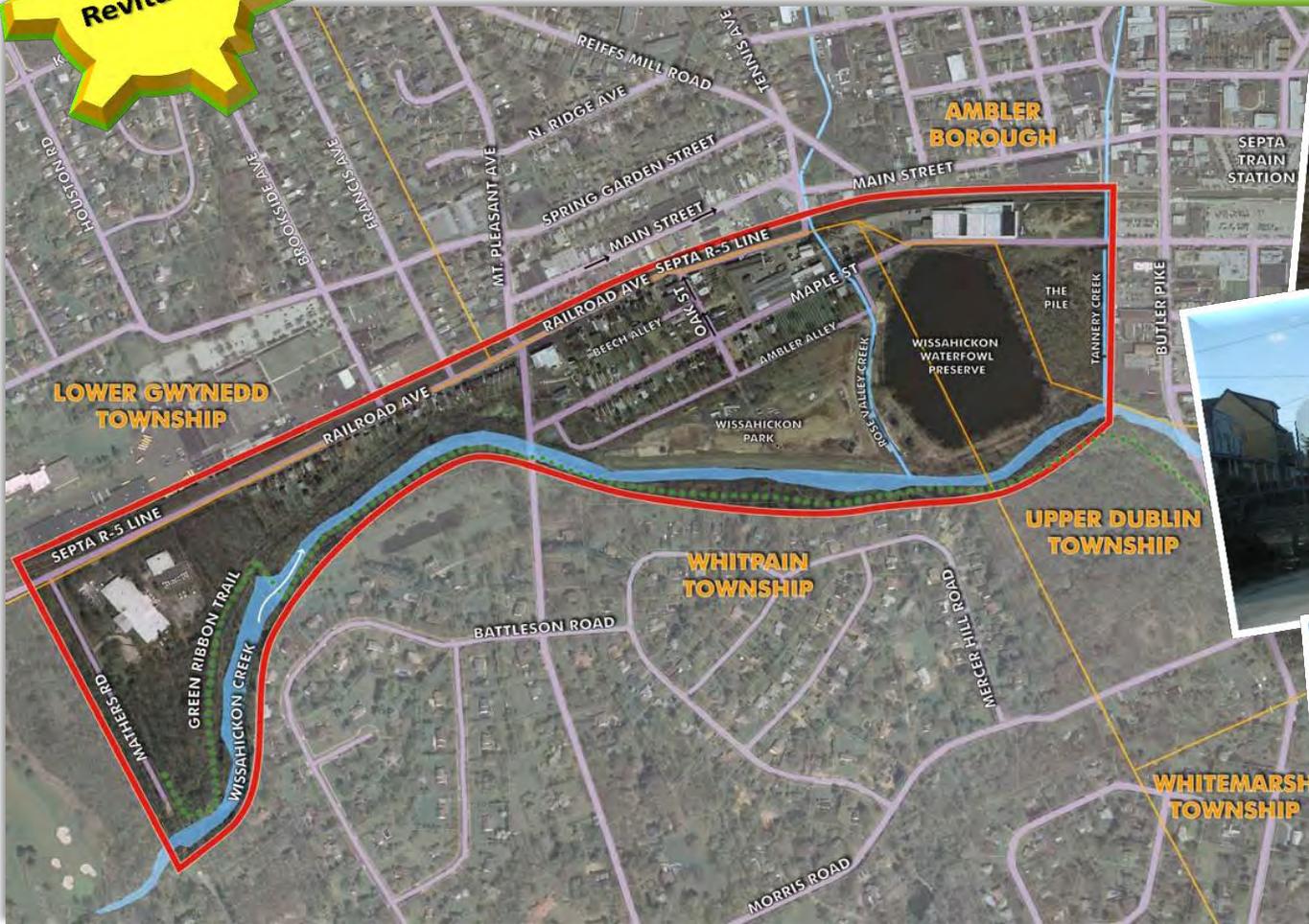
Melissa Murphy-Welch, Treasurer

Kenneth E. Wollman, Asst. Secretary

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West Ambler Village Area



Multi-municipal Cooperation Necessary. As one of Whitpain's four (4) remaining village areas, West Ambler abuts three (3) neighboring municipalities that each face significant redevelopment pressures.





Infrastructure Improvement Projects



Completed Projects

- 1 Sluiceway modifications (upstream barriers)
- 2 Sluiceway modifications (New hinged gate)
- 3 Rose Valley Stream channel widening & fortification
- 4 2013 Road resurfacing project
- 5 2013 Sidewalk & streetscape project

Projects In Progress & Proposed Projects

- 6 Wissahickon Park & Borit remediation (in progress)
- 7 Stream channel daylighting & widening
- 8 Beech Alley improvements
- 9 Tennis Ave extension
- 10 Future site/infrastructure improvements
- 11 Mt. Pleasant Ave gates for road closure during high water. Set to begin in 2015
- 12 2014 Road resurfacing project
- 13 Future RR Ave streetscape & sound barriers
- 14 Ambler Alley widening
- 15 Future sidewalk & streetscape



Park Master Plan: Option 1



- | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 MAIN PARK ENTRANCE | 6 OPEN LAWN | 11 MEADOW PER | 16 AMPHITHEATER | 21 STORMWATER BMP |
| 2 DROP/OFFS PAVILION/RESTROOMS | 7 BASKETBALL COURT | 12 TREE PLANTING ON MOUNDED EARTH (TYP) | 17 OBSERVATION PAVILION | |
| 3 SECONDARY ENTRANCE / NEW PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY TO MAPLE | 8 PICKLE BALL COURTS | 13 ROSE CREEK PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE | 18 BOARDWALK / OBSERVATION DECKS | |
| 4 PARKING (30 SPACES) | 9 LAWN VOLLEYBALL COURT | 14 WISSAHICKON CREEK PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE | 19 RESERVOIR BANK HABITAT RESTORATION | |
| 5 COMMUNITY BUILDING | 10 PLAYGROUND | 15 12 FT WIDE RUNNING LOOP (173 MI) | 20 ROSE CREEK RESTORATION AREA | |



Park Master Plan: Option 2



- | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 MAIN PARK ENTRANCE | 6 BOYS & GIRLS CLUB | 11 MEADOW FIELD | 16 AMPHITHEATER | 21 STORMWATER BMP |
| 2 DROP OFF & PAVILION/RESTROOMS | 7 BASKETBALL COURT | 12 TREE PLANTING ON MOUNDED EARTH (TYP) | 17 OBSERVATION PAVILION | |
| 3 SECONDARY ENTRANCE / NEW PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY TO MAPLE | 8 RICKIE BALL COURTS | 13 ROSE CREEK PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE | 18 BOARDWALK / OBSERVATION DECKS | |
| 4 PARKING (10 SPACES) | 9 LAWN VOLLEYBALL COURT | 14 WISSAHICKON CREEK PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE | 19 RESERVOIR BANK HABITAT RESTORATION | |
| 5 PARKING (150 SPACES) | 10 PLAYGROUND | 15 12 FT. WIDE RUNNING LOOP (1.3 MI) | 20 ROSE CREEK RESTORATION AREA | |



In a historic victory for environmental justice, EPA and B&GCA announce \$30M cleanup of Superfund Site.

Viabile options now exist to reopen Wissahickon Park

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Wissahickon Valley Boys & Girls Club *A Public-Private Partnership*

Fall 2015

Project Update

Welcome !

Agenda...

- ❑ A clubhouse for the Wissahickon Valley – **Why are we here ?**
- ❑ Update on ‘Ambler Project Learn’
- ❑ Why do we need a club here?
- ❑ What’s been done to date?
- ❑ Potential Sites
- ❑ **Discussion**



Ambler Project Learn. An intensive homework and mentoring program now serving 35+ WSD students. Hundreds more will be served every school day when WVB&GC opens.

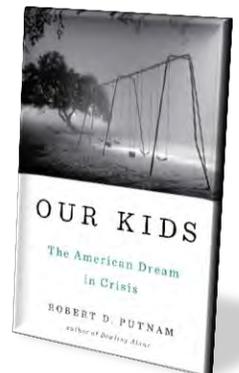
Why do we need a club here?

- ▶ **4,353** students currently enrolled in WSD – Plus twice that many enrolled in other area schools (e.g., UDSD, Archdiocese, private) or, not going to school at all
- ▶ **890** economically disadvantaged WSD students – As determined by eligibility for the Free/Reduced Meal Program
- ▶ **204** educationally at-risk WSD students – The district provides extra assistance beyond regular classrooms for these ‘Title I’ kids
- ▶ **77+** West Ambler students
- ▶ **ALL OUR STUDENTS!**
 - *Our community has **working-class neighborhoods** struggling economically and qualitatively*
 - *Ambler YMCA is an incredible facility but is now far away from the kids needing it most (**WVB&GC will complement the Y!**)*
 - *In today’s plugged-in age of ‘play dates’ and structured schedules for many area youth, a clubhouse will provide a **SAFE HAVEN** for ALL KIDS to play and learn **TOGETHER***
- ▶ **PROVEN MODEL*** – B&GC programs are time-tested; they ensure educational success and character development as demonstrated by thousands of North Penn and Souderton graduates

* For how see here: <http://bgca.org/whatwedo/EducationCareer/Pages/EducationCareer.aspx>
and here: <http://www.npvclub.org/education/>



America’s kids (our kids) are in crisis



*as presented
in Fall 2015*

What are we doing?

- ▶ **MISSION** – **WVB&GC will enable all young people in the Wissahickon Valley – especially those who need us most – to reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens.**
 - Accomplished from a unique location on the banks of the Wissahickon Creek
 - Within easy walking or biking distance of all of West Ambler, South Ambler, Pennlyn, and other nearby neighborhoods in Ambler, Lower Gwynedd, Upper Dublin, and Whitpain
 - Safe, positive, and inexpensive year-round programming (*\$20/year*)
- ▶ **Advisory Committee + Core Team** – As follow on to the Organizing Committee, a 30-member task-organized "team of teams" is planning, designing, and raising the funds to complete the entire project
- ▶ **Project Components** – Four (4) mutually supportive and generally concurrent components:
 - I. **Education & Wellness Component**
 - II. **Safe Connections Component**
 - III. **Recreation & Athletic Component**
 - IV. **Fundraising & Sustainment Component**



** Pending future outcome of BoRit Superfund process
(<http://www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/npl/PAD981034887.htm>)*

The Journey



- 
2017 **WVB&GC OPENS ?** *Community celebrates opening of a uniquely exceptional clubhouse*
- 
2015 **Wissahickon Valley Club** – *A building site is under contract; Project builds momentum*
- 
'11-14 **Ambler Project Learn + Organizing Committee** *Pilot homework program takes off; Many clubhouse sites analyzed/rejected*
- 
2008 **Club for Ambler Area Kids ?** *Informal efforts to build clubhouse & programs begin coalescing*
- 
2006 **Indian Valley Club** – *Public & private partners build model club on brownfield site in Souderton*
- 
1966 **North Penn Valley Club** – *Founded by 6 concerned parents; NPVB&GC thrives in the heart of Lansdale*
- 
1956 **Congressional Charter** – *50th Anniversary*
- 
1906 **Nationwide Movement Begins** – *53 Boston-area clubs affiliate*
- 
1860 **A Cause is Born** – *Believing that boys roaming the streets of Hartford needed a positive alternative, 3 moms found the Good Will Club*

*as presented
in Fall 2015*

as presented in Fall 2015

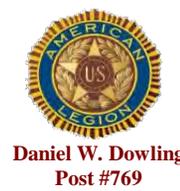


I. Education & Wellness Component

II. Safe Connections Component

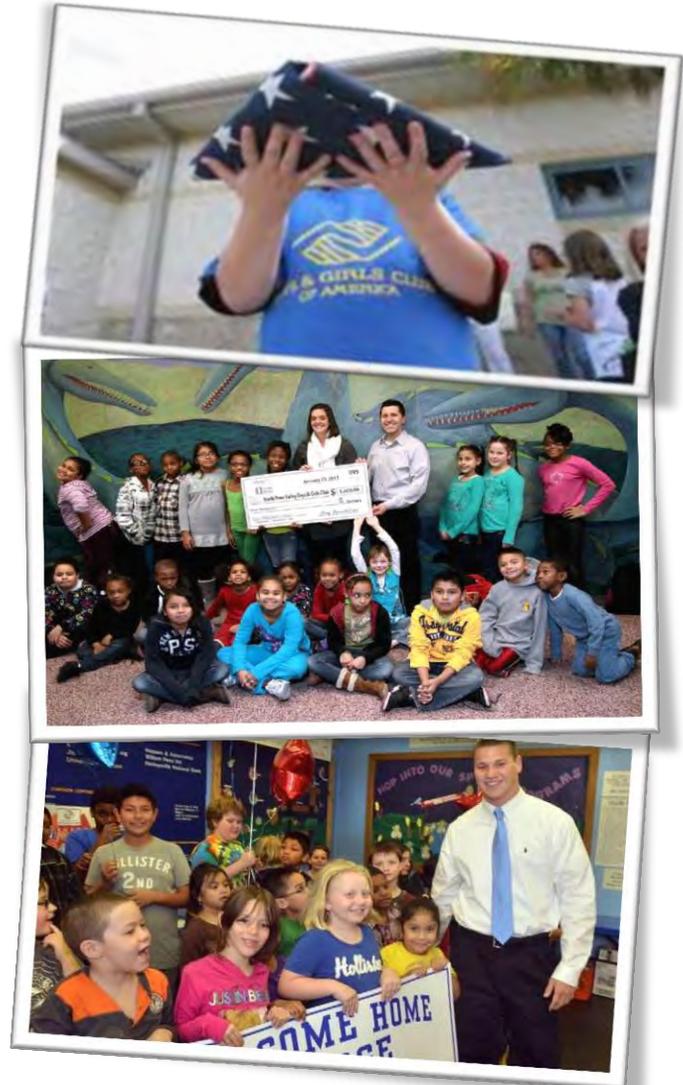
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