

SUMMIT PARK LINE FEASIBILITY STUDY

SUMMIT PARK LINE CREATING SUMMIT'S LANDMARK

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Prepared for:



City of Summit
Summit Park Line Foundation

By:



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All images are created by the WSP|Parsons Brinckerhoff unless otherwise noted.

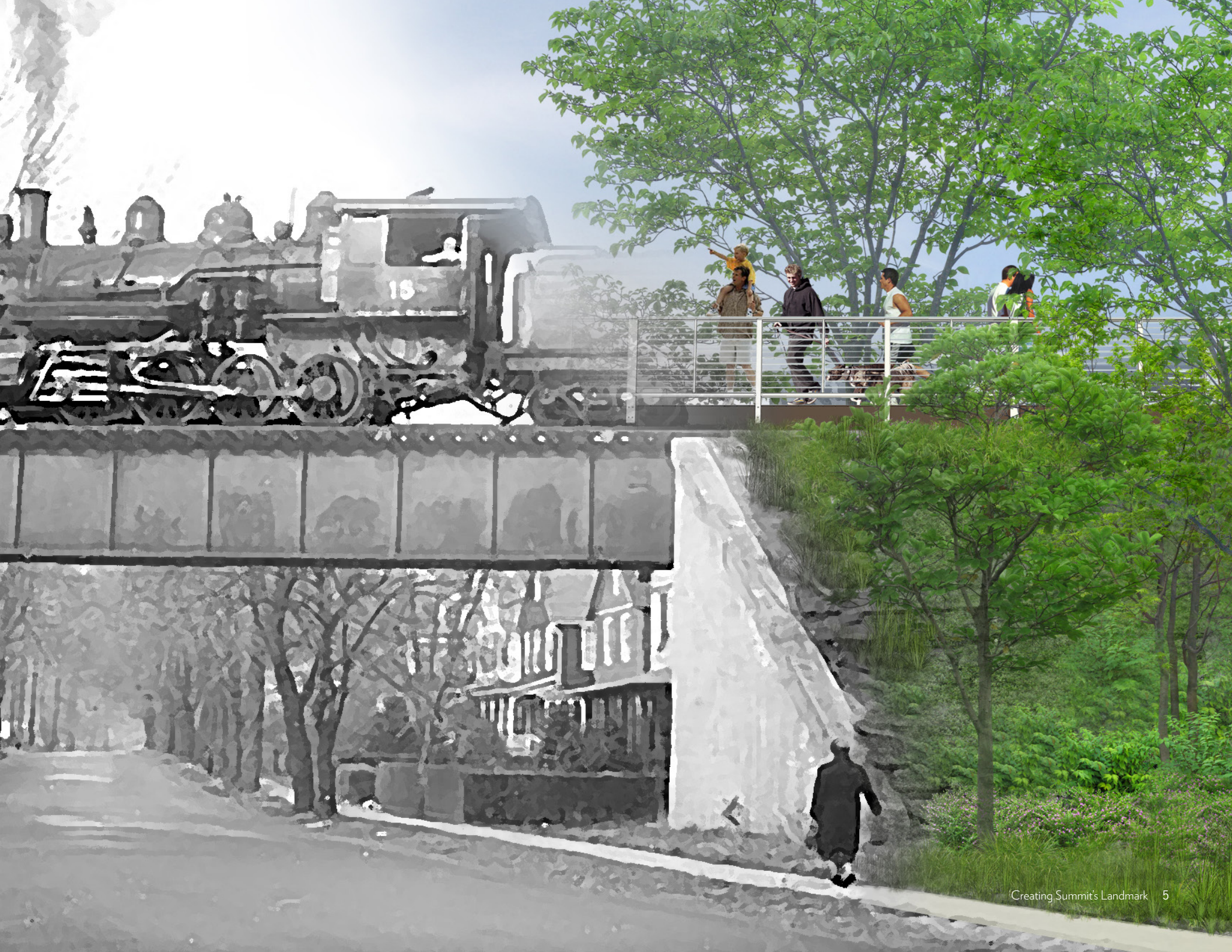
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INTRODUCTION

The City of Summit, located in Union County, New Jersey, is an economically and culturally diverse municipality of approximately 21,000 residents, with a thriving and walkable downtown. Summit maintains a distinct local identity and strong sense of community. Summit is located in an advantageous location, proximate to major highways, NJ TRANSIT rail, Newark Liberty International Airport, and midtown Manhattan via direct regional rail access in under 30 minutes.

Summit is continually looking for ways to increase its attractiveness and improve the quality-of-life for its residents and businesses. The City of Summit has identified a potential opportunity to convert an abandoned piece of infrastructure into usable public space. This report seeks to assess the feasibility of converting this abandoned rail right-of-way into active park space and envisions the opportunity for its transformation into a signature public amenity for the City of Summit.





1. PROJECT CONTEXT AND STUDY AREA

The Summit Park Line (The Park Line)—envisioned as a linear park that would replace an historic elevated railroad corridor—represents a unique opportunity to create a public amenity that would generate value for the community and provide both local and regional connectivity. As proposed, the 1.2-mile-long Park Line would begin a few hundred yards from downtown Summit, winding through eastern Summit all the way to Orchard Road in Springfield Township (see Figure 2). The trail would run along the elevated former Rahway Valley Railroad (RVRR), providing stunning views of the Manhattan skyline.

The Park Line is intended as a gateway feature for the City, a place for both active and passive recreation, and a new pathway connecting local attractions, parks, major employment centers, and a local school. The Park Line has the potential to change the face of the City, distinguishing Summit as a great place to live, work, and play.

In the long term, a future extension of the proposed Park Line could connect downtown Summit to a broader network of regional and national parks and recreational assets, including the East Coast Greenway that extends all the way from Maine to Florida.



Figure 1. Downtown Summit

Source: Fred R. Conrad for the New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2015/11/01/realestate/living-in-summit-nj/s/01LIVING-SUMMIT-slide-79TX.html?_r=0

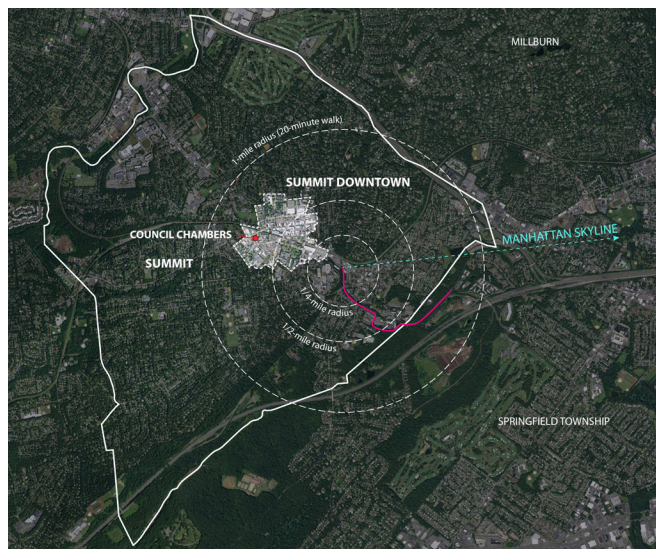


Figure 2. Project Context (Left) and Study Area Map (Right)

2. FROM PAST TO FUTURE: HOW AN INSPIRATION BECAME A VISION

The RVRR ran passenger and freight rail for close to a century between Summit and Kenilworth, connecting with the Lehigh Valley Railroad, Central Railroad of New Jersey, and the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad, connecting to the national rail network. As the highway system expanded and truck freight began to replace rail as the preferred mode for travel, the RVRR went into decline and was ultimately closed down to passenger and freight use completely in 1992. In 1994, New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJ DOT) purchased the line. Without active rail use, the line was quickly overtaken by nature and has been disregarded by many Summit residents.

Dr. Robert J. Rubino, a City Council member and former President of the Summit Common Council, first championed the Park Line vision in 2014. He was inspired by the spectacular views of the Manhattan skyline that can be seen from the rail right-of-way, and saw a unique opportunity to benefit Summit by converting this overgrown ribbon of land that snaked through the City into a green space for its residents. The first concepts of a linear park were created by a group of graduate students at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University. Their work focused on providing recreational opportunities and public access to dramatic views of the Manhattan skyline, as well as connections to Hidden Valley Park, Briant Park, and downtown Summit.

The Summit Park Line Foundation was then formed as a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of the Park Line, and the City of Summit initiated the Summit Park Line Feasibility Study (The Feasibility Study).

Initiated in the spring of 2015, this Feasibility Study has analyzed existing conditions, assessed feasibility, defined opportunities and constraints, developed design concepts, and researched financing and implementation strategies for the Park Line. As discussed in Chapter V, all concepts were vetted by the Park Line Steering Committee (established as part of this effort) and presented to the public in the fall of 2015, resulting in a design

vision and implementation plan consistent with the community's vision for the Park Line.

The project team developed the following principles to guide designers, officials, and the public as they shaped the initial vision into an implementable project:

1. Establish a high-quality public realm
2. Enhance local & regional mobility & connectivity
3. Incorporate sustainable & context-sensitive designs
4. Create a signature landscape feature
5. Strive for design flexibility, implementation feasibility, & economic opportunity

This report summarizes the myriad potential benefits related to the Park Line, ranging from creating a new community destination to increasing real estate values. Local and national precedents that could help to shape the Park Line are then reviewed, followed by a discussion of the vision and design principles that informed the design features and the intended role of the Park Line in Summit. The concept design is described through three distinct zones or “places”, each with unique characteristics and special access strategies. The report culminates by presenting a path forward, including a description of the important next steps that need to be taken to continue to build design momentum, increase awareness, and build capacity within the City to support the development of the Park Line.



Figure 3. How an Inspiration Became a Vision



BENEFITS OF THE PARK LINE

Summit is already a preferred place to live and work by creating an inviting, walkable, sustainable downtown core surrounding its train station with local attractions and amenities for its residents and workers. To that end, the City has partnered with the NJ DOT and NJ TRANSIT to build a transit-connected and walkable downtown, and was awarded designation as a Transit Village in September of 2013, the benefits of which are further discussed in Chapter V. Building upon this approach, Summit passed a “Complete Streets” Resolution in 2014, committing to creating streets that accommodate all users for all trips. The Park Line would build upon these efforts providing a new gateway amenity—unique to the City—that would enhance Summit’s prominence as a walkable, fun, family-oriented, business-friendly destination with great public spaces for people to enjoy.



Figure 4. View of Manhattan Skyline from the Summit Park Line
Source: Robert J. Rubino.

The proposed Park Line aligns with Summit Master Plan's goals. The Park Line would also address recommendations of the Union County Parks Master Plan, which specifically identifies using the RVRR as a potential greenway to create a connection between open spaces and with adjacent cities.

The multiple potential benefits of the Park Line are discussed below.

COMMUNITY AMENITY

The City of Summit is rich in recreational resources, with six sports fields/recreational centers and the large wooded parks of Briant Park, Hidden Valley Park, and Passaic River Park, which lie at the periphery of the City. Briant Park and Hidden Valley Park, both located in eastern Summit, are unique natural habitats and home to numerous species of plants and animals. Briant Park was designed in the 1930s by the nationally-renowned landscape architecture firm founded by Frederick Law Olmsted. Briant Park is a popular destination for exercising, fishing, and ice-skating and contains a well-used one-mile exercise trail loop. However, the park is not easily accessible by bike or on foot from Summit. By comparison, Hidden Valley Park is largely unprogrammed at this time, consisting of passive and inaccessible park land. There is a need for additional trails and biking routes to connect these amenities and enable residents to gain more enjoyment from these parks.

Existing streets in Summit tend to be car-oriented, lacking sufficient pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. There is a need for an easily accessible public open space that residents can walk to and walk along, and that can serve as a safe route to work, school, and other recreational destinations. There exists a need for a community space where Summit residents of all age groups come together, and where social activities are encouraged. The proposed Park Line could connect parks, create new pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and serve as a great public place that residents of Summit could use as a community space.

CONNECTIONS TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL DESTINATIONS

Similar to many municipalities in New Jersey, the City of Summit has a high rate of car ownership (96% according to 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates data) and maintains a heavy reliance on cars for local trips. The addition of a safe, direct, walkable connection between important activity centers could reduce automobile dependency, reduce congestion and parking demand, and increase mobility of seniors and children who typically rely upon others to drive them to their destinations.

Trails and parks are able to positively affect communities in various ways, ranging from improved public health to increased safety and even reduced reliance on fossil fuels by enhancing non-motorized accessibility and mobility. One of the goals in Summit's Master Plan is to enhance connectivity between its parks. The Park Line would accomplish this, and would also create the capacity for additional foot traffic connecting to and within downtown Summit.

The Park Line would connect a number of Summit's assets and provide a traffic-free route to both the train station and the downtown, the Summit Family Aquatic Center, and Jefferson Elementary School. It would also connect the community to two local major employers: Overlook Medical Center and Celgene.

The RVRR stretches well beyond the study area. A future extension of the Park Line—beyond that which is currently proposed in this Feasibility Study—could connect Summit to other regional parks and recreational resources in Union County. The RVRR would connect Hidden Valley Park (Summit), Briant Park (Summit), Houdaille Quarry (Summit/Springfield), Meisel Park, Rahway River Parkway (Springfield), Galloping Hill Golf Course (Kenilworth), and Blackbrook Park (Kenilworth), ending in Roselle Park on Westfield Avenue. If fully extended, the Park Line would connect downtown Summit to the East Coast

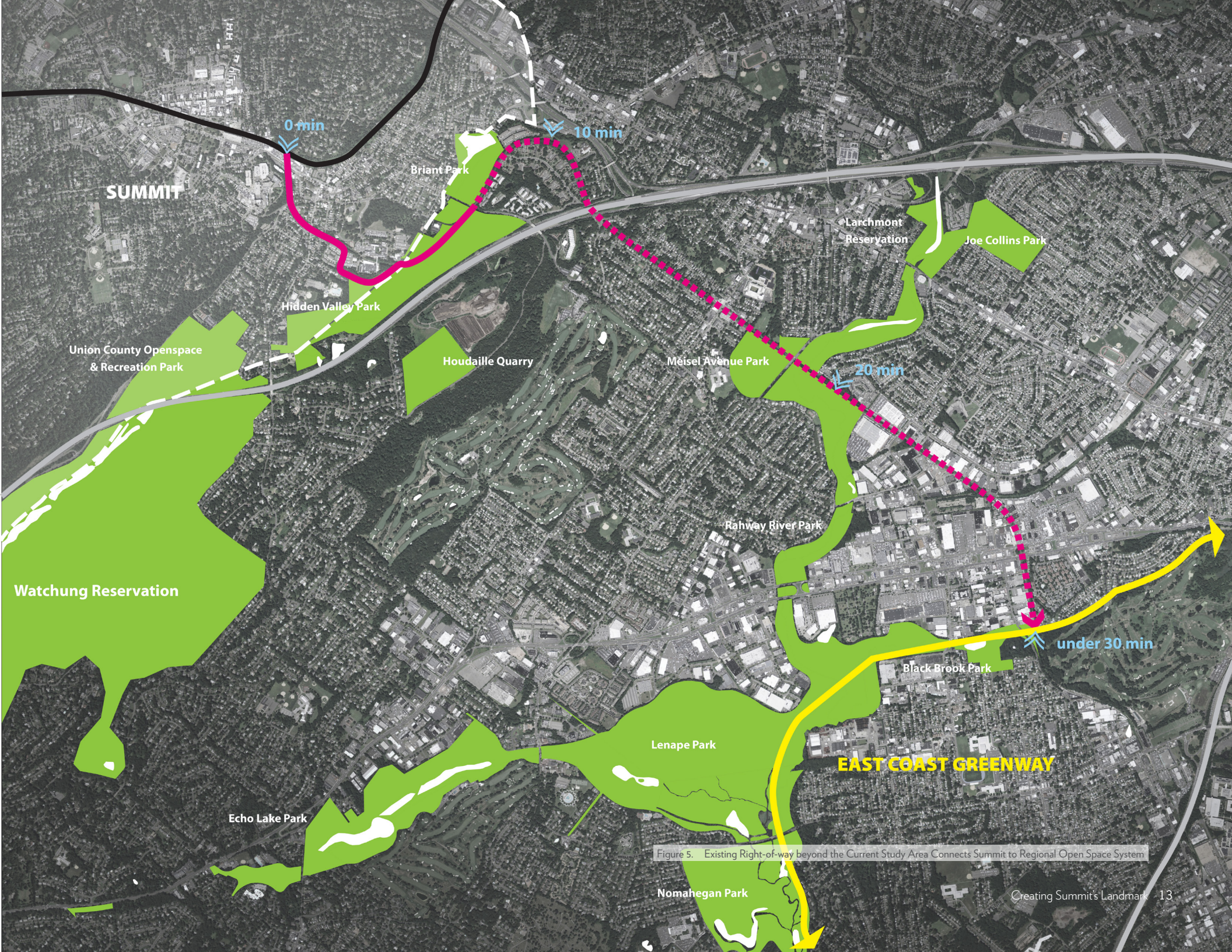


Figure 5. Existing Right-of-way beyond the Current Study Area Connects Summit to Regional Open Space System

POTENTIAL PARK LINE INVESTMENT BENEFITS

- **Decrease healthcare spending.** The City of Summit could partner with local hospitals to use the trail for exercise or physical therapy, thereby promoting a healthier community.
- **Reduce auto-dependence.** The Park Line could offer an additional travel choice, increasing safe routes for bicycling and walking in Summit.
- **Increase spending in the community.** The Park Line could be both a local and regional draw, encouraging more people to venture out in Summit and frequent local businesses.
- **Boost property values and spur development.** As evidenced by many studies, the Park Line could increase the value of properties that surround it. In complementing the City of Summit's other amenities, the addition of this destination could encourage more development, especially in the downtown.

Greenway—a national trail system that extends from Maine to Florida—by means of a 30-minute bicycle ride (see Figure 5).

ECONOMIC VALUE

Trails can be a desired neighborhood amenity that consequently boost local real estate values. As discussed in an article from the a Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, *Assessing the Economic and Livability Value of Multi-Use Trails*, the Burke Gillman Trail in the Seattle metropolitan area increased the selling price of houses close to the trail by an average of six percent. The Monon Trail in Indianapolis had an even greater effect: in a 1999 study, a statistical model showed that for 334 home sales within a half mile of the trail, the sales premium was approximately \$13,000 more than the average home not proximate to the trail and slightly more than 11% more of the average selling price, corresponding to a local property value impact of almost \$4.5 million (per the study, *Property Values, Recreation Values and Urban Greenways*). Aside from boosting residential property value, trails can also fuel commercial and retail development. For instance, as noted in a 2011 article by landscape planner Randall Arendt, the Platte River Greenway Trail in Denver created \$2.5 billion in new commercial development projects surrounding the trail.

Trails support existing commercial, retail, and entertainment businesses by increasing activity and foot traffic. A noteworthy example is the Middlesex Greenway in nearby northern New Jersey, with benefits documented in a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) completed as part of Together North Jersey's Local Demonstration Projects in collaboration with the New Jersey Health Impact Collaborative at Rutgers University. According to the HIA, survey respondents reported making an estimated 23,777 trips per year on the Greenway. Assuming the average trail user spends \$5 per visit (per the study, *Estimating the Economic Value and Impacts of Recreational Trails: A Case Study of the Virginia Creeper Rail Trail*), this would equate to a boost of \$118,885 in economic activity.

The HIA also showed that the Greenway provided new physical fitness opportunities and increased physical activity by community members. The same HIA revealed a strong connection between exposure to the outdoors and improved mental health condition. The Middlesex Greenway has partnered with local hospitals for use of the trail as a “prescription.” A similar partnership could possibly be pursued between the City of Summit and Overlook Medical Center—a Park Line neighbor—as well as other surrounding local hospitals. In the long term, the Park Line could potentially be a model for reducing health care costs through recreation, illustrating positive returns for the Federal budget and value for the Federal Rails-to-Trails program.



INSPIRATION FROM OTHERS

Precedent Rails-to-Trails projects provide inspiration and lessons learned that can be applied to the Park Line. The following case studies reflect success stories throughout the nation in creating trails and recreational spaces that improved accessibility for physical fitness, promoted sustainability, and increased nearby property and business values. As discussed below, some of the key components leading to these successes included:

- Community-based, locally-initiated trails
- Elevated trails with design features
- Trails that connect communities





The City of Summit recognizes the success of these projects based on their ability to generate local support for a new park, incorporate the needs and desires of nearby residents, attract users, and provide benefits for the surrounding community. With public outreach for the Park Line already underway, the City of Summit will continue to integrate the local community's suggestions and concerns into the design and implementation of the project to build a local network of support.

COMMUNITY-BASED, LOCALLY-INITIATED TRAILS

The nearby Middlesex Greenway and Henry Hudson Trail are examples of trail projects that won community support to realize their implementation and continued to gain popularity after project completion. Championed by a coalition of local community groups, the 3.5-mile Middlesex Greenway—built along the former Lehigh Valley Railroad (LVRR) line—connects the towns of Edison, Metuchen and Woodbridge in northeastern New Jersey. The Edison Greenways Group has been the primary non-profit advocate for the Greenway and has collaborated closely with community groups as well as key stakeholders. Schools have partnered with the Greenway for educational purposes, local businesses have monetarily supported the Greenway, and community groups like the Boy Scouts have volunteered on occasions to clean the trail. The Greenway has also been the venue for various local events like small concerts and festivals.

Many other trails that will be further discussed were started by a local constituency that rallied the public to push the project forward. The High Line in New York City first started with a small group of supporters, Friends of the High Line. Similarly, Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail was a non-profit created to raise funding that initiated the Bloomingdale Trail in Chicago.



Figure 6. Middlesex Greenway in New Jersey
Source: erniea.com.



Figure 7. The High Line in New York
Source: Friends of the High Line, <http://www.thehighline.org/about>.

ELEVATED TRAILS WITH DESIGN FEATURES

The City of Summit is interested in creating a park that incorporates landscape and architectural features to attract visitors and create a regional destination that generates economic value for the surrounding community. As proposed in this Feasibility Study, and as discussed in Chapter IV, the Park Line would have sections that are raised above grade; while presenting design challenges, this condition would also provide unique access, use, views and connectivity opportunities that would make the Park Line experience more memorable. Successful projects such as the High Line in New York City and the Bloomingdale Trail in the City of Chicago can serve as precedents as the City of Summit explores opportunities related to the Park Line.

The High Line in New York City bears similarities to the Park Line, albeit on a much more urban scale. The High Line design approach included recognition of the history of the park's right-of-way as an important freight rail link. The High Line established

distinctive access points that allowed the park, which is mostly separated from the surrounding community, to touch down and create community space at ground level. The High Line was very successful in bringing nature into an urban setting. Similarly, the Park Line could establish a natural ribbon for public use, thereby resulting in a unique pedestrian experience for users.

Another example with relevance to the Park Line is the Bloomingdale Trail, the centerpiece of the 606 system of parks named for the zip codes of the City of Chicago. The Bloomingdale Trail is a 2.7-mile-long elevated biking and pedestrian path that uses the former Bloomingdale Railroad right-of-way and runs through four Chicago neighborhoods. The City of Chicago studied the Bloomingdale Railroad as potential open space for many years. A non-profit organization, Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, was formed to raise money and awareness, and in 2004, the concept was incorporated into an open space plan. This innovative, elevated park space for local Chicago residents and visitors has helped to transform neighborhoods, create a regional amenity, and build important community connections.

By implementing strong design measures, as featured in successful projects such as the High Line and Bloomingdale Trail, the Park Line could attract visitors from a larger catchment area, which in turn could generate economic benefits in the form of increased property values, new businesses, and an expanded tax base.

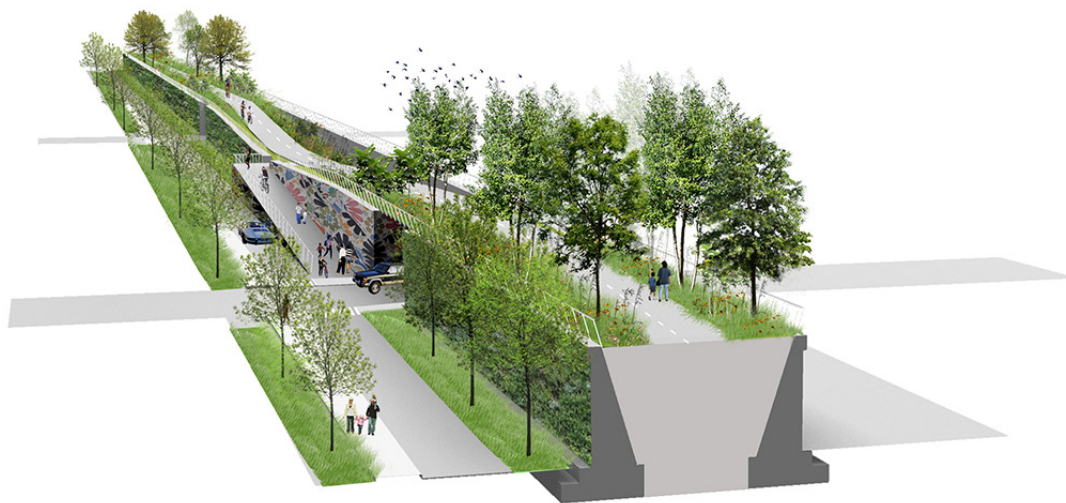


Figure 8. Bloomingdale Trail

Source: The 606, <http://www.the606.org/resources/final-design-plans/>.

These existing projects could serve as an inspiration for the City of Summit in advancing the Park Line as a means of conveyance within the community, effectively connecting residents to the City downtown core, employment opportunities, and recreational and open spaces.

TRAILS THAT CONNECT COMMUNITIES

The City of Summit views the Park Line, which would run through the heart of the City, as an opportunity to provide new mobility options, connections to local and regional destinations, and a traffic-free connection to transportation and employment centers in Summit. Other trails elsewhere in the nation, such as the Atlanta BeltLine in Georgia and the Monon Trail in Indiana, provide insight into creating trails that are integrated into existing open space systems and also provide new connections within the community.

The Atlanta BeltLine, which already has four trail segments and six new/renovated parks open, is slated for completion in 2030. When completed, it will connect 45 diverse neighborhoods, public parks, and mass transit stations in a planned 33-mile trail network throughout Atlanta. The BeltLine will function as a new means of conveyance—connecting employment centers, new housing and commercial developments, and existing regional transportation services and infrastructure—while also serving as a part of the community and a destination unto itself.

The Monon Trail in Indiana is a 10.4-mile Rails-to-Trails project that connects commercial districts, schools, parks, the State fairgrounds, and a dozen residential neighborhoods. These new connections have in turn spurred new development within the neighborhoods surrounding the trail.



Figure 9. Atlanta BeltLine Project Overview Map
Source: The Atlanta BeltLine, <http://beltline.org/about/the-atlanta-beltline-project/atlanta-beltline-overview/>



Figure 10. Before and After Looking from N. Highland Avenue
Source: The Atlanta BeltLine, <http://beltline.org/trails/eastside-trail/>

IV

DESIGN APPROACH

VISION

The Park Line would be a tremendous community destination that brings people together, generates activities, and increases walkability. As a multi-use trail and open space, the Park Line would transform the surrounding area into a walkable, livable, and sustainable community. It could be a place where residents explore the past, find opportunities for education and inspiration and connect with the environment, with each other, and with the City of Summit.





Figure 11. Park Line Concept Alignment

1. DESIGN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following five design guiding principles have been established to inform the design thinking for the Park Line. Set in place at the outset of the Feasibility Study, these guiding principles informed the decision-making, analysis, and design of the concept to realize the potential benefits of the Park Line. These principles collectively represent a desired outcome of the Feasibility Study and a pathway to achieving the vision:

1. Establish a high-quality public realm
 - Provide amenities that will serve all users, irrespective of age and gender, including pedestrians, cyclists, and wheelchair users
 - Create a range of programs to support a variety of activities
 - Work with local stakeholders and property owners to allow public access at key locations
 - Develop a way-finding system and informational signage to raise public awareness
2. Enhance local & regional mobility & connectivity
 - Connect to existing open space assets, including Hidden Valley Park and Briant Park, with a possible long-term connection to the East Coast Greenway through a future potential extension of the Park Line
 - Connect to local destinations by providing a safe, off-street, continuous trail for children and seniors to access recreation centers and parks
 - Create new access points that meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements
 - Rehabilitate and repurpose existing railroad bridges at Ashwood Avenue and Russell Place to create above-grade pedestrian crossings
3. Incorporate sustainable & context-sensitive design
 - Minimize visual and noise impacts on nearby homes
 - Consider on-site stormwater management techniques
 - Incorporate safety features where appropriate (e.g., railings, emergency lighting, emergency telephone boxes)
 - Preserve and enhance the existing habitat for local species
4. Create a signature landscape feature
 - Create a regionally-renowned park that not only serves the local community, but also serves as a regional destination
 - Strive for innovative, contemporary, and high-quality landscape and architectural design
 - Preserve historic features along the right-of-way
 - Feature locally designed public art that captures community character
5. Strive for design flexibility, implementation feasibility & economic opportunity
 - Develop phasing for financing and construction over time
 - Consider a design approach that would enhance economic opportunity at surrounding sites

Figure 12. Elements near the Park Line



2. SUMMARY OF KEY CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The Park Line has great potential to transform the City of Summit. However, given its location, former use, current status, topography, surrounding land uses, and roadway network, there are challenges that would need to be overcome to build the Park Line.

As part of this Feasibility Study, it was beneficial to acknowledge challenges at the outset to inform the proposed design. As such, one of the key outcomes of this Feasibility Study was the identification of pathways to resolve key challenges in order to move forward with approvals, design, and construction. The Summit Park Line Foundation and the City of Summit are proactively taking steps to resolve many of the challenges identified in this report.

As discussed below, challenges can be categorized into four key areas:

- ▷ Access & connectivity
- ▷ Land use & ownership
- ▷ Grade change & topography
- ▷ Infrastructure

ACCESS & CONNECTIVITY

The local street system lacks pedestrian- and bike-friendly features, making it difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to navigate the routes to and from the Park Line. Moreover, the roadways are auto-oriented. Major roads, like Broad Street, Morris Avenue, and Orchard Street, encourage busy automobile travel, which is not conducive to park access and could pose a safety concern. In addition, multi-modal connectivity is limited in and around the Park Line site. Pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and parking infrastructure are not located in a manner that facilitates convenient transfer between travel modes, thereby limiting accessibility to the Park Line.

LAND USE & OWNERSHIP

RVRR was purchased by NJ DOT in 1994 pursuant to the New Jersey Orphaned Bridge and Abandoned Railroad Bond Act of 1989 and the City is currently working with NJ DOT to complete the excess land application that will allow for public use of the right-of-way. There are a number of private parcels located at critical access locations that could constrict, compromise, or diminish the design effectiveness of access to the Park Line. The right-of-way bisects the campus of Celgene, which would necessitate the development of an alternate routing option. Furthermore, the right-of-way abuts the side and rear yards of multiple residential properties. Therefore, it is imperative that the design of the proposed Park Line address the proximity and visual relationship between these public and private uses.

GRADE CHANGE & TOPOGRAPHY

In places, the Park Line rises between 15 and 20 feet above surrounding grade. The height of the line would increase cost and reduce options for street access. The height would also pose safety concerns, and proper provisions for safety above steep grades and over streets would need to be taken into account during the design process. The steep slopes would confine the width of the pathway and could require re-enforcement to prevent erosion.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Despite the decades since the right-of-way of RVRR was used for rail purposes, some of the infrastructure from the rail era remains and would play a role in the redesign of the space into a linear park. With proper redesign/redevelopment, bridge abutments could be converted into new crossings. Bridge retaining walls remain in place at Morris Avenue and Broad Street and could serve as the foundations for new bridge crossings. Two existing railroad bridges at Ashwood Avenue and Russell Place would need to be assessed for structural integrity and retrofitted for pedestrian and bike use. Safety considerations

that protect cars on cross streets as well as pedestrians and cyclists on the bridge need to be considered when designing the new bridges and rehabilitating the existing ones.

The former bridges that crossed Broad Street and Morris Avenue created sub-standard crossing heights, inhibiting truck traffic on these thoroughfares. New bridges, built to allow bicycle and pedestrian connectivity through the trail would need to be raised to an appropriate height to meet roadway design standards.

There are safe electrical lines, both for local service and for transmission, that impact access to the right-of-way. At both Broad Street and Morris Avenue, the lines running along the street are at a level that may conflict with the new pedestrian bridges as proposed for the Park Line. Most importantly, the electric transmission lines along the rail right-of-way will remain in place. Therefore, the design of the proposed Park Line needs to provide for the use of the right-of-way as a park without adversely affecting its continued use for electrical transmission service.

Overall, based on the preliminary feasibility assessment, none of these identified constraints are significant enough to preclude the construction of the Park Line. However, it will be important for the design to take these constraints into account.

It is equally important to note that there are opportunities that make the Park Line a truly unique experience waiting to be realized. In recognizing and capitalizing upon these opportunities, it could be possible to create a transformative design that leads to successful implementation of the Park Line vision.

In addition to the benefits discussed in Chapter II, opportunities include:

- Enhanced open space network
- A safe & traffic-free route
- Improved public health

ENHANCED OPEN SPACE NETWORK

The Park Line presents an opportunity to connect to an abundant open space resource at the fringe of the City. The proposed trail would run through dense residential neighborhoods and connect the currently disconnected open space network of the City, thereby making the City's recreational resources more accessible for all.

A SAFE & TRAFFIC-FREE ROUTE

The existing right-of-way is elevated above the street grid, which could provide opportunities for grade-separated crossings and safe, conflict-free travel to schools, parks, the Summit Family Aquatic Center and pool, places of employment, the downtown, and the train station.

IMPROVED PUBLIC HEALTH

Summit is home to a nationally-renowned biotechnology company (Celgene) that strives to promote a healthy lifestyle among not only its clientele but also its employees. The Park Line would enable increased use of active transportation modes and safe recreation, which could in turn attract young employees who desire healthy and active lifestyles. To advance this objective, partnerships and coalitions could be formed between the Park Line initiative and local businesses to promote public health, a goal that is supported across the State and nation.

3. CONCEPT DESIGN

Dr. Rubino, the Summit Park Line Foundation and the City of Summit present a compelling vision for a great new park for the City of Summit. In this Feasibility Study, we have looked at the entire line extending from its eastern terminus at Broad Street to its connection into Briant Park in Springfield Township. Our goal is to present opportunities for how the park could be realized, what could happen within the park at its many unique spaces, how the bicycle and pedestrian pathway could be designed as a consistent element throughout the park, how access can be achieved and how that access can be designed to make entrances connect out into the community. Our concept design first focuses on the multi-use trail. What are the challenges to achieve a trail that can be used by all types of users, children, senior citizens, pedestrians, bicyclists, joggers, strollers and even dogs (on leashes). We then look at the challenges and opportunities presented by multiple access points to visualize how people will be able to get to the park either by walking or bicycle or by automobile, so that the park becomes a convenient asset for all residents of Summit and perhaps, even a destination within the region. Finally, our concept design looks at the spaces within the park, and differentiates the Park Line into three special places, the Gateway, the Path and the Park, three unique segments of the park, each with its own identity. Our concept design explores design possibilities for these places, setting up a series of opportunities that can be carried forward into the formal design process.





Figure 13. Overall Concept Plan and Programs Areas

THE MULTI-USE TRAIL

At this preliminary stage of analysis, the project team sought to design an ADA-accessible path wide enough for both bicyclists and pedestrians and capable of accommodating emergency vehicles. A trail of this nature would require a minimum of eight feet of width. As currently proposed, the Park Line would comprise a 1.2-mile-long multi-use trail that runs between Broad Street near the downtown and Orchard Street in eastern Summit, replete with plants and natural features. Where the right-of-way widens, the basic trail could be enriched and additional spaces and programs ancillary to the main path could be contemplated. The potential program for these spaces is discussed in greater detail in Section 4.

The proposed trail alignment would follow what was formerly the right-of-way of the RVRR. The path would branch off of the embankment to grade to navigate around the Celgene property, which gradually developed its campus around a part of the abandoned rail line through years of expansion. From that point, the trail could either return to the embankment or stay at-grade through Hidden Valley Park and extend into Springfield to Briant Park.

In this Feasibility Study, the trail alignment design was conceived based on planning analysis and the assessment of existing topographic conditions and land ownership. Detailed study of soil and hydrological conditions, as well as engineering design, will be needed to refine and exactly locate the trail and other open space programs envisioned for the Park Line.

There are three basic conditions for the proposed trail: above-grade, at-grade, and transition zones, where the path would shift from above-grade to at-grade. While individual segments of the trail are envisioned to have a unique identity, the cross-sections of these three basic conditions, as shown in Figure 14, have been created to provide a sense of the nature of each trail segment.

The above-grade segments of the multi-use trail would be located on the existing railroad embankment between 15 and 20 feet above the average street level. Due to topographic constraints of the railroad embankment, the trail would be primarily a ten-foot-wide paved (or gravel) path suitable for bi-directional passage, with a two-foot-wide soft shoulder on both sides to allow for maneuvering traffic. A 42-inch-high railing on both sides would likely be required to protect pedestrians and cyclists from the steep slopes of the embankment.

This initial design approach provides ample space for bi-directional movement of both bicycles and pedestrians on a shared-use pathway, which will be the default design on all raised portions of the Park Line. Provisions for bicycles will impact the design of bridge structures, access points and constrained areas such as the elevated portions of the berm. However, merging bicycles and pedestrians is a common approach on trail projects and accommodations for bicycles on the Park Line was seen as a high priority throughout the Feasibility Study.

The at-grade segments would be more flexible in width, allowing for separated paths for pedestrians and cyclists and additional landscape features. Where the proposed trail would run in close proximity to residential properties, the trail could be separated by a continuous screen. This screen could take many potential forms, including natural elements in keeping with the setting anticipated for the Park Line.

The transition segments would be places where the elevation or width of the trail changes. The cross-section of the transition condition in Figure 14 shows the connections between above-grade segments and at-grade segments. The ten-foot-wide elevated path could be separated into a ramp and stairs to accommodate needs of both pedestrians and bicyclists.



Above-Grade Condition



At-Grade Condition



Transition Condition

Figure 14. Park Line Conditions Cross-Sections (Typical)

In this Feasibility Study, the access points were identified based on the following considerations:

1. Minimizing impact to private homes and properties
2. Improving access from the streets
3. Considering State, County, and local fire and safety guidance and standards
4. Considering existing topography to minimize construction costs
5. Leveraging existing parking resources

ACCESS

The Park Line trail will be defined to a large extent by the treatment of these points of access. There are a significant number of varied access points with unique design features. Having multiple access points serving different neighborhoods and populations would create a park that is highly accessible. Access to the trail is recommended to be controlled due to safety and privacy concerns. Gates could potentially be installed at access locations and visiting hours could be limited based upon the ultimate determination by the City of Summit.

Six potential primary and secondary access points are proposed along the Park Line as shown in Figure 15. The proposed primary access points are located near major roadways or community focal points. There are fewer physical constraints at these locations, which allow for ADA-accessible ramps and moderate landscape design features. The proposed secondary access points are supplemental locations where ADA-accessible ramps might not be feasible. These locations would still provide access, but would be “coupled” with larger ADA accessible locations to ensure that the entire park is open to all users. The following discussion summarizes the six potential access points along the Park Line in a west-to-east order.

BROAD STREET ACCESS (PRIMARY)

Broad Street is the main route to access downtown and the train station. A primary access point that connects the proposed trail to Broad Street could make the Park Line accessible to a larger user group from a greater catchment area. The creation of a primary access point at Broad Street could transform the nature of the street, creating a new gateway that could spark redevelopment along the corridor.

OVERLOOK ACCESS (SECONDARY)

A pathway could connect the trail to Lower Overlook Road where the Overlook Hospital is located, thereby serving

visitors and employees. This access point could help to shape a portion of the Park Line to become a platform for outdoor uses connected to the hospital.

MORRIS AVENUE ACCESS (PRIMARY)

An additional access point could be designed to connect directly to Morris Avenue. Morris Avenue is a major thoroughfare and could serve as a primary access point if sufficient space could be dedicated to accommodate parking and safe access. A primary access point at this location could allow for convenient access for local residents and the potential for the Italian-American Club (located along the south of Morris Avenue) to use the Park Line as a supplemental community gathering place.

EGGERS COURT ACCESS (SECONDARY)

There is an existing ingress/egress path between Celgene’s parking lot and Eggers Court. Subject to further coordination with both Celgene and the Summit View Condominiums, this path could be preserved and also serve as a secondary access point between the Park Line and the Summit View Condominiums, while continuing to provide ingress/egress for Celgene.

MICHIGAN AVENUE ACCESS (PRIMARY)

Michigan Avenue, located at the center of the proposed Park Line, dead-ends at the edge of Hidden Valley Park. On the other side of Michigan Avenue across from the Celgene campus lies the Summit Family Aquatic Center and pool and the Jefferson Elementary School. A primary access point could connect the proposed trail to Michigan Avenue and to the Family Aquatic Center (see Figure 16). There is an opportunity to take advantage of this public recreation facility, which includes a parking lot with approximately 250 spaces that is open year-round. A primary access point established at Michigan Avenue

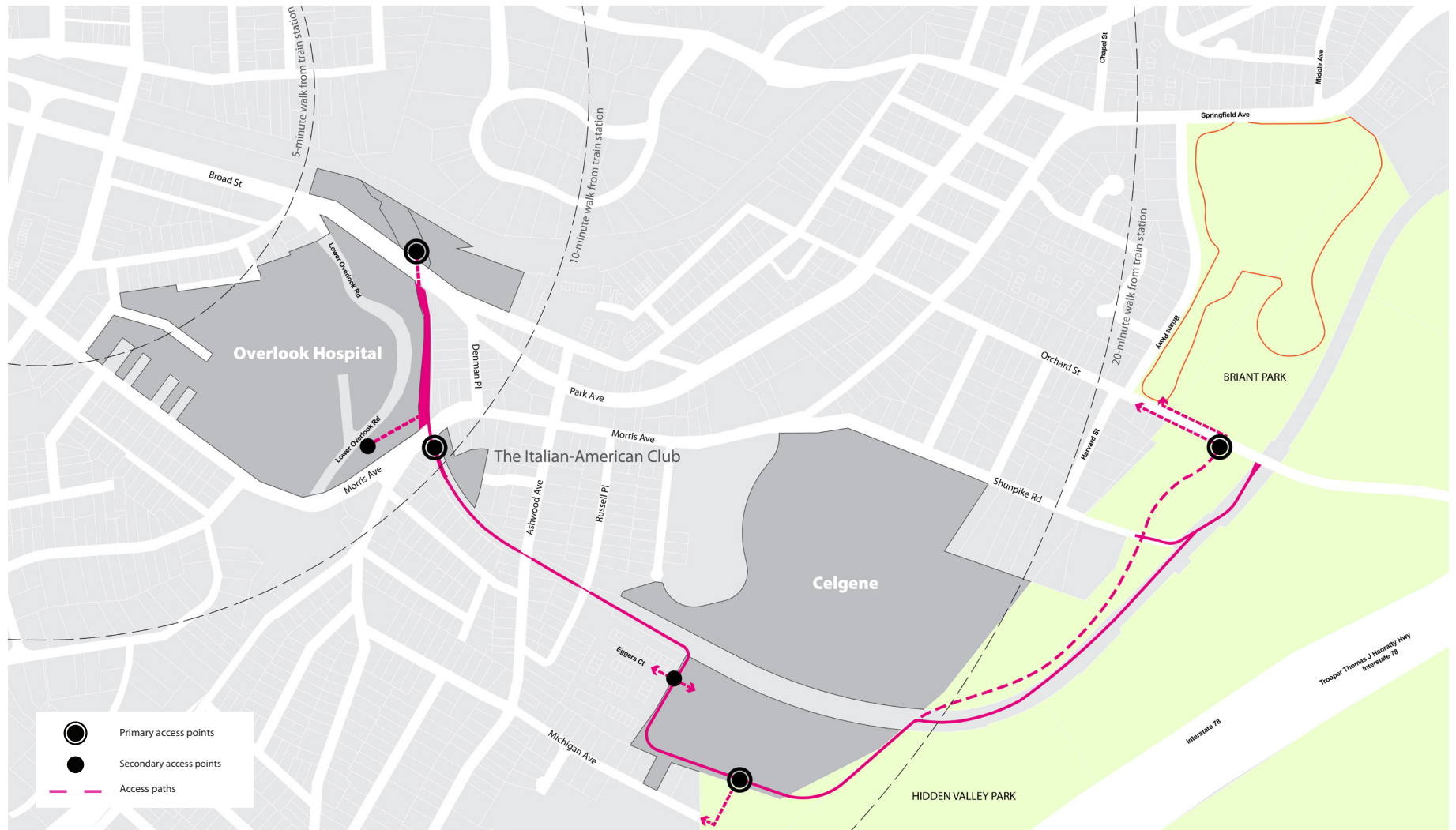


Figure 15. Park Line Access Points

with a connection to the Family Aquatic Center could provide a prominent location with public parking and public facilities connect to the proposed trail.

ORCHARD STREET ACCESS (PRIMARY)

Orchard Street is an arterial road that separates Briant Park from Hidden Valley Park. A primary access point at this location could connect the proposed Park Line with an existing one-mile trail loop in Briant Park. It could also improve accessibility to Hidden Valley Park, which currently lacks pedestrian infrastructure and has no parking facility. In this Feasibility Study, two options for crossing Orchard Street were considered: a bridge over the street and an at-grade crossing, with the latter potentially including a small parking area.

These access points provide opportunities to walk or bike through local neighborhoods onto the Park Line, creating a great neighborhood amenity. They provide direct connections at the two major places of employment, Celgene and Overlook Medical Center, creating an outdoor open space connected to these uses that can enhance work and hospital-related activities. These access points create connectivity to downtown and to major parks. Most importantly, by connecting to places where parking is provided and new parking can be created, these access points make the Park Line accessible to all Summit residents, making it a park for the entire community.

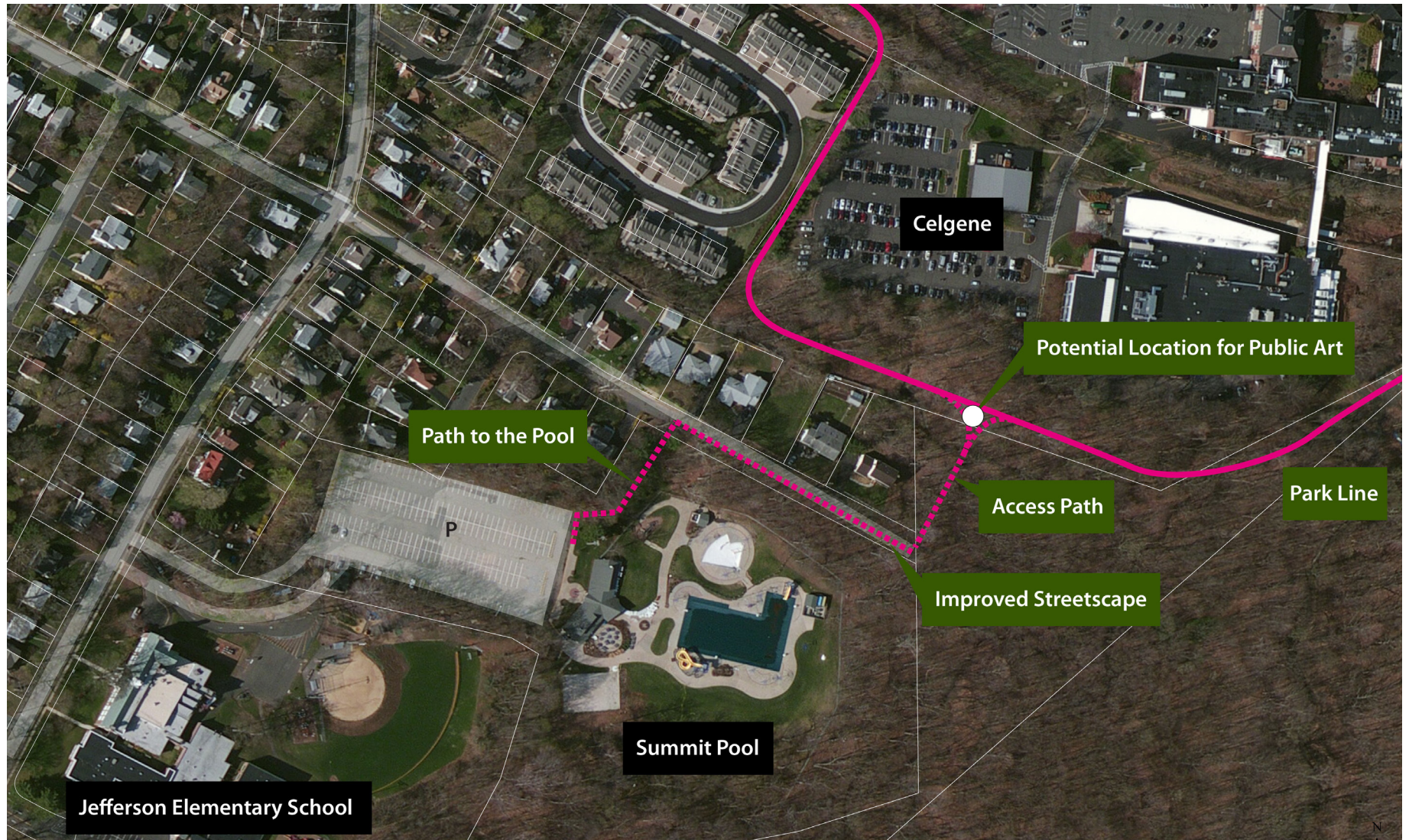


Figure 16. Michigan Avenue Access

4. THE THREE PLACES OF THE PARK LINE

When designing a park, connecting to the unique nature and conditions of the place will help to ground the park within the larger community. With the Park Line, we can see three distinctive characteristics of the community surrounding the Park Line. In the West, the park widens, connects with Overlook Medical Center, presents fabulous views of eastern New Jersey and Manhattan off in the distance and connects to downtown Summit. In the center, the park narrows and sits above the surrounding community, providing a unique perspective of the surrounding community. In the east, the park runs completely through a natural open space.

The proposed Park Line would include three distinct places that engage these three characteristics, each with their own character and special features: the Gateway, the Path, and the Park.

As the surrounding context of the Park Line right-of-way changes from urban to nature, there should be a corresponding transition in the proposed design features and activities along the trail. Figure 17 illustrates the three proposed places, which are described below.



Figure 17. The Park Line: Three Proposed Places

THE GATEWAY

The west end of the proposed Park Line, between Broad Street and Morris Avenue, is conceived as the Gateway. It would be strategically located close to downtown, the train station, and the parking garage, giving the Gateway the greatest potential for generating significant traffic from the downtown. Also unique to the Gateway would be the opportunity to connect to the Overlook Hospital campus, creating a welcoming outdoor space for patients, family, and staff. It would be a unique space, fronting a steep rock wall with panoramic views that look out above the City all the way to the Manhattan skyline.



Figure 18. View of Manhattan Skyline from the Park Line
Source: Robert J. Rubino



Figure 19. Conceptual Illustration of the View from the Proposed Terrace Outlook at Lower Overlook Drive



Figure 20. Sketch of Concept Ideas for the Gateway Zone

The right-of-way of the proposed Gateway zone is wide enough to create outdoor recreational opportunities. The steep slope on the west side of the proposed Gateway zone could be converted into a mini rock-climbing playground where children could climb, jump, and slide (see Figure 22). For visitors who prefer a moment of tranquility, a terraced seating area stepping down to a small plaza, as shown in the precedent example Figure 21, could be a place for resting, talking, and holding small gatherings. Lower Overlook Drive fronts the hospital site and is located on the ridge on top of the slope overseeing the Park Line, thereby making it an ideal location to create an outlook that captures the skyline of Manhattan. The Gateway zone could regularly host exhibitions and events featuring the art and history of Summit.



Figure 21. Scott Amphitheater, Swarthmore College

Source: <http://buffalochronicle.com/2015/05/24/buffalo-billion-funds-should-be-used-for-public-space-improvements>.



Figure 22. Conceptual Illustration of the Mini Rock-climbing Playground in the Gateway Zone

As proposed, the Gateway zone would be connected to the rest of the Park Line through two new signature bridges across Broad Street and Morris Avenue. The design would reflect both the past and future of the site, and these bridges offer an excellent opportunity to provide a signature look to the Park Line.





SUMMIT **PARK** LINE

Figure 23. Conceptual Illustration of the Signature Bridge over Broad Street

THE PATH

The area between Morris Avenue and Hidden Valley Park would be designed as a Path zone. This proposed elevated Path and bridge segment of the Park Line would provide a unique perspective on the community as the path moves through the canopy of trees, providing a natural pathway that connects to the amenities that Summit has to offer. The embankment would provide sufficient space for a two-way multi-use Path that would be shared by all users for the purpose of walking, biking, and exercising. At locations where additional width is available, seating could be installed between the outer edge of the shoulder and the safety railing (see Figure 25).

Among the many unique existing features of the Path zone are two remaining freight railroad bridges, spanning Ashwood Avenue and Russell Place. These two bridges are the only visible symbols of the former RVRP that ran through Summit. In building the Path, the retrofitting of these two bridges should be an important statement of the Park Line that would sit right in the middle of—and in many cases, right above—the community.

At locations where the proposed Park Line would run close to private homes, it would be important to design proper screening to separate residential properties from the pathway. The proposed “living screen” feature, an innovative structure that integrates living plants into the fence design to screen undesired visual and sound impact, would provide privacy for residents while offering a natural appearance. The screen could be made of natural materials and fit in with the design aesthetic for the Park Line. One option for the screen would include a wooden structure that accommodates natural screening and plantings in between the screen (see Figure 24). In this particular design concept, the primary structure would consist of wooden pilings located at 12-foot intervals, attaching to galvanized steel horizontal cables. The patterns could also be designed by regional artists or local community groups, creating cultural connections and a sense of community pride throughout the

viaduct. Native and vine plants could grow at the base of the screen, using the screen as a trellis over time.

The Path zone would serve to connect the Gateway zone to the Park zone.

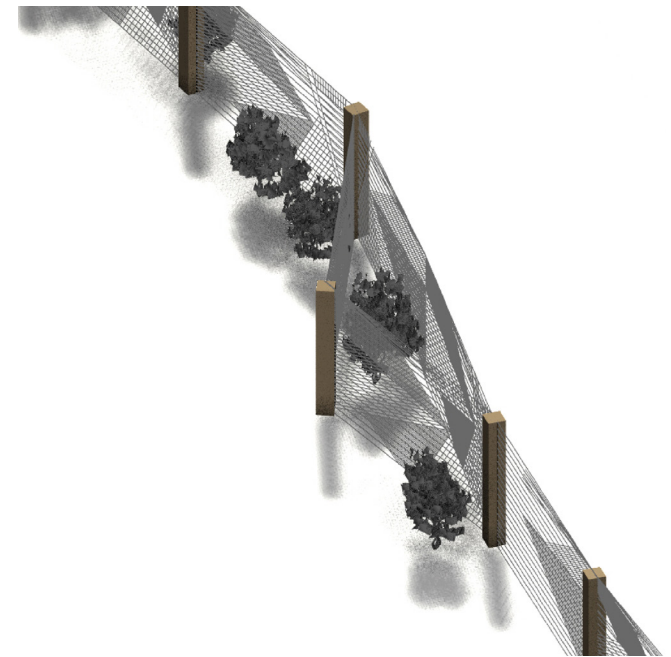


Figure 24. Living Screen Illustration

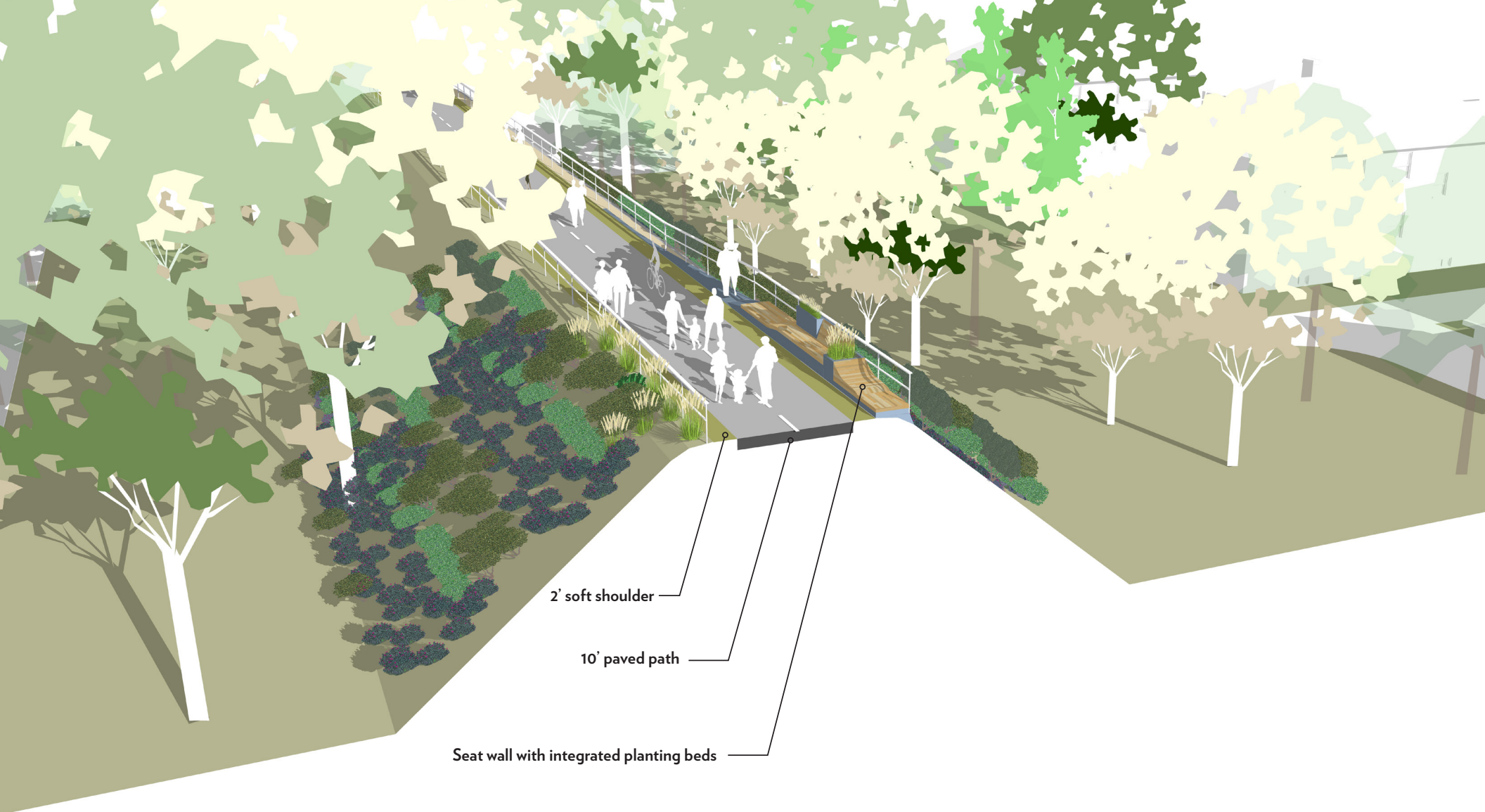


Figure 25. Trail Components (Typical)

THE PARK

Hidden Valley Park and Briant Park are two important open space assets, both to the City of Summit and nearby towns. One of the greatest potential benefits of the Park Line would be the improved accessibility to these parks. The east zone of the Park Line would travel through Hidden Valley Park and connect to an existing trail loop in Briant Park. The design of the Park zone would capture the natural beauty and activate the surrounding parks as it becomes a natural extension of those parks into the center of Summit.

Hidden Valley Park currently holds a pistol range but otherwise has minimum public access. It has approximately 76 acres of natural landforms ranging from hills to streams inhabited by abundant vegetation and animal species. The Park Line could enable residents in this neighborhood to enjoy the natural scenery of Hidden Valley Park by providing convenient pedestrian connections to the park. The design of this zone of the Park Line would emphasize view-sheds and sight-lines that capture the natural beauty of the surrounding area. The Park zone would also provide opportunities for installing basic amenities such as benches, trash cans, and way-finding signs. There are multiple options for routing the Park Line through the park to activate its natural spaces, including building the path either up on the rail embankment or at-grade.

The current phase of the proposed Park Line would terminate at Orchard Street and connect to the existing trail loop in Briant Park through a pedestrian crossing. The Orchard Street crossing would include the following elements as shown in Figure 26: an entrance/exit to the Park Line trail; a marked or textured pedestrian crosswalk; way-finding signs and information boards; a new sidewalk along Orchard Street between the future crosswalk and the existing Briant Park trail loop; and improved landscape features along Orchard Street that would further enhance the view along the street. In addition, a potential trailhead area could be planned in future phases where visitors

could pull off Orchard Street and park their cars before entering the Park Line.

The three zones of the proposed Park Line would collectively define this unique amenity in the City of Summit, including a Gateway zone that connects to the downtown featuring unique attractions, a Path zone with linear recreational space designed for all users of the trail, and a Park zone that opens the Park Line up into an expanse of natural beauty.



Figure 26. Conceptual Illustration of Orchard Street Crossing



PATH FORWARD

The Summit Park Line is a vision for a new park with distinct places that connect parks and people and places of employment and recreation. It will be an economic driver, which will serve as a new gateway for the City of Summit. The concept is strong, but many steps need to be taken for this vision to become a reality. This last chapter focuses on community coalition building, outreach, technical feasibility, fund raising, grant writing, design, and regulatory approvals. Through a series of actions and next steps, we are able to chart a path forward that can be undertaken by the Summit Park Line Foundation and the City of Summit to implement the Park Line.



Figure 27. Project Public Meeting at Summit City Hall

1. BUILDING CONSENSUS

The Park Line would be an asset to the entire Summit community. A clear goal in realizing the Park Line is to engage the larger Summit community in the Park Line conversation. Through this initial Feasibility Study, the project team conducted outreach to local businesses, community leaders, elected officials, governmental agencies, and the public at-large. This outreach solicited input, shared ideas, and began the process of building support for the Park Line.

At the outset of the Feasibility Study, the project team convened a Steering Committee of community leaders and city officials to guide the effort and direct outreach to the broader community. The Steering Committee contributed insight and valuable recommendations to inform the development of the initial Park Line concepts. In coordination with the Steering Committee, the project team engaged the general public through multiple avenues, including through the project website (<http://www.summitParkLine.org/>), a presentation at the local farmers' market, and two public events held in September and December 2015. Both events were well attended, and the public comments helped to shape the final design concepts. A timeline of the Feasibility Study is shown in Figure 28.

Some of the concerns from the community that influenced the design concepts included:

- ▷ The potential visibility of the proposed Park Line from second-story windows of adjacent homes led to the discussion of the “living screen” as a solution.
- ▷ Active use of the Park Line could provide “eyes on the street” to deter potential criminal activities along the Park Line.
- ▷ The Park Line should be a secure and controlled park, allowing the City to control visiting hours. It could be secured through the use of a police patrol or a paid/volunteer security unit.
- ▷ Bridge designs need to accommodate truck traffic on Broad Street and Morris Avenue.

Comments and viewpoints that represented support from the public included:

- ▷ The Park Line would create a safe route to schools, the train station, health facilities, as well as other amenities such as the community pool.
- ▷ The multi-use trail could serve as a safe place to walk dogs.
- ▷ The view of the Manhattan skyline is an important asset that could help draw in more visitors to the Park Line.
- ▷ The Park Line would create new connections between existing parks and downtown Summit, which supports a goal of the Summit Master Plan.

Input from the community has been reflected in the design for the Park Line as presented in Chapter IV.

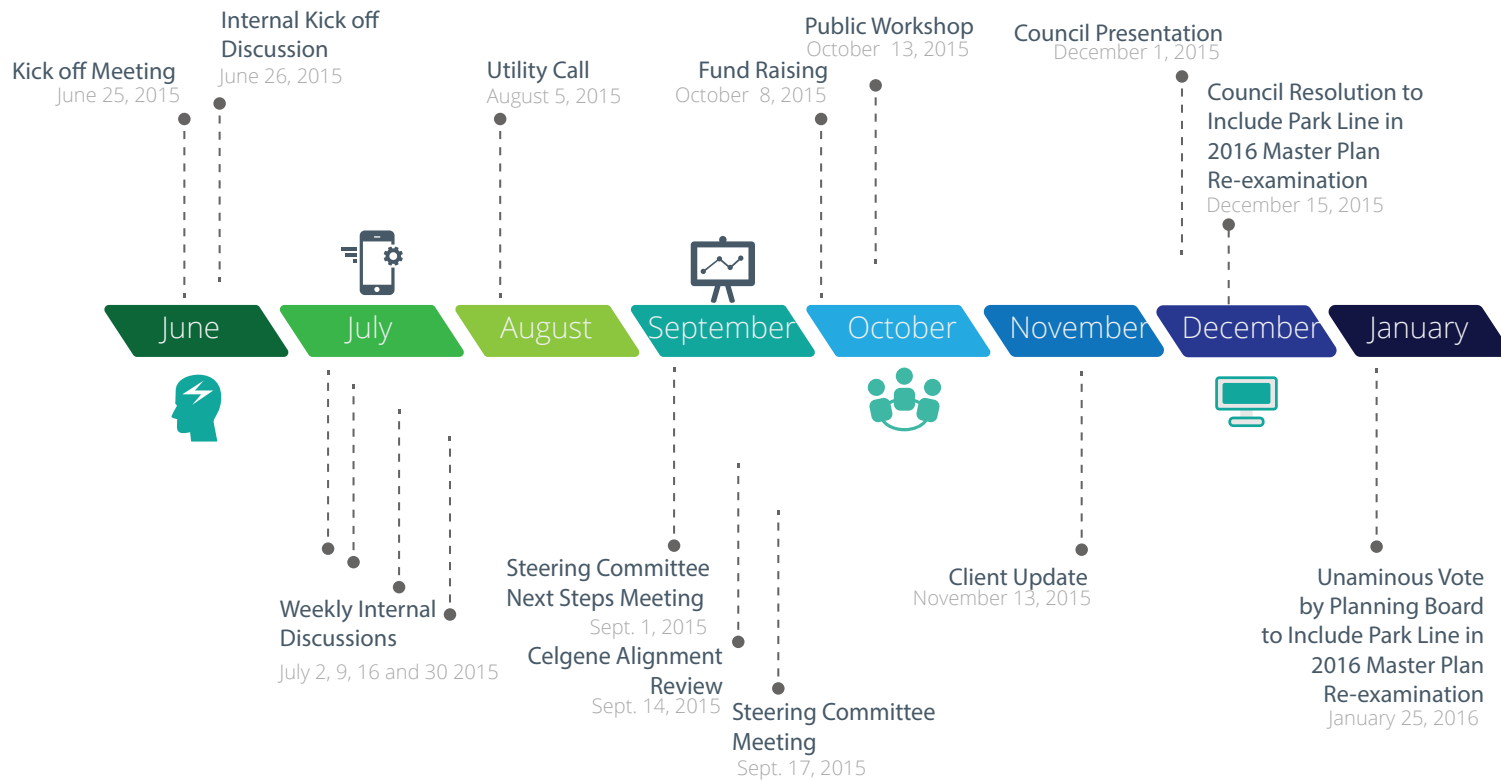


Figure 28. The Summit Park Line Feasibility Study Timeline

2. COALITION BUILDING

The purpose of the outreach process was to create partnerships and build a constituency of active and involved proponents for the Park Line. To that end, a broad approach to stakeholder and public engagement was taken during this Feasibility Study. Both the City and the project team connected with numerous partners who have a stake in the Park Line development to ensure that the initial feasibility assessment could ascertain where challenges could be met and opportunities could be realized. During this planning process, the project team conducted interviews with owners, leasers, adjacent businesses, adjacent County officials, the local police, and other city staff potentially involved in the design, construction, and maintenance of the Park Line. These interviews served to increase awareness, answer questions, and gather input on the design approach.

Three key adjacent businesses were interviewed as part of this Feasibility Study: Salerno Duane, Overlook Hospital and Celgene. All three businesses expressed support for the Park Line, were actively engaged in the initial concept design, and will continue to be updated as the design progresses towards implementation.

To implement a project of this magnitude and complexity, strong local leadership is needed to drive the design process, build a constituency, raise funds, and promote the vision. Critical to success is the ability to maintain this leadership from the development of the vision through implementation. Parallel to the Feasibility Study, Dr. Rubino and proponents of the project have initiated the Summit Park Line Foundation, which is actively raising money for design, construction, and maintenance of the Park Line while working to increase awareness and build a larger constituency. Dubbed the “Friends of the Park Line”, this Foundation will play a significant role in the successful realization of the Park Line for the City of Summit.

The City Council has already announced a Resolution incorporating the Park Line into the next update of the Master Plan. The planning board reacted to the Council’s resolution and will incorporate the Park Line into the 2016 Master Plan Revaluation. A complementary next step is for the City to initiate an open space plan and proceed with Complete Streets projects to support the Park Line.



Figure 29. Project Public Outreach Palm Cards

Thank you for creating Summit's landmark with us.

For more information, please contact:

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3. IMPLEMENTING THE PARK LINE

As proposed, the Park Line would be a unique park, as it would run along the railroad embankment, cross roadways on former rail bridges, and bisect larger parks and unique spaces. However, those conditions also come with additional costs related to bridge structures, railings, vertical transitions, and complicated access points. As it is currently envisioned, the Park Line would become much more than just a trail, with resting areas, multiple paths, and special amenities such as overlooks, children's play areas and multi-functional spaces. While the Summit Park Line Foundation has ambitious plans to realize the full potential of the Park Line, there is recognition that it would need to be constructed in phases and with help from multiple funding sources. This Feasibility Study provided a firm foundation for success, with the development of a vision, the building of consensus, and the structuring of an organization that can support the effort through to implementation. The Feasibility Study concluded that the proposed Park Line project is feasible and also identified the potential health, community, and economic benefits that could result from implementation.

Building off of this report, a number of near-term actions can be taken to advance the Park Line and position the project for implementation, so that the community can see tangible progress and results. These steps take the form of fundraising, outreach, design, and regulatory action.

OUTREACH

Outreach to the community should continue to build a strong constituency in support of the Park Line and to increase awareness. Outreach should take many forms, beyond the traditional public meeting, in order to reach the largest and most diverse group of residents and businesses. The Summit Park Line Foundation already has plans to set up "pop-up" meetings at local restaurants, continue to set up a table at the farmers' market, and, in the spring of 2016, conduct guided tours of the Park Line site to help people see the views of Manhattan and experience the potential future use of the right-of-way as a linear park.

FUNDING AND FINANCING

Multiple opportunities for garnering public funds to develop the Park Line could become available during 2016. It will be essential to identify the optimal opportunities and craft compelling grant applications. The first steps in establishing a pipeline for potential grants to support the Park Line include: developing the baseline information required for grant applications; portraying the vision of the Park Line appropriately for favorable agency response; and researching the schedule for grant submissions and prioritizing those best aligned to the proposed project to maximize the opportunity for capturing funding. The discussion below contains a summary of funding strategies through potential grants. For detailed information regarding upcoming grant opportunities, a list of applicable grants at the Federal and State level is attached as Appendix A.

An overarching financing strategy should be put in place to forecast a funding path that aligns with the anticipated design and construction milestones for the project. There are multiple funding opportunities available that do not depend upon local/tax money. Across the nation, Rails-to-Trails projects often garner funding from a variety of sources. As these projects tend to be multi-faceted and phased, different types of funding can be useful at various points in the planning, design, and construction phases.

Local and regional grants can be effective in supporting initial planning and design efforts. These grants tend to range from \$30,000 to as high as \$300,000, which can often provide enough funding to launch projects and complete much of the initial work required to establish the design and build grass roots coalitions. The City of Summit is in a strong position to apply for NJ DOT grants, as the City is a designated Transit Village. This designation gives the City priority for grants, such as the Safe Routes to Transit or Municipal Aid Grant programs.

The City and/or coalition is advised to pursue Federal grants for construction of the Park Line. These grants can be upward

of \$1 million and can represent the backbone funding for implementation. As authorized under the recently passed Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, Federal transportation programs typically provide the highest percentage of funding to support bicycle and pedestrian projects. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program, the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and the Surface Transportation Program (STP) represent popular funding mechanisms that allocate funding for pedestrian and bicycle projects through state agencies and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs).

Another avenue to garner funding is through discretionary grant programs, which encourage coordination between different modes of transportation and a variety of government agencies. A Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant is an example of discretionary grant funding. To meet the criteria for this grant, a project needs to have five major outcomes: safety, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, livability, and environmental sustainability. The Park Line project exhibits these characteristics and therefore may be a candidate for future TIGER grant cycles.

During the design phase, there could be opportunities to pursue additional grants for completing or enhancing design for elements such as way-finding, exercise stations, benches, or other means of promoting tourism. Though these are typically small grants, they can amount to a sizable percentage of the design of the Park Line.

Creative funding opportunities could be generated by the trail itself. For example, leasing to utility companies has grown in popularity, with municipalities permitting a utility use that is compatible with recreation uses along a corridor (either underground or above ground). The Park Line already maintains a utility presence; other potential users could supply a consistent funding stream for design, construction, and maintenance. The Summit Park Line Foundation could also raise additional funds through private donations. This could be accomplished through

fundraising events, through the Foundation's website, or through partnerships with local businesses.

DESIGN AND REGULATORY ACTION

This Feasibility Study has provided a clear and compelling direction for the Park Line by establishing a baseline trail concept, recognizing multiple potential amenities for the linear park, and identifying the design implications of various alternatives. However, there is still considerable design work that is necessary before the project is shovel-ready.

The concepts proposed by the Feasibility Study are based on assumptions and preliminary understanding of the site conditions. Detailed engineering and consideration of alternatives will be needed to identify the preferred design concept(s). Every design has the potential for attendant environmental impacts. An analysis of those potential impacts for the Park Line should be undertaken to garner regulatory approvals to allow for construction. An initial environmental assessment should be conducted using the current design alignment to identify any potential environmental impacts associated with the construction and ongoing operation of the Park Line. The outcome of the environmental review will inform the design and cost estimates for the proposed project, and can be used to establish the schedule and approvals needed to move into construction.

The next step in the design process will be to refine a preferred option from the list of alternatives and to carry forward a feasible first phase of work that can be implemented in short order. Implementation of a tangible first phase could provide ample opportunity for Summit residents to experience the Park Line and lay the groundwork for the expansion of this unique linear park to its full limits.

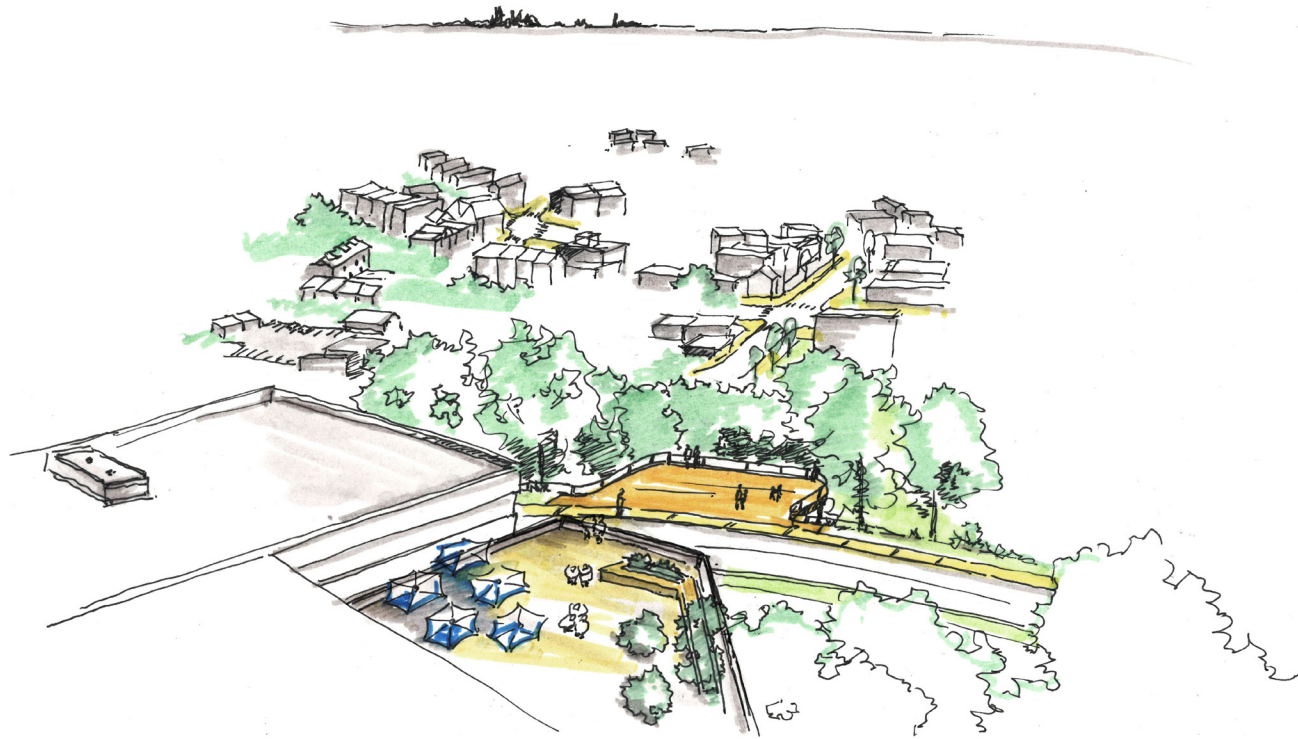


Figure 30. Artistic Illustration of View Looking Down from Lower Overlook Drive

4. CONCLUSION

The Summit Park Line was only a vision less than two years ago. Since that time, a study has been completed, a foundation has been formed, funding has been garnered, the City Planning Commission has recognized the project, the project has been incorporated into the City's Master Plan update and the community has begun to see some of the visions of this great new park opportunity. While there are still a number of steps to take, hurdles to cross and difficult decisions to make, the vision for the Park Line is taking shape and a plan for its realization is forming. The Park Line has the ability to raise property values, generate new economic opportunity, provide a safe route to school and business, connect parkland and become a park in and of itself. Most importantly, the building of the Park Line will bring the community together and create a new place that the City will build for itself to enhance the quality-of-life for the residents of Summit.

February, 2016

