

FINAL REPORT and DELIVERABLES

For: GROUNDWORK HUDSON VALLEY

Public Housing Project

NEI Job Code: 0100-113-008

Project Code: 2013-062



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Groundwork Hudson Valley

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December 15, 2014

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RE: Public Housing Project
NEI Job Code: 0100-113-008
Project Code: 2013-062

Dear Michael and Becky:

Enclosed please find our Final Report, Deliverables, and Expense accounting for expenses for the full contract period of 8/1/13-11/28/14 (including extensions). This is also our request for payment of the grant in the amount of \$27,605.

We enclose:

- the Final Report (4 pgs)
- Design Charettes at Walsh Rd. (2 pgs)
- Walsh Access Charettes (2 pgs)
- Schlobohm Access Charette (1 pg)
- Walsh Park Plan (1 pg)
- Signs produced Walsh Road and the Schlobohm Municipal Housing garden parks (3 pgs)
- Saw Mill Ecology and History Workshops Held for Green Team Youth (2 pgs)
- Invoice with the itemized breakdown of expenses (1 page)
- Letter explaining expenses (1 page)
- Back up receipts for park materials and program supplies (42 pgs.)
- Walsh Park Plan Perspective (1 pg)
- Walsh Road River Access Plan (1 pg)
- Schlobohm River Access Plan (1 pg)
- Walsh Road Park Photos (4 pgs)

Please let us know if you need anything else on this grant, and when we may expect the payment.

Thank you!

Best wishes,
Ellen Theg
Director of Grant Administration

Groundwork Hudson Valley is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization.
No goods or services were received in exchange for this gift.



Groundwork Hudson Valley

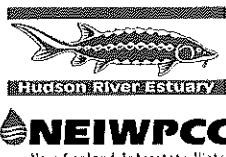
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FINAL REPORT

Project title: Public Housing Access

- Date: October 31, 2014
- HEP funds received: \$27,605 Match: \$12,455
- **Goals of the project.** The overarching goal of this project was to connect residents at Walsh Road Municipal Housing and Schlobohm Municipal Housing to the Saw Mill River. This was to be accomplished by: 1) construction of a river side patio at Walsh Road, 2) working with residents to create plans to increase future access to the river. 3) Providing educational and recreational activities for residents at the two locations.
- A one-paragraph **summary** of the project. This project was based on gathering resident input through charettes and meetings on the construction of a riverside park and general access to the Saw Mill River. Through two charettes at Walsh Road the residents gave feedback on the park plan and articulated any concerns around the project. The finalized park plan provided the blueprint for the construction of this park during the summer of 2014. Youth from Yonkers public high schools constructed and landscaped this park over the course of four months. Workshops were held around riparian habitats, the history of Yonkers and the Saw Mill River and invasive species. We had the opportunity to bring the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the Walsh Road Park and have formed a partnership with them that will continue to lend itself to supporting the Park, the residents and the youth. Community members participated in the Great Saw Mill River Clean-up along the river at both Walsh and Schlobohm in both 2013 and 2014. Plans for future access to the river were developed through community input and mapping done by the youth Green Team.
- **Course of action:** This project was a community project which started when residents at Walsh Road made it clear that they would like to have a park space near to their home that was accessible and provided space for relaxing and recreation. Groundwork Hudson Valley provided logistical management, charette facilitation, construction expertise, interpretive sign design, and outreach; Municipal Housing of the City of Yonkers provided logistics backup and outreach, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided native species plantings as well as workshop facilitation. It was decided to construct the park and use the park to draw people out to the river, where workshops could then be held. Initial charettes at Walsh were held in the spring of 2014. The park



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plan was designed by a senior architecture student at Saunders Trade and Technical High School in Yonkers. The plan was presented to the residents for additional feedback before construction began. Groundwork Hudson Valley hired their youth summer Green Team at the end of June and construction began in early July and was completed by early August. Green Team continued as volunteers into the fall to complete landscaping of the park in preparation for the ribbon cutting held on October 16th, 2014. After completion of the park, two additional charettes were held at Walsh road to discuss future increased access to the Saw Mill River. To contextualize the project, each charette included information on the history and ecology of the Saw Mill River. This helped the residents to understand the importance of the project beyond just the increased access to the river. Fourteen workshops were also held with Green Team members to increase their understanding of the river, its ecology and history. This fall, Groundwork had the opportunity to bring the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) from Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge into this project as well. Biologists from USFWS came to Walsh Road to do a workshop and workday with the youth on invasive species and instructed them in their removal as well as the propagation of native species. Groundwork chose to pursue this partnership in lieu of the proposed partnership with Audubon. The USFWS biologists will be returning to the site two more times over the next year. Two trips to Wallkill will take place in the spring, One with Walsh residents and one with the Green Team. Through the charettes and maps created by the Green Team, Groundwork Staff were able to complete plans to improve future access to the Saw Mill River at both Schlobohm and Walsh. After an initial charette at Schlobohm, Groundwork decided to wait until further funding can be secured to pursue river access at this site. Without funding, it seemed misleading to excite people over future possibilities. With input from USFWS Groundwork Staff designed interpretive signs for both Walsh and Schlobohm, they are being printed now and will be installed by the end of November.

➤ **Accomplishments**

- The Great Saw Mill River Clean-up held at Schlobohm/Walsh in 2013/2014 respectively. In 2013 the mayor of Yonkers led a team at Schlobohm.
- Park construction completed at Walsh Road.
- 2 charettes held with Walsh Road residents around Park design in addition to meetings with the resident president.
- 11 youth from Yonkers public high schools worked a total of 527 hours on park construction along with Groundwork Staff.
- Over 50 residents engaged at Schlobohm.
- Over 60 residents engaged at Walsh.
- 48 high school students from five public high schools in Yonkers volunteered a total of 334 hours to landscape the park.
- 3 charettes held around river access, two at Walsh and one at Schlobohm.
- 6 interpretive signs designed.
- 14 sessions on Saw Mill River ecology and history held for Green Team.



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- 1 plan for Walsh Road Park completed.
 - 2 plans for river access completed.
 - Partnership established with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and educational workshops provided by these biologists.
 - Four native plant species reintroduced to the park.
 - Relationships established between senior residents at Walsh Road and Green Team youth. The youth spent a total of 14 days working in the park, and every day they were there, so were the seniors. The seniors brought their suggestions, their stories and their gratitude to share with the youth.
- **Project evaluation:** The metrics used to determine success included assessing the workshops (for content), the community participation (numbers participating), number of offerings (numbers of workshops held), and completion of the construction project. The workshops offered were of high quality and were taught by knowledgeable biologists from USFWS as well as the Deputy Director of Groundwork. The participation in community meetings was 30-60 at every meeting. This exceeds the target of 20 residents reached at each site. There was an increase in overall workshops given (14 instead of 8.) Finally, while not a part of the metrics, the positive community (cleanup participants) and institutional (City support, Municipal Housing support) feedback has been heartening.
- **Lessons learned:**
- **Positive:** The construction of the park did increase the visibility of the river and created a platform to continue the discussion of the preservation of the riparian habitat.
 - **Positive:** The park project also provided a space for the development of intergenerational relationships and in that sense strengthened the downtown Yonkers community.
 - **Positive:** The ribbon-cutting as well as the involvement of the USFWS in the park project made both the residents and the youth feel that they were a part of something important. Events which promote the importance of the river in the community, especially when other organizations and political leaders are in attendance, affirms for the community that their river is something to be protected.
 - **Positive:** Partnerships grow with successful activities and these partnerships are valuable in seeking funding for more projects.
 - **Cautionary:** Community participants in meetings/charettes can become fixated on the negatives of the future access plans (such as the possibility of people from other neighborhoods coming into the new park) and it is important not to let these fears dissuade people too much from increasing access to the Saw Mill River.



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- **Pictures:** All photographs were taken by Groundwork Hudson Valley unless otherwise noted in the caption. All participants in the workshops gave permission for their photographs to be taken.



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First Design Charette at Walsh Road Municipal Housing, May 21, 2014

For this initial charette we went through three steps with the residents. First we brainstormed their vision. This portion of the charette can include any ideas, no matter how far-fetched or unlikely. We then moved to a second step where we identified concerns around development of a park. In the third step we looked at the concerns and came up with solutions to prevent these outcomes. These are the results from this meeting.

Vision:

Fruits and vegetables: garden

Tables, picnic tables (both big and small), benches

Games

Shade structures

Pool

Bathrooms

Plants (that do not attract bees), flowers

Garbage cans

Water fountains

Bug protection, light?

Concerns:

People sleeping on benches

Littering

Kids hanging out

Homeless people

Noise, loud radios

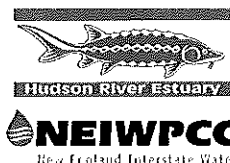
Fence

Dog walking

Who is the park for?

Maintenance

Rodents





Solutions:

Signs stating Walsh residents only allowed

Fence and gate

Park hours

Curfew

Posted rules

“See something, say something”

Resident patrol

Benches with a bar in the middle to prevent homeless persons from sleeping there

Second Design Charette, June 18, 2014

In this second Charette, the park plan was presented to the residents at the June tenants meeting.

Residents identified things about the plan that they liked. These included: the fence, the tables for dominos and the benches. Residents did not identify any aspects of the design that they wanted to change.





Walsh Access Charette, October 16, 2014.

At the Ribbon Cutting for the park Groundwork Staff set up a charette table and asked those present to suggest ideas for increasing access to the river. About fifteen people participated. These were the suggestions that were made.

- More benches and tables
 - Stormwater protection
 - Tables for cards and chest
 - Solar lights in the ground
 - More space
 - Name the park after Fonso (*Fonso was a resident who was committed to stewardship and spent a considerable amount of time cleaning the land before it became a park*)
 - More security
 - Tables/seats
-
- More space for dominos
 - Traffic calming, speed-“slow”
 - Lights for the nighttime
 - More benches for a better place to sit
 - More lights to see at night
 - Remove tree in the river across from 95 walsh road

Walsh Access Charete, October, 23, 2014.

Held at the Walsh Road food pantry on distribution day. Thirty-Seven in attendance. Using the park plan as a reference, Groundwork staff asked residents to consider how to increase access to the river and their relationship to the river now that the park is built. Here are the suggestions they came up with.

- Afternoon and weekend activities for seniors in the summer
- Clean river water
- Feeding ducks attracts other animals
 - Make a bilingual sign explaining not to do this
- Build a bridge connecting War Memorial field to Walsh with wheelchair access
- Water fountain
- Name it Fonso's park
- Picnic tables
- Maintain the flowers
- Lawn mower





- Fence the park after dark
 - Path along west side of park
 - Ground maintenance of the buildings
 - Domino tables
 - Water fountain
 - Fencing around the park
 - RIVER WARDENS: give them their Stipend after term.
 - Bridge should be high to maintain safety, and the bridge should be closed after dark to ensure safety
 - Some kind of activates and services for veterans
 - Veterans will volunteer
 - Opposite facing benches, one facing river and one facing park
 - Thinner walkway starting on eastern side
 - Bathrooms
 - Put a no feeding sign for ducks and other wildlife
-
- Lights at night
 - Bridge to war memorial park
 - A restaurant
 - Flowers
 - Chairs
 - Things to do on the weekend
 - Lights at night
 - SMALL COPIES OF MAP TO DISTRIBUTE





Schlobohm Access Charette. October 22, 2014

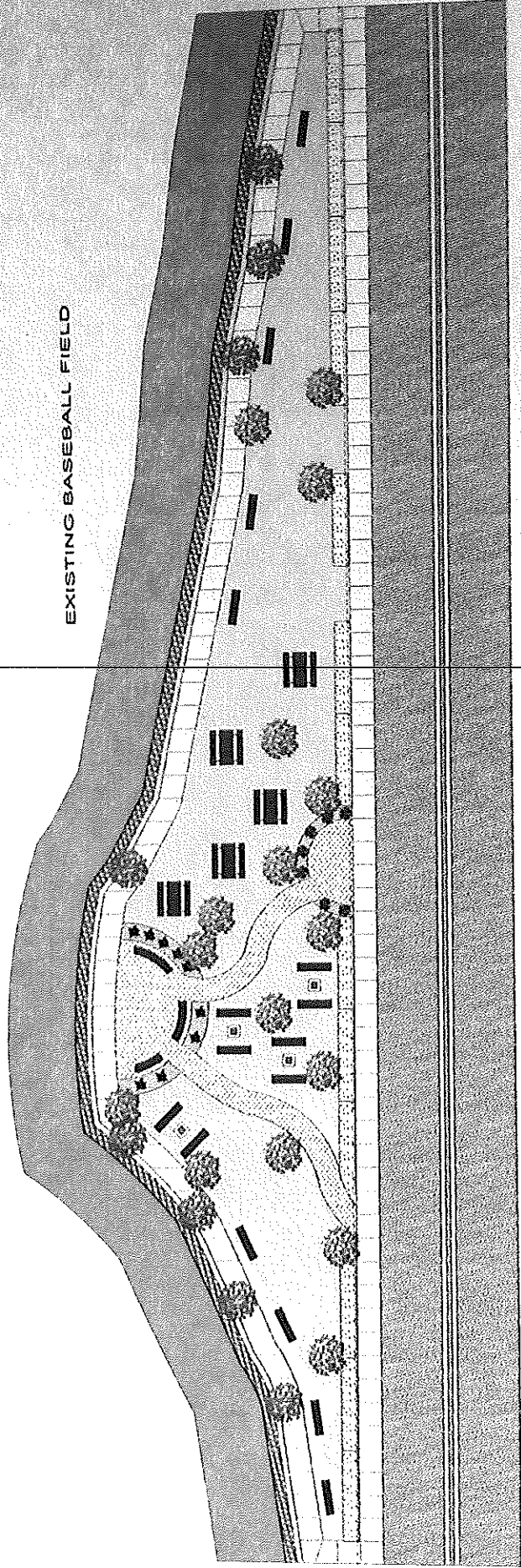
Groundwork Staff attended the October tenants meeting at Schlobohm Municipal Housing. After a conversation about the Saw Mill River, many residents did not know the river was there or that there was a park at the south end of the housing complex; residents offered their suggestions for how to improve their relationship to the river and integrate it into their lives.

- Place for kids near river
- Picnic area
- Place for recreational activities
- Trash cans
- Dog area
- Benches by river
- Stairway to the river



Walsh Park Plan

EXISTING BASEBALL FIELD



PROPOSED PARK DESIGN

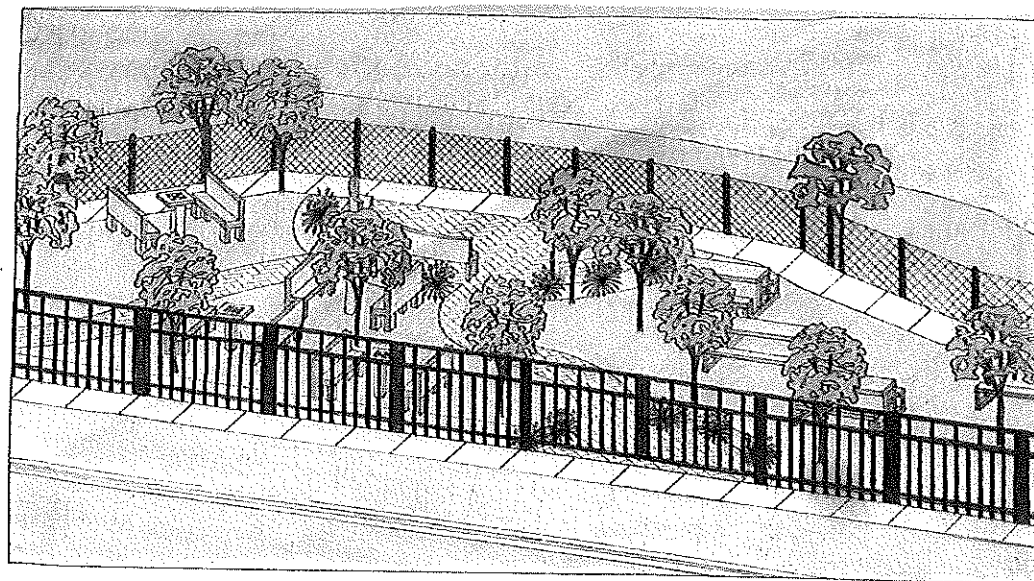
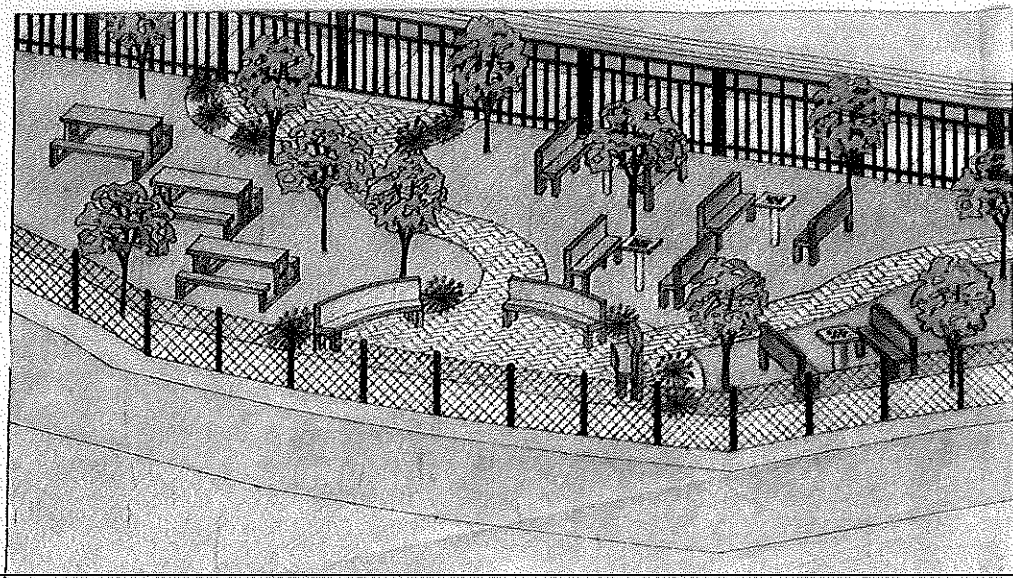
JOSSELIN CAPISTRAN
6/18/14

SCALE : 1/8" = 1'-0

PARK PROJECT DESIGN FOR GROUNDWORKS

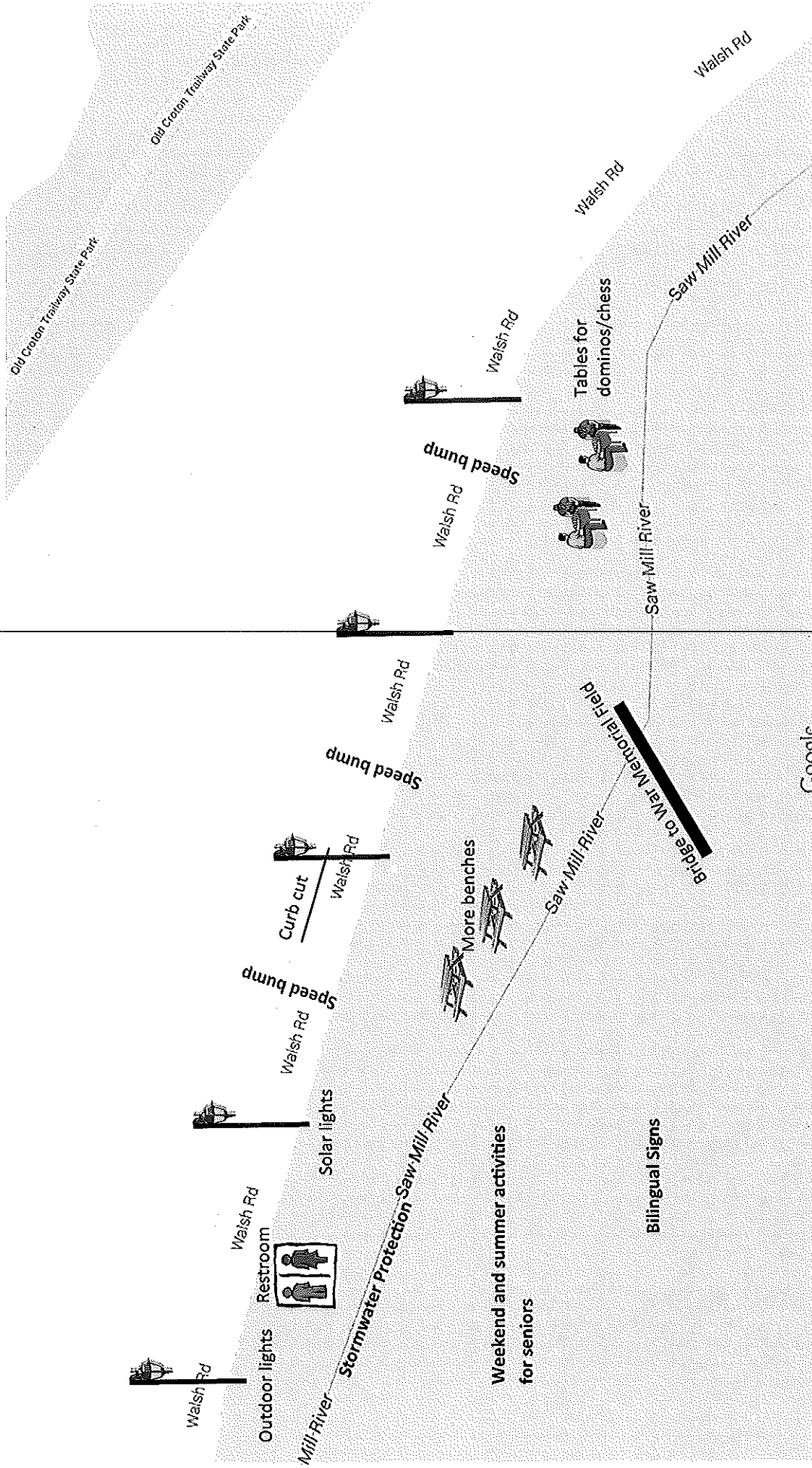
95 WALSH ROAD YONKERS, NY 10701

Walsh Park Plan Perspective



Walsh Road River Access Plan

Prepared by Groundwork Hudson Valley

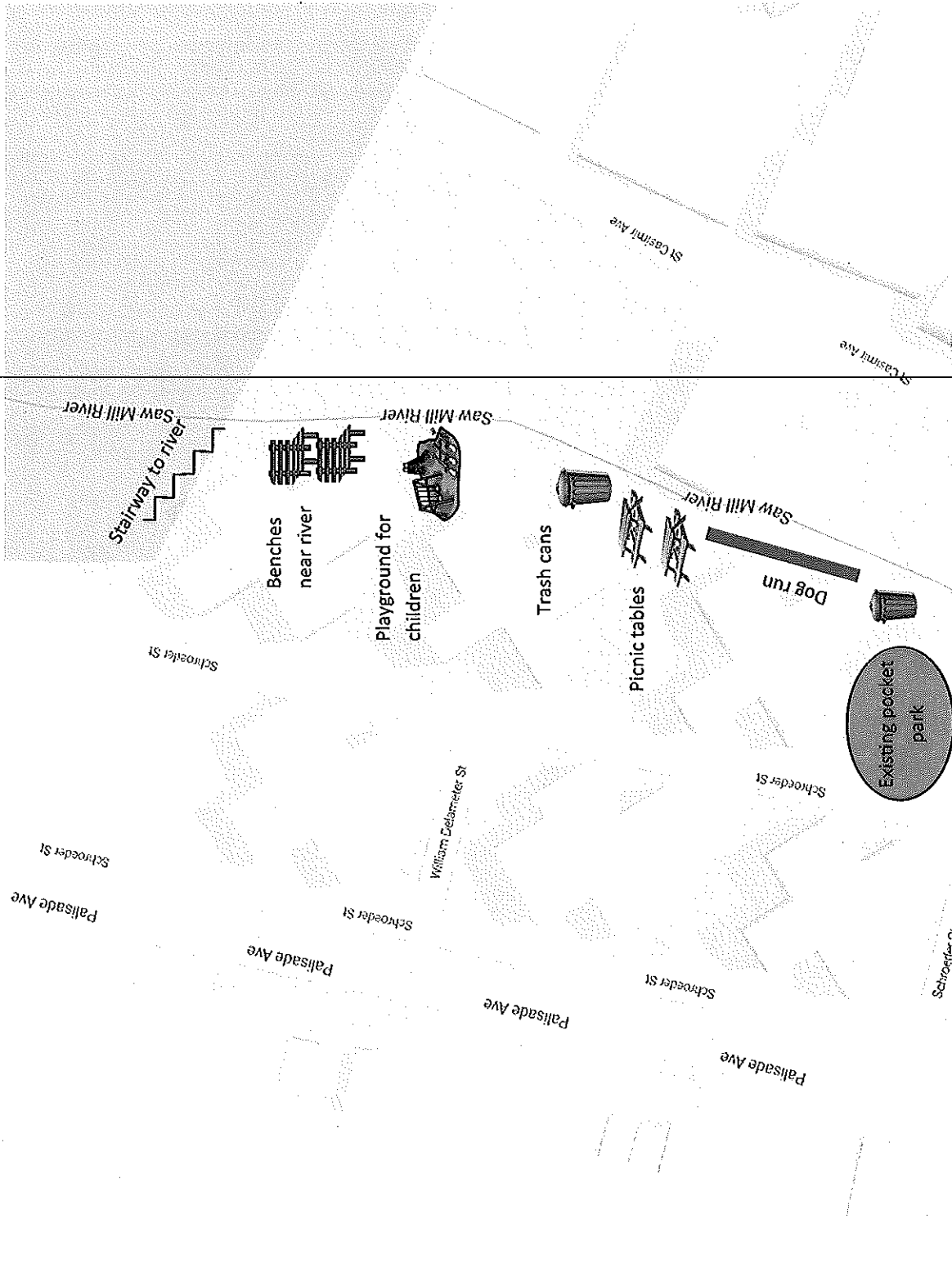


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Schlobohm River Access Plan

Prepared by Groundwork Hudson Valley



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