



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

400 LA CROSSE STREET | LA CROSSE, WI 54601 | P: (608) 789-7512 | F: (608) 789-7318

Neighborhood Revitalization Commission

CASE STUDY-BEST PRACTICES

1. Project Name(s)

South Library Park Renovation/Ash tree replanting program in Holy Trinity-Longfellow neighborhood

2. Project Location

South Library Park (formerly Tower Park adjacent to South Community Library)

3. Tags

Redevelopment

Landscaping

Capital Improvements

Infrastructure

Programming

Social Activity

Parks and Recreation

Transportation

Funding

Partnerships

Housing

Storm-water

Floodplain

Association Organization

Administration

1. Describe Project

Park renovation: Complete renovation of South Library Park, including new play equipment, landscaping, fencing, sign and shelter.

Tree planting: Removal and replacement of all ash trees within the boundaries of the Holy Trinity-Longfellow neighborhood (West Ave. to Losey Blvd., Jackson St. to Green Bay St.

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2. Project Stakeholders/Partners

Holy Trinity-Longfellow Neighborhood Association (HTLNA)
City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department

3. Project Cost

\$245,834.00 spent to date on South Library Park

\$33,614.75 spent on trees

Construction on the park project is near completion, although parts of this contract must stay open until spring. The landscaping has not yet been completed, a park sign is still waiting to be installed, and the grass seeding must show 80% growth before this project can be closed.

4. Sources of Funds

City of La Crosse Capital Improvement Program (\$375,000)

5. Capital Stack/List

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6. Project Challenges and Solutions

Challenges encountered during the project were communicating HTLNA ideas for park design plans to Parks and Rec personnel, lack of clear guidelines for the neighborhood association's role in the design process, as well as, understanding the bidding procedure. The HTLNA Parks Committee did not approve of the "alternate" play equipment model proposed by Parks and Rec, and the equipment model installed was lower quality than we expected. We also felt pressured to allocate a substantial portion of our funds toward park surfacing (\$54K) when we preferred to spend it on additional play equipment. Although there are many aspects of the new park we are satisfied with, we are unhappy with the play equipment selected.

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In addition, the project time frame was also longer than expected. Construction began in July but no work was done for several weeks after the old playground equipment was removed, which left the park unusable for much of the summer.

7. Performance Metrics/Benefits

To date, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of our project is complete. We anticipate that landscaping will be finished in spring of 2018 and that a sign will also be installed at the park entrance. Although our committee was not completely satisfied with the play equipment and project timeline, response to the renovation has been extremely favorable. Many neighborhood residents have commented on how much they like the new park, and there has been much more activity in the park since the pathway and playground were installed. In sum, the renovations have been extremely beneficial to the neighborhood, though planning and communications between the neighborhood association and Park and Rec could be improved.

11. Outcomes and Lessons Learned

It should be noted that Parks and Rec did meet with our planning committee on several occasions and seemed genuinely receptive to our ideas. We appreciate the time they devoted to assisting with this project, and their willingness to respond to our concerns. However, well-defined guidelines, specific timelines, and clear expectations of community input would have made this process more efficient.

For example, if another neighborhood association is offered the same opportunity, Parks and Rec could provide a more specific set of guidelines. They might develop a form listing park features to choose from and a price range for each feature:

Please select and prioritize the features you would like for your park:

Play equipment	\$60,000-\$200,000
Shelter	\$30,000-\$100,000
Lighting	Many options, starts at \$50K
Benches/tables	\$10,000-\$20,000
Surfacing: poured in place or mulch	\$50,000-\$60,000 for surfacing
Landscaping	\$10,000-\$30,000

It would also have helped if Parks and Rec had narrowed the options for features and provided 2-3 styles to choose from, instead of leaving decisions wide open, especially since there really was less choice involved— because ultimately they decided on the exact set of equipment, shelter model, surfacing, etc. for our park.

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We would also recommend that Parks and Rec provide a clear timeline, for both decision-making during the planning process, and for the start and completion of the project. Often during the planning phase we were asked to provide input but had very little time to consider the question before the deadline.

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