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Scenic Pittsburgh Opens New Greenspace Near Allegheny General Hospital June 21

Creation of "Fountain Street Overlook" Leads to Founding of Greenspace Partnership

Pittsburgh, PA—Scenic Pittsburgh, a nonprofit focused on protecting and preserving the scenic resources of southwestern Pennsylvania, will hold a ribboncutting ceremony for a new publicly accessible 2.2 acre greenspace in the Fineview neighborhood at 4:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 21.

The new greenspace lies on the wooded slope between Fountain and Henderson Street, directly behind Allegheny General Hospital. Some of the land involved is owned by Scenic Pittsburgh, with the rest being leased by the nonprofit from the City of Pittsburgh. The site can be accessed via stairs on Fountain near the intersection of Sandusky Street.

The ceremony is open to the public. Mike Dawida, former Allegheny County Commissioner and current Executive Director of Scenic Pittsburgh, will present some information about the history of the site and introduce members of the greenspace restoration partnership that has worked to clean up and open the site. Scenic Pittsburgh staff will also conduct tours.

The greenspace restoration partnership includes Allegheny Cleanways, Grounded, and Landforce, as well as the Fineview and Perry Hilltop Citizens Councils, but according to Sen. Dawida, there are plans to expand the partnership.

There is a particular kind of site Scenic Pittsburgh focuses on: land that is not easily developed for housing or business, is often wooded and on steep-slope property, is either too small for traditional development or too large to be a simple neighborhood project, and represents a possible greenspace asset for the surrounding community.

These sites usually have another thing in common: they are currently hosting illegal dumps, trash, and invasive weeds.

"We got started on greenspace restoration because we realized that these lots were a major source of our area's visual blight and garbage," he added. "We realized we could do more than clean these places up – with the right partners, we could transform them into scenic community

assets.”

The greenspace partnership is currently at work on another site on Lanark Street in the Fineview neighborhood, with the opening planned for Fall of 2022. A third project is in development in the Hill District.

Since purchasing a single lot at Fountain and Henderson from the school district in 2018, and leasing the surrounding lots from the City of Pittsburgh, Scenic Pittsburgh has conducted repeated cleanups of what they call Fountain Street Overlook’s “urban forest” with Allegheny Cleanways, and contracted Landforce to install paths and repair stairs. Grounded has done a great deal of work to understand greenspace needs in the Fineview neighborhood, which has been helpful in the site’s development.

In April, the Scenic Pittsburgh staff planted 50 native maple viburnum bushes that they hope will help discourage invasive weeds and start to restore the balance of native plant life to the site. The bushes and protective tubes were donated by the Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership.

Scenic Pittsburgh has received funding for the restoration of the Fountain Street Overlook from the Laurel Foundation and Colcom Foundation, as well as a joint grant from Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and Allegheny Health Network. The Buhl Foundation has also supported development of the new greenspace partnership, and the forthcoming Lanark Street project in Fineview. The Hunt Foundation has provided funding for the Hill District project, which is in development.

The Fountain Street Overlook will be open from dawn to dusk. Visitors should expect some rough and steep terrain, and some exposed foundations from homes torn down in the 1950s and 60s. There are paths throughout the site that connect the entrance at the end of Graib Street to the stairs at Fountain.

Dawida says there is more to do to make the Fountain Street Overlook the gem it should be, and they will continue to seek funding to improve and maintain it.

“This site was covered with houses just a few decades ago, so we are still working on clearing and reclaiming foundation stones and other building materials. The stairway needs additional repair, and we would like to add fencing and some other amenities,” he said.

But overall, he added, Scenic Pittsburgh is proud of the work that’s been done so far, and excited at the prospect of additional projects with the greenspace partnership.

“These sites are everywhere in Pittsburgh, and in the region. They hold great scenic and public health potential for our population and for our future,” he said. “And we can’t afford to ignore them and let them remain blighted just because restoring them can be difficult.”

About Scenic Pittsburgh: Scenic Pittsburgh is a nonprofit organization that protects, enhances, and promotes the scenic beauty – both natural and built – of southwestern Pennsylvania. Our

work is focused on the nexus where economic development, community health, and environmental and historic preservation meet. We serve the following counties: Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington, and Westmoreland. Scenic Pittsburgh is a chapter of Scenic America, the nation's premier scenic conservation organization. For more information, go to [Scenic Pittsburgh - Scenic America](#)

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