

Ryan Park will get revamped

By Robert Koch



Photo: Erik Trautmann / Hearst Connecticut Media

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The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency provided an update on Ryan Park redesign as part of the Washington Village reconstruction project.

NORWALK — A lawn area, basketball court, children’s playgrounds, pavilion and splash pad are all part of the master plan for Ryan Park in South Norwalk.

PCBs, metals and petroleum products, however, must be removed first before improvements can be made to the 2.2-acre city park at the corner of Day and Raymond streets near Washington Village.

[Zoe Belcher](#), project manager with Weston & Sampson, the consultant firm hired by the city to oversee the environmental remediation, showed the

proposed soil removal in the area that will become the playgrounds.

“Because these are not bituminous, paved surfaces, all the soils in these areas will be taken down to four feet,” said Belcher, pointing at the master plan.

Representatives of Weston & Sampson as well as Stantec, the consultant that prepared the master plan, updated about a dozen residents on what is ahead during a meeting at the [Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Office](#) at 149 Water St. on Thursday.

The former presence of a junkyard, nearby hat factory and other former industry have left between half and two-thirds of the park area contaminated to various degrees, according to Weston & Sampson.

Belcher showed a hatched map outlining PCB contamination, largely on the northwest portion of the park.

Resident [Diane Lauricella](#) asked that the park master plan be superimposed over the contamination map to give residents a better idea of what will go where.

“I just wanted to make sure that the public is satisfied and confident that materials that are left in the ground will not be percolating up,” Lauricella said.

Belcher said Weston & Sampson received confirmation Thursday that the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) had approved the Remedial Action Plan for the park.

The consultant hopes to see the city put the remediation work out to bid this summer. A separate, licensed company would perform the cleanup and finish by September if all goes according to schedule.

Although the park has been fenced to accommodate the cleanup, residents likely will see workers wearing dust masks once the remediation begins.

“There’s going to be a significant amount of materials that’s going to be removed from the property,” said [Malcolm Beeler](#), senior project manager with Weston & Sampson.

[Jeffrey A. Olszewski](#), project manager with Stantec, walked residents through the park master plan.

A large open lawn with pavilion occupies much of the park. The basketball court lies off Raymond Street, the splash pad off Day Street and two playgrounds are located at the southwest corner of the great lawn. The new park would have bicycle racks, a fitness area and enclosed portable restrooms under the master plan.

“We wanted to really bring something dynamic in there and challenging,” said Olszewski, pointing at the playgrounds. “Ropes and slides and climbing walls and things where multiple kids could be on the elements at once rather than just say, ‘Okay, wait Johnny, it’s not your turn.’ ”

[Jalila Washington](#), one of about a dozen people at the presentation, welcomed the proposed improvements.

“We’ll finally have a place similar to Scalzi Park to come,” said Washington, referring to a park in Stamford. “We don’t really have anything like that here.”

Her only question was when work will start.

The improvements will begin immediately after the environmental remediation is complete with the new park opening in December 2018, according to Stantec.

Last year, the [Norwalk Redevelopment Agency](#) received a \$2 million grant through the [Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection](#) to clean up Ryan Park in advance of its rebuilding as part of the Washington Village Transformation Plan.

