

GROVER CLEVELAND GOLF COURSE

DESCRIPTION

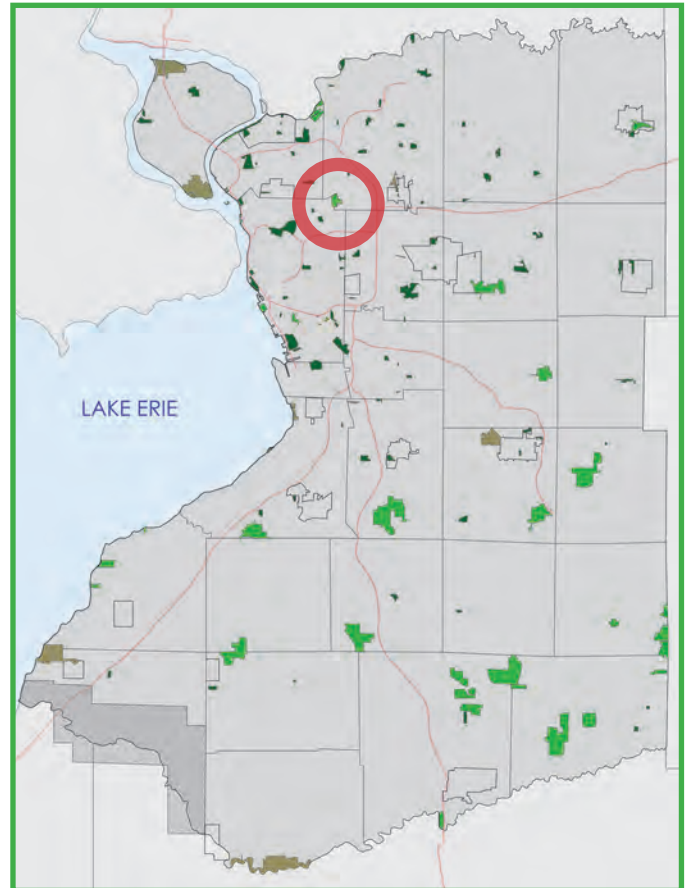
Grover Cleveland Park and Golf Course is a 111-acre park fully developed as an 18-hole golf course. Previously a City of Buffalo Park, Grover Cleveland Golf Course was sold to Erie County for one dollar in 1986. Now primarily a golf course with supporting golf-related facilities, Grover Cleveland used to have more recreational services. The current Golf Course was designed to put a premium on accuracy not distance. The course plays over 5600 yards with par being 34-35-69. The Golf Course is relatively flat overall with no dense tree cover. Mature trees border the north and west sides, with only linear groupings of trees within the course area.

Another notable “heritage” aspect of the Grover Cleveland Golf Course is that the site has one of the oldest stone buildings in Erie County on it, the ‘Schenck house’, possibly dating back as early as the 1810s. This structure is in need of upgrades to preserve its structural and architectural integrity.

PARK AND AREA HISTORY

The Grover Cleveland Golf Course has an impressive and storied history within the Western New York region. It is one of the oldest Golf Courses around, and was the original site of the Country Club of Buffalo (between 1900–1926). The original clubhouse was built in 1901, designed by architect George Cary, who also built the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society building. The 18-hole golf course, tennis courts, and polo field were added in 1902. To highlight, the Country Club of Buffalo hosted the 1912 U.S. Open Golf Tournament. The City of Buffalo purchased the club in 1925 for \$800,000.00, and renamed the site to honor the former Mayor of Buffalo, Governor of New York State, and President of the United States of America.

The Country Club of Buffalo eventually moved out to its current site in Williamsville. A portion of the golf course property was sold by the City of Buffalo to the Veterans Hospital in



Park Location Map: Grover Cleveland Golf Course is located in the Town of Amherst off of Main Street

PARK SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

- **Improve drainage;** engage a consultant to conduct a drainage study and develop a design to solve drainage issues, therefore improving the playability of the course.
- **Restore the Schenck House structure and associated out-buildings.** Potential exists for an Erie County heritage-related museum, upgraded golf course-related facility, meeting rooms, etc. Maximize access and visibility to Main Street.
- **Plant additional trees and shrubs** along Main Street and Bailey Avenue to improve playability of the course.



Grover Cleveland Golf Course Clubhouse

the 1940s, resulting in the Grover Cleveland course being shortened to its current length of 5600 yards.

Many historical design features are still visible, even though years of neglect and other haphazard changes have erased some of the course's character. Unfortunately, the original Clubhouse building burned to the ground in the 1970s. The County acquired the course in 1983. Although the "shortened" course length has made it hard to compete with newer, longer courses in the area, Grover Cleveland remains a very popular venue in Erie County and one of the best deals in the region. This property was originally a large farm / estate, which was acquired and used by the Country Club of Buffalo after they were forced to move from their Nottingham Terrace (North Buffalo) location to make way for the Pan-American Exposition of 1901.

LOCAL CONTEXT

The Grover Cleveland course sits very strategically in an urban "first-ring suburb" neighborhood adjacent to the University at Buffalo South Campus. It is located between four major municipalities in the northeast corner of the City of Buffalo, adjacent to the Town of Amherst and close to both the towns of Tonawanda and Cheektowaga. Residential and institutional land uses compose most of the surrounding neighborhood, with commercial strips along Main Street off the northeast corner of the course and along Bailey Avenue off the southeast corner. The main entrance for the course is on Main Street, which forms a portion of the northern border; single family residential backyards form the northeast and part of the eastern boundary, with Eggert Road completing the eastern boundary of the



Local context map

course; the southeast end borders a single family residential area while the southwest property line borders the Veteran's Administration Hospital. Lastly, Bailey Avenue and the University at Buffalo South Campus form the entire western boundary line.



View of the golf course





MASTER PLAN GROVER CLEVELAND GOLF COURSE

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS:

Specific Action Items - Ex. (A1)

- 1 (C-2.0) Consider a public/private partnership with Preservation Buffalo Niagara, The University of Buffalo, etc. in restoring the old stone house structure and associated out-buildings.
- 2 (A-1.0-1.2) Provide additional tree and shrub plantings along the Main Street and Bailey Avenue course edges to improve safety and playability at this course.
- 3 (C-4.0) Provide interpretive signage and markers to highlight the rich history of the course and past events in non-playable areas.
- 4 (A-1.3) Provide additional tree plantings between various "tight" fairways and holes to improve safety measures and playability on the course.
- 5 (C-1.0) Enhance or upgrade the park sign at the corner of Main St. and Bailey Ave., and provide landscape improvements.
- 6 Consider transitioning tennis court into a multi-purpose sports court; offer different interchangeable activities. Many schools in the area offer several tennis courts.

MASTER PLAN HIGHLIGHTS:

- (A-1.0-1.2) Improve the tree health of the park. Remove dead, dying or diseased trees. Prune deadwood from trees. Routinely monitor the tree population for indications of pest infestations.
- (C-6.0) Undertake a course master plan; given its unique historical design, it would be in the County's best interest to reinvigorate some of its original design features, and to promote the course as a regional "heritage" attraction.
- (C-3.0) Improve drainage; engage a consultant to conduct a drainage study and develop a design to solve drainage issues, therefore improving the playability of the course.



Legend:

- Potential Major and Minor Park Gateway Locations
- Existing Trails
- Park Boundary
- Destination
- Natural Features

RECREATIONAL CONTEXT

Grover Cleveland Gold Course sits in an urban setting with nearby parks and recreation facilities within the City of Buffalo, Town of Amherst, and Town of Tonawanda. The site has a regulation tennis court and seasonal trails for cross-country running and skiing.

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

- Limited resources, low fee schedules, and intensive course play are taking their toll on the course.
- The County should re-evaluate its greens fees to reflect regional golf course fees, and to put revenue into repairing and enhancing the golf course.
- General course improvements and enhancements are needed to keep the course competitive in the area.
- The course is too exposed to the perimeter roadways
- Constant drainage issues make some holes often unplayable, and is usually one of the last courses to open in the spring.
- Schenck house is in disrepair and isolated.

RECENT PARKS DEPARTMENT PROJECTS / IMPROVEMENTS

- Various improvements and upgrades to Club House and Halfway House.
- Parking lot and roadway improvements – Utility road and access road were repaved and parking lot was striped.

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Key - (Project Type: Project Number)

A - Action Item: Completed at low to no cost by Parks Staff
P - Assistance or completion of project by potential partner/user group
C - Capital project

- **(A: 1.0-1.2) Improve the tree health of the park.**
 - Remove dead, dying or diseased trees.
 - Prune deadwood from trees.
 - Routinely monitor the tree population for indications of pest infestations.
 - Provide new native tree plantings throughout the park, particularly along the roadway edges (Consult County Forester and local experts to determine appropriate species to benefit wildlife).
 - Provide additional tree and shrub plantings along the Main Street and Bailey Avenue course edges to improve safety and playability at this course.
 - Develop a multi-pronged approach to tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings.
 - Develop annual tree planting program to restore tree canopy and improve natural image of the park.
 - Apply for funding from NYSDEC and Erie County Soil and Water District for example for purchase of trees and materials and for the tree inventory.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: WNY PRISM/ECSWD/Forestry**



View of the golf course



The Schenck House

- **(C: 3.0) Improve drainage;** engage a consultant to conduct a drainage study and develop a design to solve drainage issues, therefore improving the playability of the course.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Consultant
- **(C: 2.0) Restore the Schenck House structure and associated out-buildings.** Potential exists for an Erie County heritage-related museum, upgraded golf course-related facility, meeting rooms, etc.
 - Maximize the access and visibility to Main Street, the proximity to the University at Buffalo and the close proximity to some of the region's most prestigious homes as major marketing advantages for future uses at this facility.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Preservation Buffalo Niagara/The University of Buffalo/VBN
- **(C: 4.0) Provide interpretive signage and markers to highlight the rich history of the course and past events in non-playable areas.**
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House
- **(C: 5.0) Upgrade course facilities** in the future, as funding becomes available. This includes resurfacing the existing parking lot, and upgrading/remodeling clubhouse/proshop etc.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: Consultant/Contractor
- **Consider the inclusion of the Schenck House and outbuildings on the National Register of Historic Places.**
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House

- **(C: 6.0) Undertake a course master plan;** given its unique historical design, it would be in the County's best interest to reinvigorate some of its original design features, and to promote the course as a regional "heritage" attraction.
 - A Golf Course Architect should be hired to assist with this restoration plan.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: Consultant/In-House
- **(A: 1.3) Provide additional tree plantings** between various "tight" fairways and holes to improve safety measures and playability on the course.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House/Forestry
- **Consider transitioning tennis court into a multi-purpose sports court;** offer different interchangeable activities. Many schools in the area offer several tennis courts.
 - Consider in the short-term dual striping the court to allow for pickleball for example or other court sports.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: Consultant/Contractor
- **(C: 1.0) Enhance or upgrade the park sign at the corner of Main St. and Bailey Ave.,** and provide landscape improvements.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House



Single tennis court off of the main park road



Entry into the Golf Course from Main Street

GROVER CLEVELAND GOLF COURSE: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	1.0	Increase tree health and tree canopy throughout the park. The overall age of the tree population at the Park is considered to be mature, with limited young trees to renew the resource over time. Develop a multi-pronged tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings	Prune and/or remove trees if determined to present an increased risk to park patrons and employees.	High	Ongoing	In-House, Forestry
A	1.1	Increase tree health and tree canopy throughout the park. The overall age of the tree population at the Park is considered to be mature, with limited young trees to renew the resource over time. Develop a multi-pronged tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings	Develop an annual tree planting program.	Medium	Ongoing	P.O.B.
A	1.2	Provide new tree plantings throughout the park, particularly along the roadway edges.	Provide additional tree and shrub plantings along the Main Street and Bailey Avenue course edges	Medium	Ongoing	In-House, Forestry
A	1.3	Provide additional tree plantings between various “tight” fairways and holes to improve safety measures and playability on the course.	Apply for tree grants	Medium	Ongoing	In-House, Forestry
C	2.0	Prevent further deterioration to the Schenck House structure and associated out-buildings. Potential exists for an Erie County heritage-related museum, upgraded golf course-related facility, meeting rooms, etc.	Engage a consultant to develop plans and contractor to construct the improvements	Medium	6-10 Years	\$50,000

KEY:

A: Action Item: Completed at low to no cost by Parks staff

P: Assistance or completion of project by potential partner/user group

C: Capital Project

POB: Parks Operating Budget

GROVER CLEVELAND GOLF COURSE: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	3.0	Improve drainage; engage a consultant to conduct a drainage study and develop a design to solve drainage issues, therefore improving the playability of the course.	Engage a consultant to develop plans and contractor to construct the improvements	Medium	3-5 Years	\$40,000
C	1.0	Establish Enhanced Gateways for the park at intersection of Main Street and Bailey Ave., as well as the Main Street entrance.	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	\$35,600
C	4.0	Provide interpretive signage in the park:	Coordinate with historical society to develop copy and obtain images for the interpretive content.	Low	3-5 Years	\$3,500
C	5.0	Upgrade course facilities in the future, as funding becomes available. This includes resurfacing the existing parking lot, and upgrading/remodeling clubhouse/proshop etc.	Engage a consultant to develop plans and contractor to construct the improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$45,000
C	6.0	Undertake a course master plan; given its unique historical design, it would be in the County's best interest to reinvigorate some of its original design features, and to promote the course as a regional "heritage" attraction.	A Golf Course Architect should be hired to assist with this restoration plan.	Low	6-10 Years	\$15,000

