



# Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park



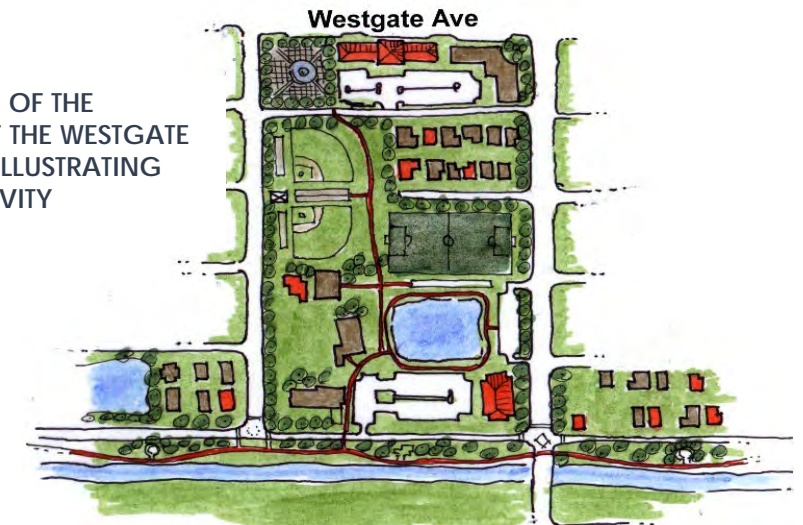
## PROJECT BACKGROUND – SETTING THE STAGE

- The Westgate CRA district sits in lowest point of the C51 drainage basin
- Prone to chronic flooding during storm events
- In 2006, the CRA established a plan to improve drainage with partners Palm Beach County Water Utilities & Lake Worth Drainage District (LWDD)
- The plan involved the widening of the LWDD L-2 Canal, which bisects the redevelopment area, to improve water conveyance
- This infrastructure project was envisioned in the Agency's 2005 CRP as a flood mitigation meets community enhancement opportunity
- The L-2 Canal Greenway would take the form of a linear park alongside the canal, providing open space, pedestrian amenities, and connectivity

CONCEPT  
RENDERING OF THE  
GREENWAY  
2005 PLAN



CONCEPT RENDERING OF THE  
GREENWAY SOUTH OF THE WESTGATE  
RECREATION CENTER ILLUSTRATING  
POTENTIAL CONNECTIVITY  
2005 PLAN





# Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park



## PROJECT BACKGROUND – PARTIALLY COMPLETE, NOW WHAT?

- Phase I of the L-2 Canal Greenway project was completed in 2012
- The CRA had been acquiring lots for Phase II using FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding and Palm Beach County CDBG allocations leveraged with CRA TIF – a total of 18 parcels along Oswego Avenue backing on to the L-2 Canal were acquired for the project
- The design for Phase II began in 2011 with construction scheduled for 2015
- FEMA funding required a time certain to complete acquisition through voluntary sales and the construction phase
- Despite an extension to funding, the CRA was unable to purchase all necessary properties at fair market value, so the Agency was forced to close out the grant without constructing Phase II and shelve the project

PHASE I OF THE L-2 CANAL  
IMPROVEMENTS (VIEW WEST) AND  
FUTURE GREENWAY LINK





# Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park



## PROJECT BACKGROUND – PIVOTING TO A NEW PROJECT IDEA

- In 2015, the CRA began working on amending its CRP with a focus on economic development, vertical redevelopment, and creating public spaces for the community
- At a community forum later that year, stakeholders provided input on the area's challenges, and, through a 'needs and wants' survey, provided a blueprint for future CRA projects and programs
- Residents expressed concern over persistent property neglect, illegal dumping, and loitering
- And among the 'wants' identified was the creation of more public parks and community events
- In 2017, the CRA received notice of an upcoming grant funding opportunity by the Palm Beach County Solid Waste Authority (SWA) for the clean up of blighted properties
- ...and so the idea of creating a neighborhood park on a portion of the land originally acquired for L-2 Canal Greenway project began to take shape...

'NEEDS & WANTS' SUMMARY FROM 2015  
COMMUNITY FORUM – SECTION 3 OF THE  
2017 AMENDED COMMUNITY  
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN  
[westgatecra.org](http://westgatecra.org)

**Property Maintenance Merchants**  
**Association**  
**Traffic Calming Home Ownership Dining &**  
**Shopping Options**  
**Mixed Uses Street Lighting**  
**Crime Prevention**  
**Remove Derelict Housing Bike**  
**Lanes**  
**Address Chronic Loitering**  
**Public Art Public Parks**  
**Community Events**





# Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park



## PROJECT BACKGROUND – INITIAL FUNDING & A PROJECT NAME

- The CRA was awarded \$151,175 in funding from the PBC SWA for clean-up of the site, removal of vegetation from the canal banks, and the construction of a park on .77 of an acre of land on Oswego Ave. previously earmarked for the L-2 Canal expansion
- The same year, the Agency demolished a dilapidated structure at 1909 Seminole Blvd. using \$15,000 of its TIF
- The site is located at the corner of Oswego Ave. at Seminole Blvd., an important north-south connector roadway
- With mature oak trees abundant throughout the site, the name “Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park” was fitting

BEFORE PHOTOS: 1909 SEMINOLE BLVD.  
PRIOR TO DEMOLITION



BEFORE PHOTOS: AFTER DEMOLITION



BEFORE PHOTOS: VIEW FROM OSWEGO AVE



BEFORE PHOTOS:  
OVERGROWN VEGETATION ALONG CANAL







# Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park



## PROJECT BACKGROUND – THE BENEFITS

- The Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park project:
  - Creates open space for community use and events commensurate with the wishes of residents
  - Facilitates the removal of a blighted structure
  - Re-purposes vacant land to prevent illegal dumping
  - Initiates the L-2 Canal Greenway project as described in the CRA's 2005 CRP by creating a feature linear park with links to other public uses
- The park site sits across Oswego Avenue from the County's Westgate Recreation Center offering an opportunity for synergy and connectivity between public uses
- The park will serve to positively anchor the corner of this distressed area of the redevelopment district
- The project represents the first of its kind for the CRA, and creates a template for future neighborhood infill parks in the district



SWA GRANT APPLICATION – CONCEPTUAL GRAPHIC



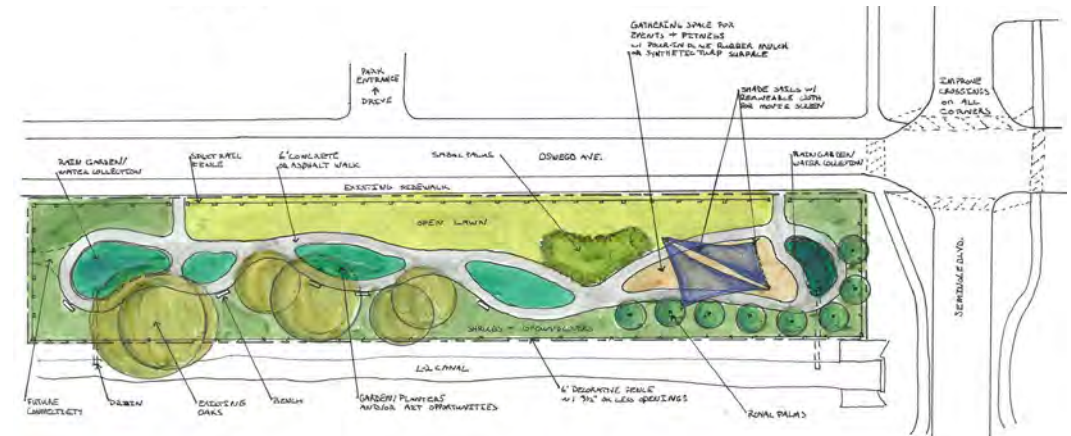
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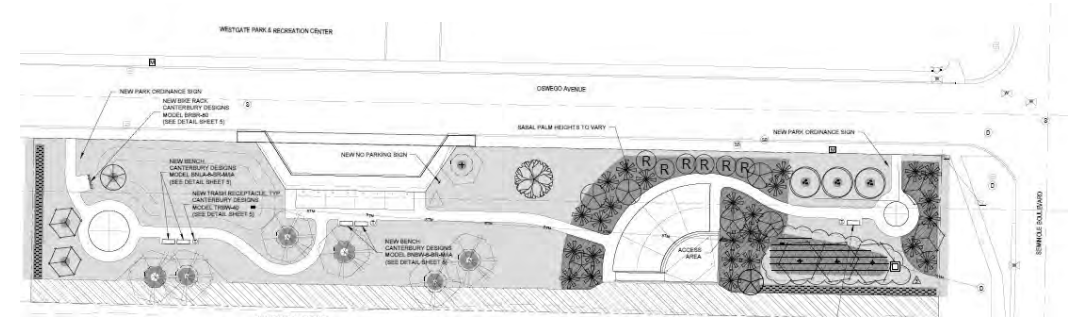
## DESIGN PHASE – A NEED FOR MORE FUNDING

- The original SWA grant application scope included landscaping, pathways, seating areas, a gazebo, and fencing
- The Agency sought the design assistance of the PBC Parks & Recreation Department which provided services in-kind to design the park layout and offered the Agency guidance through the construction phase
- Following completion of construction drawings and the development of probable costs, which included civil engineering, electrical, and structural components, it became clear that there was a budget shortfall
- The CRA requested and received assistance from the PBC Dep't of Housing & Economic Development, with approval by the PBC Board of County Commissioners, for funding from the County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocations for a total of \$345,803

## PALM BEACH COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION INITIAL CONCEPT DESIGN



PALM BEACH COUNTY PARKS &amp; RECREATION FINAL DESIGN







# Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park



## CONSTRUCTION PHASE BEGINS







# Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park



## CONSTRUCTION PHASE – NEARLY COMPLETE...

- Pathways and gathering areas are constructed, the pavilion and community information kiosk are installed, along with pedestrian scale lighting and lighted bollards adjacent to food truck parking
- Community excitement begins to build!



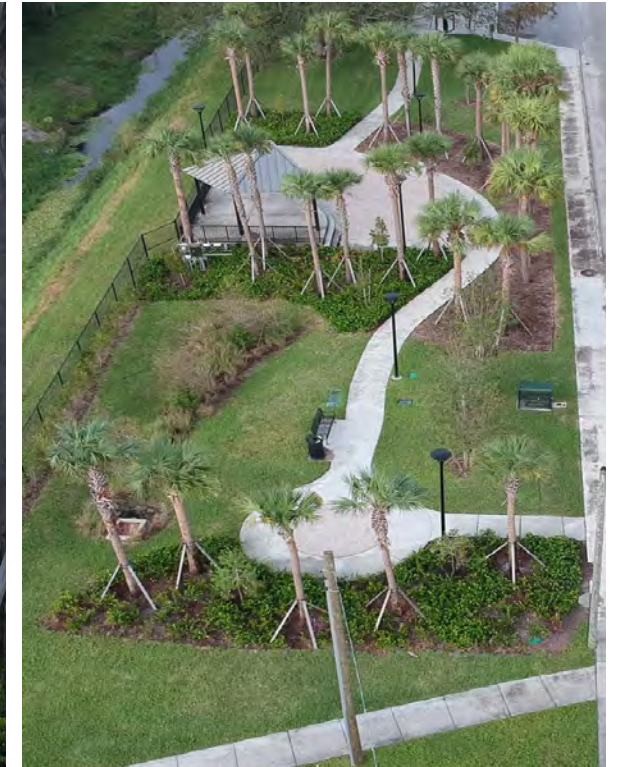




# Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park



CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED!







# Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park



## FROM BLIGHTED & DILAPIDATED TO COMMUNITY AMENITY

- The Oswego Oaks Park project was created through creative problem solving, collaborative public partnerships, and with local and federal grant funding leveraged with CRA TIF
- The land acquired for the expansion of the L-2 Canal and Greenway project using FEMA funding, was restricted to remain open space in perpetuity -- a public park is the best, and perhaps, only option for repurposing the vacant land
- Project funding sources:
  - FEMA grant (acquisition of 1909 Seminole Blvd.) – \$55,000
  - SWA grant -- \$151,175
  - CDBG grant -- \$345,803
  - CRA TIF -- \$96,817
  - PBC Parks & Recreation Dep't – services in-kind
  - Total project cost incl. acquisition, demolition, construction: \$663,795
- In early 2020, the Agency was busy preparing for a ribbon cutting and planning a series of community events at the park in collaboration with the Westgate Recreation Center, when the Covid-19 lockdowns delayed those plans...

BEFORE



AFTER







# Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park



## THE RIBBON CUTTING – OCTOBER 21, 2020

### Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park Ribbon Cutting



*(l-r) John Archambo, Solid Waste Authority manager; Matthew West, president of West Construction, Inc.; Assistant County Administrator Dorritt Miller; Elizee Michel, Westgate CRA executive director; Commissioner Mack Bernard; Sharon Sheppard, redevelopment specialist (retired), Westgate CRA); Commissioner Gregg Weiss; Dan Pellowitz, executive director of the Solid Waste Authority; Johnathan Brown, director of Housing & Economic Sustainability; Ronald Daniels, Westgate CRA board chair; Adam Swaney, P.E., project engineer, Engenuity Group; and Denise Pennell, project manager, Westgate CRA*

pavilion, winding pathways, seating areas, a food truck zone, site lighting, and landscaping to highlight the site's trademark mature oak trees.

On October 21, the Westgate/Belvedere Homes CRA held a ribbon cutting to officially open the Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park. Guest speakers included Commissioners Mack Bernard and Gregg Weiss, Westgate CRA Board Chair Ronald Daniels, and Solid Waste Authority Executive Director Dan Pellowitz. The event was emceed by Assistant County Administrator Dorritt Miller

Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park is located at 2730 Oswego Avenue, West Palm Beach. It was developed by the Westgate CRA in partnership with the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners, the Department of Housing & Economic Sustainability, and the Parks & Recreation Department. The park will provide open, recreation, and event space for the Westgate/Belvedere Homes community. It includes an amphitheater and



FROM THE NOVEMBER 13, 2020  
ISSUE OF PBCCOUNT-E-LINE





# Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park



## COMMUNITY EVENTS BEGIN! – HALLOWEEN & SANTA AT THE PARK

- COVID-19 distancing protocols prevented the CRA from holding events at the park for most of 2021, but... in October 2021, in collaboration with Westgate Recreation Center, the CRA held a low key Halloween event
- In December 2021, the CRA, and Westgate Recreation Center staff, held a Christmas-themed event with music, food trucks, and an appearance by Santa himself!
- PBSO Community Policing Deputies were in attendance, and guests were treated to a performance by G-Star High School choir students



ABOVE: HALLOWEEN EVENT  
RIGHT: SANTA AT THE PARK  
BELOW: FESTIVE LIGHTS ADORN THE PALMS & PAVILION FOR THE HOLIDAYS







# Oswego Oaks Neighborhood Park



## 2022 EVENTS – MOWTOWN AT THE PARK & COMMUNITY YOGA

- In celebration of Black History Month, the CRA, in collaboration with Westgate Recreation Center staff, hosted 'Motown at the Park' in February
- The event was well attended by community residents and featured live Motown music and food trucks
- ...and the CRA began offering a community yoga event in the spring of 2022!
- Yoga is held twice per month at not cost to Westgate residents with adults and children over 5 welcome to attend



ABOVE: MOTOWN AT THE PARK EVENT  
RIGHT: COMMUNITY YOGA AT THE PARK