

# Noisette™ NEIGHBOR

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## RIVERFRONT PARK PLANS UNVEILED!

You've probably heard, and may have seen in the newspaper, that the concept plans for the first phase of North Charleston's new 3/4-mile-long Riverfront Park are here. Phase 1 is the southern half of the Park, lying along the Cooper and south of the Noisette Creek, an area of 15-20 acres.

This is a significant first step in returning access to the river's edge to residents. The design comes from conversations we've had with you about what you'd like to see. Residents have input ideas since last year when the Noisette Company began meeting with individual neighborhoods and civic groups.

"We've created the framework for a marvelous community space based on what North Charleston residents said they wanted," said John L. Knott, Jr., CEO of the Noisette Company.

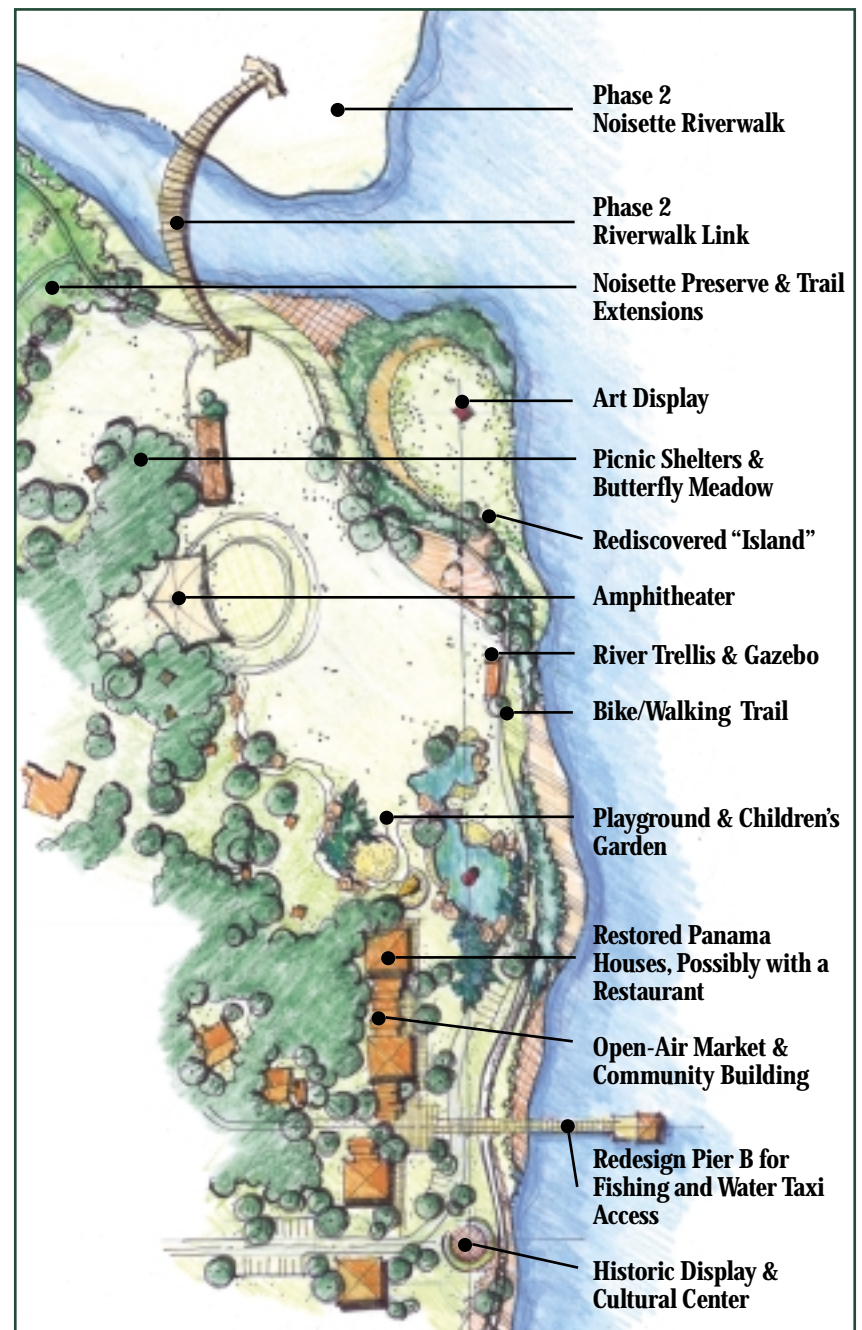
The scope of the Park shown at the right indicates a bridge to be built across the Noisette Creek to the site proposed by the City for the H.L. Hunley Museum and northward to a riverwalk promenade along future development of shopping, restaurants, and entertainment. Noisette Preserve ecosystem restoration will connect to the Riverfront Park.

Phase 1 will accommodate day use by individuals and groups, as well as large City celebrations similar to the North Charleston 30th Anniversary picnic, concert, and fireworks last June. An amphitheater will have concerts and shows in an informal lawn picnic setting. Art will be incorporated in the landscape. Until 70 years ago, there was a marsh island at the mouth of the Noisette. We plan to re-create its boundaries with native vegetation in Phase 1. Kayak and canoe access should be available where the Park touches the Creek.

Much of the Phase 1 Park work will be to remove things. The old Officers' Club and swimming pool will be de-constructed, and a large asphalt parking lot removed. Existing roads will be replaced with pervious surface trails and walkways.

Going forward, we'll refine the design, and present a construction plan to the City before the end of the year. We are working to deliver Phase 1 of the Park with a celebration of July 4, 2003. Importantly, the City is working on two critical aspects of making this schedule and the Park a reality. The first is to get the Park land from the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) by November 1st. The second is to develop the Naval Base Tax Increment Financing District to the point where financing can be secured to begin construction in January. This also means Base land, which Noisette is buying, must transfer by November 1st and go on the tax rolls. If all things go according to plan, this long-time vision of Mayor Summey and the Council "will come to be" and the revitalization of the Noisette Area of the City will "kick into overdrive."

Review of this design will continue through the month of September. If you have comments, call Jim Augustin at 302-2106.



## NORTH CHARLESTON AND STATE PORTS AUTHORITY AGREE ON DIVISION OF BASE PROPERTY

On Thursday, July 25, the City of North Charleston and the State Ports Authority agreed to a division of the Navy Base property.

Provided the State Ports Authority (SPA) and the Charleston Naval Complex Redevelopment Authority (RDA) continue to cooperate with the terms of the agreement, all of the land north of Supply Street will transfer to the city without charge. The city will, in turn, sell the land to the Noisette Company for development.

"This is an enormous step forward," City Councilman Kurt Taylor said to the *Post & Courier*. "We can now jump-start the Noisette Project. It means the Riverfront Park is close to being a reality...."

Currently, a memorandum of understanding is being drafted to outline details of the agreement. Significant investments will be made to protect neighborhoods from truck and rail traffic – including a series of overpasses that Mayor Keith Summey says will require the state to invest \$200-250 million dollars.

"We can't wait to get started on the Riverfront Park," said John L. Knott, Jr., CEO of the Noisette Company. "We've been working on conceptual designs, and are meeting with the community for feedback. North Charleston's mayor and city council have done a brilliant job in getting the division of property fairly negotiated; what we need now is for the Ports and the RDA to see the deal through, and we're off to the races!"

## COUNCILMAN'S CORNER



### Don John Hays

When my family moved to North Charleston from Anderson, South Carolina on V-J Day in 1945, the entire city was celebrating. World War II was over, an era which forever shaped the North Area, as it was known then. Certainly, WWII and the Cold War created thousands of high-paying jobs at the Charleston Naval Base. That legacy ended when the

base was closed in 1996.

Before the City was incorporated in 1972, our area had grown by leaps and bounds without a public hearing and review process, and zoning regulations. Today, we are still struggling with that 60-year legacy of unregulated industrial growth. With the announcement of the Noisette Project in March 2001, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity stands before the citizens to shape the destiny of North Charleston.

The commitment of both the City and Noisette to improving public schools is a huge first step in making North Charleston a haven for young families. Before consolidation of the Charleston County School District, North Charleston boasted some of the best public schools in the state. Today, we must revitalize our schools to make the City a vibrant, family-friendly alternative for young couples looking for an excellent quality of life with affordable housing. Certainly, that ties directly into improving our schools.

With the Noisette Company, we are committed to rebuilding blighted neighborhoods like Century Oaks. As we clean up dilapidated structures, and increase the level of homeownership, problems associated with crime and neglect will gradually disappear.

Over the past decade, we've made tremendous progress – the convention center, coliseum, and performing arts complex have all been built since 1993. The City of North Charleston – now the third largest city in South Carolina – must continue developing initiatives to beautify our city, and build on its economic base. In attracting new industries, we must ensure that projects do not negatively impact residential areas, and allow for a steadily improving quality of life.

The City of North Charleston should never waiver in its goal of building a greater future for our children, and grandchildren.



### Bob King

Today, the City of North Charleston is moving in the right direction. Although the Noisette Project will produce step-by-step, piecemeal improvements over the next 20 years, the important elements of the plan – providing waterfront access to our citizens, and plans to improve our schools – will improve the quality of life for our citizens. In looking at plans to revitalize

our city within the Noisette district, the following goals must be addressed:

- **Homeownership** is vitally important: today, 60% of our residents rent their homes, while 40% are homeowners. We must work to reverse these figures in favor of homeownership, as residents who own their homes are more likely to take care of their property.
- **Quality of Life** is an issue that hinges around improving our public schools. We have 13 schools in the Noisette district, including all the magnet schools for Charleston County. Under the Noisette Tax Increment Financing

plan, 25% of revenues must go to public schools – much of what will happen in revitalizing the city hinges on the issue of school improvement.

- **Attracting Young Families** to North Charleston, a city that consists of an older demographic group, is an insurance policy for the future. Young people bring a new energy and enthusiasm, which will create momentum for redevelopment of blighted areas.

- **Public Parks and Amenities** The Cooper Riverfront Park will be a great addition to the city; quality of life revolves around public amenities like the beautiful *Quarterman Lake* and planned Westvaco Park.

- **Revitalizing Blighted Areas** The City is working to revitalize areas like the John C. Calhoun Homes, Century Oaks, and Liberty Hill. This is crucial to improving the tax base and lowering crime rates throughout North Charleston.

- **Economic Base** Our newest industry, the American La France plant, will generate 800 new skilled jobs to the area. We need to look at providing more employment opportunities for the future, without overlapping industrial development into residential neighborhoods, a problem that North Charleston still faces from the past.

If we don't move forward with revitalization today, this may be the last chance North Charleston will ever have. Certainly, improvements will not move as fast as I would like, but we have to be realistic in face of economic restrictions. Noisette represents a golden opportunity to move forward.

The Noisette Project will probably not be completed in my lifetime, but our children and grandchildren will enjoy the benefits. Ultimately, they will live this legacy of revitalization; it is their future that our efforts are for.



### Samuel L. Hart

A decision that was made in part for us by the governing body of the State Legislature to bring the State Ports Authority to the Naval Base has become a reality. This reality has now opened the doors for negotiation and has found a means to bridge the division that stood in the way of our community's progress. Now, with the established boundary lines

in place, the property when transferred will become a great asset to the City of North Charleston.

Many neighborhood meetings were held and citizens were asked and encouraged to voice their concerns, to express their desires and needs, to participate in dialogue with the developers of the Noisette Project and community leaders. Through these shared discussions, the citizens helped to define precisely with it is that we want to achieve in our community, why is it important, and what we can do to help achieve it through the Noisette Project. These exchanges have helped the project to identify several ingredients within each impacted community, their specific assets, and what was already in place and working.

I see revitalization as "beautifying the area, from burying utility lines, to installing landscaping and improving homes." Recreational waterfront parks and facilities "such as stores and eateries" which will serve as a catalyst to the economic success of the area. Such a unique and comprehensive undertaking as the Noisette Project will surely enhance the environment and improve the quality of life in the City of North Charleston and surrounding areas well into the next century.

