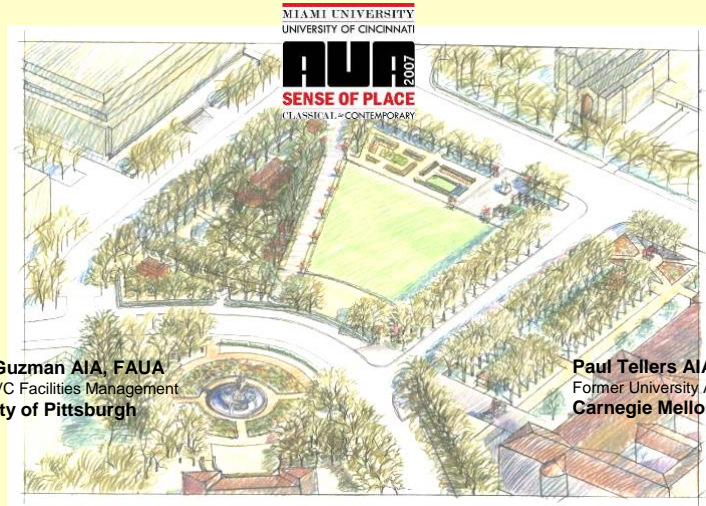


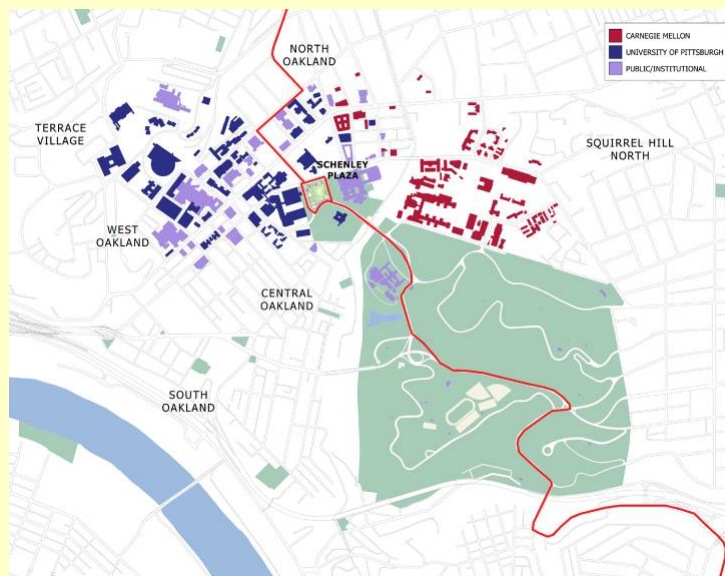
CREATING A COMMUNAL SENSE OF PLACE THE RENOVATION OF SCHENLEY PLAZA



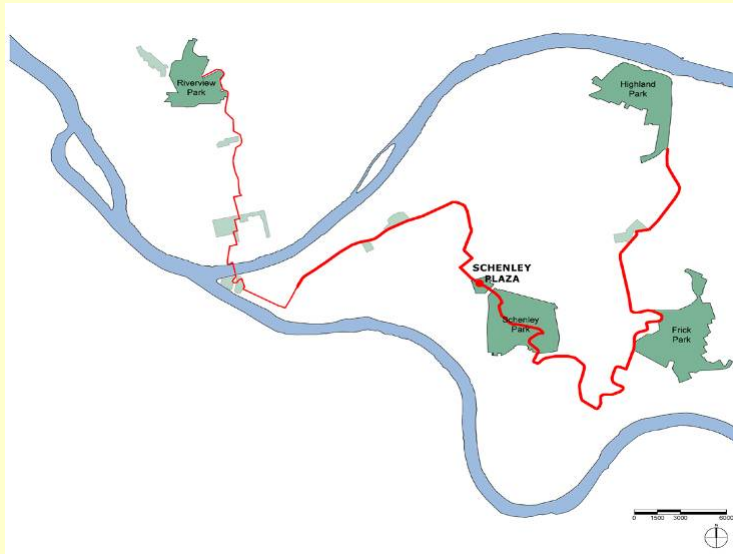
Ana M. Guzman AIA, FAUA
Retired AVC Facilities Management
University of Pittsburgh

Paul Tellers AIA, AUA
Former University Architect
Carnegie Mellon University

June 2007



PLAZA – HISTORY & CONTEXT



PITTSBURGH "NECKLACE" OF PARKS

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

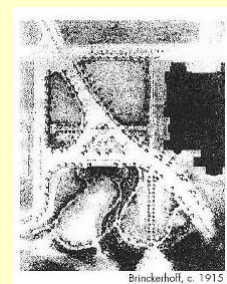
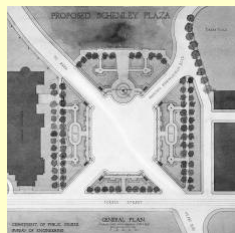
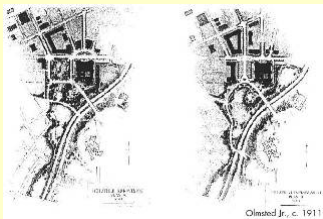
- In 1890, the City purchased 19 acres of land from the Mary Schenley Estate for \$ 75,000
- Allowable uses for the land:
 - Entrance to Schenley Park
 - Recreation
 - Public Library
 - Art Buildings



ST. PIERRE RAVINE AND THE BELLEFIELD BRIDGE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- Many designs for the Plaza were developed over the years
- All previous efforts to renovate the Plaza failed due to lack of funds and unified effort of all stakeholders (City, Institutions, Community and Development Agencies).





1990

PROJECT INCEPTION

- In 2001 the Allegheny Conference for Community Development (ACCD) declares the Renovation of Schenley Plaza their top priority development effort
- The ACCD Oakland Investment Committee (OIC) becomes responsible for the project. The Mayor, the Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh and the President of Carnegie Mellon University are members of the OIC.
- The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy (PPC) is assigned responsibility for the Plaza's maintenance, operation and events programming once the project is implemented.
- Implementation of the project is assigned to the University of Pittsburgh, Office of Facilities Management.
- The OIC establishes a Design Committee to oversee the design.

PROJECT FUNDING

• STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA GRANT	\$ 5,000,000
• FEDERAL GRANT	250,000
• INSTITUTIONS, FOUNDATIONS, PRIVATE GIFTS	4,750,000
• CITY OF PITTSBURGH	0
TOTAL FUNDING	\$ 10,000,000

THE DESIGN DECISION MAKERS

SCHENLEY PLAZA DESIGN COMMITTEE:

Susan Golomb	(Director of City Planning and Co-chair)
Meg Cheever	(PPC and Co-chair)
Kathy Boykowycz	(Oakland Task Force)
Ana Guzman	(University of Pittsburgh)
Paul Tellers	(Carnegie Mellon University)
Craig Dunham	(Carnegie Museums)
Karen Glotfelty	(The Heinz Endowments)

ADVISORS:

Ellen Brooks (ACCD)
Reynolds Clark (Pitt VC Governmental Relations)
Dan Biederman (Bryant Park, NY)

PROJECT MANAGER:

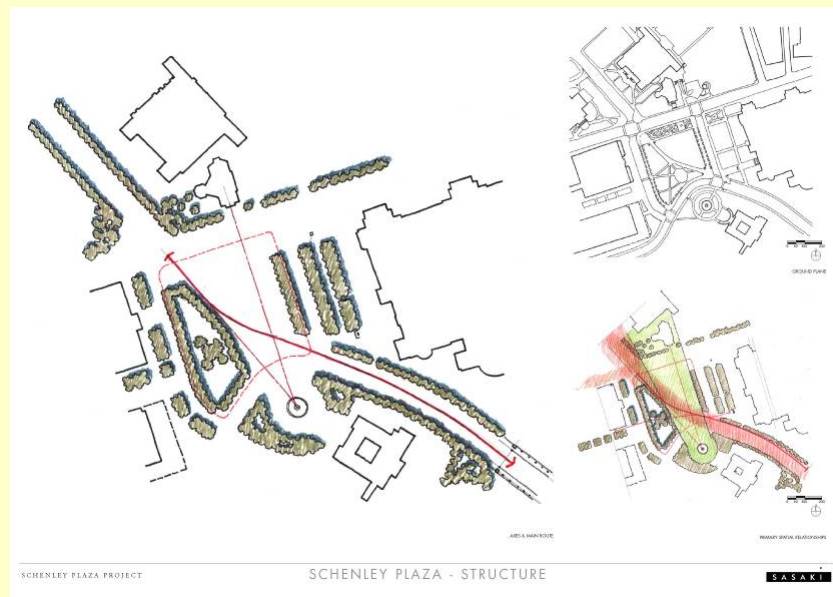
Ron Leibow (Pitt)

THE DESIGN SELECTION PROCESS

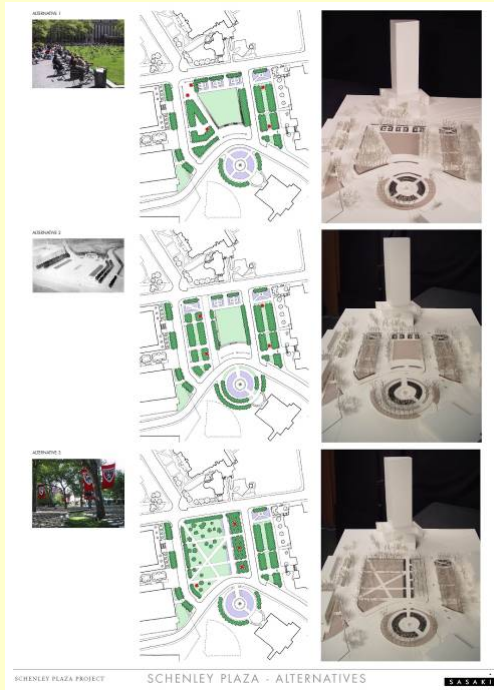
- RFQ/RFPs sent to 25 professional firms. 16 firms responded
- Design Committee reviewed qualifications
- Five firms were interviewed
- Project assigned to Sasaki and Associates/Environmental Planning and Design (EPD)

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Develop a vibrant town square and create an arrival experience that is memorable, welcoming to all constituencies and serves as a principal gateway and connection to all points in Oakland. Revive the plaza's historical persona as an entry to Schenley Park yet do not develop a pristine monument useful for admiration alone.
- Respect the formality of the surrounding 19th century architecture as well as the London Plane trees. Define, yet soften the architectural edges.
- Honor the historical axis formed by the Cathedral of Learning and the Schenley Fountain and enhance visual connections between Bigelow Boulevard, the fountain, and over the bridge to Schenley Park.
- Integrate functional standards for a safe, vibrant, and profitable urban space: flexible seating, quality vending, technologically equipped, a spectator lawn experience and high quality horticulture that adds color and vitality, similar to Bryant Park in New York.
- Establish a relationship to the Forbes Avenue commercial corridor through a design that accommodates the casual activity and off-beat character inherent in urban street-life. Design active corners, and programmable venues that can attract and capture an intergenerational audience, all year round.







PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

CHALLENGES:

- Obtaining agreement from the Community for the loss of some of the parking spaces.
- Eliminating the illegal food vendors and carts.
- Balancing all the stakeholders' requirements (high quality, minimal maintenance, sustainability, maximize revenue space, etc.) with available budget.
- Satisfying the requirements and regulations of funding agencies (minority participation, accounting, record keeping and reporting, etc.).
- Establishing the Legal Agreements that defined responsibilities for each of the parties involved.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

POSITIVE ASPECTS:

- The Design Committee made timely decisions.
- The ACCD gave great support to Pitt's efforts to keep control of the project.
- Schenley Plaza was completed on time and within the established budget and opened to the public in June of 2006.

BEFORE



START OF CONSTRUCTION

AFTER











RESULTS

- The renovation of Schenley Plaza was highly praised by all who now enjoy it as a place of recreation and relaxation in the midst of a highly urban environment.
- The kiosks were very quickly leased to food vendors, creating revenue that contribute to the Plaza maintenance and operation.
- Developers' interest in the restaurant site was immediate. Construction of a two story, 6,400 s.f. building is about to begin soon and when completed, will create an additional source of revenue for the PPC and the City. The restaurant will include indoor and outdoor dining areas that open to the Plaza and also take advantage of the outstanding views of the surrounding buildings.
- Due to the success in implementing the project, the City has now delegated to Pitt Facilities Management, a \$ 2 million project to re-structure and change the traffic signals and pedestrian crossings on several street intersections in the Oakland area, so as to make them more "pedestrian-friendly."

LESSONS LEARNED

- Because of some Universities' financial stability and manpower resources, cities are starting to look for Institutional support to achieve positive change.
- The Renovation of Schenley Plaza is a great example of how two Universities, working with the City leadership and other institutions achieved a lasting, positive impact on their host City by creating a "sense of place" for their Campuses and Community that will also benefit the City as a whole.
- Programming of the outdoor urban space is key to attracting people of all ages, educational backgrounds and interests that contribute to its liveliness and success. The flexibility in use of the space must be planned from its inception and the design must make provisions for this variety of uses.





**SCHENLEY PLAZA
A COMMUNAL SENSE OF PLACE**