PRESS RELEASE

Assemblymember Phil Steck and Mayor Gary McCarthy Announce Upgrades to Schenectady Central Park

Proposal calls for $1.3 million upgrade to Music Haven, Tennis Courts, “A” Diamond

SCHENECTADY—Assemblymember Phil Steck and Schenectady Mayor Gary McCarthy today announced plans for over $1.3 million in capital improvements to Schenectady’s Central Park. The plan, funded by a million dollar state grant, a $150,000 capital commitment from the US Tennis Association, and $150,000 in proposed City Capital funding and in-kind services, would return Schenectady’s “A” Diamond Baseball Field to playability, enhance regional cultural attraction Music Haven by adding improved seating options and operational upgrades, and would enhance the Central Park Tennis Courts to ensure continued use of the facility for tournaments while expanding the facility’s appeal and flexibility.

“I am thrilled to play such a large role in this project, and to work with my esteemed colleague Mayor Gary McCarthy, who has put together an outstanding plan for the betterment of Schenectady’s beautiful Central Park,” said Assemblymember Phil Steck. “There is a tremendous sense of civic pride in this City. Schenectady deserves to have the State take an active interest in its municipal facilities, instead of always imposing unfunded mandates that make it difficult for our Upstate cities to operate.”

“These improvements will not only provide improved recreational opportunities for residents, but will expand Central Park’s regional appeal and provide an economic boost for the City,” said Mayor Gary McCarthy. “We are thankful for the critical support of Assemblymember Steck and the partnership with the US Tennis Association. These improvements lay the groundwork for even more great things to come.”

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Music Haven has a long history in Central Park, hosting a free summer concert series and serving as a center piece for culture and the fine arts in Schenectady while drawing visitors from throughout the Region. Music Haven and its concert series have brought a wealth of music from every corner of the world to Schenectady while also serving as an important economic generator for Central Park and local businesses. Under this proposal, the hill surrounding and the area in front of the Music Haven will undergo a reconfiguration for enhanced seating options and general operational improvement.

"As an advocate for gathering spaces that bring community together, I’m delighted that the City and State see fit to invest in our parks," said Mona Golub, Producing Artistic Director of the Music Haven Concert Series. “These planned improvements and upgrades will make Central Park, with its unparalleled breadth of amenities, even more of a destination for residents and visitors alike."

The number and quality of the courts, the layout and overall setting, and the strategic location centered in Upstate New York make the Schenectady Central Park Tennis Courts one of the best tennis venues in the region. USTA Tournaments at Central Park draw over 2,000 players to the park, generating an estimated three quarters of a million dollars in economic benefits to local businesses. The proposed improvements to the Central Park Tennis Courts will ensure that USTA continues to use the facility for tournaments while also expanding the facility’s regional appeal and flexibility.

“USTA Eastern is extremely excited to offer a matching grant of up to $150,000 in order to rehabilitate the public tennis courts and tennis shed in Schenectady’s Central Park. We are honored to contribute to the revitalization of these courts, which have long been the epicenter of outdoor tennis life in the Capital Region. We believe this public facility has great potential as a home for grassroots community tennis programs and events,” said Mark McIntyre, President, USTA Eastern. “Over the years’ it has been a host site to many USTA Eastern Sectional programs and playoffs, which bring in well over half a million dollars annually in direct economic benefits to the region. We hope to continue this outstanding public/private partnership, which serves our great sport so well. We thank Amber Marino, USTA Eastern Board Member and volunteer president of the Northern Region for her hard work in shepherding this partnership to this juncture.”

“15-LOVE is proud to have served the youth of Schenectady and their families for the past 25 years. The City of Schenectady has been a strong partner, allowing us to hold our free tennis, educational & life skills programming in the parks. In order to make sure we are able to continue making a difference in the lives of Schenectady's youth for the next 25 years, and to ensure the local community, high schools and USTA leagues have safe tennis courts to enjoy, 15-LOVE is happy to help facilitate the improvements to the tennis courts at Central Park,” said Amber Marino, Executive Director of 15-LOVE. “Besides the 15-LOVE Program, high school matches and casual play, the tennis facility at Central Park is home to many high school and USTA leagues and large tournaments, bringing in thousands of visitors to Schenectady each year. It is truly the epicenter of outdoor tennis in the Capital Region and a place of pride for the City of Schenectady. 15-LOVE is happy to play a role in making sure that continues.”

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Central Park also has a rich history of baseball with three baseball diamonds that historically have attracted many professional, Triple A, Collegiate, and High School Baseball Teams from all different regions to Schenectady. The ability to have three tournament-caliber fields allows for regional tournaments and the economic activity they create. Upgrades to Buck Ewing Field, also known as “A” Diamond and named after a Negro League Hall of Fame Inductee who played most of his semi-pro career for the Schenectady based Mohawk Giants, would help Schenectady draw regional events while also serving County and City based teams, clubs, and organizations.

“Parks in general and Central Park in particular are cornerstones to quality of life in Schenectady,” said Thomas Isabella, former City Council President and long-time park proponent. “These improvements to Central Park and the Buck Ewing field will continue the positive momentum we have seen in Schenectady.”

These improvements build on other recent investments into Central Park including the Thomas Isabella Pavilion Restoration, the Central Park Swimming Pool Restoration, the Greenhouse Partnership and Improvements, and the Central Park Sidewalk around the Rose Garden and will expand Central Park’s capacity to serve the Community, host Region-wide events, and increase the economic benefits to Central Park and the City while opening doors for future enhancements and improvements.

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ENHANCING SCHENECTADY’S
CENTRAL PARK
2016 Capital Improvements

Making improvements to these three facilities will expand Central Park’s capacity to serve the Community, host Region-wide events, and expand the economic benefits to Central Park and the City, opening up doors for future enhancements and improvements.

Tennis Courts
- Complete Reconstruction of 10 Courts
- Extensive Repair of 7 Courts
- New Storage Shed with Attached Permanent Bathrooms
- Overall Site Improvements including Elimination of Overhanging Branches

Music Haven
- Reconfiguration of Hill for Improved Seating Options
- Paving of Area in Front of Stage
- Improved Permanent Seating
- Security Gates for the Stage Area
- General Operational Improvements

“A” Diamond
- New Field with Sodding & Irrigation
- New Pitchers Mound, Bases & Backstop Fencing
- New Fencing
- New Dugouts
- New Scoreboard

Recent Central Park Improvements
- Thomas E. Isabella Pavilion Restoration
- Swimming Pool Restoration
- Greenhouse Partnership and Improvements
- New Swan and Paddle Boats
- Central Park Sidewalk
- “B” Diamond Upgrades
- Disc Golf Improvements
- Rose Garden Lower Pond

Future Central Park Endeavors
- Casino Concession Building
- Iroquois Lake Fountain
- Greenhouse
- “A” Diamond Parking and Amenity Improvements
- Vale Trail Connection
- Dog Park
- Rose Garden Stair

Sponsored by
Assemblymember Phil Steck
Mayor Gary R. McCarthy

$1,000,000 NY State Assembly
State Municipal Facilities Program Grant

$150,000 City of Schenectady

$150,000 United States Tennis Association (USTA)
ENHANCING SCHENECTADY’S CENTRAL PARK
2016 Capital Improvements

The Schenectady Central Park Tennis Courts offer one of the best tennis venues in all of Upstate New York. The number and quality of the courts, the layout and overall setting, and the strategic location centered in Upstate New York make Central Park a premier tennis location.

USTA Tournaments at Central Park alone draw over 2,000 players to the park each year, generating an estimated three quarter million dollars in economic benefits to local businesses. In addition, the courts generate over $15,000 in City usage fees each summer.

Making these improvements to the Central Park Tennis Courts will help ensure that USTA continues to use the facility for tournaments while also expanding the facility’s appeal and flexibility and enhancing this important venue for our Community.

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• Extensive Repair of 7 Courts
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Assemblymember Phil Steck
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United States Tennis Association
ENHANCING SCHENECTADY’S CENTRAL PARK
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Music Haven
- Reconfiguration of Hill for Improved Seating Options
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Music Haven has a long and important history in Central Park. From its humble 1919 beginnings on a makeshift bandstand to the creation of the Agnes MacDonald Music Haven Stage in 1999, Central Park’s Music Haven has hosted a free summer concert series and been a center piece for culture and the fine arts in Schenectady.

With a robust volunteer base, Music Haven and its concert series has brought a wealth of music from every corner of the world to Schenectady while also serving as an important economic generator for Central Park and local businesses.

Enhancements to the site and seating areas will improve facility sustainability, expand seating numbers and options, and continue to serve the Community while drawing visitors from throughout the Region.
ENHANCING SCHENECTADY’S CENTRAL PARK
2016 Capital Improvements

Central Park contains three baseball diamonds and historically attracted many professional, Triple A, Collegiate, and High School Baseball Teams from all different regions to Schenectady over the years. The ability to have three tournament-caliber fields in use simultaneously is critical to drawing regional tournaments and the economic activity they create.

Upgrades to “A” Diamond, named after Negro League Hall of Fame Inductee Buck Ewing, who played most of his semi-pro career for the Schenectady based Mohawk Giants, would help Schenectady reach the critical mass needed to draw regional events while also serving County and City based teams, clubs, and organizations. With these improvements, Central Park will position itself as one of the premier baseball tournament facilities within the Capital Region.