Wanat Park Design
Public-Student Partnership in the Design Process
UConn Landscape Architecture Students
Fall 2019

Project Background
As a community service learning project, the students were tasked to conduct a park design for the property donated by the Wanat family to Town of Tolland. The donation entailed that the property is used for open space and benefits Tolland seniors. The Conservation Commission in Tolland has been partnered with the UConn Landscape Architecture Program to support the project by providing relevant data and information, giving a guided site tour, and coordinating design charrette with senior center members and town residents. Stakeholder engagement was a key component in design process. Students were asked to obtain needs and desires of potential site users of the project site, through various methods including community and senior center visits, informal interviews, and design charrette, and to synthesize them as a critical approach to inform design decisions.

Project Site
Project site is a 13.4-acre property on Sugar Hill Road in Tolland, CT. It is open grass/woodland surrounded by small residential development, a conservation easement parcel to the northwest and the Charter Brook crossing the northern part of the site.

Design Imperatives
The project was grounded upon the guiding principles of design with nature, ecological services, sustainability, resilience, and universal design, to promote the health of both site ecosystem and site users. Design parameters of particular interest include walking paths, landscape improvement, habitats for birds and pollinators, passive recreation and nature education, shade and seating and a small parking area.

Site Visit

Site Features

Woodlands taking up about two-thirds of the Wanat land

Open meadows taking up about one-thirds of the Wanat land.

Senior Center Visit

A quick tour of the Tolland Senior Center guided by Fran Weigand, Senior Center Director following the site visit on October 7, 2019.

Social gathering and recreational activities of senior community members at Tolland Senior Center.

Students introducing themselves and Wanat park project to the senior community members.

Design Charrette

To engage with residents in the community, a student-led design charrette was held on October 18, 2019. More than 50 people attended the public event brainstorming their ideas about the proposed park and participating in the design process.

Group photo of design charrette participants

Dr. Park and student host Anthony Madore introducing the project and site context to audience.

Help Tolland Plan a Park for Seniors!
Friday, October 18, 2019
Noon to 3 p.m.
674 Tolland Stage Road (Senior Center)
Snacks will be provided.
Wanat Property, Sugar Hill Road