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# Louisville Waterfront Park

Louisville, Kentucky

Written by Julie Greiner

Louisville was founded by George Rogers Clark in 1778 and since 1811 the metropolis of Louisville has relied heavily upon the river for commerce, tourism and entertainment. Louisville

was the first city in Kentucky to adopt zoning and planning measures to control and shape urban growth. The time is right, the project is needed - Phase I, II and III of the Waterfront Park is bringing the waterfront of Louisville into the future and placing Louisville in the fore running once again.

The Waterfront Park in Louisville is an extensive beautification project which is presently starting Phase II. The Waterfront Development Corporation was created in 1986 to oversee waterfront development efforts along the Ohio River in Louisville, Kentucky. This three-part development combines the oversight of the design, construction, event and maintenance of the park. No small undertaking, Phase I comprised approximately 55 acres.

### Phase I of Waterfront Park of Louisville

The Park was dedicated on July 4, 1999 and since has hosted hundreds of events with an estimated total attendance of more than a million people. The Park's design has been noticed both nationally and internationally and has won a

number of prestigious awards, including several from the American Society of Landscape Architects. The Great Lawn will be the site for the annual event to celebrate the 4th of July. This event will most certainly be an unprecedented success.



### Waterfront Park Phase II of Louisville

The Phase II of the Waterfront Park will add approximately another 35 acres to the park, including another much larger children's play area with water play, a pedestrian connection to Southern Indiana across the old Big Four railroad bridge, a small cafe, a rowing facility for school and community rowing groups and an informal amphitheater. The contract calls for additional picnic and lawn areas, tree groves and walking paths. Phase II is scheduled to be completed in the Spring of 2003.



Big Four Bridge of Waterfront Park

the country.

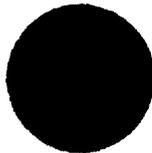
The centerpiece of the second phase, the Big Four Bridge, can be seen from throughout the park. The park is heavily used on a daily basis by children and families... the play area, walking and joggers paths, picnicking facilities and school groups are in full swing taking advantage of this beautiful location along the river. This Waterfront Park project is a step into the future and places Louisville among the more progressive cities in

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## **Louisville Waterfront Development Corporation**



***2007 Economic Impact Report***

***Waterfront Timeline***

***Waterfront Park Facts***

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The Waterfront Development Corporation was created in 1986 to oversee waterfront development efforts along the Ohio River in Louisville, Kentucky. The corporation's three-part mission includes oversight of the design and construction of Waterfront Park, operation of the park/ event coordination, and park maintenance. WDC also administers design review for properties within the Waterfront District (the Waterfront Review Overlay or WRO District).

Phase I of Waterfront Park, approximately 55 acres, was dedicated on July 4, 1999. The park hosted hundreds of events in its first full season of use, with an estimated total attendance of more than a million people. The park is heavily used on a daily basis, and averages more than 1.5 million visitors per year. Children and families enjoy the Children's Play Area and the new Adventure Playground, while walkers, joggers, picnickers, school groups, and others take advantage of its beautiful location along the river.

Phase II of the park opened on June 10, 2004. Phase II adds approximately 17 acres, including the Adventure Playground, which opened in July 2003; a wonderful esplanade along the river's edge; a cafe plaza where Tumbleweed will open in Spring 2005; the Brown-Forman amphitheater; docks for transient boaters; and an area for a new rowing facility for the University of Louisville Women's Rowing Team, school, and community rowing groups.

Construction on Phase III began in September 2005 and should be

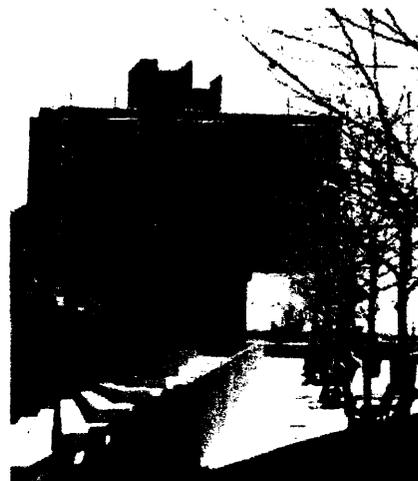
completed in early 2010. Fund raising is underway. Phase III covers 13 acres that will include a pedestrian walkway across the river and more lawn areas, tree groves, walking paths, and picnic areas. If you are interested in making a donation to Phase III, please print and fill out a pledge sheet, or contact us by e-mail or phone (listed below). All donations are much appreciated!

**Waterfront Park Facts**

**Waterfront Timeline**

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**2007 Economic Impact Report**



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Children's Play Area and Linear Park are dedicated and opened to public.

**1998** Great Lawn dedicated and opened to the public.

**1999** Phase I of Waterfront Park dedicated and opened to the public (55 acres, \$58 million).

**2000** Construction begins on Waterfront Park Place, a residential development called for in the Master Plan.

**2001** Waterfront Park is one of five national projects to receive the Honor Award for design from the American Society of Landscape Architecture.

**2003** Waterfront Park receives Phoenix Award Grand Prize for Excellence for brownfields redevelopment, the highest award in the nation.

Adventure Playground/Waterplay of Phase II is opened to public.

**2004** Phase II opened to public (17 acres, \$15 million).

Waterfront Park voted No. 1 Lawn for Family Fun by Briggs & Stratton.

**2005** Construction begins on Phase III, final phase of Park (13 acres, projected \$21 million).

Waterfront Independence Festival expands to two days and hosts more than 150,000 people.

**2007** Construction to begin on ramp to Big Four in late spring.

**2008** Phase III scheduled for completion.



**Phase I - Linear Park**



**View of Preston Point from the Public Gardens**



**Waterplay in the Adventure Playground**

**Waterfront Park Facts**

## Waterfront Timeline

**1986** Waterfront Development Corporation created by interlocal agreement between the Commonwealth of Kentucky, City of Louisville and Jefferson County.

First Board Meeting; David Karem named first Chairman of the Board.

**1987** WDC hires staff and moves into first headquarters on Main Street.

Mary Bingham donates funds to acquire WDC headquarters on River Road.

David A. Jones leads community effort to bring the headquarters of the Presbyterian Church USA to the Waterfront area.

**1988** Facelift begins with acquisition and clearing of properties.

**1990** Hargreaves Associates selected as Master Plan designer from national search. Design funded by Mary Bingham, Sara Brown, and David A. Jones.

**1992** Private fundraising campaign begins for Phase I, chaired by David A. Jones.

**1993** More than \$14 million in private donations are pledged, matched by \$12.5 million from the State.

**1994** Ground is broken for Waterfront Park.

**1996** RiverWalk completed to Shawnee Park.

New wharf completed, first major piece of Waterfront Park.

**1997** Waterfront Park hosts its first concert series on the wharf, Rockin' at Riverpoints.

Plans announced to locate Louisville Slugger Field in the Waterfront District.

Joe's Crab Shack opens for business.



**Waterfront Development Corp, 2006**



**Louisville's waterfront before Waterfront Park**