

A \$10 MILLION CAMPAIGN FOR ROGER WILLIAMS PARK



RHODE ISLAND
FOUNDATION



February 2017

CELEBRATE WITH US!

WE'VE TURNED 100.

In 2016, the Rhode Island Foundation celebrated the 100th anniversary of our founding as the sole community foundation dedicated to Rhode Island.

The Foundation was founded in 1916 with a \$10,000 gift from Jesse Metcalf. We are a community chest, intended to be here forever to address Rhode Island's most pressing issues of the day. With assets exceeding \$800 million, the Foundation is one of the oldest and largest community foundations in the nation.

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What makes a community?

Our people, places, institutions, and traditions are what make Rhode Island special. There are many ways to define community, as people identify and act based on diverse interests, backgrounds, and values. Communities are ever emerging and redefining, as relationships evolve and environments change.

Community is shared in our public spaces where people gather, traditions are shared, and a sense of belonging and pride is created among neighbors. In 2016, we made a number of gifts to celebrate the spirit of community our public spaces provide. **At the center of our centennial commemoration: leading a \$10 million campaign to preserve and improve one of Rhode Island's most treasured spaces, Roger Williams Park.**

Comprised of 435 beautiful acres, offering a range of recreational and educational opportunities, representing Rhode Island's rich history and the diversity of our people, the Park has attracted generation after generation of Rhode Islanders for over 100 years. The Park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and many of us have personal connections to this special place.

Now it needs sustained investment so Rhode Islanders can continue to create community there for years to come.



ROGER WILLIAMS PARK IS RHODE ISLAND'S FLAGSHIP URBAN PARK

Connected to our history

The Park was created in the 1870s after Betsey Williams bequeathed 102 acres of farmland and woodland to the city of Providence with the stipulation that it be used for public purpose. The gift included a portion of the land that was originally purchased from the Narragansetts by her great, great, great grandfather, Rhode Island founder Roger Williams.

Horace Cleveland, a leader in the Urban Parks Movement, created the design for the Park. It was intended to serve as an escape for those working in highly industrialized Providence in the late nineteenth century. The surrounding community quickly embraced the refuge the Park provided. Twenty years after Betsey's bequest, daily attendance had grown to 15,000 visitors. In 1896, the Park quadrupled in size to its current 435 acres. Activities ranged from tobogganing and ice skating in the winter months to live music concerts and canoeing in warmer weather.

In his 1898 inaugural address, Providence Mayor William Baker touted, "we now have a park which is one of the most beautiful in the world and justly an object of pride to our citizens." In its 2000 annual report, the National Trust for Historic Preservation declared Roger Williams Park to be one of the finest urban parks in the United States.

Today: the People's Park

Roger Williams Park still serves as “the people’s pleasure ground” that Cleveland intended, hosting family picnics, community festivals, weddings, and running groups. Each year, over 1.5 million visitors from around the state – and beyond! – enjoy the same scenery and activities as past generations.

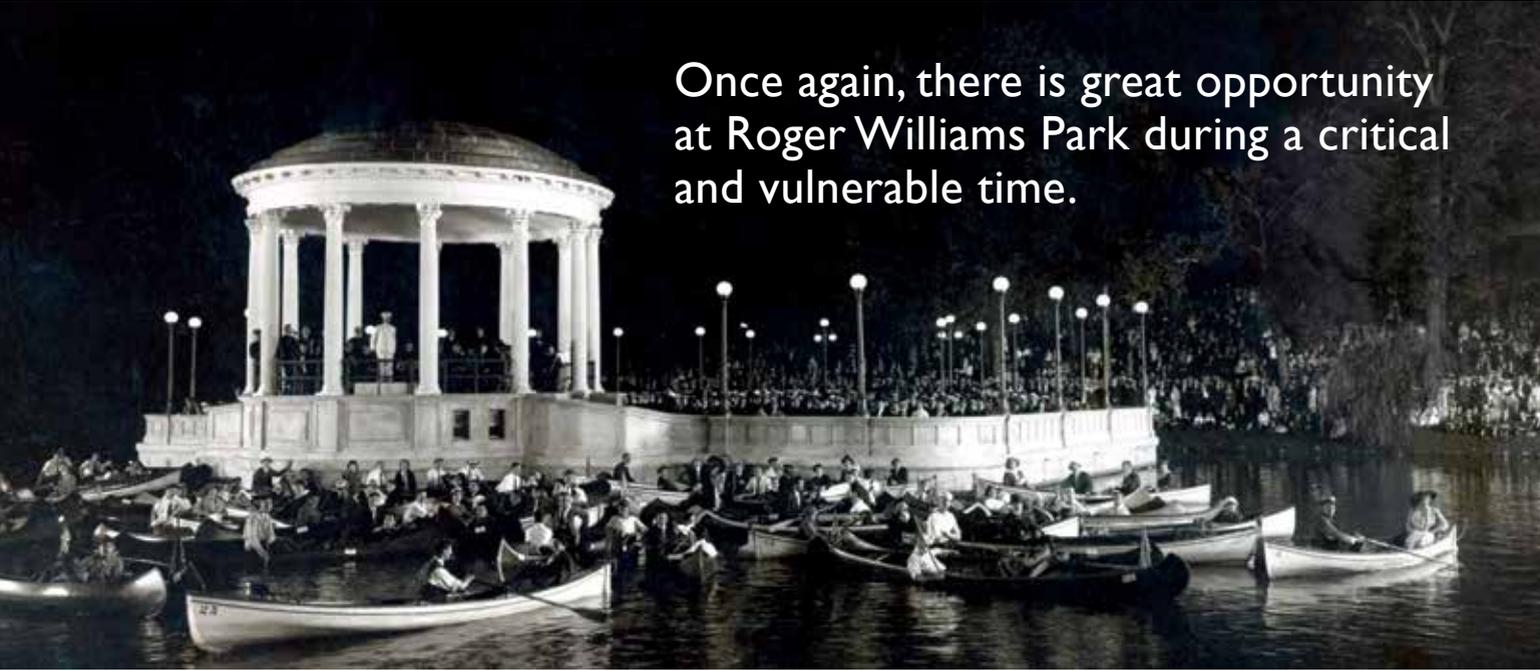
The Park today consists of expansive manicured grounds, a system of man-made recreational ponds, public gardens, an extensive roadway/walkway system, tennis courts, ball fields, playgrounds, and the Roger Williams Park Zoo.¹ Many of the current roads, bridges, and sidewalks were built by the Works Progress Administration from 1935 to 1940. The Park has several historic public buildings, including favorites like the Casino, Bandstand, Museum of Natural History and Planetarium, and Temple to Music. The Botanical Center and Greenhouses opened in 2007. The Park also features numerous pieces of public art, including tributes to the Civil War Soldier, Guglielmo Marconi, Abraham Lincoln, and Casimir Pulaski.

Potential to offer far more to the community

The community and its Park went through many changes over the 20th century. Since its creation, the Park has experienced ebbs and flows of funding determined by politics and the economy. Throughout the past 100 years, many public officials, philanthropists, and members of the community have championed the Park, but it has not received sustained investment and attention.

Once again, there is great opportunity at Roger Williams Park during a critical and vulnerable time.

Use of the Park is soaring. There is untapped potential to proactively expand programming, improve infrastructure, and boost marketing. We can expand the Park as an economic engine and community center.



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¹ The Roger Williams Park Zoo is not included in this campaign. The Zoo is a public-private partnership between the City of Providence and Roger Williams Zoological Society, a separate 501(c)3 organization that supports the Zoo.



A \$10 million campaign for Roger Williams Park

In honor of our centennial, we chose to celebrate the sense of community Roger Williams Park embodies by restoring the Park to its former community presence and preserving it for future generations. **We embarked on a bold campaign to raise \$10 million and create a conservancy for Roger Williams Park.**

Short-term improvements to protect the Park’s assets

Of the total raised, up to \$5 million will be used for immediate capital improvements. Planned short-term capital improvements² include:

Capital Improvement	Approximate Cost
Buildings and structures, including the Museum of Natural History, Bandstand, Boathouse, Betsey Williams Cottage, Casino, Temple to Music, and Botanical Center	\$2,000,000
Stormwater management	\$785,000
Statuary and monuments	\$75,000
Park entrances, wayfinding and signage, lighting, benches, gazebos, recreational facilities, and maintenance buildings	\$1,100,000
Sidewalks and crosswalks ³	\$340,000
Pedestrian and bicycle paths	\$800,000
Total	\$5,100,000

² In 2014, in partnership with the Providence Parks and Recreation Department, we commissioned Horsley Witten Group and Coldham & Hartman Architects to evaluate basic infrastructure needs and assess the condition of park elements and buildings. Based on their assessment, Horsley Witten estimated \$5.1 million to address short-term (within five years) capital improvements.

³ In November 2014, voters approved \$3 million in public bonds for roads and bridges within the Park. This is not included in the capital improvement budget above.



A dedicated, independent, and permanent funding source and stewardship organization

Once the Park's basic infrastructure is shored up, attention and investment can result in new opportunities for generations to come. **Up to \$5 million from the campaign will be held and managed in a permanent endowment at the Foundation to provide perpetual operating support for the Roger Williams Park Conservancy, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ongoing stewardship of the Park.**

As a recent report from The Trust for Public Land, a national nonprofit organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and open space, pointed out, a growing number of cities are creating nonprofit organizations to leverage private donations to revitalize and maintain iconic parks. Conservancies are “private, nonprofit park-benefit organizations that raise money independent of the city and spend it under a plan of action mutually agreed upon with the government.”⁴

Successful examples include the Central Park Conservancy, Golden Gate National Park Conservancy, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, and Trust for the National Mall. The Roger Williams Park Conservancy will work with the City to preserve the Park, offer new community programs, coordinate marketing efforts, and plan for long-term sustainability and success.

⁴ Harnik, P & Martin, A (2015). Public Spaces/Private Money: The Triumphs and Pitfalls of Urban Park Conservancies. The Trust for Public Lands.

PLEASE JOIN US

This is about preserving and enhancing one of Rhode Island's most treasured places and keeping it as a center for our community forever. Many throughout Rhode Island will benefit immediately, as will generations to follow. The Foundation kicked off the \$10 million campaign by committing \$1.5 million. Thanks to the generosity of a number of donors, campaign gifts and commitments are over \$8 million. We've established a formal agreement with the City of Providence to ensure that all donor contributions are carefully stewarded. If you share our goal of restoring and enhancing the Park for the community, we hope you'll consider joining us.



For more information on this campaign

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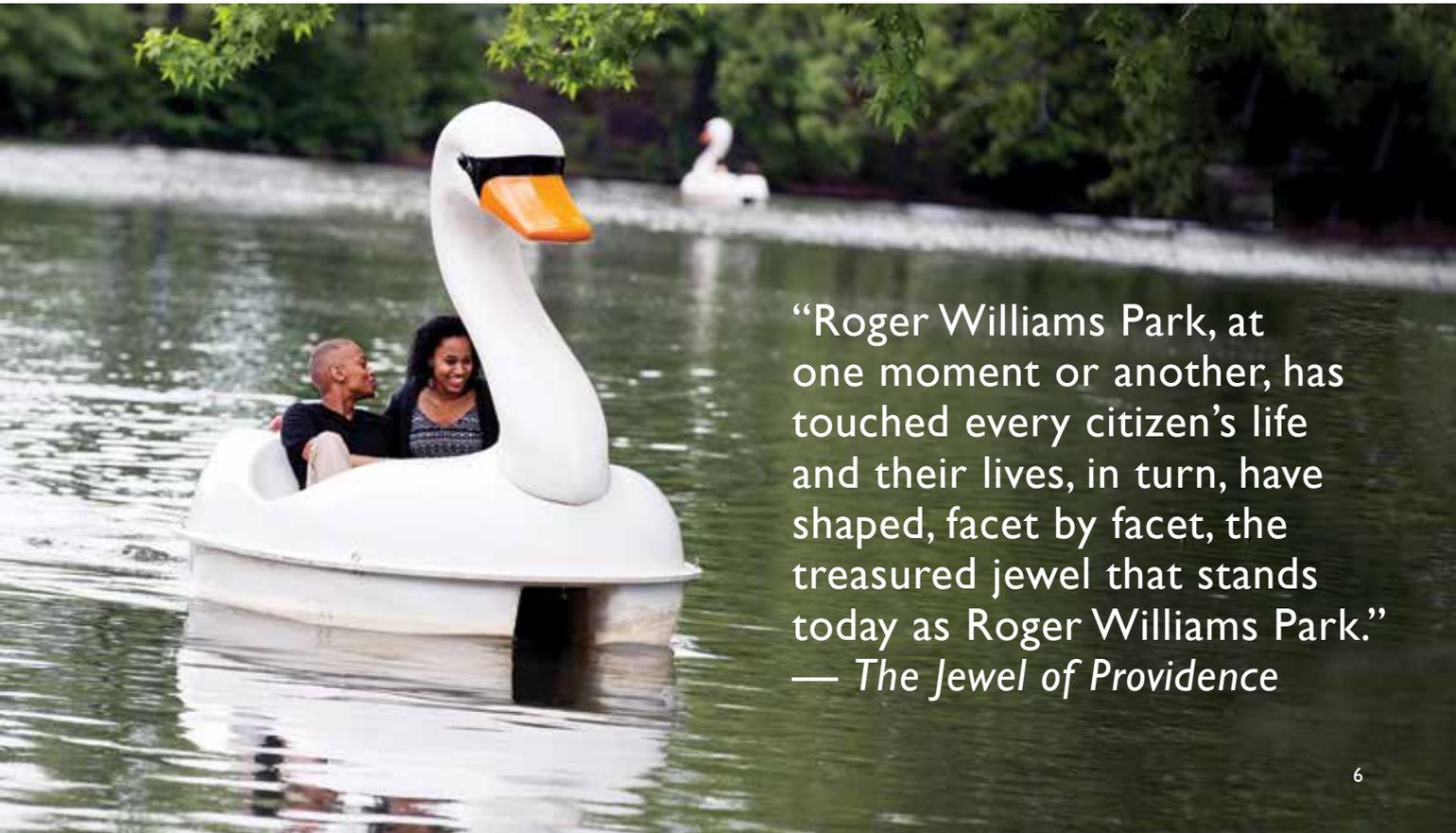
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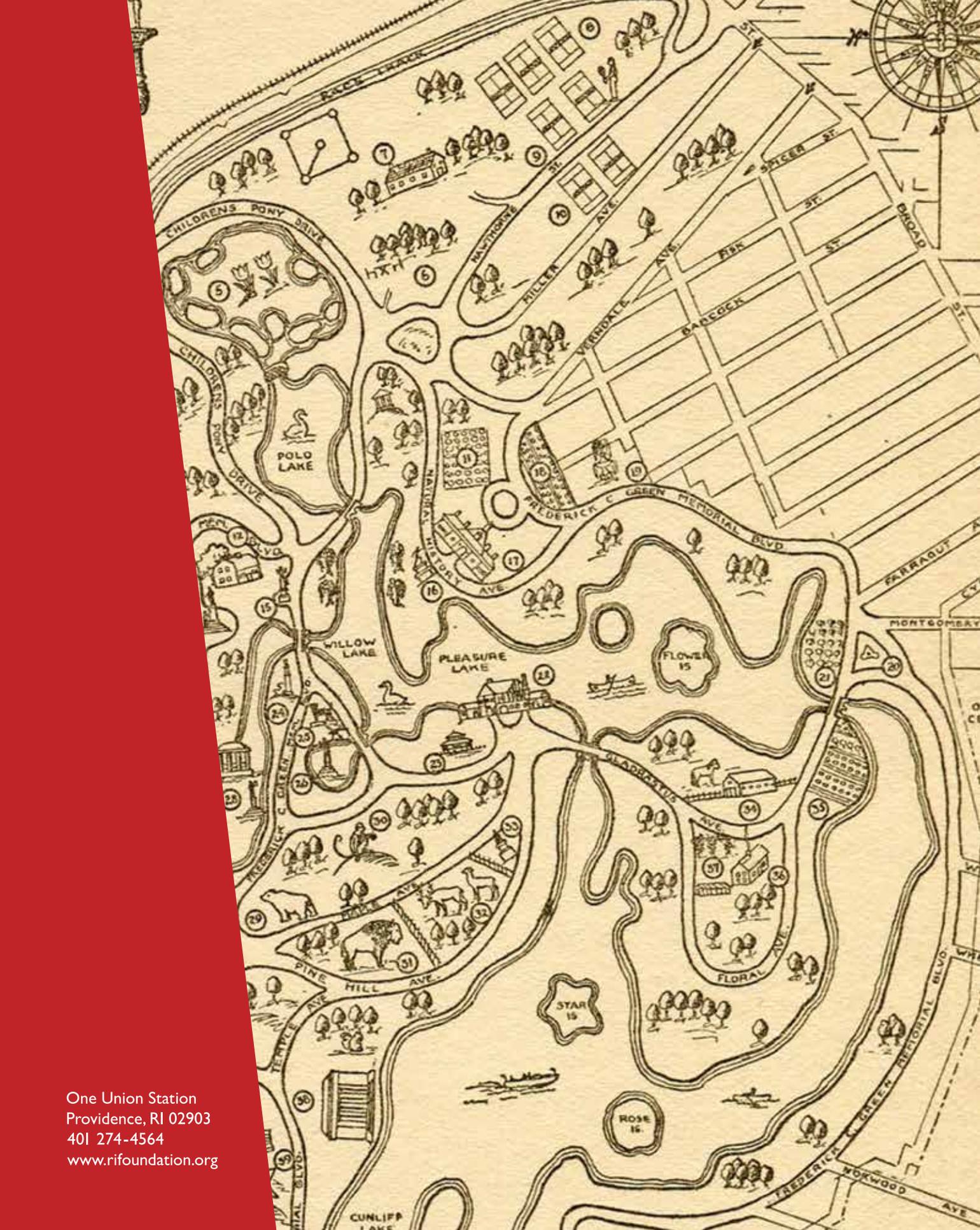
RogerWilliams Park Conservancy



@rogerwilliamspark



“Roger Williams Park, at one moment or another, has touched every citizen's life and their lives, in turn, have shaped, facet by facet, the treasured jewel that stands today as Roger Williams Park.”
— *The Jewel of Providence*



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