

Schenley Plaza is First Step to Oakland's Revitalization

By Jessica Todarello



Alice Enz

Schenley Plaza construction begins.

This winter, construction began on the revitalization of Schenley Plaza into a vibrant public green space in the heart of Oakland.

“By 2006, Pittsburghers will see an important transformation

that will benefit the city's residents and enhance the economic vitality of the region,” said Meg Cheever, president of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

The revitalized Schenley Plaza park entrance, modeled after Bryant Park in New York City, will include a large green lawn with movable chairs and tables and a paved oval that can be tented for events or used as a seating area. Beautiful horticulture will adorn the site with gardens along Forbes Avenue and bosques of trees with ground cover near both the Hillman and the Carnegie libraries. Park visitors can purchase refreshments from the food and drink kiosks with proceeds benefiting Schenley Plaza.

“Oakland residents, businesses, organizations, institutions and all of us who worked on this project are excited to see the construction beginning. We are proud to have been a part of the process to create a place that will improve the quality of life for visitors and residents,” said Susan Golomb, director of City Planning and member of the steering committee.

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy will oversee site

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maintenance in partnership with the Department of Public Works, with regular litter pickup, security and programming.

“The completed plaza will have more than 100 parking spaces around the perimeter of the plaza,” said Cheever. “The peripheral parking spaces will accommodate park users, students, commuters, Oakland residents and visitors.”

The Plaza is a partnership between the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, the City of Pittsburgh, the Oakland Investment Committee of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and the Oakland Task Force. Significant support has also been provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Honorable Ed Rendell, Governor, PNC Bank, the Eden Hall Foundation, the Hillman Foundation, Allegheny County, Dan Onorato, Chief Executive, and the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.