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### **Bring Back the View: Public Campaign Launched to Restore North Park's Historic Observation Tower**

**PITTSBURGH, PA, May 4, 2026** – The Allegheny County Parks Foundation today announced the launch of a public fundraising campaign with a goal of raising \$20,000 to support the final phase of restoration for the historic North Park Observation Tower. Located at one of the highest elevations in Allegheny County, the 102-foot Observation Tower offers sweeping panoramic views across North Park and beyond. Once complete, the tower will reopen to the public, reconnecting visitors to a treasured piece of park history.

County Executive Sara Innamorato said, “North Park’s Observation Tower is an iconic part of our park system and a treasured piece of our history. Reopening it to the public will reconnect visitors to a unique experience that generations once enjoyed, while ensuring the site is more accessible and welcoming to all.”

Built in 1937 as a water storage tank, the Observation Tower quickly became a popular destination for park visitors. Those who climbed its distinctive 154-step spiral staircase were rewarded with a stunning 360-view of North Park’s expansive landscape with downtown visible in the distance. The structure features vintage terrazzo flooring and a domed ceiling.

Over time, required updates led to the tower’s closure. Restoration of the Observation Tower was formally recommended in the 2002 Allegheny County Parks Comprehensive Master Plan, recognizing its historic and cultural significance. Momentum accelerated in 2020 when the Babcock Charitable Trust committed \$400,000 to the project, recognizing the same public value envisioned by E.V. Babcock, whose leadership helped establish the county park system, and North Park, nearly a century ago.

Today, the Parks Foundation and Allegheny County are working together to bring that vision back to life.

“The North Park Observation Tower has stood as a silent witness to cherished memories for generations. Restoring this treasured landmark is about reconnecting our community with those moments and opening the door for new ones to be made,” said Parks Foundation Executive Director, Joey-Linn Ulrich. “Our goal is to reimagine this area of North Park as a place where visitors can once again dream, connect and experience the sense of awe that comes from taking in its amazing view.”

Extensive structural assessments confirm that the Observation Tower is in good overall condition. Planned improvements include structural repairs, interior and exterior restoration, sandblasting,

repainting and safety upgrades. Beyond the tower itself, the grounds will be enhanced with native plantings, shade trees, drainage improvements, a newly designed parking lot, accessible pathways, interpretive signage, a one-acre wildflower meadow and a concrete plaza with seating. The design reflects the Prairie style used by Paul Riis, the first director of Allegheny County Parks and the landscape architect who designed North Park and honors the park's historic design heritage while improving accessibility and visitor experience.

The newly launched \$20,000 public campaign invites park supporters, neighbors and community members to play a direct role in bringing the Observation Tower back to life. Community members are encouraged to contribute to the public campaign and help ensure the Observation Tower reopens for future generations to enjoy.

Learn more about the campaign and make a donation: <https://acparksfoundation.org/observation-tower-campaign/>

Stay informed on this project from the Park Foundation's website:  
<https://acparksfoundation.org/projects/observation-tower/>

#### About Allegheny County Parks

Allegheny County has one of the largest, most established park systems in the country, covering over 12,000 acres of beautifully landscaped fields, natural forests, vibrant meadows and abundant recreational facilities.

Allegheny County's nine parks are Boyce, Deer Lakes, Harrison Hills, Hartwood Acres, North, Round Hill, Settlers Cabin, South and White Oak Parks. The parks receive over 23 million visits each year. Learn more by visiting: [www.alleghenycounty.us/Parks-and-Events](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Parks-and-Events)

#### About the Allegheny County Parks Foundation

The Allegheny County Parks Foundation is an independent 501c(3) non-profit organization that strengthens the health and vibrancy of our community by improving, conserving and restoring the nine Allegheny County Parks. Working in partnership with Allegheny County, the Parks Foundation brings together ideas, leadership and resources to make the parks more sustainable and enjoyable for all. Learn more by visiting: [www.acparksfoundation.org](http://www.acparksfoundation.org)

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