



# James Parkway & Puryear Drive Rehabilitation

Mabel Clare Thomas Park Vision Plan

College Station, TX

April, 2022







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# Introduction



# INTRODUCTION

The James Parkway and Puryear Drive has been identified for streetscape improvements and rehabilitation of the Mabel Clare Thomas Park. Work has already begun with the removal of a municipal pool in 2020. As further improvements are made to the area, a vision plan is needed to ensure a holistic design of the park and streetscape that meets the needs of the city and community. This project aims to develop a vision plan to guide the streetscape improvements and future improvements within Thomas Park.

A site analysis/framework plan shall be conducted to assess existing site features and amenities, which will guide conceptual designs that establish program requirements and park amenities that fit the site and surrounding neighborhoods. Based upon the conceptual designs, a draft vision plan shall be presented to the public for comments and opinions; informing the final design of the vision plan.

A roadmap and vision will be provided to give the framework and steps the City will take to ensure successful implementation and project planning. The vision plan will be developed to allow for flexible implementation so that the City can phase the improvements based upon needs and funding. Eventually when the park is built out, the streetscape and park improvements will address the needs of the site and users while creating a neighborhood park that provides the community a place to play, relax and enjoy.





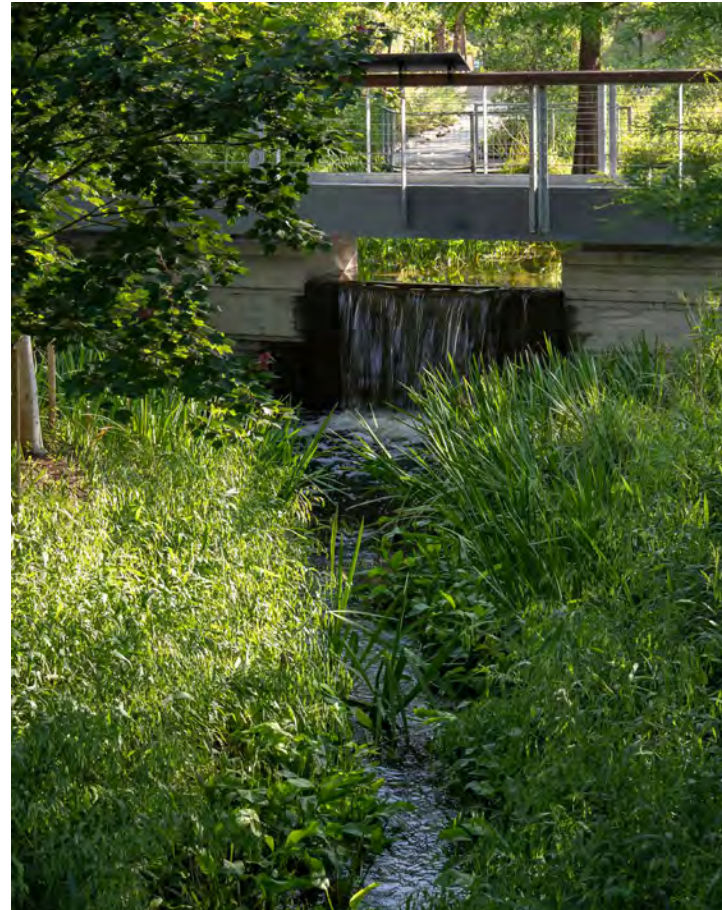
# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This project will develop a vision plan based on site and user needs while addressing infrastructure, phasing, maintenance and budget needs and limitations. The vision plan will create distinct experiences for users to play, relax and engage through opportunities that encourage community interaction and emphasizes Mabel Clare Thomas' legacy while increasing park usability through purposeful design of amenity areas and the drainage. In addition to the inventory and analysis, the following goals were developed to guide the design process and vision plan. These principles will inform decisions and programmatic elements within Thomas Park.



## Community

- Make a strong connection to City Hall and Texas A&M University (TAMU).
- The park should function as both a neighborhood park and community-wide park.
- Create opportunities for different kinds of programming desired by the community.
- Accessibility should be considered in every aspect of design. Park amenities should be designed for all.
- Emphasize comfort and access for multiple modes of mobility to and within the park.



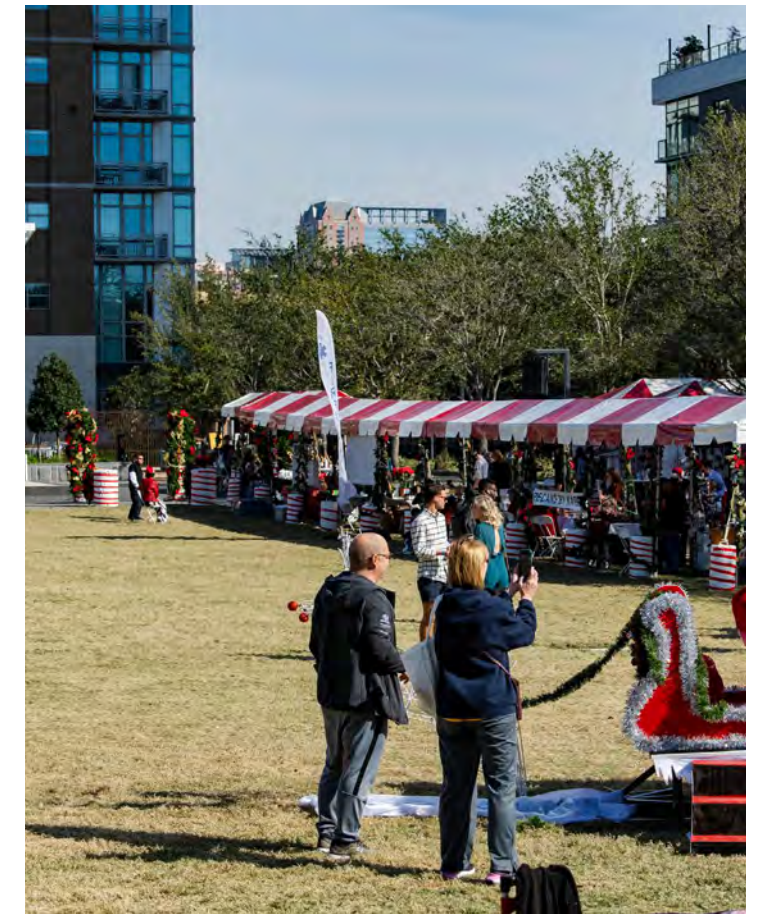
## Environment

- Effectively manage stormwater through green infrastructure best practices and enhance park's usability.
- Accentuate human comfort for optimal use in all seasons.
- Use the natural drainage patterns as an educational opportunity.
- Plant the next generation of trees and enhance the habitat of the park.



## Art

- Reinforce and enhance the historical significance and legacy of the park, in particular the story of the namesake, Mabel Clare Thomas.
- Tell the story of College Station's train-related history and create a strong connection to the new City Hall.
- Provide opportunities for the community to engage in the art and meaning of the park.



## Economics

- Proposed features and park amenities that consider maintenance needs.







# Inventory/Analysis

Before proposing the vision plan, it is important to understand the history, existing site elements and opportunities/constraints to develop a design that efficiently meet the needs of the community and functional aspects that Mabel Clare Thomas Park serves.



# THE BIG PICTURE

College Station is located between some of Texas' largest cities. It is home to TAMU and named after the train station that serviced the university. The city grew around the college, and Thomas Park is set within one of the old neighborhoods that was home to many of those who attended and/or worked at the university.

In close proximity to Thomas Park, the city has built a new City Hall that honors the past influence of the train depot. The architecture and surrounding landscape will contain elements that are reminiscent of the trains.

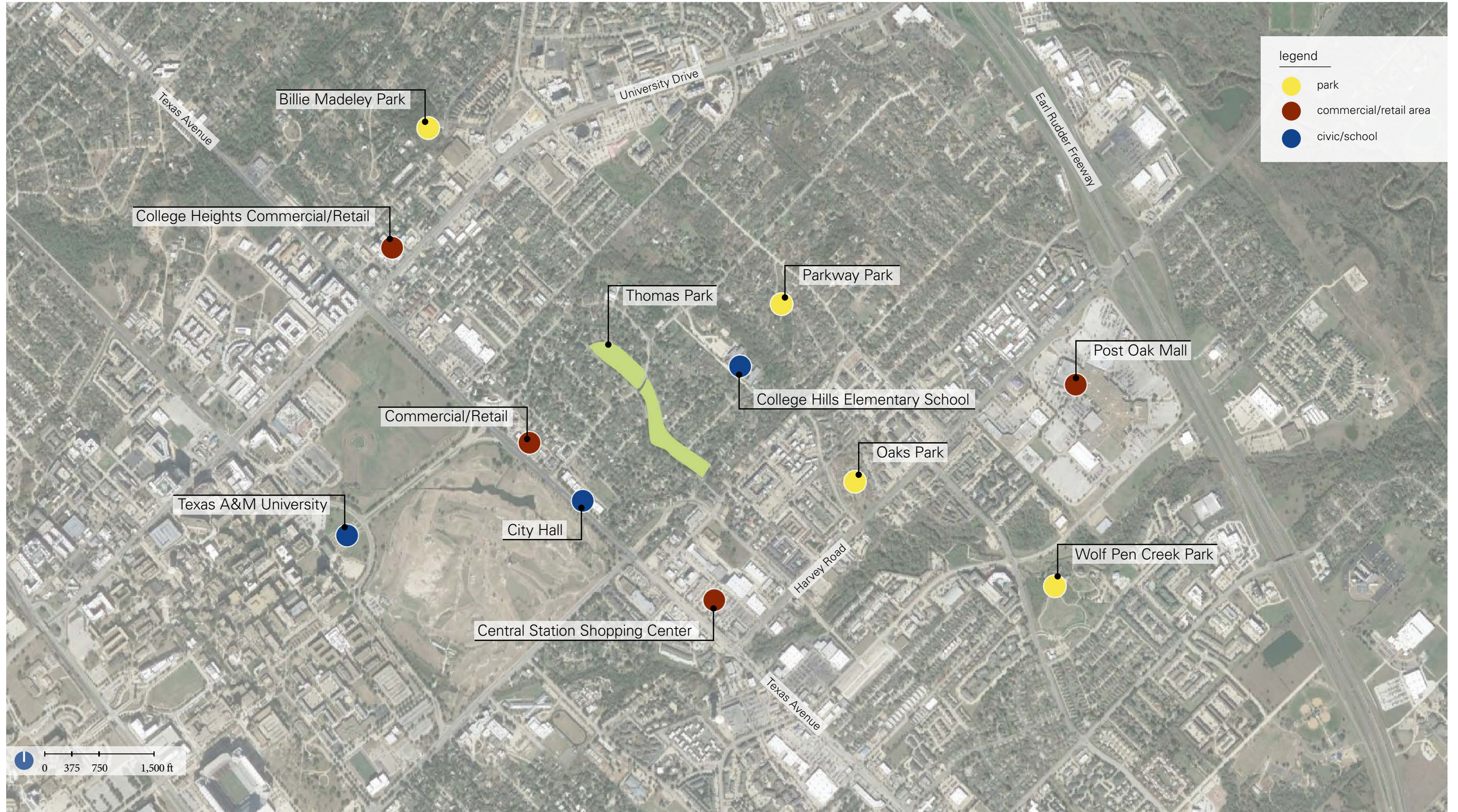
Additionally, the city is within the Brazos River Basin. The water that flows through Mabel Clare Thomas Park feeds into Wolf Pen Creek, which is a tributary to Carters Creek. This feeds into the Navasota River which is a major tributary to the Brazos River.

Thomas Park has many stories to tell and connections to the surrounding community. As the design for the vision plan is developed, there is a great opportunity for the park to help tell each story and tie the community to the past while providing for the future.





# SURROUNDING DESTINATIONS





# STUDY AREA



Thomas Park is about twelve acres. As James Parkway and Puryear Drive are in need of streetscape improvements, the study area identified by the City for the vision plan is the southern portion of the park, which is about eight acres. The north section of the park was studied for additional improvements separate from the vision plan.

As Thomas Park is situated in an old neighborhood, it is located close to many amenities on all sides as seen on the diagram to the right. TAMU is just across Texas Avenue and the College Station city buildings are just 2 blocks to the southwest. Thomas Park is nestled into a neighborhood that contains numerous retail and commercial areas (refer to page 3). Thomas Park serves a wide variety of users; those who attend TAMU, work at the TAMU and who live in the surrounding area.



# HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Thomas Park is named after a prominent member of College Station, Mabel Clare Thomas. She lived from 1887 to 1975 and was a powerful figure in the community during her lifetime. She is most widely known for her advocacy in children's literacy.

She grew up in Alabama and moved to College Station as her husband was a faculty member and researcher for TAMU. She would spend her time with the many organizations that she was a part of and doing a weekly radio program titled *The Story Hour*.

Starting from a young age, Mrs. Thomas started publishing a number of works featured in magazines like the Atlanta Constitution. She won numerous awards and was given honorifics through a number of different organizations like the Texas Woman's Press Association.

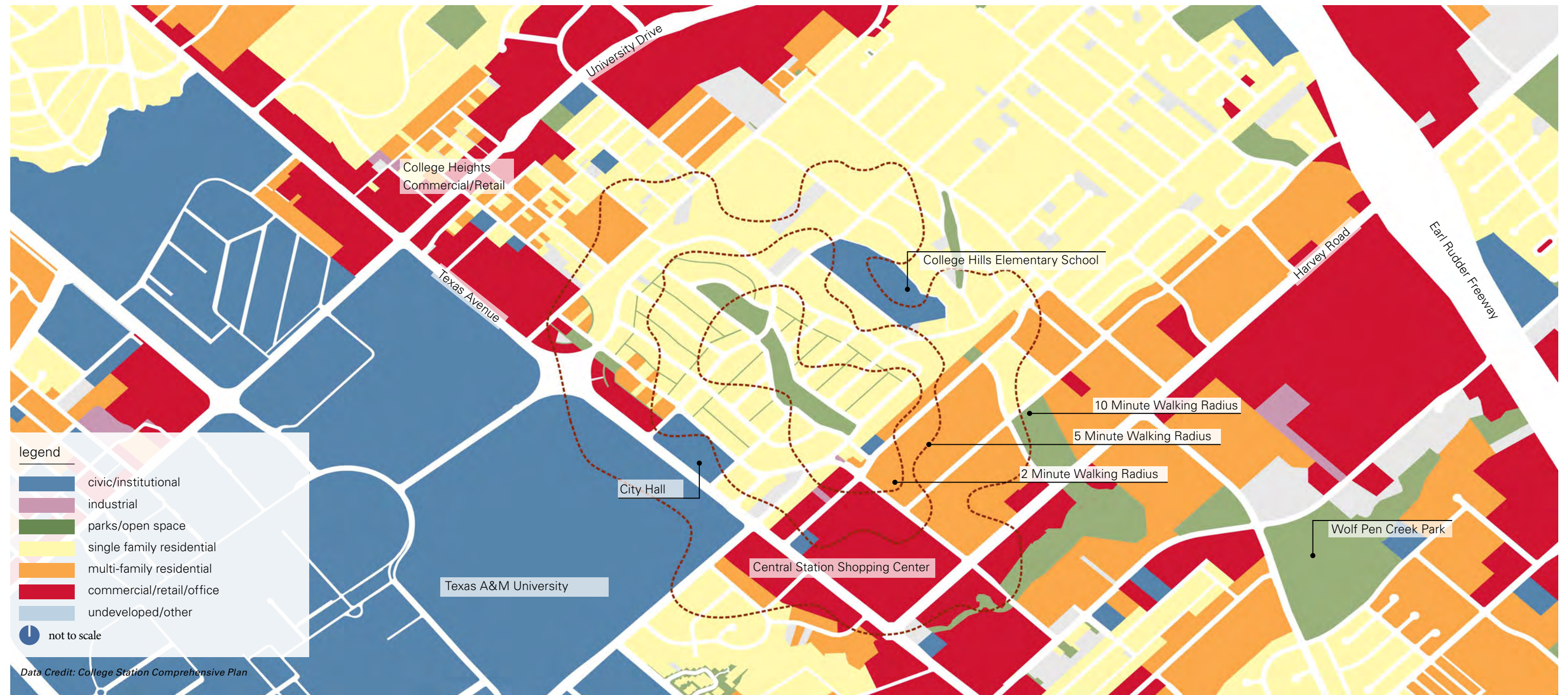
Thomas Park came to be because of her efforts in helping College Station acquire the land. Within the park, there are a number of historical markers honoring Mrs. Thomas and her family. Two of these markers are dedicated trees, one for her and another for her husband.

As a vision plan is developed for Thomas Park, it is imperative to honor and recognize those who paved the way for the existence of the park. Mrs. Thomas dedicated much of her life to the community around her, just as Thomas Park continues to serve College Station. There is greater potential for the park to tell her legacy.





# EXISTING LAND USE



The neighborhood surrounding Thomas Park holds historical significance and is a pocket of single-family residential surrounded by commercial/retail and multi-family residential units. Thomas Park is close to TAMU and within a ten-minute walking distance to a few of the commercial and multi-family residences. As College Station continues to grow, Thomas Park provides park amenities for a wide range of users.



# DEMOGRAPHICS

In designing a park for the community, it is important to recognize who the users are and will be. The following demographics information will provide context for the conceptual design and proposed programmatic elements within the park.

Thomas Park is surrounded by a younger community, for College Station has a median age that is ten years younger than the state's average. Those within a five minute walk of Thomas Park have a higher income than those who live within a 15 minute walk of the park and the city. The adjacent area isn't as diverse as the City. It is home to Scholars and Patriots. These are individuals who are affiliated with the university or the military and are highly mobile, active and social. These are the individuals that Thomas Park directly serves, though the vision plan will aim to serve College Station as a whole.

	College Station	Within a 5 Minute Walk of Thomas Park	Within a 15 Minute Walk of Thomas Park
<b>Population (2019)</b>	116,612	328	2,670
<b>Median Age</b>	23.8	24.8	24.8
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$42,479	\$61,981	\$47,094
<b>Education</b>			
No High School Diploma	5%	0%	13%
High School Diploma	9%	14%	16%
Some College	24%	33%	23%
Bachelor's/Grad/Prof. Degree	60%	53%	49%
<b>Tapestry LifeMode</b>			
Scholars + Patriots: individuals affiliated with a university or military branch and are highly mobile, active and social.	65% Scholars + Patriots 12% Affluent Estates 7% Ethnic Enclaves 6% GenXurban 5% Middle Ground 4% Family Landscapes	100% Scholars + Patriots	94% Scholars + Patriots 11% GenXurban

Data Credit: Esri and Data Axle



# PARKS PROGRAMMING ANALYSIS

To ensure that Thomas Park is providing services that are needed for the surrounding community and College Station as a whole, it is imperative to understand what the existing parks are providing and their proximity to Thomas Park. The following analysis reviewed the inventoried park amenities, provided by the City in a spreadsheet, in relation to a two, five and ten minute walking radius as well as a ten minute drive radius. More park amenities were listed within the spreadsheet, but the mapped amenities here are the amenities that were less prominent throughout College Station.

The information concluded through each analysis will inform the proposed programmatic elements for Thomas Park so that the park can provide the community with park amenities that compliment the neighborhood and parks in close proximity.



## Volleyball Courts

11% of parks in College Station have a volleyball court.

The closest park with a volleyball court is a little **more than a ten minute walk** from Thomas Park.

The second closest court is **2.7 miles away** which is a **45 minute walk** but within the ten minute drive area.



## Softball Field

8% of parks in College Station have a softball field.

The closest softball field is **1.8 miles away** from Thomas Park. This distance is a **35 minute walk** but within the ten minute drive area.



## Soccer Field

5% of parks in College Station have a soccer field.

The closest soccer field is **2.7 miles away** from Thomas Park. This distance is a **45 minute walk** but within the ten minute drive area.



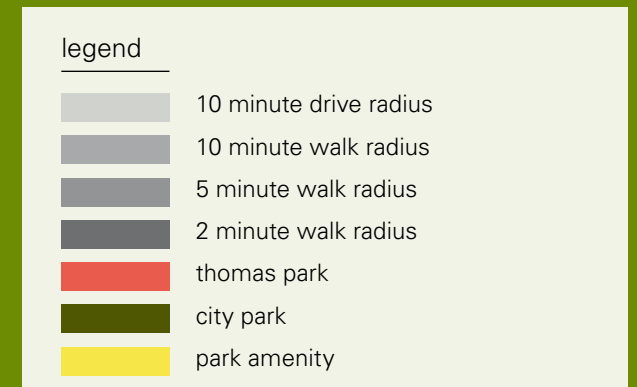
## Restroom Facility

17% of parks in College Station have a restroom facility.

The closest is a little **more than a ten minute walk** from Thomas Park at Oaks Park.

Restroom Facilities are more frequent among the other parks than some of the other listed park amenities.





Park Location and Amenities Data Credit: City of College Station



### Swimming Pool

3% of parks in College Station have a swimming pool.

The closest pool is **2.1 miles away** from Thomas Park. This distance is a **41 minute walk** but within the ten minute drive area.

The City is considering a aquatic feature for Thomas Park. Stephen C. Beachy Central Park has a splash pad that is very popular, which is **2.7 miles away** from Thomas Park.



### Nature Trail

6% of parks in College Station have a nature trail.

The closest nature trail is about **2 miles away** from Thomas Park. This distance is a **41 minute walk** but within the ten minute drive area.



### Baseball Field

3% of parks in College Station have a baseball field.

The closest baseball field is **2.4 miles away** from Thomas park. This distance is a **48 minute walk** but within the ten minute drive area.



### Pond

21% of parks in College Station have a pond.

The closest pond is **1.5 miles away** from Thomas Park. This distance is a 30 minute walk but within the ten minute drive area.



# TAMU STUDENT WORK

In the summer of 2020, the City of College Station collaborated with the landscape architecture department at TAMU to develop concepts for the design of Thomas Park. These concepts proposed adjustments to the existing park amenities and introduced new amenities to enhance the park. As the vision plan is developed, the design team isn't starting from ground zero but building upon the work that has come before.

The following is a list of the introduced park amenities:

- Musical Play Unit
- Play Mounds + Nature Playground
- Wet/Sand Play Area
- Splash Pad
- Neighborhood Pool/Lazy River/Hot Tub
- New Parking Lot (Permeable)
- Pickleball Court
- Badminton Court
- Flexible Recreation Field
- Disc Golf
- Exercise Units
- Food Truck Area
- New Trees
- Pollinator Garden
- Volunteer Garden
- Gathering Event Space
- Bioswale Garden
- Interactive Path







- legend
- park space
  - parking lot
  - passive space
  - active space
  - trails



# EASTGATE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Through public outreach, the Eastgate Neighborhood Plan was produced to guide improvements and development between 2011-2018 for the community around Thomas Park. This plan recognized the need for the drainage improvements and master plan for Thomas Park.

The plan proposed different road section scenarios and provided the survey results gathered during the project. The survey results show public feedback on the different road scenarios for Puryear Drive and James Parkway. Additionally, the public provided opinions on the existing state of Thomas Park and what improvements would be beneficial.

The work developed during the Eastgate Neighborhood Plan will help build the foundation for the proposed improvements as the Thomas Park vision plan is developed and streetscape improvements are proposed for Puryear Drive and James Parkway.

# 2018 SURVEY

In 2018 the City of College Station did a parks survey to receive feedback from the public on park amenities and operations. They had 1,032 respondents and several of the questions were about Thomas Park. The public voted on what park amenities they would want in Thomas Park and the following were the highest:

- New Pool - 36%
- Splash Pad - 21%
- Dog Park - 14%
- Athletic Fields - 6%

Although a new pool was listed as the highest park amenity, about 40% of the respondents never visited any of the pools in the city within the past year. Additional questions within the survey show community members' current usage and participation and their possible interests. This informs what park amenities should be built into the vision plan.

**City of College Station**  
Planning, Economic Development

## Eastgate Neighborhood Plan

Adopted: June 23, 2011

**2011-2018**

**City of College Station**

**Eastgate Neighborhood Plan**  
1-6

**INTRODUCTION | ADOPTED 06-23-11**

attended by more than 75 residents from the area. Residents were asked to choose their top priorities for the plan and to provide feedback about why they chose a specific topic. The meeting also served as a way to introduce the planning process to the neighborhood.

A summary of the feedback that was received from this Kick-Off Meeting and other public meetings is provided as an appendix to the Plan (**Appendix B, Public Input Summary**). Members of the community were made aware of the event through postcards, notification signage, City television channel, fliers sent with utility bills, and information that was distributed to neighborhood organizations.

**Surveys**

After the Kick-off meeting, an on-line survey was made available for residents at the plan's website: <http://www.cstx.gov/ndcplanning>. Responses were recorded with the documentation from the Kick-Off meeting.

**Issues and Opportunities Meeting**

A second neighborhood-wide event was the Issues and Opportunities Meeting held on October 26, 2010 at College Station City Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to collect more in-depth information about what is positive about the neighborhood and where there is room for improvement.

Participants from the Kick-off Meeting were provided information about the date and time of the meeting, and promotional materials were provided to the Neighborhood Resource Team for distribution.

**Neighborhood Area Meetings**

As residents contributed to the planning process, it was realized that areas of the neighborhood faced different pressures or were expressing different responses to similar concerns. As a result, neighborhood area meetings were held in late January 2011, one each at College Hills Elementary, City Hall, and College Hill Missionary Baptist Church. The purpose of these meetings was to receive more in-depth feedback from each of the neighborhood areas regarding the concerns of their area. Residents of each area were sent a postcard invitation for the meeting held in their part of the neighborhood.

**Open House**

Neighborhood-wide Open Houses were held at College Hills Elementary on April 26 & 27, 2011 to receive feedback on the draft Plan. With more than 80 in attendance, participants were able to view the draft language, maps, and strategies, as well as converse directly with Staff about any of the Plan components.

Residents were notified through postcards, notification signage, and promotional materials provided to the Neighborhood Resource Team

**Map 1.1 Community Character Areas of Change**

Planning Area  
Character Change Area  
Commonly Character  
Neighborhood Transformation  
General Suburban  
Urban  
Urban Area Top  
Historic Area  
Historic Area - Protected  
Historic Area - Reserved  
Redevelopment Area



# SITE/FRAMEWORK PLAN





# STORMWATER + DRAINAGE





Thomas Park relieves a large amount of water from the surrounding neighborhood and streetscape on its path to Wolf Pen Creek. Even during an average storm event, water fills the drainage swale and floods numerous areas throughout the park and street.

The flooding on the streets creates conflicts for vehicles. The flooding within the park causes the park to be unusable, in particular for those who are utilizing the walking paths or trying to move around the park. The parking lot and many of the informal parking spots around the park are flooded.

The vision plan will consider the drainage needs and ensure that the park is safe and usable during storm events, allowing the park to be an amenity at all times.





# SHADE CANOPY STUDY



To understand the usability and level of comfort the park provides, it is vital to know what areas are cool versus hot. Thomas Park has a shade canopy of 47%, with 80% of the shade being located along the perimeter of the park. The walking path that follows the perimeter of the park is mostly covered by the shade canopy providing a comfortable path to walk along, though there are gaps that if filled would make the experience even more enjoyable and usable during Texas' hottest months of the year.

The interior of the park has many areas that are not covered by the shade canopy. This makes many areas of the park unusable during the hottest months of the year until the sun sets. Many of the active amenities are located within the interior of the park.

Providing appropriate shade coverage throughout the park would enhance usability and increase park usage during the hotter times of the year and day.



# PARKING STUDY

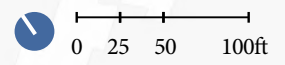


A parking study was conducted to develop a baseline understanding of what is existing and what potential there is for parking along the perimeter. There are 18 parking spaces in the existing parking lot. There are visual indicators along the perimeter of the park that show people are parking informally. There are about 19 spaces along James Parkway and 31 spaces along Puryear Drive

The street has the potential for providing 120 on-street parking spaces. This was calculated based upon offsets from intersections, crosswalks and fire hydrants. This provides a baseline for the vision plan and streetscape improvements and will influence proposed park amenities and how parking needs are met.

Though this park is intended for use of the entire city of College Station, additional park land should not be used for off-street parking. It is recommended that additional parking needs should be met through formalizing on-street parking around the perimeter of the park.

- legend
- existing parking lot
  - existing street parking
  - potential street parking





# PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

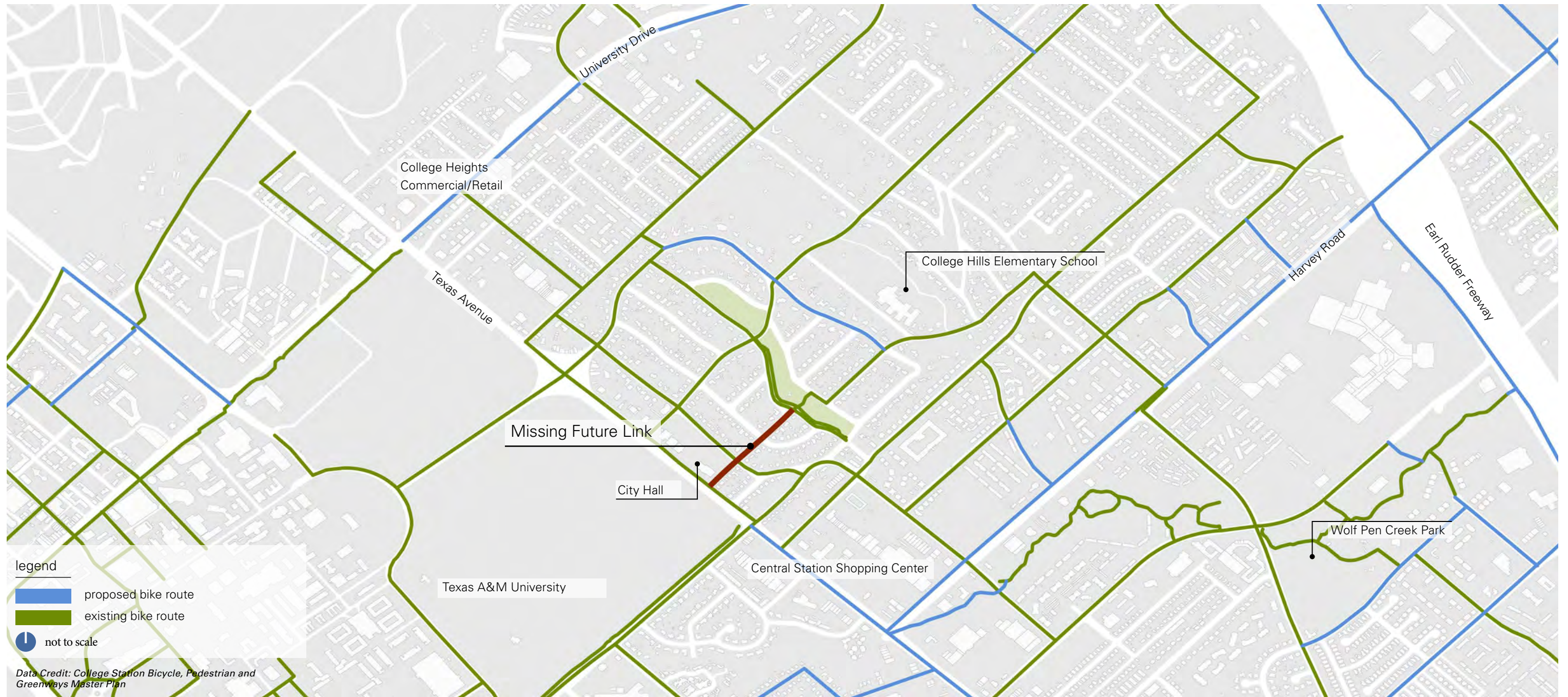


Thomas Park serves an important role for the surrounding neighborhood in providing a safe environment to walk. The neighborhood does not have consistent sidewalks and connections as seen in red in the image above.

As future improvements are considered, especially the connection to the new City Hall, it will be important to recognize that Thomas Park will be a destination for the community to have a safe pedestrian experience.



# BICYCLE CONNECTIONS



Thomas Park is a converging/connection point for many bike routes. Many of these routes are existing with some proposed routes to further enhance the connections within the surrounding neighborhood. Thomas Park is between some destinations within the community and the park has the opportunity to provide a safe bicycle environment that doesn't conflict with vehicles and pedestrians. As the vision plan and streetscape improvements are developed, the bicycle connections and needs will be considered to enhance and encourage multiple modes of mobility leading to the need for less vehicular parking spaces at the park.







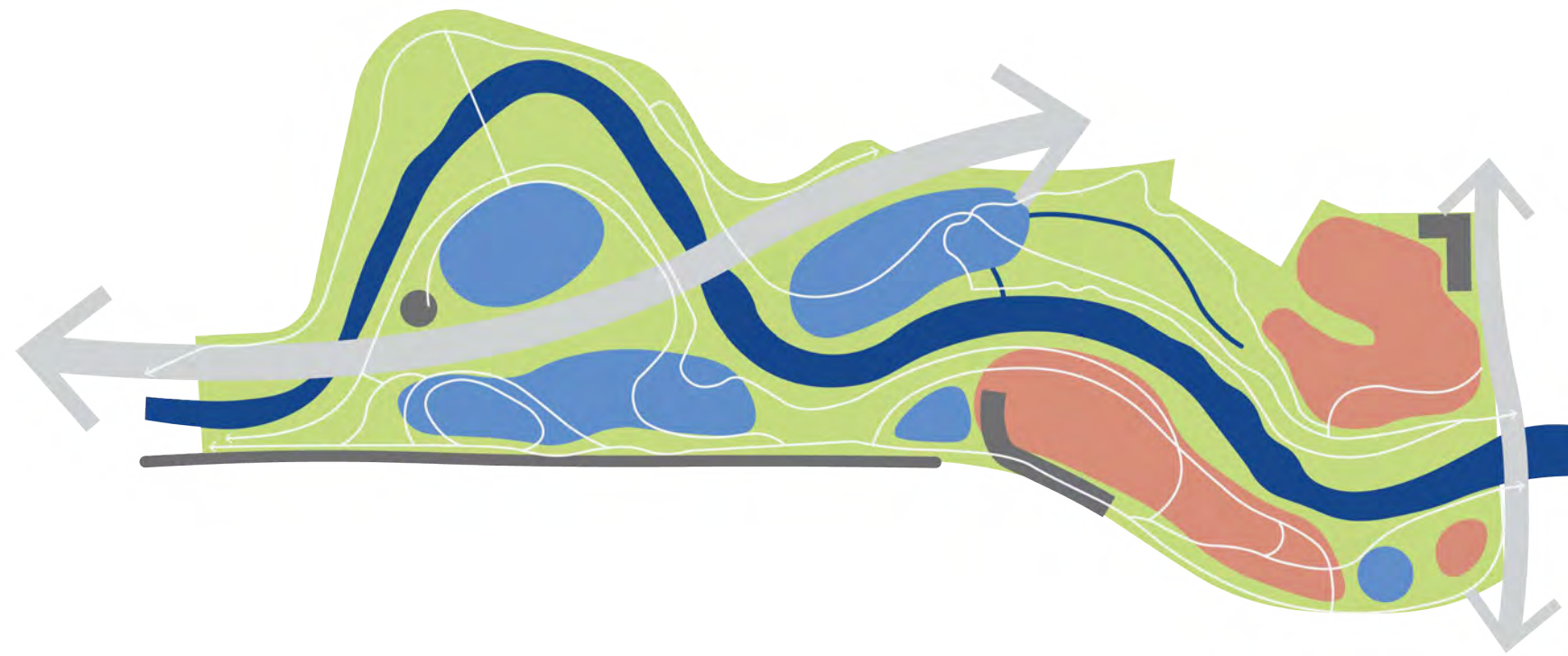
# Precedent Projects

The following projects provide inspiration for what programs could occur in Thomas Park. The projects provide spatial reference for park amenities.

These projects were chosen based upon site features such as an impactful drainage and the placement between streets. Each park was evaluated from active space versus trails and open space and how much parking was provided.



# BUFFALO BAYOU/ELEANOR TINSLEY, HOUSTON TX



**84% Trails and Open Space**

**16% Active Programming**

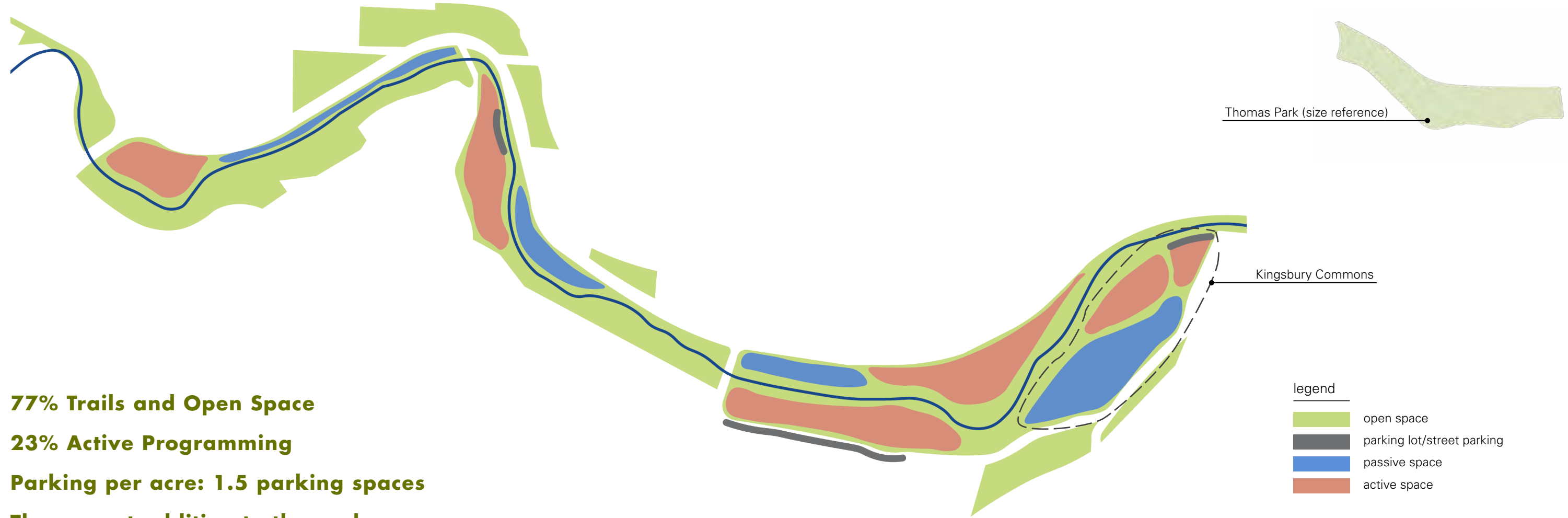
**Parking per acre = 3 parking spaces**

- **Partnerships + Volunteer opportunities that benefits those who participate and the park.**
- **Extensive trail network that follows the length of Buffalo Bayou.**
- **Event spaces, dedicated gardens, and historical locations that are linked to the community.**





# PEASE PARK, AUSTIN TX



**77% Trails and Open Space**

**23% Active Programming**

**Parking per acre: 1.5 parking spaces**

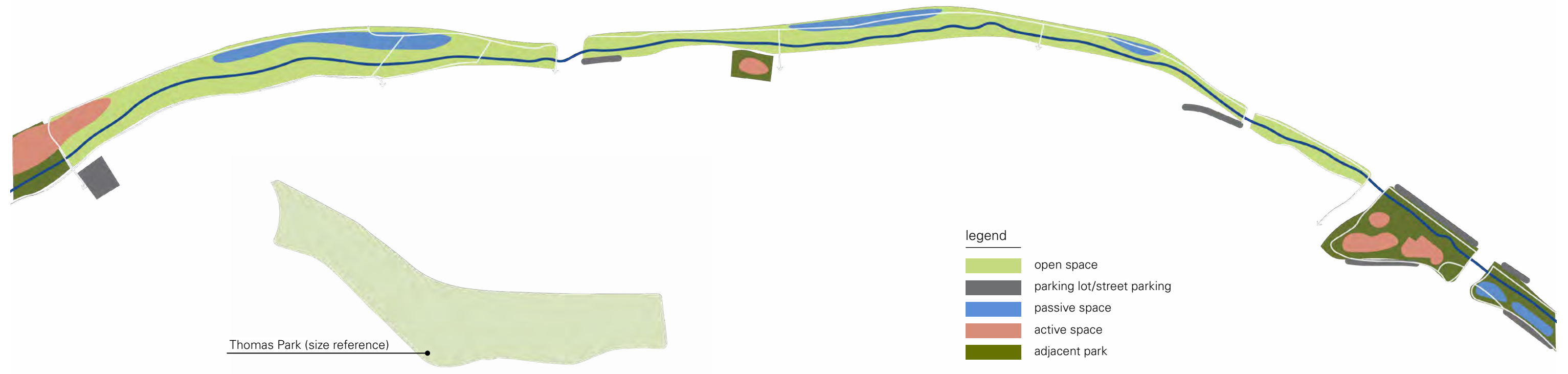
**The newest addition to the park, Kingsbury Commons, is comparable to Thomas Park in size and has approximately 25 parking spaces.**

- **Natural restoration with conservation and volunteer efforts throughout the park.**
- **Community + Volunteer Events to engage the public and provide opportunities for the public to invest in the park.**
- **Active programmatic hubs to centralize activity.**
- **Limited parking to promote other modes of mobility.**





# FOOTBRIDGES PARK, SANTA FE NM



**90% Trails and Open Space**

**10% Active Programming**

**Parking per acre: 5 parking spaces**

**The adjacent park, De Vargas Park, has 25 parking spaces, which is two more parking spaces per acre than Footbridges Park.**

- **The green link between parks connecting them through a safe, greenway.**
- **Active programs located at the linked parks.**
- **Passive park amenities with overviews of the drainage.**













# Vision Plan

Building off the analysis and precedent work, the vision plan was developed by exploring three concepts and receiving feedback from community members. The vision plan creates a destination for the community to come together to engage and exchange while honoring the legacy of Mabel Clare Thomas.



# DEVELOPING THE DESIGN

Three conceptual designs were developed to envision different scenarios for Thomas Park (greater detail can be found on pages 60-65). Each provides a community heart while emphasizing different amenities and activities. These were refined into one concept based upon feedback from the City.

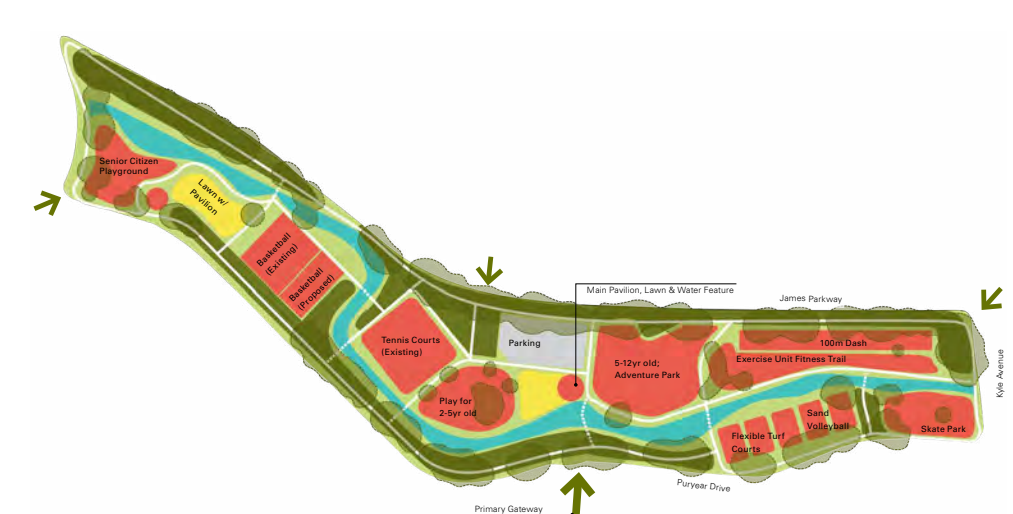
## Concept 1: Nature Destination



## Concept 2: Community Hub



## Concept 3: Fun For All



- lawn
- parking
- planting area
- sidewalk/trail
- programmed area
- existing tree canopy
- footbridge/boardwalk
- drainage route/water
- tree planting
- gateway
- 0 25 50 100ft





# ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

A public meeting was held in the fall of 2021 to inform and provide the community with the opportunity to comment on the refined concept of the vision plan. This was an in-person meeting followed by an online survey. Community members identified the importance of further exploring how the existing character of the park can be enhanced and that the future aquatic feature would require further engagement with the public.

The following were key takeaways from the engagement (identified by CD&P):

- The top three improvements for the public were roadway improvements, the future aquatic feature and sidewalk improvements.
- Further design exploration is needed to ensure that the legacy of Mabel Clare Thomas is present in the park.
- There is a need for more areas/equipment for teenagers.
- There is a desire for more open spaces, picnic areas and covered/shaded areas.
- There is a desire for additional parking and lighting.





# VISION PLAN: CREATING A COMMUNITY HOME







1. Additional shade amenities to improve usability and comfort
2. Enhance play area with legacy opportunities and increase developmental opportunities
3. Provide educational opportunities about the natural and historical elements in the park
4. Community gathering area w/generational equipment to create a place for people of all ages and abilities
5. Central dedication area to Mabel Clare Thomas w/a grand shade tree to tie her story into the community center of the park



# PHASING & IMPLEMENTATION







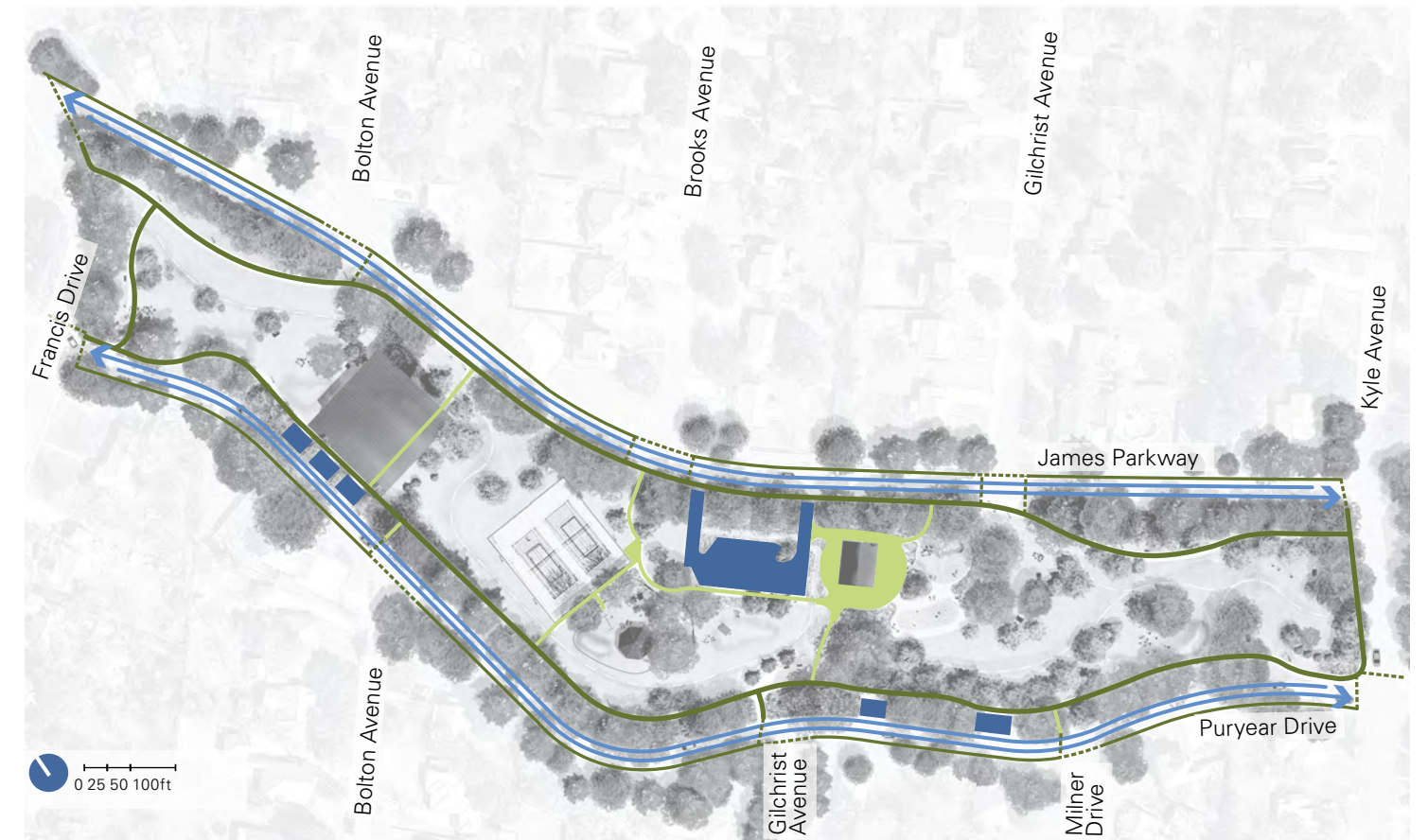
1. Additional pedestrian lighting within interior of park to improve usability and safety
2. Additional connections within the park to increase mobility
3. Regrade drainage way to allow it to be usable during dry conditions and improve drainage during wet periods
4. Provide play berms creating more play opportunities and topographic interest within the park
5. Define park entrances to create a sense of place
6. Planting the next generation of trees increasing shade to accentuate human comfort



# THE PIECES OF THE VISION PLAN

The vision plan creates a home for the community while addressing key issues identified throughout the project. The following diagrams highlight how the key principles were considered in the design and the benefits that will be provided to the community. Each amenity and system aims to provide the community a park that deepens connections to each other, the systems around them and the past.

## Circulation & Parking



### Opportunities

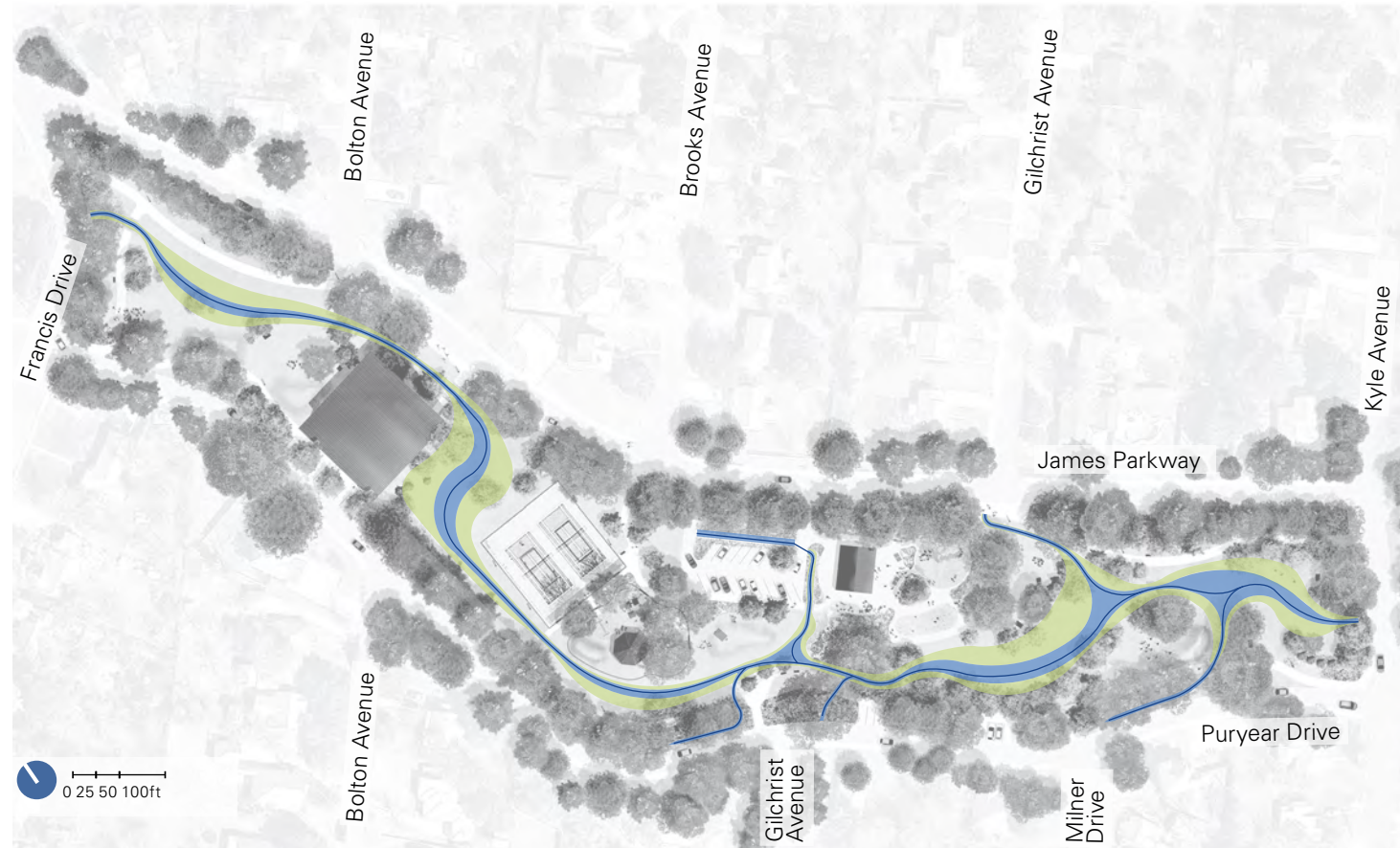
- Two-way vehicle travel with sidewalk on both sides
- Opportunities for crossing at intersections
- Additional parking
- Park exterior 10' sidewalk with interior sidewalks for connections

### legend

- vehicular travel
- parking
- exterior trail
- interior trail
- - - potential crossings






## Drainage



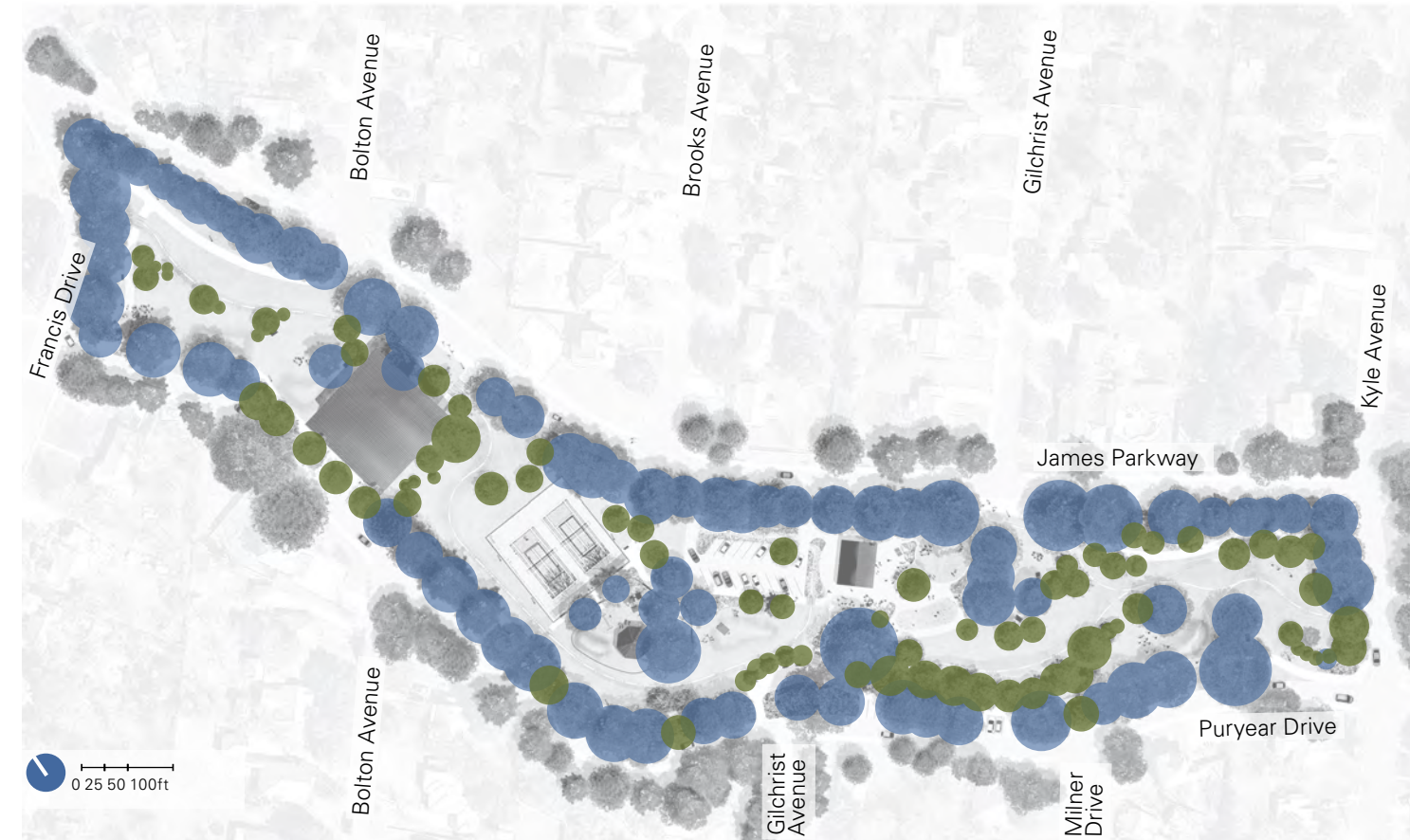
### Opportunities

- Adequate space for water capacity
- Alleviate water ponding at adjacent intersections and parking lot
- Increase safety and usability of park during rain events
- Tell the story of the watershed
- Provide educational opportunities

### legend

-  drainage way
-  water level during average storm
-  water level during intense storm



## Tree Canopy



### Opportunities

- Enhance human comfort and park usability by increasing the shade canopy
- Preserve the existing tree canopy
- Plant the next generation of trees
- Increase specie diversity
- Enhance habitat

### legend

-  proposed tree canopy
-  existing tree canopy





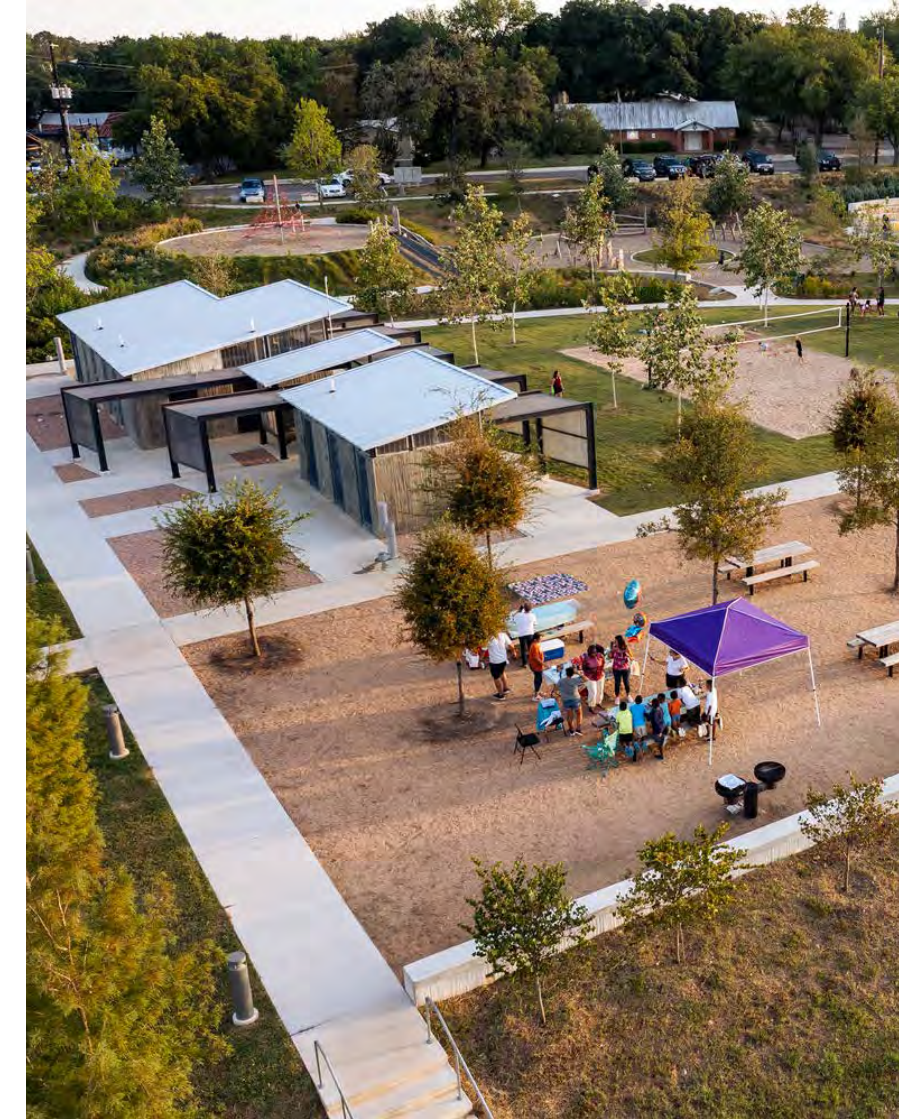


# Character Precedents

The vision plan provides the community with new amenities while enhancing the existing amenities and features in the park. The following image precedents show what the different amenities in the vision plan could look like and highlights opportunities that these amenities could provide.



# VISION PLAN PRECEDENTS



The vision plan for the park will include a variety of spaces for a diverse user experience.

- » Community Pavilion and Restrooms
- » Kids Play Area
- » Drainage Ways
- » Picnic Spaces
- » New Sidewalk Network
- » Earth Berms
- » Landscaped Area



# GENERATIONAL EQUIPMENT PRECEDENTS



There are a range of activities that encourage people of all ages to engage with and together.

- » Musical Features
- » Interactive Art/ Sculptures
- » Reading/ Art Nooks
- » Engaging Features like hammocking and rope/ hanging equipment
- » Games; Table tennis, bocci ball and similar activities

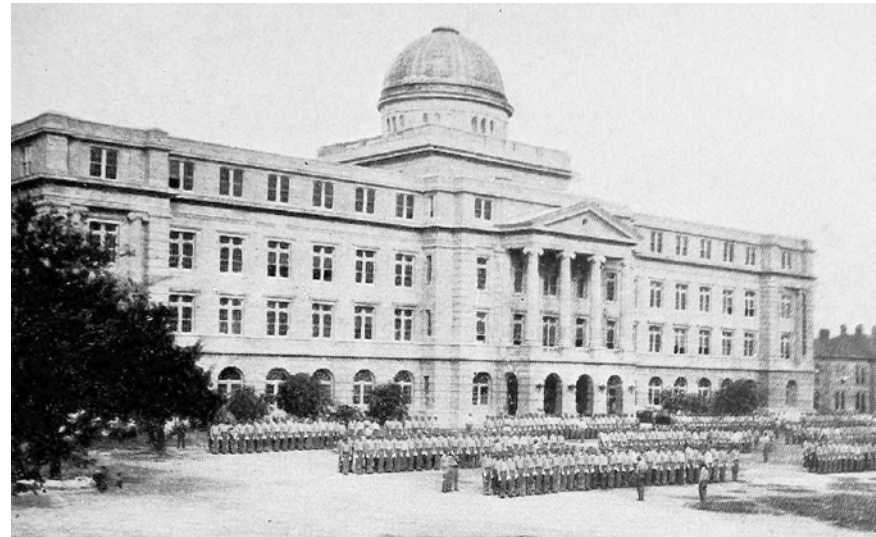


# EXPERIENTIAL GRAPHIC DESIGN

Experiential or environmental graphic design, also known as EGD, is an opportunity to embed meaning and context into the built environment. The following pages outline some of the opportunities we see for the park, including context and inspirational imagery to show what is possible.

If thoughtfully done, the additions can help tell these stories and build freedom for future ones.

- » Railroad
- » TAMU
- » Mabel Claire Thomas
- » The Ecology and botanicals
- » Watershed & treatment
- » Community
- » History





# TYPES OF EGD OPPORTUNITIES

## Identification Opportunities (entry signage)

- Vehicular scale
- Pedestrian scale
- Placemaking monuments or portals
- Connection to City Hall and TAMU



## Placemaking Opportunities

- Educational artwork:
  - Sculptures (stand-alone or 3D murals)
  - 2D murals and surface treatments
- Provide opportunities for the community to engage in the art and meaning of the park
- Weave art, identity, and story throughout the park



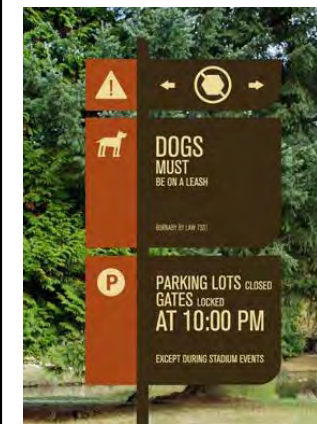
## Educational Opportunities (interpretive)

- Stormwater reclamation story
- Flora and fauna
- Reinforce and enhance the historical significance and legacy of the park
- The story of the namesake, Mabel Clare Thomas
- College Station's train-related history



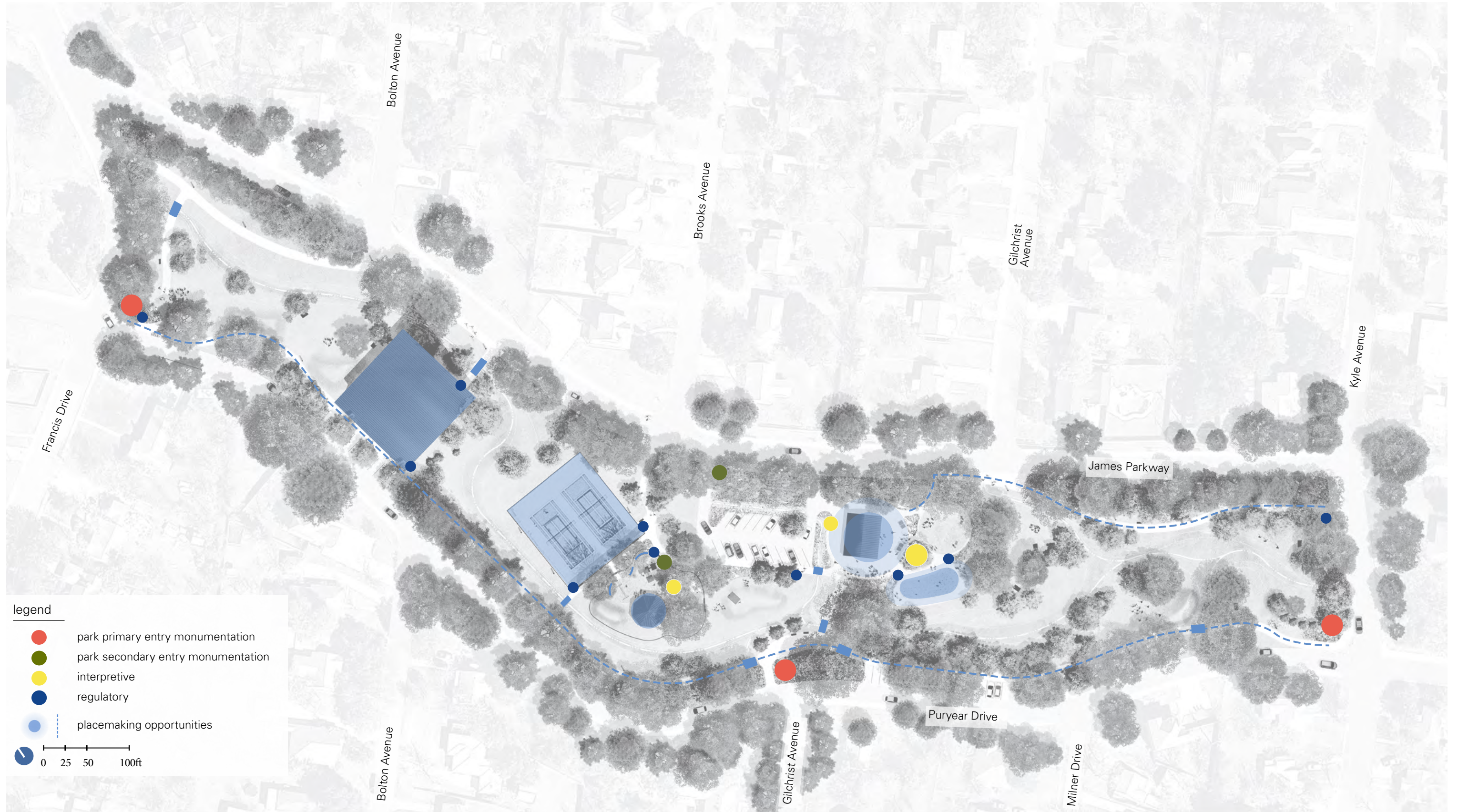
## Regulatory Needs

- Park rules
- Playground rules
- Water feature rules
- Custom street signs





# EGD OPPORTUNITIES





# EGD PRECEDENTS





# ADDITIONAL EGD PRECEDENTS





# ADDITIONAL EGD PRECEDENTS



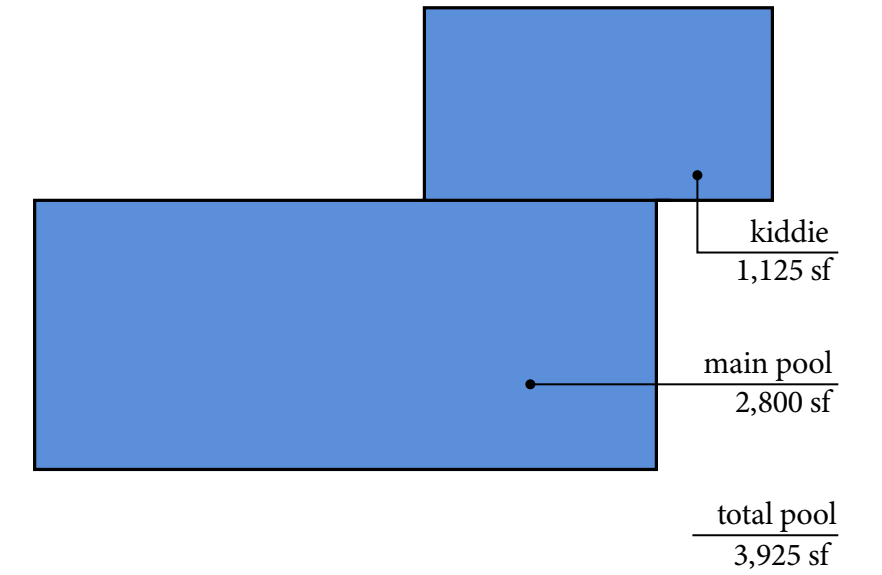


# FUTURE AQUATIC FEATURE OPTIONS



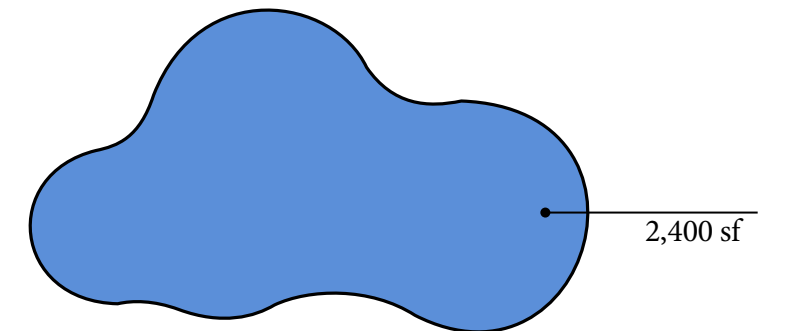
## Considering a Pool

Reference: old pool footprint

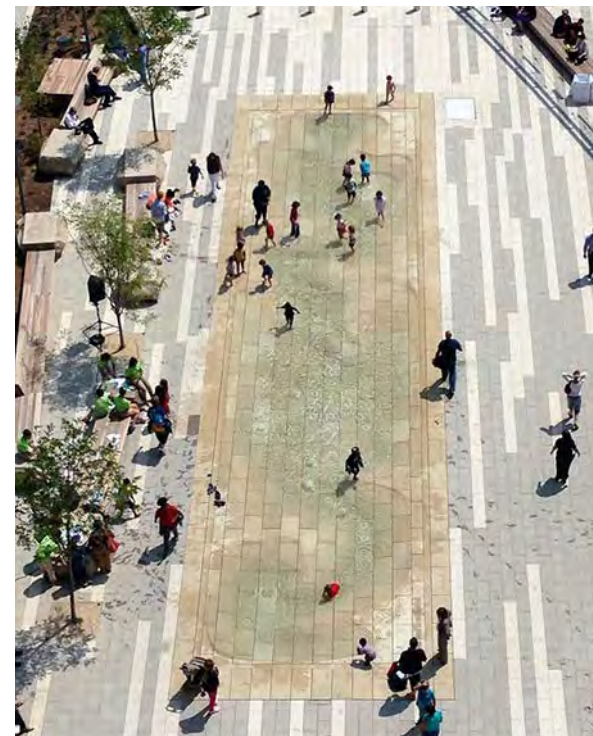
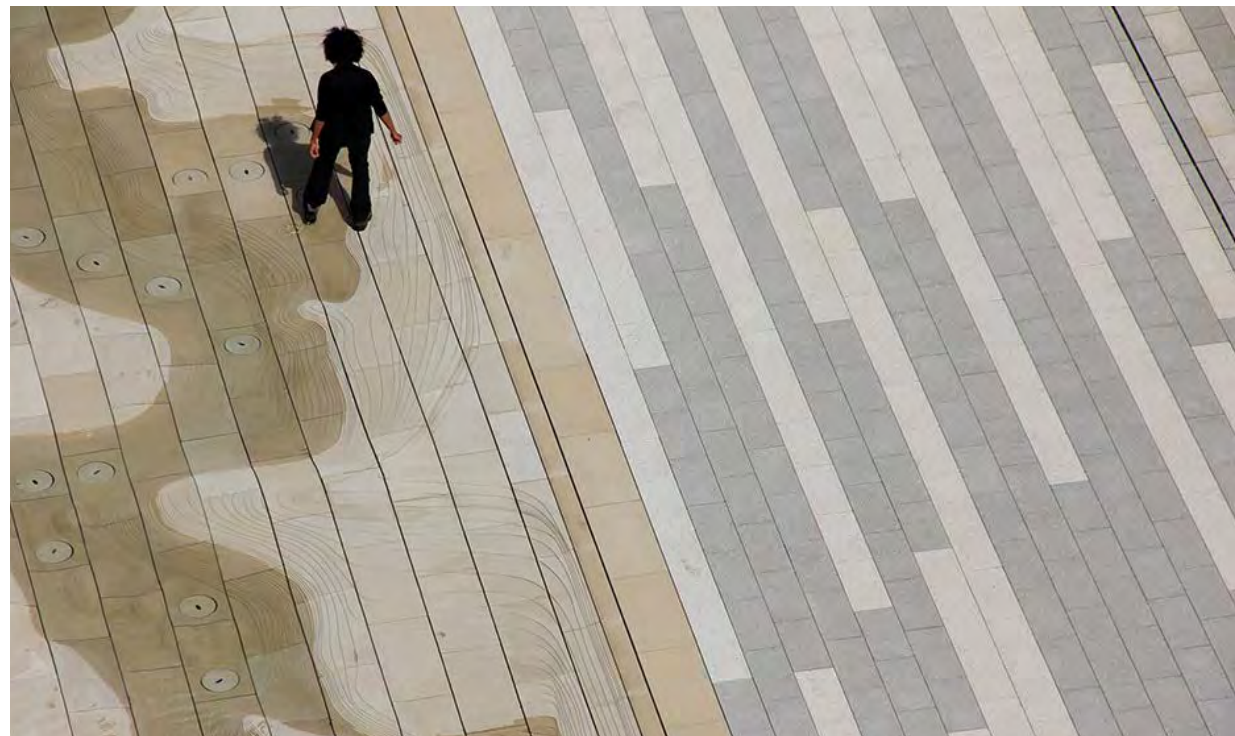


## Considering a Splash Pad

Reference: Stephen C. Beachy Central Park splash pad









# FUTURE AQUATIC FEATURE OPTIONS CONTINUED



A potential aquatic feature is a fog water feature. This creates a unique experience to engage with water in a different way than traditional aquatic features. The ephemeral quality of the feature allows individuals to define how they interact with the feature. It invites opportunities to utilize lighting and the surrounding landscape to create different type of interactions.











# North Portion of Thomas Park



# ENHANCING THE NORTH PORTION

The first public meeting and subsequent discussions highlighted the desire to provide additional improvements to the northern section of Thomas Park. These are not a part of the vision plan of the southern portion of the park though the recommendations reflect the aesthetics of the vision plan. The expanded playground will provide additional play features that allow for multiple generations to play together. It is expected that these improvements will be considered during the current park maintenance budget and the next budget cycle. These improvements include:

- additional benches
- proposed trees for shade
- expand the existing playground
- resurfacing the sidewalk/ trail



## Potential Additional Play Features







Play Lawn for Smaller Activities

Play Berms Shaping the Lawn

North Section Heritage Tree

Sensory Garden  
w/Pathways

James Parkway

Puryear Drive

Existing Exercise Station

Expanded Playground w/Pavilion & Plantings

Improvements to the Existing Sidewalk

Open Field for Sports and Large Activities

Francis Drive

**legend**

	existing tree canopy		lawn
	proposed tree canopy		planting area
	sidewalk/trail		programmed area
	secondary trail		site furniture/ amenities
	drainage route		

0 25 50 100ft







# Appendix



# CONCEPT 1: NATURE DESTINATION





## 94% Trails and Open Space

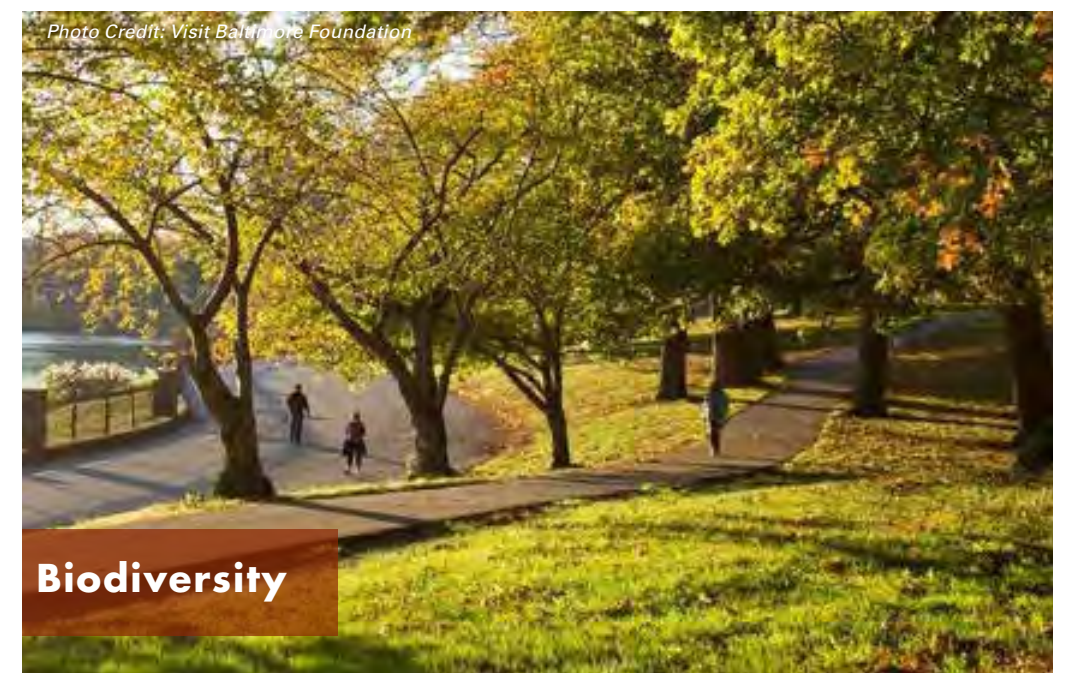
## 6% Active Programming

**Parking is proposed to be along the perimeter of the park, pulling it out of the interior of the park to better use the area to enhance the programming and green infrastructure.**

**Parking per acre: 1 to 2.5 parking spaces (8 to 20 spaces)**

- **Emphasis on natural restoration with volunteer opportunities within the park to respect maintenance needs.**
- **Tell the story of the water that filters through Thomas Park and eventually becomes part of the Gulf of Mexico.**
- **Effectively manage the water to allow the park to be usable at all times.**

- **Provide educational opportunities throughout the park.**
- **Develop a trails system that offers flexibility and more connections to the neighborhood and within the park.**
- **Provide passive park amenities with overviews of the drainage.**





# CONCEPT 2: COMMUNITY HUB



The following concept was developed to provide a foundation for the final vision plan.

The former pool was a place that the community gathered and interacted during the summer months. In its absence, there is a void of that community interaction at least during swim season. The Community Hub concept fills this void by providing a park that encourages community engagement and gathering throughout the year. The activities in the park aren't limited to just the adjacent neighborhood but invite all to come and engage in the surrounding community and invest in College Station.

The central destination is a community pavilion with conditioned facilities. This space will be designed to be flexible to encourage activities such as community meetings, outdoor classes and community events. The programming throughout the park is a mixture of active and passive to provide a diversity of choices for different users. The drainage weaves throughout the park amenities to shape the community spaces and provide opportunities to interact with the water.



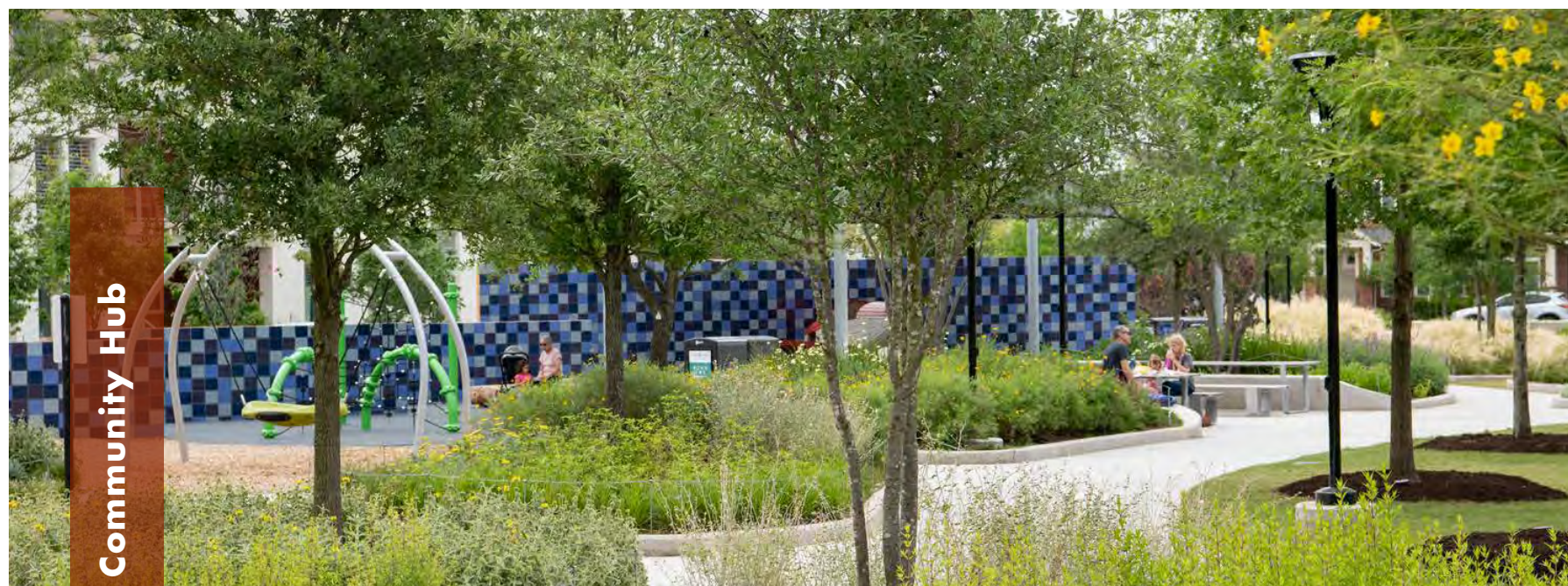
## 85% Trails and Open Space

## 15% Active Programming

**Parking is mostly on-street parking with a pull-in section located in close proximity to the community center, with the intent of providing for events like farmers markets and food trucks.**

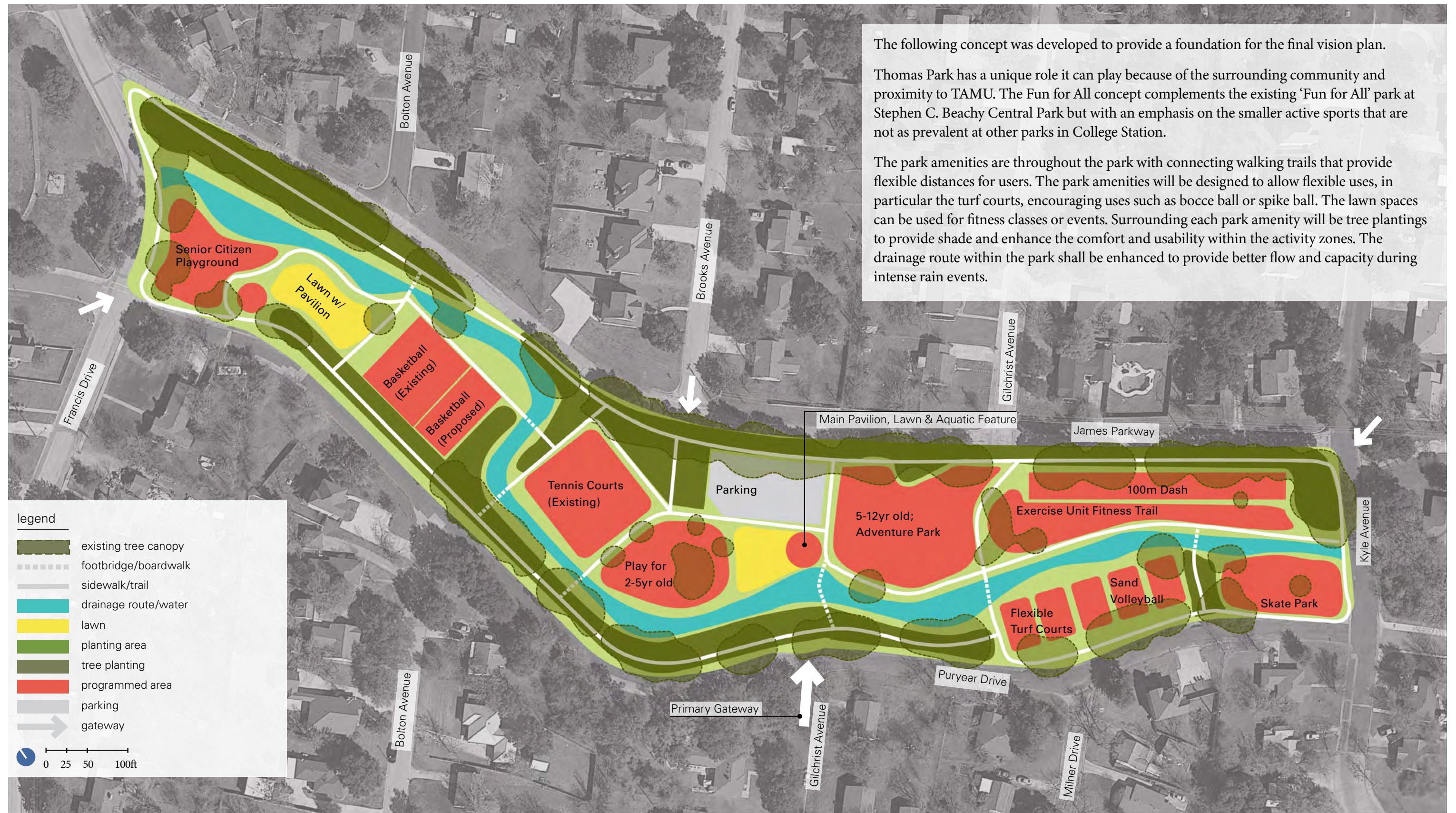
**Parking per acre: 3 to 4.5 parking spaces (21 to 36 spaces)**

- **Emphasis on community gathering, exchange and connectivity.**
- **Provide flexible spaces that encourage the exchange of materials/ideas and promote community activities such as yoga, music events and outdoor classes.**
- **Reinforce the legacy of Mrs. Thomas through the stories that are melded into the infrastructure, planting and furniture of the site.**
- **Emphasize the connection to the new City Hall by augmenting and centralizing the entrance into the park off of Gilchrist.**
- **Engage the public and provide opportunities for public investment through community and volunteer events.**





# CONCEPT 3: FUN FOR ALL





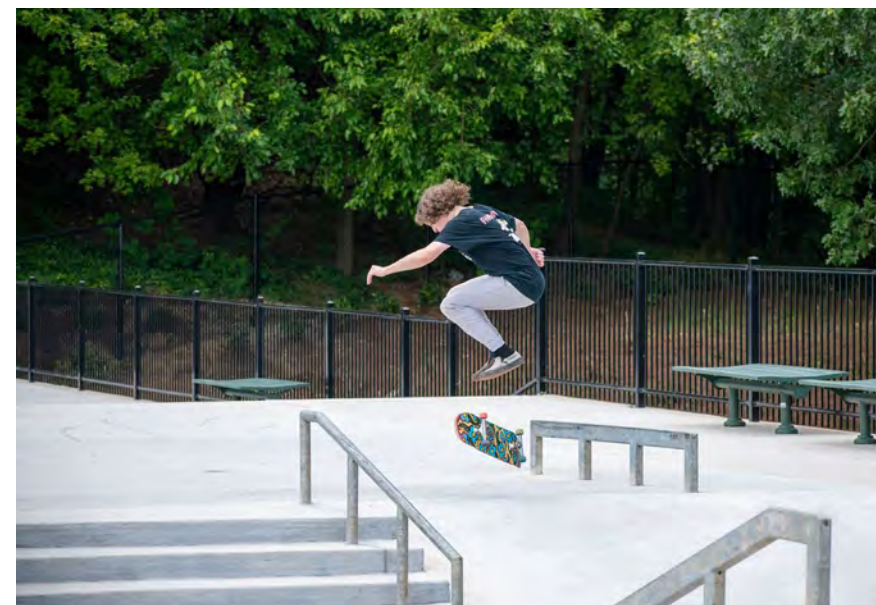
## 70% Trails and Open Space

## 30% Active Programming

Parking within the interior of the park is maintained and supplemented with on-street parking to provide more parking for the active park amenities.

Parking per acre: 5 to 6.5 parking spaces (40 to 52 spaces with 18 of these being in the existing parking lot)

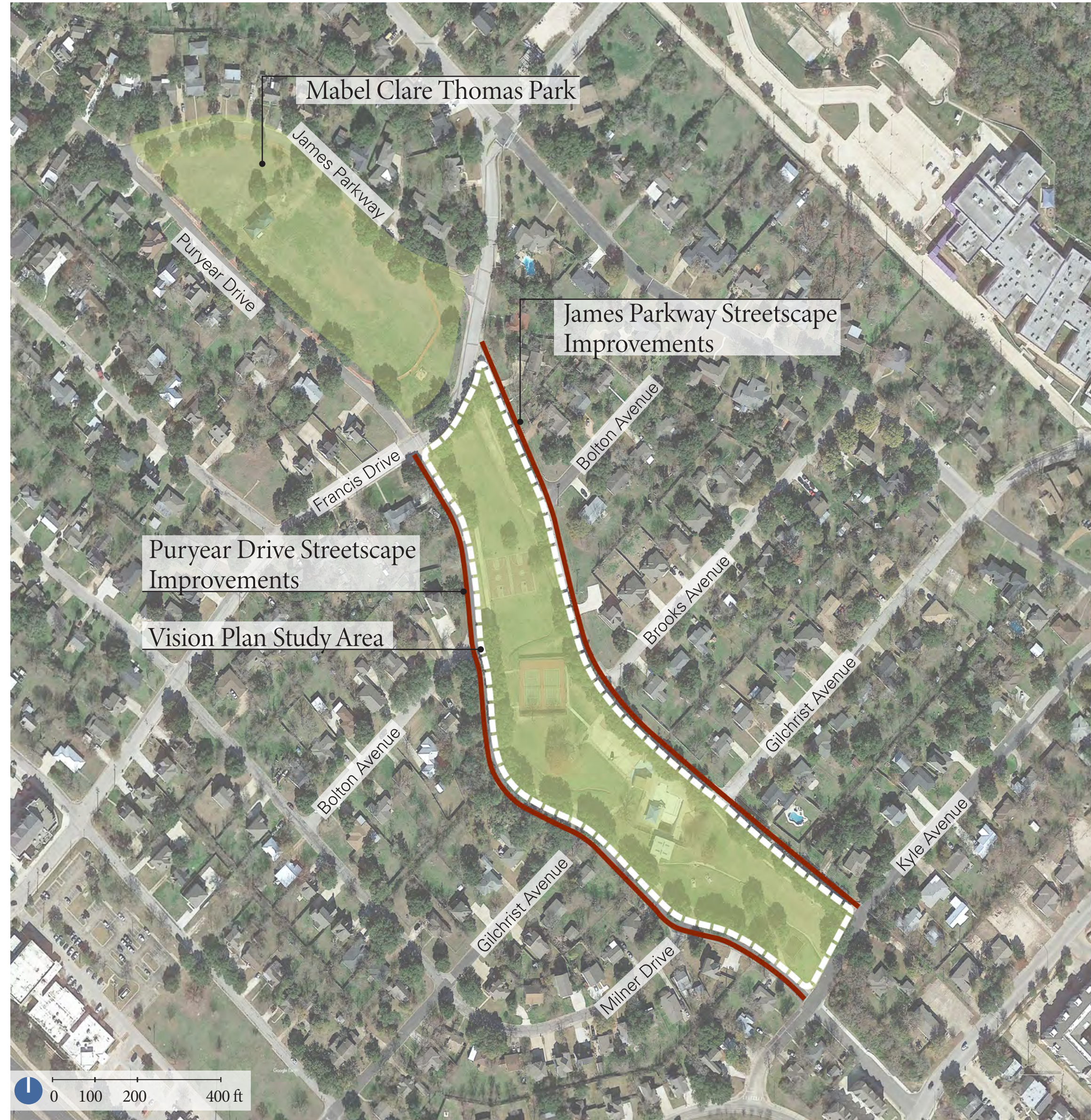
- Emphasis on active programming that is connected through an extensive trail network that provides different distances for users to walk, jog or ride their bicycles.
- Provide dedicated space for the smaller activities and sports that are not as prevalent throughout the park system.
- Create a hub of active amenities that encourage interactions and community connections.
- Accentuate comfort and usability for all users throughout the park especially for the active programming.





# The Legacy & Foundation

## Study Area

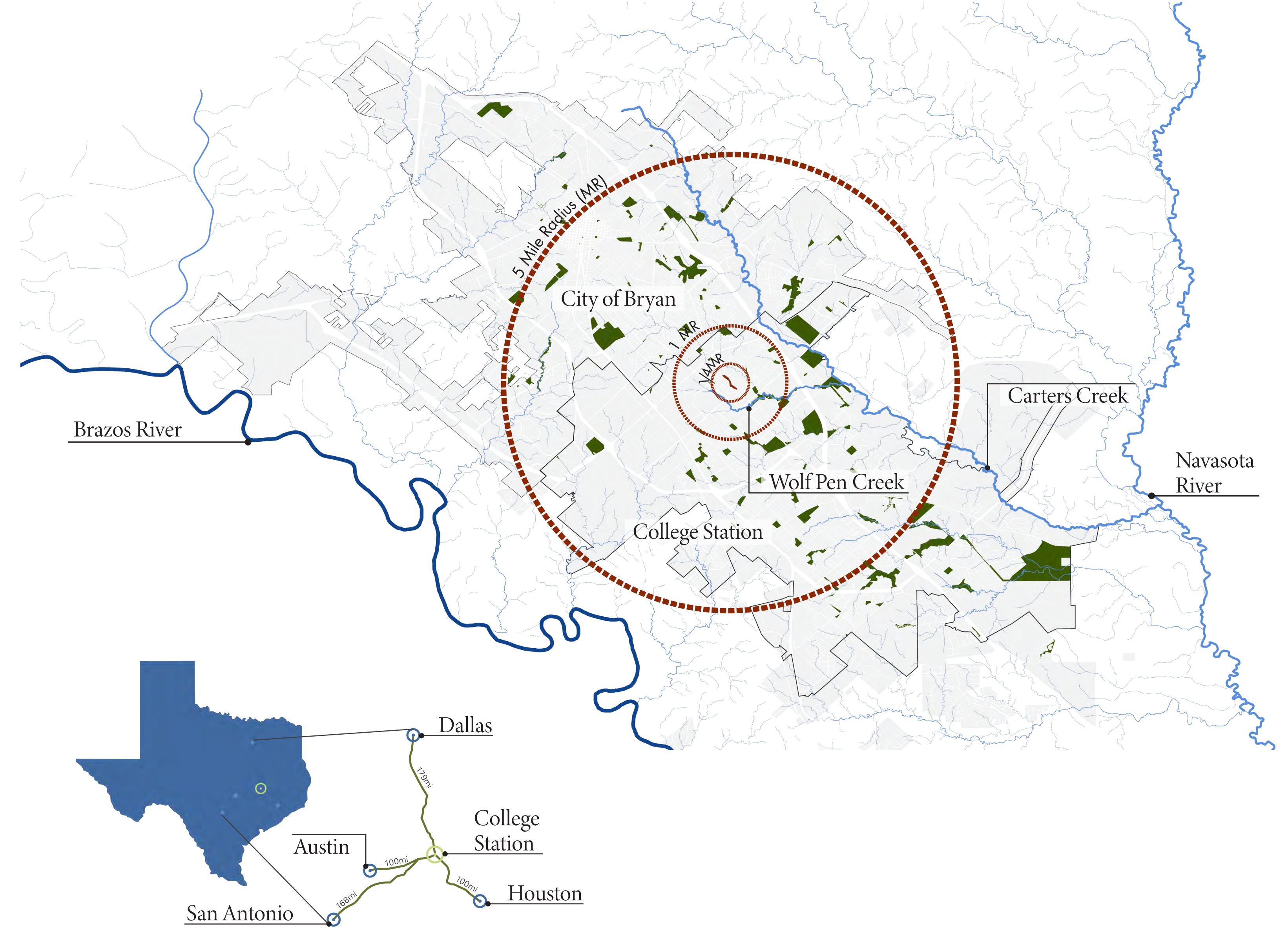


The James Parkway and Puryear Drive has been identified for streetscape improvements and rehabilitation of the Mabel Clare Thomas Park. A vision plan is needed to ensure a holistic design of the streetscape and park that meets the needs of the city and community while preserving the trees and enhancing the legacy of the park.

## Schedule & Implementation

- Summer 2021** Project kick-off
- Today** Public meeting to share project information & collect feedback
- Early 2022** Finalize improvements & vision plan
- Spring 2022** Public meeting to share final improvements & vision plan
- Late 2022** Construct roadway, drainage, & sidewalk improvements.
- T.B.D.** Construct additional park amenities included in vision plan

## The Big Picture



## Mabel Clare Thomas' Legacy

Mabel Clare Thomas Park is named after a prominent member of College Station, Mabel Clare Thomas. She dedicated much of her life to the community around her and improving the park will allow her story to be told for many years to come.





# The Vision & Previous Work

## Vision Statement

The vision plan creates distinct experiences for users to play, relax and engage through opportunities that encourage community interaction and emphasizes Mabel Clare Thomas' legacy while increasing park usability through purposeful design of amenity areas and the drainage.

## Guiding Principles

### Community

- Create connections
- Serve the whole community
- Consider accessibility
- Emphasize comfort and access for multiple modes of mobility

### Environment

- Effectively manage stormwater and enhance park's usability
- Accentuate human comfort
- Develop educational opportunities
- Preserve the existing tree canopy and plant the next generation of trees

### Art

- Reinforce the historical significance and legacy of Mabel Clare Thomas
- Tie into the train-related history
- Provide opportunities for community engagement and art

### Economics

- Proposed features and park amenities that consider maintenance needs

## The Vision Plan isn't starting from scratch...

### Eastgate Neighborhood Plan

The Eastgate Neighborhood Plan (2011) guides capital improvements and development for the community surrounding Mabel Clare Thomas Park. This plan recognizes the need for the drainage improvements and a vision plan for Mabel Clare Thomas Park. It builds the foundation for proposed improvements of the Mabel Clare Thomas Park site and streetscape through recurring themes presented in the plan:

- Improve pedestrian connections & mobility
- Preserve the existing community character
- Reinforce the historical significance of the park and of College Station
- Improve roadway conditions and additional parking
- Need restrooms and a playground shelter
- Incorporate wildlife preservation & natural landscaping

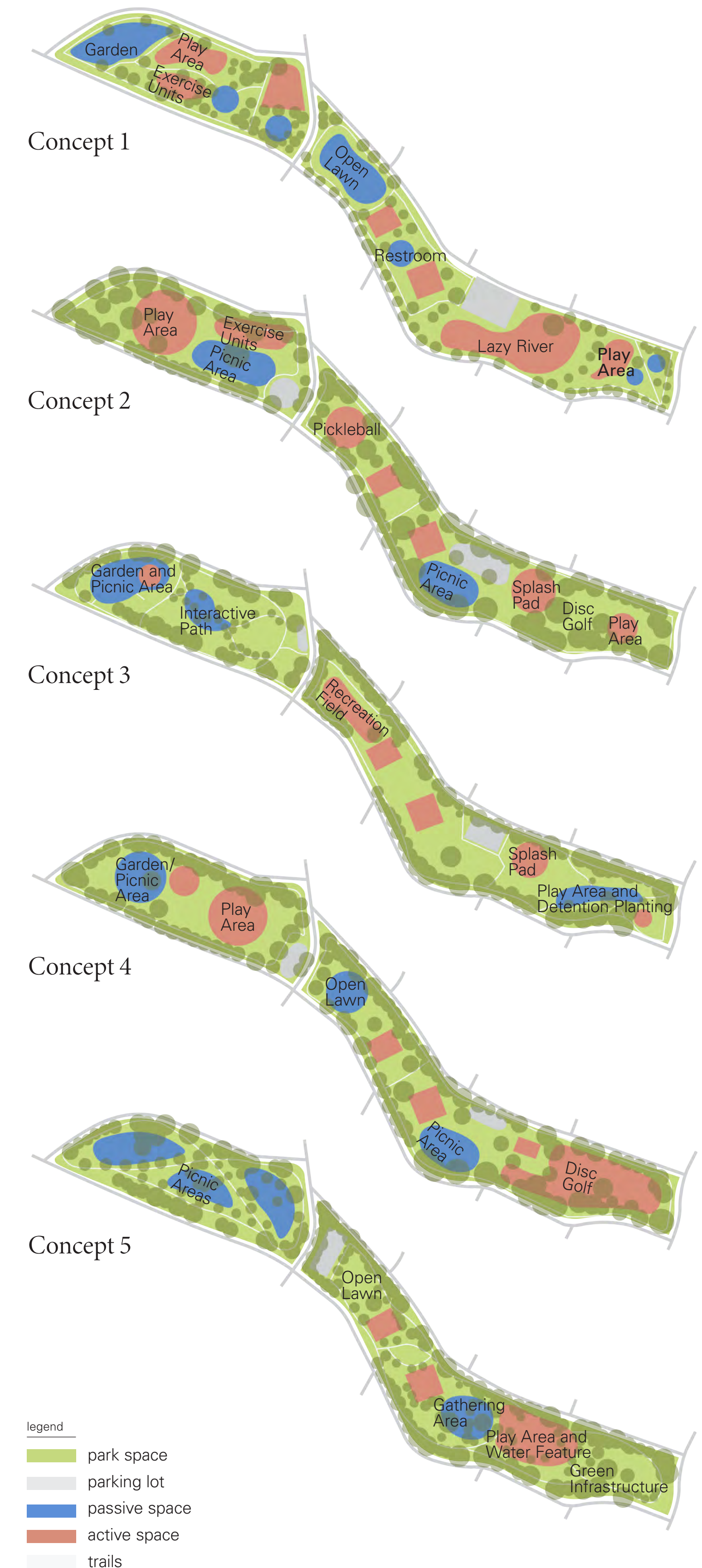


### 2018 Parks Survey

In 2018, the City of College Station did a parks survey to receive feedback from the public on park amenities and operations city wide. They had 1,144 respondents and several of the questions were about Mabel Clare Thomas Park. Survey respondents provided key input and metrics for amenities incorporated into the vision plan.

### TAMU Student Work

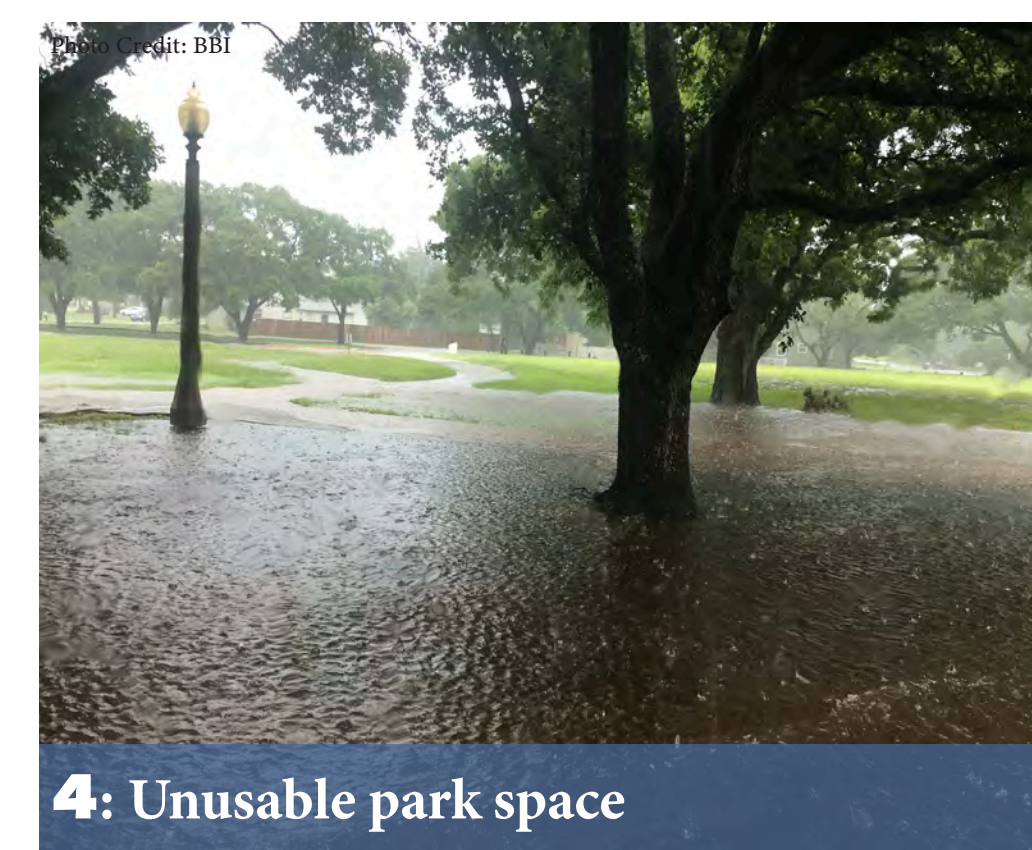
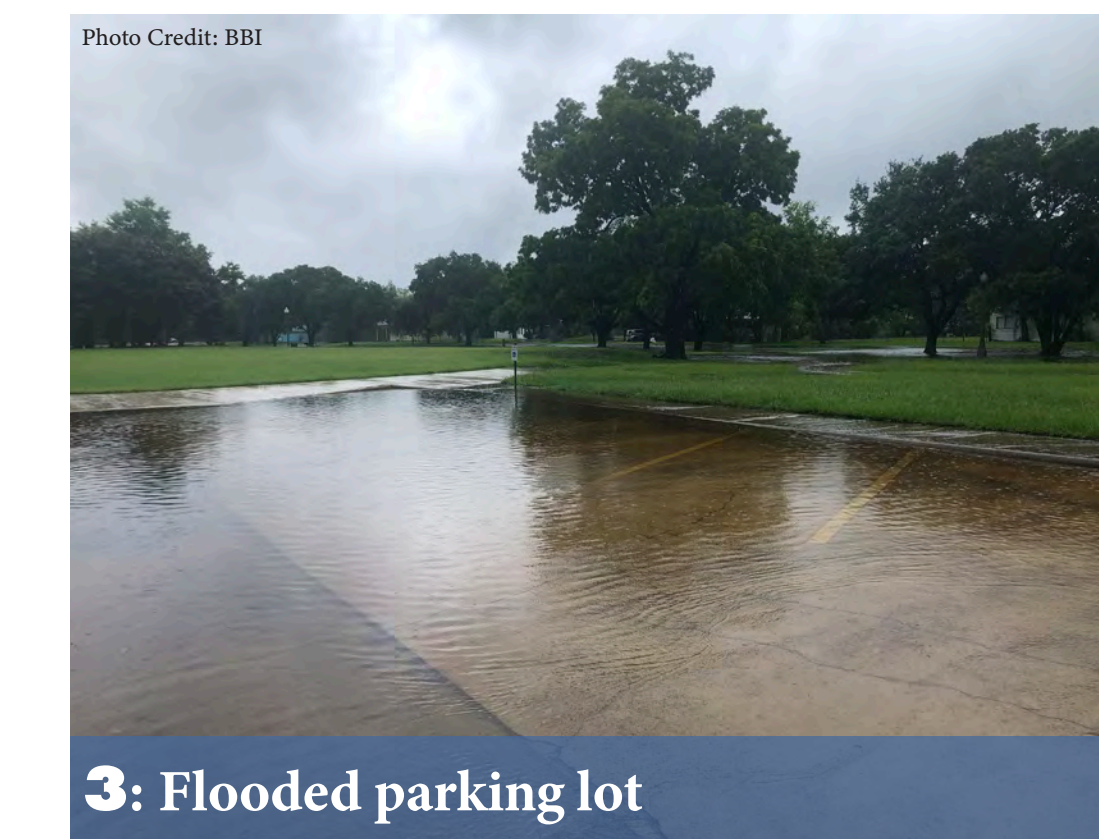
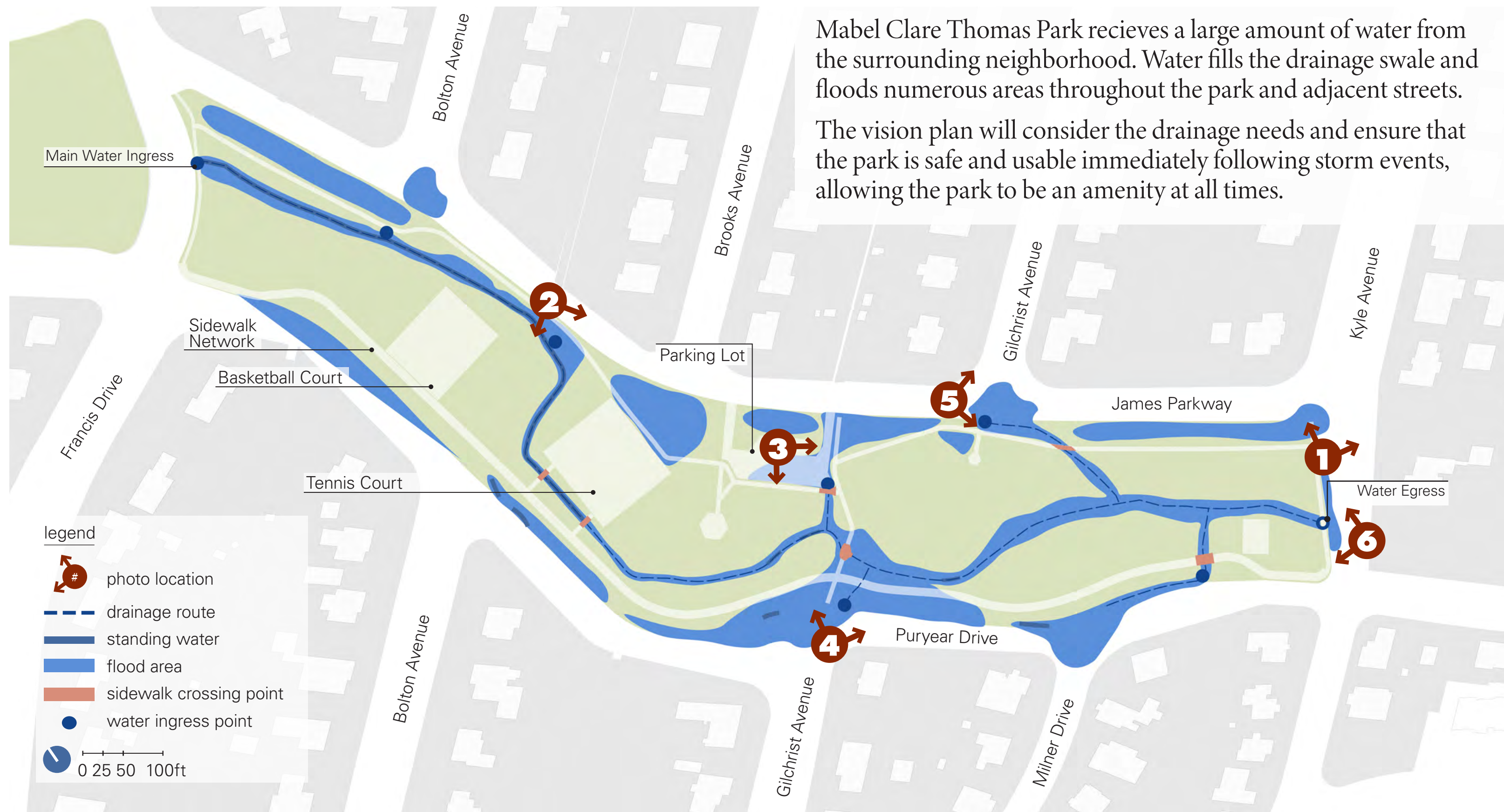
In the summer of 2020, College Station collaborated with the landscape architecture department at TAMU to develop concepts for Mabel Clare Thomas Park. The innovative concepts generated by the students visualize the true potential of the space and will be considered throughout the development of the vision plan for the Mabel Clare Thomas Park.





# Understanding the Existing Conditions

## Stormwater + Drainage Study



## Tree Canopy Study

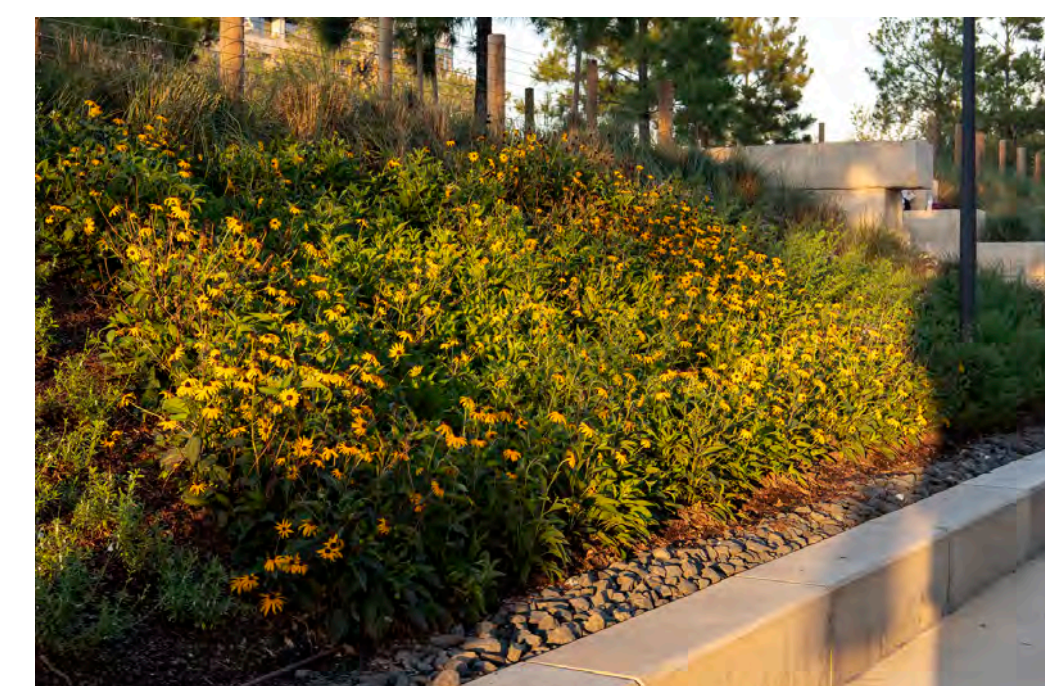
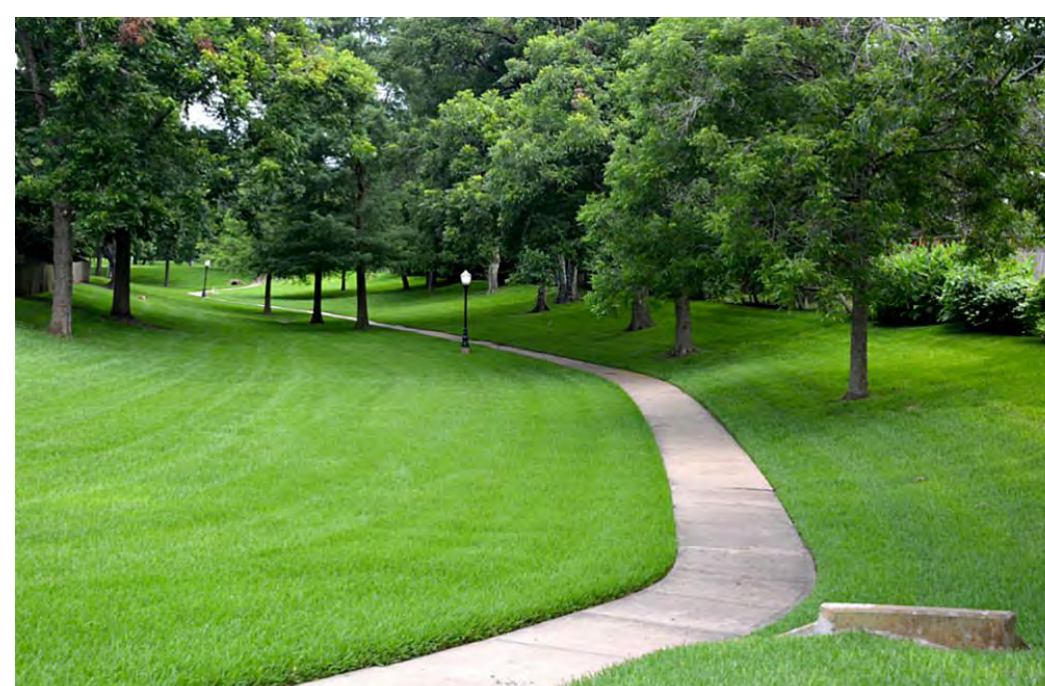
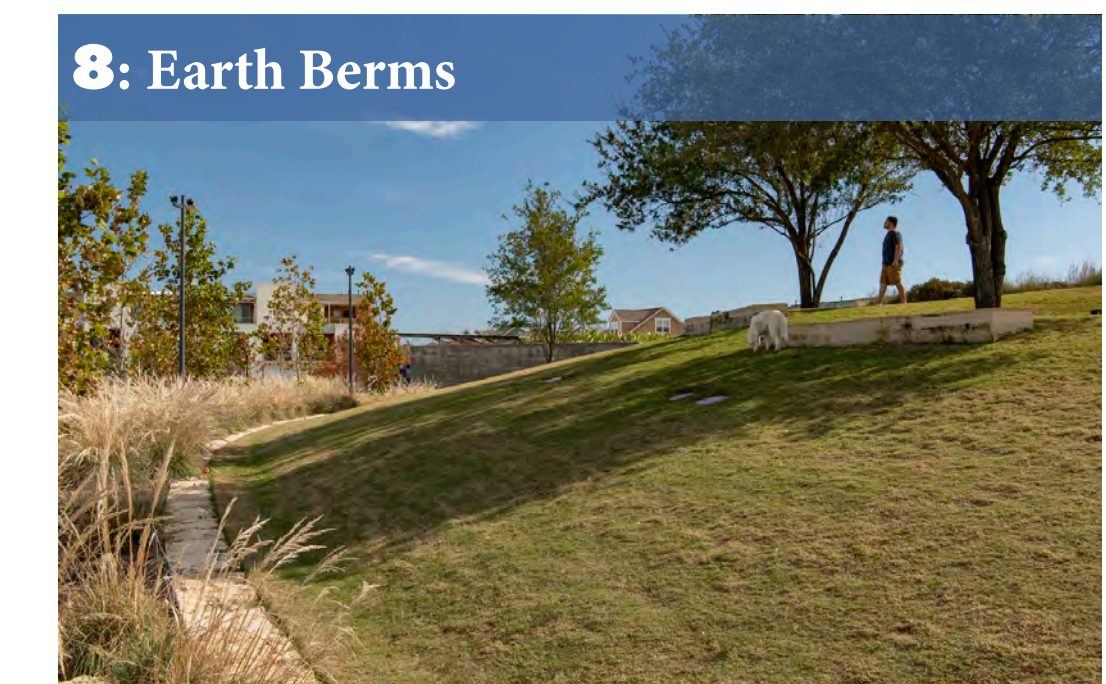
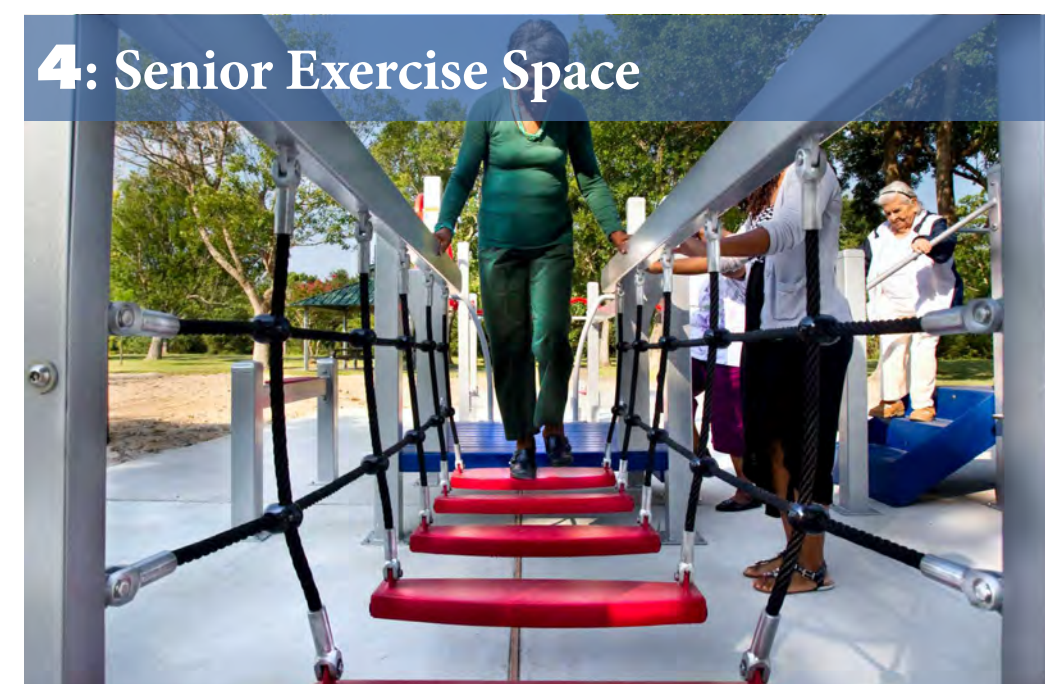
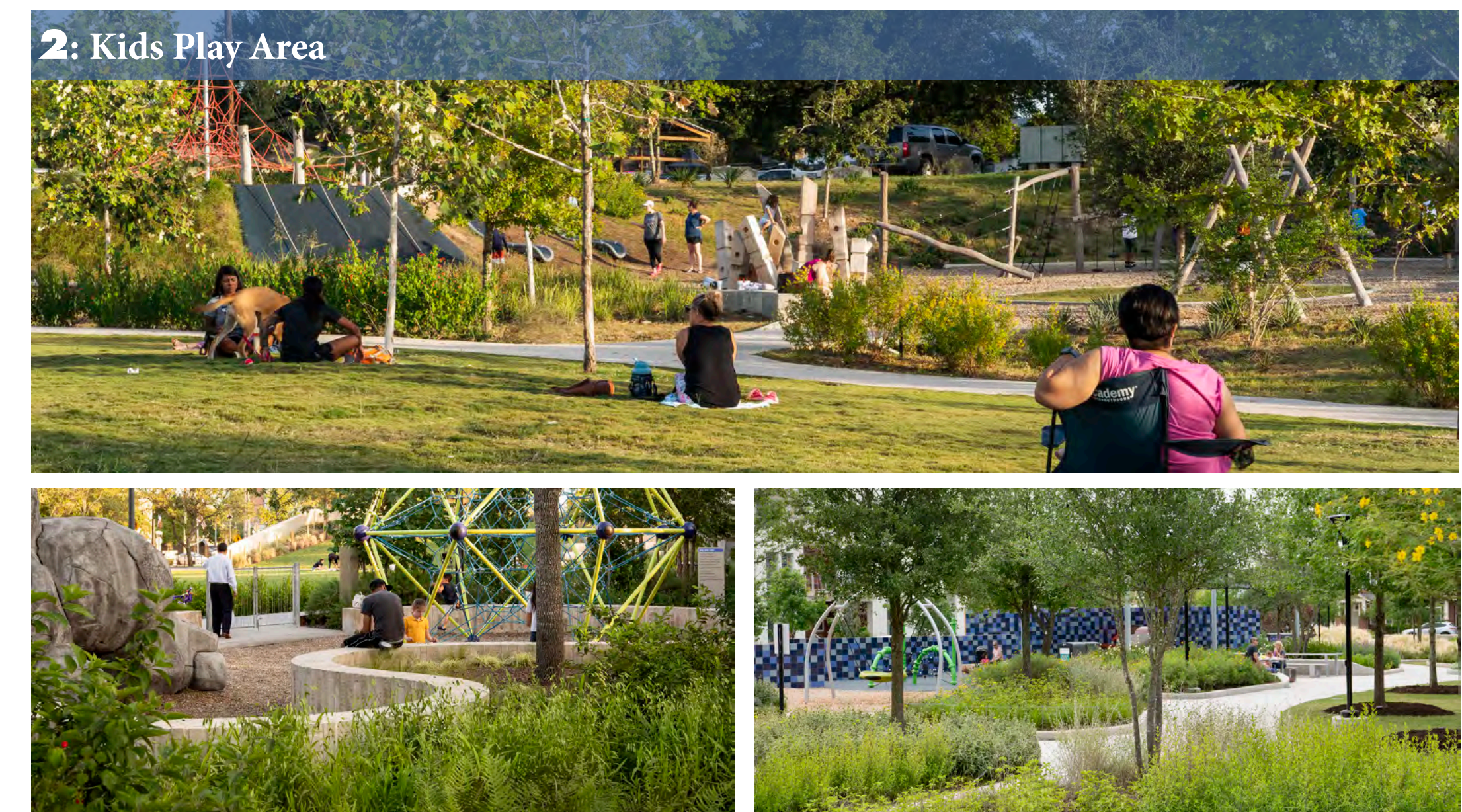


## Parking Study



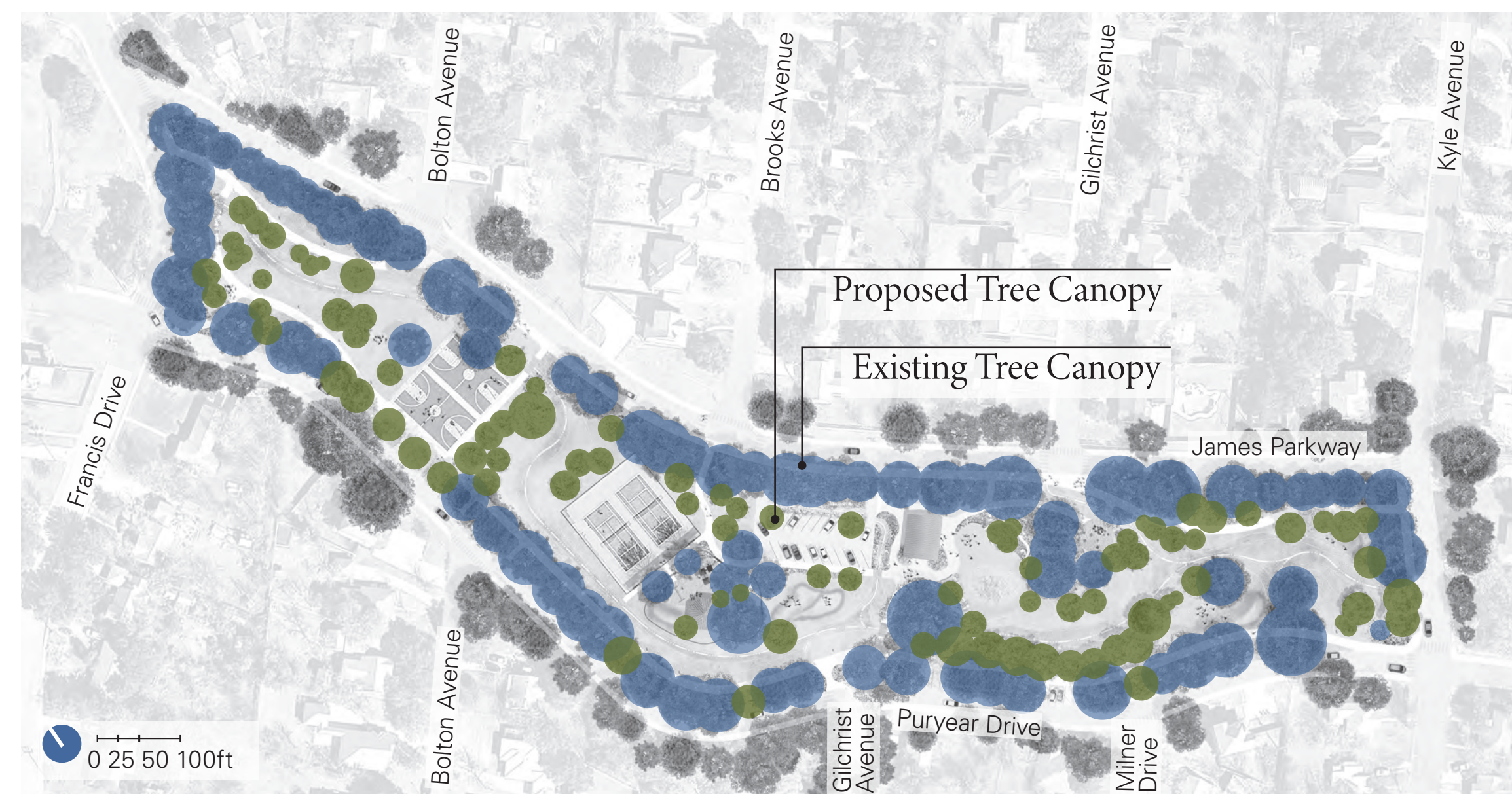
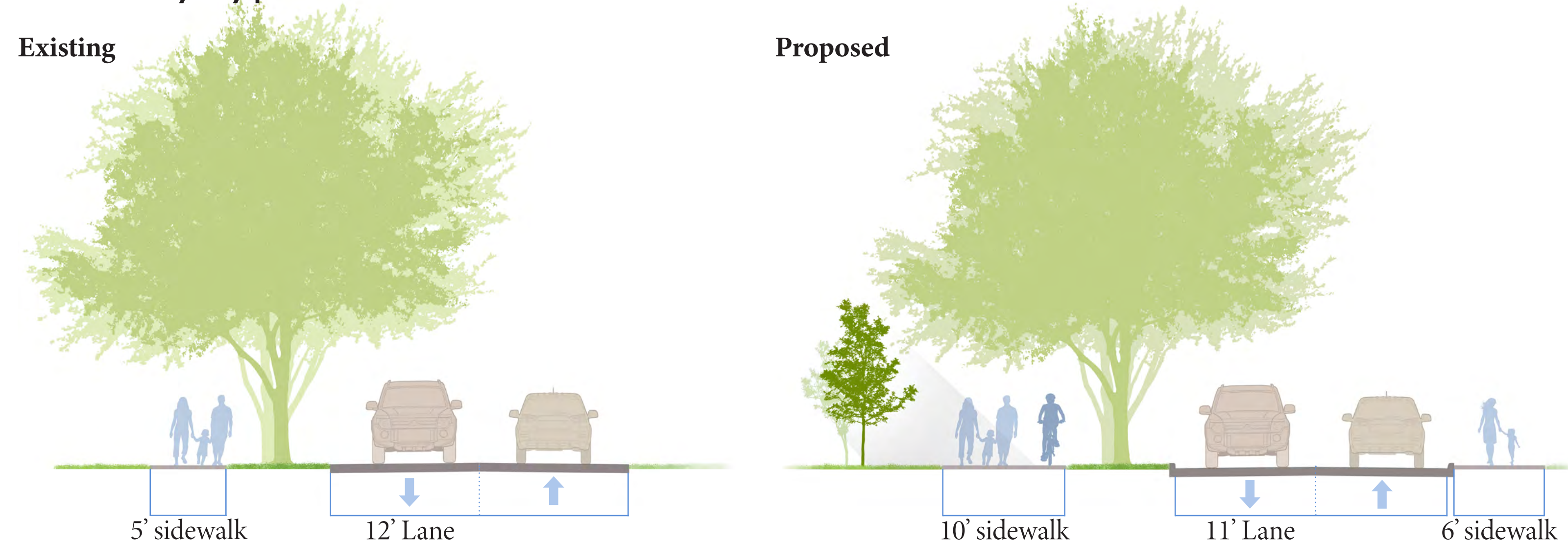


## Creating a Community Home





### Roadway Typical Section

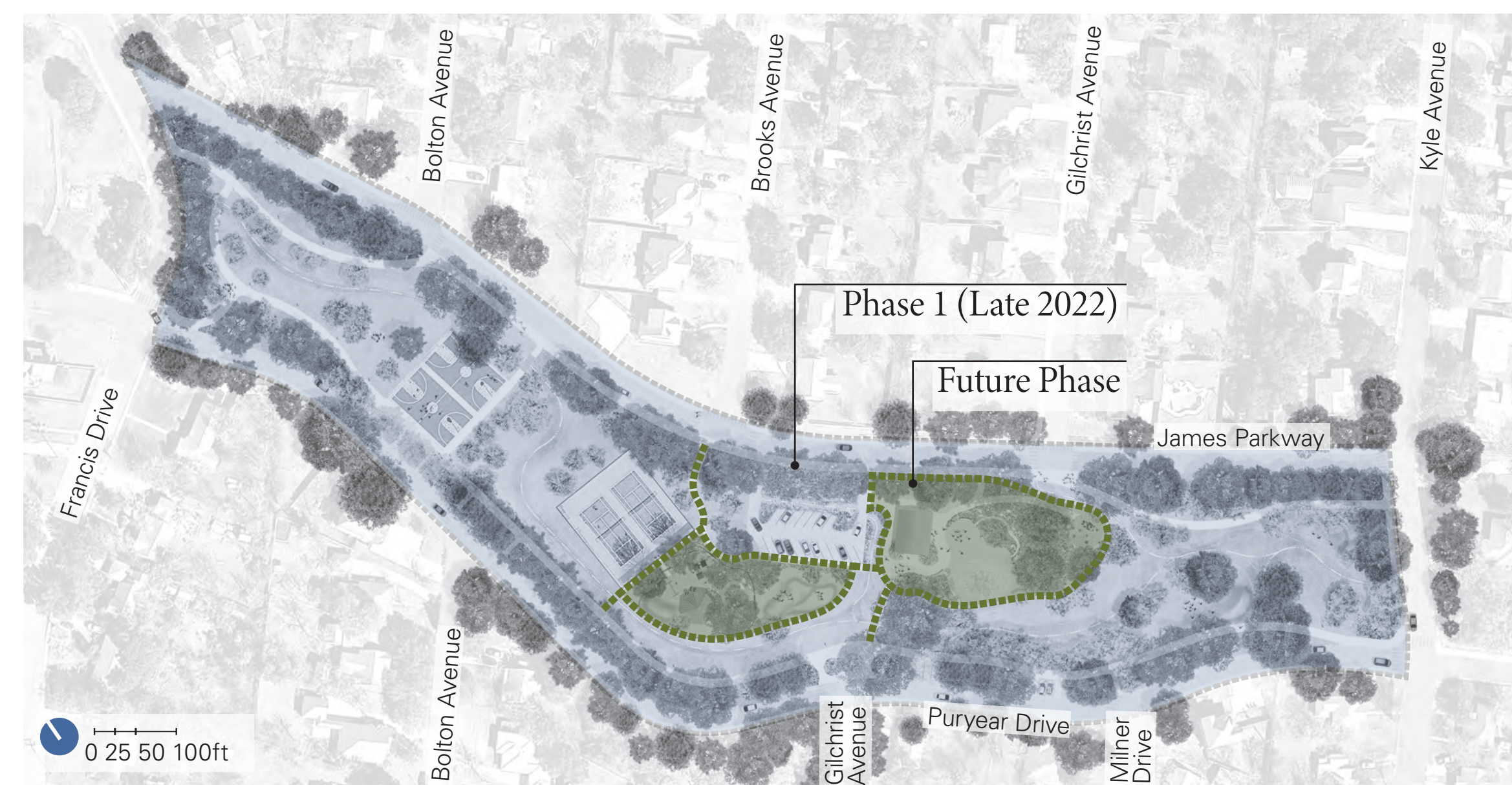


### Tree Canopy

- Enhance human comfort and park usability by increasing the shade canopy
- Preserve the existing tree canopy
- Plant the next generation of trees
- Increase specie diversity
- Enhance habitat

legend

- proposed tree canopy
- existing tree canopy

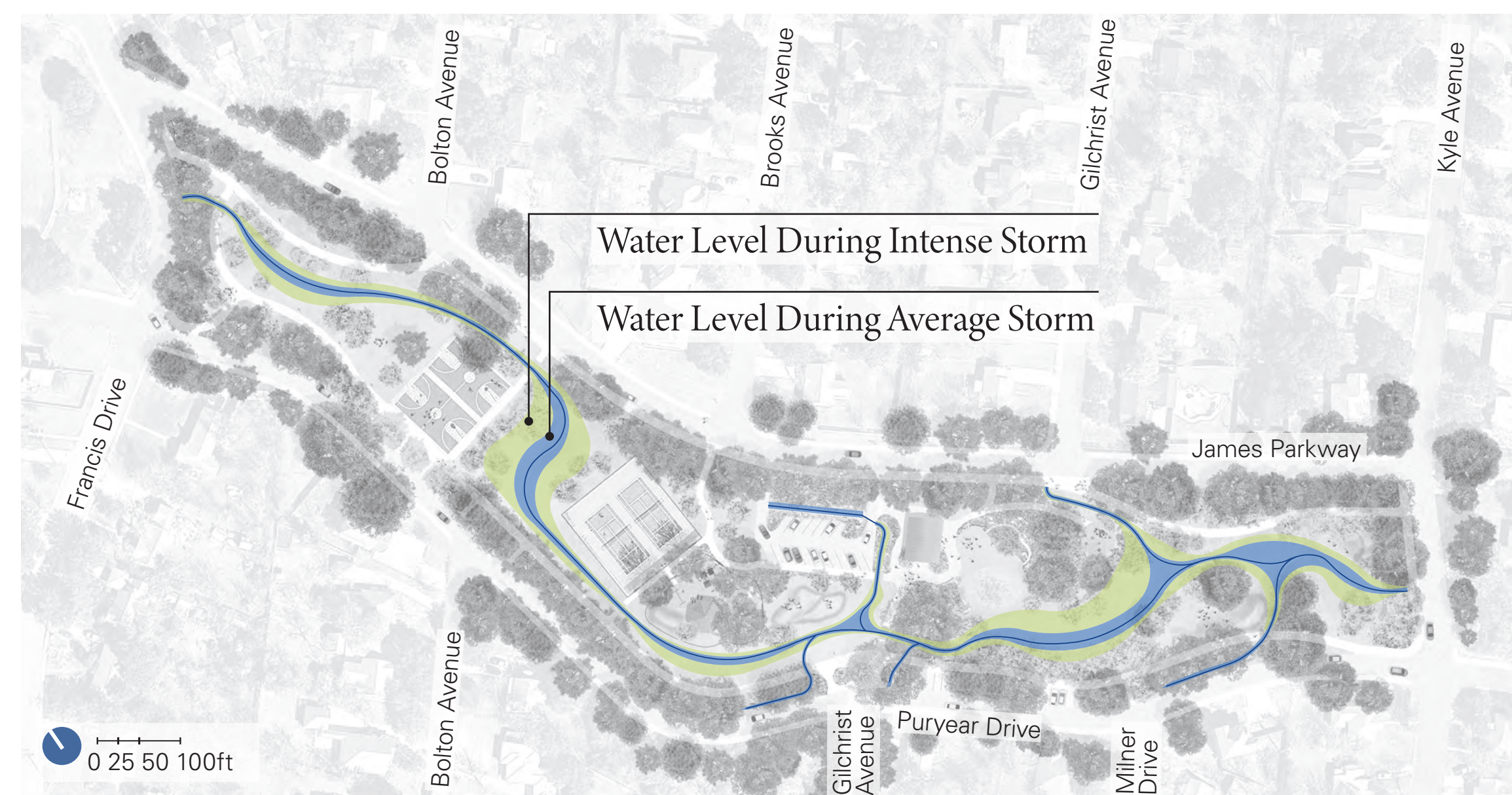


### Implementation & Phasing

- Phase 1 (Late 2022): Construct roadway, drainage and sidewalk improvements
- Future Phase: Construct additional park amenities not built in initial construction phase

legend

- Phase 1 (Late 2022)
- Future Phase

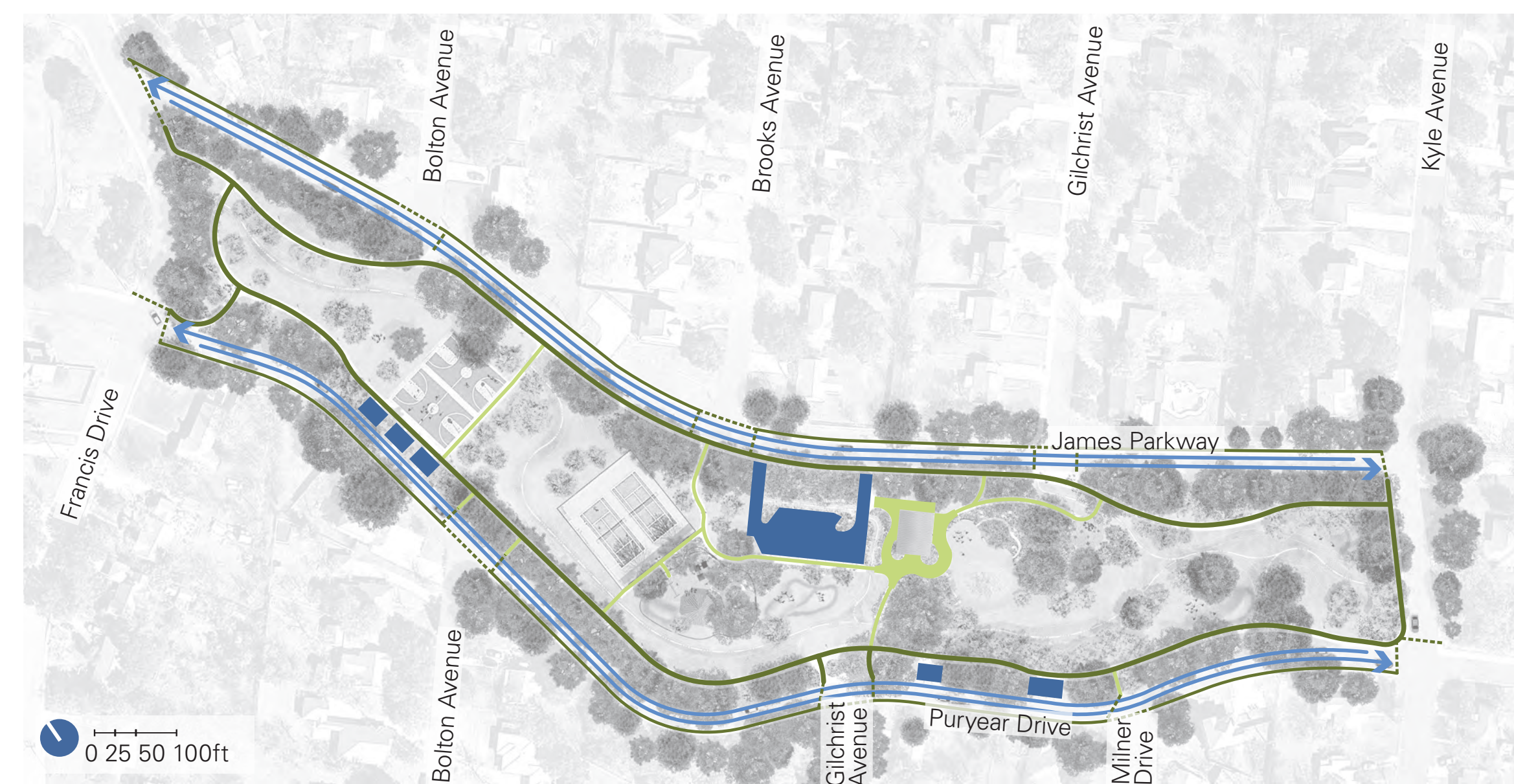


### Drainage

- Adequate space for water capacity
- Alleviate water ponding at adjacent intersections and parking lot
- Increase safety and usability of park during rain events
- Tell the story of the watershed
- Provide educational opportunities

legend

- drainage way
- water level during average storm
- water level during intense storm

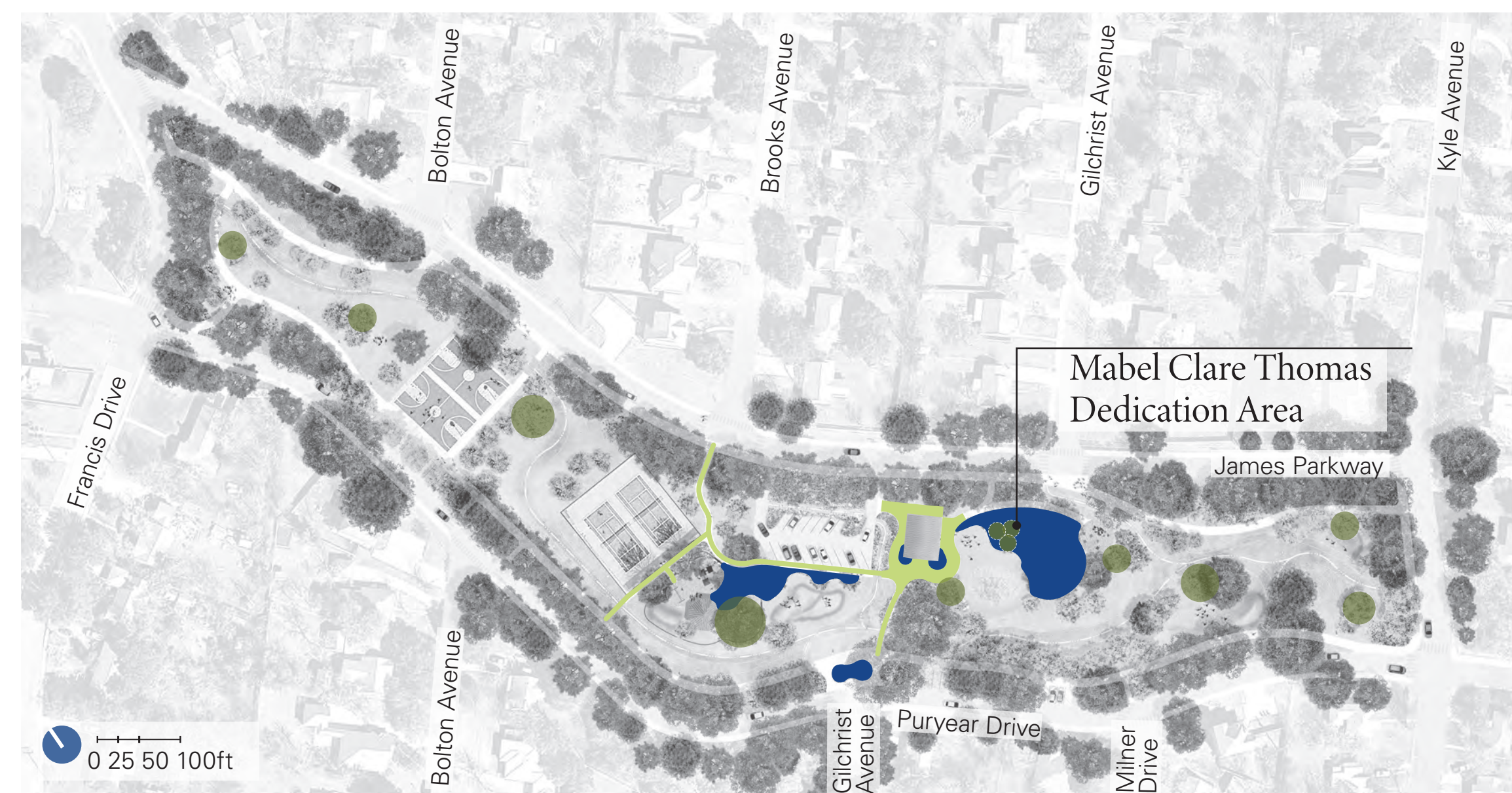


### Circulation & Parking

- Two-way vehicle travel with sidewalk on both sides
- Clearly marked crosswalks
- Additional parking
- Park exterior 10' sidewalk with interior sidewalks for connections

legend

- vehicular travel
- parking
- exterior trail
- interior trail



### Legacy Markers

- Reinforce Mabel Clare Thomas' legacy and continued influence on the community
- Create strong connections between City Hall and the city's past

legend

- reading trees
- landscape area
- story walk



# The Legacy & Foundation

## Schedule & Implementation

Summer 2021

Fall 2021

Early 2022

Today

Late 2022 - Late 2023

To Be Determined

Project kick-off

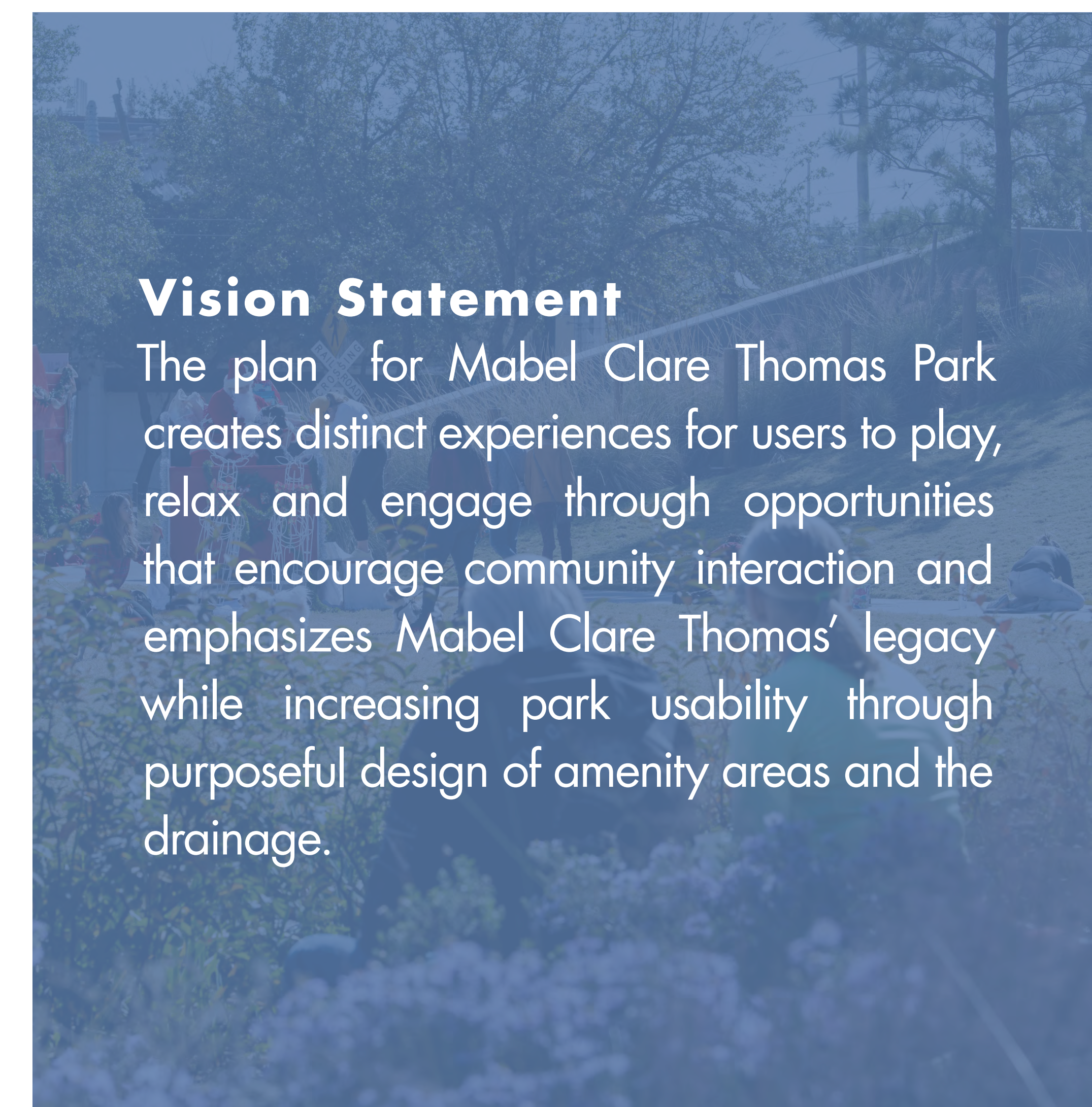
Public meeting to share project information & collect feedback

Finalize improvements & vision plan

Public meeting to share upcoming & future improvements

Construct roadway, drainage, & sidewalk improvements.

Construct additional park amenities included in vision plan



### Vision Statement

The plan for Mabel Clare Thomas Park creates distinct experiences for users to play, relax and engage through opportunities that encourage community interaction and emphasizes Mabel Clare Thomas' legacy while increasing park usability through purposeful design of amenity areas and the drainage.

### The Legacy

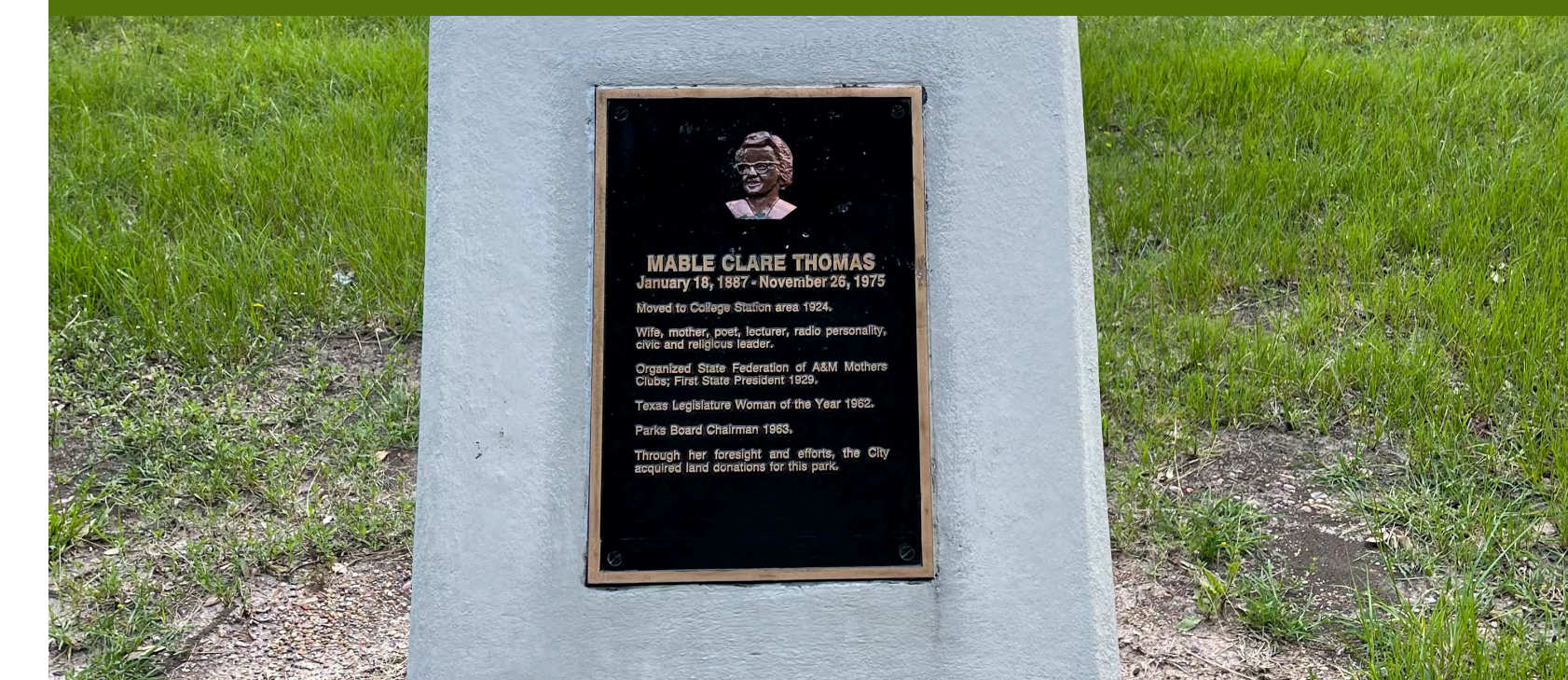
Mabel Clare Thomas Park is named after a prominent member of College Station, Mabel Clare Thomas. She dedicated much of her life to the community around her and is most widely known for her advocacy in children's literacy. Improving the park will allow her story to be told for many years to come



There are two dedicated trees to Mrs. Thomas and her husband



Memorial plaque recognizing Mrs. Thomas and her work





# Budgeted Improvements

Summer 2021

Fall 2021

Early 2022

Today

Late 2022 - Late 2023

To Be Determined

## The First Steps





# Budgeted Improvements

Summer 2021

Fall 2021

Early 2022

Today

Late 2022 - Late 2023

To Be Determined

## The First Steps



1. Additional pedestrian lighting within interior of park to improve usability and safety
2. Additional connections within the park to increase mobility
3. Regrade drainage way to allow it to be usable during dry conditions and improve drainage during wet periods
4. Provide play berms creating more play opportunities and topographic interest within the park
5. Define park entrances to create a sense of place
6. Planting the next generation of trees increasing shade to accentuate human comfort



# Future Improvements

Summer 2021

Fall 2021

Early 2022

Today

Late 2022 - Late 2023

To Be Determined

## Creating a Community Home





# Future Improvements

Summer 2021

Fall 2021

Early 2022

Today

Late 2022 - Late 2023

To Be Determined

## Creating a Community Home



1. Additional shade amenities to improve usability and comfort
2. Enhance play area with legacy opportunities and increase developmental opportunities
3. Provide educational opportunities about the natural and historical elements in the park
4. Community gathering area w/generational equipment to create a place for people of all ages and abilities
5. Central dedication area to Mabel Clare Thomas w/a grand shade tree to tie her story into the community center of the park



# Future Improvements

Summer 2021

Fall 2021

Early 2022

Today

Late 2022 - Late 2023

To Be Determined

## North Section of Thomas Park

The first public meeting and subsequent discussions have highlighted the desire to provide additional improvements to the northern section of Thomas Park that is not included in the vision plan of the southern portion. It is expected that these improvements will be considered during the current park maintenance budget and the next budget cycle.

These improvements include:

- additional benches
- proposed trees for shade
- expand the existing playground
- resurfacing the sidewalk/ trail

The expanded playground is designed to tie to the vision plan of the southern portion of the park and will provide additional play features that allow for multiple generations to play together.

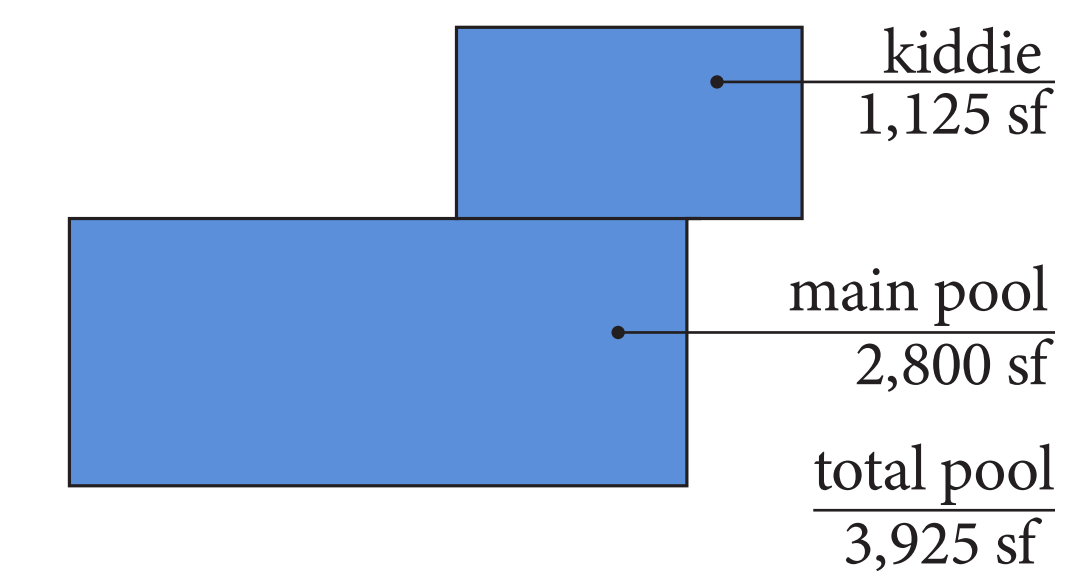
## Potential Additional Play Features



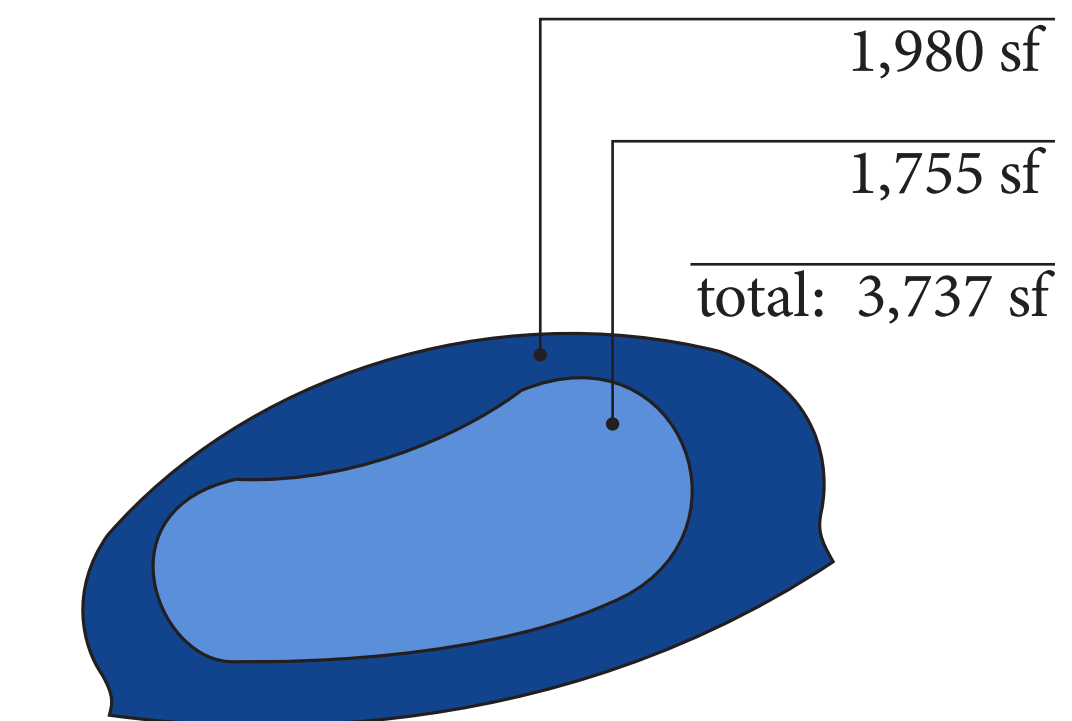
## Future Aquatic Feature

### Considering a Pool

Reference: old pool footprint

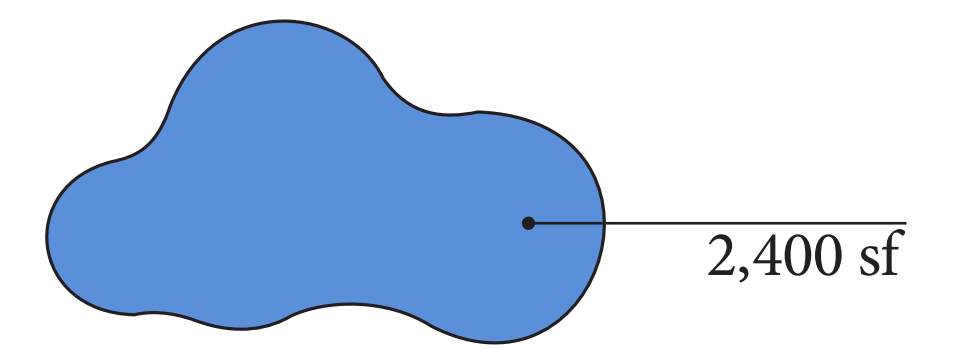


Thomas Park new pool

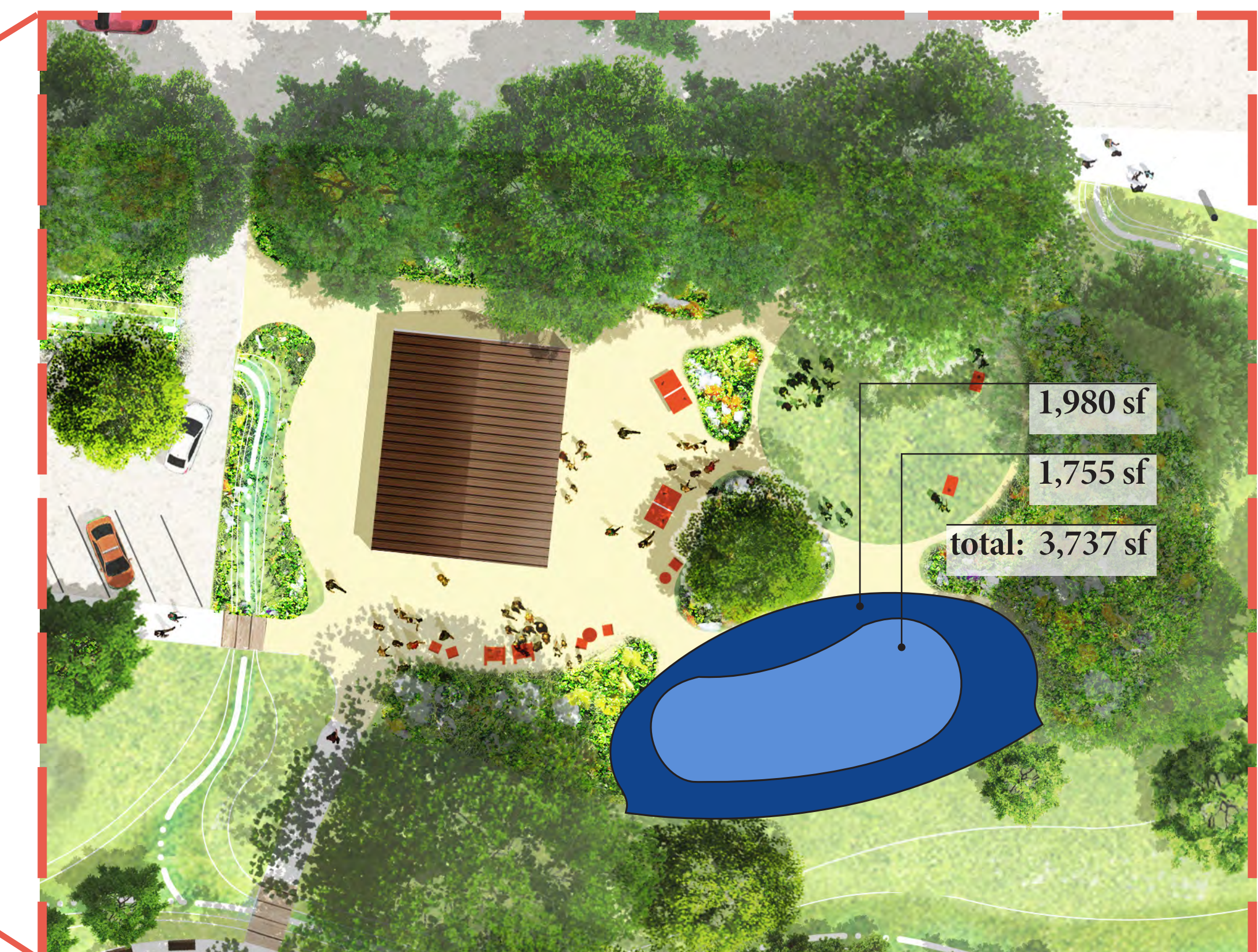
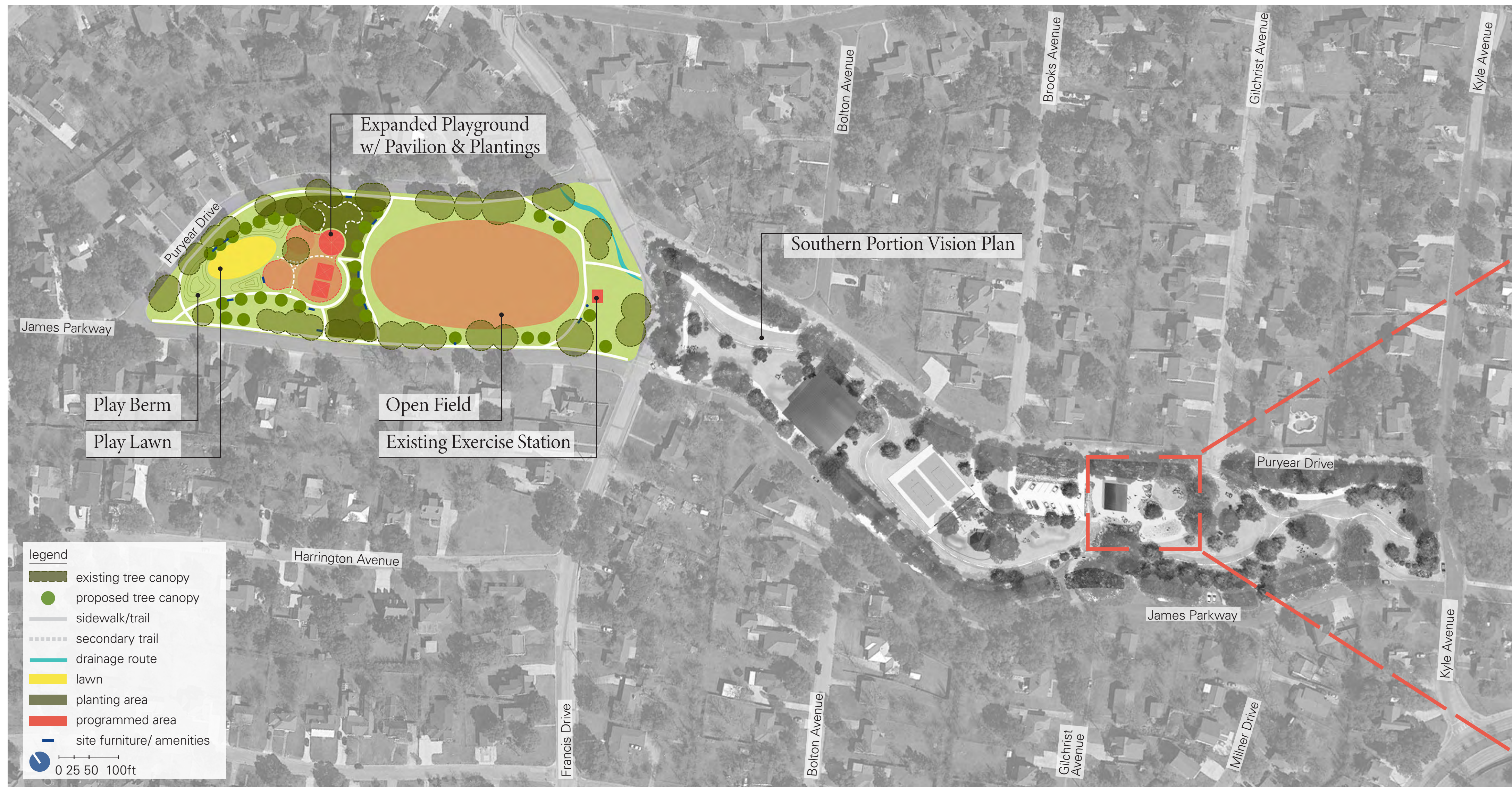
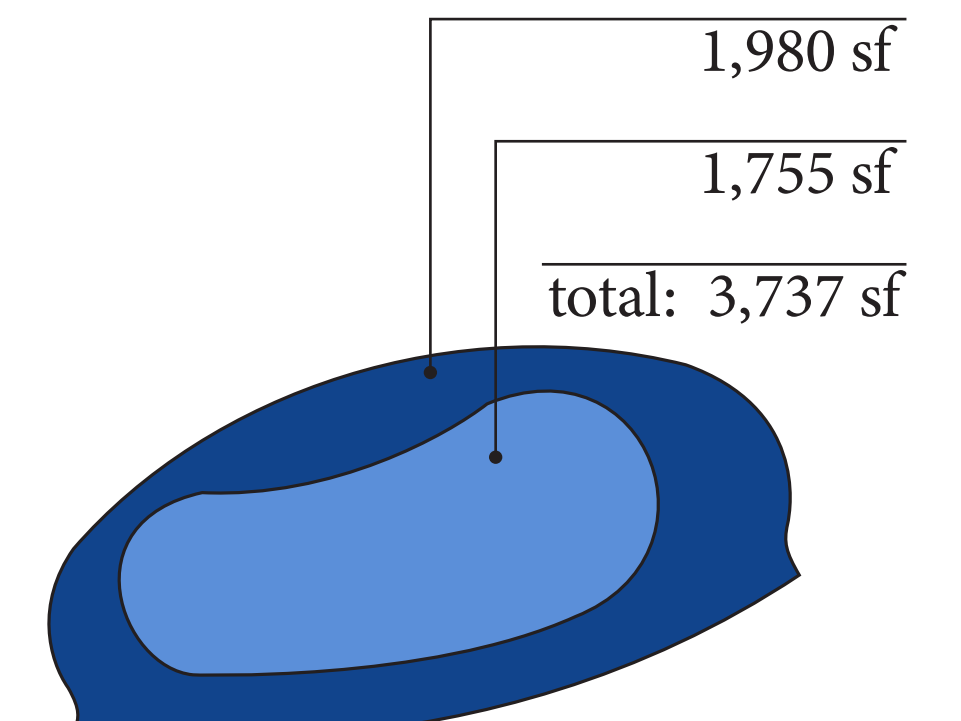


### Considering a Splash Pad

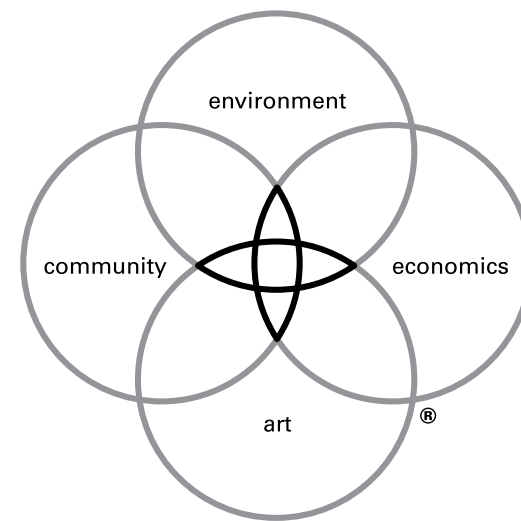
Reference: Stephen C. Beachy Central Park splash pad



Thomas Park splash pad







## DW LEGACY DESIGN®

We believe that when environment, economics, art and community are combined in harmony with the dictates of the land and needs of society, magical places result — sustainable places of timeless beauty, significant value and enduring quality, places that lift the spirit.

Design Workshop is dedicated to creating Legacy projects for our clients, for society and for the well-being of our planet.