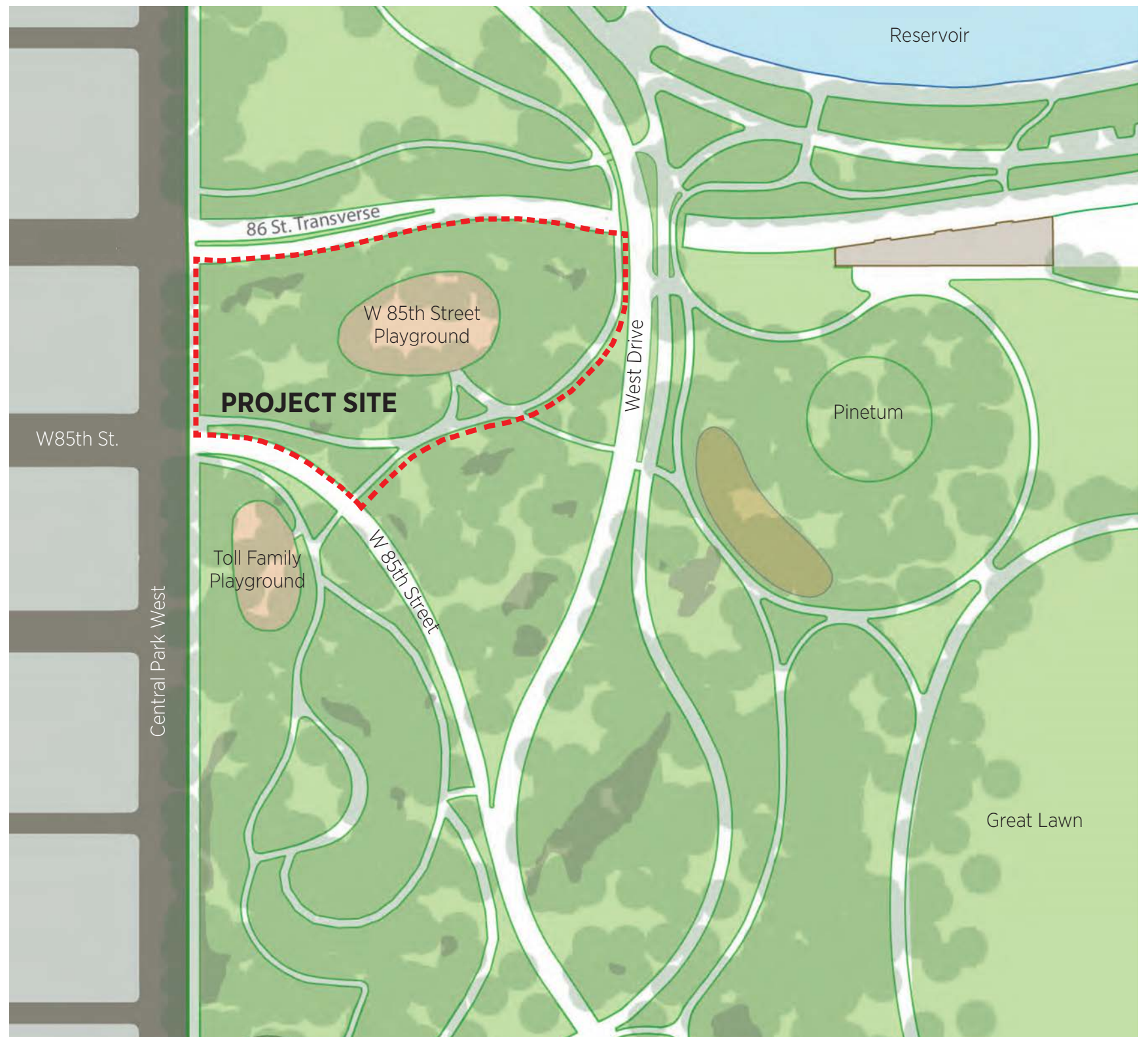
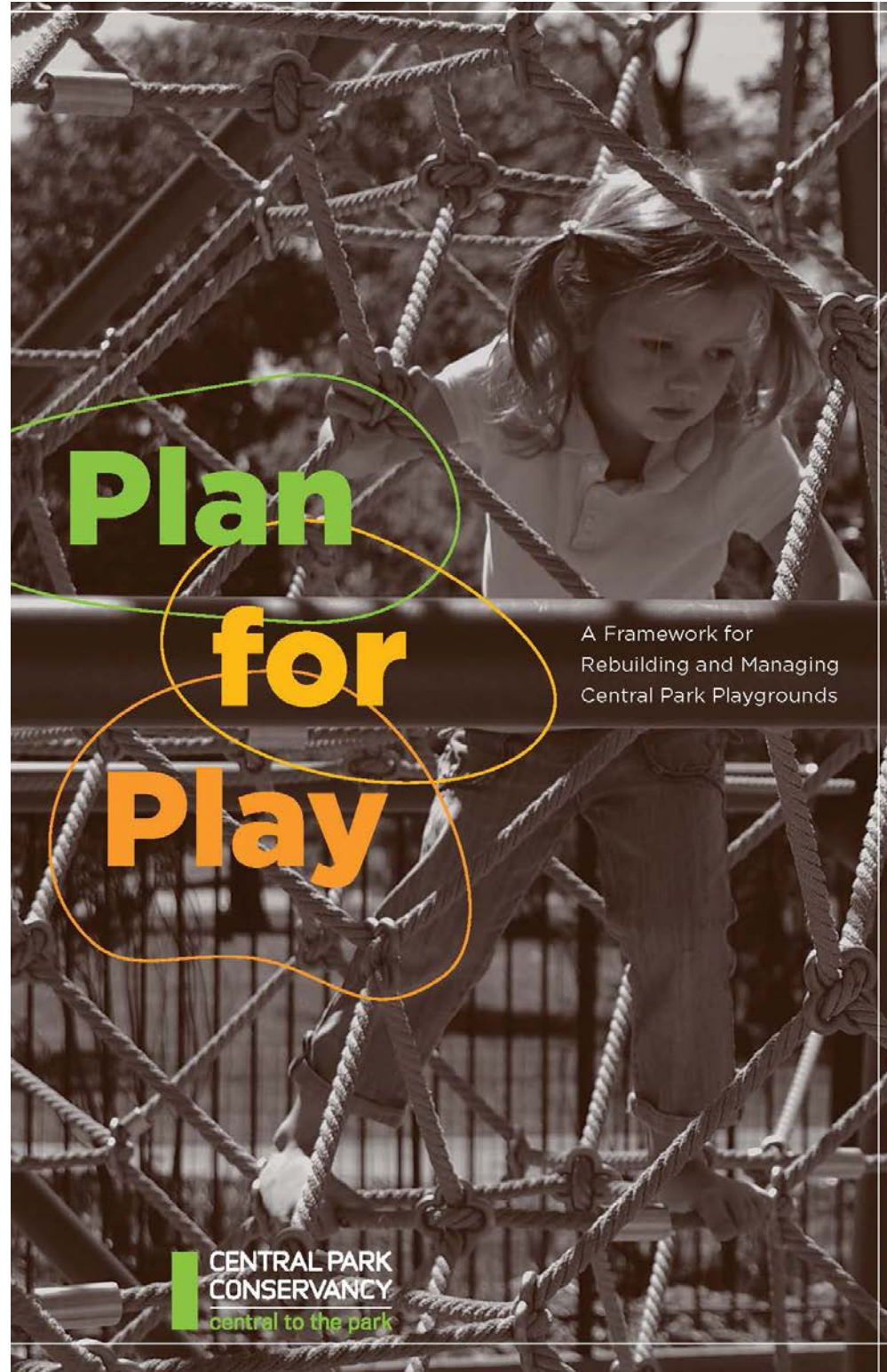


THE RECONSTRUCTION OF WEST 85TH STREET PLAYGROUND





PLAYGROUND RESTORATION GOALS



www.planforplay.org

- Reflect the goals of the Plan for Play initiative to:
 - Improve relationship between the playgrounds and the Park.
 - Enhance the quality and variety of play experiences.
 - Maximize user accessibility.
 - Ensure compliance with current safety standards
 - Preserve unique and successful aspects of existing designs.
 - Practice sustainable design and construction.
 - Design innovative solutions.
- Acknowledge the prominence of this playground within the Seneca Village site and reenvision the playground as a play and family gathering space connected to the surrounding landscape.
- Enhance the distinctive topography and site features of the surrounding landscape.
- Create an accessible route from the west side and to W84th St Playground.







Seneca Village Community

This kiosk marks the center of Seneca Village, a predominantly African-American community that existed from 1825-1857. The village originated when African Americans began buying property between 82nd and 89th Streets and Seventh and Eighth Avenues. Among the earliest purchasers was an important African-American church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, which initially acquired land for a burial ground. Members of the church purchased additional property and began to build houses. More African Americans joined the community in the 1830s, and in the following decade Irish immigrants also began to settle in the village. In the 1850s, the city used eminent domain to acquire the land as part of Central Park; by 1857, residents were required to leave and all structures were razed.

Researchers believe that African Americans may have begun to settle in the area to create an autonomous community far from downtown. Although New York State abolished slavery in 1827, African Americans still faced discrimination and threats of violence, among other grave obstacles to freedom and citizenship. Some established their own institutions – schools, churches, newspapers, and aid organizations – as well as separate neighborhoods where they could build community. In a sparsely-settled area, about three miles from the developed part of Manhattan, Seneca Village was a refuge from both the racist climate and the overcrowded and unhealthy conditions of the rapidly growing city.

Seneca Village was the most densely settled part of the 776 acres slated for Central Park, land that was home to approximately 1,600 people. By 1855, roughly 225 individuals lived in Seneca Village, which consisted of fifty-two houses, three churches, at least one school, and several burial grounds. Roughly two-thirds of Seneca Village residents were African-American, about half of whom owned their homes.

The Significance of Seneca Village

The high rate of property ownership in Seneca Village made it an exceptional community for 19th-century New York. For African Americans, buying property was not only a source of economic security, it was also a path to suffrage. Beginning in 1821, New York State required African-American men to own at least \$250 worth of property in order to vote, while European-American men were eligible to vote without having to own property. Some African Americans owned property in Seneca Village but did not actually live there, instead renting out their land or holding it as an investment.

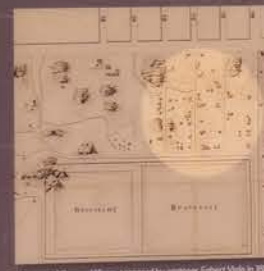
That many residents owned their homes and lived in the village for a long time defies the typical 19th-century depiction of the community as a shantytown inhabited by destitute squatters. Park advocates and journalists chronicling the construction of the park often presented Seneca Village – along with other settlements and residents in the area – in very disparaging terms, highlighting contemporary racist attitudes towards African Americans and disdain for the poor.

Seneca Village was far from a shantytown – while some residents were poor and did live in buildings described as shanties, most lived in two-story homes. Also in defiance of stereotypes, most African-American residents were gainfully employed, typically as unskilled laborers or service workers. Among the occupations listed in the census records are cook, waiter, domestic, sailor, cooper, grocer, preacher, and cartman. Records also indicate that many children living in the village attended school, suggesting that families prioritized education. All of these factors have led researchers to understand Seneca Village as a predominantly middle-class community, one that was more stable and prosperous than other African-American enclaves in the city at the time.

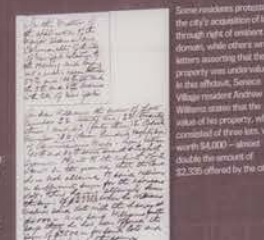
Seneca Village's three churches were another marker of a stable community, anchoring not only religious but also political and social life for African Americans. African Union Church (built around 1840) and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (built 1853) were both satellite locations for churches based downtown. All Angels' Church (built 1849) was established as a mission by St. Michael's Episcopal Church, a congregation on the Upper West Side, and was attended by both European Americans and African Americans.

What happened to Seneca Village?

When the city began planning for Central Park, it acquired land through eminent domain – the right of governments to take private land for public use. Those who owned property were compensated for its value and residents were required to leave, a long process that ended in the fall of 1857. The construction of Central Park began in 1858 with the clearing of the land, including the demolition of Park began in 1858 with the clearing of the land, including the demolition of



This map of Seneca Village, prepared by engineer Egbert Vele in 1855 as part of the survey of the land slated for Central Park, shows the cluster of houses, churches, and gardens that made up the community.

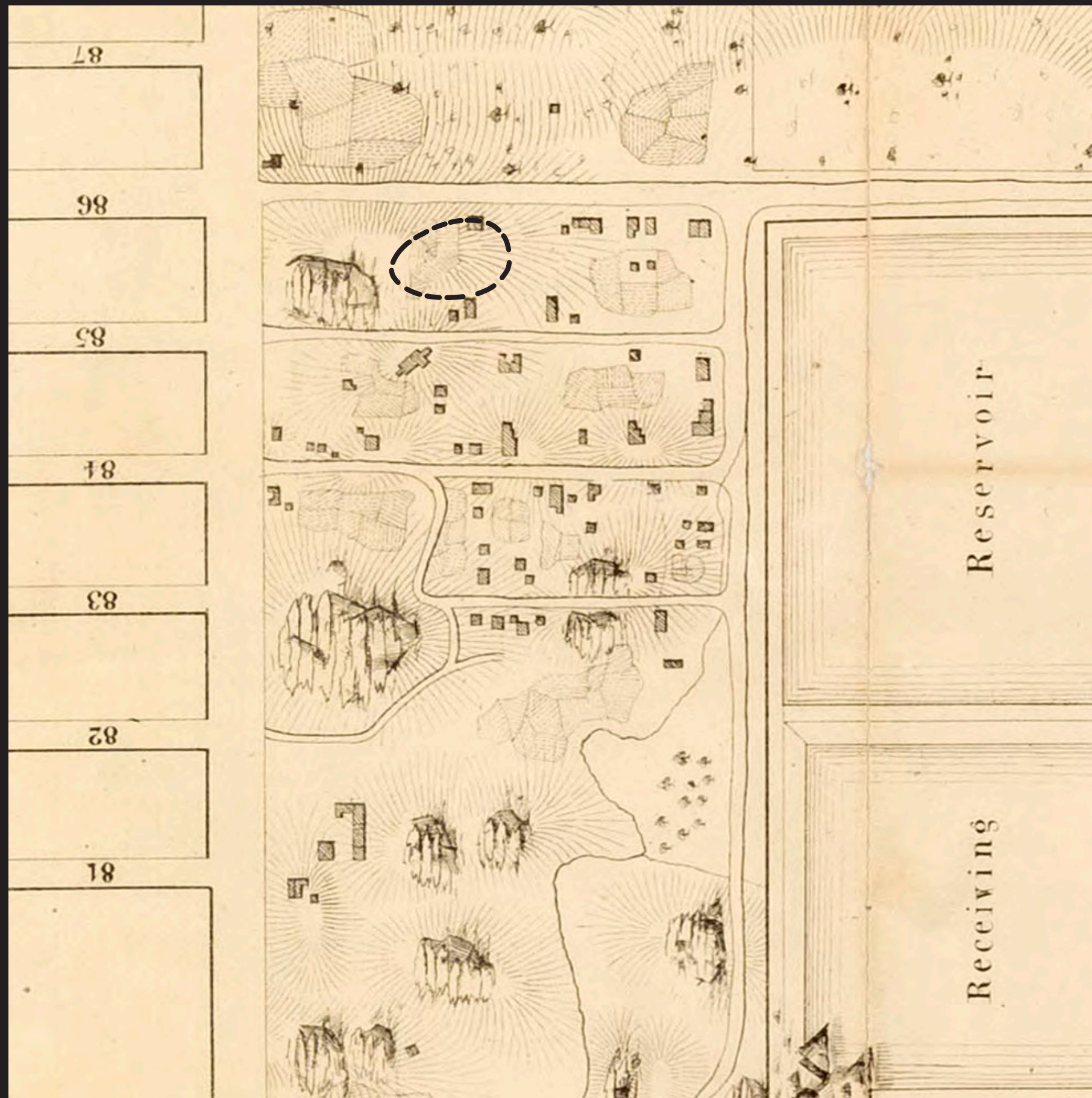


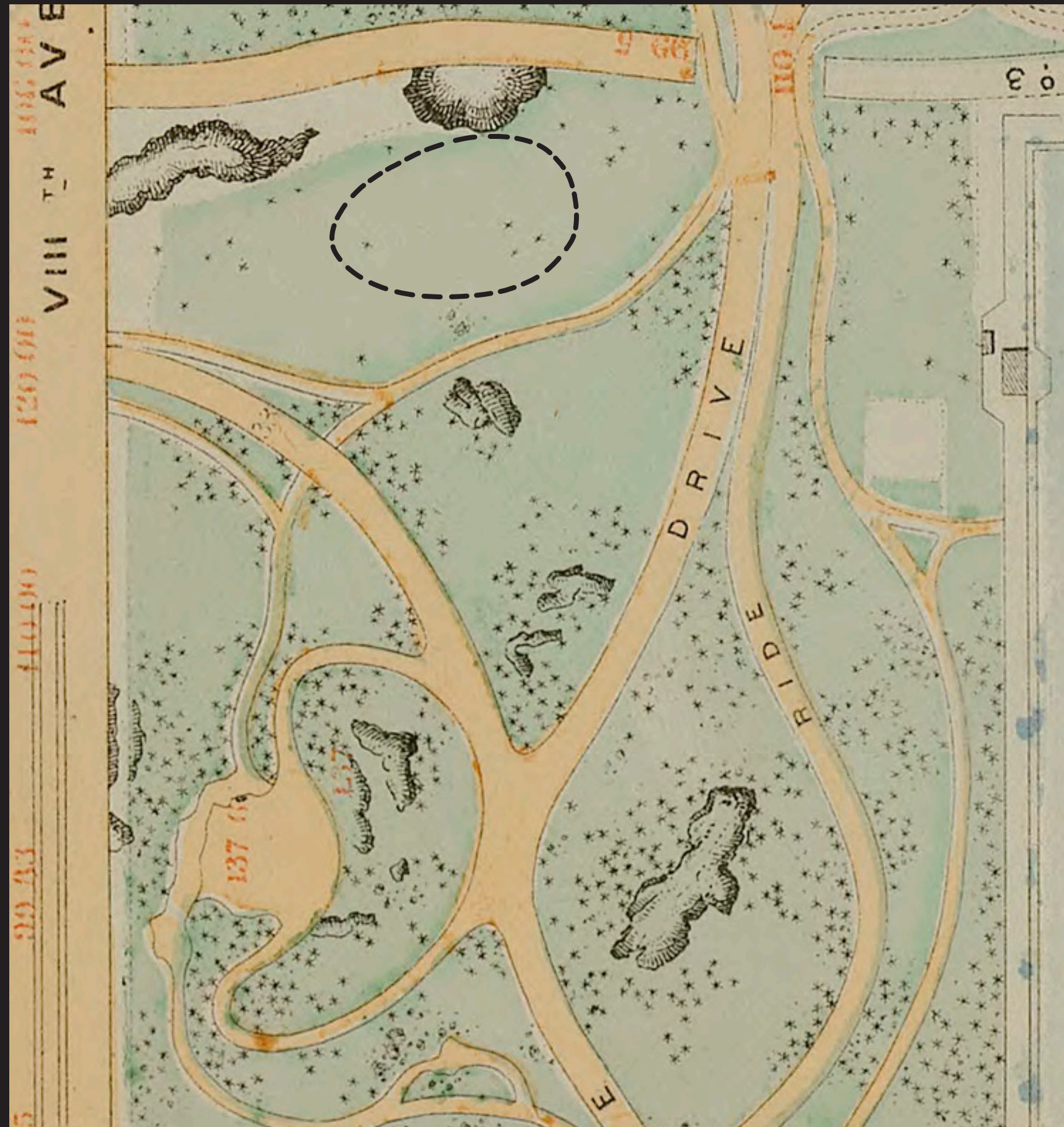
Some residents petitioned the city's acquisition of land through eminent domain, while others wrote letters asserting that their property was worth more than the city offered. Seneca Village resident Andrew Williams states that the value of his property, which consisted of two lots, was worth \$4,000 – almost double the amount of \$2,300 offered by the city.

Timeline

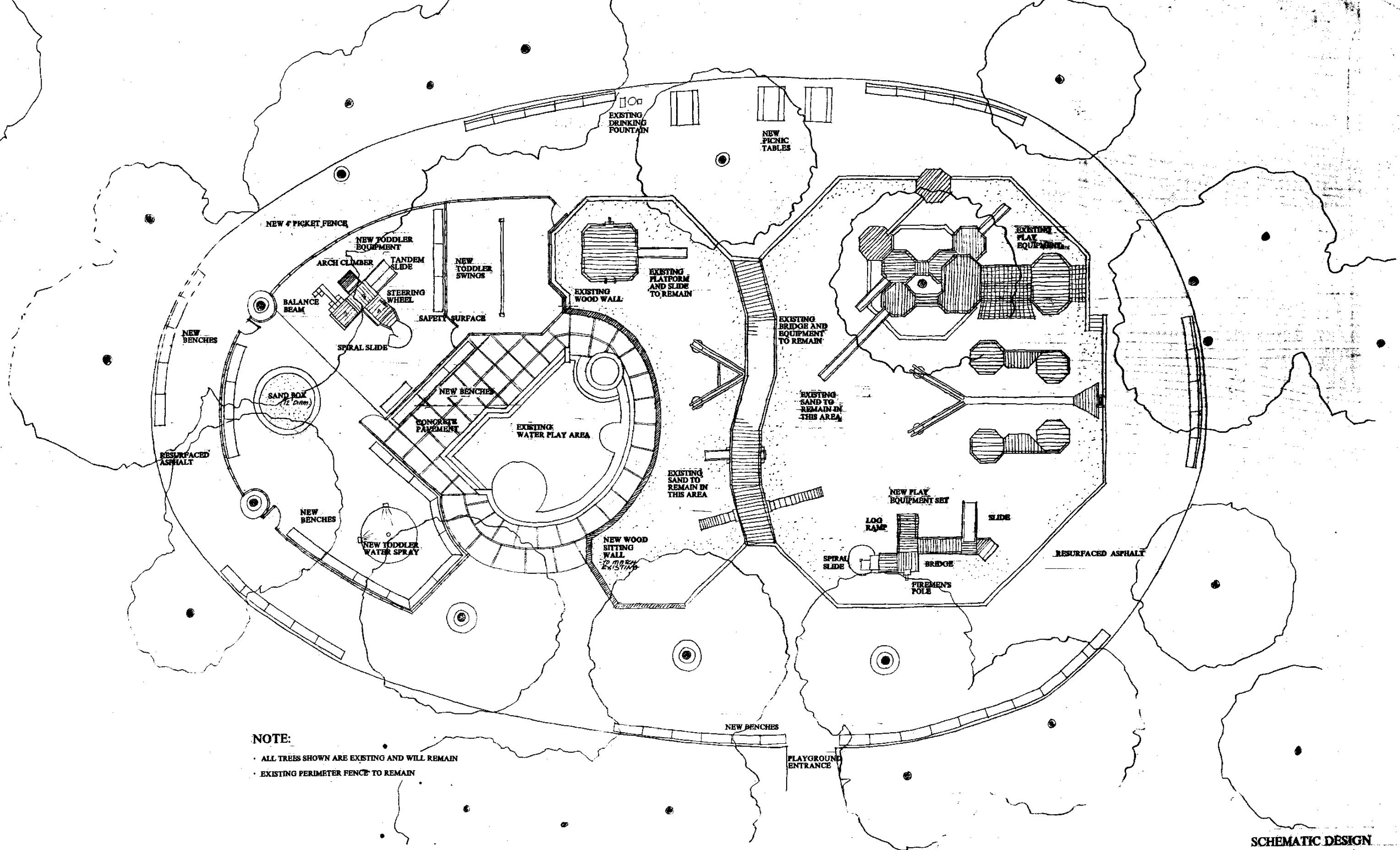
- 1815** The Reverend John Baptist completed maps documenting farmland in Upper Manhattan. The area in the West 80s is largely undeveloped.
- 1817** NY State passes the Gradual Emancipation Law, ending African American slavery before July 4, 1793 will become free on July 4, 1827.
- 1821** NY State requires that African-American men, in order to vote, must own property valued at \$250 or more.
- 1824** John and Elizabeth Whitehead purchase farmland in the West 80s.
- 1825** African American purchase land from the Manhattan African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church to create a burial ground.
- 1825** Total population of NYC approximately 96,000, of which 8% are African American. Less than 100 are slaves.
- 1827** Abolition of slavery in NY State on July 4. First African-American newspaper, Freedom's Journal, published in New York City.
- 1830** 8th Street and 9th Avenue are in use through the area.
- 1832** Charters outbreak in NYC, 3,500 die, 90,000 flee.
- 1833** St. Michael's Church establishes Sunday School in Seneca Village.
- 1834** Anti-slavery riots in NYC destroy numerous homes and businesses of abolitionists and African-American leaders.
- 1836** Mayor shows approximately 12 buildings in the village.
- 1838** Planning begins for the Croton Aqueduct, NYC's first water supply system.
- 1840** First record of Irish immigrants settling in the area. African Union Church and School built.
- 1842** Corner stone of meeting room for Croton Aqueduct Supply Company, located just west of Seneca Village.
- 1845** Photos famine in Ireland leads to huge wave of Irish immigration.
- 1849** St. Michael's builds All Angels' Church.
- 1850** Total population of NYC approximately 202,500 of which 8% are African American. Fugitive Slave Act enables law enforcement to arrest suspected runaway slaves and denies them right to jury trial.
- 1853** African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church first congregation for a new church.
- 1853** NY State sets aside over 700 acres of land in Manhattan to create Central Park, the country's first major public park.
- 1855** Land for the park surveyed, documenting 125 houses and approximately 225 residents in the village.
- 1857** All residents forced to leave. Most buildings are razed.
- 1857** In Dred Scott decision Supreme Court rules that African Americans are not and cannot be citizens.
- 1858** Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux win the design competition for Central Park. First section of the park opens to the public.
- 1861** The Civil War begins.











SCHEMATIC DESIGN





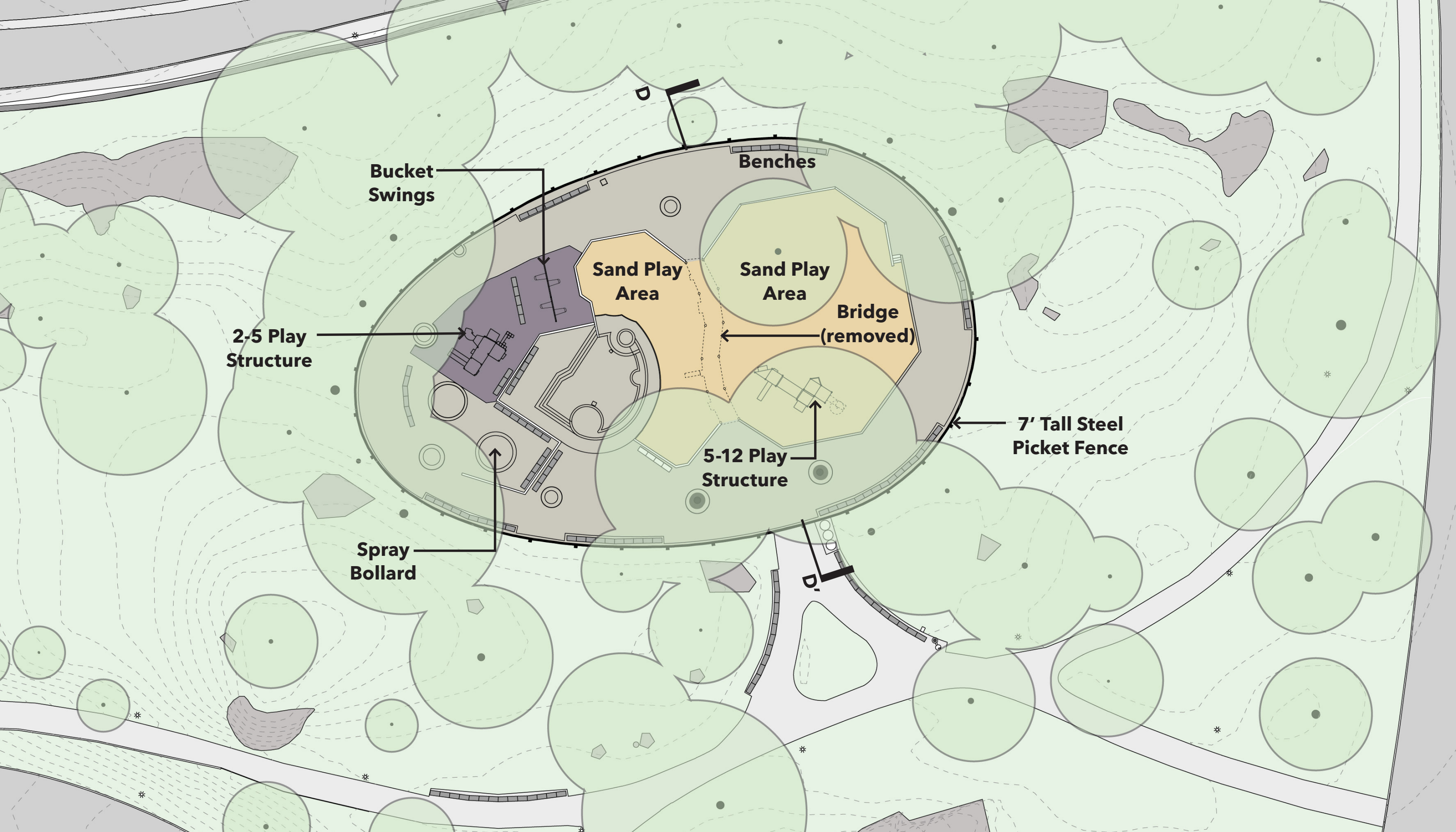


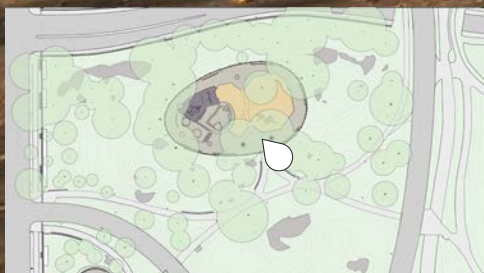












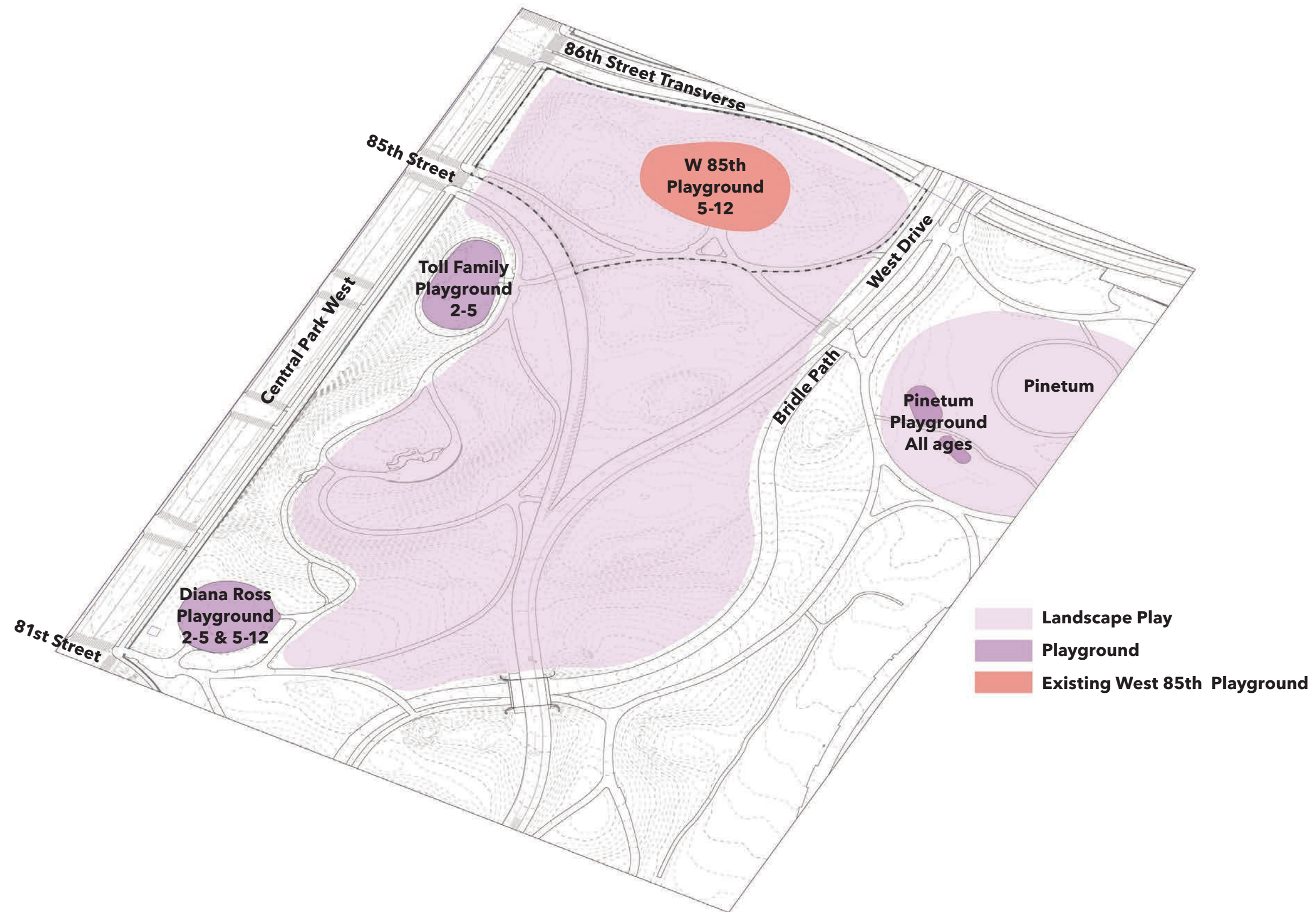














Playground

Existing Playground Footprint: 26,196 SF
Proposed Playground Footprint: 24,455 SF
6.6% decrease

Proposed Picnic Area: 3,256 SF
Proposed PG Footprint + Picnic Area: 27,711 SF
5.78% increase

Paths

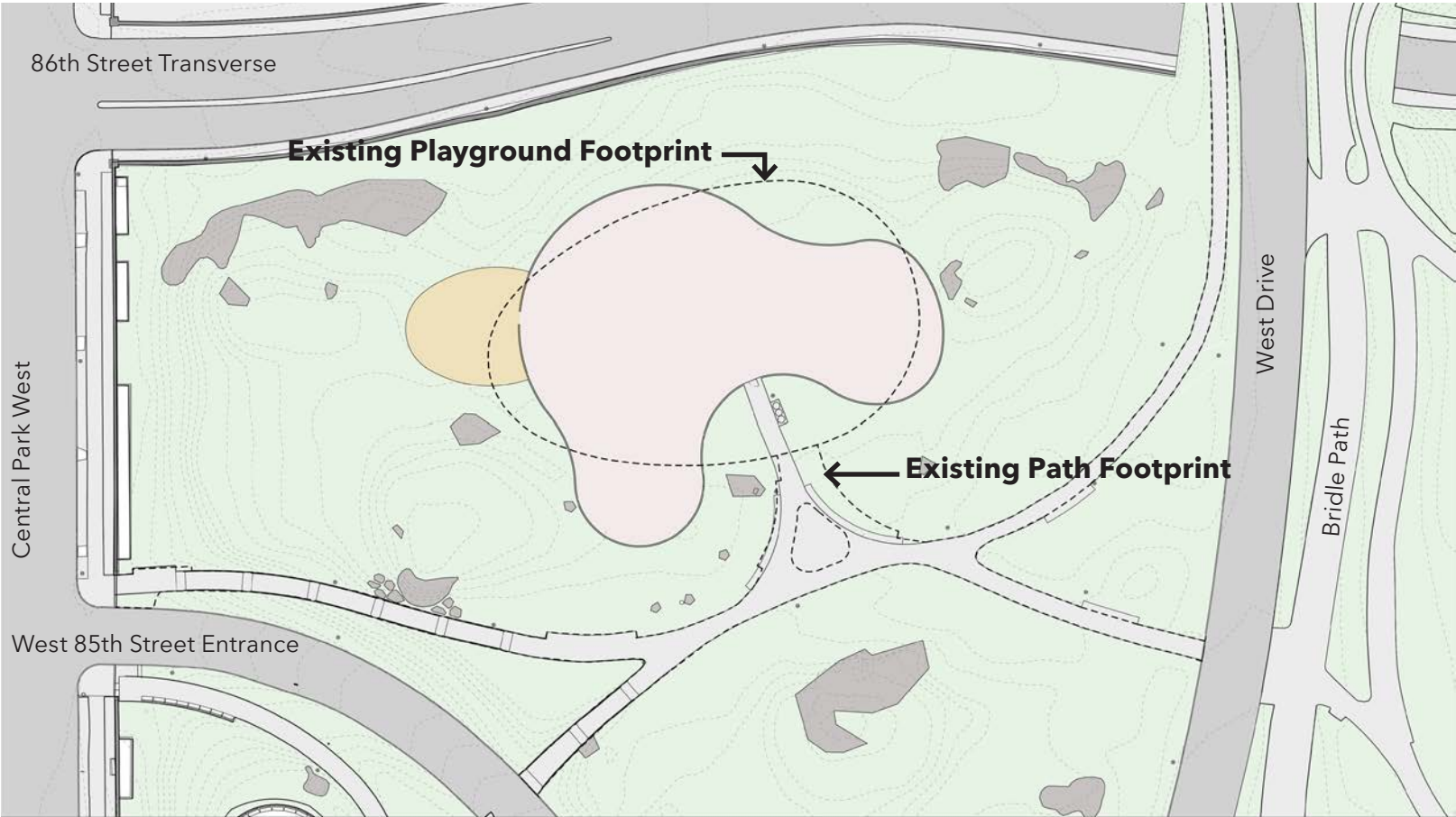
Existing Paths: 12,968 SF
Proposed Paths: 13,286 SF
2.5% increase

Total

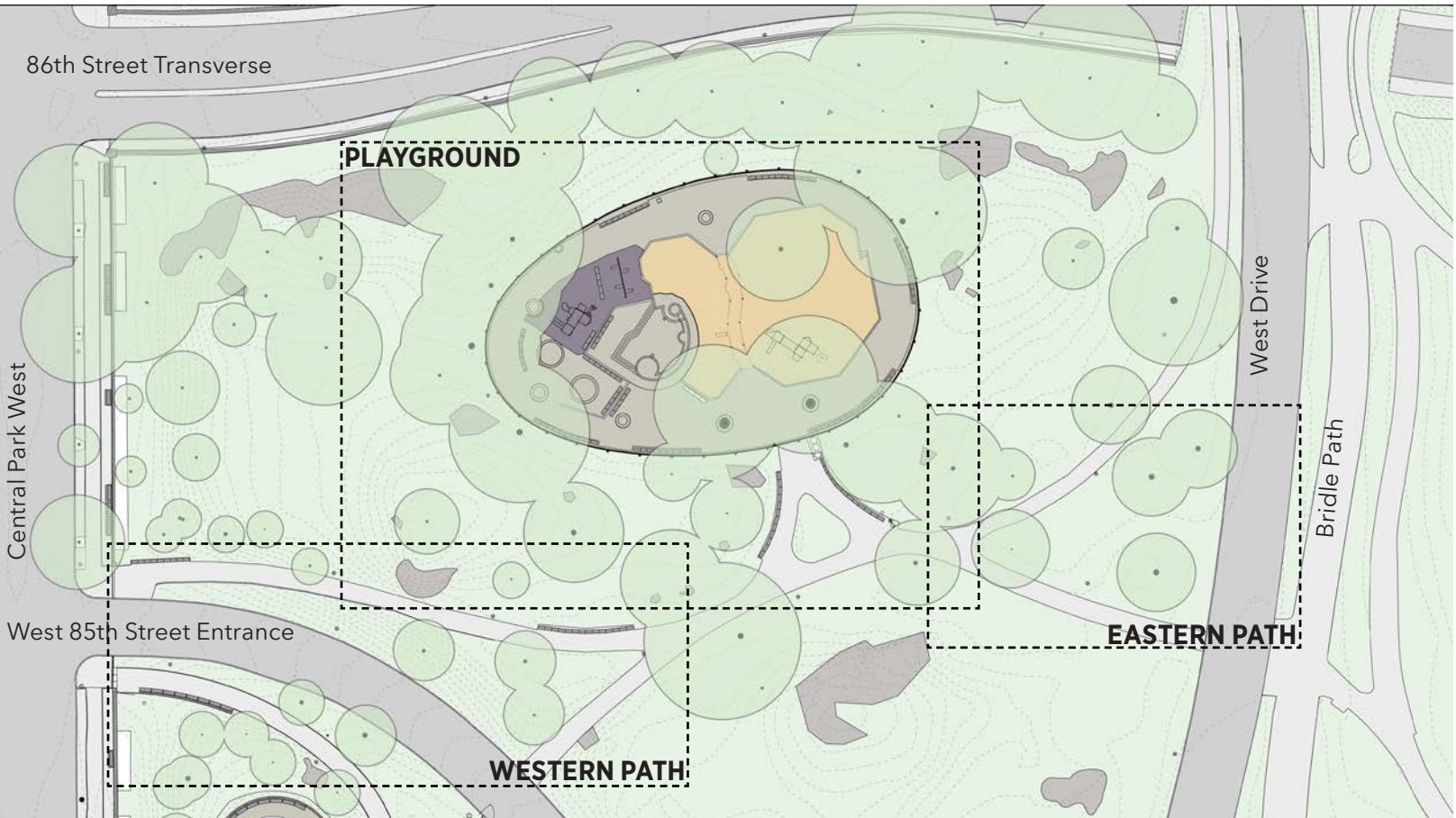
Existing Playground + Existing Paths: 39,164 SF
Proposed Playground + Proposed Paths: 37,741 SF
3.6% decrease

Proposed Playground + Picnic Area+ Proposed Paths: 40,997 SF
4.7% increase

* Picnic area ground plane material is bonded wood carpet which is a pervious material

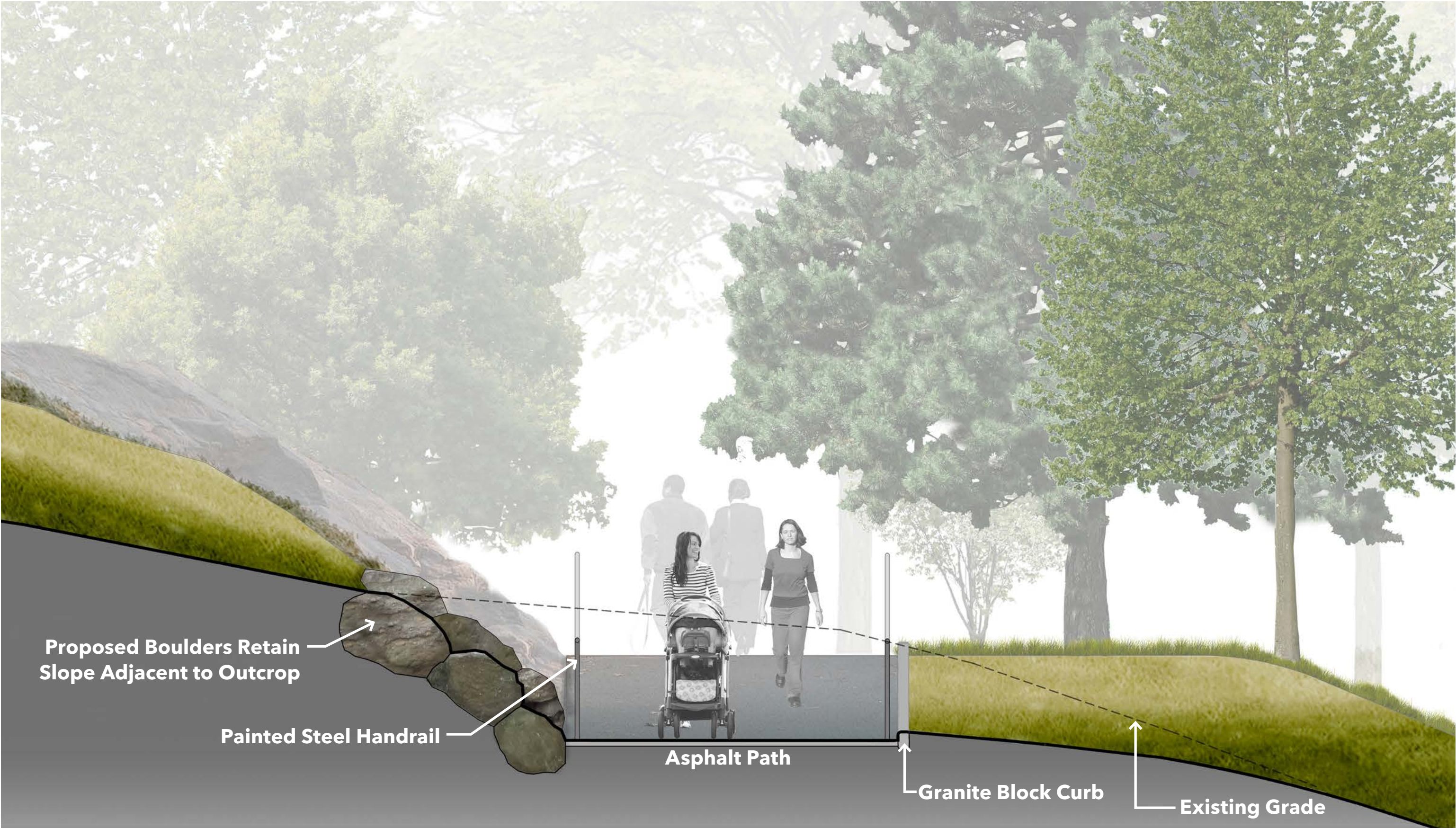


EXISTING AND PROPOSED OVERLAY

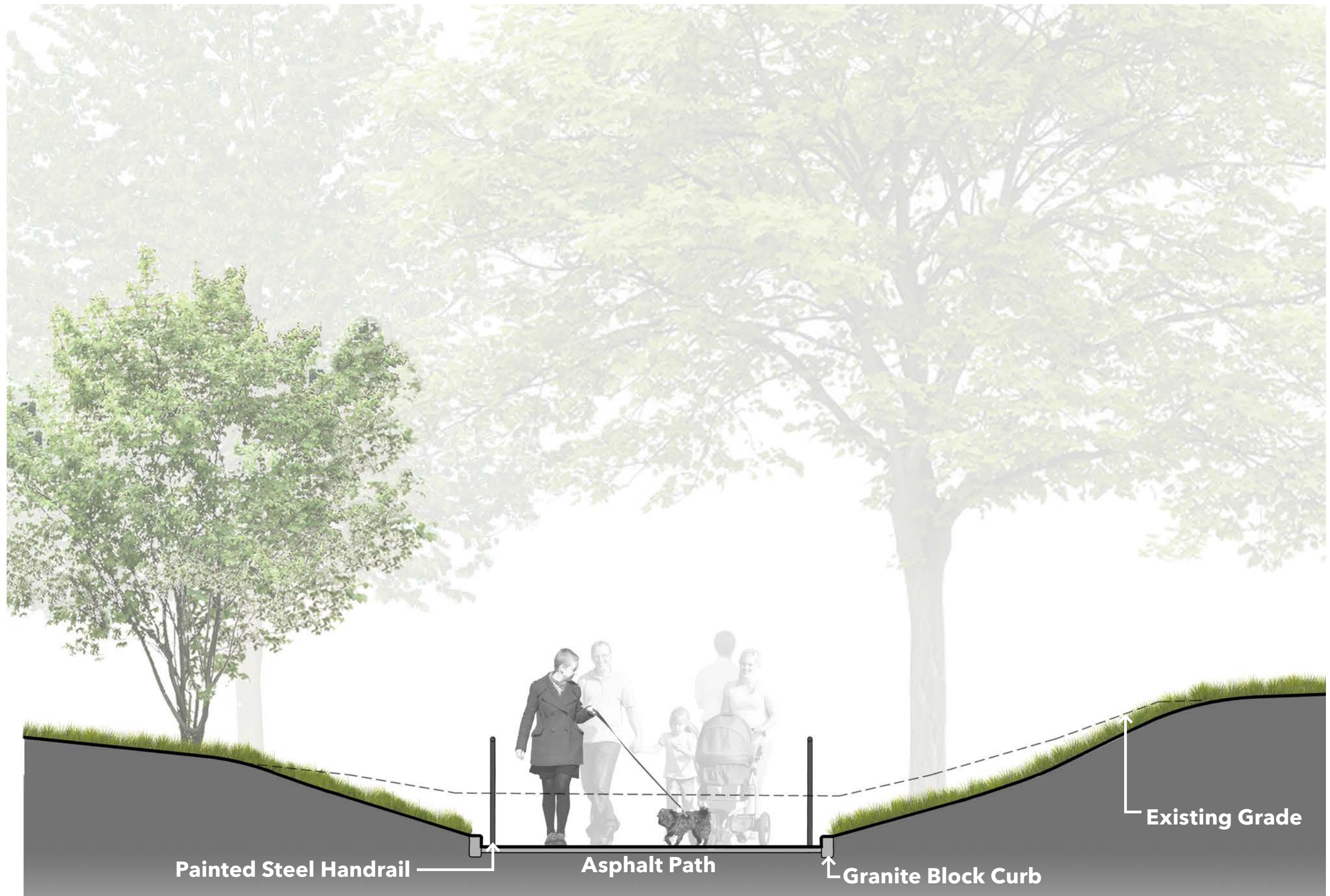


EXISTING

PROPOSED

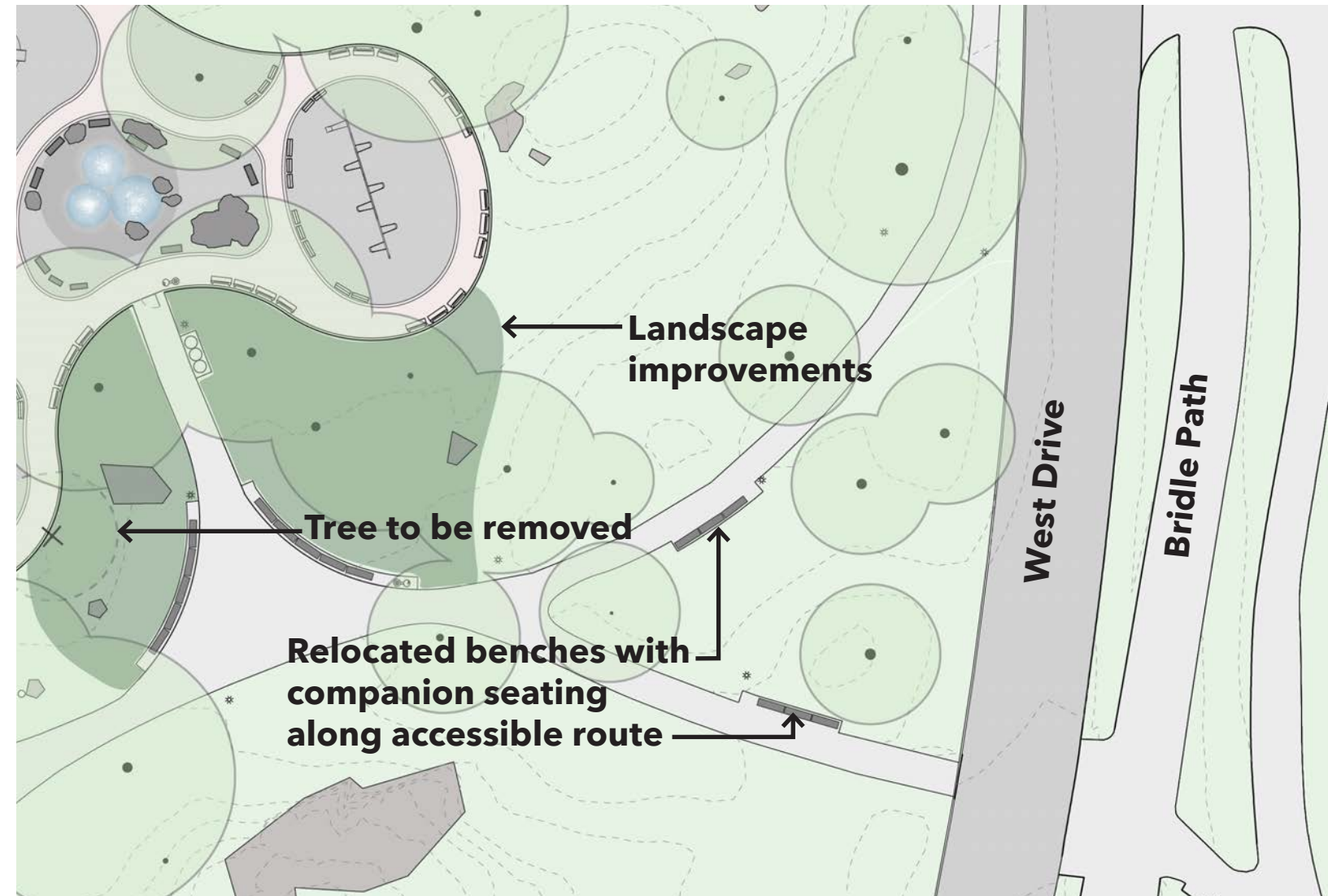




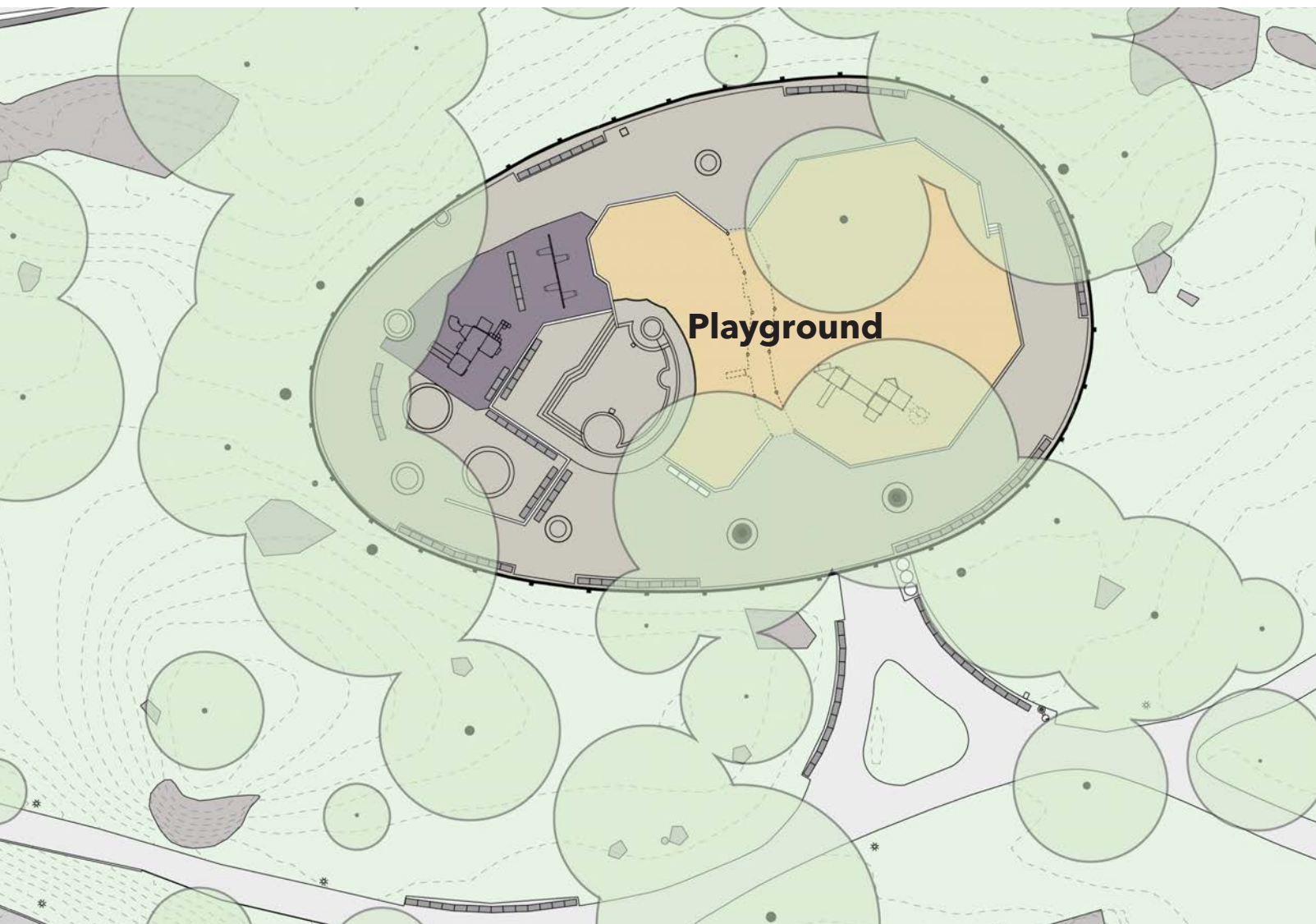




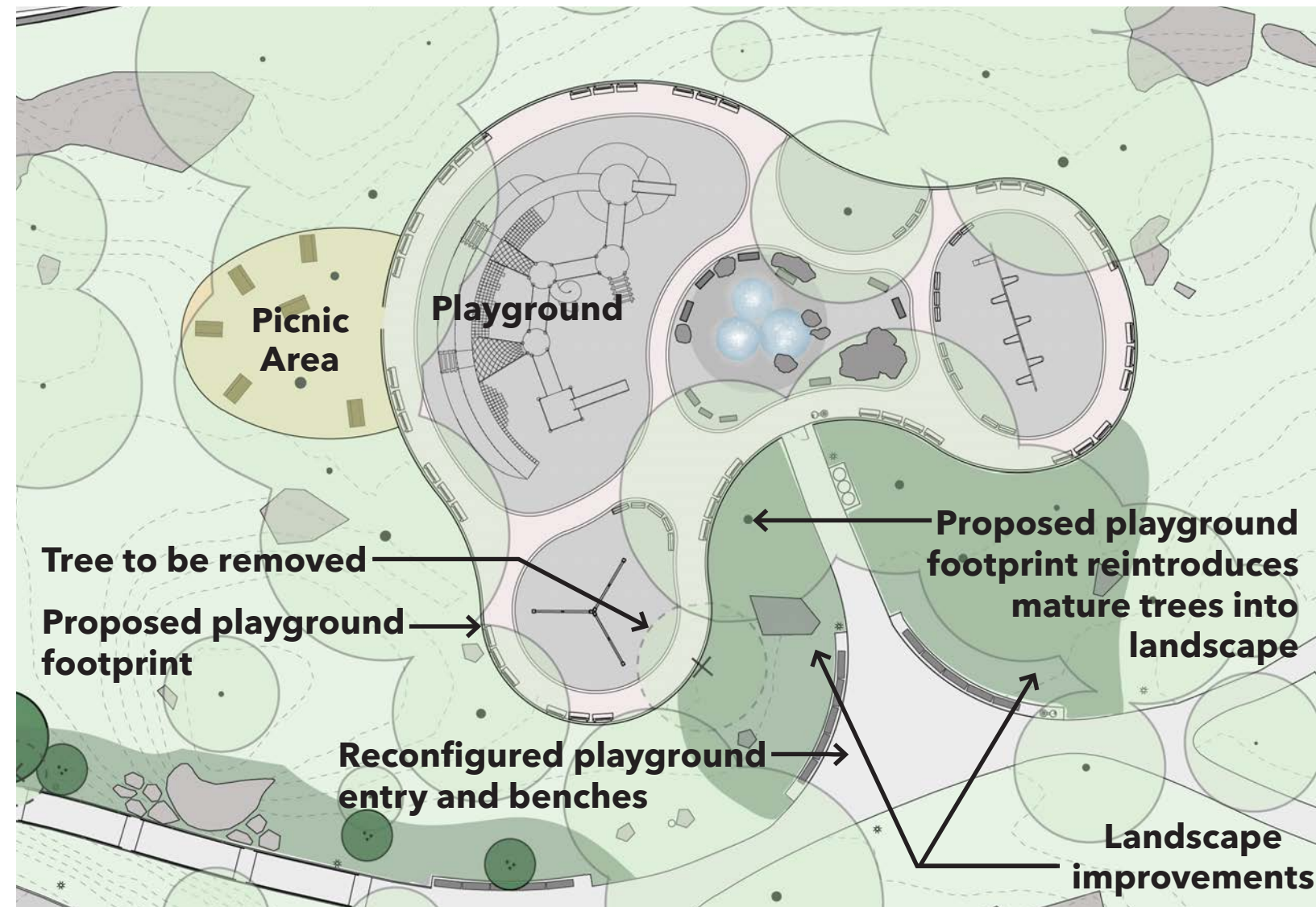
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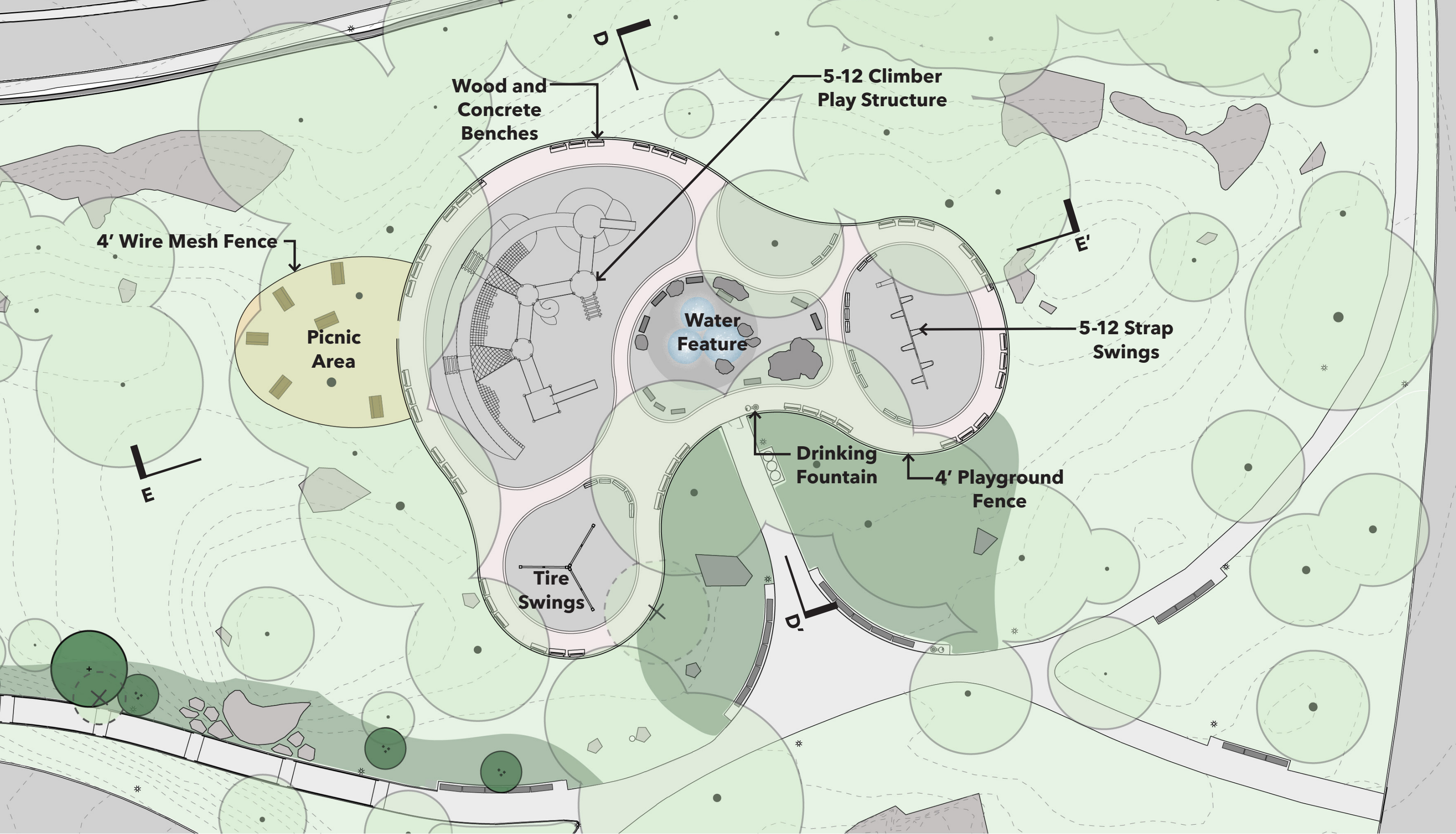
PROPOSED



EXISTING



PROPOSED







EXISTING SECTION ELEVATION



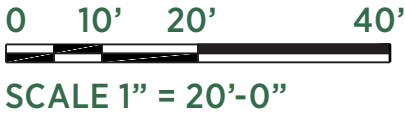
PROPOSED SECTION ELEVATION



EXISTING SECTION ELEVATION



PROPOSED SECTION ELEVATION









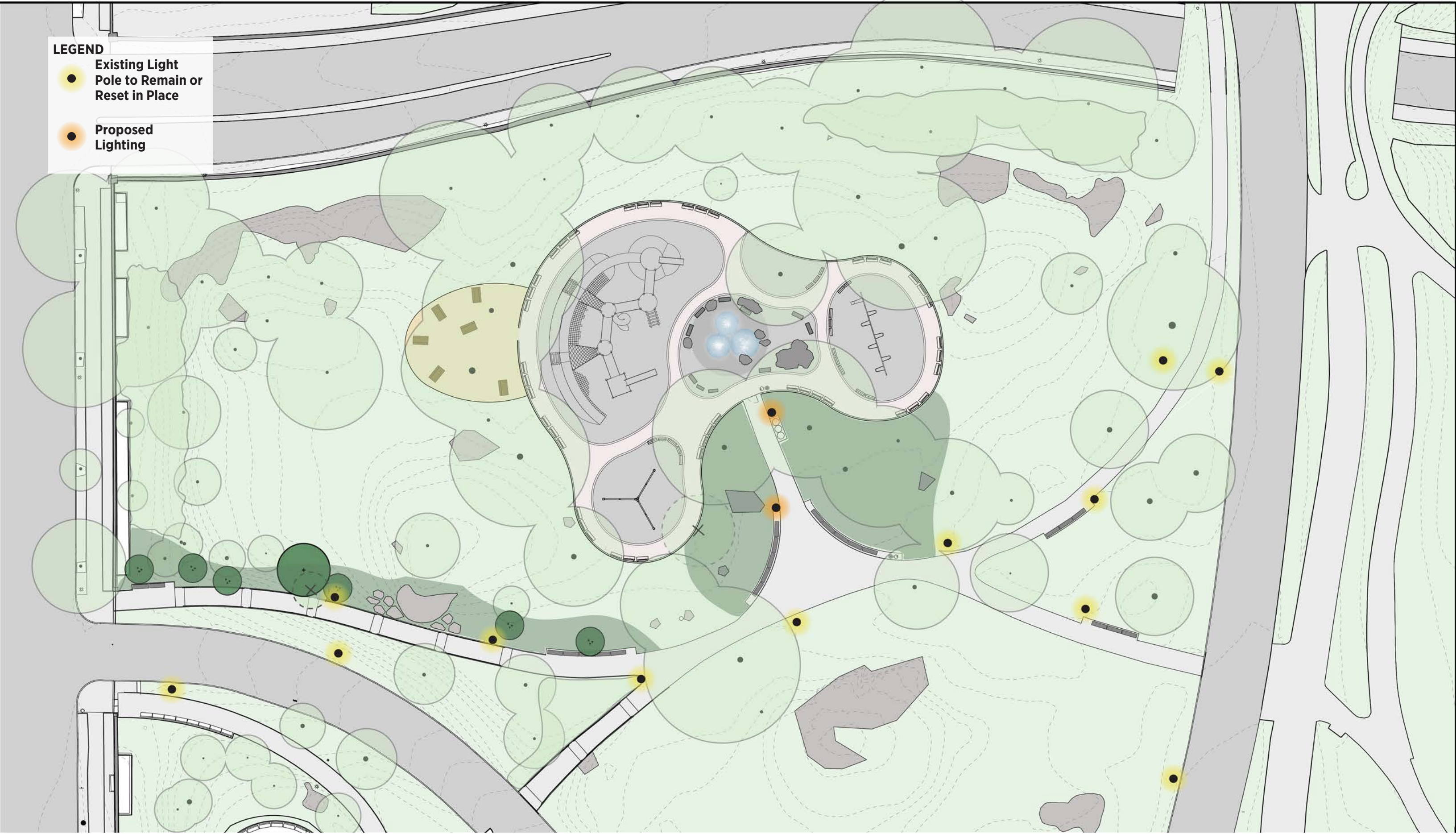


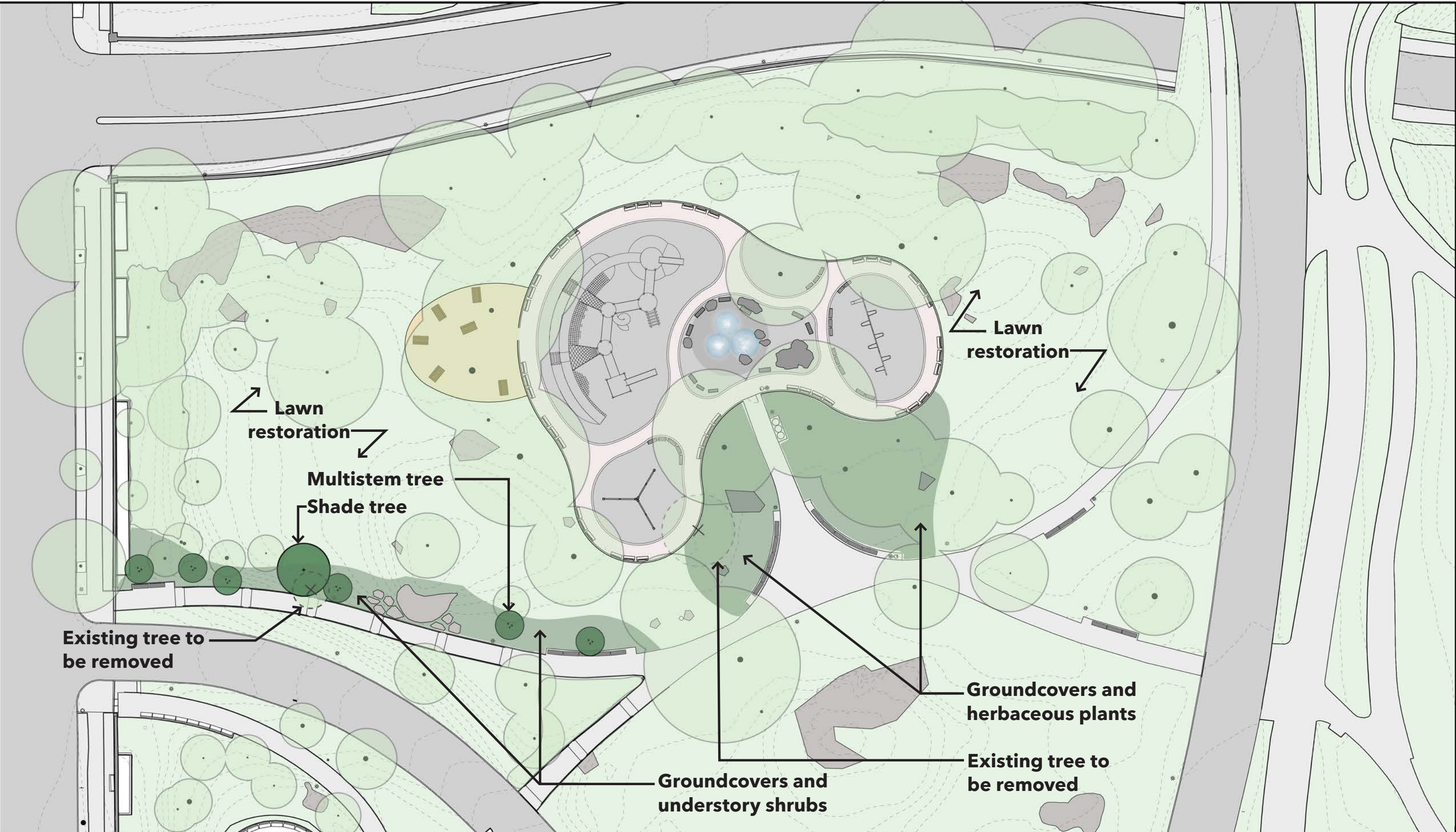


LEGEND

● Existing Light Pole to Remain or Reset in Place

● Proposed Lighting





TREES AND LARGE SHRUBS



Pin Oak
Quercus palustris



Allegheny Serviceberry
Amelanchier arborea



Eastern Redbud
Cercis canadensis

SHRUBS



Virginia Sweetspire
Itea v merlot flower



Fragrant Sumac
Rhus aromatica



Dwarf Fothergilla
Fothergilla gardenii



Dwarf Oakleaf Hydrangea
Hydrangea quercifolia



Chokeberry
Aronia melanocarpa



Summersweet
Clethra alnifolia

PERENNIALS AND GRASSES



Blue Wood Aster
Aster cordifolius



White Wood Aster
Aster divaricatus



Poverty Oat Grass
Danthonia spicata

FERNS



Hay Scented Fern
Dennstaedtia punctilobula



Marginal Wood Fern
Dryopteris marginalis



Christmas Fern
Polystichum acrostichoides

GROUNDCOVER



Euonymus
Euonymus fortunei



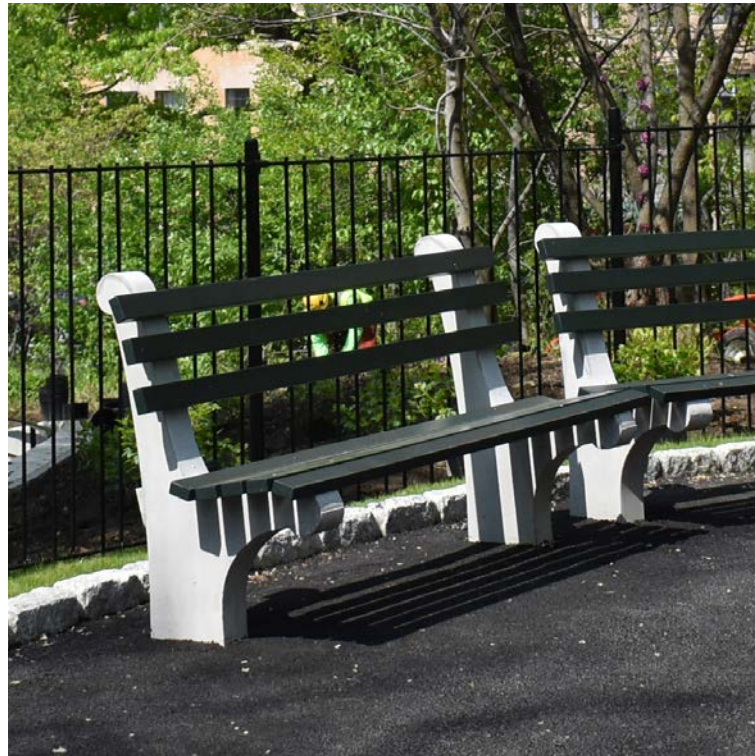
Pennsylvania Sedge
Carex pennsylvanica




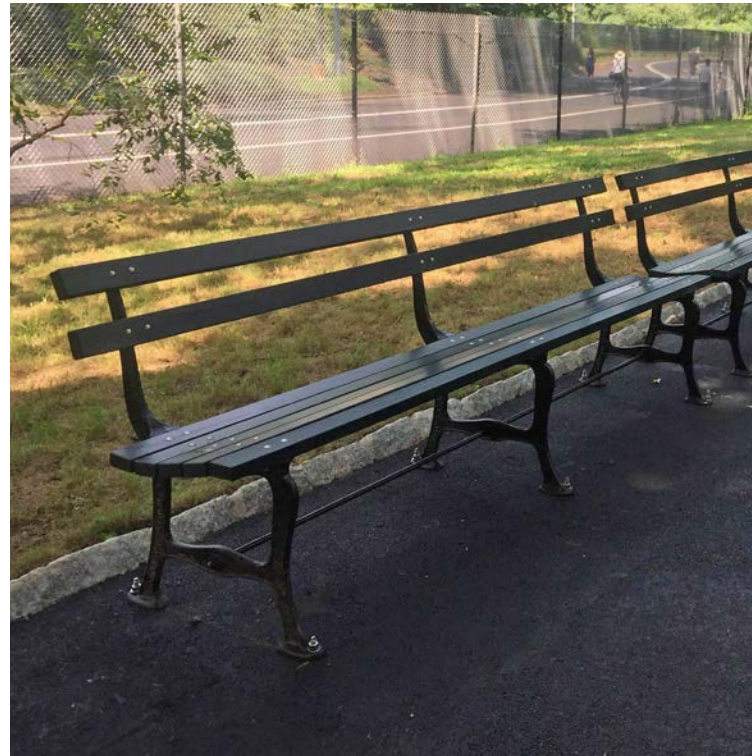
Appalachian Sedge
Carex appalachica



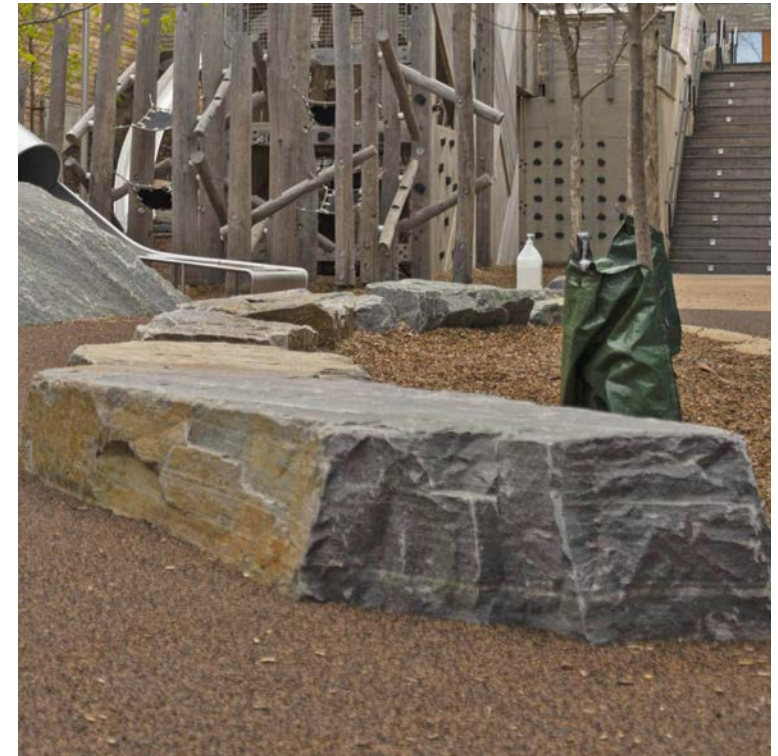
Crinkled Hair Grass
Deschampsia flexuosa



 Wood and Concrete Bench
Place with Added Space for Companion Seat



 Central Park Settee Bench
Place with Added Space for Companion Seat



 Custom Stone Bench



 Custom Wood Bench



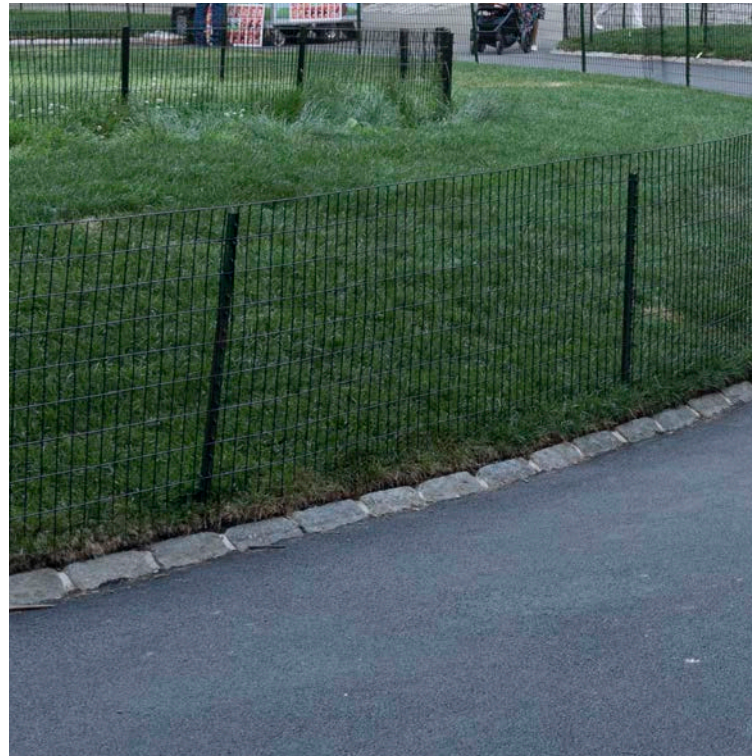
 Accessible Picnic Table



Key Plan



Accessible Path - Rectangular Asphalt Block Paver Landings and Child Handrail (Round Steel, Painted Black Finish)



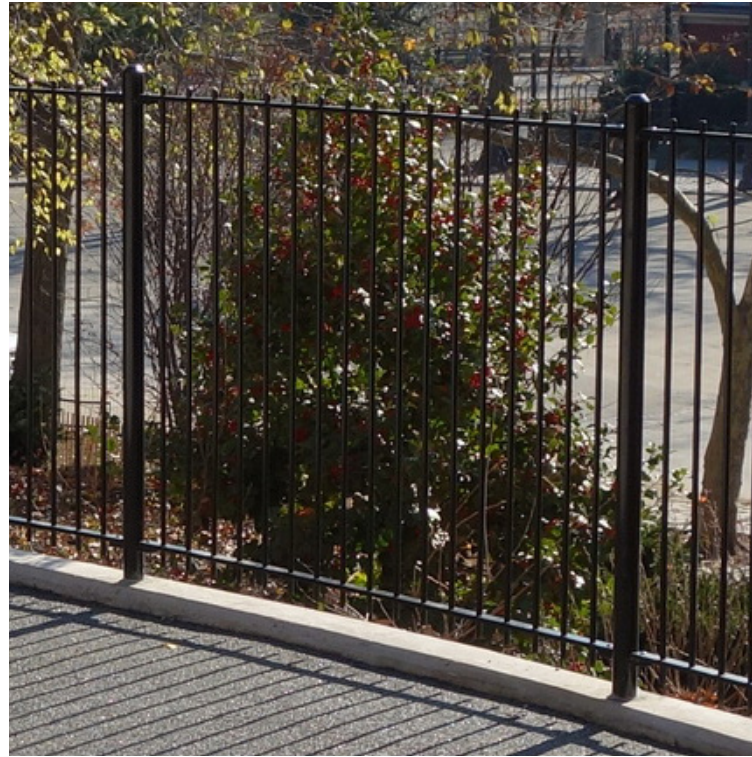
Asphalt Paving with Sloping Granite Block Curb



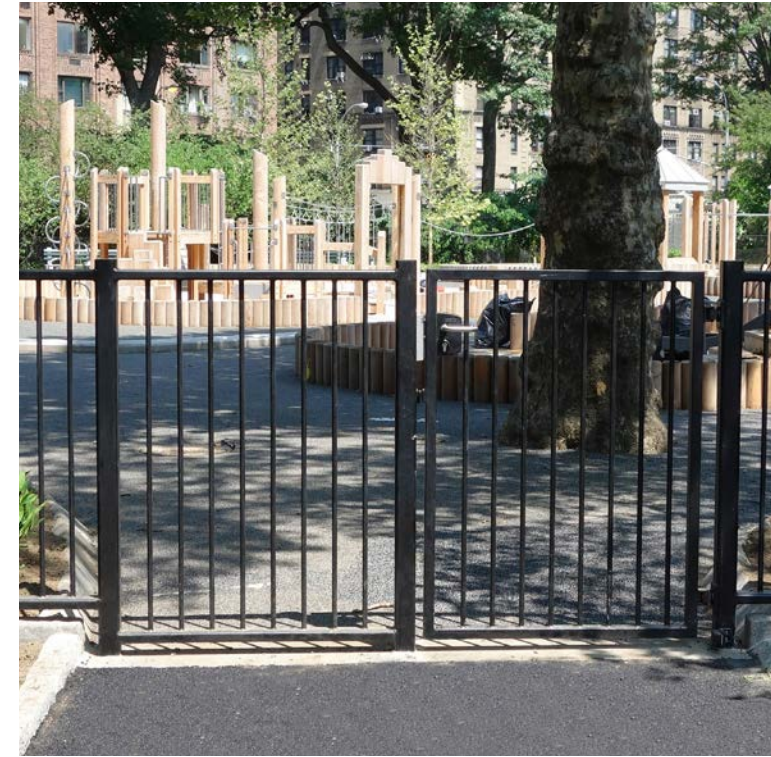
Key Plan



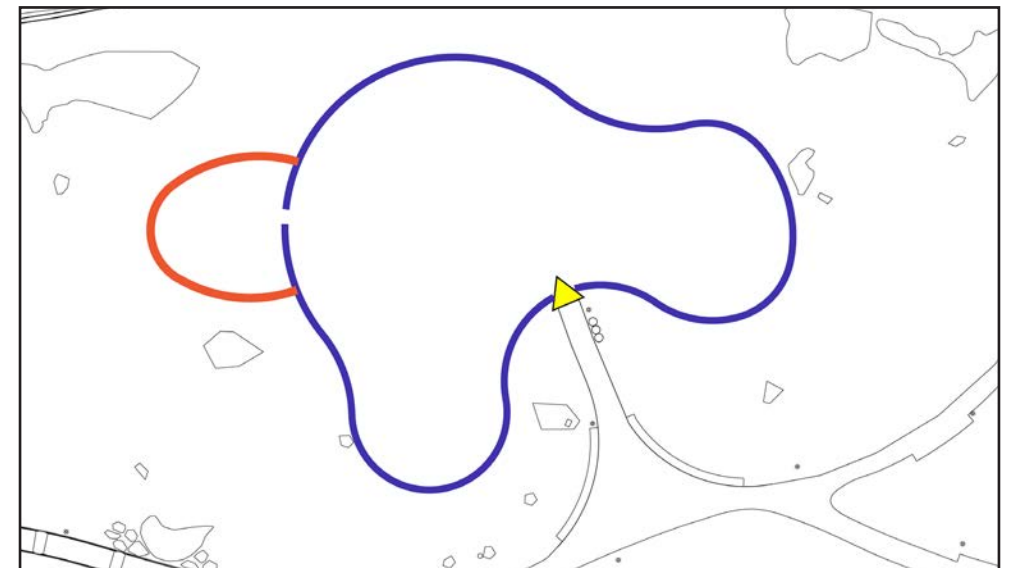
 4' Wire Mesh Fence at Picnic Area



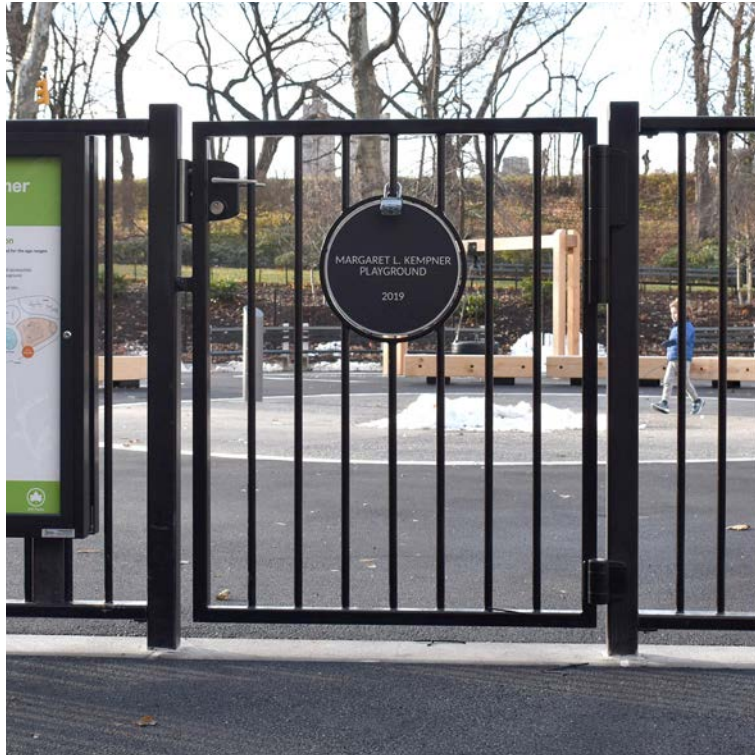
 4' Steel Picket Playground Perimeter Fence on 8" Concrete Curb (Adventure Playground)




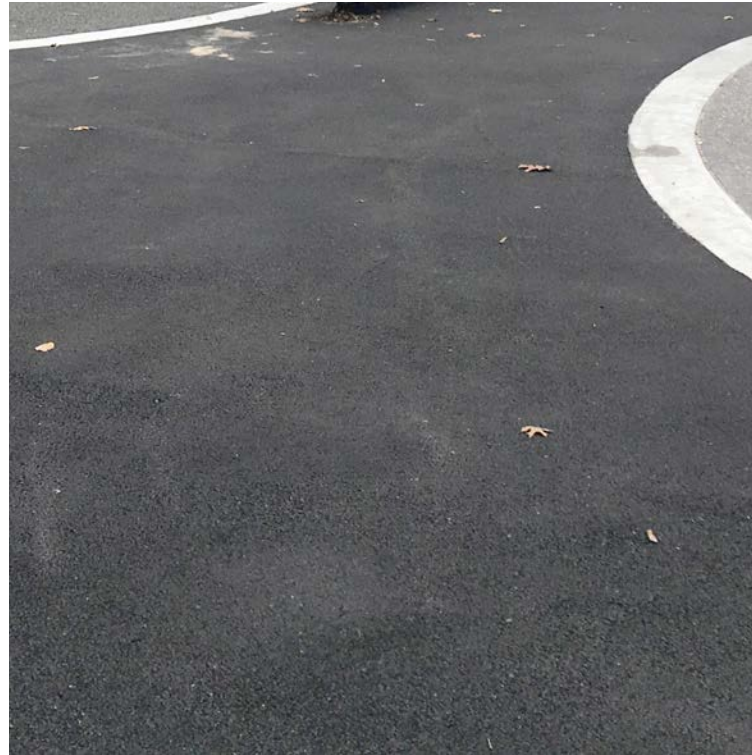
 Playground Gate



Key Plan



 Granite Threshold at Playground Entry Gate



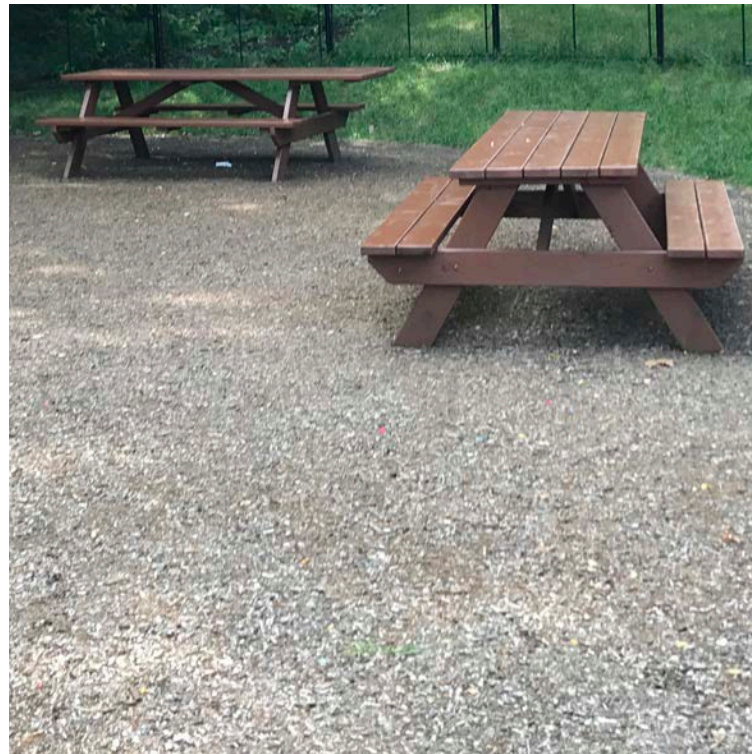
 Asphalt



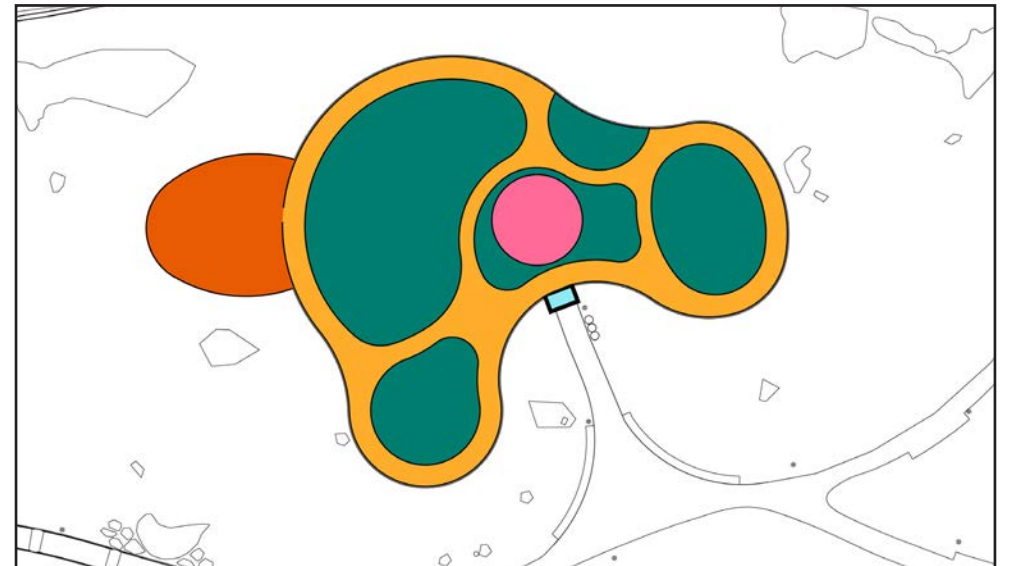
 Safety Surface - Gray



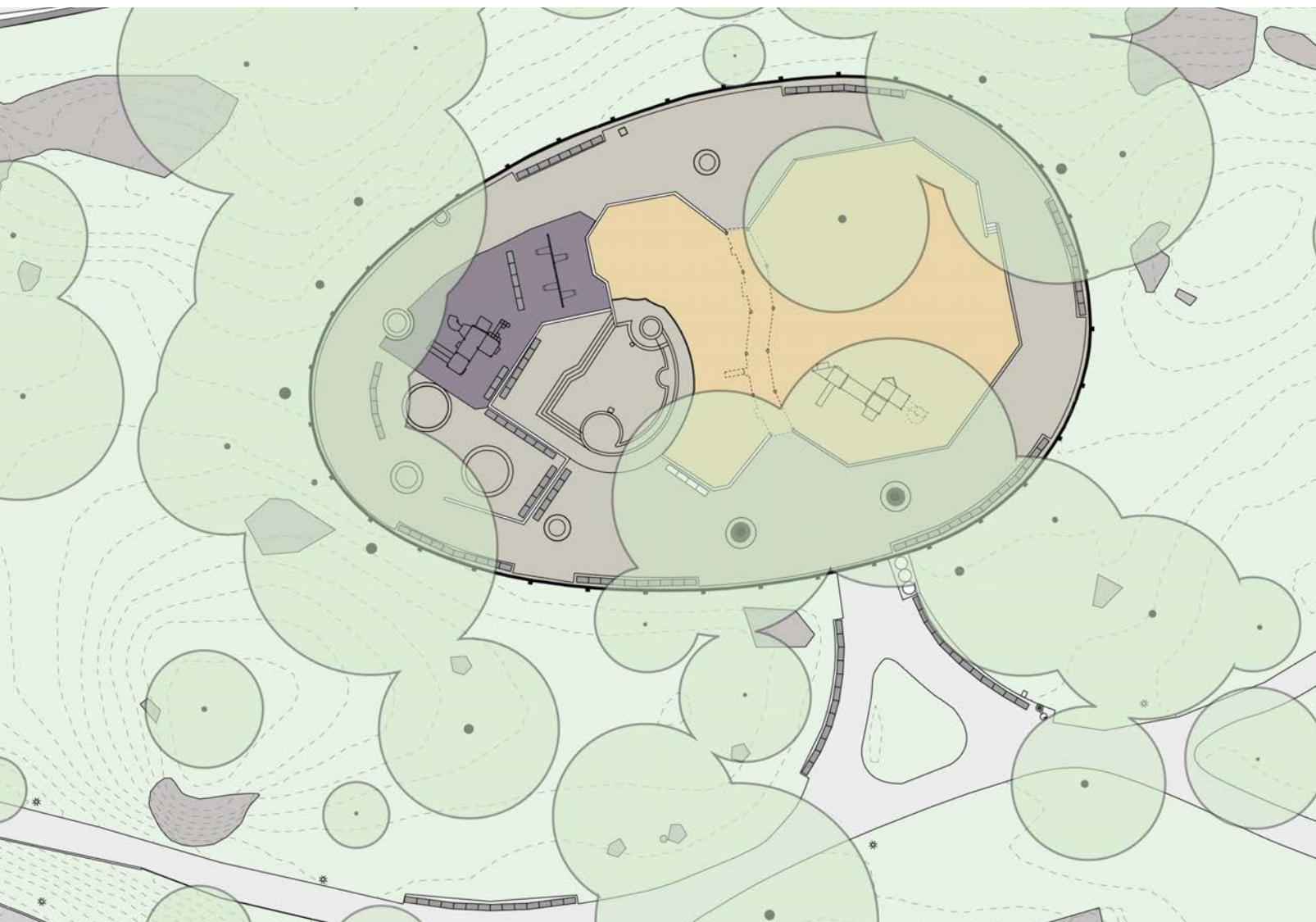
 Exposed Aggregate Concrete and Flush Concrete Border



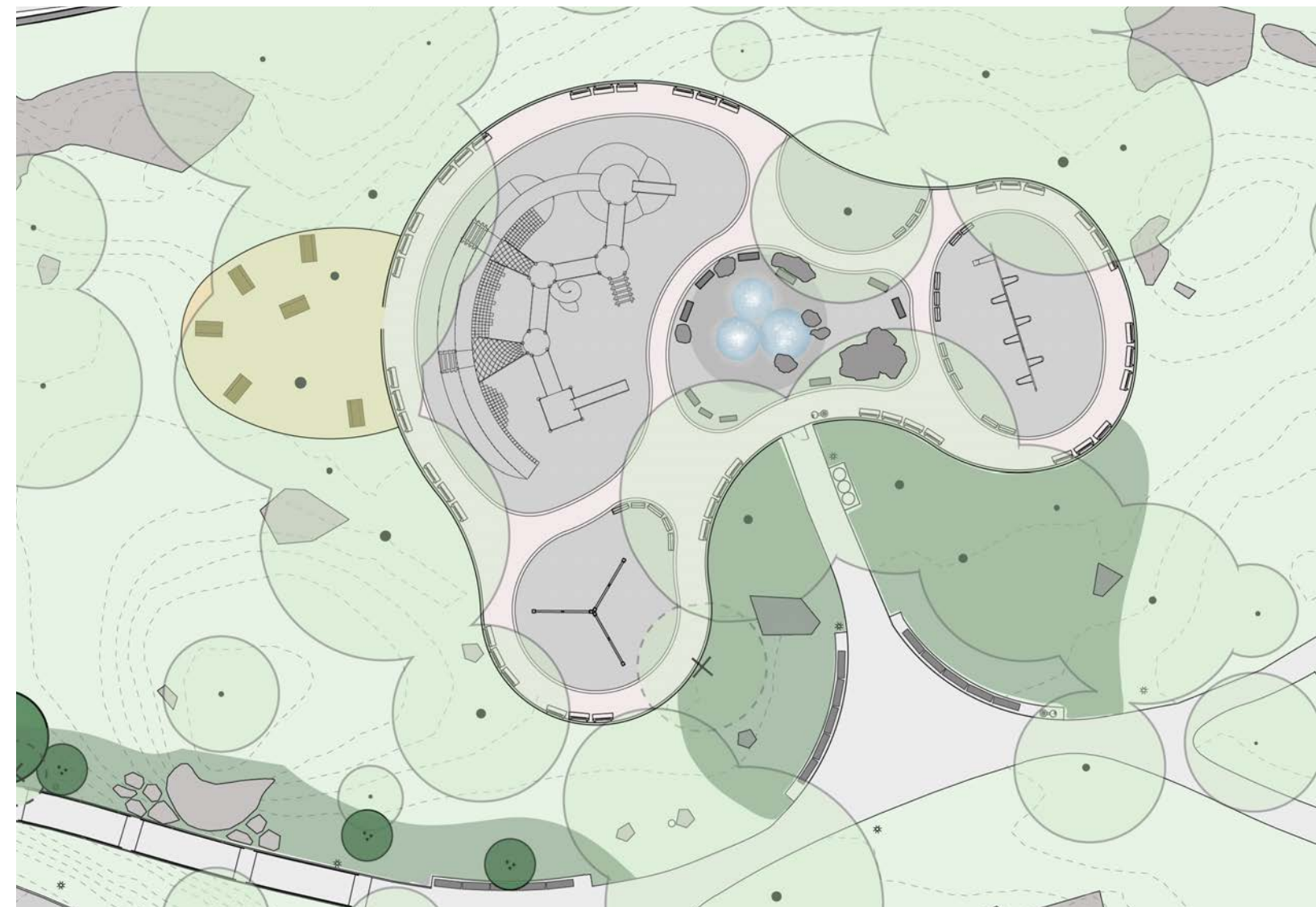
 Bonded Wood Carpet



Key Plan



EXISTING



PROPOSED

APPENDIX

