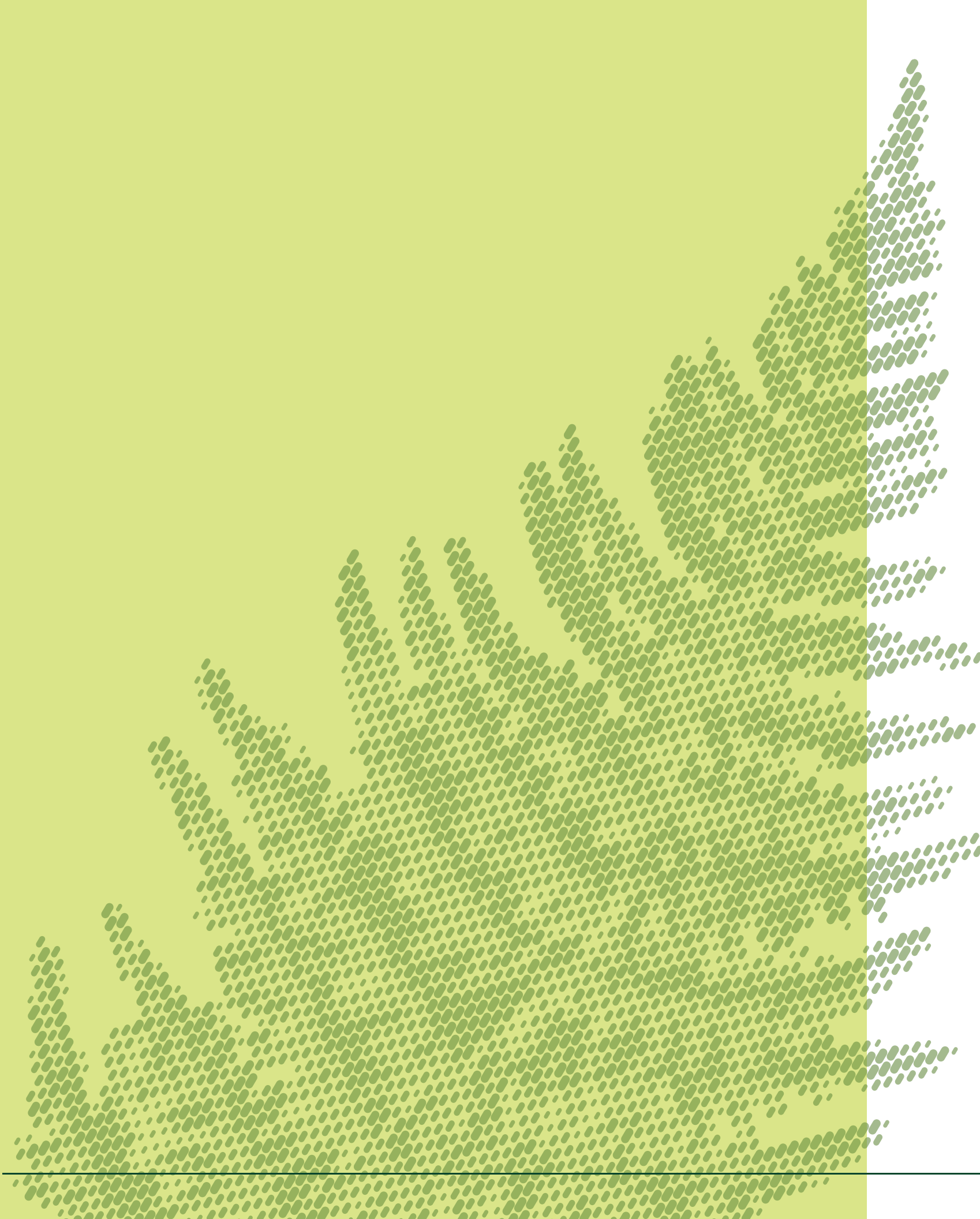


Vision + Action Plan

for New Jersey's Newest State Park:
A Nine-Mile Greenway in Essex and
Hudson Counties



NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION



Imagine an accessible, green corridor stretching nine miles across eight municipalities in two of the most populous counties in the nation's most densely populated state. You might immediately picture a river or stream corridor but in fact this is a converted rail line, once gray, now green, created through natural resource restoration that includes native plantings and stormwater management features. This revitalized green space contains diverse amenities, community gathering spaces, sports courts, performance spaces and alternative transportation options for more than 16% of the state's residents.

This vision is becoming a reality in New Jersey's Essex and Hudson counties following years of grassroots advocacy to transform that blighted rail line into a one-of-a-kind urban state park.

In 2022, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection acquired the abandoned nine-mile rail line that had become a community eyesore stretching from Montclair to Jersey City. Work to plan its transformation into a valued community asset quickly began. Public input was at the center of the process, with engagement events hosted in every municipality along the future park's route, ranging from information tables at farmers markets and block parties to formal open houses and listening sessions at libraries, schools and parks.

Construction of a nearly one-mile segment of the park in Newark is underway and marks the largest single investment in state history for the acquisition and development of a new state park.

This Vision & Action Plan looks beyond the under-construction Newark segment and outlines the foundational elements that will guide future planning for the park's remaining eight miles.

A starting point, the Vision & Action Plan establishes "rules of the road" for further development of the park by identifying core values, priorities, and foundational elements to guide future planning, design, and investment decisions for the remainder of the corridor.

Next steps in this park's development include developing a comprehensive master plan, identifying funding mechanisms and defining long-term operations and maintenance plans.

Continued community engagement will be essential to ensure the nine-mile greenway serves all the communities it reaches.

We are excited by the possibilities and hope you will join us in planning the future phases of New Jersey's newest state park.



Shawn M. LaTourette, Esq.
Commissioner
Department of Environmental
Protection



John Cecil
Assistant Commissioner
State Parks, Forests &
Historic Sites



Maggie McCann
Administrator
Urban State Parks &
Initiatives

Acknowledgements

The Vision and Action Plan would fall short without the recognition, candor, and generosity of the many community voices from each of the eight municipalities: Montclair, Glen Ridge, Belleville, Bloomfield, Newark, Kearny, Secaucus, and Jersey City. We are building on grassroots foundational work from many local organizations that have long advocated for this project.

We thank the staff at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection who assisted with this plan:

Shawn M. LaTourette

Commissioner

John Cecil

Assistant Commissioner — State Parks, Forests & Historic Sites

Maggie McCann

Administrator — Urban State Parks & Initiatives

Julia Wong

Project Manager — Urban State Parks & Initiatives

Shetal Oza

Administrative Analyst — Office of the Deputy Commissioner

Consulting Team:

Agency Landscape and Planning

Prime Consultant and Design Team Lead

Creative Urban Alchemy

Urban Design and Equity

Green Shield Ecology

Ecology

Heyer, Gruel, & Associates

Land Use and Zoning

Hisel Flynn Architects

Architecture

HLB Lighting

Lighting

Hive Public Space

Programming and Accessibility

NV5

Engineering and Transportation / Parking

Town Square

Operations and Governance

Ummo

Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage

Table of Contents

Chapter 01 | Overview

- 12 Background + Phased Development
- 24 Project Vision
- 34 Community Conversations

Chapter 02 | Community

- 50 Identity
- 64 Economic Development
- 72 Access

Chapter 03 | Stewardship

- 94 Partnerships
- 98 Programming and Activation

Chapter 04 | Design Framework

- 110 Framework and Design Language
- 120 Space and Place
- 132 Activity Centers and Amenities
- 158 Environment and Resilience

Chapter 05 | Design Standards

- 170 Kit of Parts
- 188 Site Furnishings
- 210 Play
- 220 Signage and Wayfinding
- 234 Ecology

Vision and Action Plan Glossary

This glossary should be used for definitions of terms related to the Vision and Action Plan, and New Jersey's newest state park.

Activity Center

A special segment of the park that features a concentration of amenities and programming.

Amenity

A feature or facility within the park that enhances comfort, convenience, enjoyment, or aesthetic appeal for users.

Component

Any piece of the park, ranging from large-scale pieces such as segments to small-scale pieces such as benches.

Corridor

The collection of neighborhoods, commercial corridors, industrial districts, and communities in general that the park runs through.

Design Framework

A structured plan or set of guidelines that shapes the overall organization and development of a landscape project. It provides the foundation for design decisions, ensuring that all elements work together cohesively to meet project goals.

Design Language

A consistent set of visual, material, and spatial elements and principles that create a unified style or identity across the park.

Guiding Principle

A foundational idea or value that shapes decisions, policies, and practices related to how the park is planned, designed, built, maintained, and operated.

Kit of Parts

A set of standardized, modular components or elements that can be combined in various ways to design and build outdoor public spaces with efficiency and flexibility.

Landscape Typology

The classification and categorization of landscapes based on their physical characteristics, functions, and ecological or cultural patterns.

Municipality

A local government unit—such as a city, town, or village—that has been officially organized and given authority to govern a specific geographic area.

Phased Development

The organization of how the park is constructed, typically done by breaking down the full site into multiple, more manageable segments that are constructed in sequential order.

Programming

The planning, organizing, and delivering of activities, events, and services within a park to engage the community and encourage public use.

Soil Remediation

The process of removing, reducing, or neutralizing contaminants in soil to restore it to a safe and usable condition.

Right of Way

The entire width of land dedicated to the operation of the park.

Segment

A portion of the park, typically with unifying characteristics that distinguish it from other segments.

Site Furnishings

Movable or installed objects placed in outdoor spaces to support function, comfort, safety, and aesthetics for users. Some examples include: benches, bike racks, light poles, and trash cans.

Stewardship

The responsible planning, care, and oversight of park resources—natural, cultural, and built—to ensure their long-term sustainability, accessibility, and benefit to the public.

Stormwater Management

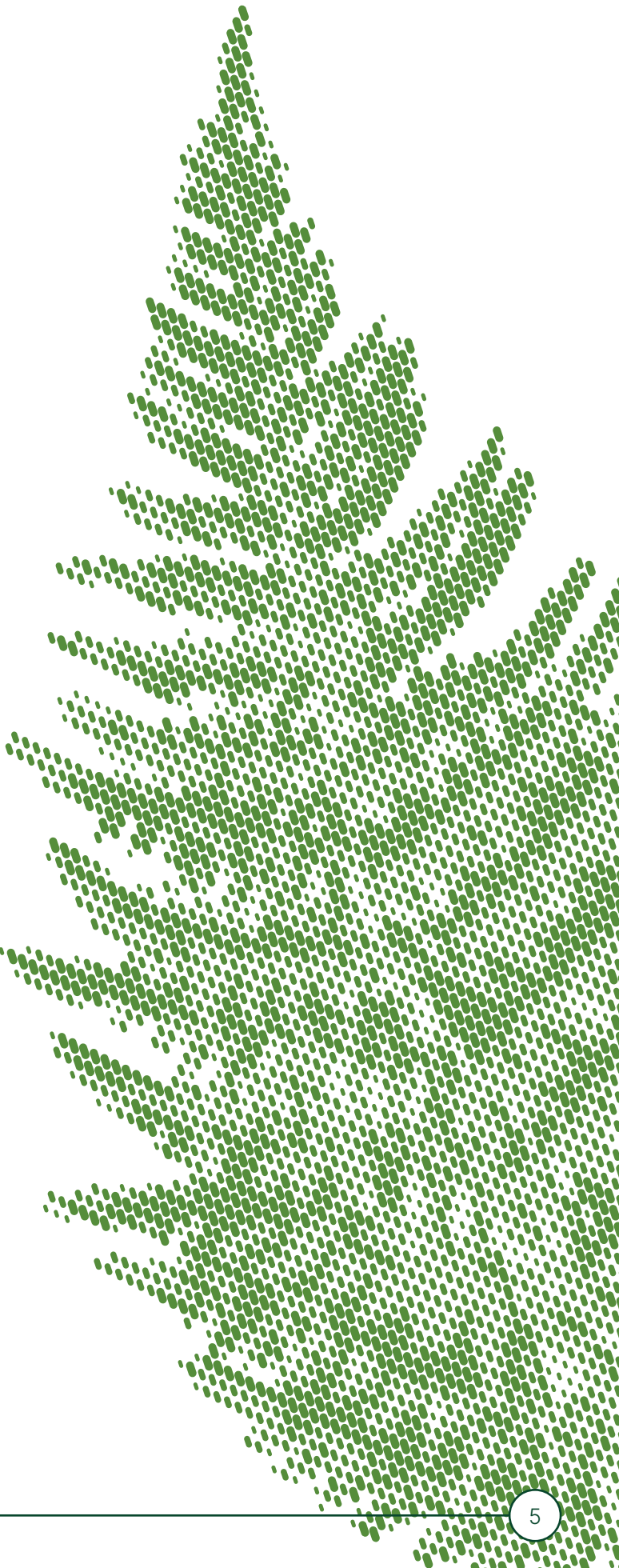
The process of controlling rainwater runoff to reduce flooding, erosion, and water pollution.

Threshold

The transition space between one type of park segment and another.

The Park

The approximately nine-mile, 100-foot-wide former rail line spanning eight municipalities across Essex and Hudson counties.



How to Use This Plan

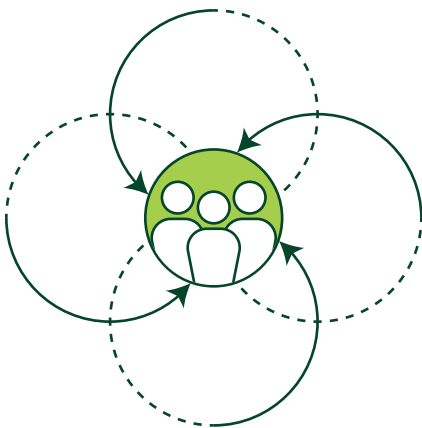
The Overview offers a quick glance at the plan for constructing and stewarding the park. The subsequent chapters unpack the three components of the Vision and Action Plan: community, design, and stewardship. Here, you'll find detailed strategies for fostering community partnerships, maintaining design standards for the park buildout, and programming the new park to suit its many users.

The Overview



Overview:

This chapter introduces the purpose of the document, the process to-date for the park's redevelopment of a former rail line to a connected active transportation system, the role of the Advisory Board, and considerations for the park's continued care and stewardship as the redevelopment of the corridor is completed.



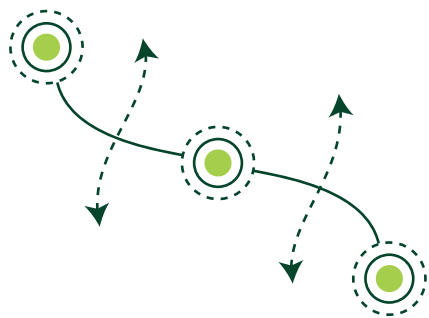
Community:

Thousands of people shared their ideas for the future of the park from the Spring of 2023 to today. This chapter describes the unique communities that exist along the park and identifies opportunities to improve access, leverage community economic development, and amplify neighborhood connectivity.



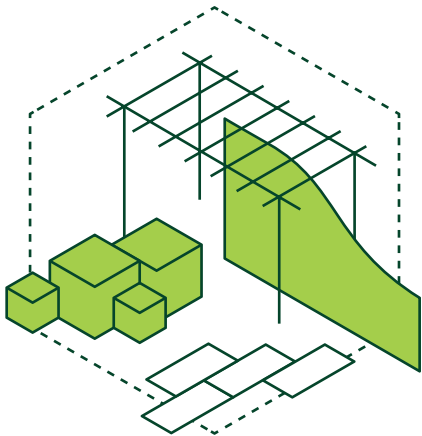
Stewardship:

As the newest state park, the park needs a different model for maintenance, management, and programming to make the park a success. This chapter outlines how programming and activation happen throughout the eight municipalities that touch the park and makes recommendations to support future formal relationships to build and manage the park sustainably.



Design Framework:

The park will be built in phases as funding and capacity are available. To ensure that the Vision and Action Plan's principles are upheld, and that all people are welcomed to this park space, this chapter of the Vision and Action Plan includes design guidance that the Advisory Board could engage for each stage of the design and implementation of future park segments.



Design Standards:

This chapter is a toolkit and how-to guide to build future sections of the park and to ensure that community vision, accessibility, and welcoming design are forefronted as the park is completed.

Guiding Principles

The three components of the Vision and Action Plan are buttressed by the following guiding principles:

Community

The park’s relationship to community involves forming an identity for the park, providing access to the park, and leveraging the park to catalyze economic development in surrounding neighborhoods.

Stewardship

Stewardship of the park involves forming partnerships to fund park operations and programming the park with vendors and activities that keep it a vibrant space that serves the needs of its many users.

Design

The park’s design expresses community values as a built space that are welcoming and inclusive of people who are walking or rolling and supports connected, natural wildlife corridors that improve the health for people who live and work around the park.



Identity

Reflect the cultures, values, customs, and needs of surrounding communities.

Partnerships

Uplift the capacity of residents to foster community networks and partnerships.

Space, Place, and Amenities

Create a place of play, learning, and wonder that can be enjoyed by all ages and abilities.

Economic Development

Enhance quality of life for existing communities and vitality of commercial corridors. Bolster resilience to physical and cultural displacement.

Programming and Activation

Partner with community-based organizations to provide a diversity of programming.

Environment and Resilience

Connect natural corridors, expand biodiversity, and improve health outcomes for residents.

Access

Establish active connections between homes, jobs, education, and cultural destinations.

Connectivity

Provide infrastructure for safe access and enjoyment of the park.

Chapter 01

Overview

Background + Phased Development .	12
Project Vision	26
Community Conversations	36

Section 01

Background + Phased Development

Chapter 01 Overview

Project Background



The park’s “Kearny Cut” ¹

Introduction

The park is approximately nine miles in length, with an average width of 100 feet, and crosses through eight municipalities in both Essex and Hudson Counties. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection acquired this property from Norfolk Southern railroad on August 19, 2022. The park is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a linear multi-modal recreational and transit corridor enabling seamless walking, biking and transit opportunities between Montclair and Jersey City, while serving as a catalyst for environmental improvements and economic development in the adjacent communities.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is committed to deep, robust community engagement to learn how members of host communities want to use and interact with this new public open space, how it can best serve community needs, and other methods to ensure equitable distribution of the myriad environmental, public health, and economic benefits promised by this transformative project.

2023 Pre-Design Study Reports Summary

NJDEP’s approach to the first phase of development was to identify the most feasible and impactful portion of the park for initial development and public use. This work was completed in fall of 2023 in the form of pre-design study reports, which synthesized the process and results of a **Phased Development and Engagement Strategy** commissioned by NJDEP to consider the many benefits and unique site conditions presented by the park. This resulted in recommendations for Phase 1, which prioritizes initial investments in stormwater infrastructure, remediation, safety and security, and supportive public amenities. Phase 1 design work began shortly after the completion of the pre-design study reports, to coordinate the design and construction of the first open section of the park. NJDEP aims to open the first segment of the park by the end of 2026.

Stormwater, Remediation, Safety and Security

Stormwater Management

The park will manage stormwater that falls onto its property to reduce runoff that may impact offsite areas. Effective stormwater management can help prevent flooding and erosion in the park corridor. By addressing localized stormwater, the park will create a sustainable environment, support biodiversity, and enhance water quality. It can also act as an urban “sponge” by managing stormwater runoff from adjacent streets and other impervious surfaces, especially in communities that have Combined Sewer Systems (CSS).

Remediation

Some portions of the park may be affected by pollution or contamination due to historic railroad and industrial uses. By remediating existing soil and rail ballast, NJDEP will create a healthy and safe environment for park users. The **Greenway Site Investigation, Remedial Investigation and Remedial Action Selection Report** studied where this remediation needs to occur, and to what level, through a series of site investigations and borings. Necessary remediation work will be completed as part of NJDEP’s phased development approach.

Safety and Security

By prioritizing safety and security, a welcoming environment can be created for everyone to freely explore and appreciate the beauty of the future park. The **Park Safety and Security Needs Assessment and Recommendations**, found in our pre-design study reports, conducted in-field research to analyze the current safety conditions and ease of site access for first responders.

History



Images, left to right:
A Lenni-Lenape community ²
The Montclair-Boonton Line, 1867 ³
Tiffany Manor Apartments, Newark ⁴

200,000 Years Ago
Glaciers cut through exposed bedrock that would provide the future foundation for the rail line. The Kearny Cut is an example of a glacier-formed ridge.

1500s
Lenni-Lenape Communities
Lenni-Lenape people, of the Algonquian nation, inhabited small settlements across New Jersey for centuries, cultivating the land and hunting. Many names in the region—such as Passaic, Secaucus, Hackensack and Hoboken—derive from the language of the native inhabitants.



1800s
Rail Origins
Ice was harvested from New Jersey lakes and moved along the rail line into major ports in Jersey City and New York City. To build the rail, construction workers blasted through portions of the bedrock ridge that cuts through Kearny to connect northern New Jersey to the ports of New York.

1900s
Many Rails Into One
In 1887, the Erie Railroad created the Arlington Railroad to connect over the Kearny Meadows between the Hackensack and Passaic rivers. The rail line expanded into Jersey City in 1943. In 1960, the Erie Railroad merged with another rail line to the Hoboken Terminal via the Bergen Tunnels, connecting the rail between Jersey City, Boonton, and westward.



2000s to Today
The rail line carried commuters until 2002, when NJ Transit discontinued operations because of low ridership, the opening of alternate lines, and repair costs. Freight service between Jersey City and Newark discontinued in 2005. No freight traffic has moved between Newark and Montclair since 2009. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection acquired the rail property from Norfolk Southern in 2022 to convert it into a recreation and transportation corridor.

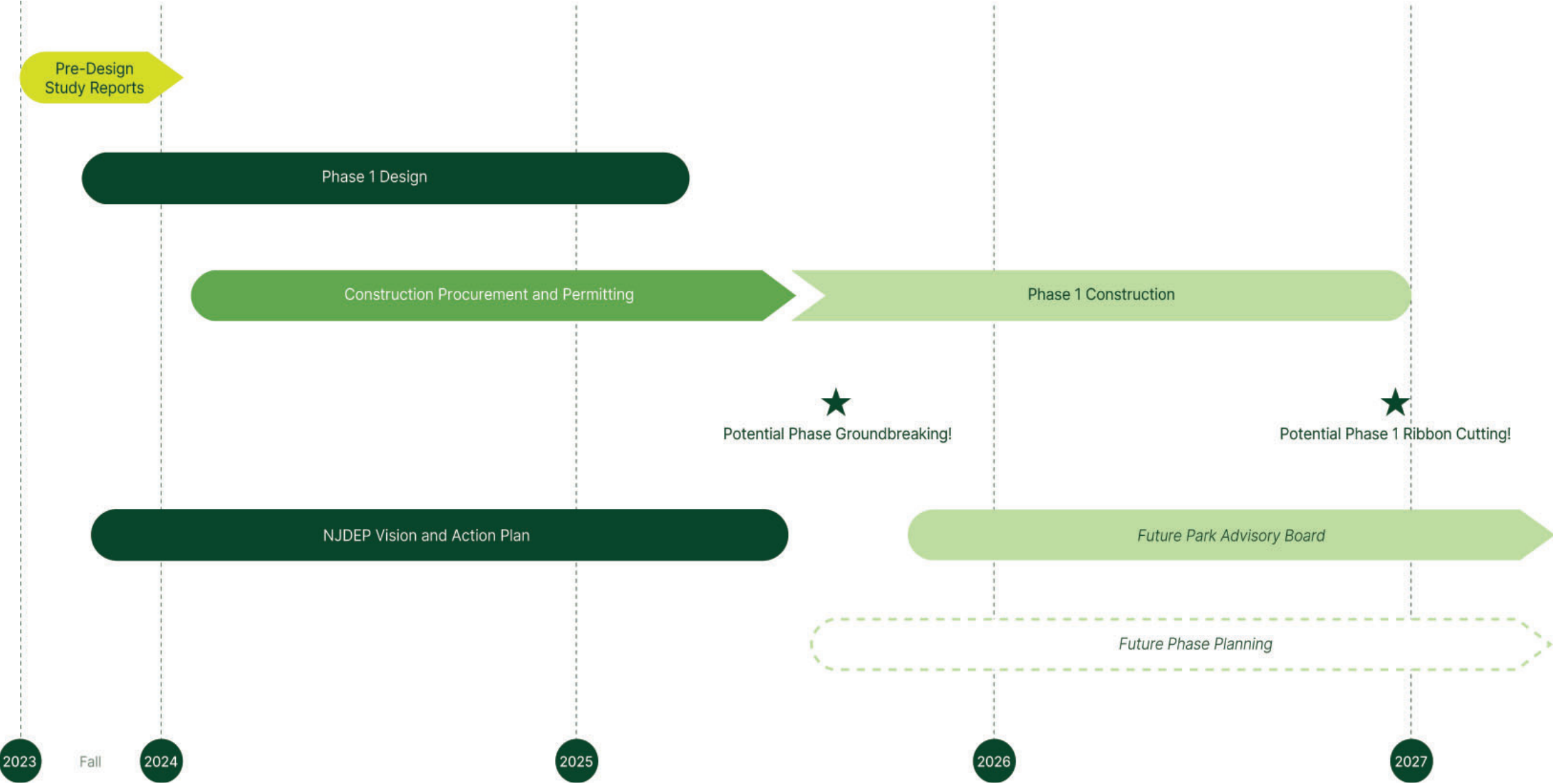
Phased Development

Developing the park in phases means that different segments of the park would be made available to the public over time, eventually resulting in a fully accessible recreational and transit corridor. This approach enables visitors to enjoy the benefits of various segments throughout development. The Vision and Action Plan has been developed simultaneously with the first phase of implementation, which was identified in the phased development report during the pre-design study reports.

What is Phase 1 of the park’s development?

Phase 1 encompasses nearly 0.8 miles of the park that are relatively easy to construct by the end of 2025, have a positive impact across a variety of metrics, and deliver some of the “wow” factor that will embed the park in the hearts of New Jerseyans. At the geographic center of the park’s nine miles, spanning the width of Newark, a culturally and geographically diverse municipality, this will be a powerful initial investment for NJDEP.

The first phase runs from Branch Brook Park Drive to the edge of the Broadway Overpass in Newark. Running through a dense urban neighborhood at grade, this section will function as an urban linear park. The focus is on providing continuous trail access to a series of park amenities aligned with community feedback—playgrounds, sports courts, water play, an event lawn and stage, gathering areas, shady seating, community gardens and picnic spaces, open lawns, native plantings and food truck parking.



The park design planning and process from 2023 to today



Phase 1 Overview

Design Studies

Phase 1, running from Branch Brook Parkway to Broadway in Newark, includes a series of unique experiences. Two continuous pathways, a multi-modal bicycle path to the north and a pedestrian path to the south, continuously meander along a corridor punctuated by rest areas and activity centers. The Branch Brook Park Overlook Activity Center offers amenities like shaded seating, an overlook to the historic park, and a lawn for picnics. Tiffany Manor Activity Center, at the junction of Highland Ave. and Manchester Place, offers a comfortable urban plaza with views to the iconic and historic manor building, shaded seating, bike facilities and space for small events, including food trucks. Finally, Newark Central Activity Center, at the widest section of the entire park, provides active amenities to stay and play all day, including sports courts and fitness equipment, picnic areas and community gardens, an adventure playscape, water features, and an event lawn with a stage for medium-sized community events.

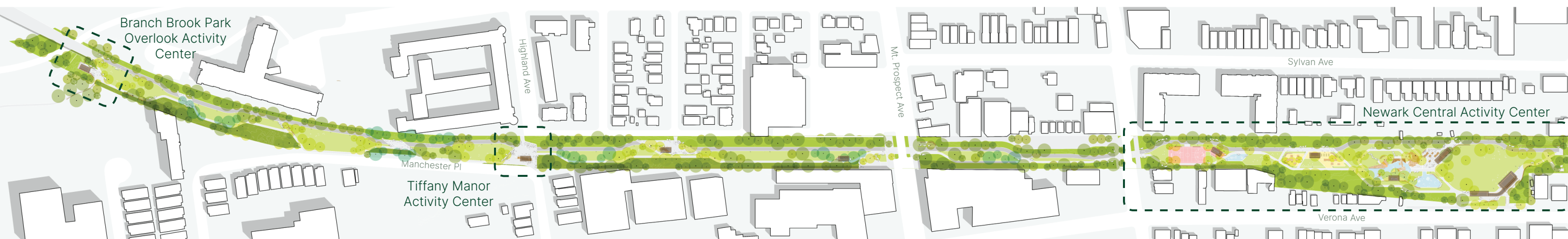
Design Documentation

Building off of the pre-design study reports, engagement feedback and conceptual planning, the team has been developing the design of Phase 1 into detailed documents to support bidding for construction. This includes traditional design phase milestones of schematic design, design development, and construction documentation. A series of design workshops with the NJDEP team in each phase have explored key issues related to design aesthetic, site and architectural finishes, maintenance, plantings, and pedestrian use patterns. Collaborative discussions have led to decisions which are folded into the design documentation. Deliverables at each phase of the design process include drawings (plans, sections, axonometric diagrams, and details) as well as construction specifications.

Permitting and Procurement

Permitting conversations with local and state regulatory bodies began concurrently with the design phases and built on research completed in pre-design study reports. Permitting for Phase 1 includes environmental permitting for work with remedial soil design, stormwater permitting, and permitting related to work within public rights of way (where the park crosses streets). Detailed permitting requirements and schedules related to approval processes are documented within the project schedule, and are expected to be complete at time of project bid.

NJDEP is partnering with EDA to retain a construction manager and issue subcontractor bids for the construction of Phase 1. The design team is an active participant in coordinating the bid process and overseeing construction administration to ensure a high quality deliverable for the State of New Jersey.



Phase 1 in Newark features three activity centers: Branch Brook Park Overlook, Tiffany Manor, and Newark Central.

Phased Development

Strategies

The pre-design study reports explored different scenarios for phased development of the park based on site analyses that looked at key intersections. Input from community engagement and local officials was synthesized into recurring values and priorities. These values and priorities were assembled through studies on community context, site conditions, stormwater management, peer project reviews, and the associated cost analyses.

This analysis was integrated into a set of site suitability criteria that evaluated the capacity of each segment of the nine-mile site to accommodate the project's goals for design, socioeconomic factors, budget, and timeline.

A subset of “impact” criteria identified park segments that are in the highest need of new park space, economic development, stormwater

management, soil remediation, and other improvements that the park will bring to those communities.

A portion of “ease” criteria identified the park segments where it is feasible to construct the first phase of the new park within budget and timeline targets.

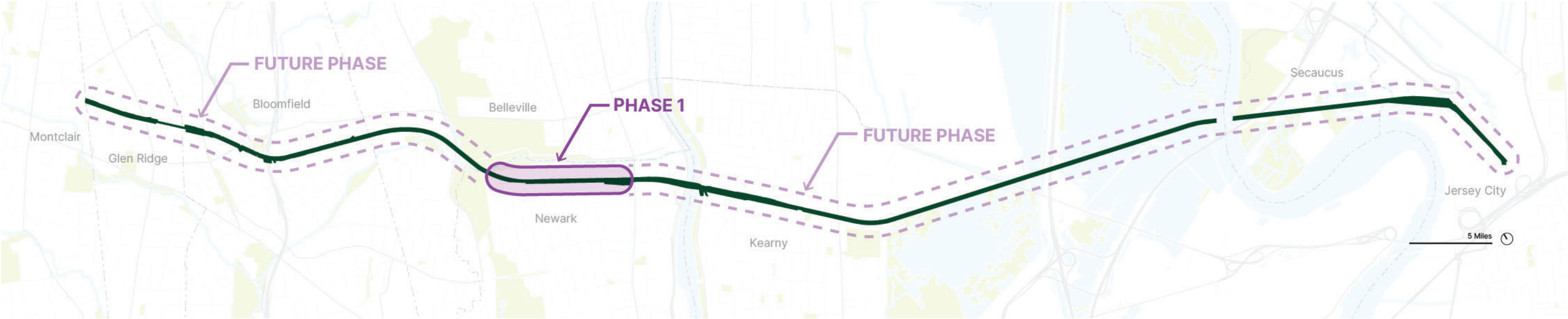
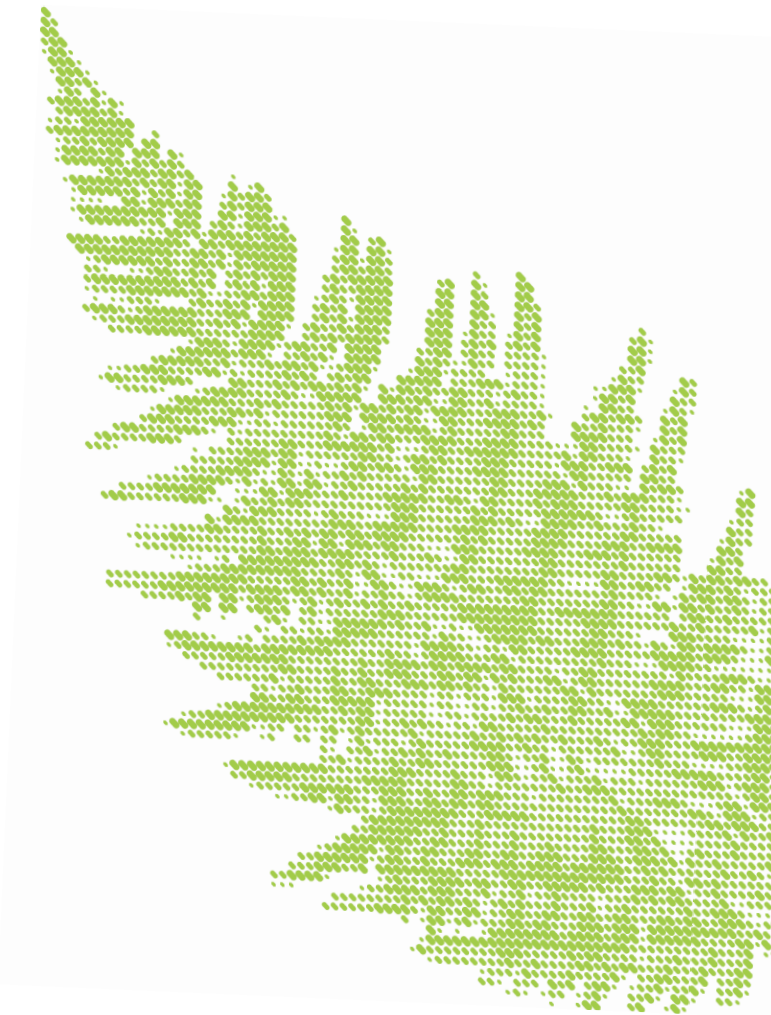
The suitability assessment also considered so-called “wow moments.” That is, moments of distinguished beauty or significance that merit the designation of a state park. In Phase 1, significant notable moments along the site include the Branch Brook Park bridge and Tiffany Manor, among others.

These criteria dictated the order in which development would take place over time, beginning with Phase 1, and continuing through the end of the park's development, in phases.

General Criteria

Many factors will determine the exact timeframe and sequencing of future phases. These might include:

- Timing and considerations related to adjacent projects in the Meadowlands, Secaucus, and Jersey City portions of the park.
- Extent of structural improvements related to the series of park overpass bridges along the western segments of the park. Transportation grants could be leveraged for some of this work. Significant coordination would be required between the state and municipalities owning the rights of way.
- Timing and considerations related to NJ Transit's potential development of dedicated transit between Jersey City and Arlington Depot.



Potential future phases are west and east of Phase 1.

Section 02

Project Vision

Chapter 01 Overview

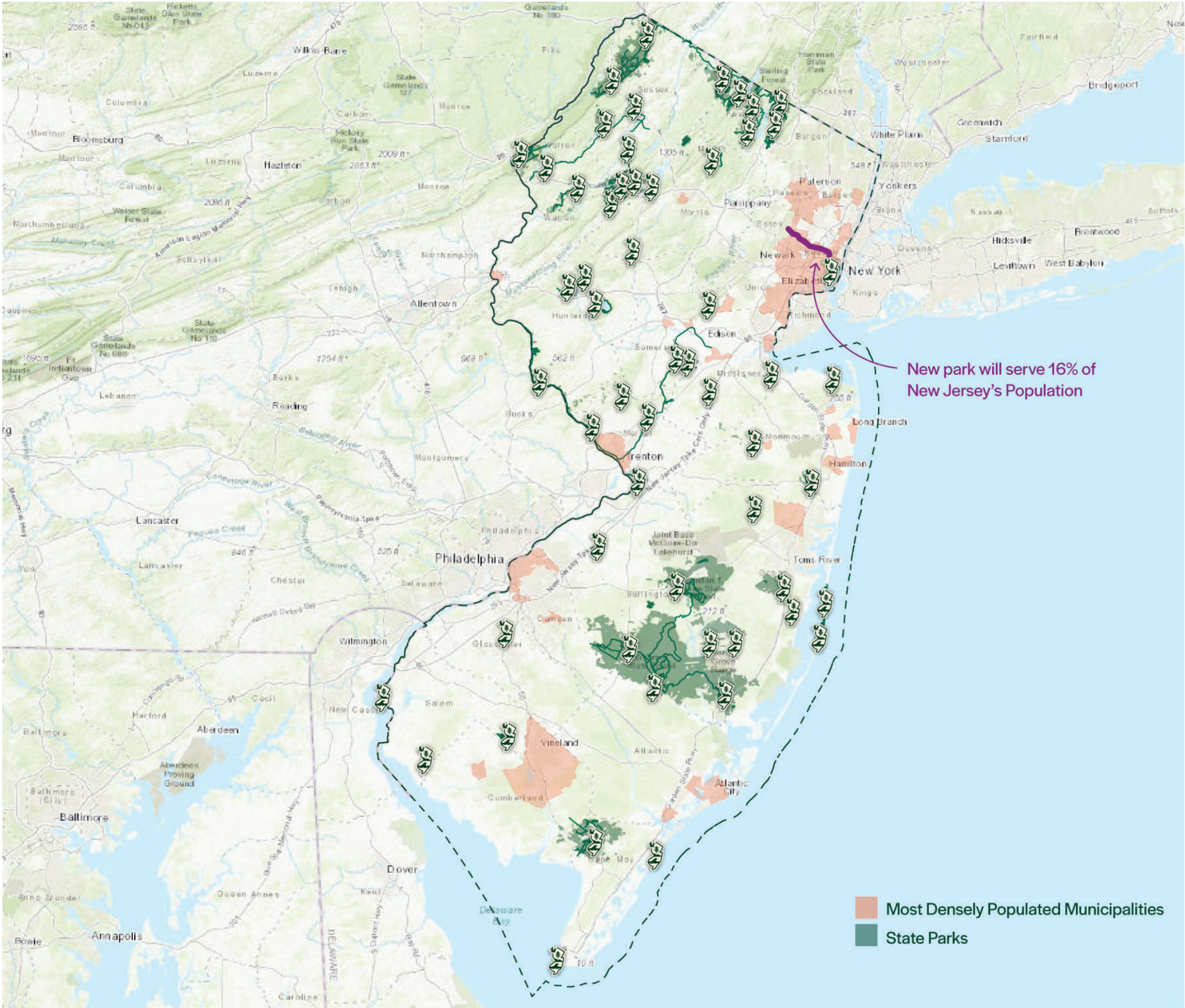
Expand Park Access

Bring the State Park to the City

The New Jersey State Park Service operates 51 state parks and forests. Of these parks, only one state park is within the boundaries of the most densely populated area in the state. The park would increase access to walkable park spaces to over 100,000 people who live and work within a 10-minute walk of this trail.

This area includes the eight municipalities crossed by the park. The municipalities of Montclair, Glen Ridge, Belleville, Bloomfield, Newark, Kearny, Secaucus, and Jersey City would have access to nine miles of linear parkway within walking distance, biking distance, or a short commute by public transit or car. This makes everyday recreation more easily accessible for thousands of residents and visitors in the area.

The park would provide many of the benefits offered by existing state parks. It would offer safe access to public greenspaces with endless options for activities. This could range from a family barbecue to a school field trip. It would also provide a recreational and transit corridor for those seeking outdoor exercise or a protected commuting thoroughfare. Additionally, it would provide shelters and restroom facilities to supplement daytime activities and events along the park.



Map of New Jersey's state parks relative to the park. ⁶

Fill Unmet Park Needs

Amplify Destinations and Programs



The park property connects directly into three municipal parks and is within walking distance of over ten nearby parks. This offers an incredible expansion of the accessible park network in these communities. The graphic analysis above provides a glimpse into the unmet needs of these greenspaces and can be used as a springboard for programming design.

For example, there are numerous instances of park-adjacent parks that lack facilities for community cooking events, cultural centers, or basic needs such as restrooms. The design of the park might respond to this unmet need with a beautifully designed cultural center that offers space for community barbecues or trailside restroom breaks.

In areas that don't have designated sports fields, play spaces, or dog parks, the park design might include greenspaces with full-scale sports fields, safe and engaging play equipment, and protected areas for dogs and their owners to recreate. These areas might also include community gardens, sheltered resting space, or flexible greenspaces for picnicking or lounging.

The usable and programmable space of the park fluctuates in width throughout the nine miles. This results in a diverse set of potential experiences and programming. Some areas are as narrow as 30' while others are as wide as 200'. The narrower segments might be perfect for small group gathering spaces or nature areas. The wider areas might support much needed large event space or facilities to support the everyday visitor to the park.

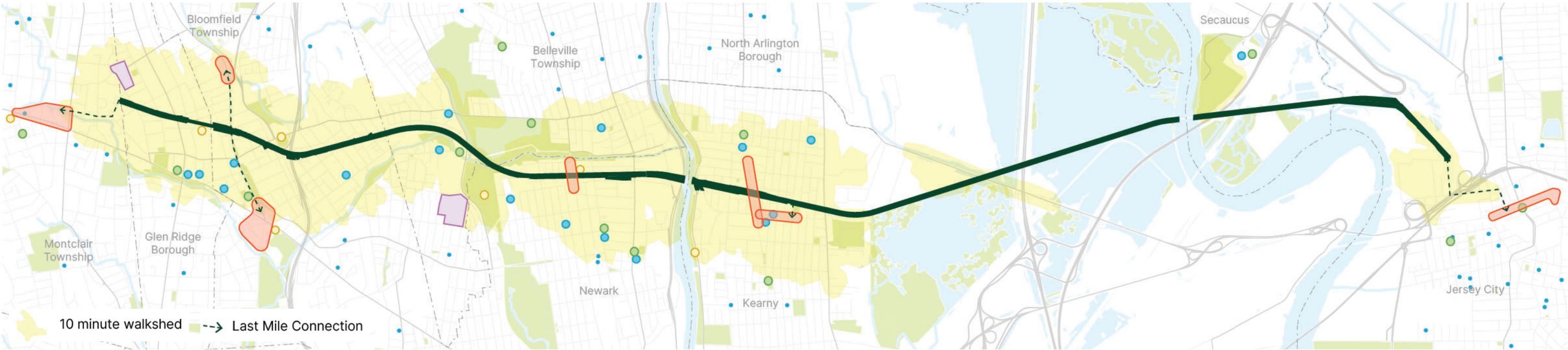
The careful and thoughtful program design of these spaces would also offer local organizations more programming space and possibilities. It would amplify existing parks and their amenities by serving as a connection across these spaces. Ultimately, it would render this region a greater destination for public outdoor recreation and activities.

Adjacent Park Gaps

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>a Foley and Bloomfield Memorial Field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature spaceCommunity cooking areaDog play area | <p>e Manor Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature areaOpen fieldsSport facilitiesCommunity cooking areaDog play area | <p>i Glenfield Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature spaceCommunity cooking areaDog play area | <p>m Branch Brook Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature areaCommunity cooking areaDog play area |
| <p>b Oakside Bloomfield Cultural center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Open fieldsPlay spacesSport facilitiesCommunity cooking areaDog play area | <p>f Bell Playground</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature spaceOpen fieldsSport facilitiesCommunity cooking areaRestroomsDog play area | <p>j The Glen Gazebo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Open fieldsPlay spacesSport facilitiesCommunity cooking areaRestroomsDog play area | <p>n Frank A. Cardoza Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Kearny Dog ParkNature spaceOpen fieldsSport facilitiesCommunity cooking areaRestrooms |
| <p>c Belleville Little League Baseball field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature spaceSport facilitiesCommunity cooking areaDog play area | <p>g Gunnell Oval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature areaCommunity cooking areaDog play area | <p>k Bloomfield Green</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature spaceOpen fieldsPlay spacesSport facilitiesCommunity cooking areaRestroomsDog play area | <p>o Arlington Depot Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature areaOpen fieldsPlay spacesSports facilitiesCommunity cooking areaRestrooms |
| <p>d Belleville Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature spaceSport facilitiesCommunity cooking areaDog play area | <p>h Laurel Hill Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature areaCommunity cooking area | <p>l Bloomfield Baseball Fields</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature areaSport facilitiesCommunity cooking areaDog play area | <p>p Hickory Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nature areaOpen fieldsCommunity cooking areaRestroomsDog play area |

Benefit Surrounding Communities

Engage with Community Infrastructure



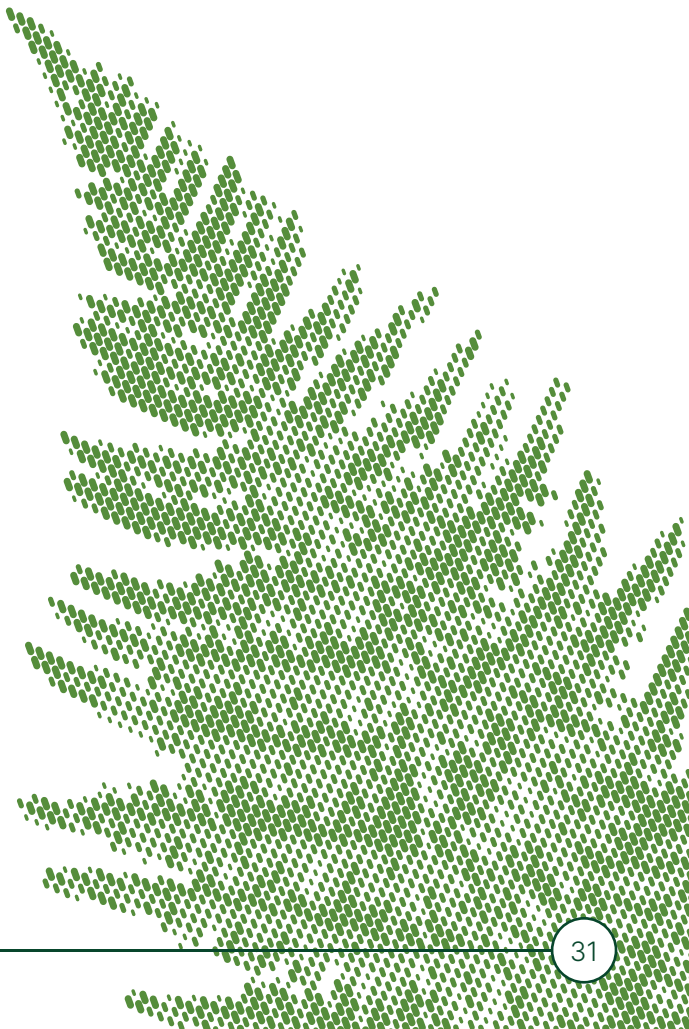
Social Infrastructure

- Neighborhood Centers**
 - Bloomfield Ave / Montclair
 - Broad and Baldwin
 - Six Points / Bloomfield
 - Mount Prospect Ave
 - Kearny Ave
 - Midland Ave
 - Newark Ave
- Hospitals**
 - Mountainside Medical Center
 - Clara Mass Medical Center
 - Columbus Hospital
- Arts, Culture, and Gardens**
 - One River School of Art and Design
 - Benson St Community Garden
 - Westminster Arts Center
 - Oakeside Bloomfield Cultural Center
 - Cherry Blossom Welcome Center
 - Art Town Alley
 - Kearny Community Garden
- Libraries, Recreation, and Civic Centers**
 - Montclair Public Library
 - Glen Ridge Public Library
 - Bloomfield Public Library
 - Bloomfield Civic Center
 - Belleville Senior Recreation Center
 - Belleville Rec House
 - Belleville Public Library
 - Newark North Public Library
 - Newark North Senior Center
 - Kearny Public Library
 - Secaucus Public Library Annex
 - Jersey City Free Public Library
- Schools (within a 10-min walk)**
 - Ridgewood Avenue School
 - Central School
 - Leonardo da Vinci International Academy
 - Bloomfield High School
 - Fairview Elementary School
 - Belleville PS 10
 - Park Elementary School
 - Ridge Street Elementary School
 - Elliot Street Elementary School
 - Luis Munoz Marin Elementary School
 - Saint Peter School
 - Lincoln Middle School
 - Hudson Arts and Science Charter School
 - Roosevelt Elementary School
 - Schuyler Elementary School
 - High Tech High School

Expanding an Existing Network

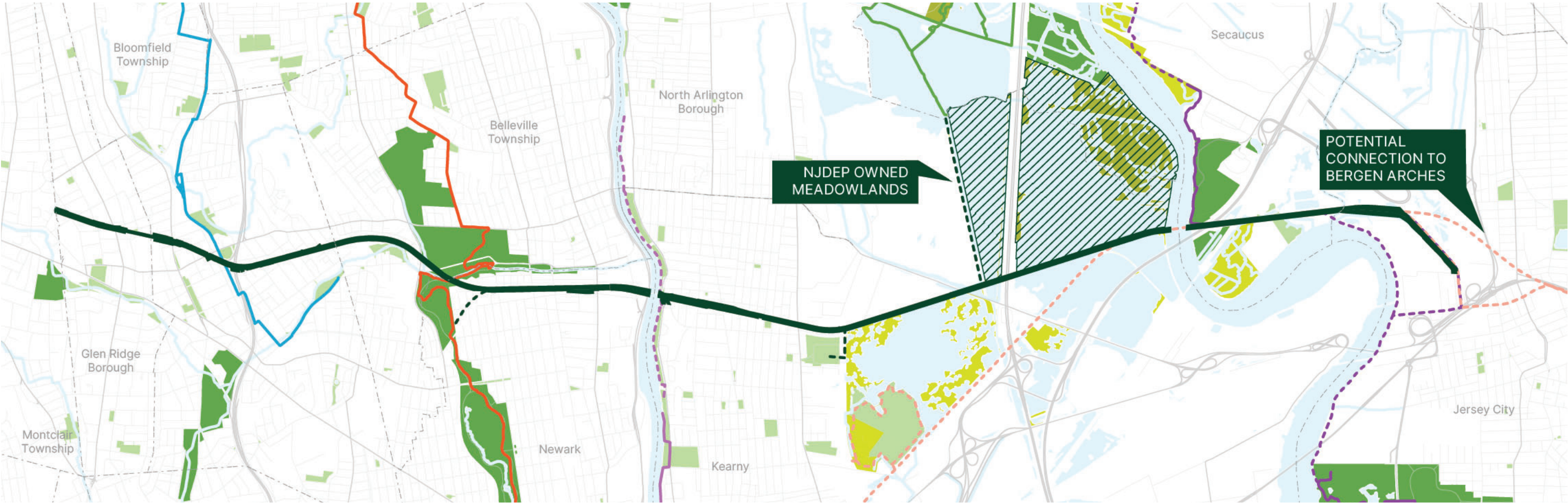
Today, much of the social and cultural fabric of each of the New Jersey municipalities that touch the future park are isolated from one another—disconnected pearls along a necklace without a string. With tens of thousands of people living or working within a half-mile, or a 10 minute walk, of the park, there is so much untapped potential to realize and connect the socially and culturally unique experiences of each municipality into a connected and celebrated cultural corridor.

Not only could the park benefit surrounding communities by providing accessible green space for recreation, promoting physical activity, and enhancing mental well-being, it could also boost local economies by attracting visitors, improving property values, and fostering stronger community connections through shared public spaces and cultural events. Additionally, the park could serve as a sustainable transportation corridor, reducing traffic and pollution.



Connect Natural Systems

Establish a Unified Corridor with the Park



Parks and Trails

- Municipal
 - County
 - Regional
 - NJDEP
 - State
- Existing Trails**
- Morris Canal Park
 - Lenape Trail / Liberty Gap Trail
 - Passaic River Waterfront Walkway
 - Sawmill Creek Trail
 - Hackensack Riverwalk
- Planned Trails**
- Passaic River Waterfront Walkway
 - Hackensack Riverwalk
 - Other proposed trails
 - Future NJDEP Park Connection

The park will continue to serve as an important habitat corridor for diverse ecosystems. The property traverses numerous different landscape typologies, which are detailed in the **Design Framework** chapter. These typologies are characterized by their unique hydrological, geological, and ecological makeup, supporting many different species of plants and animals.

The park property intersects numerous bodies of water including the Passaic River, the Hackensack River, and wetlands. These areas are thriving with healthy aquatic life and migrating bird species. The park has the power to expand habitat for the many species that depend upon these waterways, while engaging the public in on-site environmental education for the local ecosystem. This enhanced habitat zone would undergo a careful site survey

to prescribe any necessary remediation practices, as detailed in the pre-design study reports. This would ensure a safe and healthy space for all people, plants, and animals.

In addition to these waterways, the park property also intersects many different greenspaces of varying size and function throughout the nine miles. The park would expand upon existing wildlife corridors, which would help support a continuous network of plant and animal habitat. Outdoor space that is continuously linked provides critical access to food sources and a greater transportation corridor for the species that live in this area.

The park would supplement the welfare of these species through careful landscape maintenance and a thoughtful palette of plant species native to New Jersey. The park planting strategy provides

an analysis of existing site conditions and the resultant list of recommended plants that would thrive in these spaces. The strategy is outlined in the **Environment & Resilience** section of the **Community** chapter.

Lastly, the park would connect existing and planned trail systems, greatly expanding access to outdoor recreational and commuting routes for the everyday user or the new visitor. In an area without many designated recreational thoroughfares, this would provide much desired activity space and environmental engagement opportunities for local communities.

Section 03

Community Conversations

Chapter 01 Overview

How Community Was Reached

Since 2023, NJDEP and the design team have been engaging with the community through a variety of inclusive communication methods, as detailed below.

Digital and Physical Outreach:

Website, Survey, LinkTree, Mailers, and Flyers

An official NJDEP project website was created as an information hub for upcoming events and project details. The team also put together a digital survey that asked participants questions surrounding park programming, potential built amenities, project goals and concerns, and participants’ future vision. Ultimately, it was filled out by 568 people during the Phase 1 timeline.

A Linktree site was made available to connect the public with the website, survey, and social media. In order to physically reach the people and businesses directly adjacent to the park, the team also sent out 32,000 print mailers and left flyers at local businesses and parks.

In-Person Conversations:

Community Listening Workshops, Youth Engagement, and Pop-up Listening Sessions

The team hosted six community listening session workshops that shared project information and facilitated conversations with the public to discuss their priorities for the park. In tandem with these workshops, the team hosted pop-up listening sessions in public spaces and at local events in the surrounding municipalities of the park. These pop-ups were intended for populations and communities that had not already heard of the park project or who had not interacted with the project’s online engagement. The sessions invited passersby to contribute ideas, comments, and concerns in person or through digital media.

Lastly, the team invited local teenagers from all eight municipalities intersected by the park property to participate in a hands-on workshop and brainstorm ideas from the park. Ideas ranged from environmental, food, and racial justice to community collaboration, health, and happiness.

Trail Test

Following input gathered during numerous engagement events, the team extended the opportunity for the public to further express their opinions and experience many of their ideas in a life-sized, contextual setting. This demonstration offered the public a chance to submit feedback surrounding the themes of play, gather, connect, and relax. It also provided a chance for community members to witness the installation of small wooden “ornaments” created during workshops, which formed a distinctive collective art piece on the park.

Business Outreach

Prior to key engagement events, the team conducted on-the-ground outreach to retail businesses in the areas near the park, including key commercial corridors, with a particular focus on businesses adjacent to the park. A large majority of business owners were supportive of the park and agreed to post flyers in their windows to promote events. Property owners recognized the likely increase in their property value.

Meetings with Community Leaders, Local Agencies, and Municipalities

The team met with multiple state and local agencies to discuss the park and its relationship to various assets. Understanding current and future capital projects to be undertaken by different entities is important to developing a clear park phasing plan.

Additionally, the team met with community leaders and BIPOC organizations to share potential community benefits of the park (health, wellness, multigenerational programming, accessibility, connections, entrepreneurship, economic development, etc). These meetings were built on discussions that NJDEP had with the park-adjacent municipalities by offering space for one-on-one conversations and sharing project updates.

Engagement Summary

Getting the Lay of the Land



Narrowing in Locally



Coordinating with Essential Stakeholders



What Community Voiced

Input gathered from engagement revealed multiple themes about desired programming and uses, public space characteristics, and community priorities/needs. The team engaged with over 500 community members from each of the eight municipalities intersected by the park. Over 1,270 comments about the project were gathered from both in-person and online engagement. These comments have been organized into the categories detailed below.

Programming

The following focus areas for programming possibilities emerged from community feedback:

Mobility and Connectivity

There is strong support for a shared use path for biking and walking. Interest in transit, light rail, and bus rapid transit made up 6% of all comments.

Active Recreation

A desire for active corridors was made clear through the repeated interest in walking, jogging, biking, fitness stations, and active play spaces.

Arts and Culture

Many people see the park as a place for year-round activities, everyday gatherings, and hosting community programs and art events.

Education

A priority is to highlight the industrial history, ecology, and interesting facts of surrounding communities.

Economy

The park's potential impact on the local economy was a recurring topic, focusing on local business connection and influence on housing costs.

Nature and Wellness

The theme of the park as a connection to nature was prominent, with an emphasis on engaging with nature and supporting biodiversity.

Character

There is a consistent desire for more nature-driven experiences that support existing ecosystems along the park. Pollinator gardens, passive greenspaces, active recreational corridors, and community spaces were common themes.

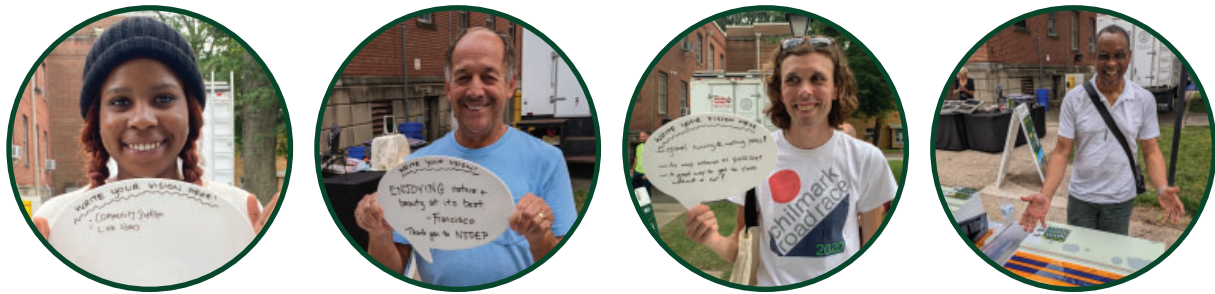
Safety and Security

Safe experiences for people on all modes of travel along the park is a key concern. Ideas about surface treatment reflected a concern about accessibility for people of all walking abilities, those with wheelchairs, parents with strollers, and runners and joggers. There were also concerns about potential quality of life issues and security challenges that could arise as foot traffic increases. In advance of and during its Phase 1 development, NJDEP will prioritize securing any unsafe areas.

Segment Prioritization

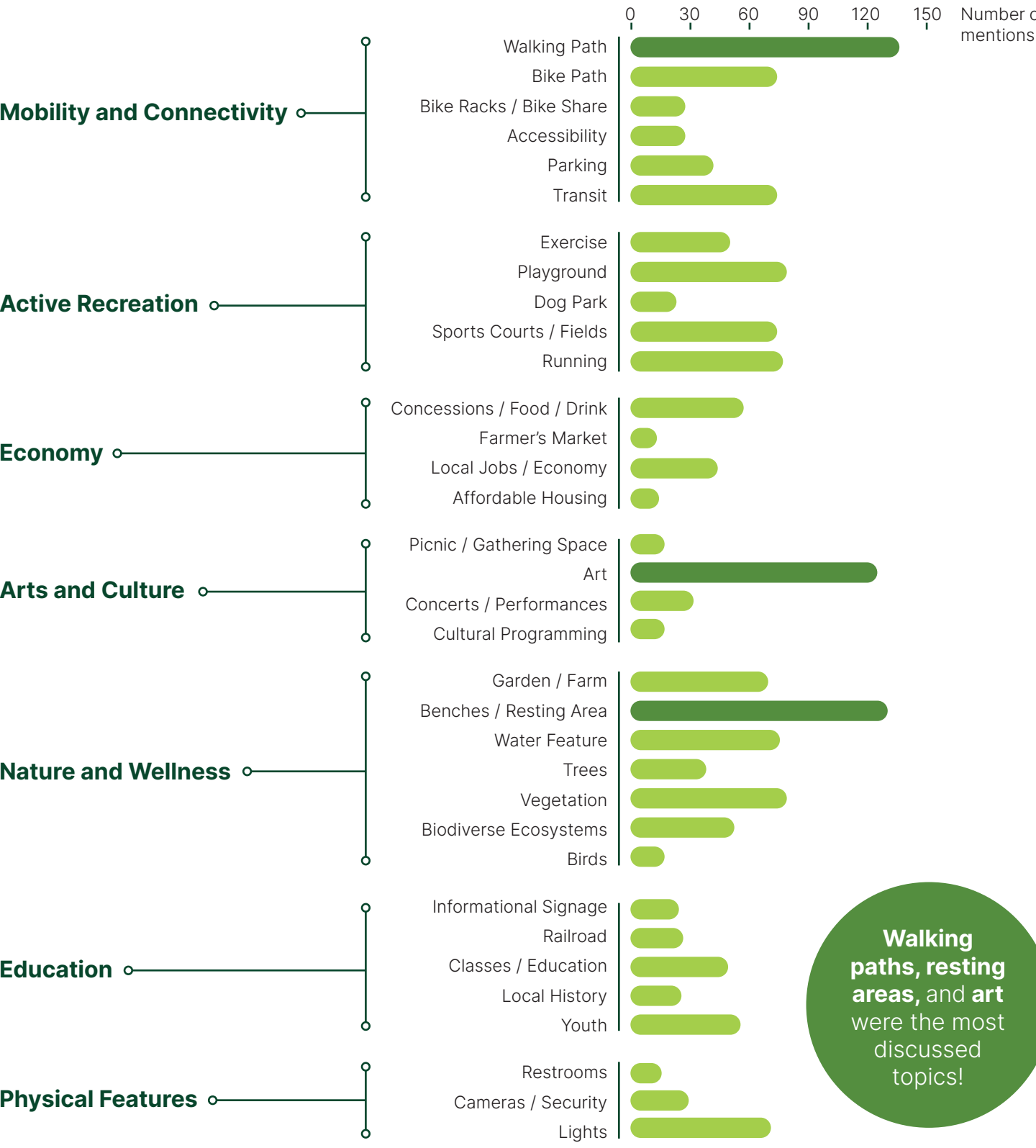
People often expressed an eagerness to prioritize segments closest to their community when asked where the park should start, indicating enthusiasm about the project's potential. Activity-centered feedback focused on better bike and pedestrian access to the Meadowlands. Suggestions for segment starting points included starting in: the Newark/Central area (most densely populated), a historically underrepresented community, or areas adjacent to local commercial corridors.

Community Listening Session at Bloomfield Farmer's Market ▶



Community Comments

The following words and themes received the most mentions in community comments. It's important to note that within these comments, a word might be mentioned in either support or opposition to a particular theme. This graph aims to illustrate the topics that the public was most interested in discussing.



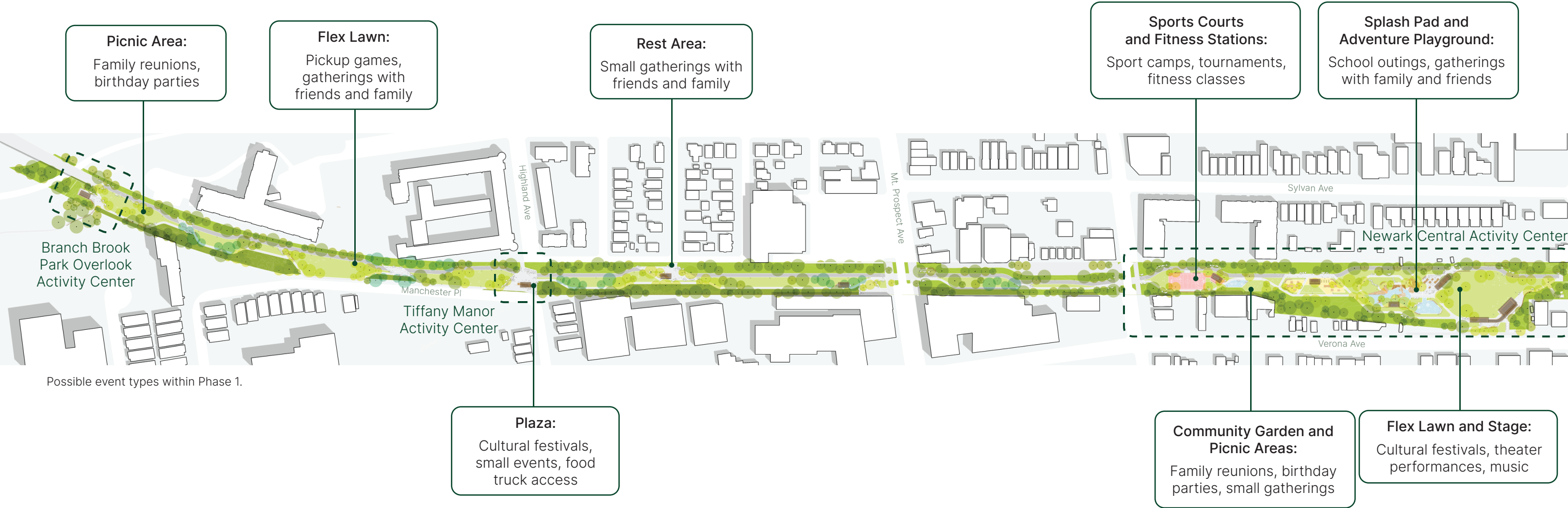
Walking paths, resting areas, and art were the most discussed topics!

Community Engagement Strategies

When and Where

Since 2023, NJDEP has been hosting and facilitating community events and sharing media to understand the community’s interests, needs, and priorities, in addition to garnering general excitement for the future park. In-person programming has been taking place in communities adjacent to the park. Some of these events have been set up on the park property itself, in an effort to inspire imagination for a future linear parkway in its place.

Throughout the design phase, the team has coordinated long-term planning near the park. This will continue during the construction and eventual opening of Phase 1, which includes spaces for hosting community gatherings, whether small or large. Possible event types are imagined in the Phase 1 plan, illustrated below.



Pre-design study reports, Phase 1 Design Studies, and Vision and Action Plan Development

Future Phase Studies

Summer / Fall 2023

Forming Connections

- Pop-ups
- Youth visioning sessions with local partners
- One-on-one stakeholder conversations with community organizations

Summer 2024

Piloting Partnerships

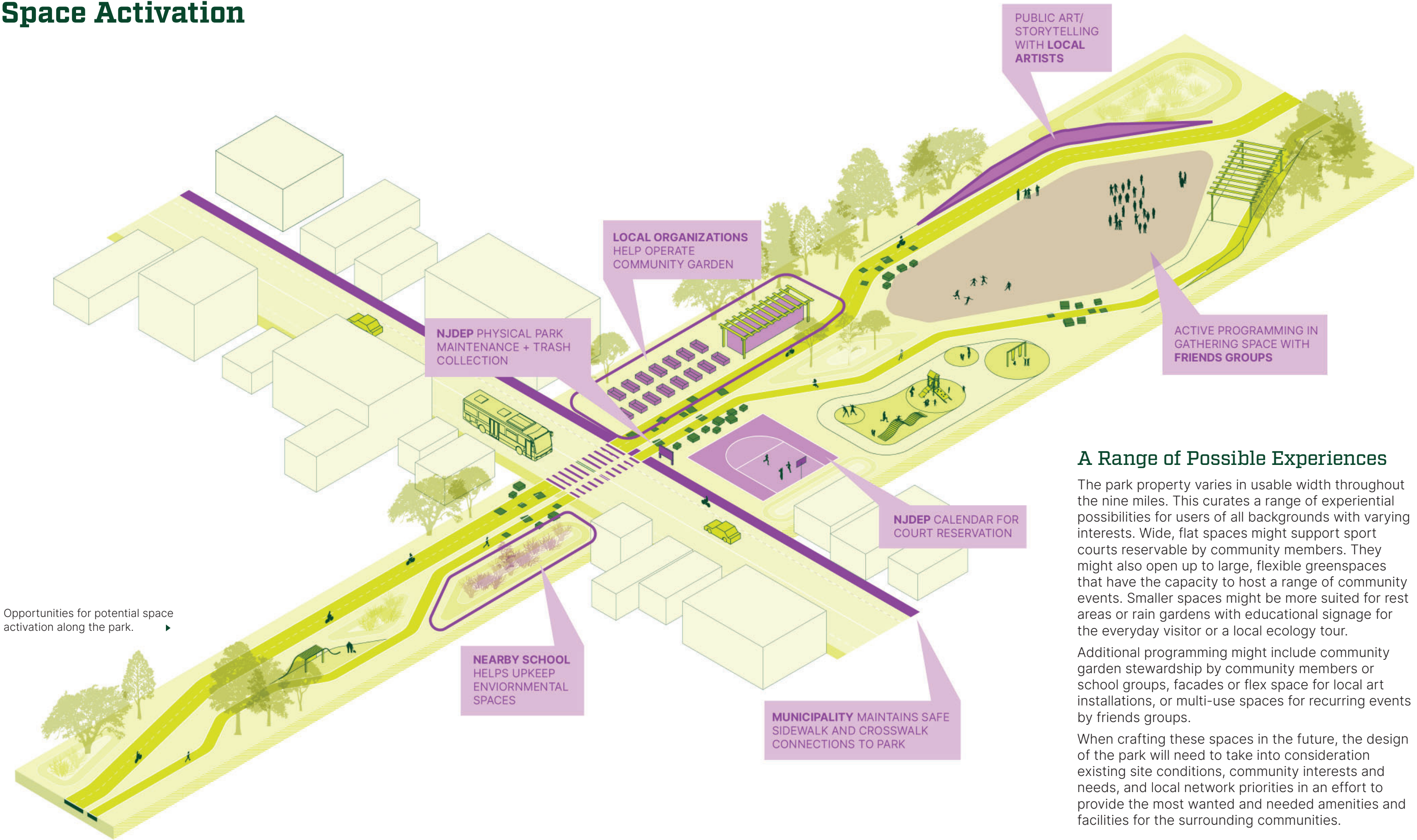
- Tactical demonstrations in partnership with community organizations
- Temporary installations based around major project components (art, traffic, community garden, or event programming)

2025 / Ongoing

Coordinating Long-Term Management and Programming

- Determine best partners for specific programming needs and spaces on the park
- MOUs, Insurance and Vendor contracts for partnerships
- Vision and Action Plan recommendations

Space Activation



A Range of Possible Experiences

The park property varies in usable width throughout the nine miles. This curates a range of experiential possibilities for users of all backgrounds with varying interests. Wide, flat spaces might support sport courts reservable by community members. They might also open up to large, flexible greenspaces that have the capacity to host a range of community events. Smaller spaces might be more suited for rest areas or rain gardens with educational signage for the everyday visitor or a local ecology tour.

Additional programming might include community garden stewardship by community members or school groups, facades or flex space for local art installations, or multi-use spaces for recurring events by friends groups.

When crafting these spaces in the future, the design of the park will need to take into consideration existing site conditions, community interests and needs, and local network priorities in an effort to provide the most wanted and needed amenities and facilities for the surrounding communities.

Chapter 02

Community

Identity	50
Economic Development	64
Access	72

Principles:

Identity:

Reflect the cultures, values, customs, and needs of surrounding communities.

Economic Development:

Enhance quality of life for existing communities and vitality of commercial corridors. Bolster resilience to physical and cultural displacement.

Access:

Establish active connections between homes, jobs, education, and cultural destinations.

Section 01

Identity

Chapter 02

Community

Community Strategies

Integrating Cultural Symbolism, Colors, and Patterns in Designing Public Open Spaces

Public open spaces are essential elements of urban environments, providing areas for recreation, social interaction, and cultural expression. Designing these spaces with attention to cultural symbolism, colors, and patterns is crucial for creating environments that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also resonate with the local community. This approach fosters a sense of belonging, respect for cultural diversity, and a deeper connection between people and their surroundings.

Cultural Symbolism: Weaving Tradition into Modern Spaces

Incorporating cultural symbolism in public open spaces bridges the gap between tradition and modernity. Symbols, motifs, and artistic expressions unique to a culture can transform a generic space into a meaningful one. These elements can be integrated through sculptures, murals, landscaping, and architectural features, ensuring the space reflects the history and values of the community. For example, in many Indigenous cultures, specific plants and animals hold significant meanings. By incorporating these elements into the design, planners can honor the heritage and stories of these communities. This not only preserves cultural identity but also educates visitors about the richness of local traditions.



Cultural ornamentation in wall reliefs can be reflected in building materials that enhance wayfinding and celebration.

Colors: Evoking Emotions and Cultural Identity

Colors have powerful psychological and emotional impacts, and their significance varies across cultures. Thoughtfully chosen color palettes in public open spaces can evoke specific emotions and create an inviting atmosphere. They can also reflect the cultural identity of the community, making the space feel more personalized and relevant. Incorporating culturally significant colors can enhance the sense of place. Using colors rooted in cultural heritage in public spaces can imbue the area with positive connotations and a sense of cultural pride.



Rays of color hold cultural significance and pride, from cosmology to the flags of Latin American countries.

Patterns: Connecting Past and Present

Patterns are another vital element that can connect the past with the present in public open space design. Traditional patterns, whether in paving, seating, or decorative elements, can serve as a visual link to a community's heritage. These patterns often carry historical significance and can tell stories of the people and their environment.

Incorporating cultural symbolism, colors, and patterns in designing public open spaces is not just about aesthetics; it is about creating environments that resonate with the community and celebrate its identity. These elements can transform a simple park or square into a place of cultural significance, fostering a sense of belonging and pride among residents. By honoring the traditions and values of the community, designers can create public spaces that are not only beautiful but also meaningful and inclusive.



Fostering multi-generational experiences in a public sphere celebrates past, present, and future togetherness.

Community Strategies

Symbolism, Colors, and Patterns of Latino Communities of New Jersey

Around 30% of the combined populations of the eight municipalities intersected by the park identify as Hispanic or Latino. Latino cultures are rich with symbolism, colors, and patterns that reflect their history, values, and traditions. In New Jersey, these cultural elements are vibrant and omnipresent, offering a tapestry of diverse and meaningful expressions. This section explores the symbolism, colors, and patterns prevalent among the Latino communities in New Jersey, illustrating how these cultural markers maintain a sense of identity and heritage in a multicultural environment.

Symbolism

Symbolism in Latino cultures often draws from indigenous, African, and European influences, creating a unique blend that tells stories of resistance, resilience, and community.

Religious Symbolism

Many Latino cultures are deeply rooted in Catholicism, with symbols like the Virgin of Guadalupe, crosses, and saints playing a significant role. The Virgin of Guadalupe, in particular, is a unifying figure, symbolizing faith, motherhood, and protection. Her image is often found in homes, churches, and public murals, serving as a reminder of faith and cultural identity.

Nature-Based References

Symbols from nature, such as the jaguar, eagle, and serpent, are prevalent in Latino iconography. These symbols often have roots in indigenous cultures, representing power, freedom, and wisdom. For example, the eagle, a powerful emblem in Mexican culture, is a symbol of strength and vision.

Abstract and Geometric Symbols

Indigenous patterns, such as those from the Mexica and Inca civilizations, are incorporated into modern designs. These symbols can represent various concepts, from the cycles of nature to societal structures. They are often seen in textiles, ceramics, and tattoos, preserving ancient traditions through contemporary mediums.

Colors

Color plays a crucial role in Latino cultures, conveying emotions, beliefs, and social status. The use of vibrant and contrasting colors is a hallmark of Latino artistic expression. Red is a prominent color symbolizing life, energy, and passion. It is often used in celebrations, such as festivals and weddings, and in religious contexts to signify the blood of Christ and the saints. Yellow and gold represent wealth, happiness, and the divine. Gold, in particular, has historical significance from the time of the Mexica and Incas, who associated it with the sun and gods. Yellow is also used during Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) to honor the deceased and invite them back to the world of the living. Green symbolizes fertility, nature, and hope. It is commonly seen during festivals and in everyday life, reflecting the lush landscapes of Latin American countries. In Mexican culture, green is also part of the national flag, representing independence and hope. Blue represents tranquility, trust, and the sky. It is often used in religious art and decorations, symbolizing the heavens and the Virgin Mary.

Patterns

Patterns in Latino cultures are deeply rooted in tradition, often passed down through generations. These patterns are not just decorative but carry significant meaning and stories.

Textile Patterns

Weaving is a traditional craft in many Latino cultures, with patterns that vary by region and ethnicity. In the Andes, for example, textile patterns can indicate a person's community, social status, and even marital status. These patterns often incorporate geometric shapes, animals, and natural motifs.

Talavera Tiles

Talavera tiles, originating from Spain and widely used in Mexico, are known for their intricate patterns and vibrant colors. These tiles are commonly used in architecture, from kitchen backsplashes to building facades, blending European and indigenous artistic traditions.

Molas

The Guna people of Panama and Colombia create molas, which are colorful, hand-sewn textiles featuring intricate patterns. Molas are traditionally worn as part of women's clothing but are also used in various forms of art and decor. The designs often include elements of nature, animals, and abstract shapes.

The Latino communities in New Jersey bring a rich tapestry of symbolism, colors, and patterns that celebrate their diverse heritage. Through religious symbols, vibrant colors, and intricate patterns, these cultural elements serve as a bridge connecting them to their roots while enriching the multicultural landscape of New Jersey. By embracing and showcasing these cultural markers, the Latino communities maintain a strong sense of identity and pride, ensuring that their traditions continue to thrive in their adopted homeland.



The yellow in flags of Latin America often represent gold or wealth, red often represents life, energy, or passion, and green often symbolizes fertility or nature.



Imagery from nature are prevalent in Latino art and iconography. In Mexica mythology, hummingbirds represent the sun god, Huitzilopochtli.



Patterns in Mayan textiles can indicate a particular community of origin, social status, or even marital status. This pattern is represents the Guatemalan village of Almolonga.

Accessibility and Belonging

Urban Design with Impact

Urban design profoundly influences how individuals experience and interact with public spaces. Two critical concepts that guide effective urban design are Accessibility and Belonging. While Accessibility focuses on removing barriers to ensure that everyone can use and benefit from public spaces, Belonging emphasizes creating environments where individuals feel welcomed, included, and connected to the community. While Accessibility and Belonging are distinct concepts, both are essential for creating inclusive, vibrant public spaces. Accessibility ensures that everyone can use and benefit from public spaces, while Belonging fosters a sense of connection and inclusion. By integrating principles that promote both Accessibility and Belonging, urban design can create environments where all individuals feel welcome, engaged, and valued. The case studies discussed illustrate how these principles can be effectively applied to transform public spaces into inclusive, thriving community hubs.



Rendering spaces accessible for users of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities establishes a welcoming atmosphere and encourages a sense of belonging.

Accessibility

Accessibility in urban design ensures that public spaces are usable by all people, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. Key elements of Accessibility include language access, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and considerations for vision impairment, neurodivergence, and wayfinding.

Language Access

Ensuring that public spaces accommodate speakers of different languages is crucial. Multilingual signage and information help non-native speakers navigate spaces more easily.

Government Services

Accessible design in public spaces should include easy access to government services, allowing individuals to engage with civic resources without unnecessary barriers.

Vision Impairment

Designing for vision impairment involves incorporating tactile surfaces, audio signals, and high-contrast signage to aid navigation for those with visual challenges.

ADA Compliance

Adhering to ADA standards ensures that public spaces are physically accessible to individuals with mobility impairments. This includes ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms.

Wayfinding

Effective wayfinding design helps people navigate spaces confidently and independently, using clear signage and intuitive layouts.

Connections to Transportation

Public spaces should be well-connected to transportation networks, ensuring that people can easily access these areas regardless of their mode of travel.

Neurodivergence

Designing with neurodivergent individuals in mind includes creating environments that minimize sensory overload or provide opportunity for ample stimulation.

Case Study



La Casita Community Garden Pavilions; Bronx, NY

Dozens of one-room structures, known as casitas, are scattered across the Bronx, forming one of the most impressive grassroots community rebuilding efforts in New York City. The first casita, “La Casita de Chema,” was built by Jose Soto in 1978 on an empty lot in Melrose. It became the heart of a communal space called the Rincón Criollo. Inspired by this model, residents began constructing casitas in

other vacant lots, reclaiming spaces ravaged by arson, decay, and neglect throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Each Bronx casita is unique and hand-built, typically featuring a small, one-story wooden structure with a peaked roof, large front porch, and many windows. Though the indoor space is limited to a single room, the surrounding yard - called the batey - serves as a vibrant hub of activity. These areas often include benches, domino tables, chicken coops, gardens, barbecue pits, music platforms, and patios for dancing, making each casita a dynamic center of community life and cultural preservation.

Based on the casita tradition, NYRP (New York Restoration Project) and Urban Air Foundation commissioned TEN Arquitectos to develop an adaptable structure in a South Bronx greenway to serve as a platform for a diverse array of activities such as a food preparation station, stage for performances to just a straightforward spot for solace and shade.



La Casita Community Garden Pavilions, Bronx, NY ⁷

Belonging

Belonging in urban design goes beyond physical accessibility to create spaces where individuals feel a sense of connection and inclusion. This involves fostering social interaction, civic engagement, cultural expression, and economic opportunities.

Social Interaction

Public spaces should encourage dialogue, learning, and intergenerational connections. Spaces designed for interaction help build community bonds and a sense of belonging.

Civic Engagement

Designing spaces that promote collaboration and participatory art allows residents to take an active role in their community, fostering a sense of ownership and pride.

Civic Pride

Incorporating elements that reflect the unique local identity, such as locally engaged art and indigenous plants, helps residents feel connected to their heritage and community.

Safety and Places of Refuge

Safe, welcoming spaces where people can congregate, recreate, and enjoy cultural activities contribute to a sense of belonging and community cohesion.

Flexibility

Designing flexible spaces that accommodate diverse activities ensures that public areas meet the varying needs and interests of the community.

Nurturing Economic Development

Supporting local entrepreneurs through opportunities to engage in public spaces helps cultivate community wealth and economic resilience.



Spaces that encourage social interaction between people of different backgrounds, ages, and abilities can strengthen a sense of belonging and community.

Case Study



Destination Crenshaw; Los Angeles, CA

When the Crenshaw/LAX light rail line was planned to run through the heart of Black Los Angeles, community leaders recognized a unique opportunity to showcase the cultural vibrancy of the Crenshaw District. In response, they launched one of the largest Black art and economic revitalization initiatives in the country. The community came together to build new public spaces, plant 100 trees, support local businesses, create jobs, and commission works from over 100 Black artists. The goal was clear: to ensure that anyone arriving in Los Angeles via

the new Metro line would be welcomed by the energy, legacy, and creativity of Black LA.

At the center of this initiative is Destination Crenshaw, a cultural infrastructure project that affirms the historical and ongoing presence of Black communities in the area. With new murals, sculptures, architectural features, and public programming, the project celebrates the identity, resilience, and achievements rooted in the Crenshaw District. It honors the joy, struggle, and contributions of Black Americans while creating a lasting, unapologetic statement of cultural pride and permanence.

Designed as both a cultural landmark and economic engine, Destination Crenshaw aims to drive long-term development through local hiring, support for small businesses, and the elevation of Black creative talent. The initiative includes more than 100 public artworks by LA-connected Black artists and will add four acres of open cultural space, revitalizing the Crenshaw Corridor. As the most significant commercial and cultural hub for Black Los Angeles, this project ensures the community not only survives but thrives, shaping a bold, forward-looking legacy.



Destination Crenshaw; Los Angeles, CA⁸

Regenerative and Equitable Development

Regeneration of the park presents an opportunity to develop its capability to support improved relationships between the socio-economic, cultural and natural systems of the diverse communities that it touches while improving upon this vital natural resource. This report encourages the leveraging of strategic partnership opportunities around programming, maintenance, and funding mechanisms to support the park's long term sustainability. The case studies presented in this report explore projects designed to stimulate cultural, economic and social transformation through both small interventions and large capital projects. Furthermore we ground this chapter in a series of guiding principles for regeneration and equity to ensure that the communities around the park thrive and are prioritized as investments occur.



Interactive relationships help build community.



Public playspaces encourage gathering of different groups.

The following principles for regenerative and equitable development of the park should guide decision making:

Accounts for the ingenuity of lower-income communities to solve their own problems.

Designing for equitable, systemic change in vulnerable communities should involve the fusion of the local knowledge of residents and community leaders with the technical knowledge of professionals in small, nimble, public projects.

Place based, inequity conscious approaches.

It is not enough to just have community engagement but there is a distinction between a focus on inclusive processes and on equitable outcomes. Projects that center community partnerships must be truly scoped, managed and programmed with community residents as the primary decision makers.

Invests in the self-determination and adaptive capacity of residents to speak for themselves.

To change the patterns of systemic inequity modes of decision making must be altered to incorporate a wider range of voices. The collective value system must also be recalibrated so that safety, health and equity are just as important decision-making factors as financial return on investment. Spaces that build stronger social networks can dramatically increase the adaptive capacity of a community.



Diverse spaces for engagement and play create social recreation opportunities.

Encourages playful activities that entice residents, young and old, to be creative together regardless of their artistic abilities or technical knowledge.

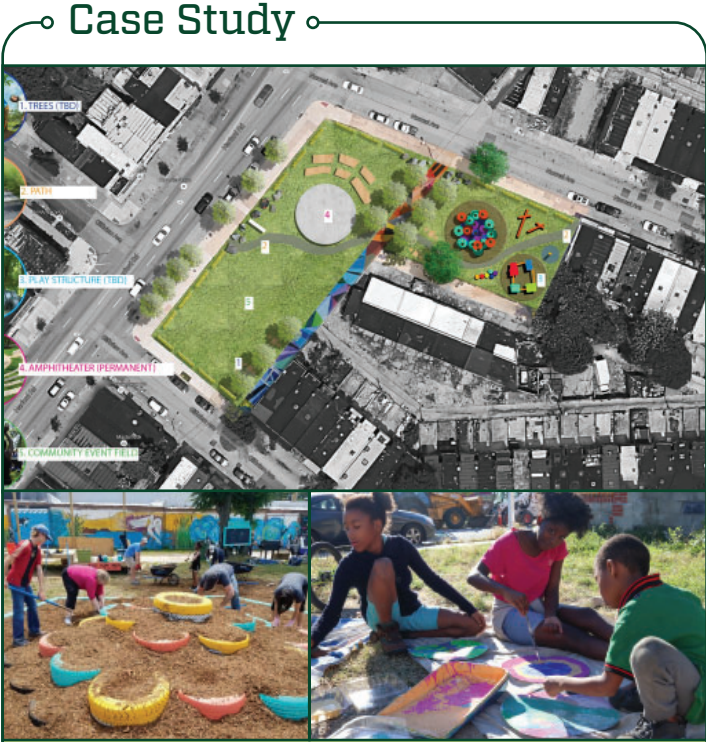
When planning with vulnerable populations it is essential to make space for resident leaders to contribute in ways that provide vital user information and creative inspiration for the project to change the conversation from one dominated by fear and distress to one driven by social equity, vibrancy and hope.

Recognizes the intractable relationships between social and ecological systems: aligning technical and ecological systems with social and economic ones.

To support the increased resilience of vulnerable communities the projects that are prioritized must be (1) community led, (2) intervene in public infrastructure, and (3) consider both ecology and equity in their approach.

Explores the role that microprojects can play in changing macrosystems.

There is an opportunity to realize projects that although they are implemented in the micro or prototype scale - they are focused on systemic change and intended to create dialogue that challenges the way that public spaces are used and understood. Smaller scale interventions can function as “urban acupuncture” - serving as a form of creative prototyping to help communities suffering from significant stress.



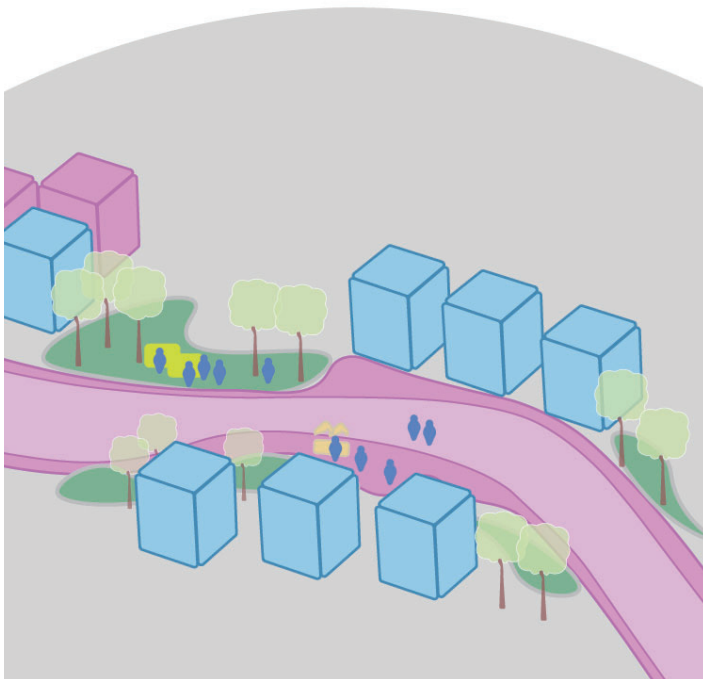
The Neighborhood Design Center at the Darley Park Gateway in Baltimore, MD

The Darley Park Gateway transformation in East Baltimore had the main intention to improve health and safety through communal space. With an aim to address chronic violence by creating a communal sanctuary, this project formed a network of community associations and business owners by highlighting the mutual benefit of space improvement. The Neighborhood Design Center collaborated with community members and design experts and came up with several ideas for simple, low-cost interventions to activate the space. Now bursting with life, this dynamic park is complete with a performance stage, play area, and ample greenery.

Neighborhood Design center; Baltimore, MA⁹

Fostering a Sense of Community

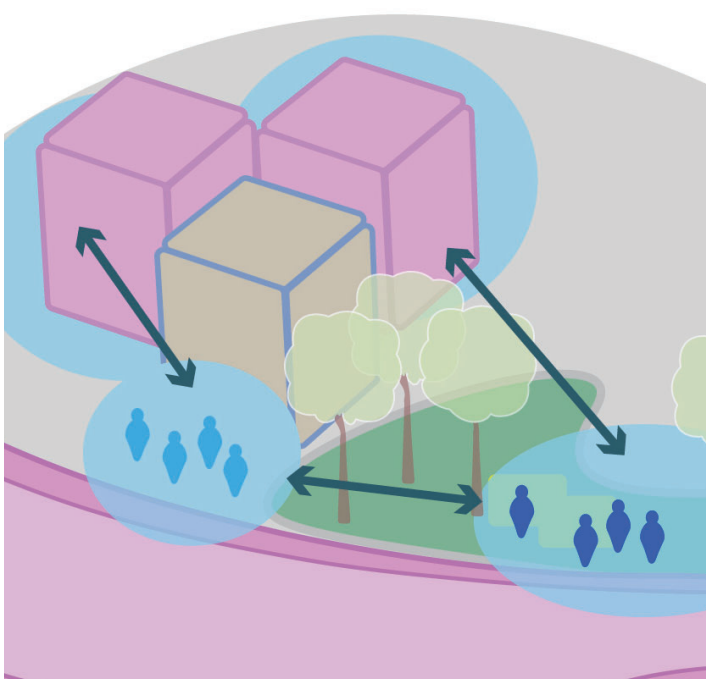
Successful parks ensure that the existing residential community thrives and benefits from the public space



Ensures that vulnerable residents are aided, instead of displaced, by interventions.

Placemaking/ placekeeping projects should aspire to contribute to positive change in vulnerable communities by allowing the assets, needs and wisdom of community residents to be a driving factor in the design and implementation process. Focusing on the shared edges of existing neighborhoods, and investing in pairs of complementary assets, prevents the catalyzation of inequitable pattern of development and displacement.

Parks can help facilitate a sense of community between residents



Facilitates community socio-spatial network and partnership building.

Networks and partnerships provide strength and helpful redundancy that increase a community’s capacity to adapt to future crises. The blending of residents (young and old) and representatives from other social service organizations can truly strengthen a project and provide new opportunities for innovative programming along the park. In place based practice the network building is not only about the people involved but also where they can give birth to new projects in partnership.

Parks can open up opportunities for environmental stewardship, fostering a relationship between the community and their surroundings



Supports climate resilience and capacity building.

If the community engagement isn’t connected to a clear learning goal for the project, it risks becoming performative rather than meaningful.

◦ Case Study ◦

Porous Public Space: People, Rainwater and Cities in Pacifica, CA

Roxanne Lee, Associates ASLA; James Wohlers, Student ASLA | Graduate | Faculty Advisors: Nancy Rottle, FASLA; Louise Grasso, University of Washington

This student project showcases actionable toolkit for communities to collaboratively design solutions to improved urban watershed health. Training of youth in stewardship activities and stipends provided to youth for stewardship activities. The booklet demonstrates how streets can be transformed into Porous Public Spaces using collaboratively design solutions.

Porous Public Space ⁹

Section 02

Economic Development

Chapter 02

Community

Catalyzing Economic Development With Parks

Parks generate value. Everyone would rather be near a park than not. Because parks are an asset to the neighborhoods they run through, they increase desirability and therefore drive appreciation.

Where people want to be is where retailers want to vend. From a retail perspective, park visitors are a captive audience. From concessions to pop-up markets to events, retail nodes are a natural complement in certain moments along a park.

Parks also spur economic activity. They need to be designed, constructed, maintained, operated, insured, secured, marketed, managed, and so on. Many of these services are often provided by third party vendors, meaning the private economy participates in the life of a park.

By generating value, stimulating retail spending, and creating bid opportunities for third party vendors, parks are economic catalysts. Park operators can use this economic power to achieve any number of social goals. The Atlanta Beltline, Inc. leveraged it to guarantee that affordable housing and commercial space would be built along the Beltline. The Detroit Riverfront Conservancy leveraged it to create a venue for local art and music, a beer garden, and pop-up markets along the Joe Louis Park. And the City of San Francisco leveraged it to create workforce development and vendor opportunities in an economically distressed community adjacent the new India Basin Shoreline Park.

Spurring Equitable Development Beyond the Park

Parks generate development opportunities for the properties that surround them. By acquiring park-adjacent land, park operators can leverage site control to achieve equitable development goals. The following case study from the Atlanta Beltline provides a great example of an equitable development through the integration of affordable housing in adjacent parcels.

◦ Case Study ◦



Rendering of Murphy Crossing, Cudlesac ¹¹

Murphy Crossing, Atlanta Beltline, Atlanta, GA

The preservation of affordable housing has become a top priority for equitable development along the Atlanta Beltline. In 2024, it created/preserved over 569 units of affordable housing, nearly double its annual goal.¹² Over the duration of its construction, the project hopes to create/preserve over 5,600 affordable units by 2030.

A notable development along the Beltline is Murphy Crossing, which is a 20-acre post-industrial site that will be developed into 1,100 units of affordable and market rate housing, with designated affordable commercial spaces for small businesses.

Retail on the Park

Retail nodes make sense at certain moments along a park. Visitors often want to stop for a beverage, sit for lunch, or shop at a local pop-up market. These visitor needs create opportunities for local retailers. The Joe Louis Park, featured below, illustrates how equitable business opportunities may be implemented along the park.

◦ Case Study ◦



Dequindre Cut Freight Yard, Max Ortiz ¹³

Dequindre Cut Freight Yard, Joe Louis Greenway, Detroit, MI

The Dequindre Cut Freight Yard is a multipurpose venue for live music, public art displays, refreshments, and shopping run by the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy. It is part of the larger Joe Louis Greenway, a 27.5-mile linear trail named after Joe Louis, a boxer, social justice advocate, and proud Detroit.

The Freight Yard hosts a multitude of events, ranging from a family-friendly harvest festival to techno DJs and cocktails. This programming brings activity to local businesses, rendering it a catalyst for local wealth creation along the Joe Louis Greenway. ¹⁴

Vendor Opportunities

To steward a park, a host of maintenance, operations, programming, and professional service work is required. Much of that work is done by third party vendors, and therein lies an opportunity to stimulate the local economy. Through socially-conscious procurement practices, park operators align the success of the park with economic goals of local businesses. India Basin Shoreline's Equitable development plan is a great example of integrating local job creation into park construction and management needs.

◦ Case Study ◦



India Basin Shoreline Community stewardship event ¹⁵

Equitable Development Plan, India Basin Shoreline Park, San Francisco, CA

Looking to provide hyper local job opportunities in building and maintaining the park could be a great tactic to support equitable economic development around the park.

The City of San Francisco included an Equitable Development Plan (EDP) as part of its construction of the new India Basin Shoreline Park. The EDP includes strategies for notifying Black-owned construction firms of bid opportunities and workforce training opportunities for local residents to join the park staff. ¹⁶

Community Resilience Strategies & Case Studies

Expanding Benefits of the Park to Surrounding Neighborhoods

Multiple studies have found that proximity to a park increases the value of a given property.¹ These studies suggest that the park could add a premium of 5% to 20% to the value of adjacent properties.

Cities across the country have successfully deployed strategies to increase community resilience, maintain neighborhood character, and spread the benefits that parks bring to existing residents and businesses. For example, the city of Montclair, a park-adjacent municipality, unanimously passed a rent control ordinance, which became effective May 9, 2022.

Legacy Resident Retention Programs

Legacy resident retention programs provide a direct and immediate method to protect existing residents from harmful price appreciation. These programs can take the form of assistance such as first-time home buyer education or direct financial support like down-payment assistance. Municipalities might also offer tax relief to existing residents.

Public Private Partnerships

Public private partnerships are models for leveraging the resources of the private sector and aligning them with public goals to realize mutually beneficial outcomes. In the context of parks, this often entails the construction of affordable housing and affordable retail spaces along a park.

Community Land Trusts

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are non-profit entities for owning property collectively and removing it from the speculative real estate market. CLTs acquire and hold deeds to land, and sell or lease the buildings on top of that land. This way, the CLT can offer the buildings at a lower price than selling both the building and the land. Moreover, CLTs are governed by a board of CLT residents, surrounding neighbors, and professionals who support the CLT’s mission.¹⁷

Careful and Intentional Zoning Practices

Finally, the power of zoning can be used to protect vulnerable tenants. Light manufacturers and artists are particularly vulnerable to displacement due to the fact that many rail-to-trail conversions run through industrial or post-industrial districts. Manufacturers and artists rely on affordable space to remain financially sustainable. But incoming residential and retail space command much higher rents per square foot and therefore commercial developers tend to favor residential and retail uses over manufacturing and artist uses. Through zoning, municipalities have the power to limit certain land uses. So, for example, if a municipality seeks to protect a creative arts and maker community, it could do so by enacting zoning restrictions on residential and retail uses in that district.

These are core tools that can be used to protect the existing character of neighborhoods and ensure that the benefits a park brings are enjoyed by existing community members, not just newcomers.

Case Study



Legacy Resident Retention Services: Atlanta Beltline, Atlanta

Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. offers a host of services to help legacy residents stay in their homes, including property tax assistance and down-payment assistance.

Atlanta Beltline, John Becker¹⁸

Case Study



Public-Private Partnerships: Joe Louis Park, Detroit

Detroit is currently building out the 30-mile Joe Louis Park. The City is partnering with private developers to build affordable housing units along the park. The 78-unit Brooke on Bagley apartment building will reserve 16 apartments for households earning less than \$50,000 annually.

Detroit Development News¹⁹

Case Study



Community Land Trust: 11th Street Bridge, Washington D.C.

The Douglass Community Land Trust in Washington D.C. was created to increase community ownership and to preserve and expand affordable housing near the 11th St Bridge. Community land trusts are non-profit entities for owning property collectively and removing it from the speculative real estate market.

11th Street Bridge Park, OLIN Labs²⁰

Case Study

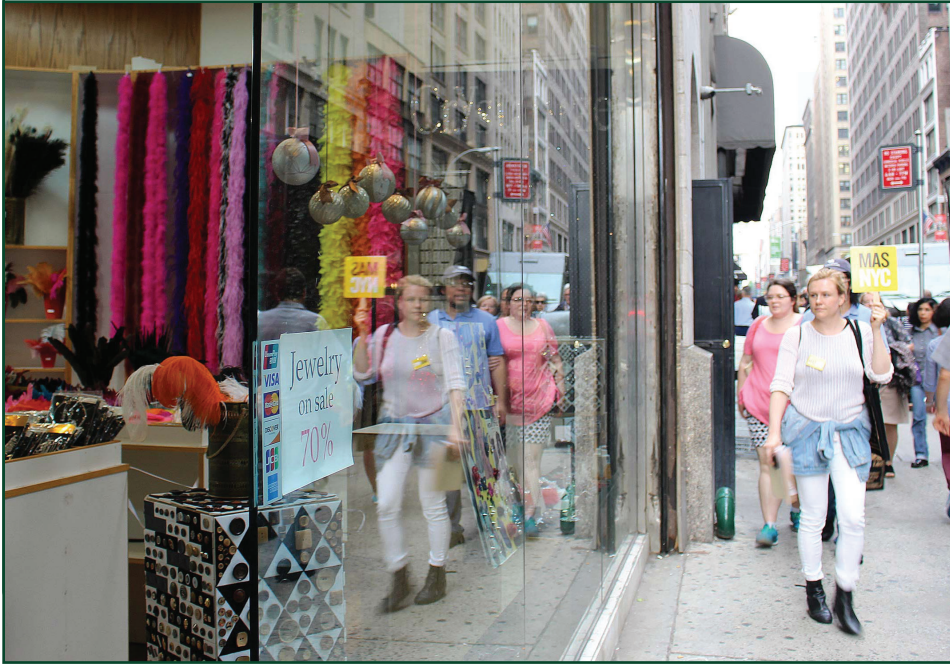


Tax Relief: Longtime Owner Occupants Program, Philadelphia

As property values increase in parts of Philadelphia, the City's Longtime Owner Occupants Program (LOOP) and Homestead Exemption programs exempt qualifying homeowners from being taxed in full on the new value of their homes.

Germantown, Housing²¹

Case Study



Zoning: Garment District, New York City

The Garment Center in Manhattan has been a central part of the apparel production and fashion industry for more than a century. In the mid-1980s, there were concerns about increasing conversions of industrial loft buildings to office uses and the subsequent potential loss of apparel manufacturing jobs. In response, the city studied potential impacts of the Times Square Redevelopment Project on the Garment Center.

To address these concerns, the Special Garment Center District was created in 1987. The district allowed the underlying M1-6 zoning regulations to apply on the Avenues, but created a Preservation Area that restricted existing buildings on side street blocks to retail, wholesale showroom, and industrial uses.

Manhattan Garment District²²

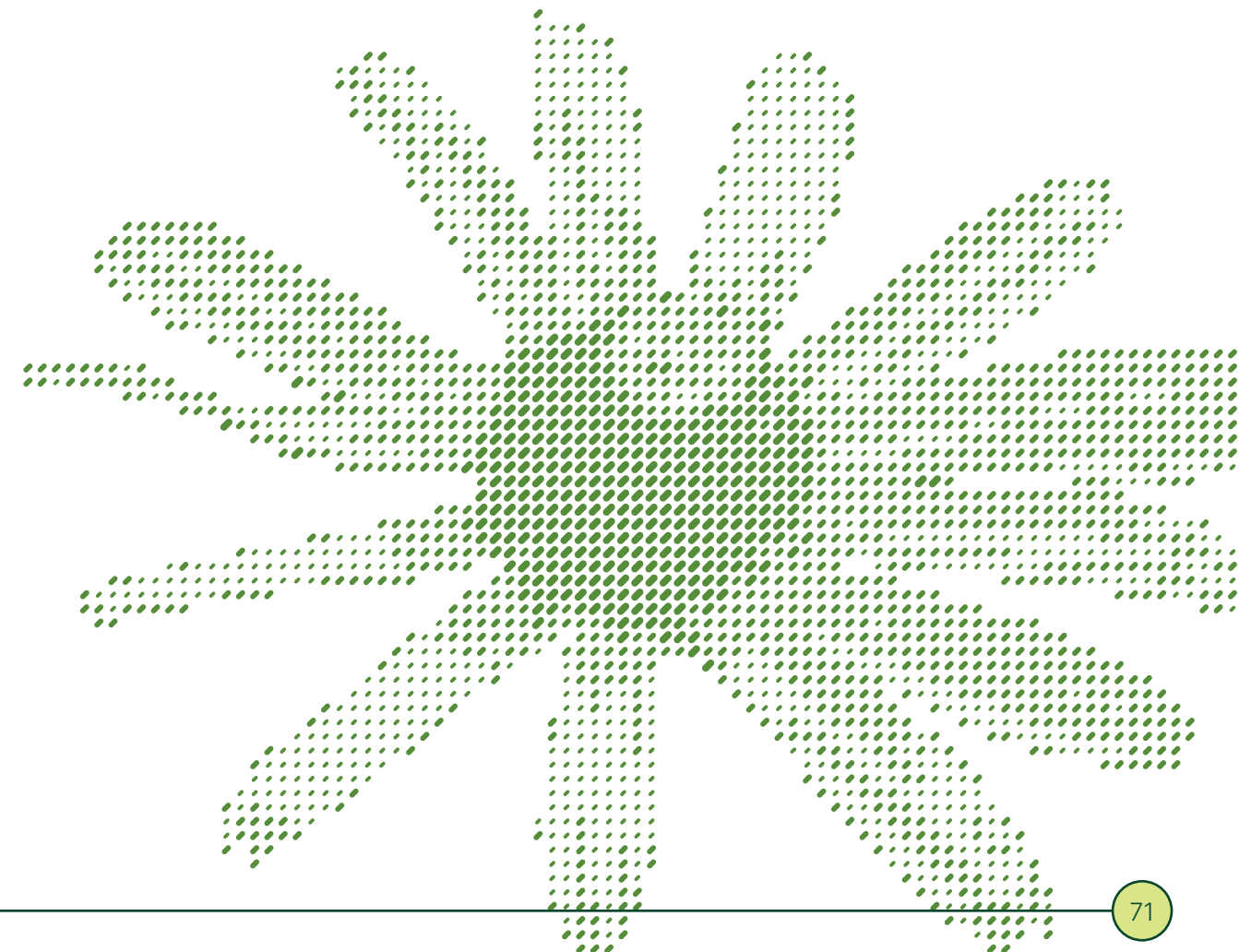


Chapter 02

Community

Section 3

Access



Transit Connections

The vision of the park is to serve as a bicycle and pedestrian link, connecting municipalities and destinations between them. One of the key links it could provide is connecting people on foot or bicycle to transit, as dedicated active transportation routes are always preferable for their directness and safety. The park right of way also often follows a different route than much of the roadway network and can serve as the best connection to these transit stations for people seeking to use them. It can also make certain stations feasible options in places where they previously were not.

The park could provide that first/last mile access to a number of NJ Transit busiest stations and bus stops along the way, such as the NJ Transit Bay Street (Montclair), Secaucus Junction, passenger rail stops, and the Branch Brook Park stop of the Newark Light Rail.

Secaucus Junction is an intermodal transit hub operated by NJ Transit. It connects to New York City and the NY/NJ region. Additionally, Secaucus Junction is relatively inaccessible by active transportation modes due to the overall roadway network of limited access roadways and heavy freight traffic in the area. Improving access to this station will improve access to New York City and many of the NJ Transit rail network destinations such as the Giants Metlife stadium, American Dream Mall, etc.



TRANSPORTATION

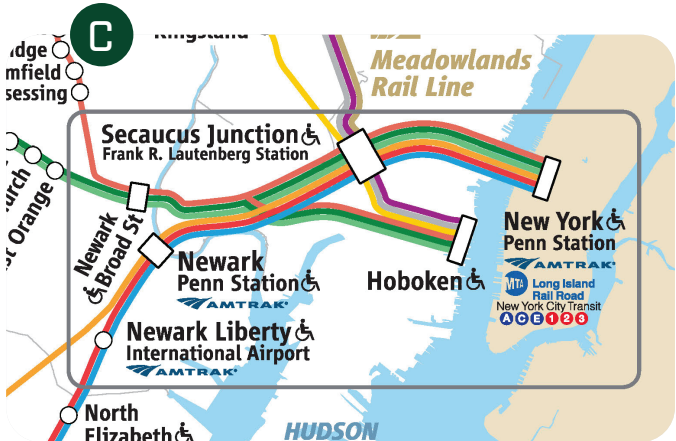
- Bus Lines
- Bus Stops
- Light Rail
- Light Rail Stops
- NJ Transit Rail Lines



Bay Street Station ²³



Branch Brook Park Lightrail Station ²⁴



NJ Transit map ²⁵

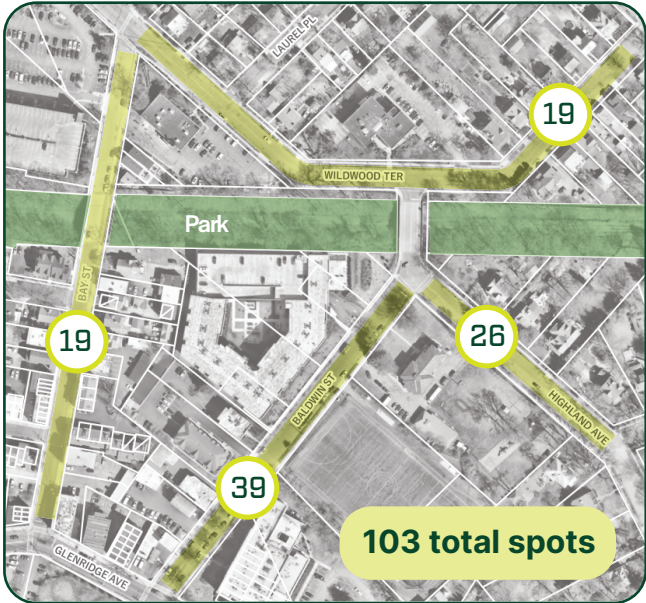
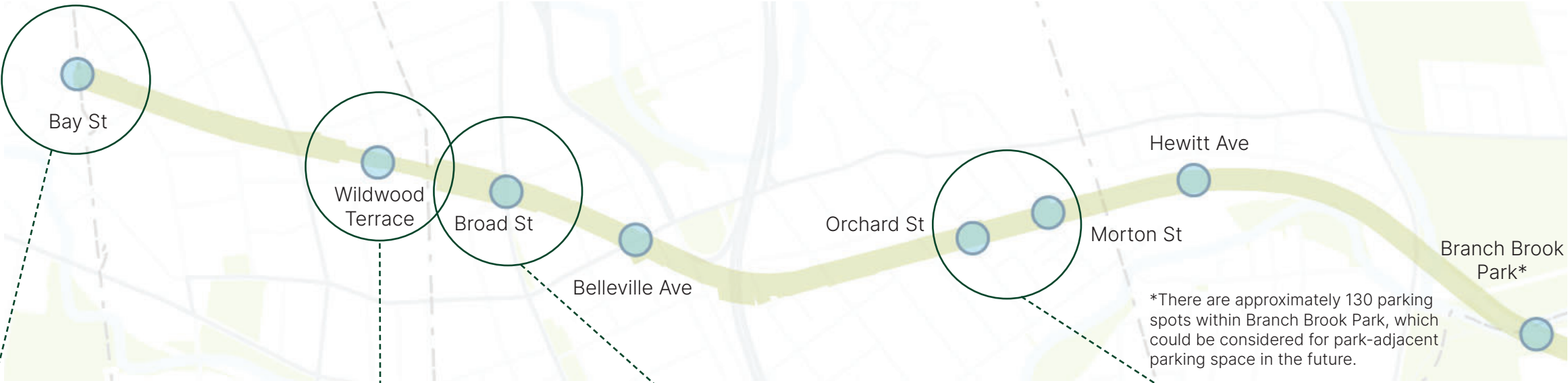
Parking: West

The western section of the park begins near downtown Montclair, then passes through residential areas of Glen Ridge and Bloomfield. Because of this, there are a variety of on-street parking scenarios at the various road crossings, including some places with little to no on-street parking availability/capacity, and others with a large amount. After identifying the potential for on-street parking spaces at a possible future park activity center, a desktop analysis of parking usage on weekdays and weekends was undertaken. High-quality aersils were utilized to identify parking utilization at those locations. The parking availability aersils in this section show the percentage of parking available on a weekday and weekend based on the analysis.

Some crossings, like the beginning of the park in Montclair/Glen Ridge and the nearby historic Benson Street Station (today a private residence not open to the public), appear to have significant on-street parking availability. Other locations, like the Broad Street crossing and the Orchard Street crossing (both in Bloomfield) have more consistent usage of on-street spaces. Connections to the park would be necessary to truly access this on-street parking. Additionally, there are a few parking lots within a 1/2-mile radius of the Bay St. crossing that could potentially be considered for shared use or formal agreements in the future. These parking

lots currently have a combined total of 435 parking spots.

A detailed parking study would likely identify more clear parking trends, but the general observation of the western portion of the park is that there is moderate use of the roads for parking, which allows for the potential of these roads to be used for parking by park users. The diagrams below illustrates the total number of on-street parking spaces per street within a 10-minute walk of the park.

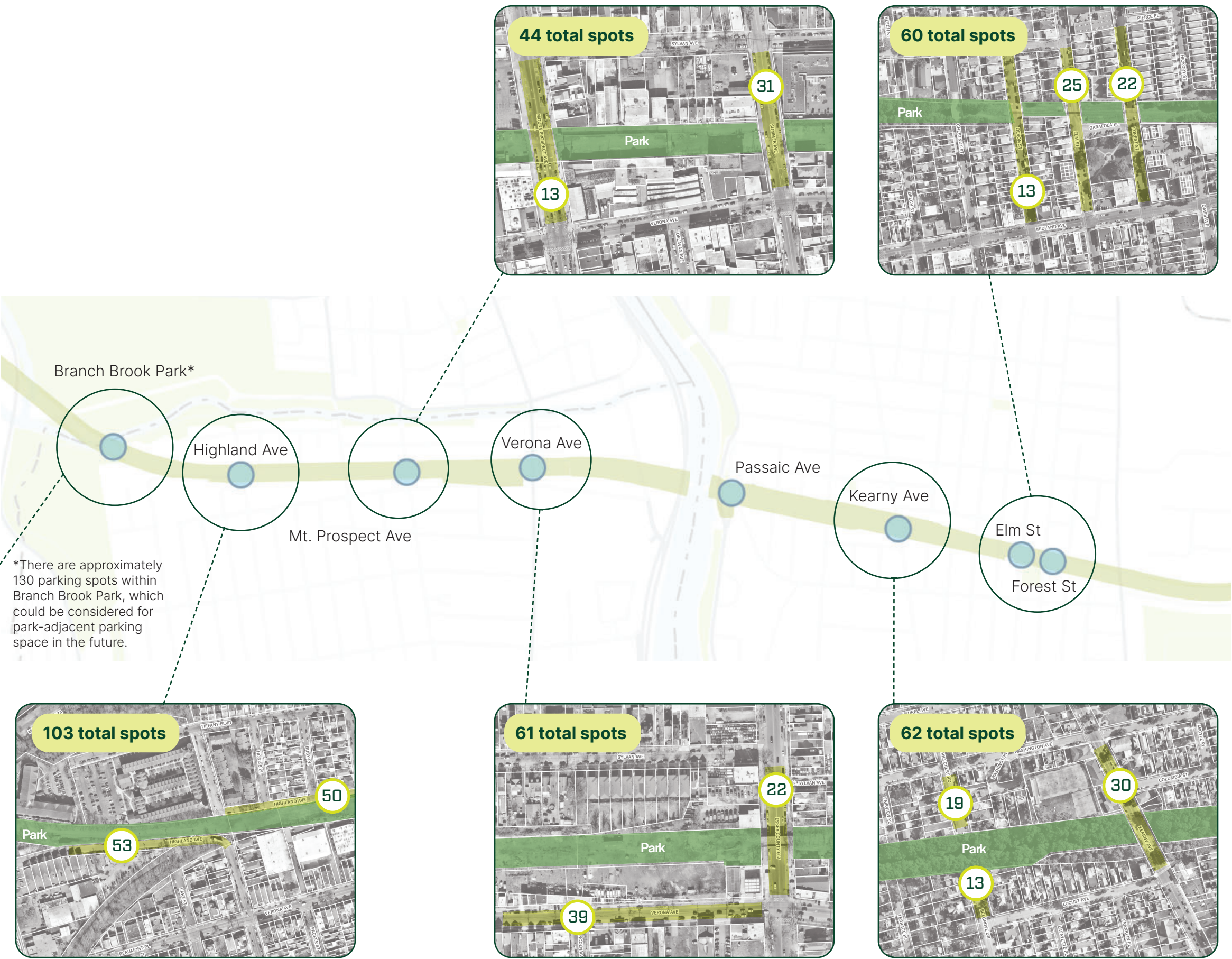


Total number of on-street parking spots

Parking: Central

The central section of the park, which comprises the Newark and Kearny portions, passes through residential areas with denser housing than the western section, as well as a commercial/industrial area in Newark. Because of this, there is a consistently higher rate of on-street parking usage in some of these road crossings. Some of the crossings have room to provide street parking for park users, such as at the Tiffany Manor Apartments in Newark and the Kearny Avenue crossing in Kearny. Others were near, at, or beyond the calculated possible capacity, with the park property itself being used in some of these areas for parking.

As noted earlier, a detailed parking study would likely identify clearer parking trends, but the general observation in the central portion of the park is that the industrial parts of Newark near the riverfront will see consistent parking usage, but the residential areas vary enough to potentially support park parking. The diagrams below illustrate the total number of on-street parking spaces per street within a 10-minute walk of the park.



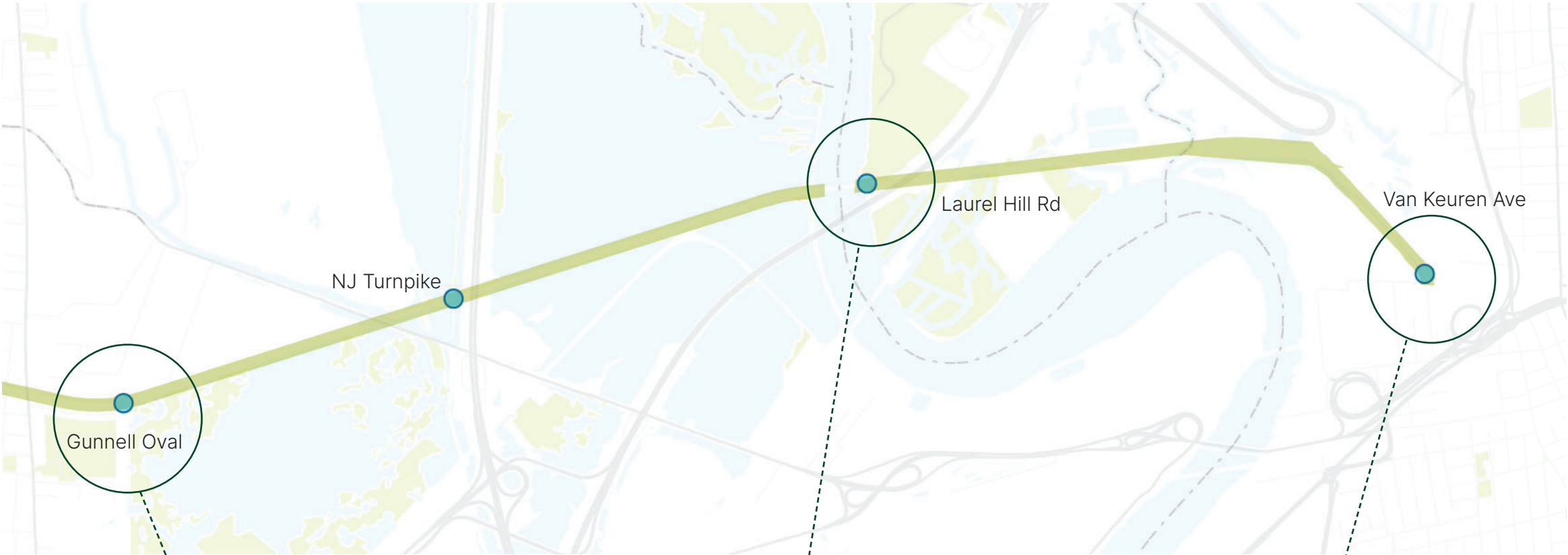
Parking: East

The eastern section of the park, which comprises the Meadowlands in Kearny, Secaucus, and Jersey City, as well as the park's eastern end in an industrial area of Jersey City, does not pass through areas typically used for on-street parking. The Meadowlands areas are either industrial or entirely separate from the roadway network, and the eastern end in Jersey City does not work at this time for on-street parking due to consistent industrial and freight use. One benefit of this area, though, is the availability of open land.

The Meadowlands should be protected when possible but there is land that has been previously modified and made suitable for other industrial uses that can be used for parking, including the land beneath the NJ Turnpike, the land near Secaucus Junction, and areas all around the eastern end of the park. The potential for extensive parking lot construction should be considered, as there is little else available. That being said, it should be considered that many Jersey City users will not drive to the park, as they can walk or bicycle from their residences. Should safe pedestrian and bicycle corridors be constructed, they should ideally connect into Jersey City's extensive existing network.

The findings of a more in-depth parking study for the rest of the park can more clearly identify if there is additional need in the eastern portion of the park for parking availability. However, the general finding is that there is little parking available, and parking would need to be built alongside park development.

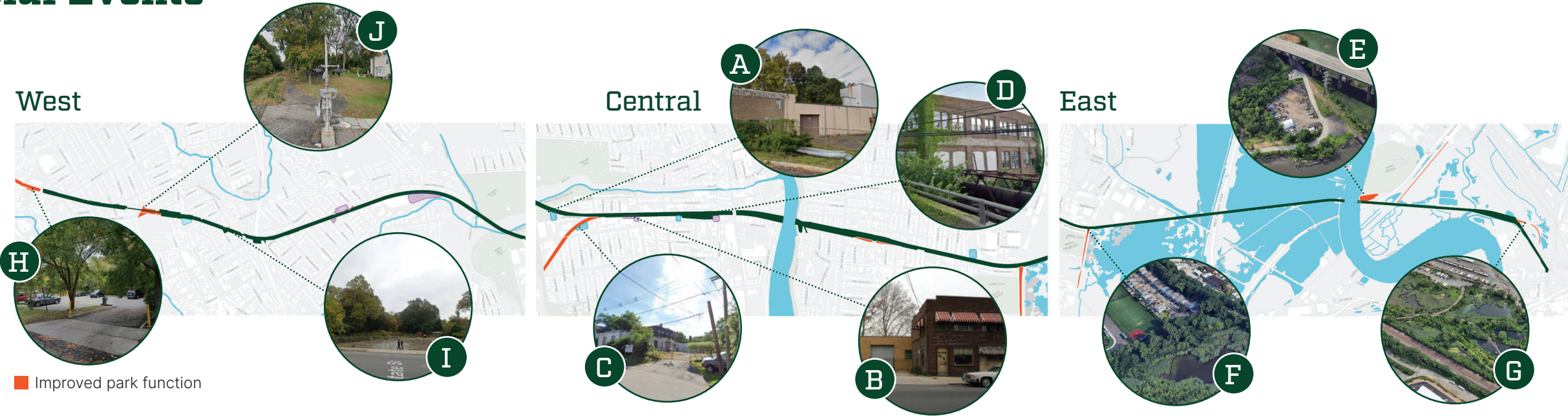
Parking would need to be developed in the eastern segment of the park due to the lack of public parking spaces available directly adjacent to the park property. ►



Parking: Central, Special Events

Along the park, it is anticipated that large events will be held, such as a marathons, bike rides, or street festivals. During these events, current street parking capacity may not be able to accommodate the number of people visiting the park. As a result, spaces intended to be activity centers should be evaluated for additional off-street parking. The activity centers may have considerable on-street parking in theory, but may not have significant spots available or be able to handle a significant influx.

An additional corner lot, currently home to a gas station, has been identified here as one possible location for additional parking spaces, which will not only provide year-round access to the park but also help accommodate and encourage these events.



Potential Land Acquisition - Parking

Vacant Buildings and Parcels



164 Manchester Pl (Newark)
The nearby Branch Brook Overlook Activity Center could connect the park to additional parking. [CURRENTLY FOR SALE]



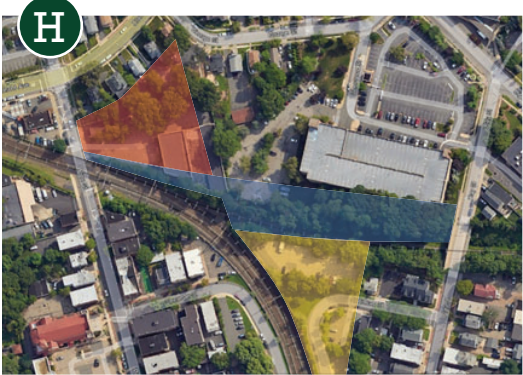
149 Verona Ave (Newark)
Near the Newark Central Activity Center site, this space would allow another mid-block entrance to the park on Verona Ave. [CURRENTLY FOR SALE]



938-948 Lake (Newark)
This is a large site that sits on the other side of the Manchester Spur. It could increase connectivity to nearby schools. [CURRENTLY FOR SALE]



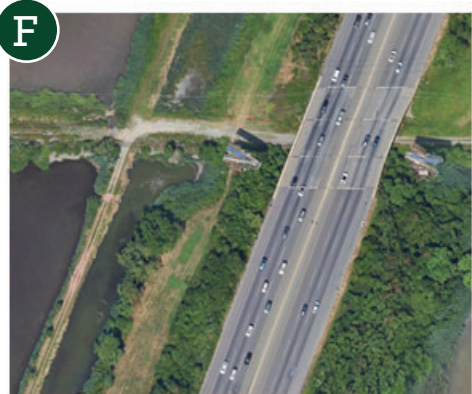
604 Schuyler (Kearny)
This building is reminiscent of the park's industrial past and could allow an interior elevator to the park below.



Bay Street Hub (Montclair)
Red area (at Pine Street): During field view, this area appeared underutilized. A shared driveway for at-grade access to the park or purchase of property might be considered.
Blue area (railroad between Pine & Bay streets): Consider the following: purchase or lease of this small strip of property from NJ Transit, removal of unused tracks, or the creation of a 12'-wide path back to Pine Street.
Yellow area (Sherman St. East): This is a major western gateway for the park. The municipality of Montclair has discussed purchasing parking lot parcels currently owned by the hospital. The municipality already owns two small parking lots across the street. There is an opportunity to reimagine this space by removing the loop street and dead-ending both Sherman and Grant Streets.



Laurel Hill Road Hub (Secaucus)
These are three potential vacant areas (the two areas adjacent to the park are within the utility right of way, separated by a steel tower structure carrying high voltage lines). There is potential for 180 parking spaces within 500' of the park.



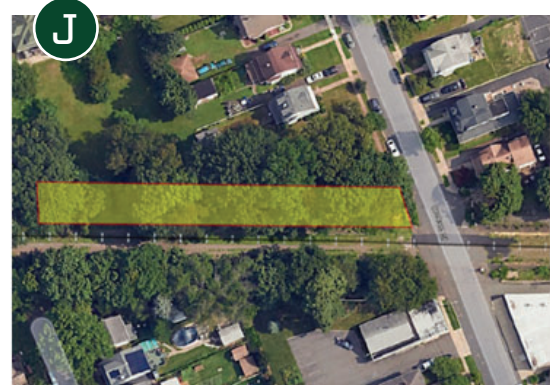
Meadowlands Hub (Kearny)
These are vacant areas along the NJ Turnpike and may be owned by the New Jersey Turnpike Authority. There is potential access from the Belleville Turnpike (NJ7). There are potential permitting issues related to wetland areas. Areas north of the park are within a wildlife management area.



Van Keuren Ave (Jersey City)
Semicircular parcel currently serves disorganized truck storage/parking, with potential for 80 parking spaces. It is a southerly parcel site of apparent vacant industrial buildings, with potential for 110 parking spaces. It is a heavily industrial area with significant on-street parking for large trucks.

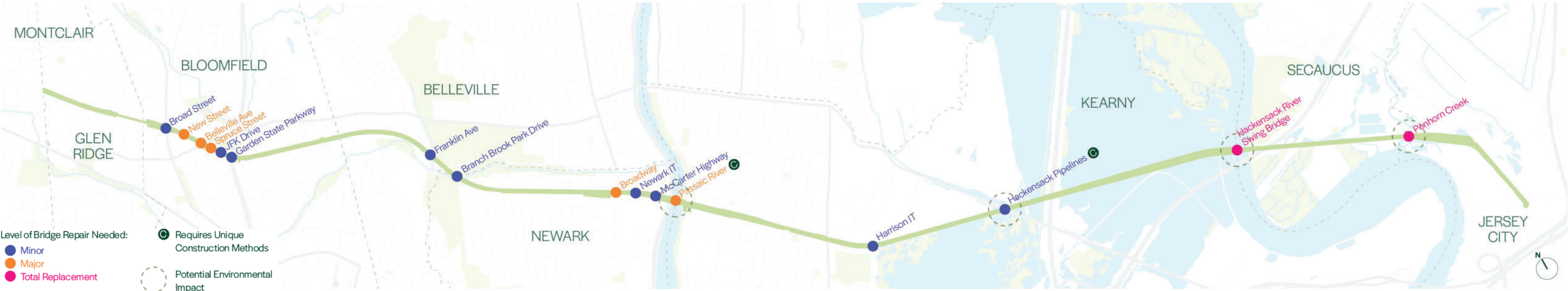


Broad Street (Bloomfield)
This vacant parcel is privately owned and has the potential to provide roughly 80 parking spaces. Areas immediately adjacent to the railroad are unsuitable for parking due to significant slopes.



Orchard Street (Bloomfield)
This is a currently wooded strip along northside of park, with potential for 35-40 parking spaces (which are on current park property). However, parking in this area would incur significant impact to a stand of mature trees: there may be considerable community opposition.

Bridge Repair and Replacement



There are 16 structures along the park corridor that must structurally support park users over waterways, roadways, or other features. These structures previously carried the Boonton Line railroad and will require rehabilitation in order to be repurposed as bridges that will carry pedestrians and bicyclists. Typical work required will include replacement of the bridge deck (removal of rails, ties, and ballast) and the addition of railings and fencing. It is likely that the bridges have sufficient load-carrying capacity to function as a park due to the significantly larger loads associated with rails versus pedestrians. The condition of the structures will need to be further evaluated since they were last assessed circa 2018 and additional deterioration since then is likely. As a result, the structures will not only need to be repurposed, but also rehabilitated to improve their condition. Below is a short summary of the structures, possible required rehabilitation, and likely improvements. Bridge repair sites are listed from east to west.

● **Penhorn Creek (MP 3.21)** is a 42'-long, 30'-wide, three-span timber bridge that crosses Penhorn Creek with timber pile substructures. This bridge is within the current staging area of the Portal Bridge construction site, and future work will need to be coordinated with NJ Transit. Rehabilitation may include replacing crushed

timber piles and replacing deteriorated timbers. Improvements may include adding railing/fencing.

● **The Swing Bridge over the Hackensack River (MP 4.17)** was a moveable bridge with six approach spans totaling 480', with a center swing span 260' in length. The approach spans are steel girders supported on concrete substructure. The main span is a steel truss that has been in the open position since the tracks were abandoned. The width of the bridge is 24' and crosses the Hackensack River, which is a navigable waterway that must remain accessible to marine traffic. To utilize the existing structure as part of the park corridor, new mechanical driving and electrical equipment would need to be installed with power supplied across the navigation channel via submarine cable. It would need extensive steel repairs and 24/7 monitoring by bridge operators to open and close the span, as required by vessel traffic. The cost of utilizing the existing structure, along with the staffing and operational expenses required to restore functionality, may be too significant to overcome, necessitating its removal and replacement with a fixed bridge meeting the same 50' vertical navigational clearance as the new Portal North Bridge.

● **Pipelines over Hackensack River (MP 5.63)** is a 26'-long, 27'-wide, single span, steel through girder bridge that crosses a pipeline with concrete abutments. Rehabilitation may include cleaning the steel structure, correcting corroded areas, and painting the steel structure. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing.

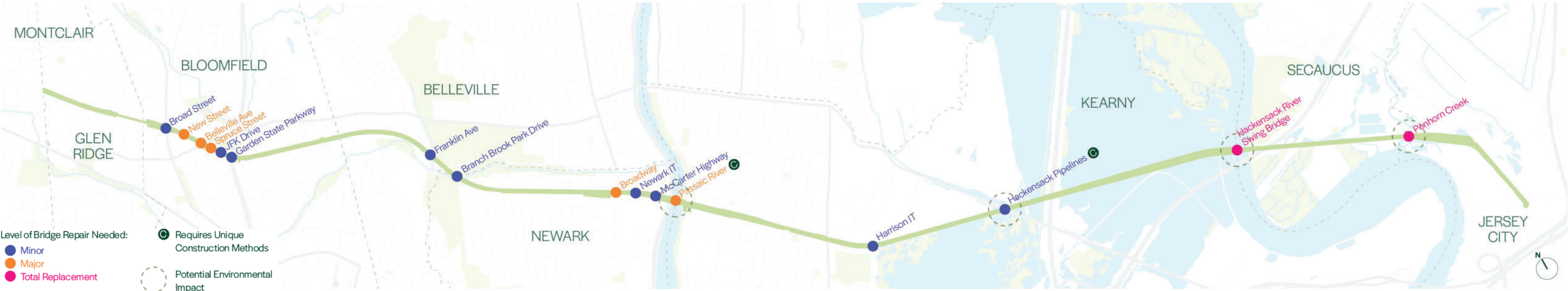
● **Harrison IT (MP 6.41)** is a 33'-long, 34'-wide, single span, reinforced concrete bridge that crosses a stream with concrete abutments. Rehabilitation may include concrete repairs. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing.

● **Passaic River (MP 7.57)** is a 580'-long, 24'-wide, seven span, steel girder bridge that has a center swing span which has been locked in the closed position since tracks were abandoned. The bridge crosses Passaic Avenue, the Passaic River, and McCarter Highway (Route 21) with masonry and a concrete substructure. Although the swing bridge portion can no longer open, it is still listed in 33 CFR 117.739, resulting in the need for coordination with the US Coast Guard to determine if the vertical clearance is sufficient to allow permanent fixture of the bridge. Rehabilitation may include

cleaning the steel structure, correcting corroded areas, painting the steel structure, and concrete/masonry repairs to the piers. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing.

● **McCarter Highway (MP 7.74)** is a 66'-long, 24'-wide, single span, steel through girder bridge that crosses McCarter Highway with masonry abutments. Rehabilitation may include cleaning the steel structure, correcting corroded areas, and painting the steel structure. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing.

Bridge Repair and Replacement



● **Newark IT (MP 7.88)** is an 85'-long, 24'-wide, single span, steel through girder bridge that crosses a private lot with masonry abutments. Rehabilitation may include cleaning the steel structure, correcting corroded areas, painting the steel structure, and repointing masonry. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing.

● **Broadway (MP 7.96)** is a 120'-long, 33'-wide, three span, steel through girder bridge that crosses Broadway with masonry abutments and steel piers. Rehabilitation may include cleaning the steel structure, correcting corroded areas, and painting the steel structure. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing.

● **Second River / Branch Brook Park Drive (MP 8.85)** is a 175'-long, 35'-wide, three span, concrete arch bridge that crosses Second River and Branch Brook Drive. Rehabilitation may include concrete repairs. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing.

● **Franklin Avenue (MP 9.1)** is a 86'-long, 31'-wide, two span, reinforced concrete bridge that crosses Franklin Avenue with concrete abutments and pier. Rehabilitation may include concrete repairs. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing.

● **Garden State Parkway (MP 10.29)** is a 120'-long, 37'-wide, two span, steel through girder bridge that crosses the Garden State Parkway with concrete substructure. Rehabilitation may include cleaning the steel structure, correcting corroded areas, and painting the steel structure. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing.

● **JFK Drive (MP 10.36)** is a 110'-long, 33'-wide, single span, steel through girder bridge that crosses JFK Drive with masonry abutments. Rehabilitation may include cleaning and painting the steel structures and correcting corroded areas. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing.

● **Spruce Street (MP 10.42)** is an 80'-long, 28'-wide, three span, steel through girder bridge that crosses Spruce Street with masonry abutments and steel piers. Rehabilitation may include cleaning the steel structure, correcting corroded areas, painting the steel structure, and repointing masonry. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing.

● **Belleville Avenue (MP 10.47)** is an 80'-long, 25'-wide, three span, steel through girder bridge that crosses Belleville Avenue with masonry abutments and steel piers. The vertical clearance is 11'-8". Rehabilitation may include cleaning the steel structure, correcting corroded areas, painting the steel structure, and repointing masonry. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing. Additionally, the substandard vertical clearance must be investigated.

● **New Street (MP 10.58)** is a 90'-long, 22'-wide, three span, steel through girder bridge that crosses New Street with masonry abutments and steel piers. The vertical clearance is 11'-6". Rehabilitation may include cleaning the steel structure, correcting corroded areas, painting the steel structure, and repointing masonry. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing. Additionally, the substandard vertical clearance must be investigated.

● **Broad Street (MP 10.69)** is a 60'-long, 32'-wide, single span, steel through girder bridge that crosses Broad Street with concrete abutments. Rehabilitation may include cleaning the steel structure, correcting corroded areas, painting the steel structure, and repointing masonry. Improvements may include replacing the bridge deck and adding railing/fencing.

Bridge Repair and Replacement

Bridge	Material	Type		Span	Width	Aerial /Map
Penhorn Creek Bridge	Timber(3-span)	Fixed	3.21	42 feet	30 feet	
Hackensack River Swing Bridge	Steel Truss (6-span)	Movable	4.17	740 feet	24 feet	
Pipelines Over Hackensack River	Steel Through Girder (single-span)	Fixed	5.63	26 feet	27 feet	
Harrison IT	Reinforced Concrete (single-span)	Fixed	6.41	33 feet	34 feet	
Passaic River	Steel Girder (7-span)	Movable (fixed)	7.57	580 feet	24 feet	
McCarter Highway	Steel Through Girder (single-span)	Fixed	7.74	66 feet	24 feet	
Newark IT	Steel Through Girder (single-span)	Fixed	7.88	85 feet	24 feet	
Broadway	Steel Through Girder (3-span)	Fixed	7.96	120 feet	33 feet	
Second River / Branch Brook Park Drive	Concrete Arch (3-span)	Fixed	8.85	175 feet	35 feet	
Franklin Avenue	Reinforced Concrete (2-span)	Fixed	9.1	86 feet	31 feet	
Garden State Parkway	Steel Through Girder (2-span)	Fixed	10.29	120 feet	37 feet	
JFK Drive	Steel Through Girder (single-span)	Fixed	10.36	110 feet	33 feet	
Spruce Street	Steel Through Girder (3-span)	Fixed	10.42	80 feet	28 feet	
Belleville Avenue	Steel Through Girder (3-span)	Fixed	10.47	80 feet	25 feet	
New Street	Steel Through Girder (3-span)	Fixed	10.58	90 feet	22 feet	
Broad Street	Steel Through Girder (single-span)	Fixed	10.69	60 feet	32 feet	

The bridges over the river are the connections between the phases of park development. However, given the condition and scale of rehabilitation or replacement needed, there may be other ways to creatively bridge those gaps. ►

A small ferry could serve as a great interim option with the potential to be a long-term mode of travel across the Passaic and Hackensack Rivers. The investment cost associated with a ferry may be considerably less than replacing or rehabilitating both the WR and DB drawbridges. ▼

◦ Case Study ◦



Liberty Landing Ferry in New Jersey ²⁶

The Liberty Landing Ferry

The Liberty Landing Ferry provides access between Paulus Hook in Jersey City, Liberty State Park, and the World Financial Center in New York. The ferry traverses only 500' to connect Paulus Hook to Liberty State Park.



Island Line Bike Ferry in Vermont ²⁷

The Island Bike Ferry

The Island Line Bike Ferry in Vermont is a great example of a short distance ferry. This ferry serves a small 200' "cut" on the causeway of a portion of the Island Line Bike Trail. A local company called Local Motion operate this bike ferry to shuttle bicyclists across the "cut."

Chapter 03

Stewardship

Partnerships	94
Programming and Activation.	98

Principles:

Partnerships

Uplift the capacity of residents to foster community networks and partnerships.

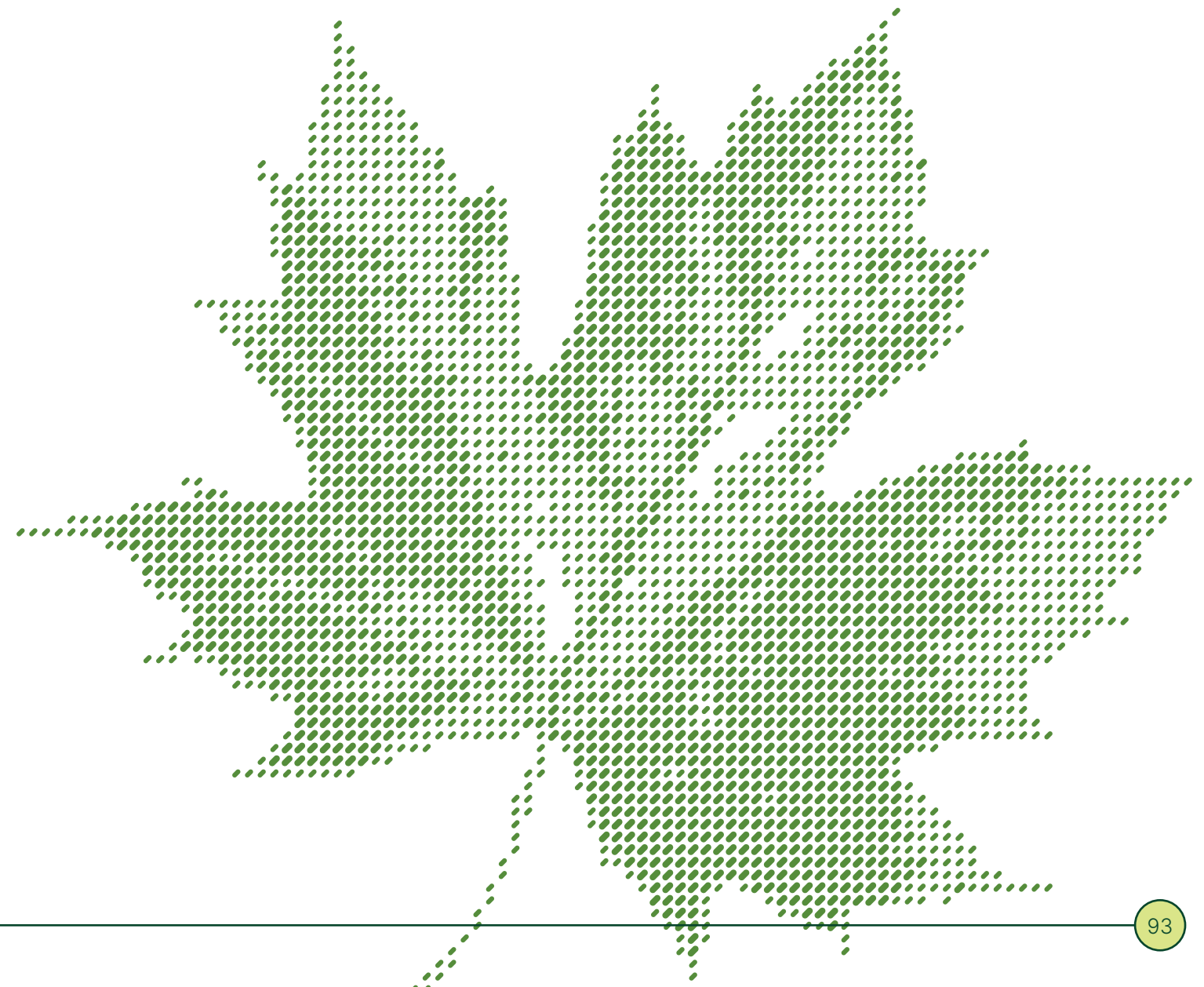
Programming and Activation

Partner with community-based organizations to provide a diversity of programming.

Section 01

Partnerships

Chapter 03 Stewardship



Procurement Practices

To construct and operate a park, a host of design and engineering, construction and supply, insurance and legal, maintenance, and many more professional services are required. Much of this work is conducted by third party vendors, and therein lies the power of parks to be economic catalysts.

By deploying equitable procurement practices, park operators can align the economic activity the park generates with socioeconomic development goals.

When soliciting professional services—typically through a Request for Proposals (RFP)—park operators should take care to craft bid packages that are accessible to emerging and mom and pop businesses. This may, for example, mean limiting the scale and complexity of RFPs. Or it may entail keeping the RFP free of unnecessarily burdensome requirements (such as history of work). Where funding sources allow it, the RFP’s scoring criteria may better support applicants who are headquartered locally and/or are a registered Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE).

Advertising RFPs is another crucial area of procurement practice. Park operators should adopt a communication strategy that advertises bidding opportunities on platforms used by DBEs.

Lastly, park operators should write equitable hiring practices into their contracts and leases with vendors. These may entail flexible educational requirements such as the acceptance of GEDs and avoidance of requiring unnecessary advanced degrees. These practices may also include discouraging vendors from asking about a job applicant’s conviction history.

Equitable procurement practices such as these open the door for local, emerging, and disadvantaged business enterprises. They also tie the success of the park to the economic health of the local business ecosystem. That is a win-win.

◦ Case Study ◦



India Basin Shoreline Park Equitable Development Plan

The City of San Francisco is constructing a new park in an economically distressed neighborhood called Bayview. The City crafted an Equitable Development Plan (EDP) to link the construction and operation of the park to economic opportunity for Bayview residents and businesses.

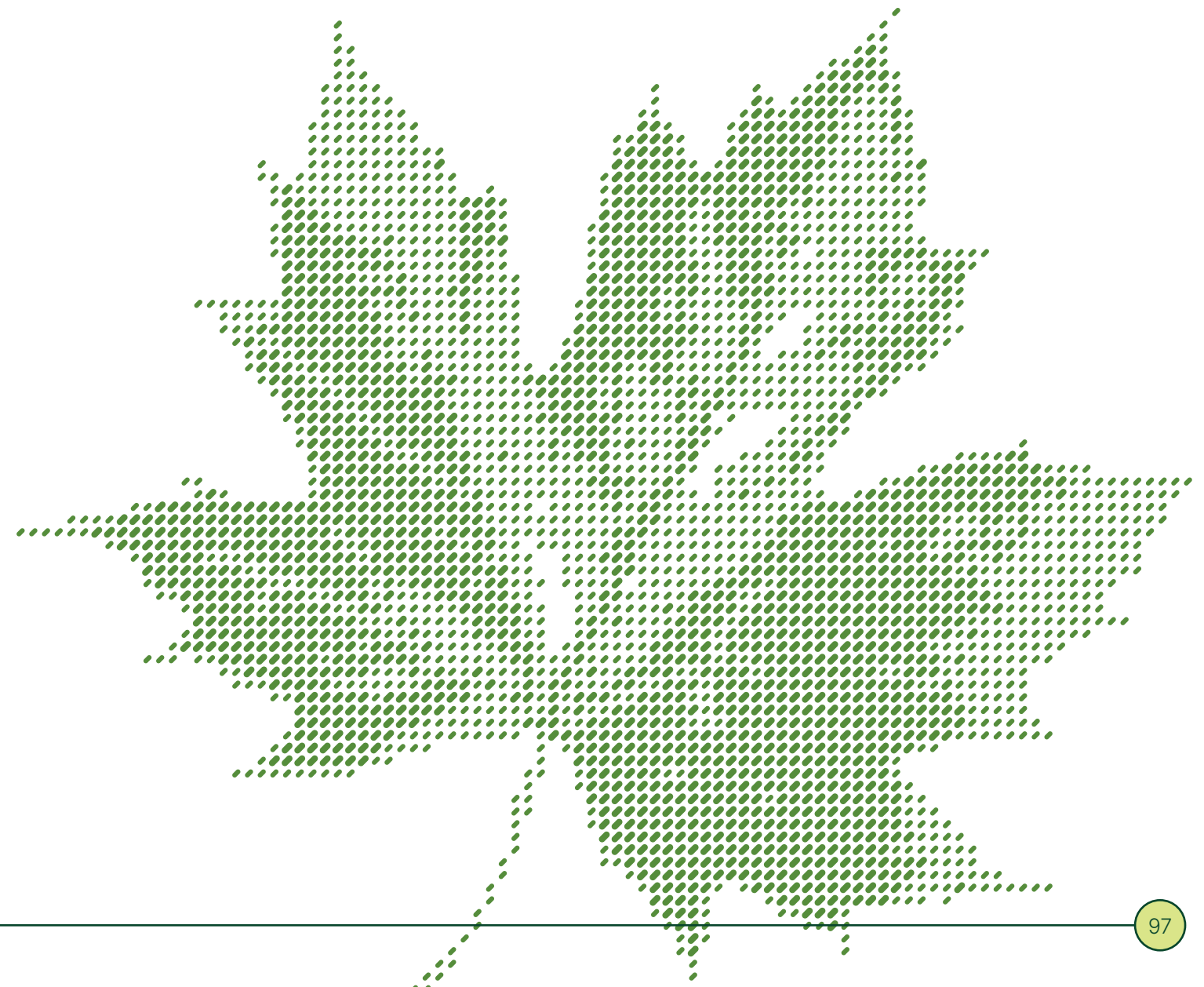
The EDP includes a communications strategy to advertise bids to DBE construction firms and suppliers, bidding guidelines that make RFPs more accessible to small businesses, workforce training opportunities for local residents, and equitable hiring practices that have flexible education requirements and discourage contractors from asking about conviction history.

India Basin Shoreline Park EDP ²⁸

Section 02

Programming & Activation

Chapter 03 Stewardship



Programming and Activation

Temporary to permanent activation strategy

Temporary activations ahead of each built phase of the park can demonstrate future uses to the surrounding community and allow for programming models and collaborations with that community to take place. A series of affordable and short-term changes is the catalyst for permanent programming. Benefits of these types of small scale interventions include:

- Serving as a tangible outcome of the engagement process
- Encouraging community buy-in/generating participation through creative artmaking and implementation tasks
- Informing long-term permanent activations
- Nurturing a sense of community ownership and pride
- Generating public/private interest
- Developing a long-term local stewardship plan

Well-managed and well-curated programming combined with short-term interventions offer surrounding neighbors ongoing opportunities to observe and participate in the long-term planning process. Activity centers become spaces for experimentation and civic engagement that can eventually be integrated into the design of the park. Once a stewardship partner has been identified, key considerations for the success of a demonstration project should include:

- Identifying key partners' capacity for activations and rightsizing the type of activation accordingly
- Providing technical support for design, planning, and procurement of materials
- Coordinating and/or providing support with implementation tasks
- Cultivating creative programming using art as a vehicle for community participation
- Managing documentation and social media promotion
- Allowing the activation to serve as an opportunity for neighbors to come together and share ownership of the space.



Possible programming and activation timeline

Piloting Partnerships

The park offers an incredible space for community events and activities. See below for potential activities that could be explored in the future.

Tactical Demonstration - Pop Up Community Garden

- Meet with Operation Grow Inc. and create a short-term partnership to explore pop-up community garden locations (near park Elementary, a cafe, etc.)
- Coordinate the action plan
- Design/build garden beds, purchase tools, set guidelines



◀ Precedent: Pop-up Community Garden, Image: Mauricio Pena ³⁰

Temporary Art

- Manage an open call for artwork display
- Design AND install display panels along the park or on a construction fence: neighborhood info, project info, fun facts, etc..
- Co-create and install a ground mural



◀ Precedent: Playful Neighborhood Monuments, TinyWPA ³¹

Single-Day Community Events

- Develop an event day plan. Potential locations: Manchester Place, Garafola Place, Greenwood Lake St
- Connect with local vendors, farmer's markets, performers, DJs, etc.
- Coordinate a pre-event clean up
- Provide opportunities for sharing project progress and invite feedback



◀ Precedent: Farmer's Market, Allen Eyestone ³²

Temporary Traffic Calming Activations

- Temporary parklet, signage, bollards, art at key intersections
- Potential locations: Garafola Place, Manchester Place, Elm Street, Devon Street, Mt. Prospect Avenue



◀ Precedent: NYC Asphalt Art Activations, Mary Carter Taub ³³

Codesigning with Activation Producers and Organizations

Case Study



Newark Community Garden with Operation Grow

As part of our inclusive outreach strategy across the 9-mile corridor, the Hive Public Space team identified several community events and locations for “Pop-Ups,” to hear ideas for the park from surrounding neighbors. At a local farmers market hosted by S.T.E.A.M URBAN, a nonprofit dedicated to reshaping the learning landscape in Black and Brown areas, the engagement team was introduced to Operation Grow, led by Executive Director Sharonda Allen. Operation Grow immediately stood out as a future partner. It is a nonprofit that seeks to foster environmental stewardship, improve quality of life, and create sustainability by providing education, empowerment and support to underserved/frontline groups.

Above:
Volunteers planting the garden ³⁴

Top Right:
Final touches on the garden ³⁵

Bottom Right:
Pop-up garden is ready to be enjoyed! ³⁶



An interactive Youth Visioning Workshop followed, providing an opportunity for Operation Grow’s young minds to come together and share their vision for the park. They brought fresh ideas and innovative perspectives that reflected their current and future needs. It also reinforced ideas that had been heard throughout our engagement, including a community garden that would serve as a hub for communal activities, educational programs, and environmental stewardship.

Ahead of the first built phase of the park, and with the support of NJDEP, the design team formalized a paid partnership with Operation Grow to demonstrate the impact of a community gathering space. The team collaborated closely with Operation Grow to design and procure the materials required for a temporary Summer Pop-Up Garden at a potential activity center site along the park property in Newark. A one-day build-out resulted in a beautiful garden hosted and scheduled by Operation Grow, to encourage a wider network of community agents to play a role in the evolution of the space.

This partnership will help identify successes and challenges that can serve as a guide for future collaborations and stewardship models along the park, while also cultivating future stewards of the corridor in Newark. Adjacent neighbors are taking ownership of the space and are planting within the garden beds, serving as eyes on the ground, informing the Hive Public Space team of issues in real time.

Community Engagement Strategies

During the design process, there were many opportunities for residents and organizations to get involved with the park. Getting to know the community members, establishing relationships with local organizations, and implementing on-site events are just a few of the ways to enhance the park's local impact.

Farmer's Market event in Newark ►



Pop Up | Existing Events

The purpose of these activations will be to engage the public at existing community events.

Community listening session at North Newark Library ►



Listening Session | Workshop

These include lively discussions with individuals of all ages, exploring interactive models and hearing about the public's dreams for the park.

Trail test on park property in Newark ►



Trail Test | Event / Demonstration

This allows future park visitors to imagine future experiences on the park property, set up to scale.

Tap into programming capabilities of local organizations

- Foster sense of belonging and ownership in surrounding communities
 - Reflect local values, identity, and culture
- Note: this would be outside of NJDEP's core function



◄ Parks pop-up at Bloomfield Farmer's Market

Tactical demonstrations ahead of construction

- Build buzz and provide opportunities to engage surrounding communities and artists
- Build support of project's future phases
- Test out partnership capacity and working relationships



◄ Parks summer pop-up garden in Newark

Chapter 04

Design Framework

Framework and Design Language . . .	110
Space and Place	120
Activity Centers and Amenities	132
Environment and Resilience	158

Principles:

Space, Place, and Amenities

Craft a linear corridor that can be enjoyed by all ages and abilities.

Activity Centers

Provide destinations with amenities that encourage play, learning, and connection.

Environment and Resilience

Connect natural corridors, expand biodiversity, and improve health outcomes for residents.

Section 01

Framework and Design Language

Chapter 04

Design Framework

Park Design Framework

A Landscape with Variety

The park is a vibrant tapestry of diverse landscapes and cultures, offering a unique blend of natural beauty and community character. This chapter delves into the existing conditions of the park that support different uses. It unpacks the design opportunities that the Advisory Board should consider to invest in to support community activations throughout all nine miles. The framework is organized into three sections: Space and Place, Activity Centers and Amenities, and Environment and Resilience.

Space and Place

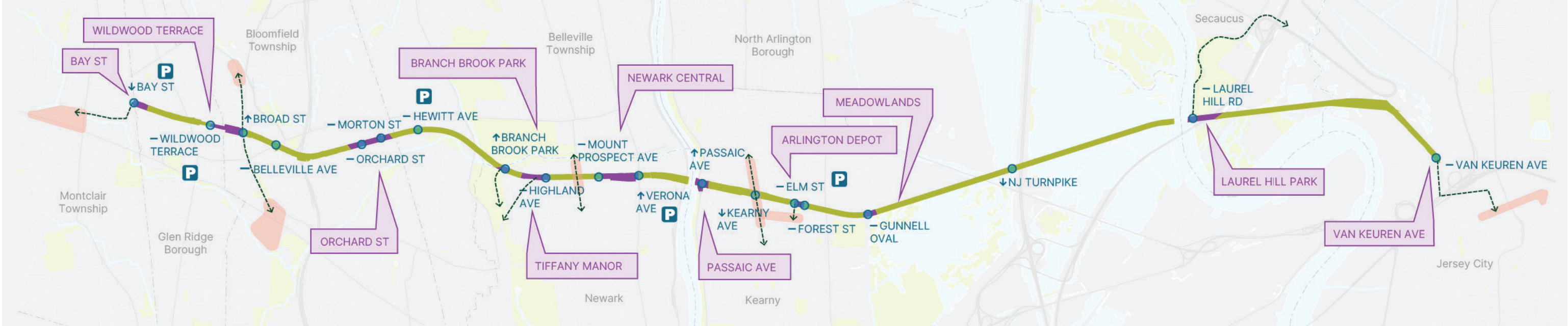
As described in the pre-design study reports, the park has unique human-made and natural features that contribute to different experiences of the continuous nine mile stretch. Referred to in both the pre-design study reports and this document as “landscape typologies,” these sections of the park contain distinct species of plant and animal life as well as vibrant communities and remnants of the area’s industrial history. Each typology offers differing elements of topographical change, hydrological systems, and vegetation density, resulting in a range of possible visitor experiences.

Activity Centers and Amenities

Of the nineteen roadways that cross the park, there are eleven key intersections that have the potential to foster a center for activity and provide safe park access. Each activity center site has unique site conditions. The grade at which the streets intersect with the park varies, providing diverse topographical experiences and viewsheds. These sites have the power to expand upon existing park networks and offer points of interest, providing a range of views into and from the park. Corridors with shared use pedestrian paths connect these activity centers, offering safe passage while expanding access to community amenities such as transit hubs and adjacent greenspaces.

Environment and Resilience

The park is an ecologically rich habitat corridor. The framework features a “homegrown park initiative,” which outlines a planting strategy that supports and enhances the broader biodiversity of regional flora and fauna. The initiative seeks to foster a deep connection to nature and promote environmental stewardship through education opportunities for visitors. By integrating ecological health with community engagement, this initiative helps pave the way for a sustainable socioeconomic future for the park and its surrounding communities.



Activity Centers across the park

--> Last Mile Connection

- Activity Center
- Corridor
- Major Thresholds
- ↓ Park is below Grade
- Park is at-grade
- ↑ Park is above Grade
- Neighborhood Centers
Bloomfield Ave / Montclair
Broad + Baldwin
Six Points / Bloomfield
Mount Prospect Ave
Kearny Ave
Midland Ave
Newark Ave

Park Components

The width and length of the usable space of the park's right of way varies throughout the nine miles. A right of way is the legal right to pass along a specific route through grounds belonging to another.

The variations of width and length can be categorized into three distinct components: corridors, thresholds, and activity centers. Corridors are stretches of the park that offer recreational and commuting space for pedestrians. Thresholds offer safe points of access and clear wayfinding. Activity centers are designated areas for social recreation, play, and gathering.

Accessible Corridors

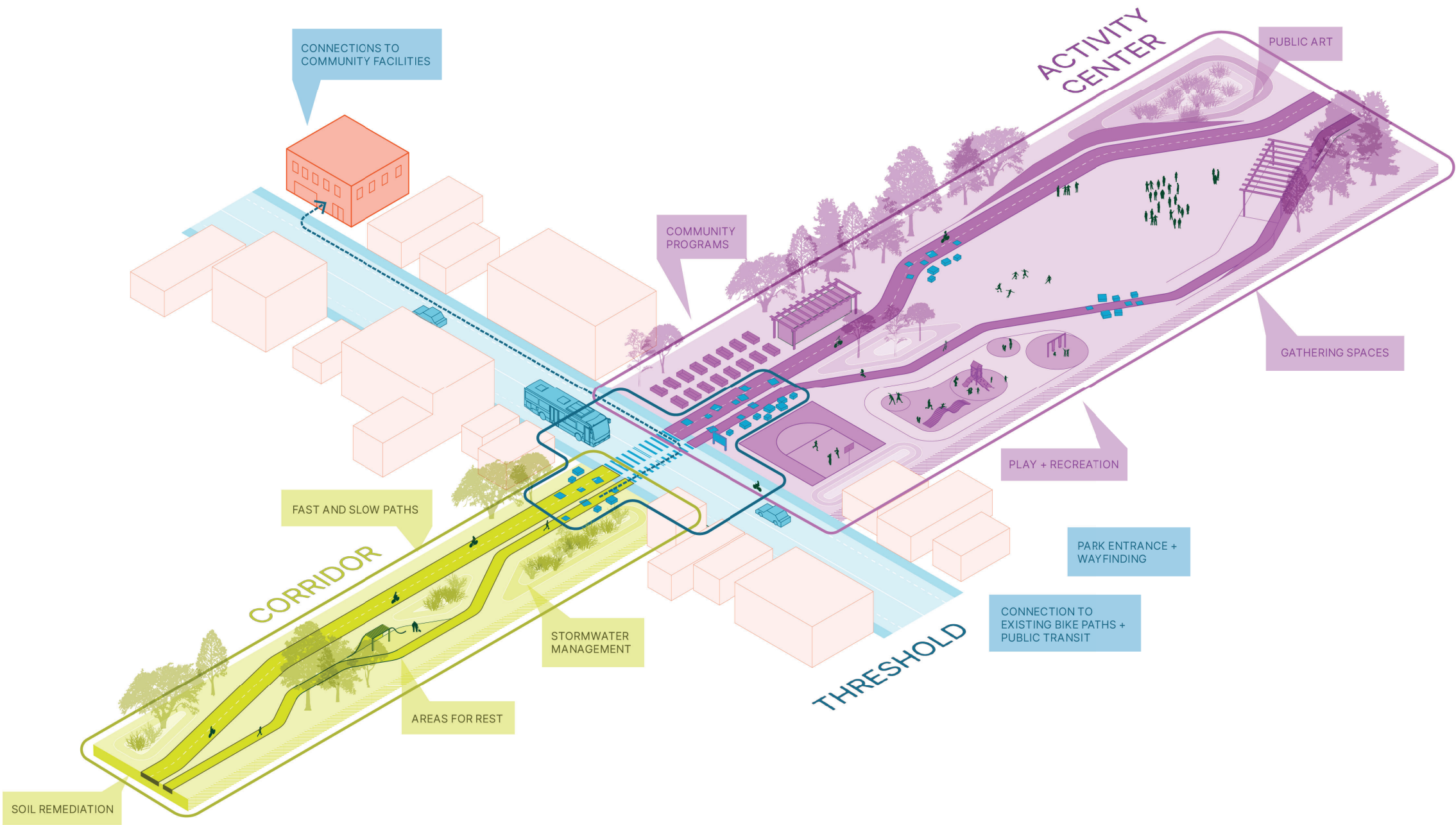
Corridors are segments of connectivity between thresholds and activity centers. They offer space for multi-modal transportation, on foot or on wheels. Gentle turns along the paths create a dynamic experience, while ensuring a safe speed of passage for all visitors. The spaces created by these turns establish areas for sheltered and unsheltered rest. Given that the corridor elevation varies in relation to existing grade, stormwater management practices such as bioswales or rain gardens are required to sustain the safety and longevity of these corridors.

Safe Thresholds

Thresholds provide safe crosswalks and clear wayfinding for visitors accessing the park throughout the nine miles. They offer connections to existing bike paths, public transit, community facilities, commercial corridors, and residential neighborhoods. They also provide points of access for service vehicles and gathering.

Dynamic Activity Centers

Activity centers are areas with significant or wide usable space that can support large gatherings and community-style programming with various shelter options. They expand on the interests and needs of the local neighborhood. Playspaces and sports fields provide social recreation opportunities. Flexible greenspaces might showcase public art or community gardens.



Typical framework of relationships between corridors, thresholds, and activity centers.



Ice from the Lakes to the Rails of New Jersey

Prior to the development of electric refrigerators, people had to rely on nature’s cooling system for refrigeration: ice. The lakes of northwestern New Jersey were once a dependable and abundant source for this desirable commodity. Large chunks of ice were broken up by a horse-drawn plow, ushered to a lake access point, and hand-cut into blocks to eventually be loaded onto a train for storage and shipment to nearby towns and cities. Before the railway of the Montclair-Boonton Line was utilized for commuters, it hosted the transfer of ice from storage houses to cities.

◀ Harvesting ice floes from Lake Hopatcong. ³⁷



Ice blocks loaded onto a conveyor for transport. ³⁸



A stack of ice blocks in the process of melting post a storage facility fire. ³⁹

Utilizing Historic Elements as Inspiration for Design

The ice floes from the lake, the rectangular blocks of hand-sewn ice, the linearity and industrial materiality of the rails, and the steady repetition of rail ties all serve as the inspiration for the design studies of the park. The forms are as visually intriguing as they are impactful in the storytelling of one of the park’s many former histories. They serve as the foundation for design across the park, while making space to celebrate and incorporate the many different cultures and communities that currently reside and work or have resided and worked in this area in the past.

Ice, Rails, and Ties Found Through Form and Materiality in the Park

The form and materiality of ice, rails, and ties are reflected in initial sketches for potential scenarios throughout the park. Rectangular forms intended for seating or traffic control visually reference ice blocks and their route of transportation along the park. The steel facades of the rails can be recalled through the fabrication of walls or signage while their form can be recognized through the gentle curvature of pathways. The steady repetition of the wooden ties between the rails takes shape through the beams of a trellis for shaded rest areas.

Design Language Elements



Ice

Ice can be visualized through seating or paving patterns.

◀ Artist Rachel Whiteread's work titled "Embankment" offers aesthetic similarities to stacked ice blocks. ⁴⁰



Rails

Rails inspire space-shaping walls and barriers

◀ Artist Richard Serra's piece, "Snake" nods towards industrial materiality. ⁴¹

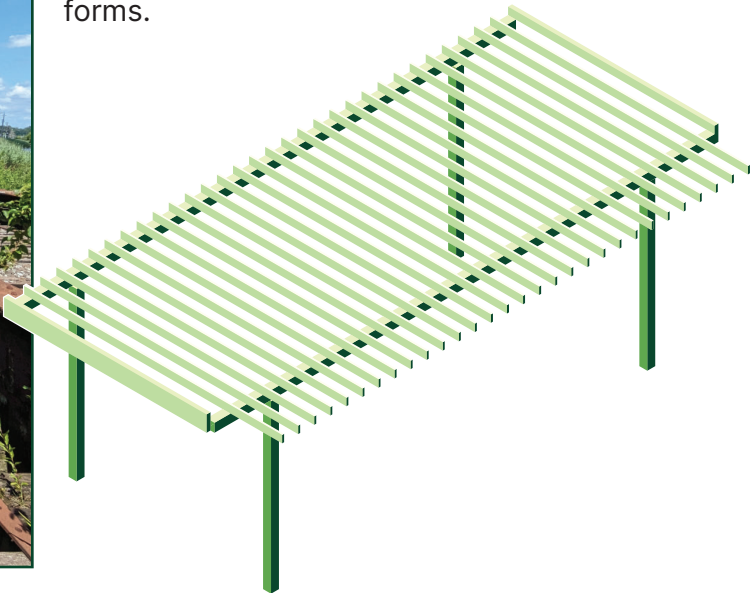
WELCOME TO THE GREENWAY



Ties

The structure of ties is revealed in pavement patterns, form seating elements, or in trellis roofing

◀ The original ties of the former commuter rail inspire structural forms.



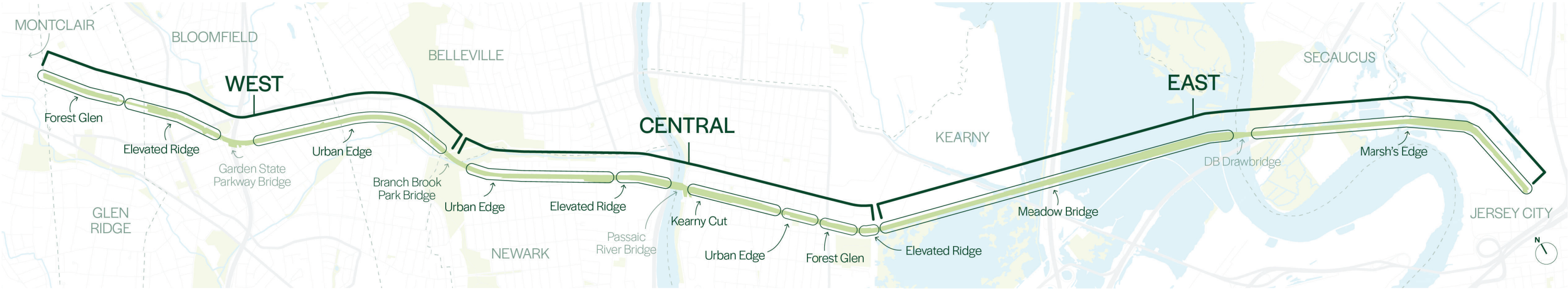
Section 02

Space and Place

Chapter 04

Design Framework

Landscape Typologies



Character zones and landscape typologies across the park

Landscape typologies within three character zones

Three character zones fall naturally within the park: west, central, and east. Within these zones, six distinct landscape typologies occur: Forest Glen, Elevated Ridge, Urban Edge, Kearny Cut, Meadow Bridge, and Marsh's Edge.

These typologies have distinct adjacent land uses, topography, proximity to water, and physical features. Each typology presents unique possibilities and constraints.



Forest Glen

Situated behind backyards, this lush typology found in Glen Ridge and Kearny, is already deeply appreciated by residents and nature enthusiasts who want to preserve the area's biodiversity.



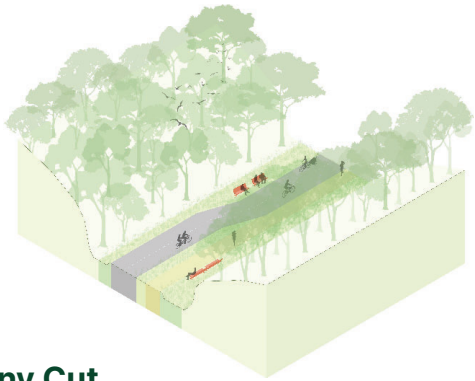
Elevated Ridge

This typology glides above its residential and commercial surroundings along a raised berm with mature trees that stand above the roof lines. It is found in Bloomfield, Newark, and Kearny.



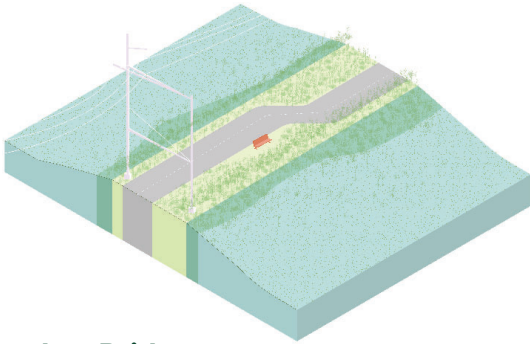
Urban Edge

This typology runs at street level and is fully integrated with the surrounding neighborhood. It takes place in Belleville and Newark.



Kearny Cut

This typology slices through bedrock, exposing jagged rock faces and nestling the park in a canyon-like landscape that is sheltered from the town of Kearny.



Meadow Bridge

A panoramic marshland experience makes this Kearny typology stand out. Trains criss-cross the landscape, foregrounding views of the Manhattan skyline.



Marsh's Edge

The Meadowlands meet Jersey City and Secaucus in this segment. Marshes merge with active industrial infrastructure.

Program Highlights

Each typology varies in width and space for amenities. This results in narrower corridors, 30 - 60' wide, that hug the user with towering trees and lush vegetation or wider spaces, 150 - 200' wide, that allow for more activity space.

Recreate and Commute

The park property runs through the eight municipalities of Montclair, Glen Ridge, Bloomfield, Belleville, Newark, Kearny, Secaucus, and Jersey City. A pedestrian transportation corridor could weave across each typology, connecting communities and allowing for a safe and accessible recreational thoroughfare. The variety in topography, width, and viewsheds throughout the typologies ensures a diverse set of experiences for both the recreational user and the commuter.

Rest and Gather

Narrower corridors of the park, such as the Forest Glen, Elevated Ridge, Kearny Cut, or Meadow Bridge, could provide quiet areas for individual or small-group gatherings. These spaces would be nestled by adjacent paths, establishing a convenient spot for a quick break on the trail. Larger corridors, such as the Urban Edge or Marsh's Edge, would have the space to support group gatherings, multiple events at a time, or large community programming.



Play and Explore

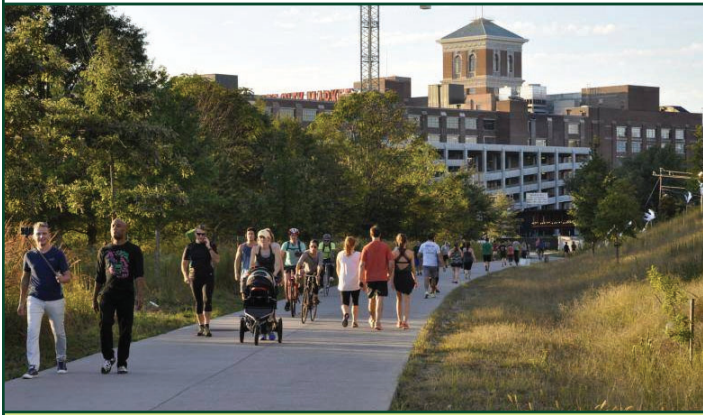
Opportunities for play and exploration vary in scale and type across each typology. Areas with dense vegetation such as the Forest Glen or the Kearny Cut might support forest walks or pollinator gardens. Larger spaces with greater program flexibility, like the Urban Edge, could host playgrounds or sports fields. Small-scale sensory gardens or nature play amenities might be tucked alongside paths in other areas such as the Elevated Ridge, Meadow Bridge, or Marsh's Edge.

Learn and Engage

The uniqueness of each typology offers endless opportunities for on-site education. In the Meadow Bridge and Marsh's Edge, one might learn about the industrial history of the waterways. In the Kearny Cut, one can see the impact of the railway industry by meandering down the rocky corridor, blasted away to make room for the transit corridor. In areas embedded more within the urban fabric, such as the Forest Glen, Elevated Ridge, or Urban Edge, one might engage in hands-on learning through accessible community gardens or learn about the cultural evolution of the area throughout time.



Case Study



Shared use pedestrian corridor on the Atlanta Beltline

Single use or shared use pathways along a park allows for safe and pleasant experiences exercising in the outdoors.

◀ Visitors enjoy a shared use path on the Atlanta Beltline.⁴²



Seating and bike stations along the 606 in Chicago

Accessible rest areas are convenient and necessary for the visitor.

◀ Easy access to rest areas is critical to parks, like this one on the 606.⁴³



Playspaces alongside the paths at Buffalo Bayou in Houston

Playspaces that are accessible, adaptive, and engaging are critical components to a public outdoor space.

◀ A child enjoys a playspace adjacent to a main path at Buffalo Bayou.⁴⁴

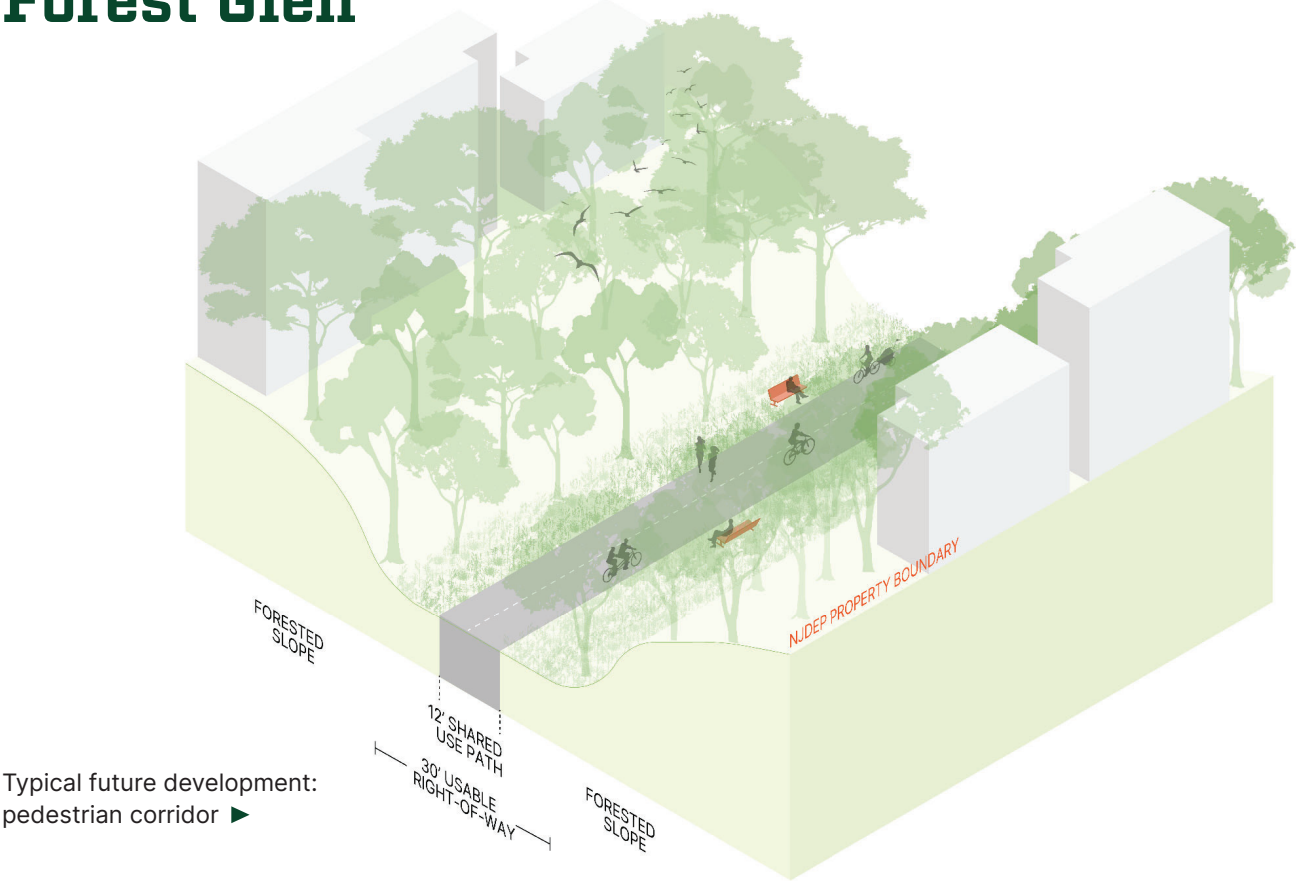


Environmental education on the LA River

Information signage engages the visitor in their surroundings while sharing with them ways to steward their space in the future.

◀ Clear signage for all ages, like this example along the LA River, helps visitors learn about their landscape.⁴⁵

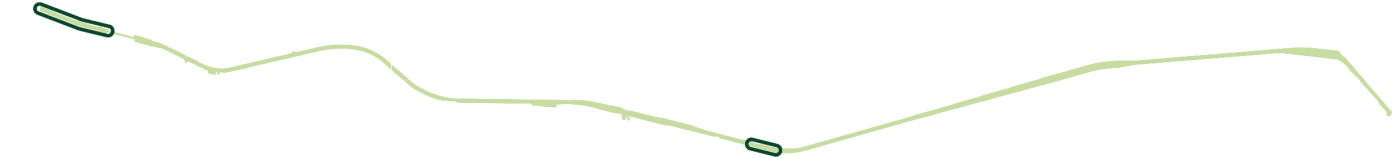
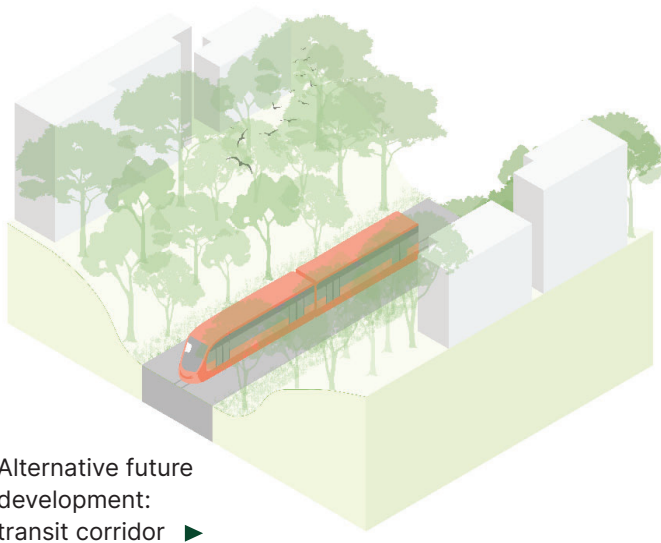
Forest Glen



Typical Future Development

Tucked behind backyards in a shallow glen, this wooded stretch of the future park takes a tranquil course. Found in Glen Ridge and Kearny, it is surrounded by a buffer of vegetation. Songbirds roost in the canopy while fox and deer forage below. This section of the park is deeply appreciated by residents and nature enthusiasts, who want to preserve the area's biodiversity.

This area sits slightly below grade than its surroundings, with bridges marking residential streets that cross overhead. The accessible flat space is roughly 30', which is enough space for a 12'-wide shared use pedestrian path buffered by vegetation, with rest spaces along the way. In a scenario with a public transit corridor, pedestrian zones would be eliminated due to the constraints of the narrow right of way.



Forest Glen locations in Glen Ridge and Kearny.

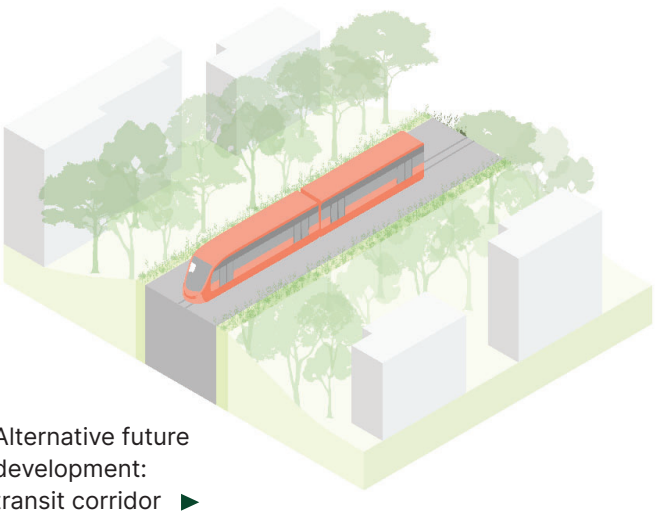
Elevated Ridge



Typical Future Development

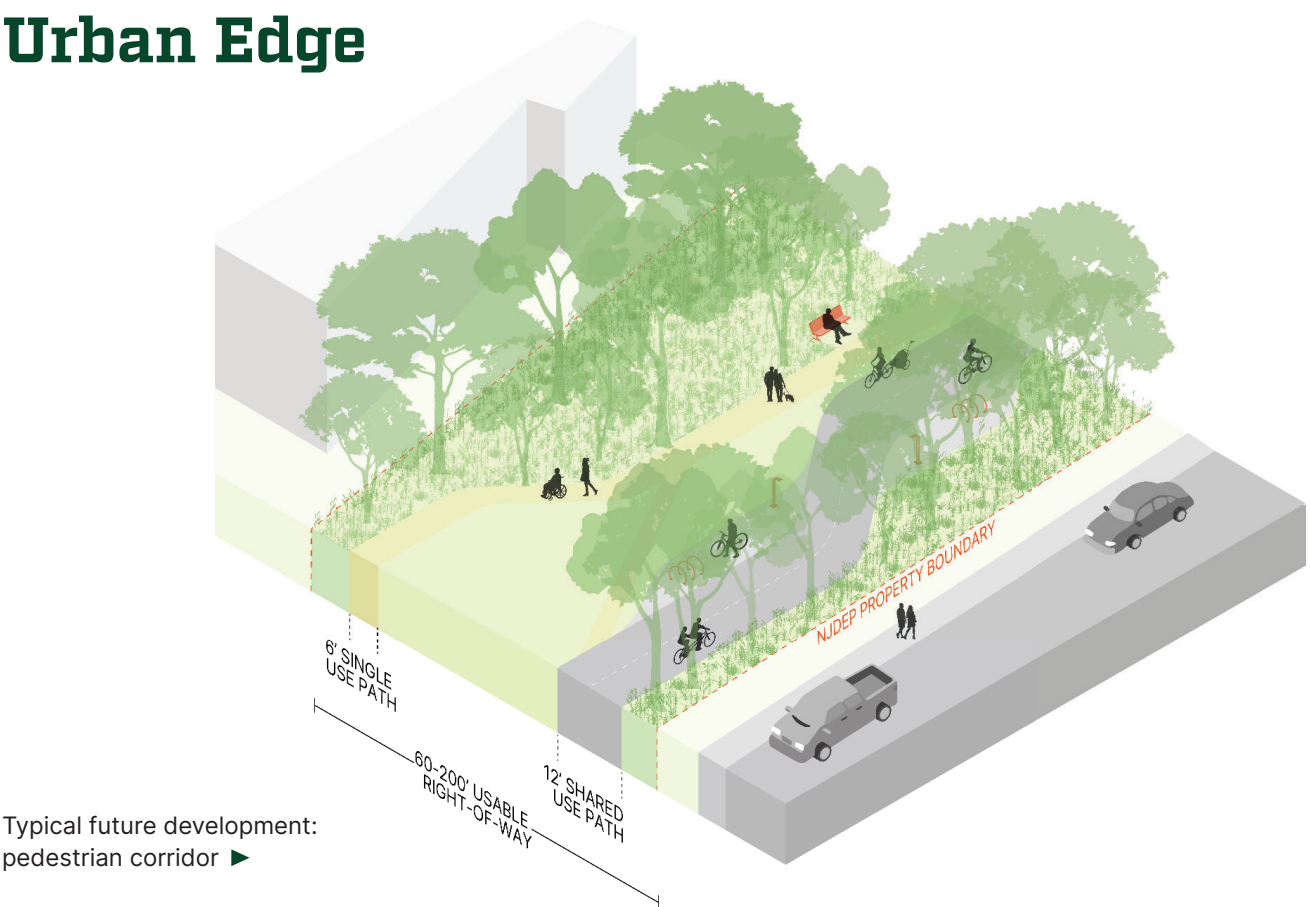
This segment glides above its residential surroundings along a raised berm with mature trees that stand above the roof lines. Several historic bridges along the park create scenic overlooks. The nearby Second River, a primary tributary of the Passaic River and once home to local industrial mills, flows underneath the park in Belleville.

Some of the edges are reinforced with retaining walls, which help create the 40' accessible flat space at the top of the berm. This allows for a 12'-wide shared use path, a 6'-wide single use path and vegetated buffers with rest areas. These buffers might include bioswales or rain gardens for stormwater management. A public transit corridor would replace the pathways and rest areas. Vegetated buffers could potentially accommodate elevated pedestrian pathways.



Elevated Ridge locations in Bloomfield, Newark, and Kearny.

Urban Edge



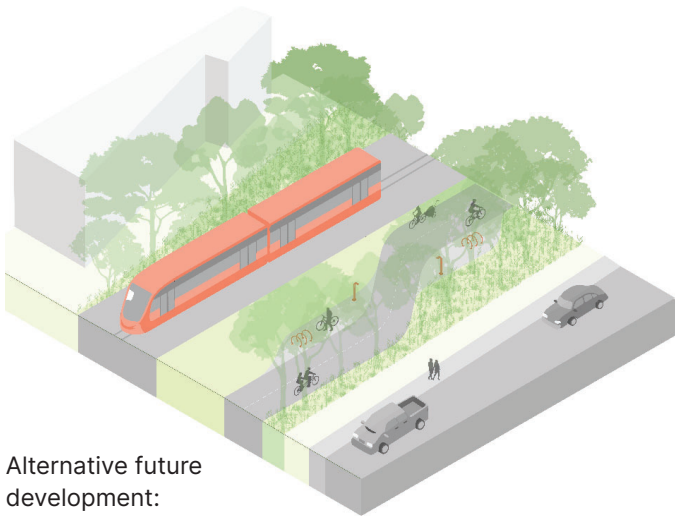
Typical future development:
pedestrian corridor ▶

Typical Future Development

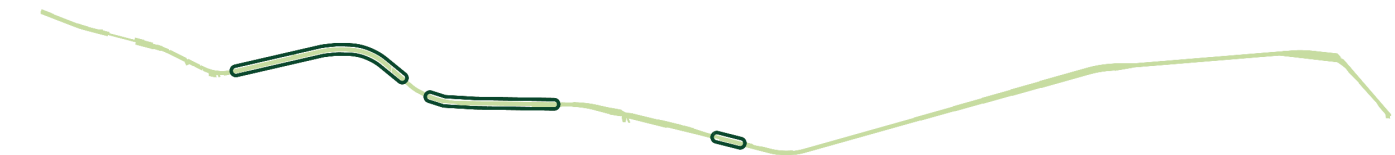
This segment runs at street level and is fully integrated within the surrounding neighborhood, which is both residential and commercial.

Here, two discontinued railways merge and the path opens up to 200 feet in width. This is the largest flat space on the park, creating the perfect canvas for a 12'-wide shared use path, a 6'-wide single use path, and gathering spaces. These could be flexible public greenspaces, full-scale sports fields, playgrounds, or sheltered social spaces.

Given the large surface area, a transit corridor could replace the single use path and run alongside the shared use path. Gathering space amenities would likely need to adapt to accommodate the transit corridor, but vegetated areas would remain.

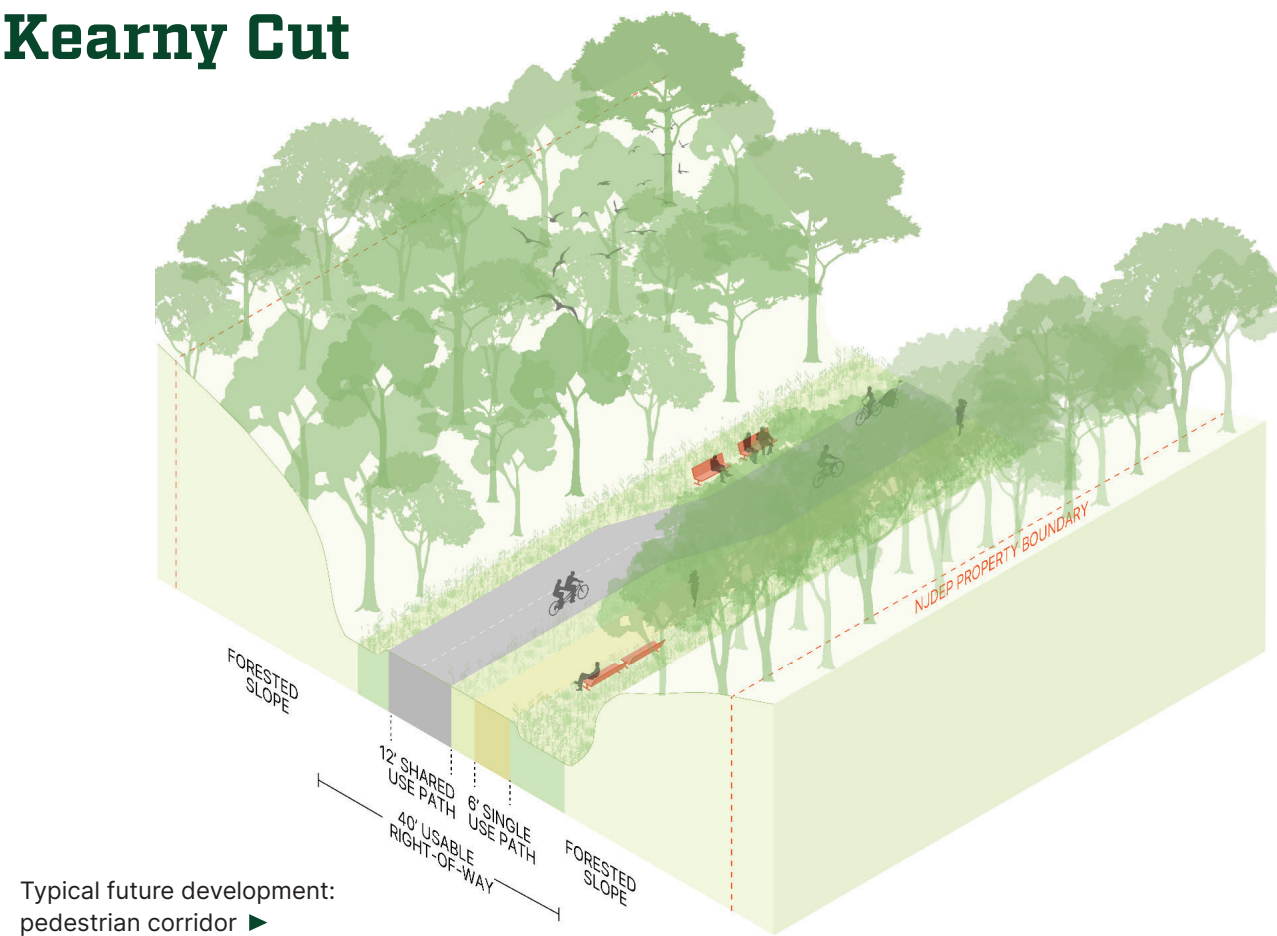


Alternative future development:
transit corridor ▶



Forest Glen locations in Glen Ridge and Kearny

Kearny Cut

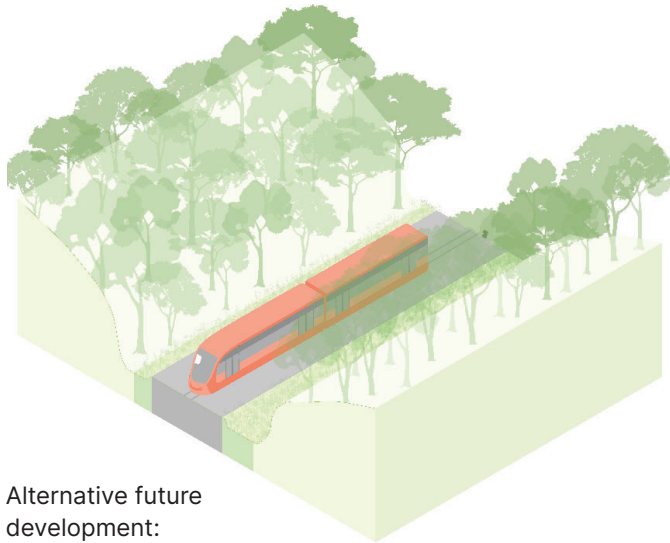


Typical future development:
pedestrian corridor ▶

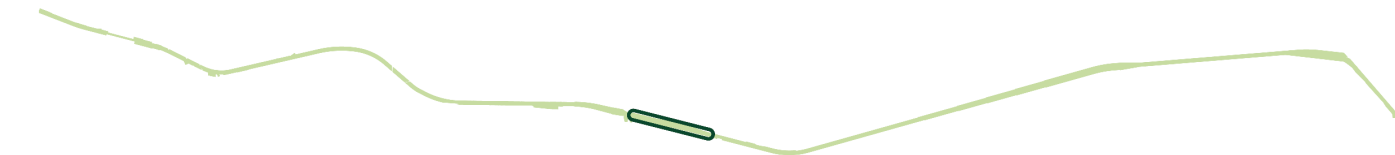
Typical Future Development

This segment slices through bedrock, which was long ago blasted away to make room for the historic railway. Jagged rock faces nestle the park in a canyon-like landscape that is sheltered from the city above. The high rock walls and dense vegetation of this typology make it a significantly cooler temperature than its surrounding urban fabric.

Here, the usable right of way is about 40' in width. The narrow usable area of the right of way offers space for a shared use path directly parallel to a single use path, merging into one shared use path as the area narrows further. A transit corridor would replace the pedestrian space entirely.

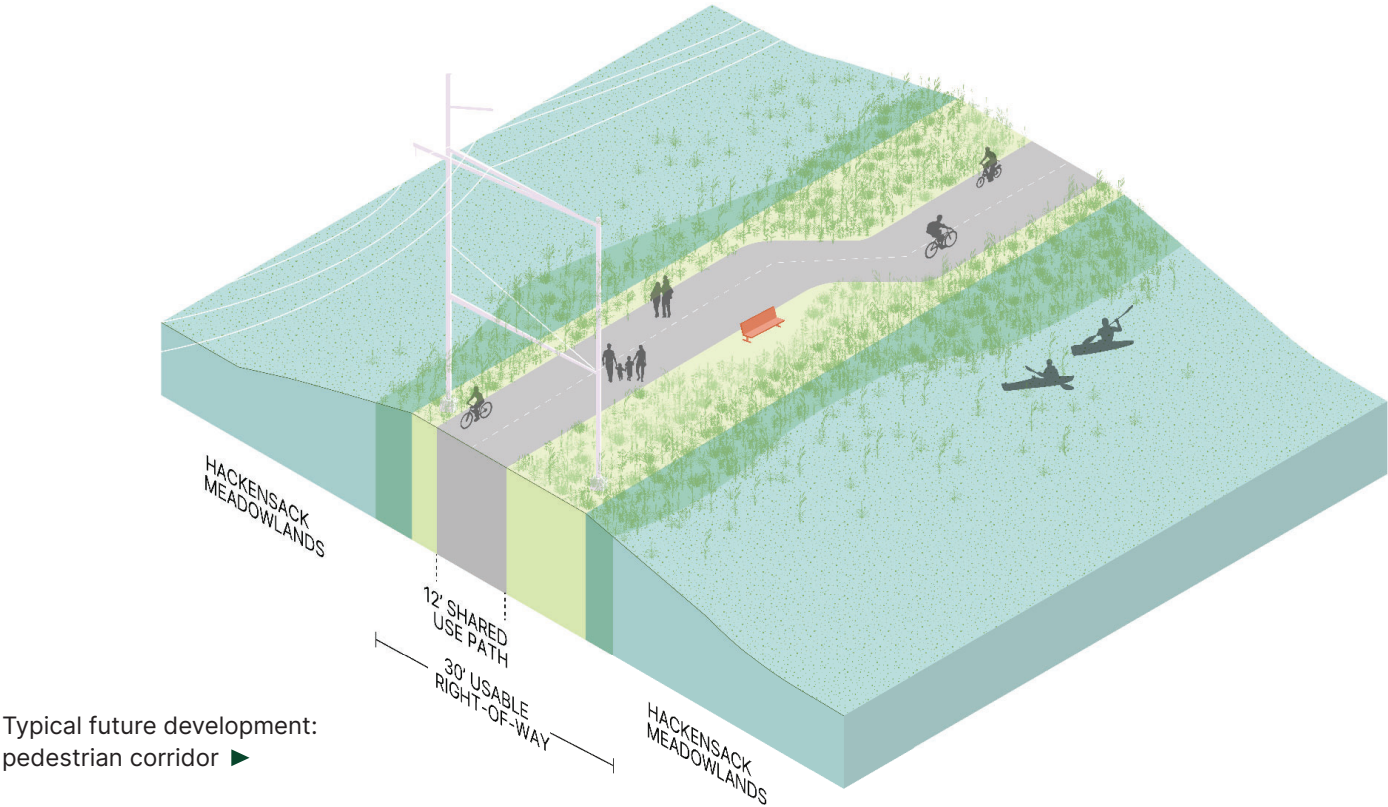


Alternative future development:
transit corridor ▶



Elevated Ridge locations in Bloomfield, Newark, and Kearny

Meadow Bridge

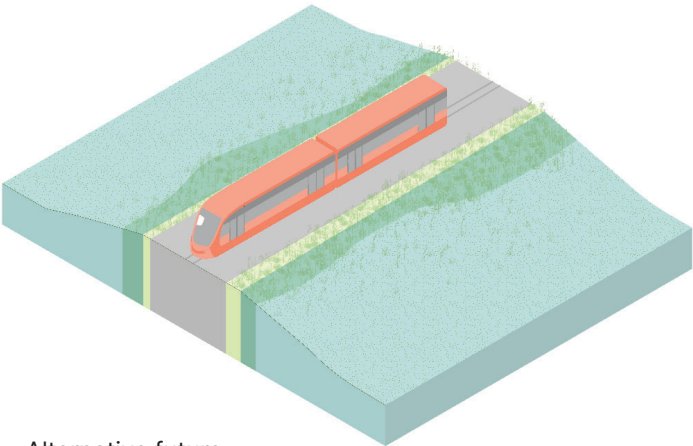


Typical future development: pedestrian corridor ▶

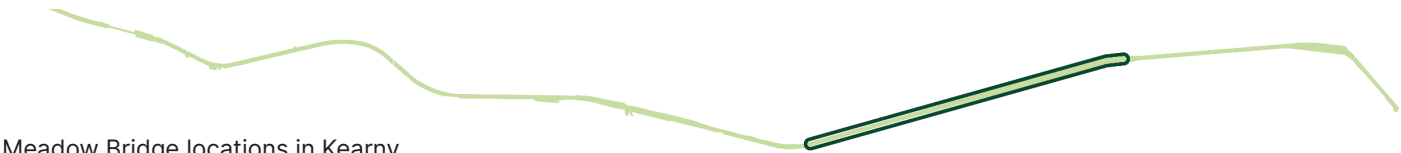
Typical Future Development

A panoramic marshland experience makes this segment stand out, alongside its large population of native wildlife and migratory birds. On the horizon are Manhattan skyline views, with trains and industrial power infrastructure criss-crossing the landscape in the foreground. From any point along the Meadow Bridge, the visitor is immersed within the sensorially-stimulating landscape of the Hackensack Meadowlands, which also acts as a natural audible softener. This creates a peaceful outdoor space where one might rest, relax, and rejuvenate along a shared use path.

In a scenario with a public transit corridor, pedestrian zones would be eliminated due to the constraints of the typology’s 30’ right of way. Depending on permitting, a cantilevered boardwalk system for pedestrians could be explored.

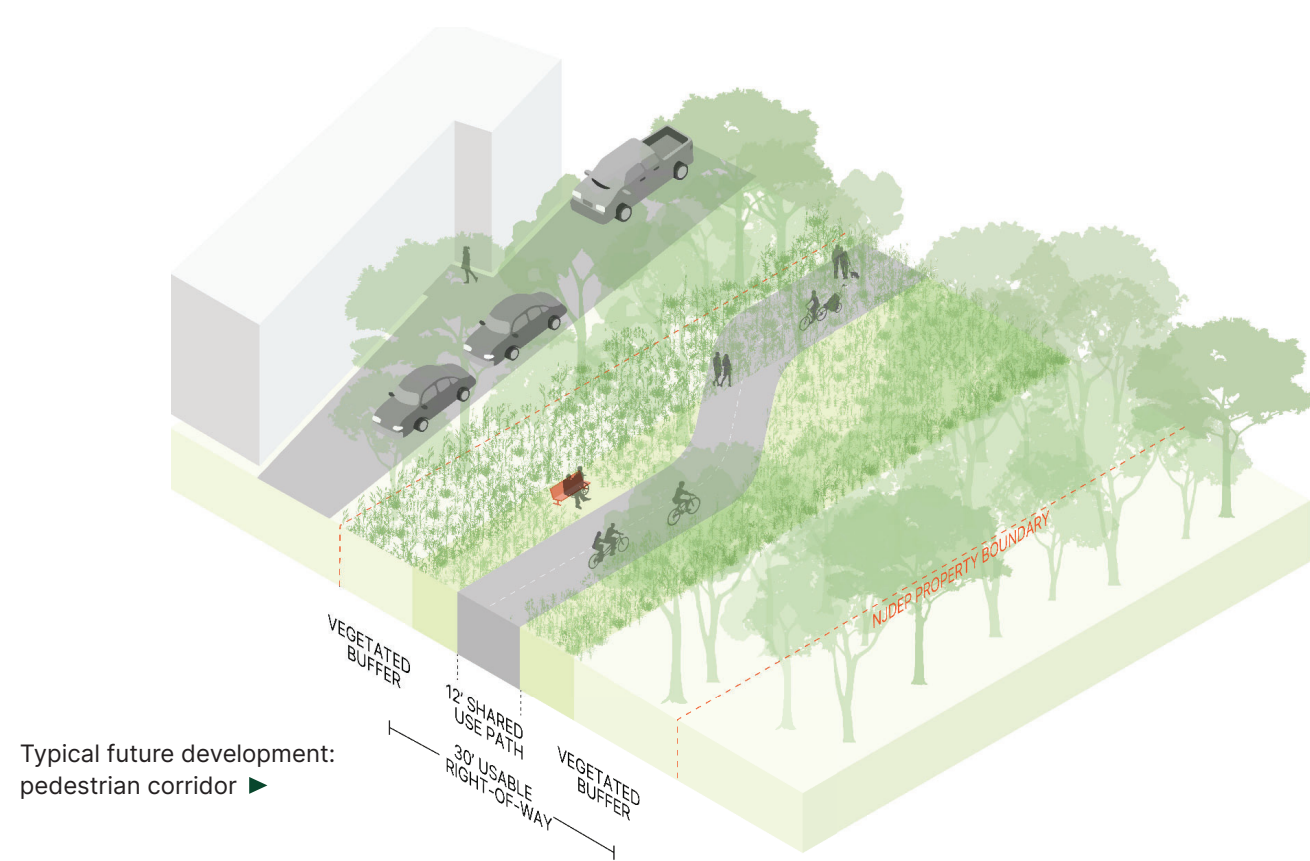


Alternative future development: transit corridor ▶



Meadow Bridge locations in Kearny

Marsh’s Edge

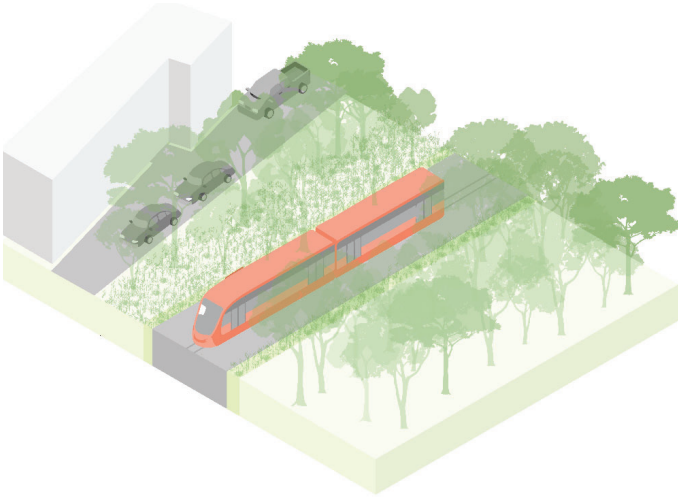


Typical future development: pedestrian corridor ▶

Typical Future Development

The Meadowlands meet Jersey City and Secaucus in this segment. Marshes merge with active industrial and rail infrastructure, highlighting the interplay between industry and nature. Snake Hill, a former quarry and impressive geological landscape, borders the northern edge of the park. The din of highway traffic and reversing trucks are reminders of present-day industry needs.

The average width of the right of way here is 30’. This creates enough space for a 12’-wide shared use path, vegetated buffers, and rest areas. In a scenario with a public transit corridor, the pedestrian path would be eliminated.



Alternative future development: transit corridor ▶



Marsh’s Edge locations in Secaucus and Jersey City

Section 03

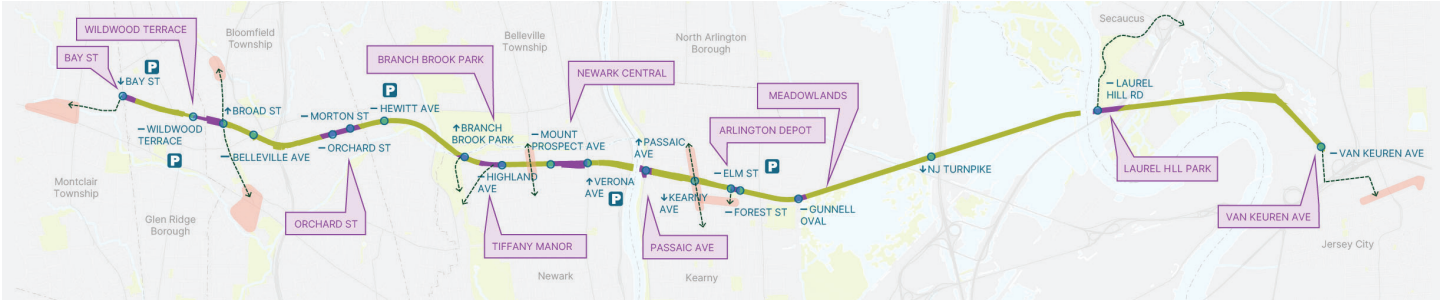
Activity Centers and Amenities

Chapter 04

Design Framework

Activity Centers and Amenities

This section outlines the three activity centers within Phase 1, as well as eight locations throughout the nine miles of the park that are well suited for future potential activity centers. These examples represent the vision and opportunities to promote increased access and community impact of the park. The examples of Bay Street, Montclair, and Wildwood Terrace, Glen Ridge, would require additional acquisition or partnership to realize this vision.



Activity Centers across the park

- > Last Mile Connection
- Activity Center
- Corridor
- Major Thresholds
- ↓ Park is below Grade
- Park is at-grade
- ↑ Park is above Grade
- Neighborhood Centers
 - Bloomfield Ave / Montclair
 - Broad + Baldwin
 - Six Points / Bloomfield
 - Mount Prospect Ave
 - Kearny Ave
 - Midland Ave
 - Newark Ave

Bay Street, Montclair

Existing Conditions

The Beginning of the Park

Located directly west of the Montclair terminus of the park property boundary, this activity center could operate as a trailhead. NJDEP would need to acquire additional land to build such a space. There might be gathering spaces, rest areas, and amenities to support park visitors.

Thriving Ecosystem

This potential activity center is proposed along a dense corridor of canopy trees and shrubs that have taken over the park property since its time as an operating railway. Many plant and wildlife species call this space home. An activity center here would respect the existing vegetation and give visitors an opportunity to engage with nature in an urban setting.

Point of Connection

An existing parking lot sits between an operating rail network to the west, Sherman St. to the south and Bay St. to the east. An activity center here could provide parking lot users direct access to the nearby commercial corridor to the north.

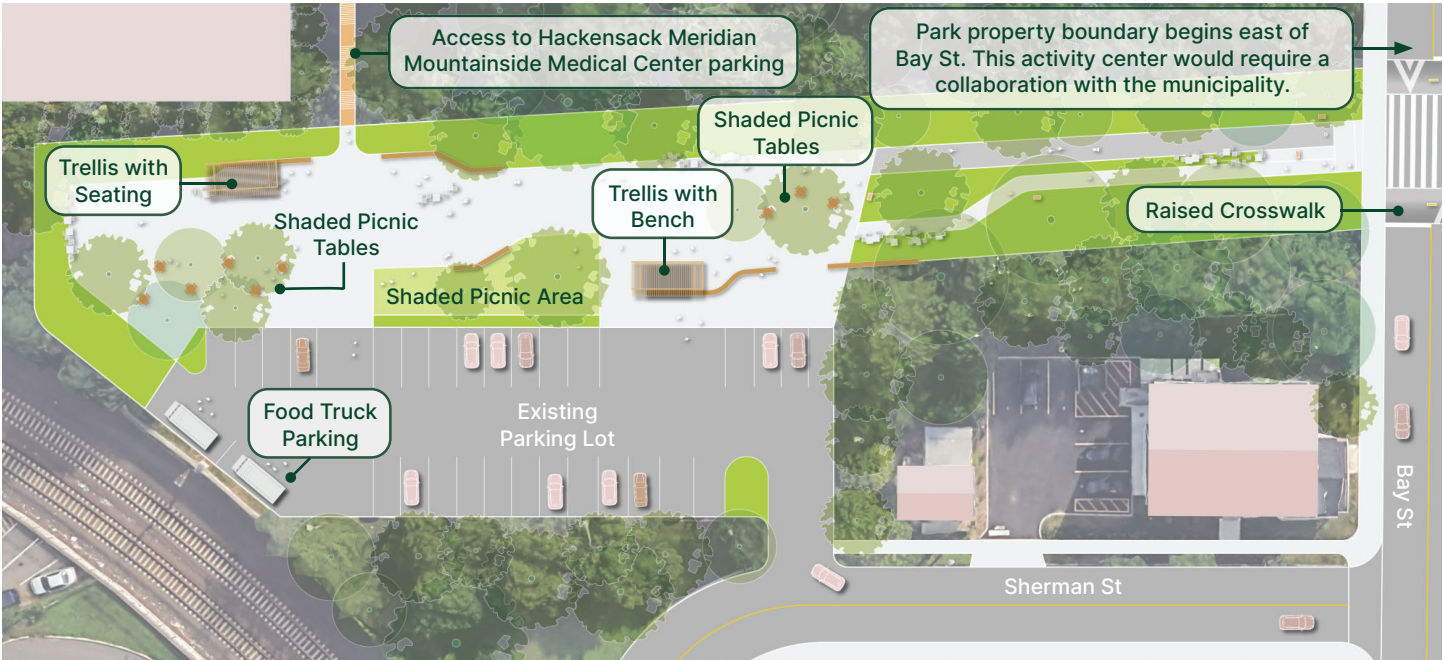
Activity Potential

Recreational activity space for those on foot or on wheels

Shady rest areas

Safe space nearby for vendors

Opportunities for environmental education



An activity center here would offer access to the western terminus of the park, as well as gathering and resting space.

Wildwood Terrace, Glen Ridge

Existing Conditions

Connects Neighborhoods

Located at grade near the northwestern corner of the Bloomfield Cemetery, this potential activity center would offer a safe recreation and transportation corridor, connecting the nearby park intersections of Broad St. and Ridgewood Ave.

Celebrates a Historic Icon

Constructed in 1883, the quaint, English Tudor-style Benson Street Station is an architectural icon and relic of the Gilded Age, situated adjacent to the park for visitors and passers-by to observe. The building is a private residence and not open to the public.

Establishes Community Space

The park currently runs adjacent to a beloved community garden on the eastern side of Wildwood Terrace. An activity center here could expand working space, storage areas, and community gathering places for park visitors or community gardeners to enjoy.

Activity Potential



Immersion within the natural environment



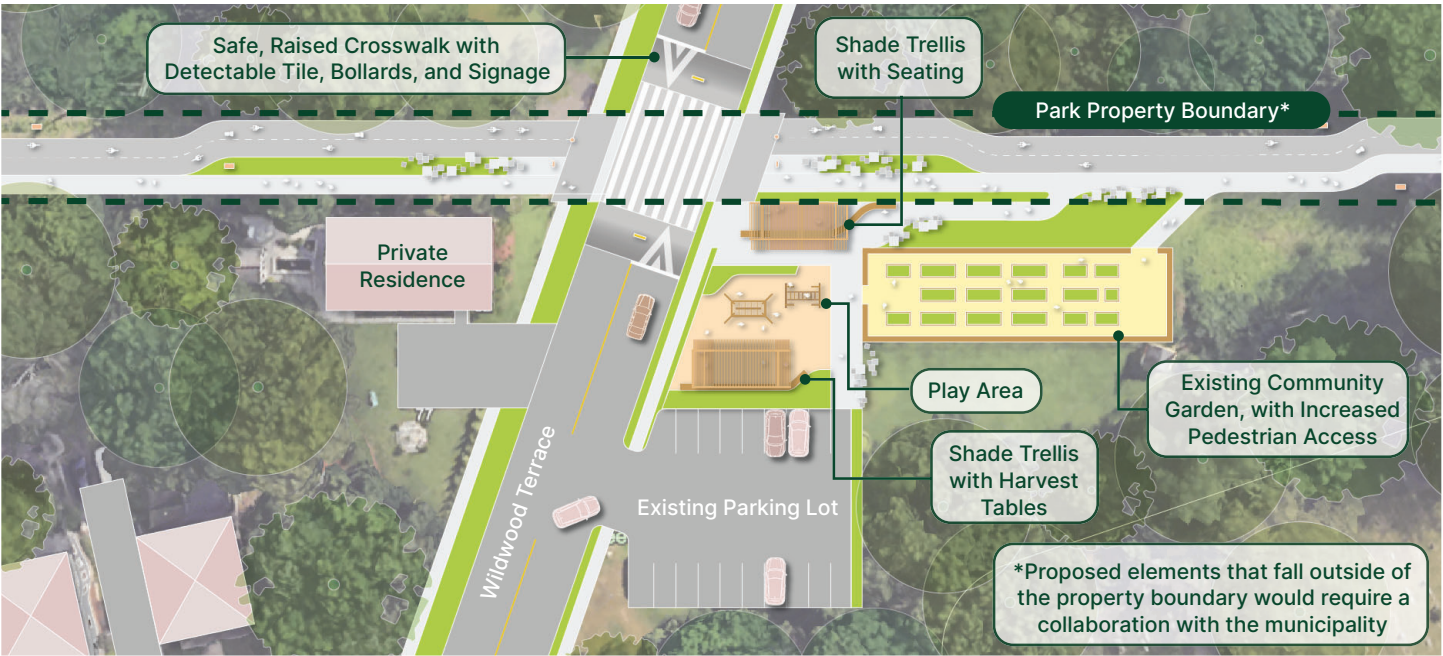
Increased access to existing community gardens



Safe space for rest, snack break, or lunchtime picnic



Increased access to existing play area



An activity center here would expand access to existing amenities.

Orchard St., Bloomfield

Existing Conditions

Connects to Local Corridors

The at-grade Orchard St. intersection is situated in a quiet residential neighborhood of Bloomfield. Local businesses are woven throughout the surrounding area, with the busy Garden State Parkway humming in the distance, several blocks to the west.

Provides Flexible Neighborhood Greenspace

While there are large greenspaces nearby, the immediate neighborhood is lacking in flexible greenspace. Access at this potential activity center would expand residents' public event space and create safe space to gather and recreate.

Creates a Recreational Corridor

Access to the park at the Orchard St. intersection would provide residents with a safe and pleasant route for multimodal recreation.

Activity Potential



Recreational activity space for those on foot or on wheels



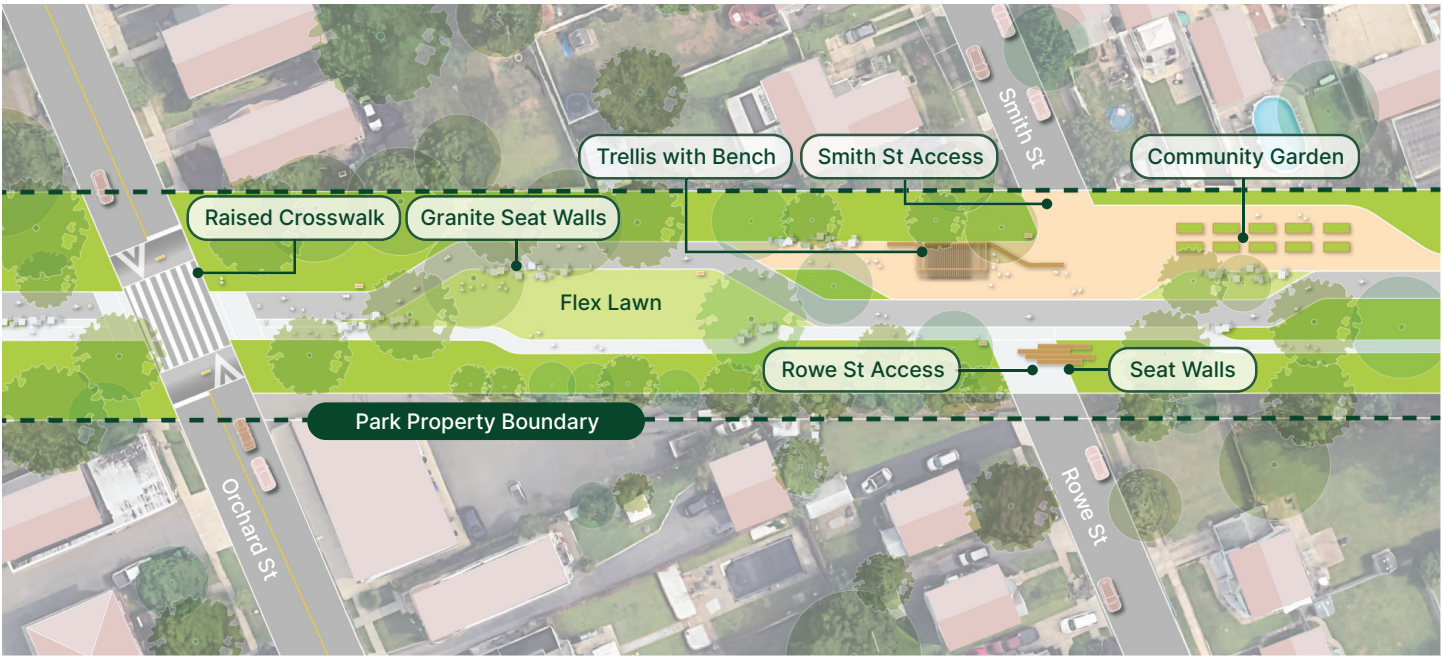
Shady rest areas



Immersion within the natural environment

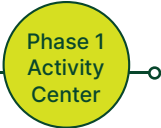


Opportunities for environmental education



Public gathering space and community gardens could expand access to safe, accessible outdoor areas for the community.

Branch Brook Overlook, Newark



Existing Conditions

Connects to Local Trail Systems

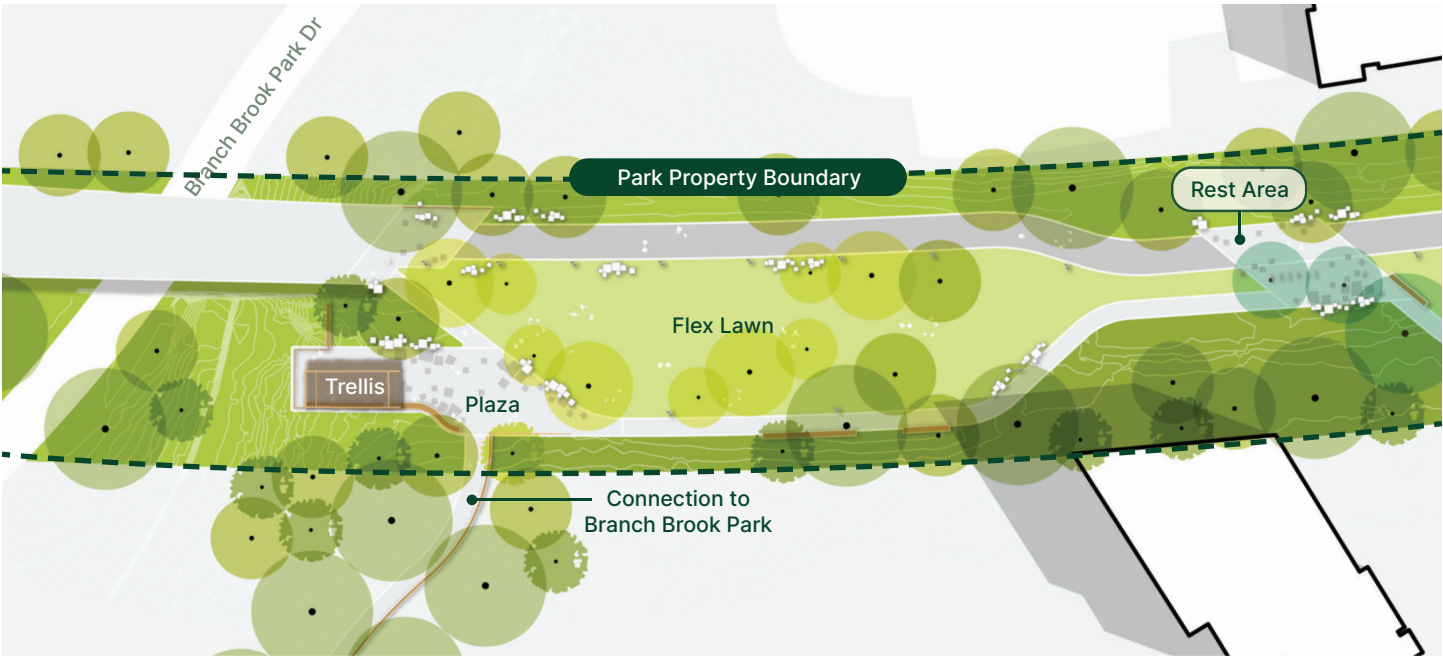
The park intersection at the northern edge of Branch Brook Park will bridge trails from Belleville Park, across the Second River, and into the beloved Branch Brook Park to the south. This will open up new routes of recreation for local residents and visitors.

Expands upon Local Park System

Connecting trail systems ultimately builds a greater park system in the area. With Belleville Park to the north, Hendricks Field Golf Course to the northwest, and Branch Brook Park to the south, this activity center will have the power to establish one of the largest connected recreational greenspaces in the area.

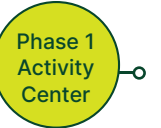
Provides a Recreational Thoroughfare

This part of Newark comprises a mixture of public land, industrial areas, and commercial zones with residential neighborhoods woven throughout. Park visitors will have access to designated pedestrian paths and rest areas, resulting in a safe transportation and recreation corridor between Newark and the adjacent town of Bloomfield.



The Branch Brook Overlook Activity Center provides visitors with a shaded view and connection to Branch Brook Park.

Tiffany Manor, Newark



Existing Conditions

Historic Icon

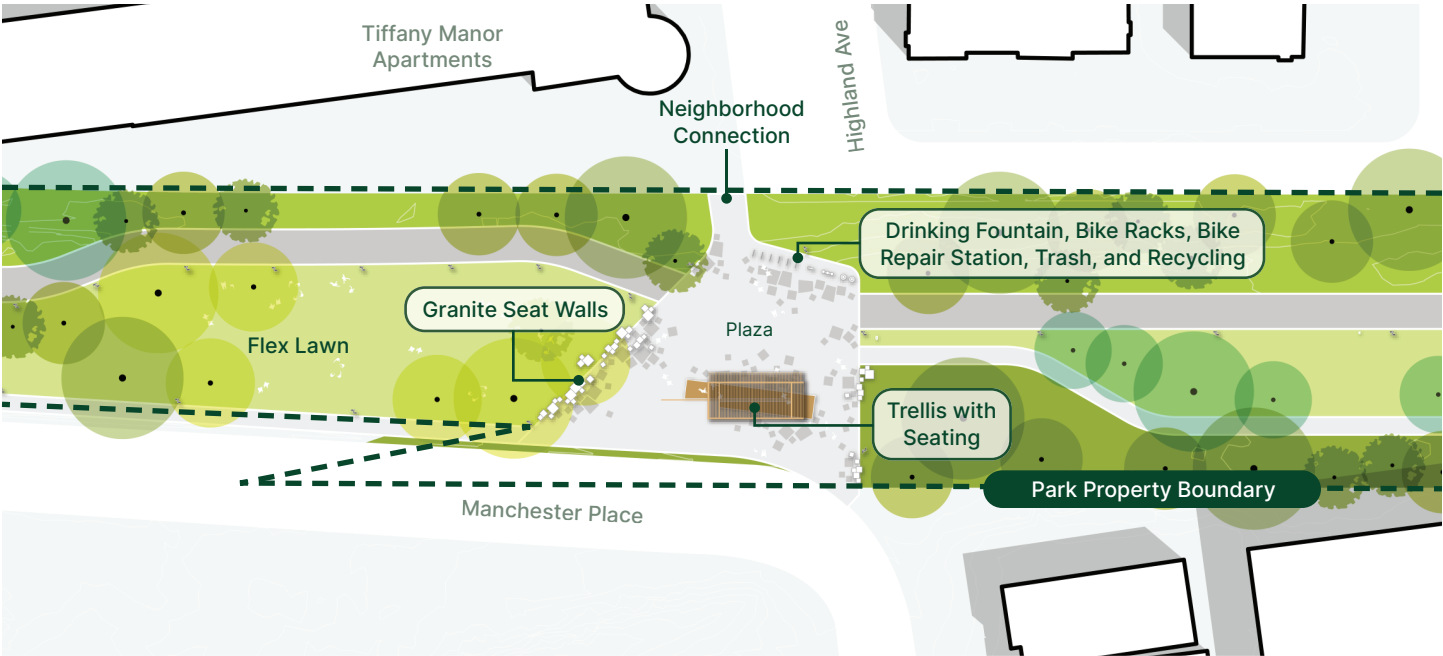
Once home to the Tiffany & Co. factory, the Tiffany Manor Apartments offer a unique slice of history in this part of Newark. It is nestled between the park to the south, Highland Ave. to the east, an additional apartment complex to the west, and Belleville Park to the north. An activity center here will expand greenspace for the many nearby residents.

Neighborhood Connection

The nearby Second River forms the boundary between Belleville and Newark here. Highland Ave. intersects the park, runs parallel to Tiffany Manor Apartments and terminates near Belleville Park. An activity center here will provide an excellent connection point for these areas.

Gateway to Greenspace

The intersection of Tiffany Manor Apartments and Belleville Park provides great access to greenspace for local residents. The Tiffany Manor Activity Center, just a block south of this intersection, will expand greenspace access to the greater public.



The Tiffany Manor Activity Center establishes a safe space for connection and gathering.

Sketch of Branch Brook Park Overlook Activity Center



Sketch of Tiffany Manor Activity Center



TIFFANY
MANOR

SOMOS
HANDCRAFTED AREPAS

AREPA GRILLED CORN MEAT CACHAPA 2.50	PURTO RICO PORK CARNITAS CARNE MEXICANA TOFU ANGAD CHICKEN
GRILLED CORN MEAT GRILLED CORN MEAT GRILLED CORN MEAT	GRILLED CORN MEAT GRILLED CORN MEAT GRILLED CORN MEAT
2.50 2.50 2.50	2.50 2.50 2.50

SELECT your CRUT - STUFF IT UP

Newark Central, Newark

Phase 1
Activity
Center

Existing Conditions

Large Space for Gathering

This segment of the park features the widest usable right of way throughout the entire nine miles, spanning between Mt. Prospect St and Verona Ave. At its widest point, it spans 200' in width. Its flex lawn has the capacity to support roughly 2,000 people standing. The extents of the space open up numerous possibilities for rendering this segment a major hub of Newark, for active and passive recreational and event space.

Bustling Urban Hub

This area of Newark is characterized by dense residential areas, commercial corridors, and busy industrial zones. This results in a diverse array of users, with the weekday daytime population increasing considerably. An activity center at this location will provide rest space, recreational areas, and flexible public space for all to enjoy.

Rich Cultural History

Many jazz musicians, pop artists, athletes, poets, and activists call Newark home. An activity center here will offer a space to celebrate Newark's past and present contributions to the arts.



Sports courts, fitness stations, play areas, and performance / gathering spaces make this activity center engaging for all ages

Passaic Ave., Kearny

Existing Conditions

A Fascinating Socioenvironmental History

The Passaic River forms the backdrop of this potential activity center site. The recorded history of the river begins as the home of the Leni Lenape tribe. With the onset of industrialization, the area became populated with urban grids and the river experienced heavy pollution in the process of natural resource recovery.

A Living Museum

This site sits above Passaic Ave., with a view of the river below. Informational signage would educate visitors on the surrounding plant and animal species, while framing a lovely, shaded view for a rest or a stroll.

A Connection Between Cities

The Passaic River serves as both municipality boundary and connection between Newark and Kearny. An activity center here would act as a gateway for the park visitor to traverse between the cities easily, on a potentially remediated future bridge.



Trellises overlooking the river might offer shaded space for gathering or environmental education opportunities

Sketch of Newark Central Activity Center



Sketch of potential Passaic Ave. Activity Center



Arlington Depot, Kearny

Existing Conditions

Historic Icon

The Arlington Depot park is adjacent to the park. Remnants of its namesake are still in place, reminding the park visitor of the once bustling station of the former commuter line. An activity center so close to the existing park would shed light on its industrial past.

A Beloved Greenspace

The Arlington Depot park is deeply beloved by community members. With flat greenspace at street level, it provides an accessible spot for small gatherings. An activity center adjacent to this park would increase accessibility to the park and expand public greenspace.

A Central Gathering Spot

Within a ten-minute walk of the existing park is the nearby Gunnell Oval, a greenspace with sports fields and play spaces. The park would stitch these parks together, resulting in an expanded corridor for social gatherings and recreational spaces. An activity center here might focus on amenities such as a community garden or an outdoor cooking area.



An activity center here could increase access to sheltered and unsheltered public gathering spaces

Meadowlands Overlook, Kearny

Existing Conditions

A Living Museum

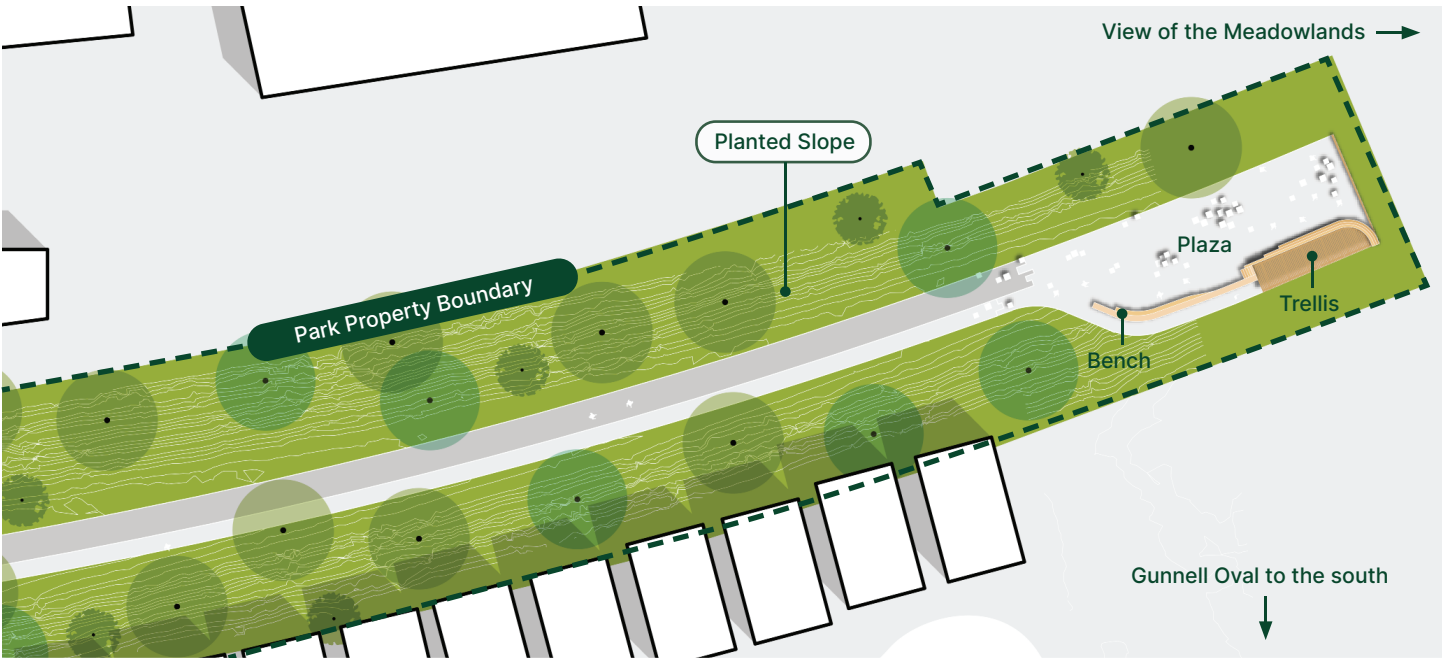
The Meadowlands is a large ecosystem of wetlands at the terminus of the Passaic River. In the 17th century, Dutch settlers cleared and drained the woodlands to establish salt hay meadows. After resources depleted, the area became a dumping grounds and a landmass for urban grid development. In the late 20th century, remediation and restoration began, resulting in the thriving ecosystem that exists today.

Respite with a View

The Meadowlands are characterized by broad swaths of grassy vegetation, large expanses of water, and a vast horizon containing the Manhattan skyline and acres of vegetation. An activity center here would offer a peaceful place for rest and respite, with a unique view.

Thriving Wildlife Habitat

The Meadowlands is home to a diverse array of migrating plant and animal species. An activity center here could offer interactive equipment such as binoculars or educational signage to engage the visitor with their vibrant surroundings.



The Meadowlands activity center would immerse visitors in the diverse wildlife and plant species of the area

Sketch of potential Arlington Depot Activity Center



Sketch of potential
Meadowlands Overlook
Activity Center



Laurel Hill Park, Secaucus

Existing Conditions

Bustling Recreation Hub

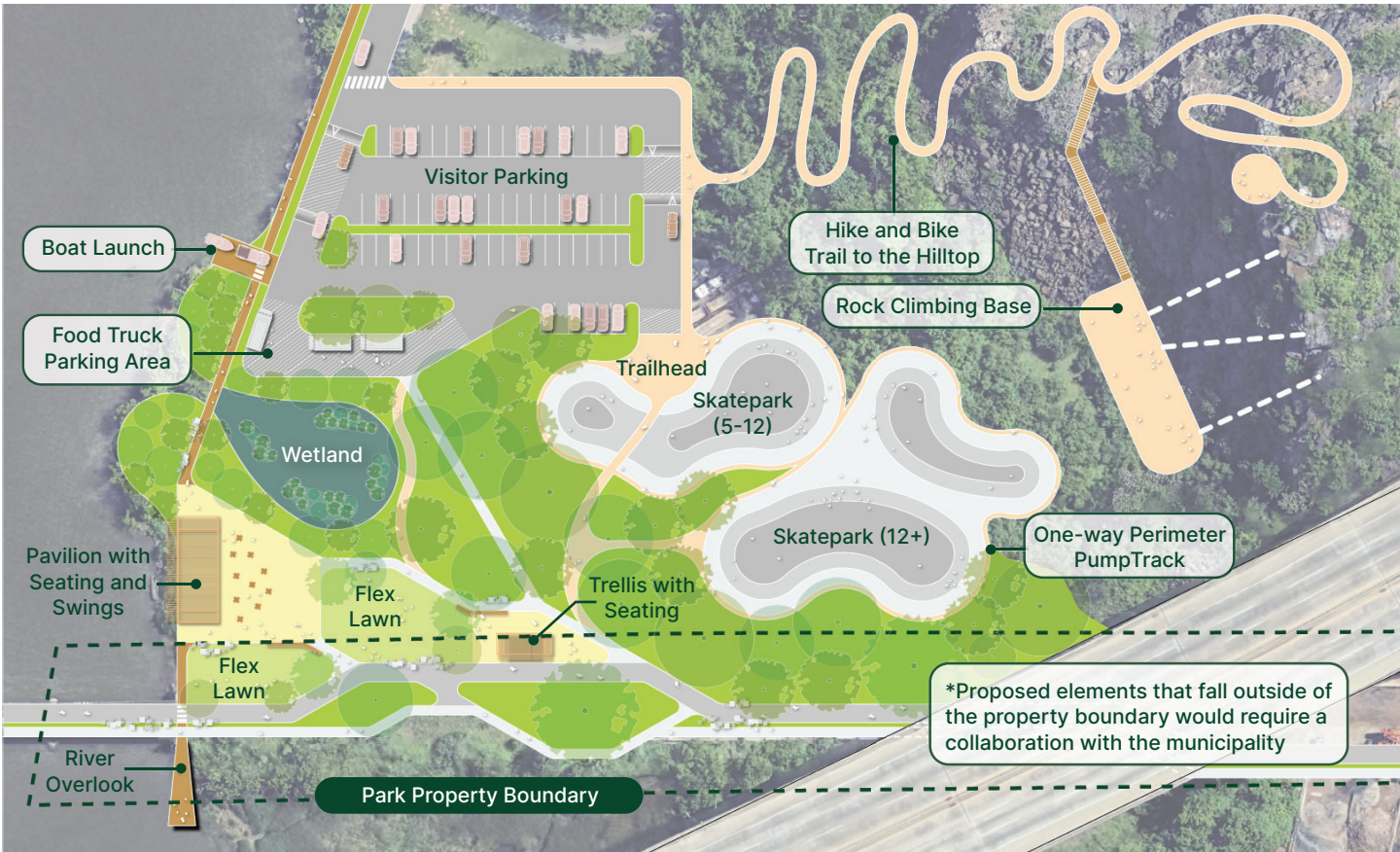
The existing Laurel Hill Park is well used by the local community. The space boasts two multi-purpose baseball/football/soccer fields, a lighted synthetic cricket field, a batting cage, a play space, and designated picnic areas. Additionally, its proximity to the Hackensack river bank makes it the perfect spot to engage with the river by boat or on foot or wheels. An activity center at this location would provide access to even more visitors and users of this space every year. An entrance / exit point here would usher the user under the bridge and over the DB Drawbridge, which was designated as a bridge requiring thorough rehabilitation and remediation should it be incorporated into the park design in the future. This is outlined in the pre-design study reports. Timing of this potential site is subject, in part, to the Portal North Bridge project.

Expanded Access to Greenspace

Given the abundance of industrial zones, traffic corridors, and railway lines in this area, accessible public greenspace is limited. An activity center here would expand public greenspace access by a considerable amount.

A Convergence of Greenspace and Industry

Residue of former railways is visible through raised earthen berms criss-crossing the Meadowlands. The DB Drawbridge nearby the park provides insight into the once-busy corridor of freight and passenger trains crossing the river. Informational signage here would be critical for visitors to learn and understand the complicated relationship of industry and the environment.



Laurel Hill Park could provide a variety of active recreational spaces, trails and a rest area

Van Keuren Ave., Jersey City

Existing Conditions

Gateway to the Park

Van Keuren Ave. lies at the eastern terminus of the park. The visitor would begin in the urban grid of Secaucus and Jersey City and weave through a wetland toward the Hackensack River. An activity center here could establish an exciting hub for this area. The relatively flat ground plane could host community events of small to medium sizes, offer space for picnics, or be recognized as a starting point for recreational activity across the park. The timing of this potential site is subject to completion of ongoing projects in the area.

Urban Exploration

This segment stitches together the dense urban fabric of Secaucus and Jersey City with the wide expanse that is the Hackensack River and the Meadowlands. Entering or exiting the park at this location would provide a protected and accessible recreational corridor to explore the area and seek respite from the bustling city.

Activated Greenspace

In an area so densely packed, public access to greenspace is valuable. An activity center here would have the power to provide residents with a year-round backyard for recreation, play, gathering, or rest.



Westside Ave could offer additional visitor parking, rest zones and a flexible lawn

Section 04

Environment and Resilience

Chapter 04

Design Framework

Homegrown Park Initiative

Planting Strategy, Explained

The planting design for the park consists of many species that are native to northeastern New Jersey. They are living examples of the natural heritage of the state.

As a visitor travels throughout the park, there are a variety of plant communities unique to the local moisture and sunlight conditions. These communities take place in five unique ecological typologies found across the park: Urban Meadow and Forest Edge, Woodland Bluff, Urban Garden, Wet Meadow, and Marsh's Edge.

This planting strategy includes native plant species that have high visual appeal throughout the seasons and are also of great benefit to New Jersey's environment and people. There are multiple advantages of this approach, for the park and its surrounding communities. First, visitors would experience a beautiful part of New Jersey's natural spaces. Second, seeing this type of planting design could encourage people to add these species to where they live and work. This would increase the natural resources of the region for years to come. The diversity of the plantings could also strengthen the local ecosystem's

resilience and reduce likelihood of plant disease, which would ultimately lessen needs for ecological operations/management.

These benefits will be explained by interpretive signage in key areas of the park. This has educational benefits for people of all ages and can encourage the use of these native plants in the communities that surround the new State Park. As these plants maximize attraction to native wildlife, birds, butterflies, and other animal species, the park will come alive with the sounds and sights of nature for years to come. Educational programs and stewardship opportunities for people surrounding the park will be encouraged and supported.

As wind, runoff, and animals carry seeds that have grown in the new park to areas that surround this landscape, biodiversity and the benefits of native plants will spread, enriching nearby communities. The park could then become an important part of the "homegrown national park" concept, encouraging people to play a positive role in habitat sustainability.

Statewide Advantages of the Park Planting Strategy



Benefits to the Environment:

- Biodiversity , which encourages sustainability
- Wildlife habitat and food (seeds, fruit, leaves)
- Pollinator plants, resulting in a healthier ecosystem
- Support of the local ecology and food web
- Enhancement of local conservation areas
- Increase of the natural heritage of New Jersey

Benefits to People

- Enhancement of physical and mental health
- Decrease in pesticide and fertilizer use
- Decrease in maintenance needs
- Beauty in all seasons, as flowering, fruiting, and plant shape and color change
- Less water use than many horticultural varieties
- Slower water runoff, decreasing local erosion
- Cleaner air and water, which improves local ground and water conditions

Ecological Typologies of the Park



Ecological Typologies

Park plantings celebrate the natural history of the NJ Piedmont, a zone of gentle slopes and flats, with occasional steep-sided stream valleys southeast of the hilly NJ Highlands. These

plantings can be categorized into five unique ecological typologies, which are described further in the Ecology section of the Design Standards chapter at the end of this document.

Wet Meadow



Urban Meadow and Forest Edge



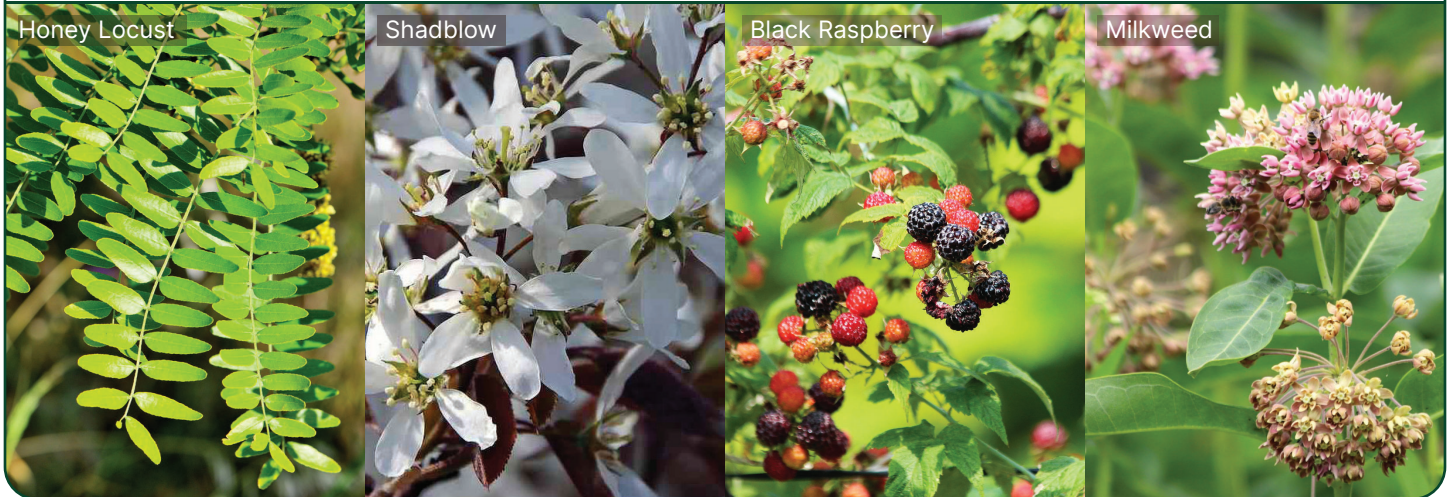
Urban Garden



Woodland Bluff



Marsh's Edge



Soil Safety Strategies

The park’s history as a former railroad right of way dates back to the early 1800s. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, thousands of passenger and freight rail cars transported people and goods between Greenwood Lake in Northern New Jersey to ports on the Hudson River in Jersey City. The construction of the railbed required a relatively flat grade to allow for efficient train travel, which gave way to long stretches of fill material (such as the area through the Meadowlands) and dramatic cuts (for example, the Kearny Cut). The fill material used in the construction of the railroad, called historic fill, is a non-indigenous material, deposited to raise the grade of the area, which was contaminated prior to emplacement, typically with heavy metals and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), and is not connected with the site activities at the location of the railway. Historic fill is assumed to be contaminated unless tested.

Another consideration is that the trains, in operation for over 125 years on the line, may have leaked or released contaminants such as heavy metals into the rail bed. Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), and petroleum hydrocarbons, associated with rail cars/cargo, could also have discharged into the environment.

Between the use of historical fill materials for the construction of the railroad and the possibility of leaking of hazardous materials from railcars and other sources, a series of desktop and field investigations were performed on the park right of way to determine whether ballast and soil have been contaminated. These investigations were performed between 2020 and 2023. The findings were reported in a **Site Investigation, Remedial Investigation and Remedial Action Selection (SI/RI/RAS) Report**, which was submitted to the NJDEP in September 2023.

The **SI/RI/RAS** found that capping the historic fill material would be suitable to allow for the conversion of the former railbed into a public park space. Capping can consist of hard surface materials such as trail paving or brick plazas. In areas of grass or landscape plantings, the cap will consist of imported “certified clean fill” soil or gravel, which will prevent human contact with the

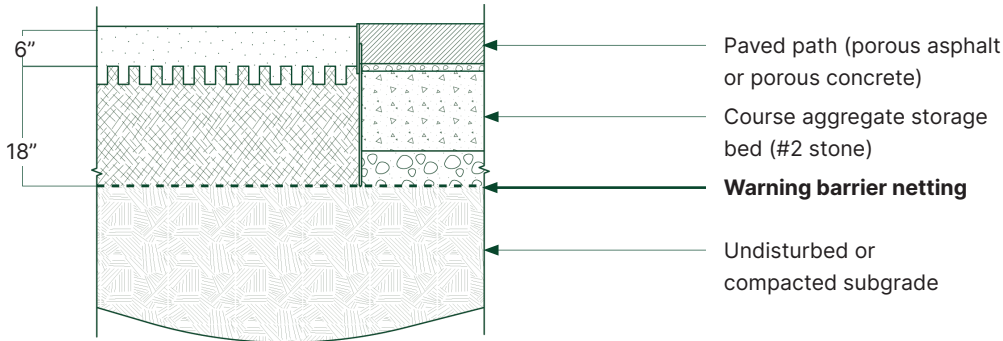
historic fill material. A demarcation barrier, such as an orange warning barrier netting, will be placed between the historic fill and the clean fill layers to inform future parties performing any excavations in the future park.

In areas of existing vegetation, such as the sides of fill slopes where mature trees have grown, fencing to prevent public entry will be the default strategy to prevent contact with historic fill. Given the steepness of some of these slopes, fencing would be a necessary strategy. Additional soil testing could be performed to confirm the absence of contaminants if fencing was not desired. These remediation strategies will allow for safe public use of the park and flexibility in its design.

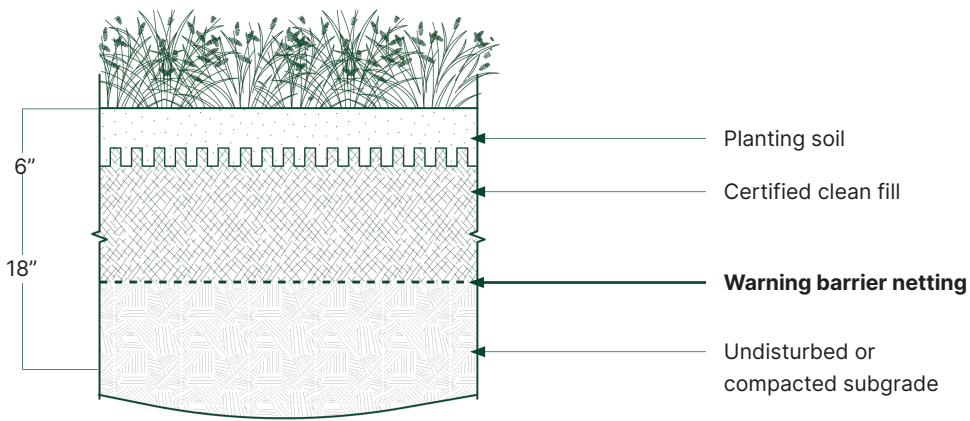


Typical Location of the Orange Warning Barrier Netting

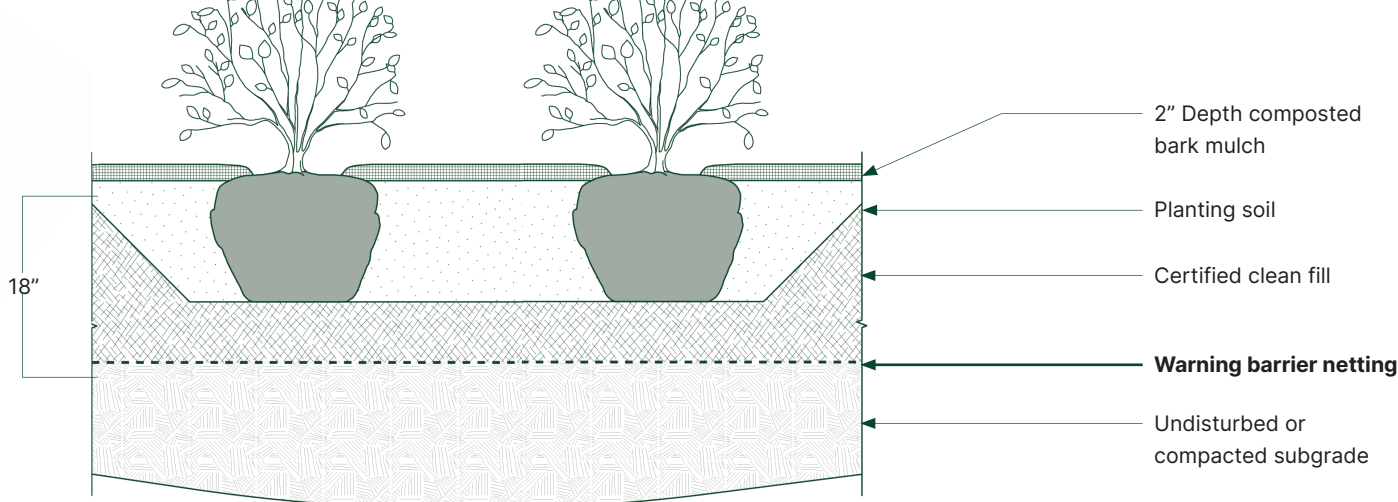
Along Paths



At Planting Beds and Lawn Areas



At Shrubs



Stormwater Plan

When the urban areas around the park were developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the focus of designing for stormwater was to move it away from streets and yards as quickly as possible via street gutters, underground pipes, and conveyance ditches. However, with more frequent and higher intensity storms due to climate change, it has become increasingly more important to provide opportunities for stormwater to infiltrate into the ground rather than simply conveying it to downstream sewer systems.

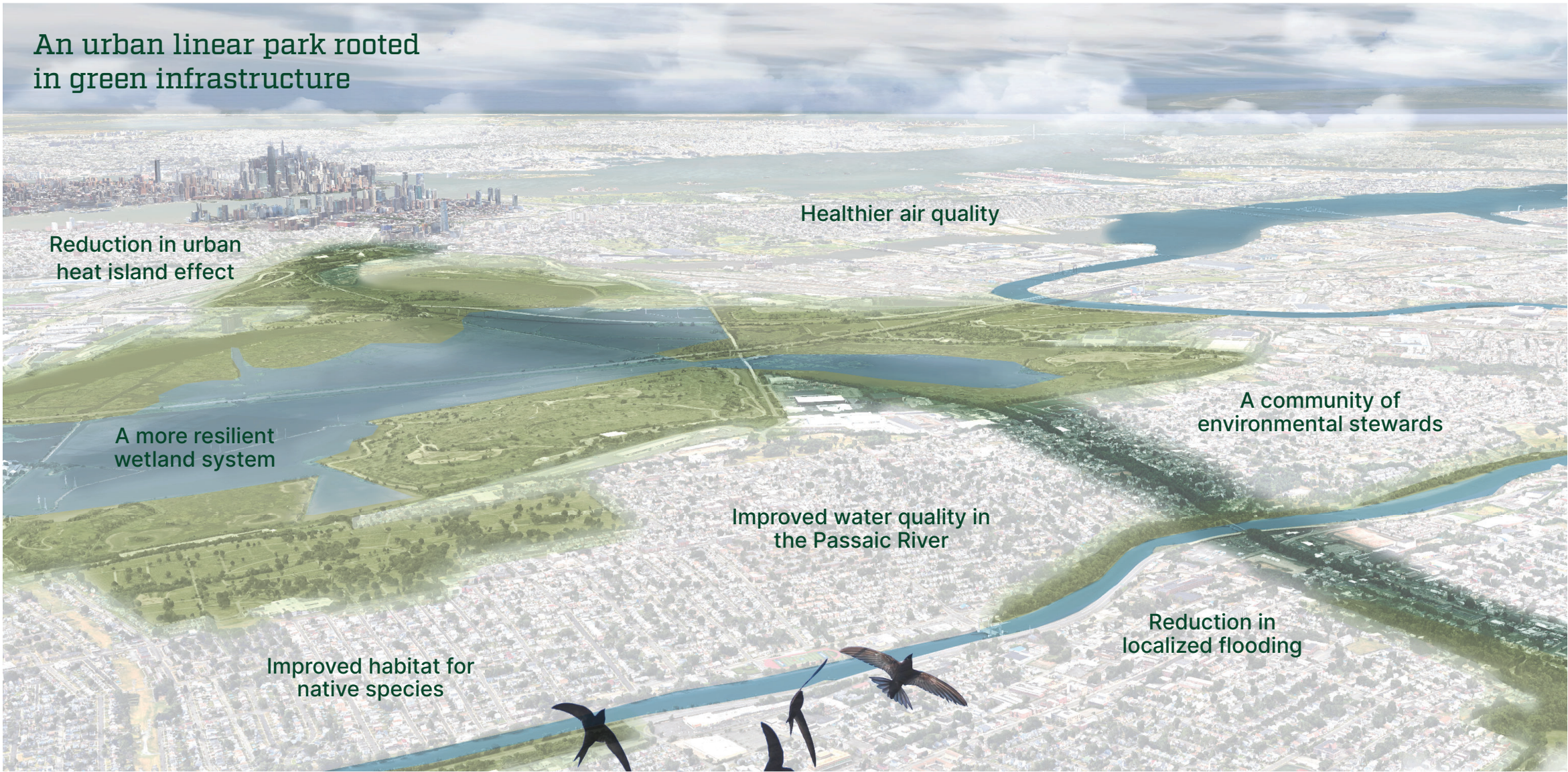
With urban growth, impervious surface has increased, further disrupting the natural hydrologic cycle, in which water infiltrates into the ground. This increased stormwater runoff exacerbates issues of frequent flash flooding, streambank erosion, and degradation of the landscape.

Some older urbanized areas within the park corridor, like Newark and Kearny, have a Combined Sewer System (CSS). In areas with CSS, stormwater flows from the street into a combined sanitary and stormwater sewer to be sent to the treatment plant. During intense storm events, which are increasing due to climate change, the system can become overloaded. As a result, the combined flow of untreated stormwater and wastewater flows directly into local water bodies.

Given the size of the park and its location within highly developed and impervious areas, there is an opportunity for the park to help mitigate stormwater issues in the communities that surround it. The ability to manage outside stormwater will be dependent on the topography within and around the park, as well as soil infiltration rates.

Stormwater improvements within the park will include green infrastructure techniques such as porous pavements and rain gardens, and will serve four larger goals: increase local groundwater recharge, reduce stormwater volume and rate of runoff, increase water quality, and reduce untreated stormwater and wastewater overflows into water bodies.

Due to the presence of existing historic fill, there is the potential for low permeability rates within the park corridor. The potential to use infiltration



stormwater facilities may be limited. However, Green Infrastructure remains a priority for NJDEP. Once the necessary geotechnical investigation is completed, it is advised to coordinate a Pre-Application meeting with the NJDEP reviewer to discuss stormwater management options.

In 2023, NJDEP developed **The Greenway Stormwater Management Infrastructure Assessment and Recommendations** report. This report details existing conditions and possible stormwater management tools within the Park.

A park that serves as a stormwater sponge has benefits for the entire region!

Sustainability is a means of maintaining natural resources and is vital as many natural activities are unable to be supported with the built environment increasing. Green infrastructure is a way of creating man-made processes that are based in biomimicry, which is a nature-inspired innovation. By diverting stormwater to areas that allow it to infiltrate naturally, we are implementing a solution inspired by naturally occurring processes.

This is important because it allows the naturally occurring resources, in this case groundwater, to reestablish on its own. It even improves water

quality without the use of sewer treatment facilities. These innovations use strategies that optimize energy and resource efficiency, resulting in a system that is both functional and beautiful.

There are several green infrastructure options that will help to meet stormwater goals, but green infrastructure with surface storage can be a visual expression to manage stormwater. This allows the stormwater management features to have environmental benefits while building upon the natural environment along the trail.

Overall, green infrastructure can help the park build on the goal of creating a multi-functional space that promotes resiliency and sustainability.

Chapter 04

Design Standards

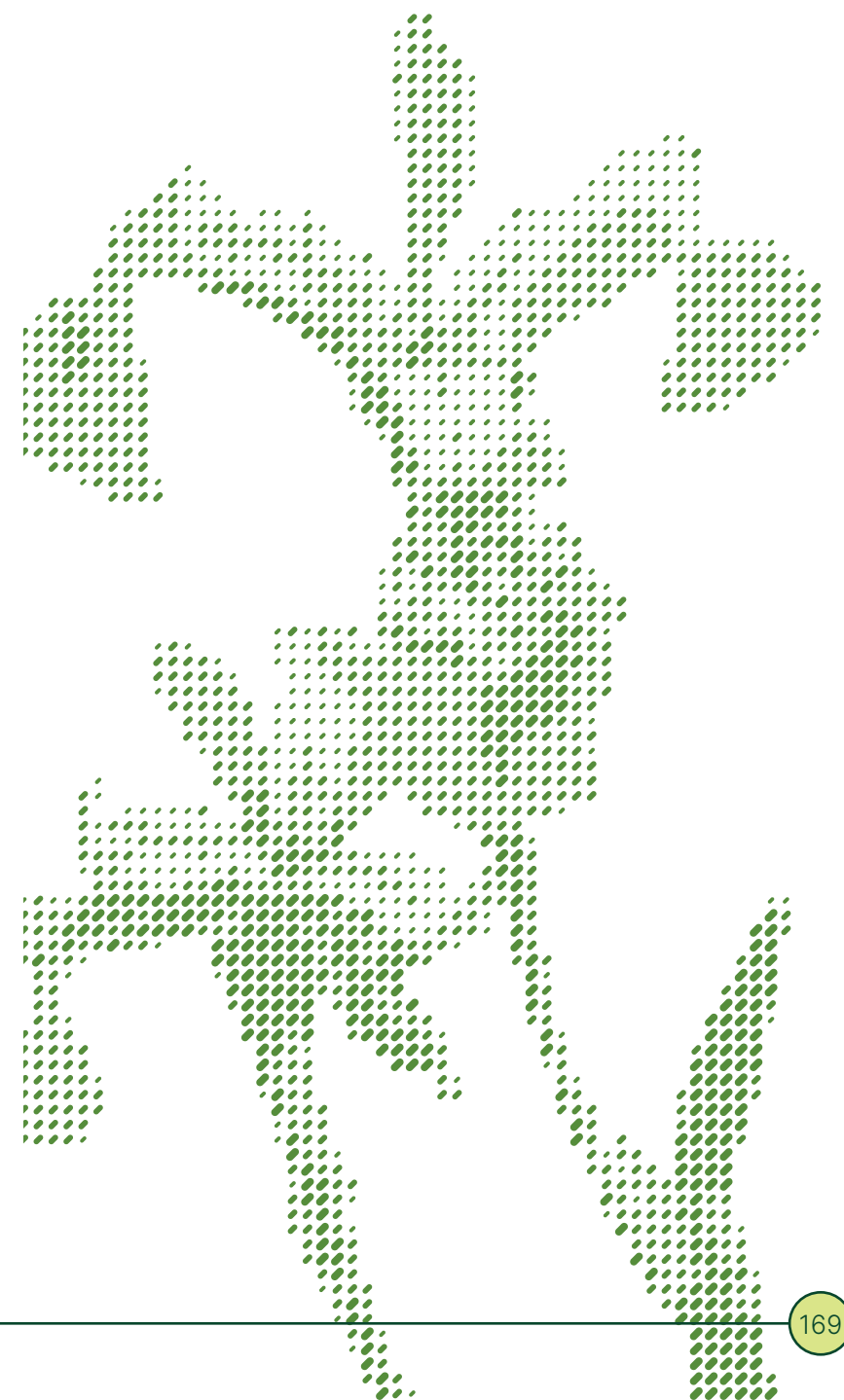
Kit of Parts	170
Site Furnishings	188
Play	210
Signage and Wayfinding	220
Ecology	234

Chapter 05

Design Standards

Section 01

Kit of Parts



Kit of Parts

Three components make up the kit of parts for the park: corridors, thresholds, and activity centers. Corridors are stretches of the park that offer recreational and commuting space for pedestrians. Thresholds offer safe points of access and clear wayfinding. Activity centers are designated areas for social recreation, play, and gathering.

Ch. 5, Sect. 01 - Kit of Parts
Thresholds, page 178

Ch. 5, Sect. 01 - Kit of Parts
Activity Centers, page 182

Ch. 5, Sect. 01 - Kit of Parts
Corridors, page 174

Corridors

Corridors are stretches of the park that offer recreational and commuting space for pedestrians. Shared use and single use paths run throughout, coming together at rest areas equipped with trailside amenities. Informational, educational, and wayfinding signage help shape visitor experiences. Lighting keeps the space navigable and safe for all users.

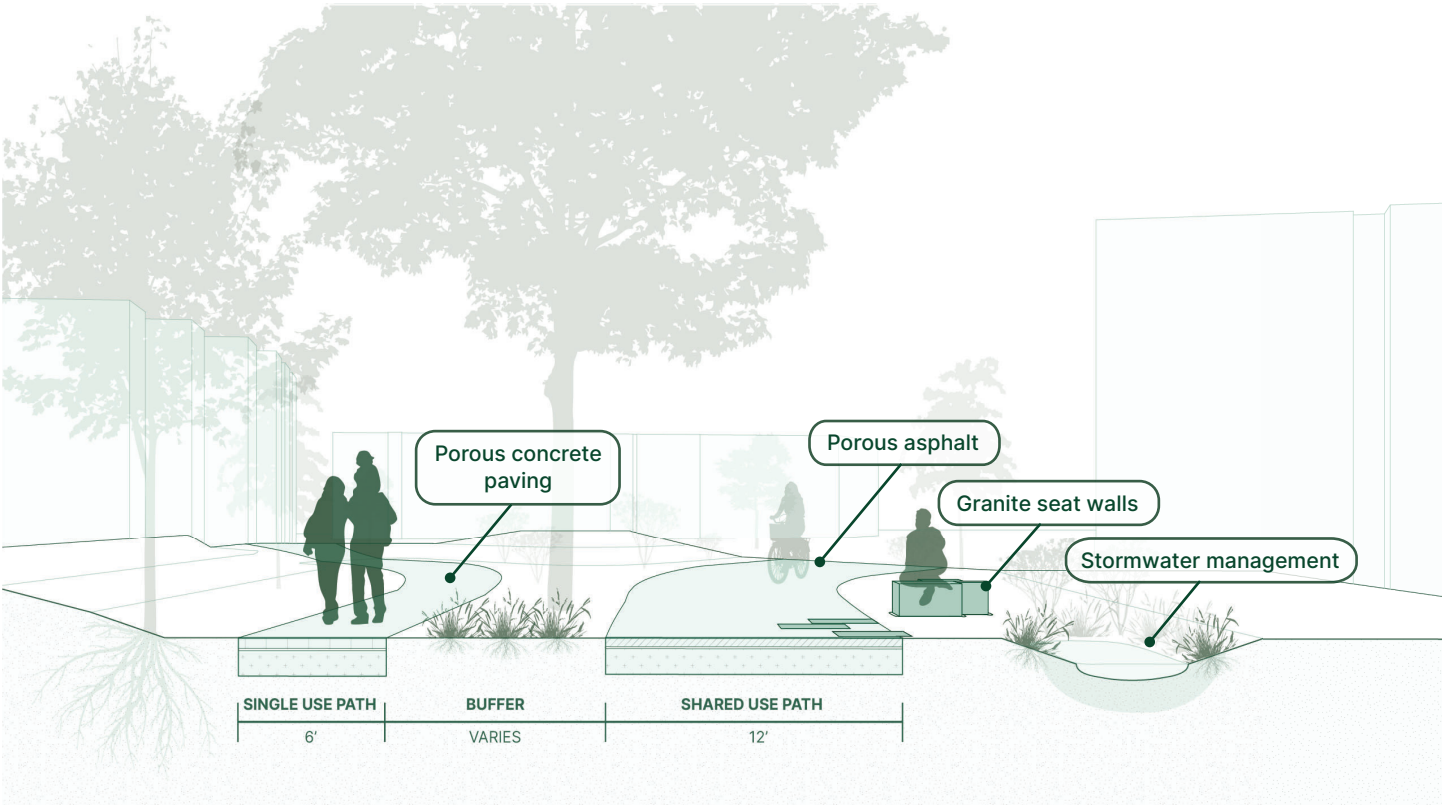
Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings
Lighting, page 206

Ch. 5, Sect. 01 - Kit of Parts
Shared Use Path, page 174

Ch. 5, Sect. 01 - Kit of Parts
Granite Seat Walls, page 185

Ch. 5, Sect. 01 - Kit of Parts
Single Use Path, page 174

Corridors



Typical 6’ single use path and 12’ shared use path.

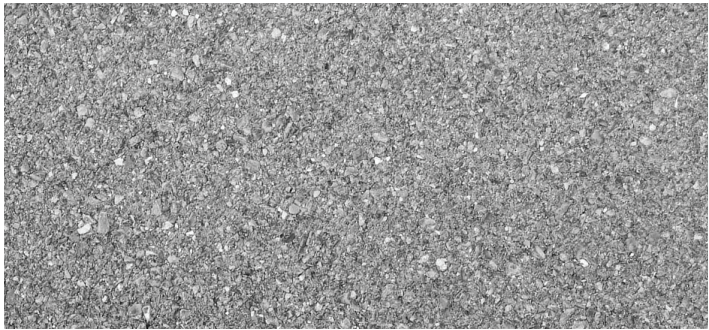
Shared and Single Use Paths

Throughout the nine miles, there are two primary ADA path types to accommodate pedestrians on foot or wheels. Shared paths are 12’ in width and are intended for park users on foot or wheels traveling in opposite directions. Shared use paths are made of porous asphalt to aid in stormwater management.

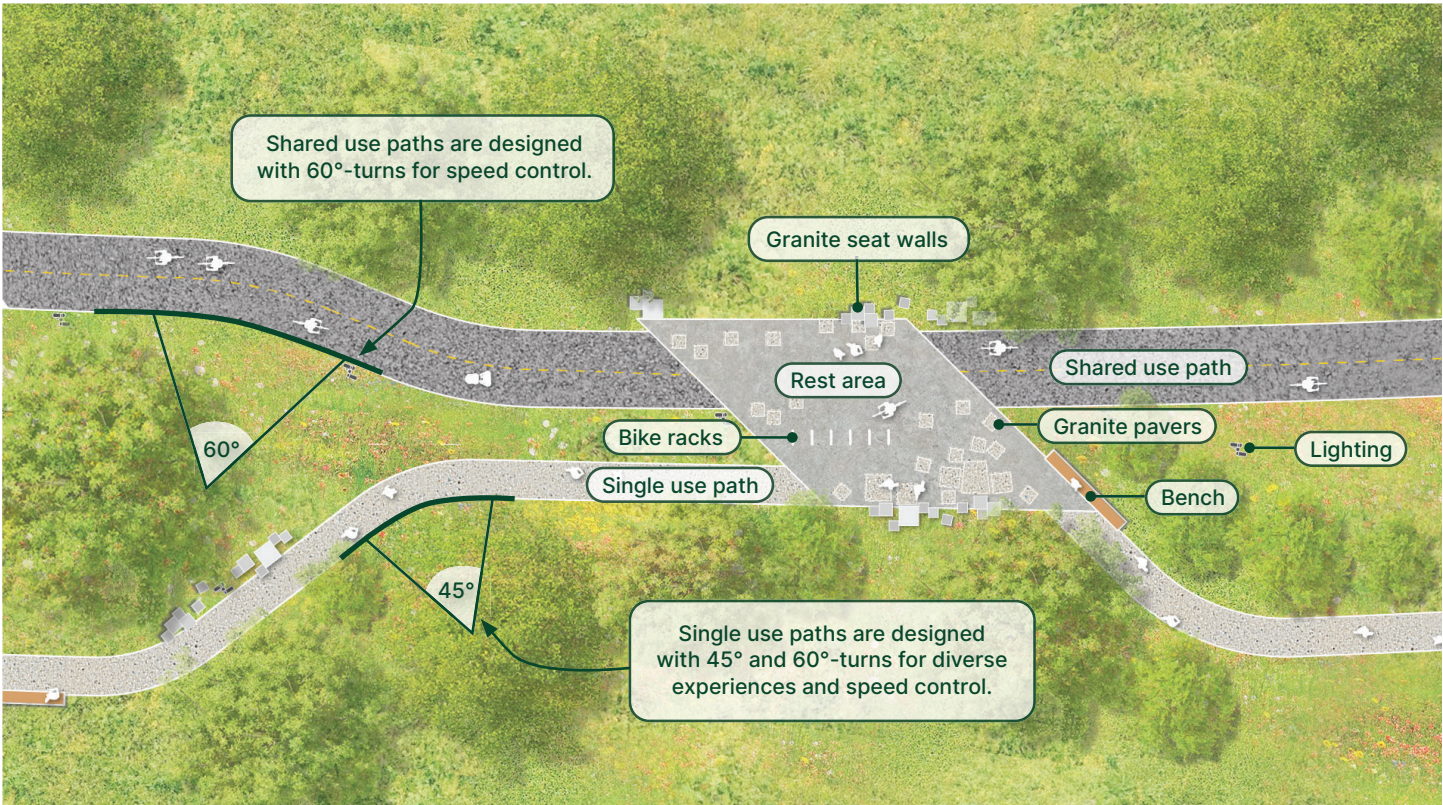
Single use pathways are 6’ wide and accommodate pedestrians only. Single use paths might attract individuals looking for a more leisurely walk along the park, away from faster paced wheel-users. The pedestrian pathways are made of porous concrete.



Shared use paths are made with porous asphalt.



Single use paths are made with porous concrete



Typical corridor with a shared use path, single use path, and a rest area.

Path Angles and Rest Areas

Shared use and single use paths are designed with carefully angled turns for speed control and diverse path experiences. The shared use path includes 60°-turns to allow safe passage of multi-modal users, while still meeting the minimum requirements for turning radii of shared use paths. The single use path is designed with 45° and 60° turns.

Shared and single use paths converge at rest areas throughout the park. Granite seat walls are embedded between and alongside the paths leading up to the rest areas, to signal users to slow down. Rest areas might also include amenities such as bike racks, litter receptacles, and seating.



Park paths reference the gentle curves of rail tracks.

Thresholds

Thresholds provide safe crosswalks and clear wayfinding for visitors accessing the park at a variety of points throughout the nine miles. They offer connections to existing bike paths, public transit, community facilities, commercial corridors, and residential neighborhoods. They also provide efficient points of access for service vehicles and social gatherings.

Ch 5, Sect 04 - Signage and Wayfinding
Informative Signage, page 228

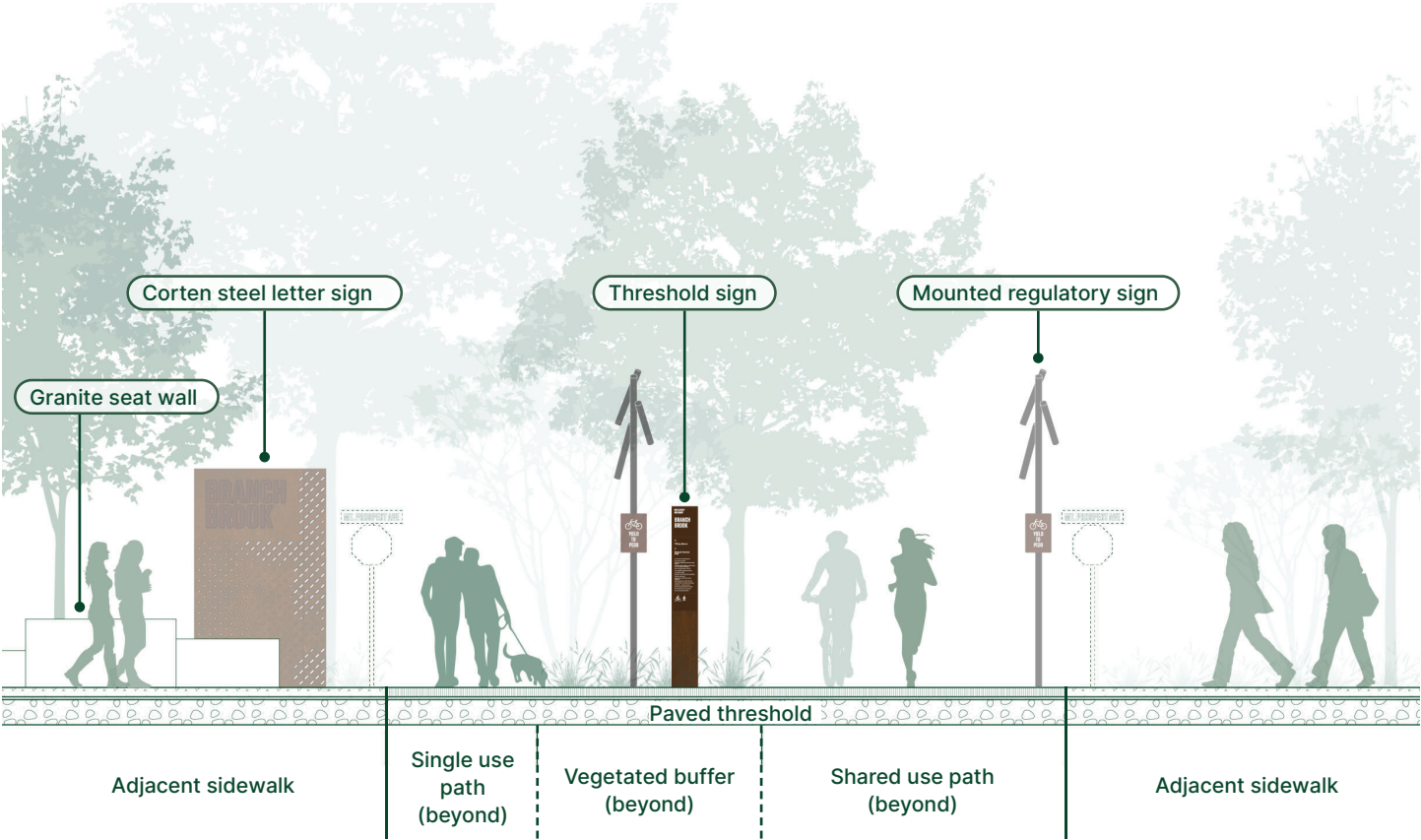
Ch 5, Sect 04 - Signage and Wayfinding
Threshold Signage, page 224

Ch 5, Sect 02 - Site Furnishings
Lighting, page 206

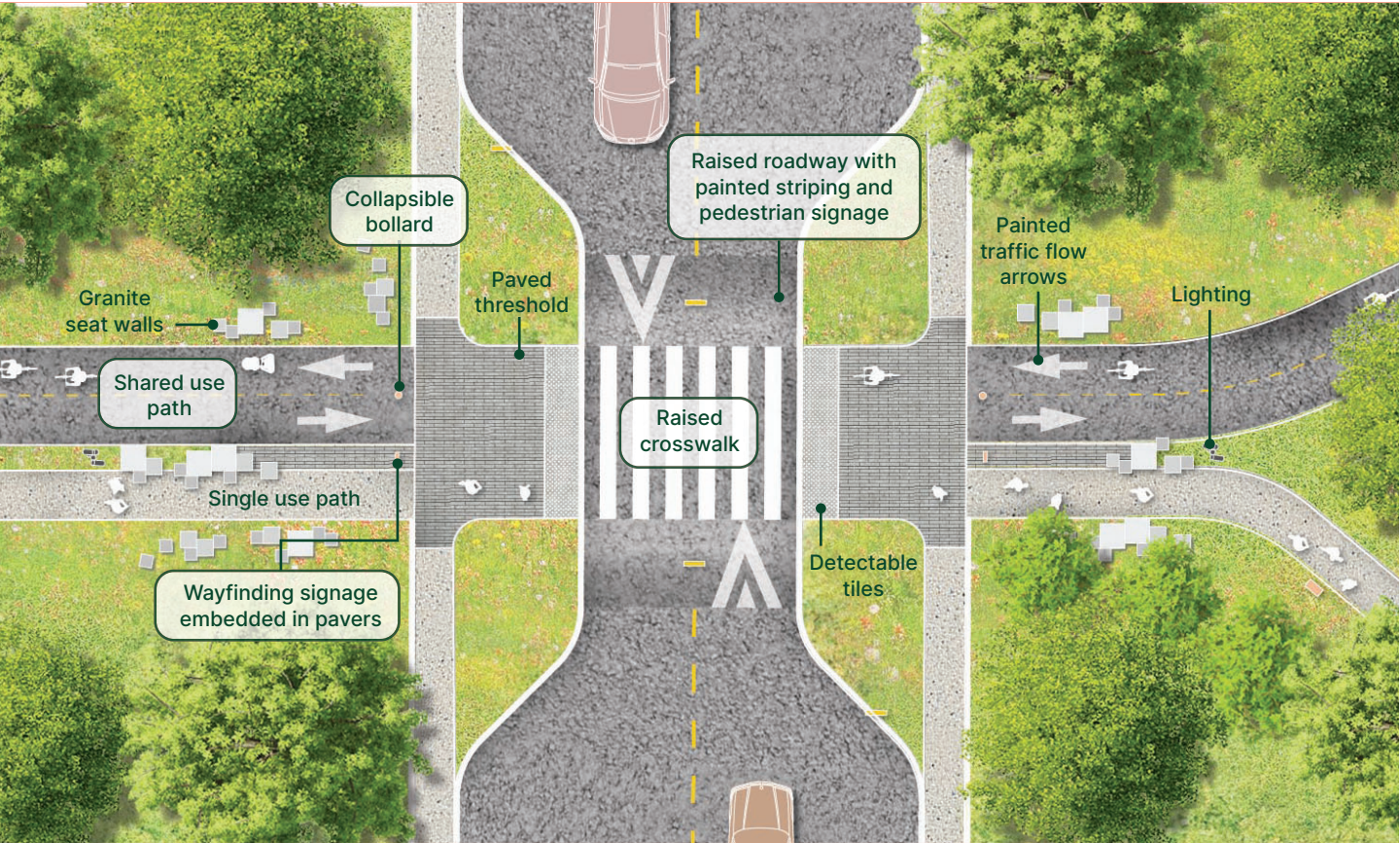
Ch 5, Sect 01 - Kit of Parts
Threshold Layout, page 178

Ch 5, Sect 01 - Kit of Parts
Granite Seat Walls, page 185

Thresholds



Typical threshold with signage and granite seat walls.



Typical threshold at intersection.

Threshold Materiality

Likely to see the most vehicular and pedestrian traffic, thresholds must maintain standard signage and safety measures throughout the nine miles. All thresholds should have safe crosswalks, traffic arrows, and clear signage to signal to both pedestrians and vehicle users. Collapsible bollards should be installed at each threshold entry point.

Threshold furnishings and signage should uphold a material palette consistent with the rest of the park. This includes standard Corten steel wayfinding signage (guidelines can be found in **Section 04, Signage and Wayfinding**, in the **Design Standards** chapter), granite ice block seat walls, and shared and single use pathways.



Signage is typically made of Corten steel.



Granite seat walls are inspired by the ice blocks once transported by the bygone rail.



Typical signage aesthetic along the park.



Granite seat walls create sculptural moments for rest.

Activity Centers

Activity centers provide areas for diverse modes of recreation and gathering. The drawing below illustrates Newark Central Activity Center's multi-sports court, which can host a variety of activities, such as full court basketball, soccer, or pickle ball courts, to name a few. Activity centers might also include playspaces for all ages and abilities, gathering spaces of various sizes, event facilities such as storage space or stages, and more typical public park amenities such as shade structures, restrooms, drinking fountains, bike facilities, litter receptacles, and signage.

Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Trellis, page 190

Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Utilities, page 204

Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Modular Benches, page 202

Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Granite Seat Walls, page 198

Ch. 5, Sect. 03 - Play:
Playspaces, page 210

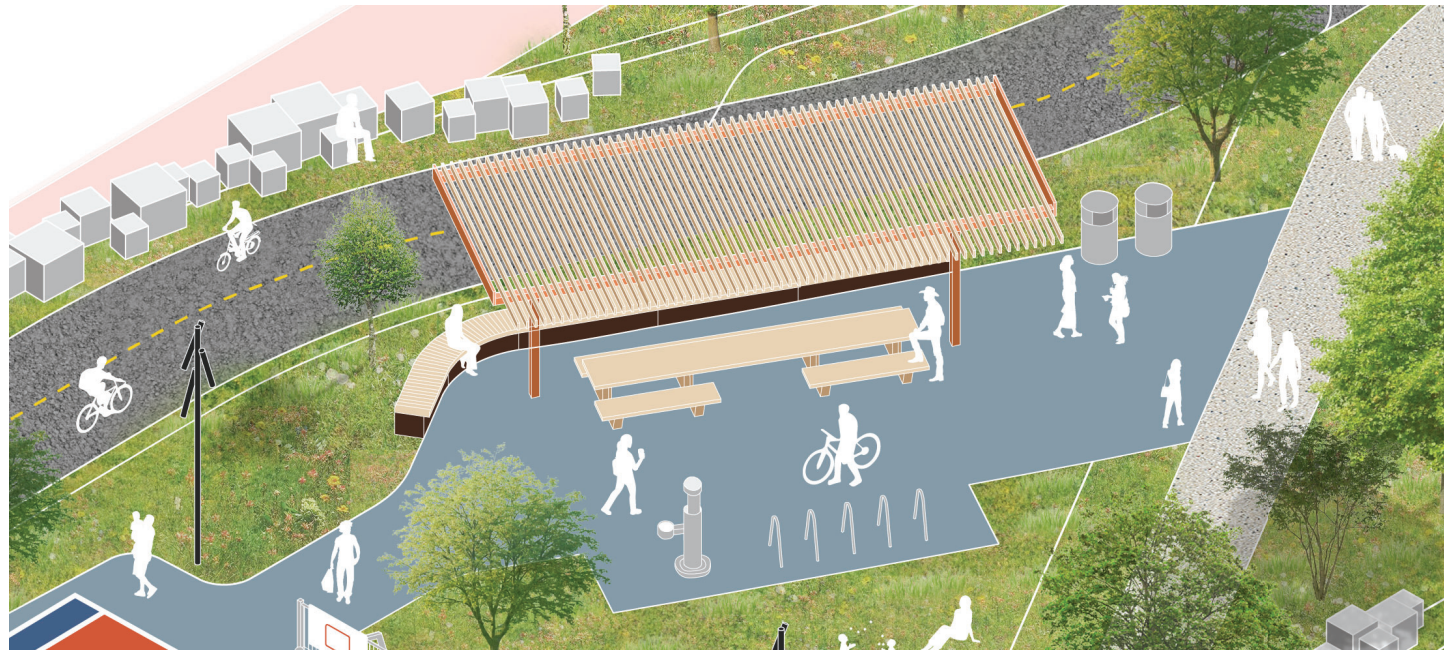
Ch. 5, Sect. 04 - Signage and Wayfinding:
Threshold Signage, page 224

Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Corten Steel Walls, page 194

Activity Centers: Materiality



Sports Courts: should be considered at activity centers, with flexibility in programming.



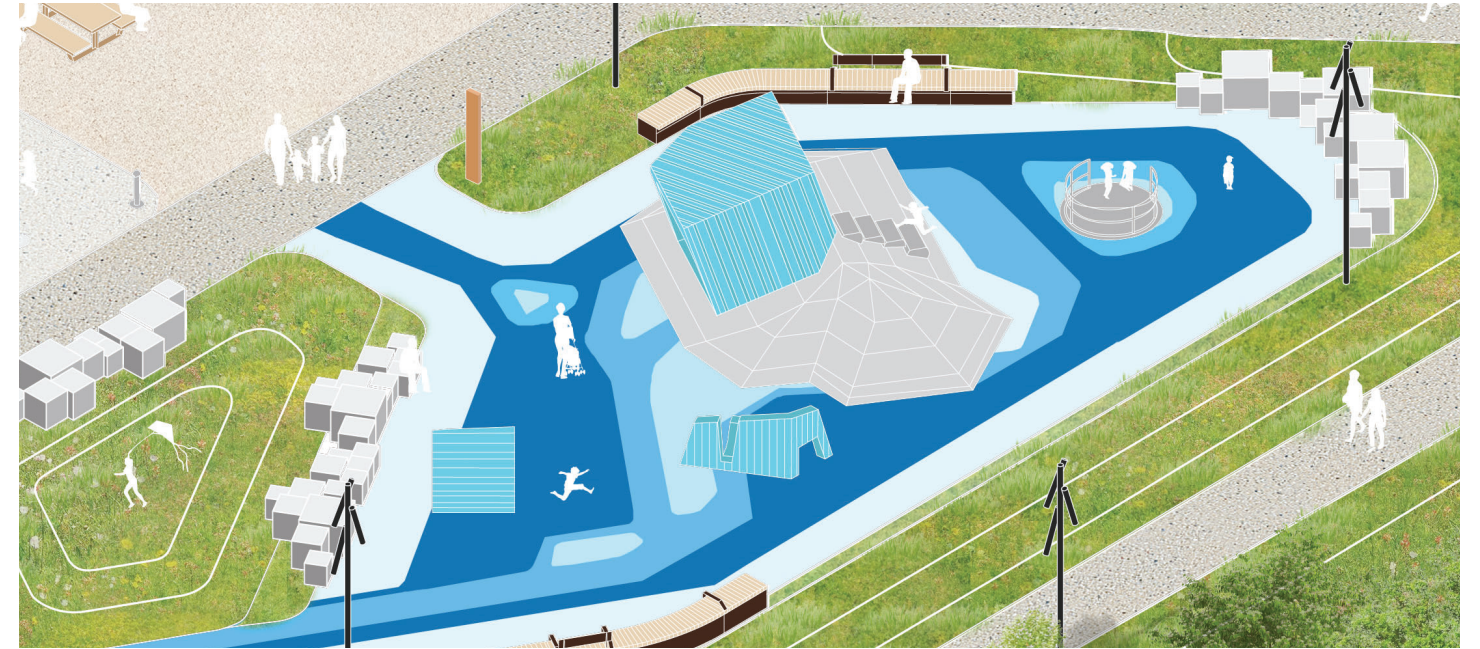
Rest Areas: might be sheltered or unsheltered, with seating and access to amenities such as bike racks or water.

Sport Courts

Activity centers can host a variety of opportunities for various recreational program types. Multi-sport court sites should use park-specified color selections of sport court surfacing. Striping should accommodate different types of sports.

Rest Areas

Rest areas within activity centers should include park-specified shade trellises, seating, and utilities such as drinking fountains, bike facilities, and litter receptacles). More detail on site furnishings can be found later in this chapter, in **Section 02, Site Furnishings**.



Play and Fitness Spaces: should be designed upon the site's existing conditions and community needs, desires, and cultures.



Greenspaces: encourage social gathering, play, and recreation.

Play and Fitness Spaces

Activity centers might also host play and fitness areas, which should all utilize park standard color sections of poured-in-place rubber surfacing. See **Section 03, Play** of this chapter for more details.

Greenspaces

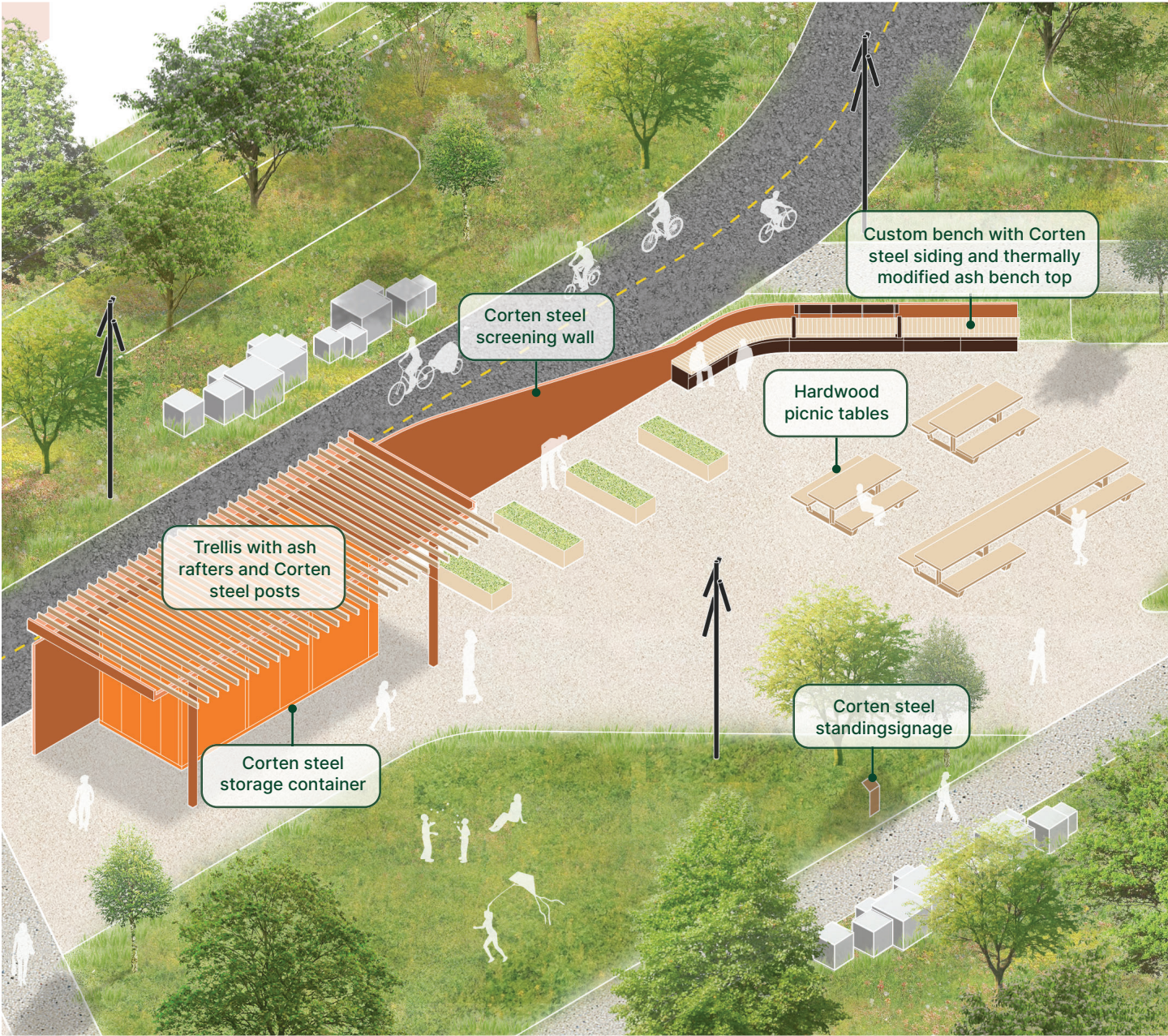
Flexible greenspaces should be considered at activity centers to encourage recreational activities, social gathering, and play.

Wood

Wooden elements appear in trellises, benches, and picnic tables. These features reference the historic wooden ties of the site's former rails. Ash trellis rafters run perpendicular to pathways, as do thermally modified ash bench tops, both of which create a visual rhythm similar to rail ties.

Steel

Corten steel is found throughout the park's site furnishings and signage family. The material is a visual and physical reminder of the site's industrial past. Perforated Corten steel walls can be found in activity centers for screening and spacemaking. Steel fences are specified for screening and remediation protection. Storage containers constructed of steel sheeting might appear at activity centers, hosting storage or restroom facilities.

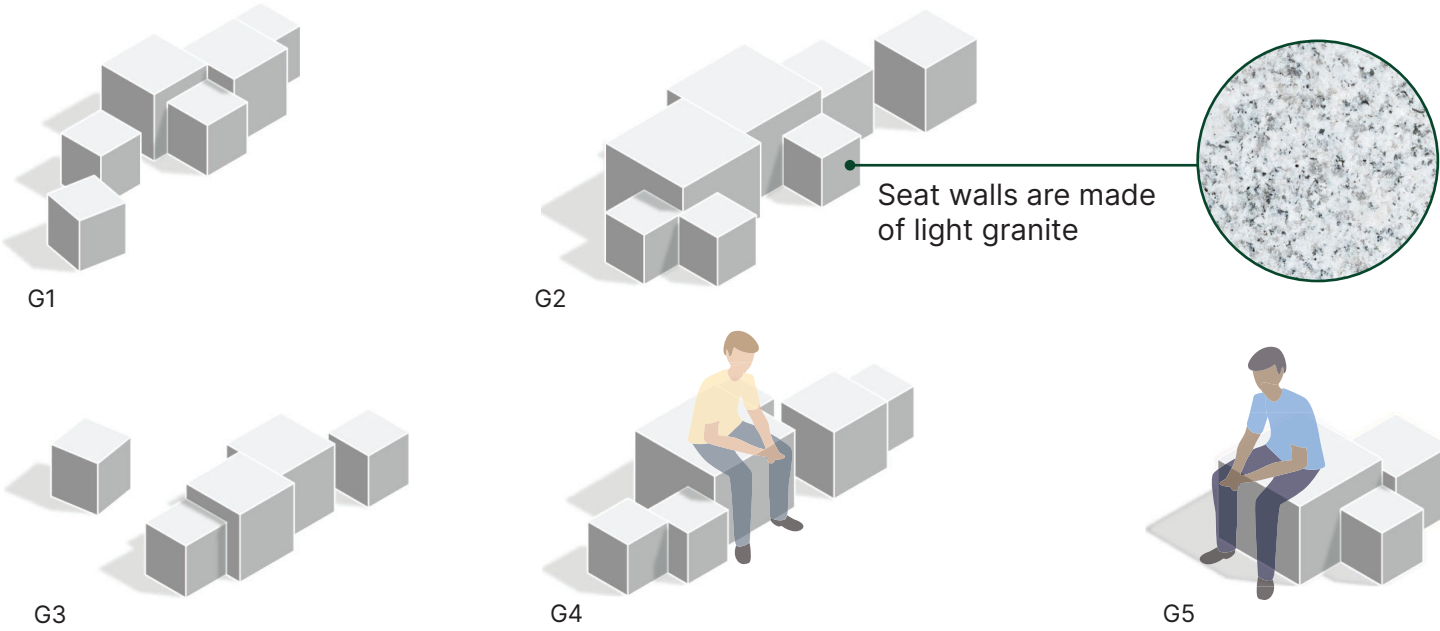


Typical rest area featuring the park's material themes of wood and steel.

Granite Seat Walls

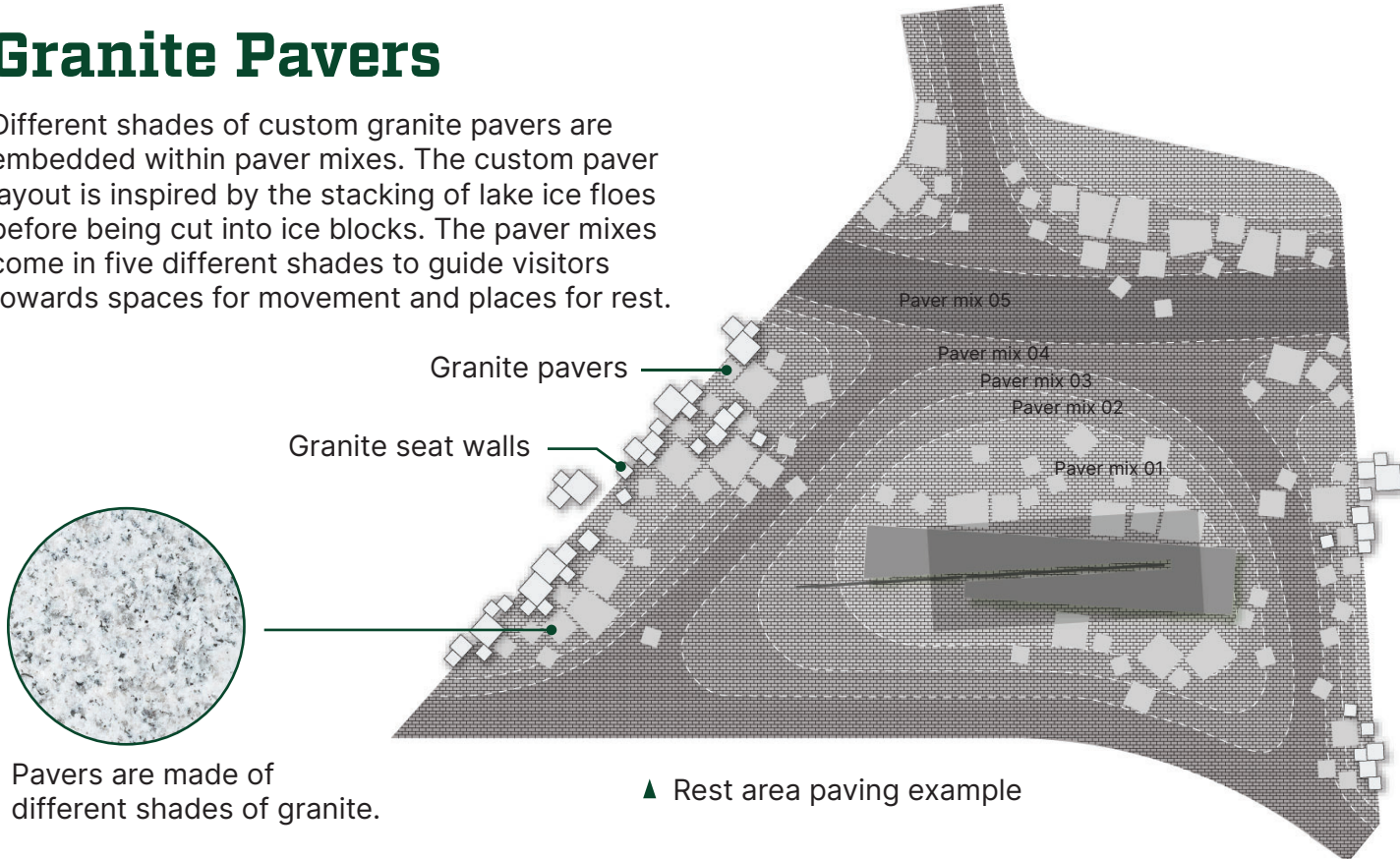
Granite is a resilient material that offers visual clues to the site's former use as a transportation corridor of ice blocks from the lakes of northern New Jersey eastwards. Clusters of seat walls are inspired by stacked ice blocks. Throughout

the park, five different cluster iterations can be incorporated along pathways, thresholds, and activity centers. The seat walls offer moments of rest while also providing a visual cue to slow down near intersections or activity center entrances.



Granite Pavers

Different shades of custom granite pavers are embedded within paver mixes. The custom paver layout is inspired by the stacking of lake ice floes before being cut into ice blocks. The paver mixes come in five different shades to guide visitors towards spaces for movement and places for rest.



Pavers are made of different shades of granite.

Chapter 05

Design Standards

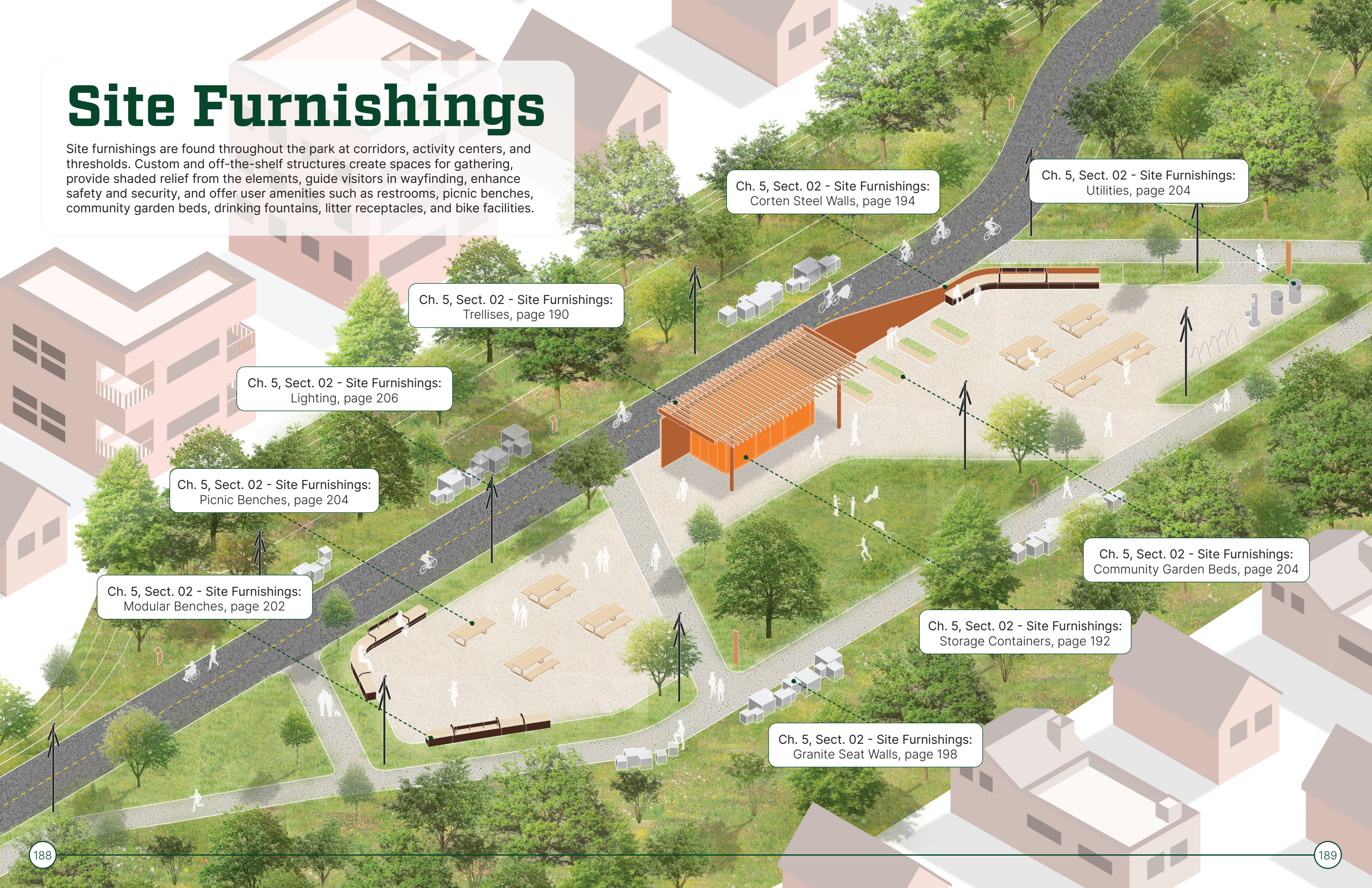
Section 02

Site Furnishings



Site Furnishings

Site furnishings are found throughout the park at corridors, activity centers, and thresholds. Custom and off-the-shelf structures create spaces for gathering, provide shaded relief from the elements, guide visitors in wayfinding, enhance safety and security, and offer user amenities such as restrooms, picnic benches, community garden beds, drinking fountains, litter receptacles, and bike facilities.



Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Corten Steel Walls, page 194

Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Utilities, page 204

Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Trellises, page 190

Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Lighting, page 206

Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Picnic Benches, page 204

Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Community Garden Beds, page 204

Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Modular Benches, page 202

Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Storage Containers, page 192

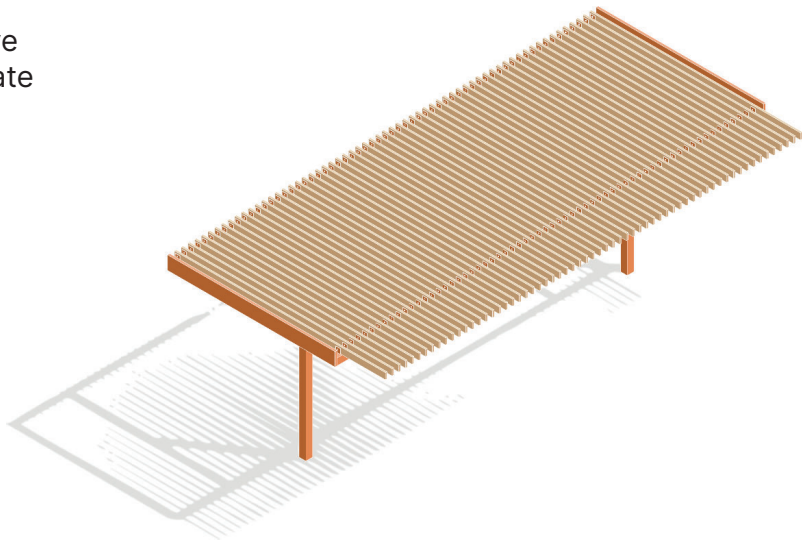
Ch. 5, Sect. 02 - Site Furnishings:
Granite Seat Walls, page 198

Trellises

Trellises provide spaces for respite and relief along the path. Situated along corridors and activity centers, they provide shade for gathering areas. The frames, constructed of Corten steel, reference bygone rails of the site. The ash rafters are inspired by wooden rail ties, making up a rhythmic, perforated roof that cools the visitor in dappled light.

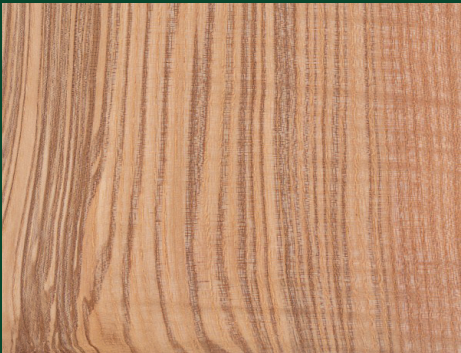
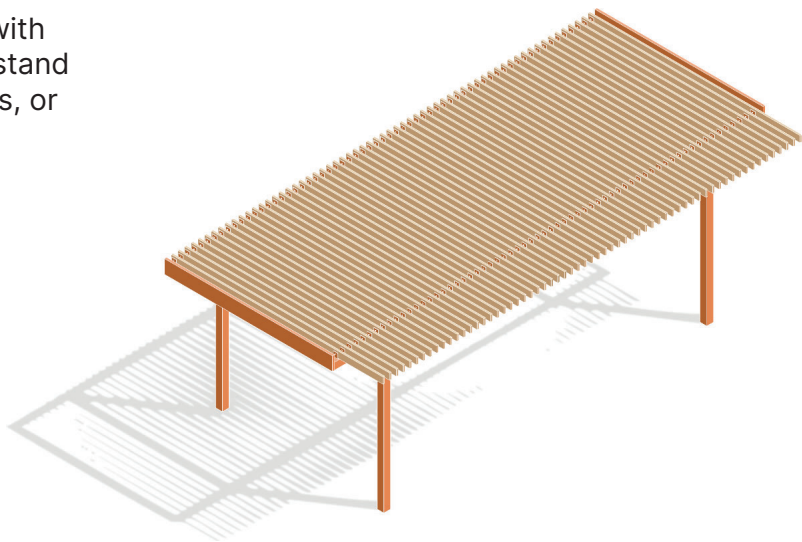
Two Post

The two post trellis structures are found along corridors and at activity centers. The design leaves space for a modular benches to weave between the two posts in an effort to integrate seating and shade together.



Four Post

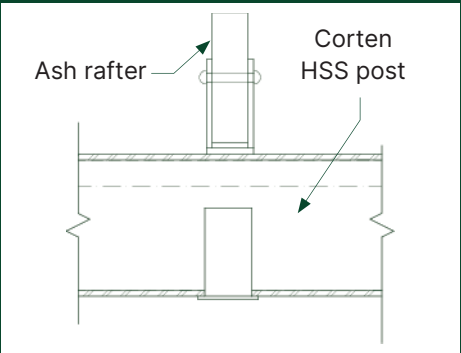
The four post trellises are situated at activity centers. Four posts provide supplementary support and allow for different interactions with site amenities. The structure is designed to stand alone or host restroom facilities, picnic tables, or other modular features.



Rafters are made of ash.

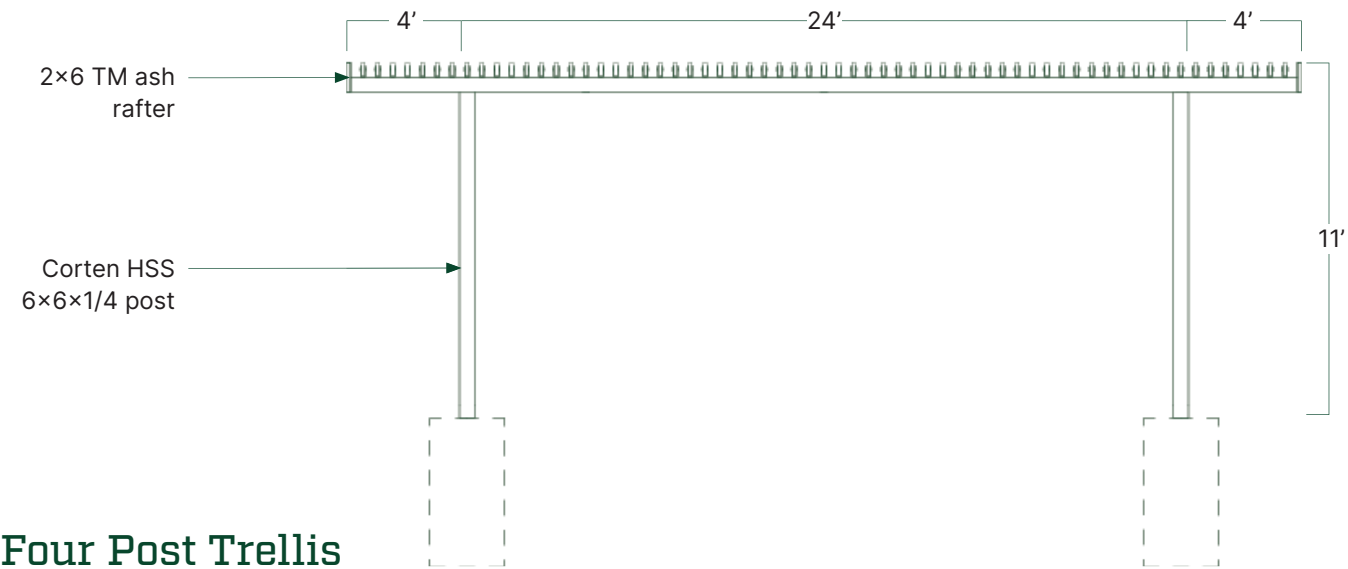


Frames are made of Corten steel.

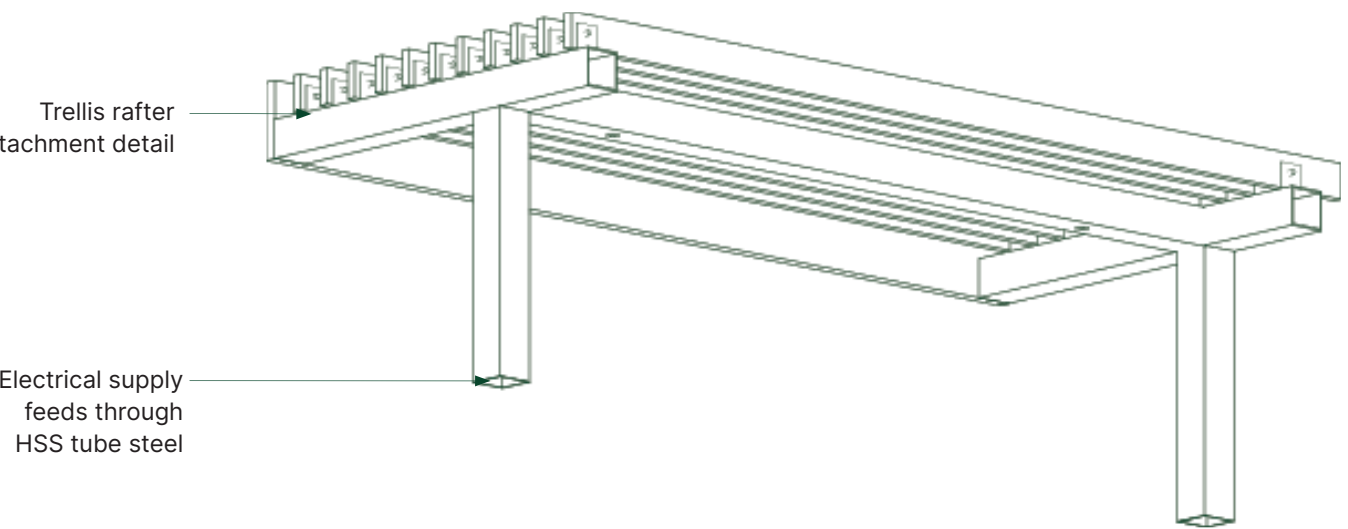


Typical roof detail.

Two Post Trellis



Four Post Trellis

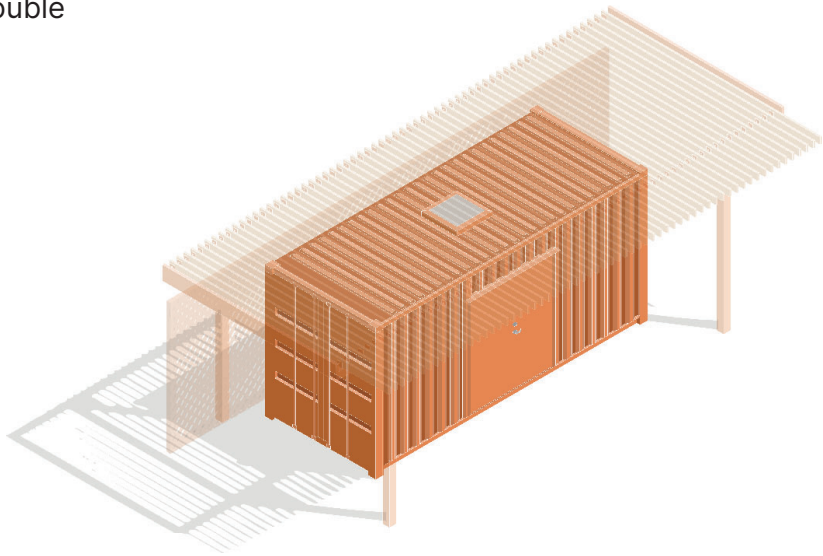


Storage Containers

Storage containers are found at activity centers and are sited to support the spaces that they serve. Recalling the railroad industry that historically traversed the site, the shipping containers provide storage and restroom facilities for the park. Where a shipping container is required, there is always a trellis for coverage and a Corten steel wall to screen its back side from view.

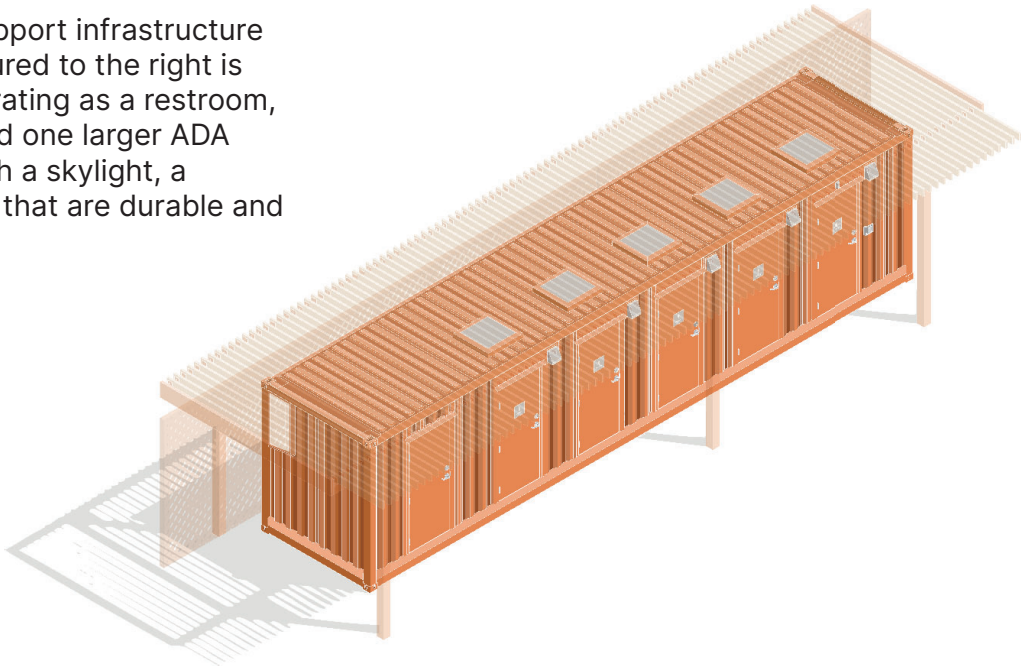
20' Long

The 20' container provides storage for visitor and site maintenance uses. It is equipped with double doors and a skylight.

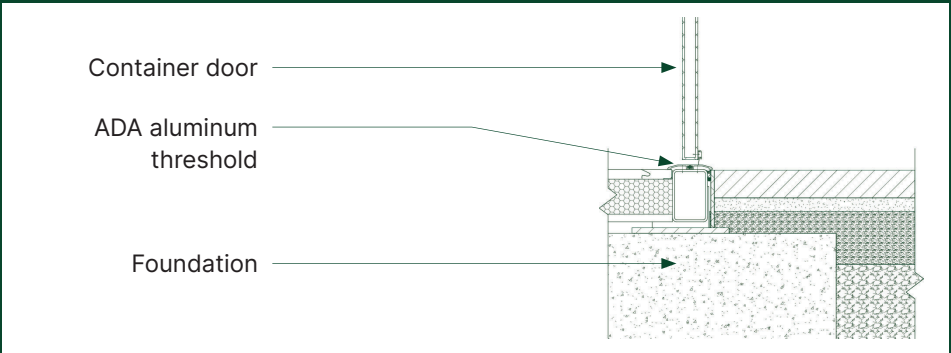


40' Long

The 40' container provides support infrastructure to larger activity centers. Pictured to the right is the 40' storage container operating as a restroom, which has 4 standard units and one larger ADA unit. Each unit is equipped with a skylight, a changing station, and finishes that are durable and easy to clean.

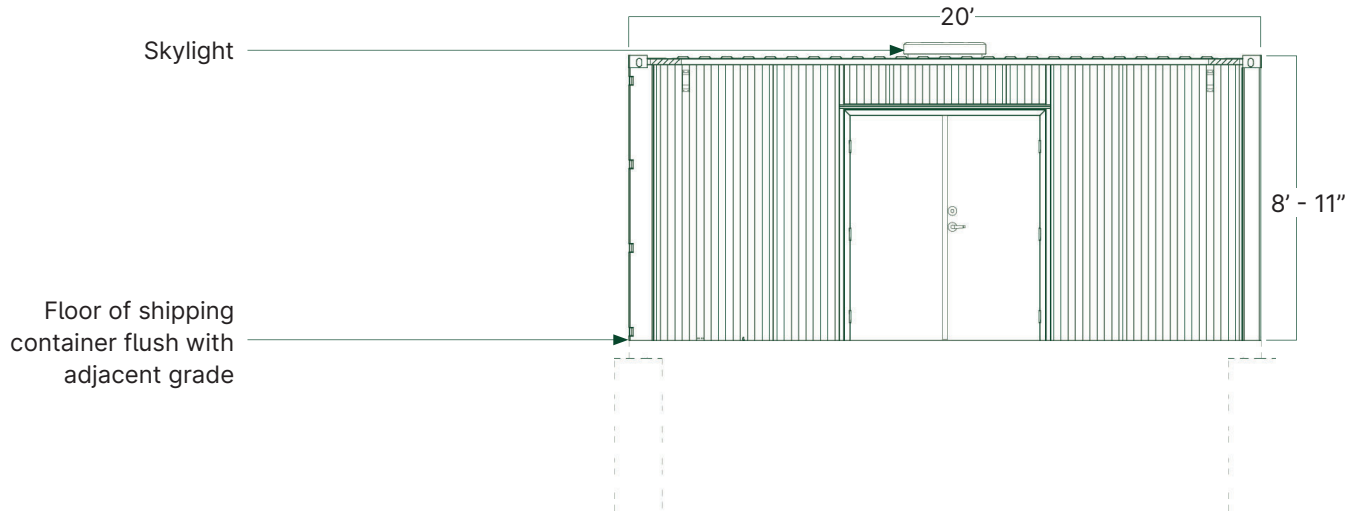


Containers are painted steel.

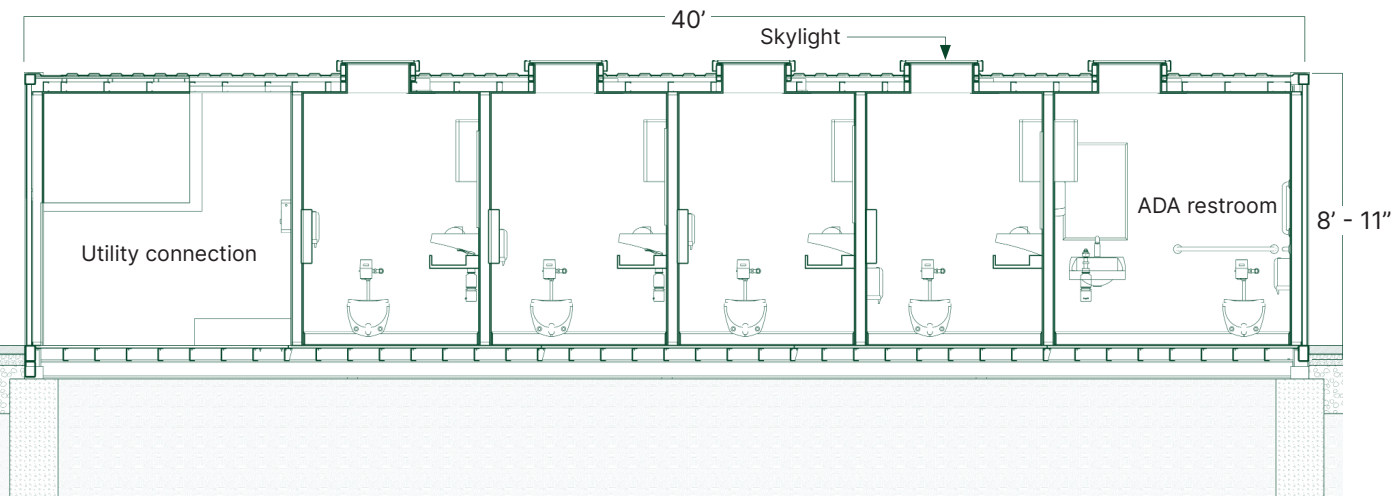


Typical container threshold detail.

20' Storage Container



40' Storage Container Supporting Restroom Facilities



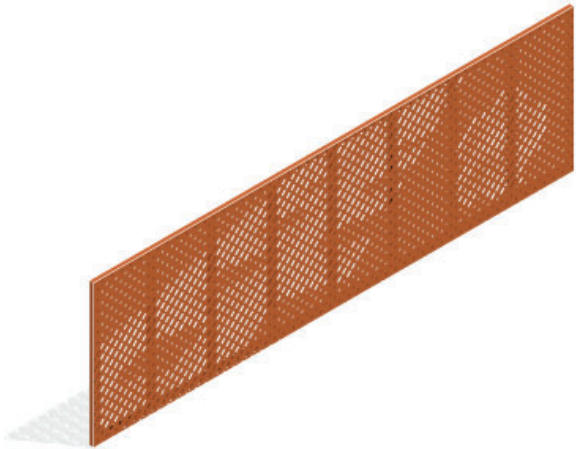
Corten Steel Walls

The steel rails of old train tracks are reinterpreted to become walls of Corten steel that mimic the historic lines of the tracks. The steel rails sweep with the paths of circulation throughout the park, celebrating the new movements of those on foot or wheels. The Corten walls take on a variety of

roles including signage and wayfinding, backdrops for public artwork, vegetation armatures, benches for rest, and visual screens against abutting uses. Steel panels are also perforated with designs that reference history, nature, and community.

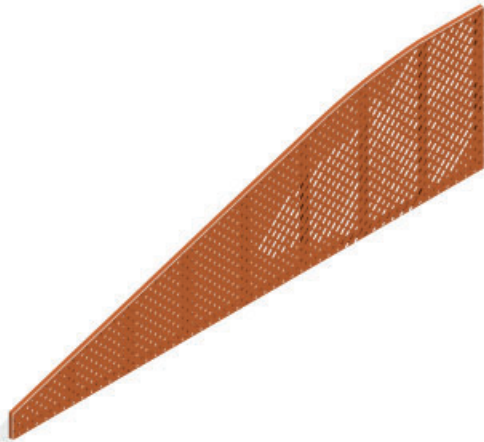
Typical

A tall straight section of Corten wall acts as a visual barrier throughout the park. A Corten frame supports a perforated Corten sheet which faces the paths of the park. The graphic on each wall is unique and tells a story of the specific wall location.



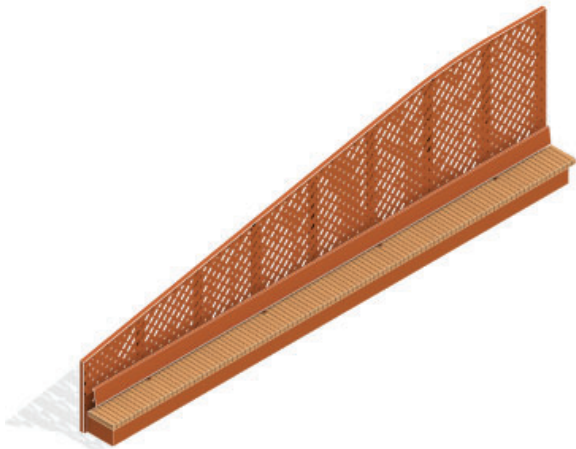
Sloping

Taking their cues from rail yard geometries, the steel walls rise and fall, emphasizing the idea of historic rails rising out of the site, creating a smooth transition up to the typical wall height of 9'-6".

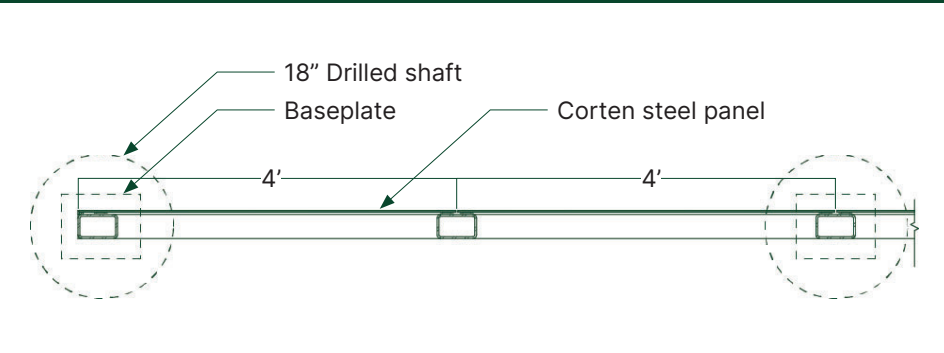


Wall and Bench

Corten wall and bench hybrids occur in areas requiring both a physical barrier and a place for rest. Where steel walls come into play, they always share a centerline with the posts of a trellis.



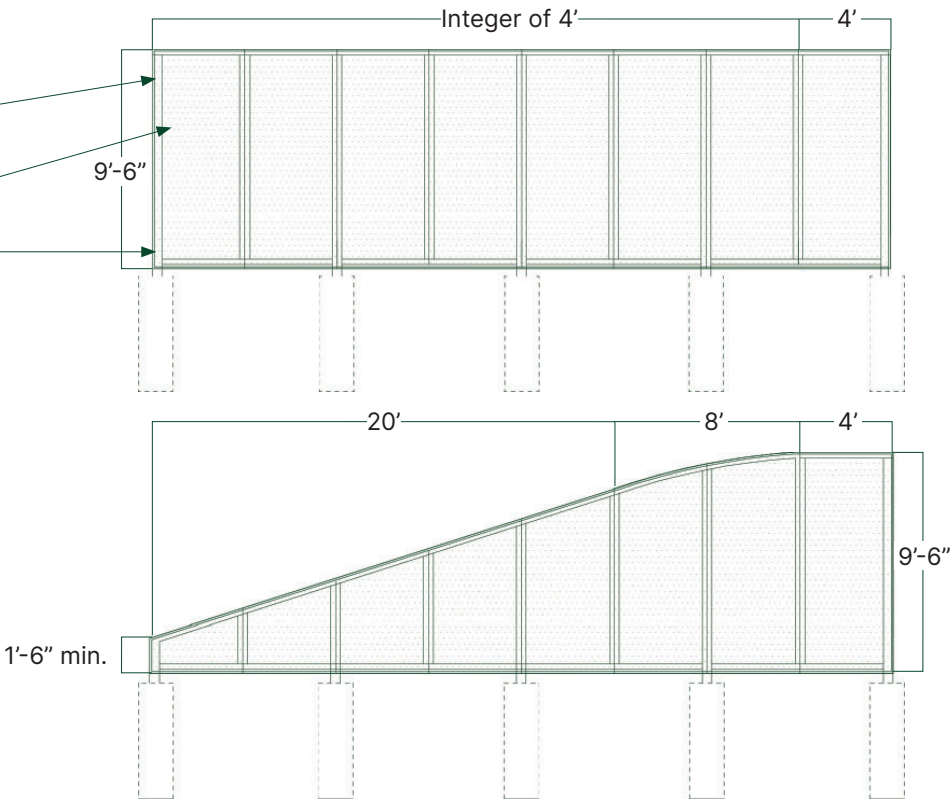
Corten steel is used for the walls.



Typical wall detail at post.

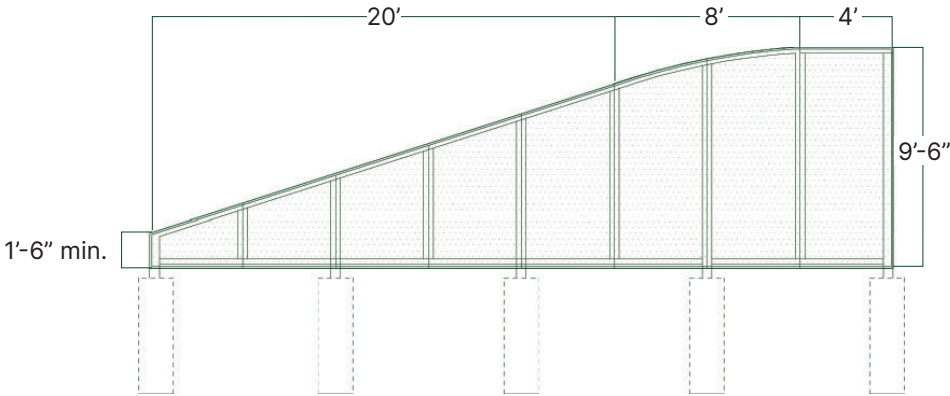
Typical Wall

Corten HSS top and bottom
Perforated Corten panel
Corten HSS post



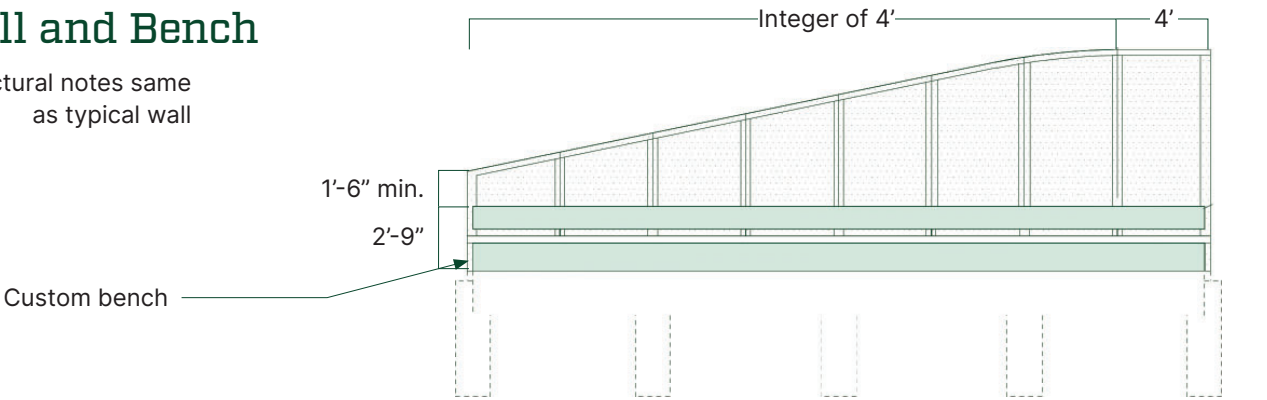
Sloping Wall

Structural notes same as typical wall



Wall and Bench

Structural notes same as typical wall

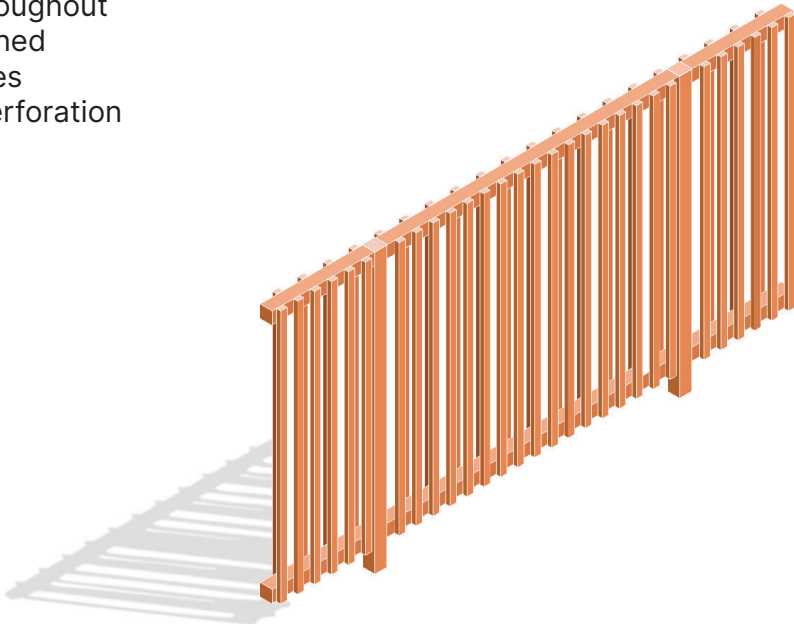


Fences

Fences shape the visitor experience throughout the six unique landscape typologies of the park, as a screen or remediation fence. Screen fences visually and physically delineate private and public spaces, safeguard the visitor from uneven ground, and provide screening to enhance the overall experience. Remediation fences detract the visitor from entering spaces undergoing processes of repair.

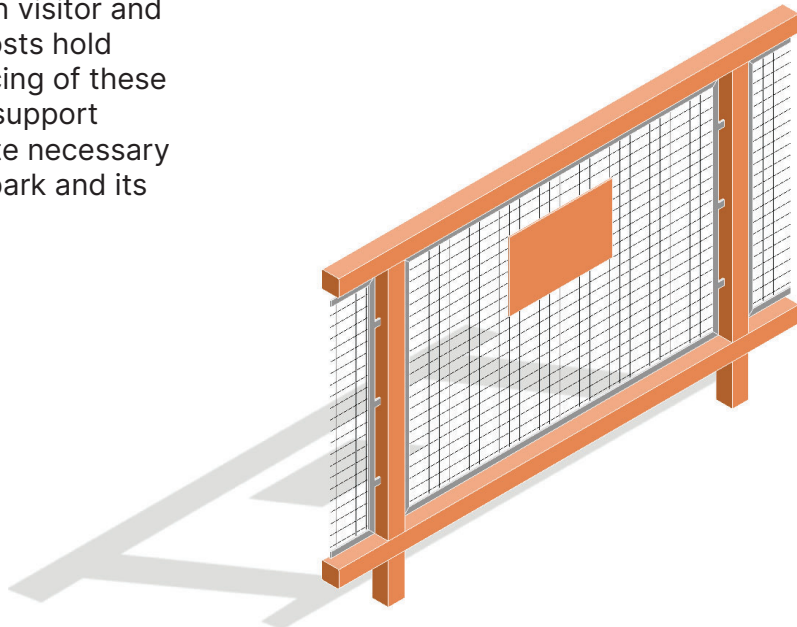
Screen Fence

A Corten steel fence acts as a screen throughout the park. Corten steel posts are closely lined together along a steel frame. This provides screening while also allowing for some perforation through the fence.

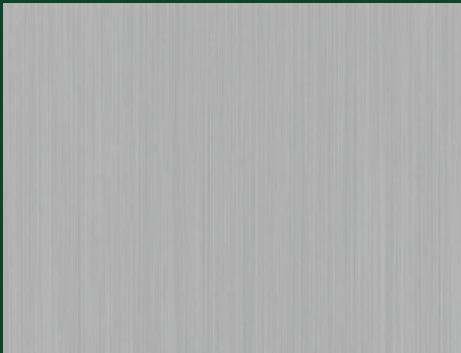


Remediation Fence

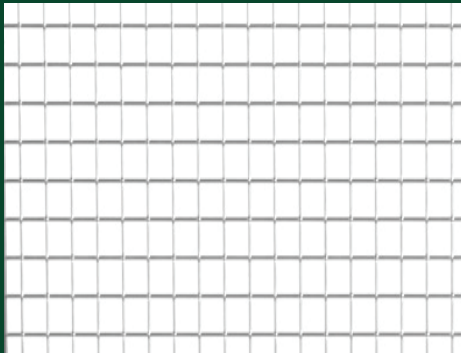
Corten steel remediation fences aid in visitor and wildlife protection measures. Steel posts hold together welded mesh infill. The spacing of these posts creates just enough structural support while maintaining the simple silhouette necessary for embedding itself throughout the park and its context.



Corten steel is used for fence frames and posts.

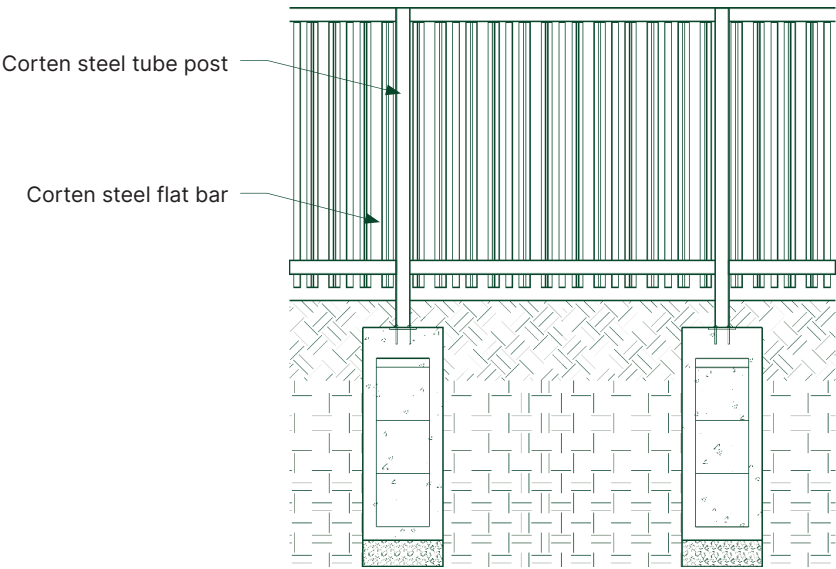
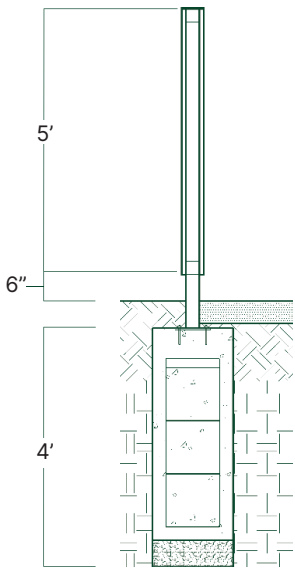


Mesh infill frames are held together by steel.

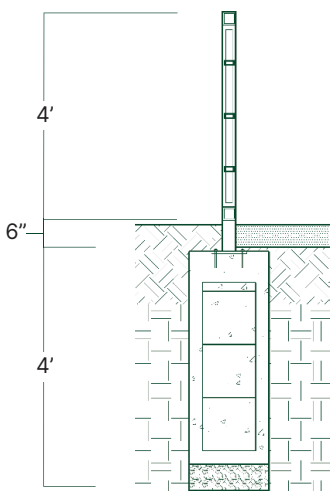


Welded wide mesh

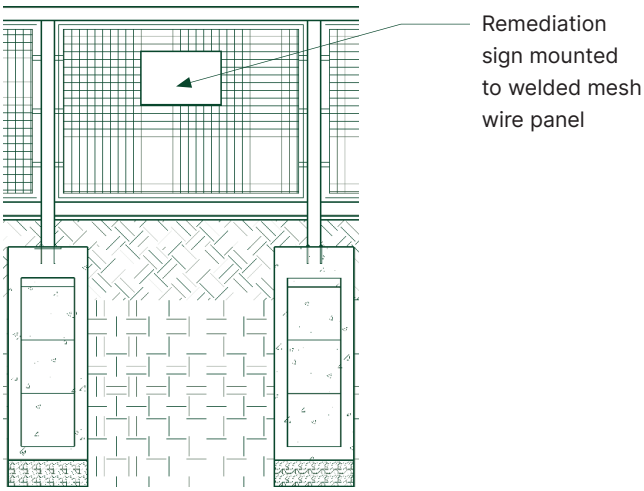
Screen Fence



Remediation Fence

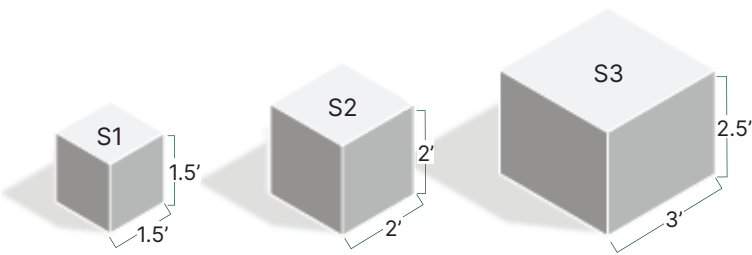


Structural notes same as screen fence



Granite Seat Walls

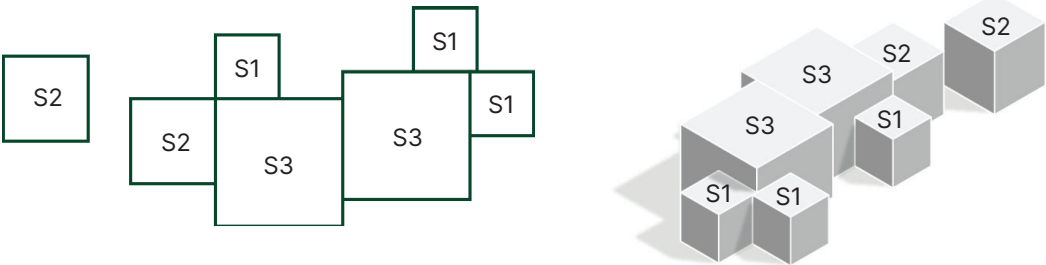
Granite seat walls are inspired by the ice blocks that were once transported along the site's former railway. There are three different sizes: S1, S2, and S3, as illustrated to the right. These blocks are clustered together in five unique groups, which are found throughout the park.



Group 01



Group 02



Group 03



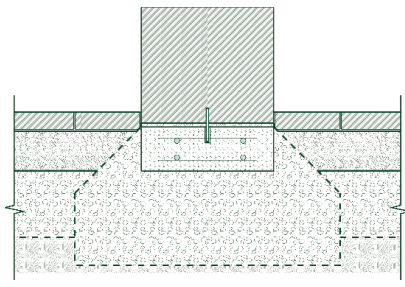
Group 04



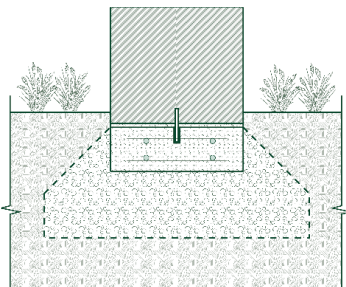
Group 05



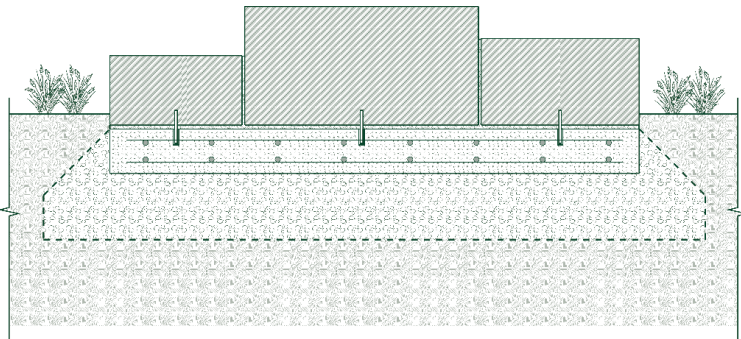
Single seat wall in paving



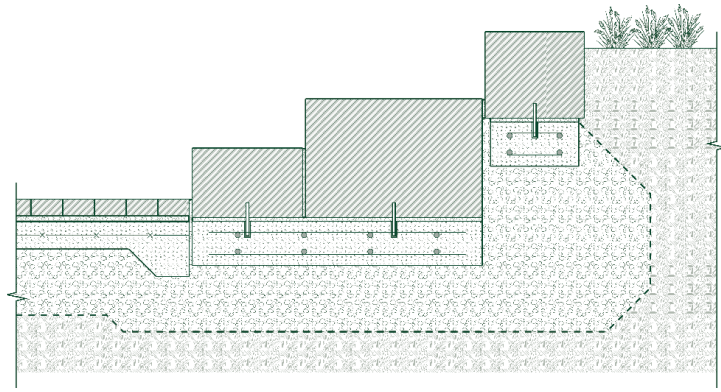
Single seat wall in planting



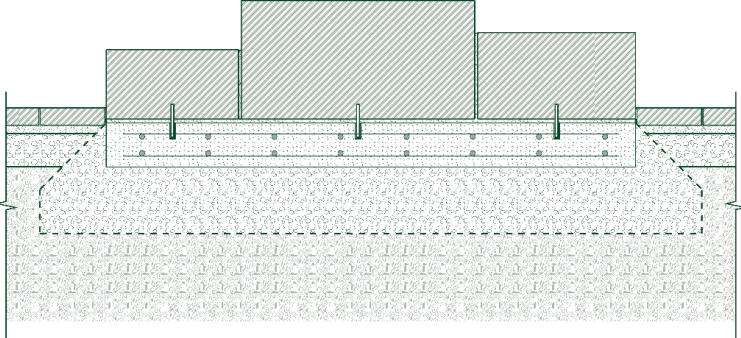
Group of seat walls in planting



Group of seat walls in sloped planting



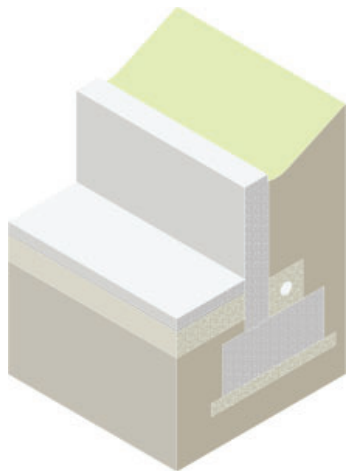
Group of seat walls in paving



All details feature granite blocks of various sizes embedded within different material ground treatments.

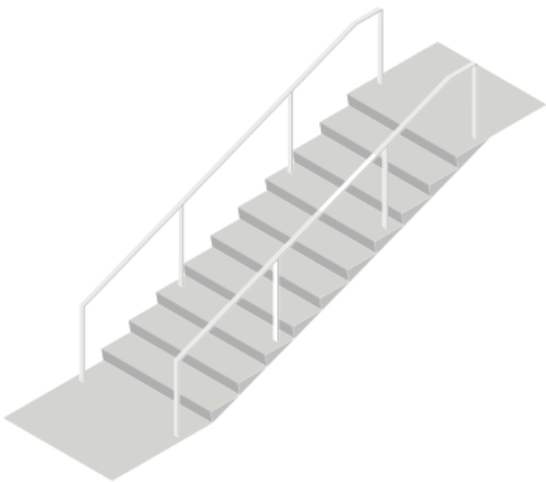
Retaining Walls

Throughout the nine miles, the park passes through a variety of topographical changes. To ensure safe and clear passage through the site, different types of retaining walls are employed for soil retention. These retaining walls may also create new opportunities such as elevated platforms or unique planting moments.

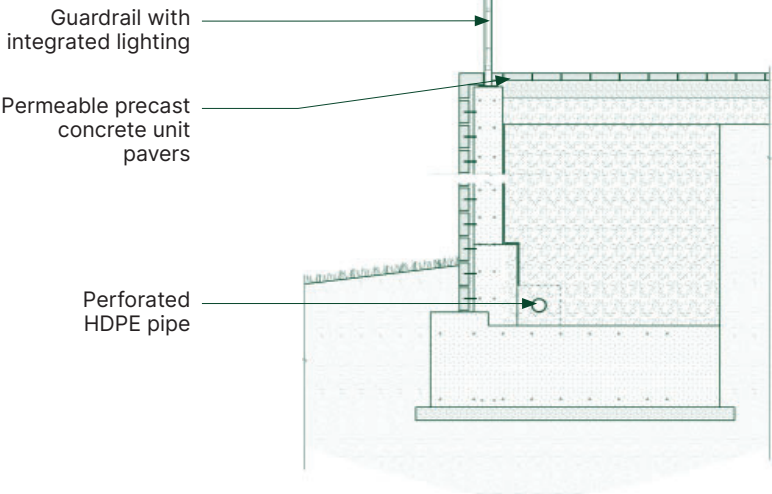


Stairs and Railing

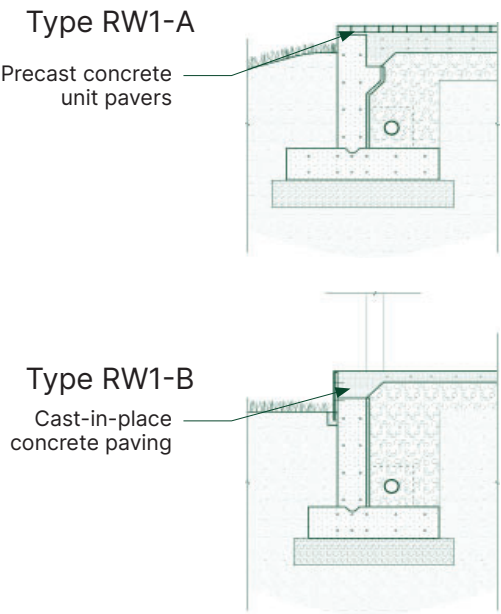
All stairs throughout the park should have a granite tread and stainless steel handrails, to keep inline with the overall park design palette.



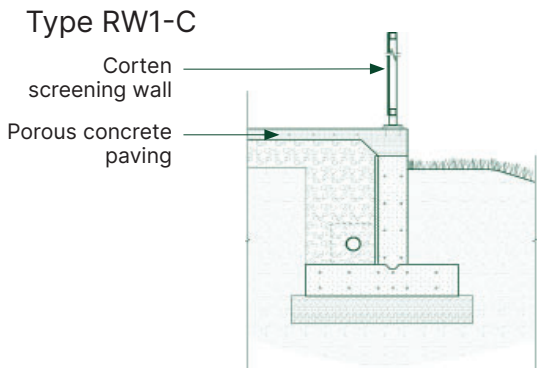
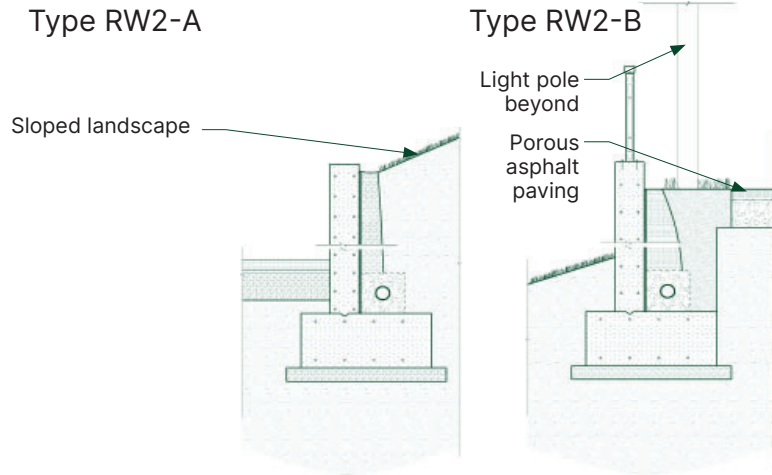
Type 'RW3'



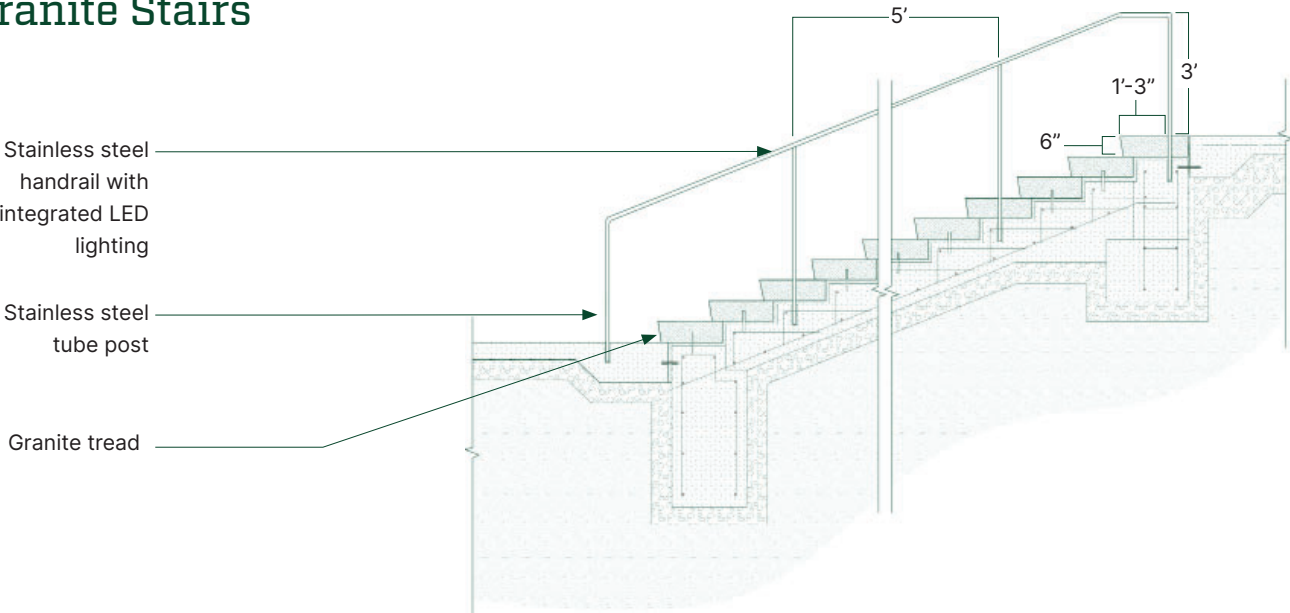
Type 'RW1'



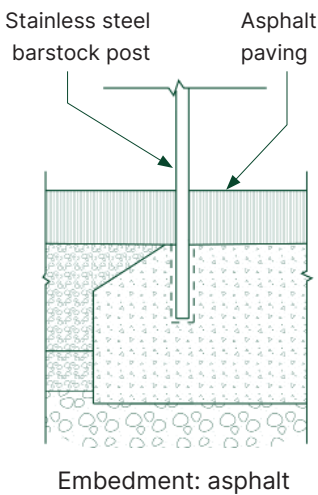
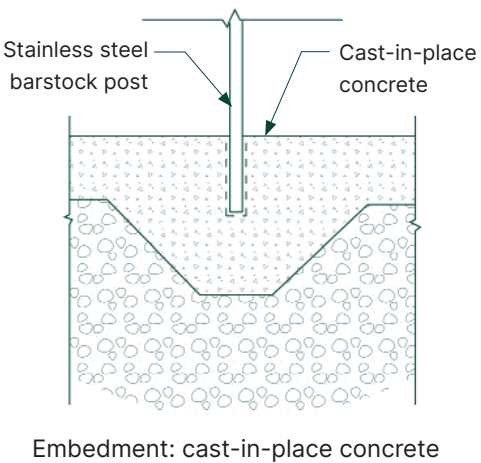
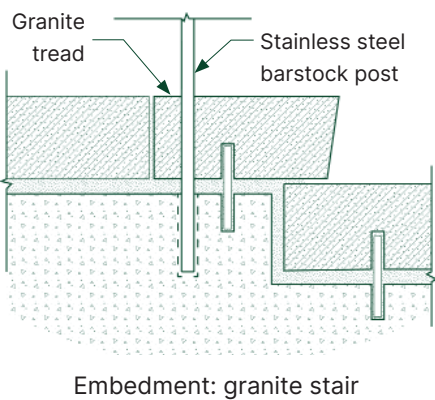
Type 'RW2'



Granite Stairs



Rail Embedment

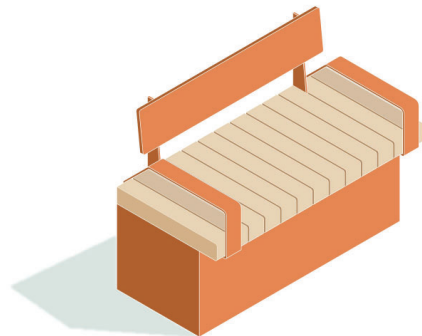


Modular Benches

Quality seating is essential for ensuring comfort along the park. Drawing inspiration from the aesthetics of rail ties, the modular bench design features a series of interchangeable units that can be configured to create a variety of both curved and linear seating arrangements. The modular system includes 4' and 8'-long linear units, as well as standard curved units with angles of 30°, 45°, and 60°.

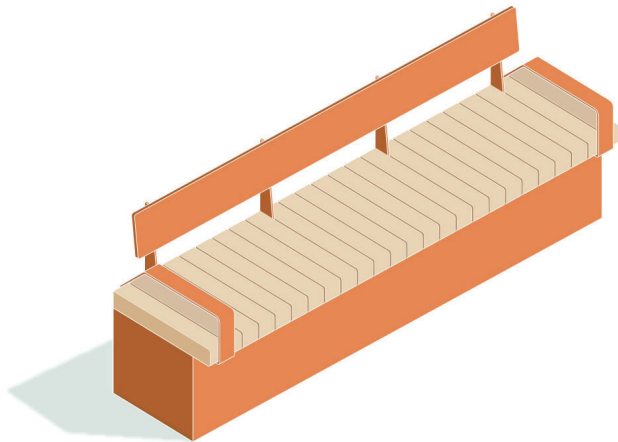
Typical 4' Unit

The 4' unit can be seamlessly combined with other modules to create a variety of seating arrangements, with or without armrests and backrests.



Typical 8' Unit

The 8' unit is intended for larger gathering areas. It can be combined with other block modules for expansion and can be customized with modular backrests and armrests.



Material Palette



Powder coated steel



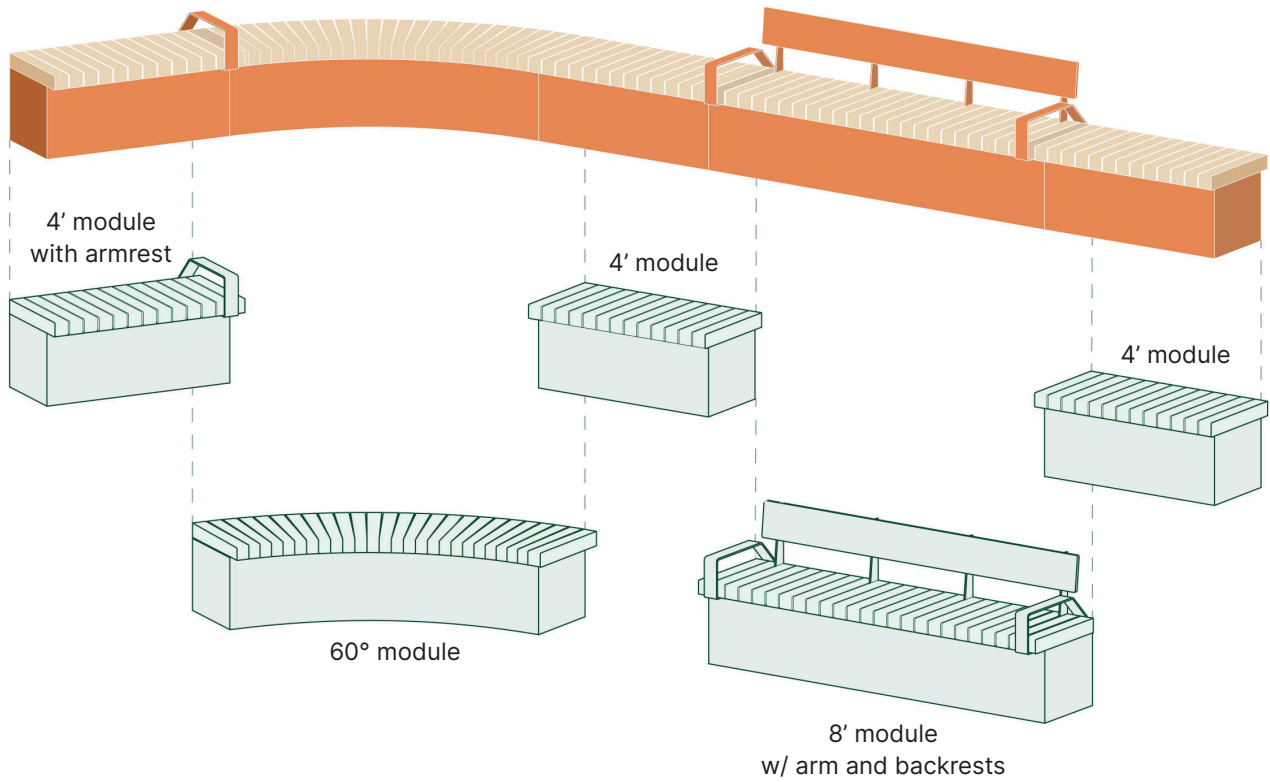
Thermally modified ash bench



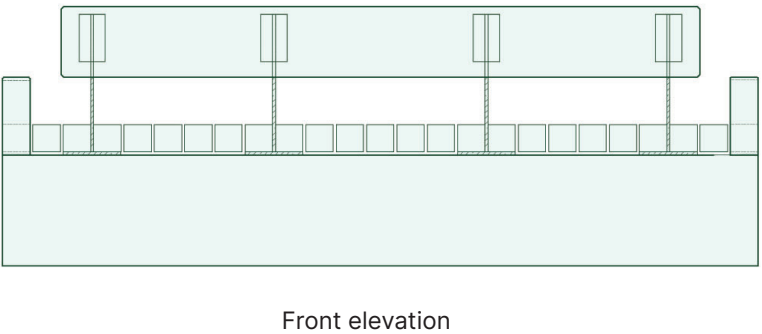
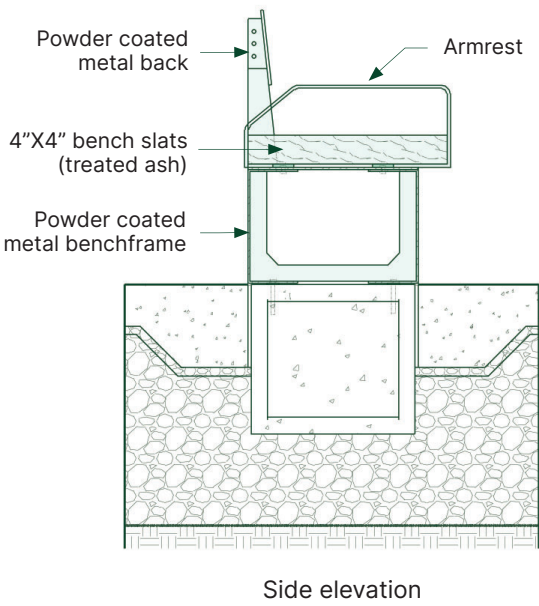
Design is inspired by rail tie aesthetics.

Modular Assembly

The 4' and 8'-long modular bench units can be combined with each other, as well as with backrests and armrests, to create unique seating opportunities for different spaces along the park.



Details

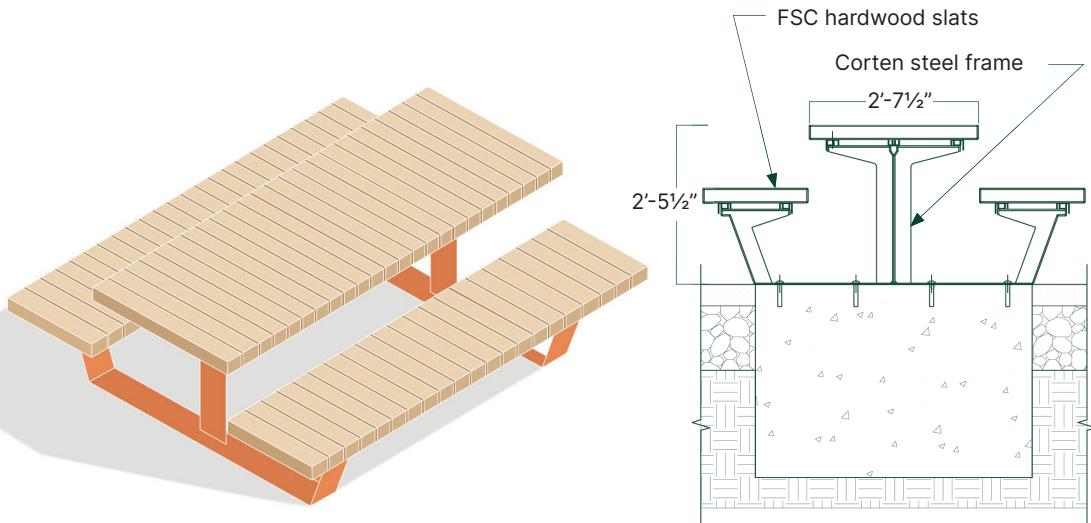


Utilities

Picnic benches, community garden beds, trash/recycling receptacles, bollards, bike racks, bike repair stations, and drinking fountains can be found at activity centers. Collapsible bollards are located at thresholds to provide physical and visual safety clues.

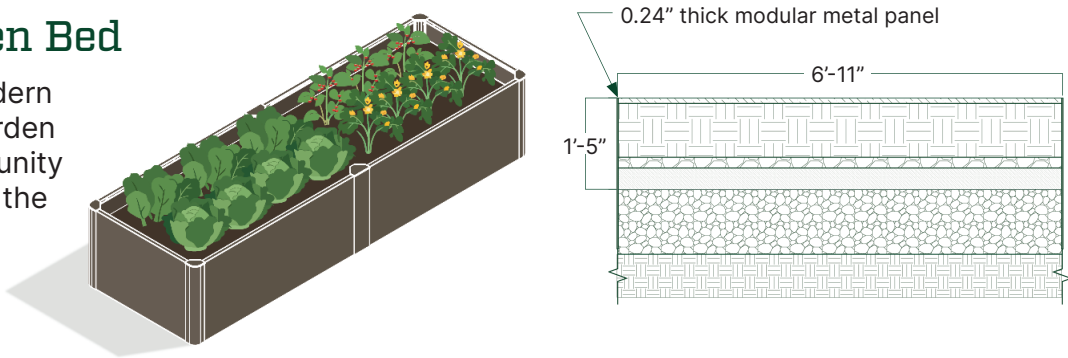
Picnic Bench

The preferred picnic bench for the park is the “Solid Crosswise Picnic Set,” by Streetlife. Materials for this model should include a frame finish in Corten steel and FSC hardwood.



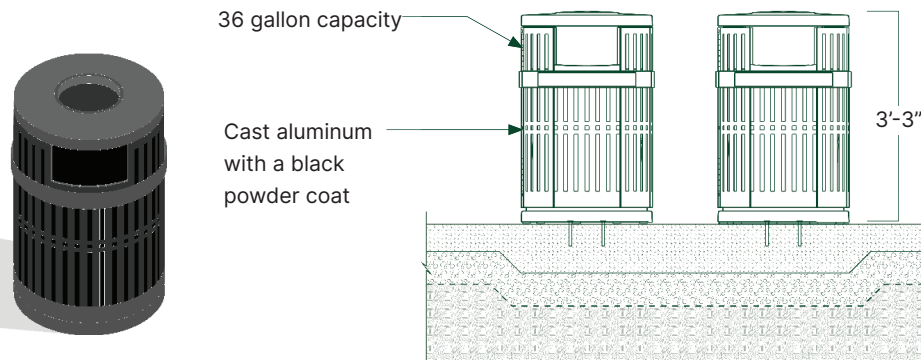
Community Garden Bed

Vego Garden’s 17” Tall Modern 27” x 83” Metal Raised Garden Bed is preferred for community gardens along the park, in the color “Umber Brown.”



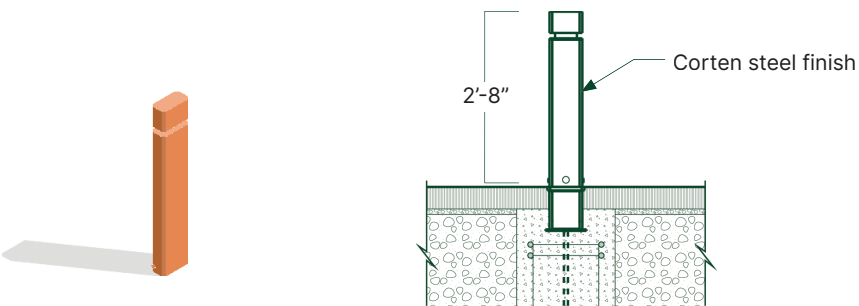
Trash / Recycling

Landscape Forms’ “Chase Park Litter” receptacles should be used for trash and recycling throughout the park. Both containers should have a 36-gallon capacity, a side opening with a sand pan at the bottom, and should be in the color black.



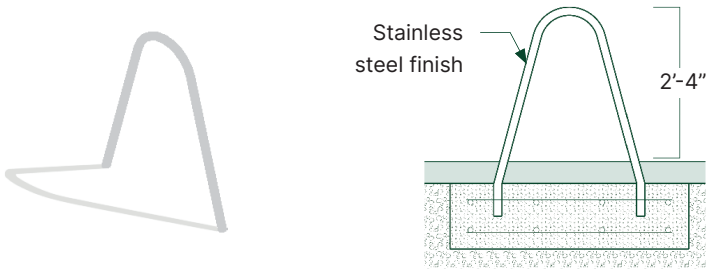
Removable Bollard

Cyria’s “Eudald” model should be specified for removable bollards along the park, with a Corten steel finish.



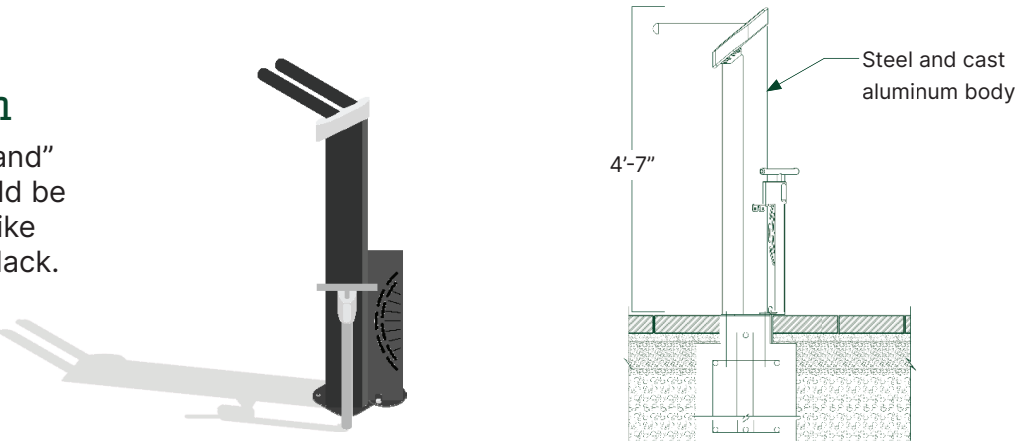
Bike Rack

The “Bola” bike rack by Landscape Forms should be used throughout the park, with embedded mounting, and in brushed stainless steel.



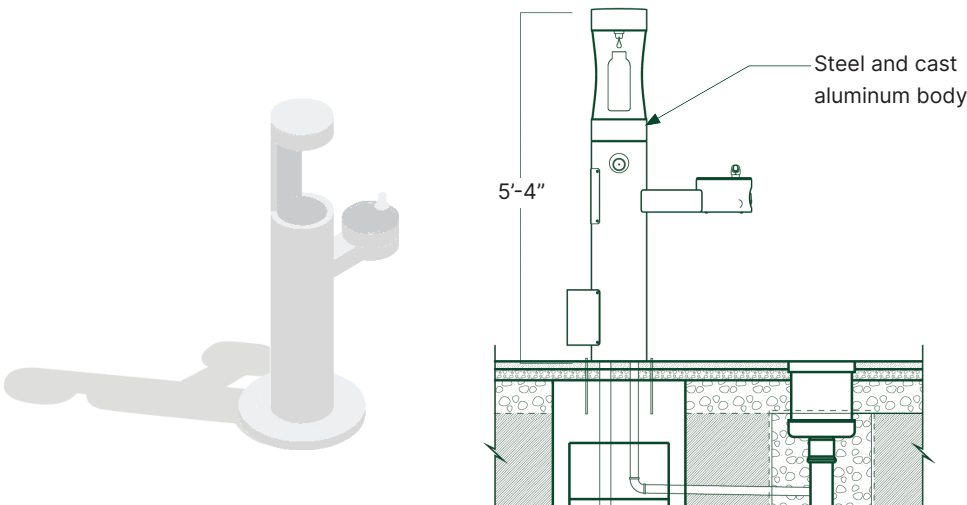
Bike Repair Station

The “Deluxe Public Work Stand” by Saris Infrastructure should be used in areas in need of a bike repair station, in the color black.



Drinking Fountain

The drinking fountain that is best suited for the park is Elkay’s Outdoor ezH2O® Upper Bottle Filling Station, model # LK4420BF1UFRKBLK, in the color black.



Lighting

Proper lighting is essential to a safe and enjoyable visitor experience. Lighting along the park should conform to the standards established in Phase 1 and designed/installed to support varied program uses in subsequent phases. The overall goal is to provide light that “moonlights” the space, creating generally uniform visibility without bright or dark spots, glaring or blinding patterns, or light pollution. Light should focus on paved areas and pathways of travel, with destinations having a slight increase in light to serve as beacons.

Architecturally Integrated

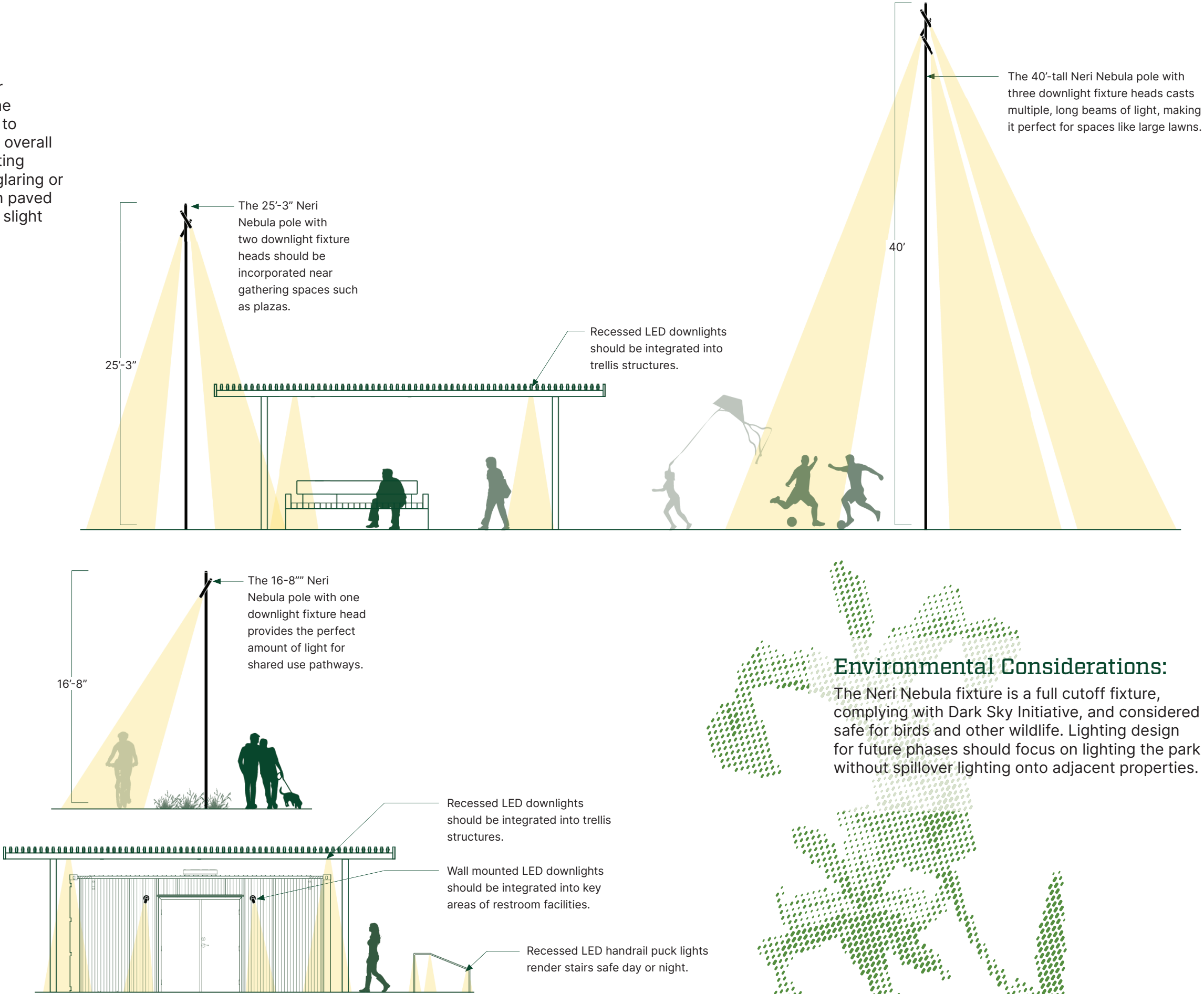
Architectural structures should have integrated lighting to operate as beacons for gathering and to promote safe use of the facilities at night. Shade structures should include integrated downlights, restroom facilities should incorporate architectural sconces at key arrival moments, and stair handrails should have embedded downlights.

Along the Shared Use Path

Neri Nebula pedestrian poles should be installed approximately 60’ on center along the length of the shared use pathway, at a consistent distance from the path edge. Lights point down, and distribute lengthwise along the pathway to provide a uniform level of light.

Moonlighting for Gathering Spaces

Gathering areas should be lit by taller, multi-headed Neri Nebula Moonlighting poles. These fixtures cast dappled light through the tree canopy, providing uniform light to gathering spaces.



Environmental Considerations:

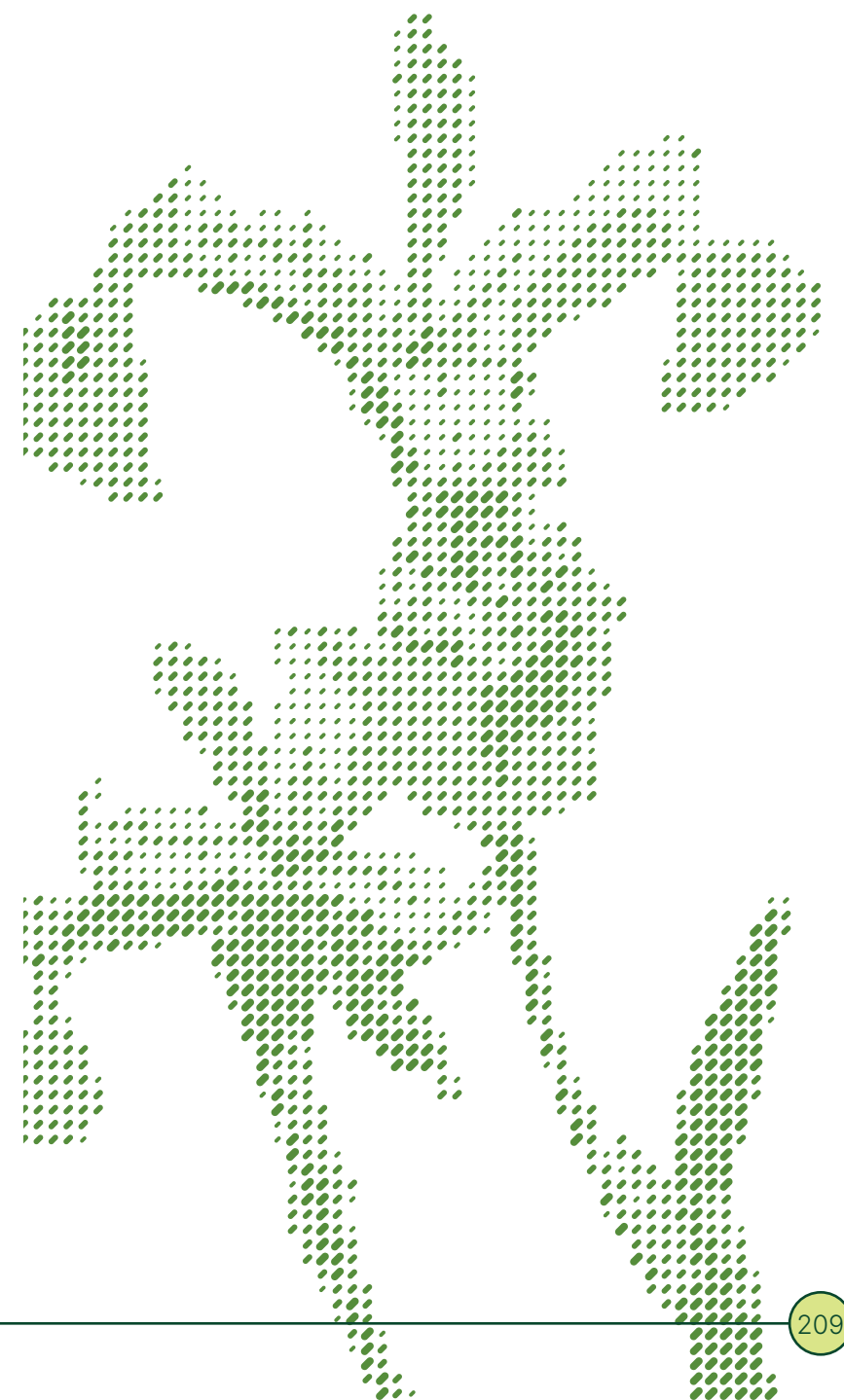
The Neri Nebula fixture is a full cutoff fixture, complying with Dark Sky Initiative, and considered safe for birds and other wildlife. Lighting design for future phases should focus on lighting the park without spillover lighting onto adjacent properties.

Chapter 05

Design Standards

Section 03

Play



Park Play

Play structures are a vital component of public amenities along the park. All future installations should incorporate a diverse range of play experiences, engage youth with the site's history and ecology, and provide essential amenities such as restrooms, water fountains, ADA-accessible pathways, and seating. The illustration below highlights Newark Central Activity Center's play spaces, demonstrating how key design principles can be incorporated into play structures, surfacing design, and accessible routes of activity.

Ch. 5, Sect. 03 - Play:
Storytelling and Play Diversity, page 212

Ch. 5, Sect. 03 - Play:
Access and Amenities, page 214

Ch. 5, Sect. 03 - Play:
Access and Amenities, page 214

Storytelling and Play Diversity

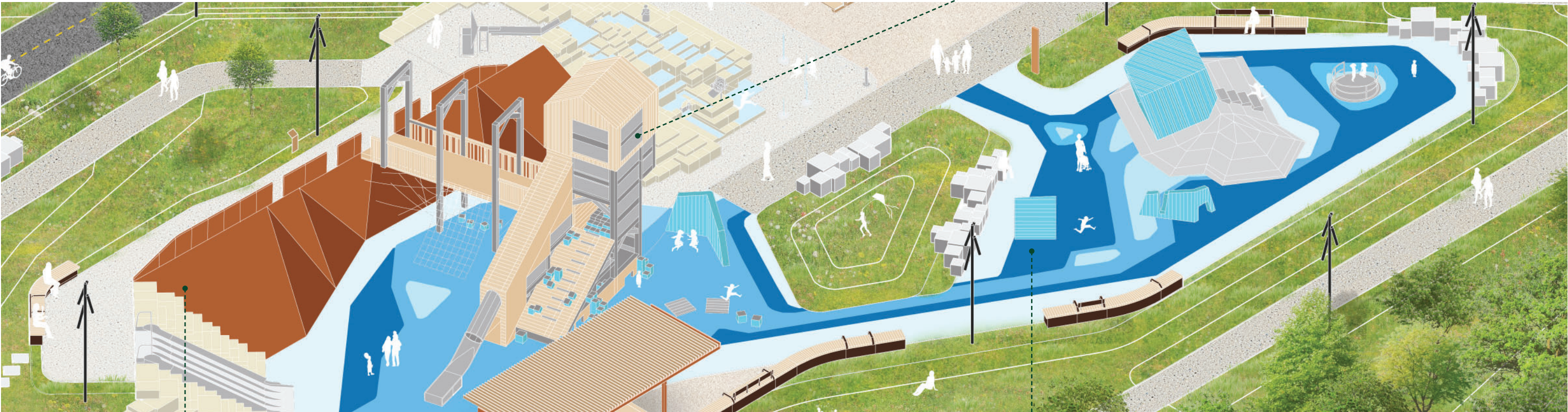
Incorporating references to the site’s history presents exciting opportunities for storytelling while introducing a variety of play experiences into the space. From active play and sensory games to role-playing and imaginative activities, users can immerse themselves in the site’s heritage while developing critical social and physical skills essential for healthy growth and well-being. The integration of relevant site history into a diverse play program should be a guiding principle for all future play spaces throughout the park.

Moments of Discovery

Dynamic play opportunities such as climbing, sliding, and sensory stimuli create exciting moments of challenge and discovery. In the Newark Central Activity Center, these spaces are inspired by the ice block transportation system, which was an angled conveyer belt used for moving ice blocks from storage spaces onto trains for transport.



Ice block conveyer belt. ³⁸



Phase 1’s Newark Central Activity Center features a play space that integrates storytelling and play diversity.

Topographical Interest

Features like a rock scramble or a climbing wall instigate active play for a range of ages. In the Newark Central Activity Center, these spaces are inspired by the park’s iconic “Kearny Cut,” which is a canyon left over from a blast for the former railway.



The park’s “Kearny Cut.” ¹

Ice as Inspiration

The water play area and play surfacing patterns at the Newark Central Activity Center are inspired by the movement of the Wisconsin Glacier, which shaped the landscape long ago. Additionally, the design draws from the formation of lake ice floes—once harvested for ice blocks and transported via the park’s historic railway—as a creative influence for the surface patterns throughout the space.

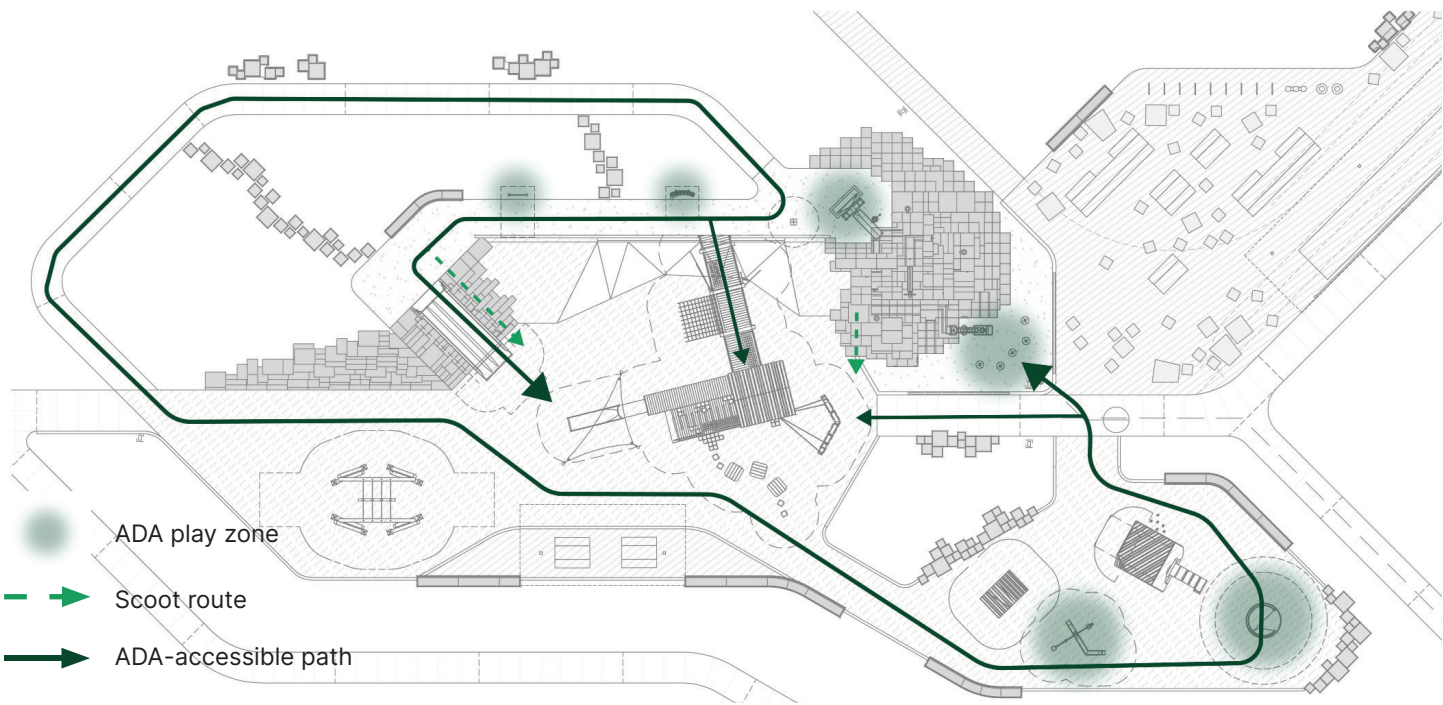


Ice floes. ⁴⁶

Access and Amenities

All play areas along the park must include adhere to ADA guidelines and accommodate public amenities to ensure the spaces are comfortable and inclusive. At play areas, this might include scoot routes and transfer platforms. Ample shade, seating, and public restroom access should be adjacent to play structures. Play structures should also have direct access to site amenities like drinking fountains, bike racks and trash/recycling receptacles.

ADA Access



Scoot Routes and Transfer Platforms

Wherever possible, ADA accessible transfer platforms should be thoughtfully integrated into play equipment and elevated structures so that wheel chair users may easily transfer on and off equipment. ADA accessible scoot routes should be integrated within play areas that feature grade change, ensuring that users have a safe alternative to descend.

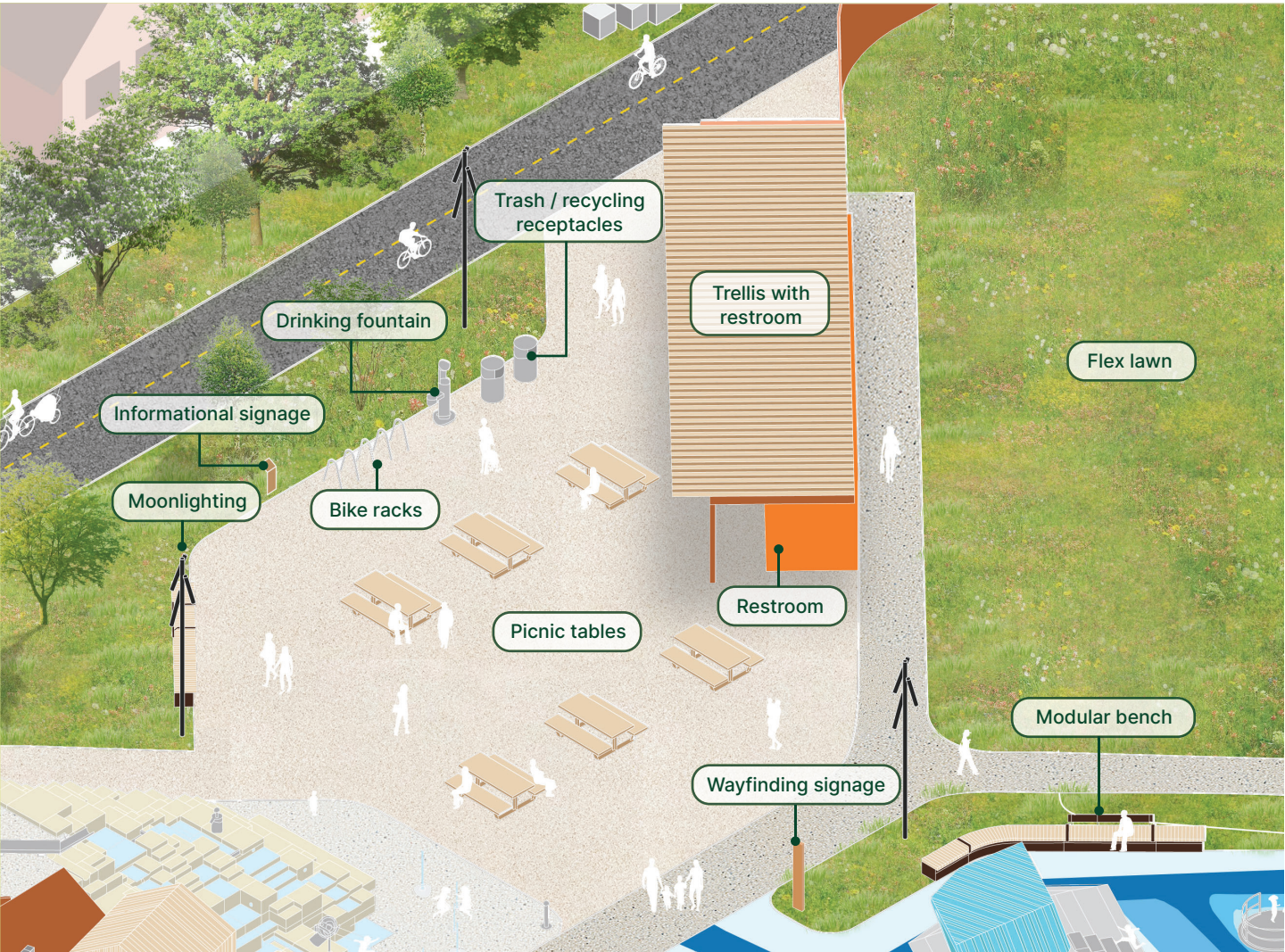
Integrated ADA play features

All play areas along the park should thoughtfully integrate ADA accessible play elements so not to stigmatize users with different abilities. One example includes the universally accessible carousel in the Newark Central Activity Center play space, which is flush with the surface of the ground so wheelchair users may access it.



ADA-accessible carousel

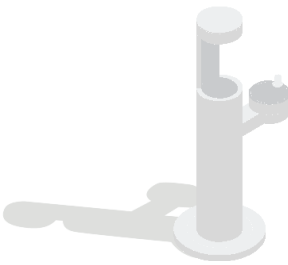
Typical Rest Area Adjacent to Play Spaces



Amenities for visitor comfort, safety, and navigation are essential for rest areas.

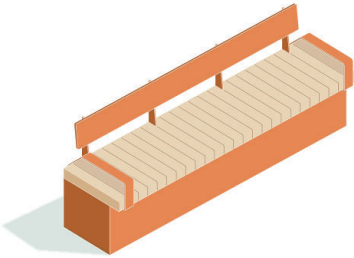
Drinking Fountains

Active play requires drinking fountains to be nearby.



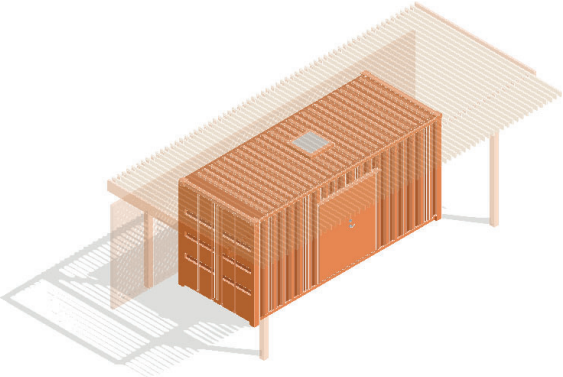
Seating

Modular benches provide spaces of rest for children and caregivers.



Restrooms

All users of play spaces will need easy access to restrooms.

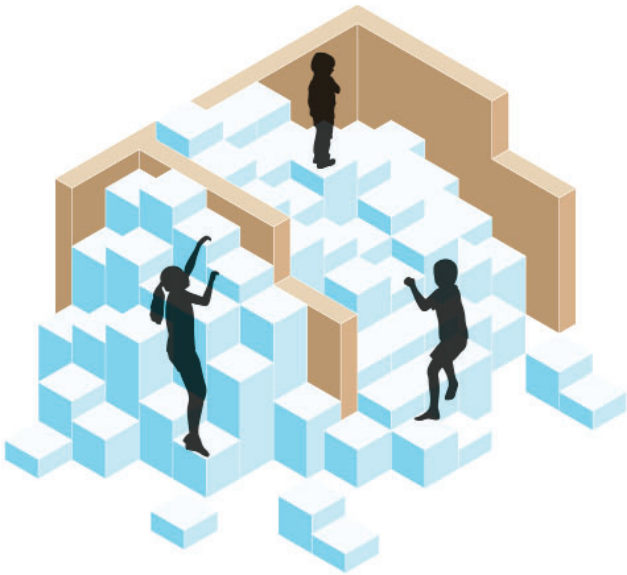


Play Structure Examples

Outside of the Newark Central Activity Center play space, there are many opportunities for potential play spaces throughout the park property. These amenities should continue to integrate storytelling with diverse types of play, such as physical, active, imaginative, and sensorially-stimulating structures. Ideas are featured below.

Ice Climbing Blocks

Ice blocks are a prominent element throughout the design and could be utilized for a variety of fun climbing play features. Inspired by ice houses of New Jersey's Lake Hopatcong, this example provides a playful climb to the top of the stacks of harvested ice allowing users to immerse themselves in the site's history.



Geologic Textures

Engaging different senses through play is important for users of all ages. In this example, visitors might run their hands along a wall inspired by the exposed rock facades of the Kearny Cut, for a more tactile, textured experience.



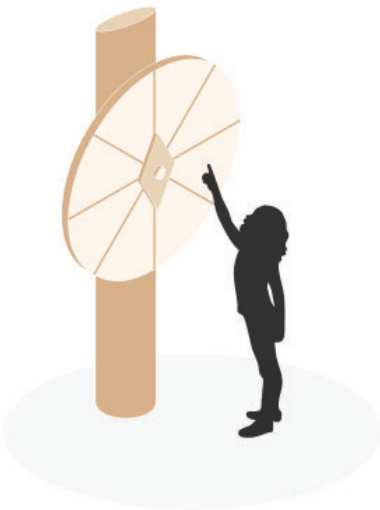
Engaging Sound

Music-making play structures provide a variety of benefits to users of all ages and abilities. In this example, a marimba is integrated with ice block formations, engaging senses of sound and touch.



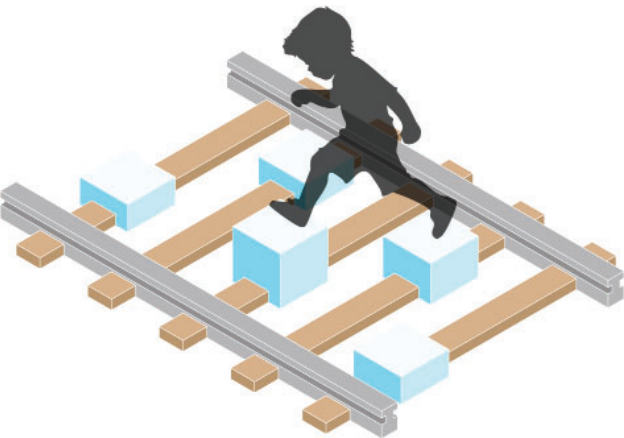
Interactive Components

Opportunities to learn about the sites history could be integrated with interactive elements. Featured here is a spinning wheel that might host illustrations of the site's ecological and industrial history.



Rail Tie Inspiration

This example features a balance beam and hopping blocks, integrating the park's material themes of rail ties and ice blocks into play spaces.



Section 04

Signage and Wayfinding

Chapter 05

Design Standards

Design Language

The park signage orients visitors while highlighting the site’s cultural and ecological significance. Sculptural steel walls are perforated with locally inspired imagery. They offer visual interest and interpretive storytelling, celebrate the park’s industrial heritage and natural richness, and foster a deeper connection between nature, community, and history along the corridor.



Industrial remnants of the former railway serve as inspiration for the overall design language. ⁴⁷

Materials

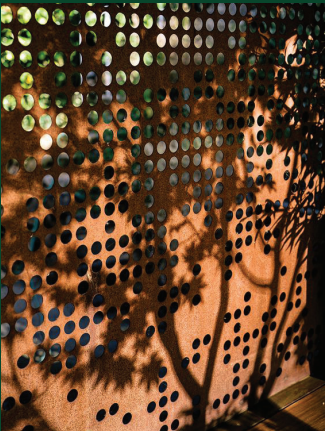
Drawing from the site’s industrial heritage, the signage references railroad materials and color palettes. Featuring Corten steel panels and a bold, clean typeface, the signs establish a rugged aesthetic throughout the park. Sculptural Corten steel walls further reinforce the industrial character of the overall signage system.

Graphic Inspiration

Existing Conditions



Steel Facades



Embossed Graphics



Cut-Out Graphics



Images, top row, from left to right: Wheeler Antabanez ⁴⁸, Joe Fletcher Photography ⁴⁹, Turner Design ⁵⁰, Caboolture to Wamuran Rail Trail ⁵¹

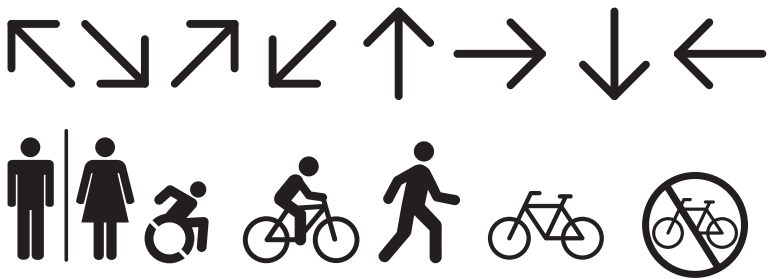
Bottom row, left to right: Wheeler Antabanez ⁵², Semple Brown ⁵³, Sasaki ⁵⁴, Benjamin Vogt ⁵⁵

Signage Family

Sign Types

Corten steel is found throughout the different types of signage: wayfinding, informative, and interpretive. A standard set of symbols, arrows, and colors are consistent across all signage types.

Note: Final design and language for park signage to match final installed signage for Phase 1.



Standard symbols and arrows used across all signage types.

Colors used for signage facades and lettering.



Threshold Sign



Specialty Rules



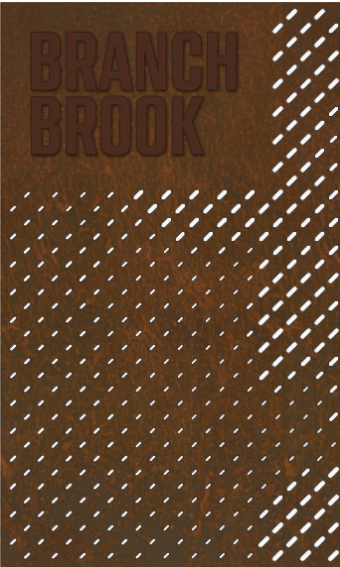
Trail Marker



Interpretive Freestanding



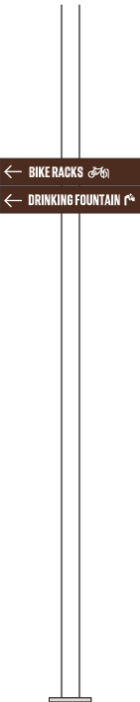
Interpretive Mounted / Etched



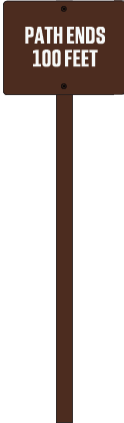
Cortel Steel Letters



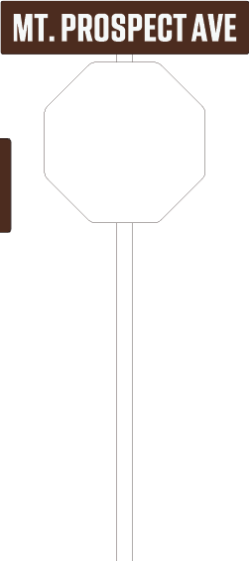
Regulatory Mounted



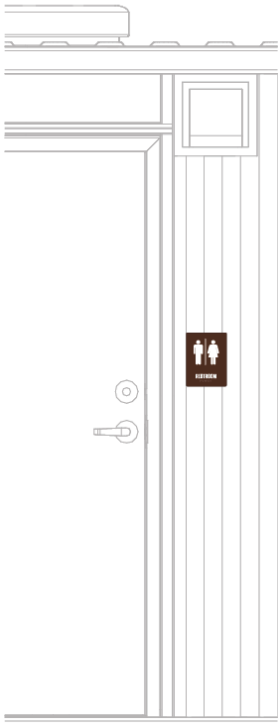
Amenities Mounted



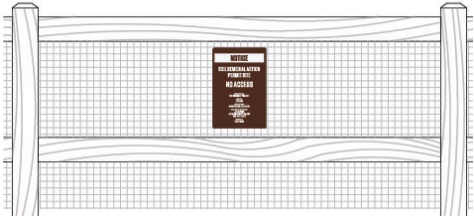
Path Ends Freestanding



Street Signs Mounted



Room Signage Mounted

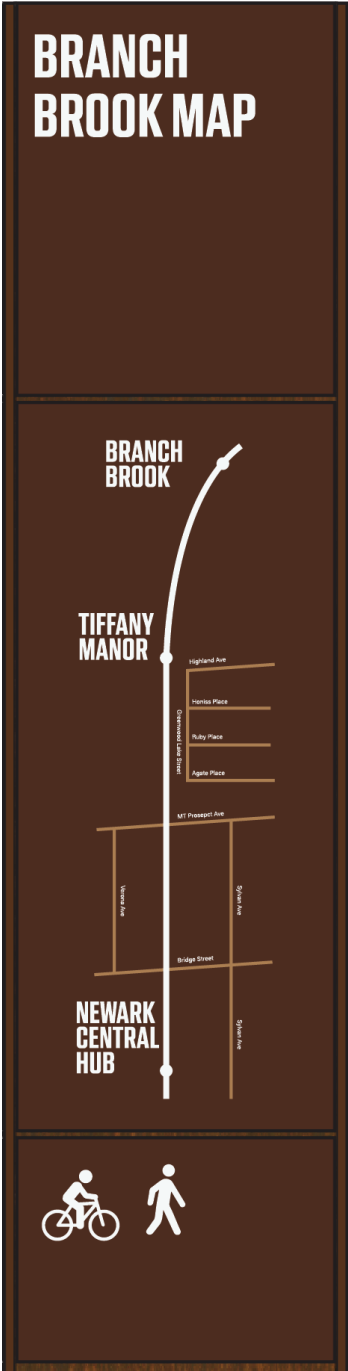


No Access Mounted

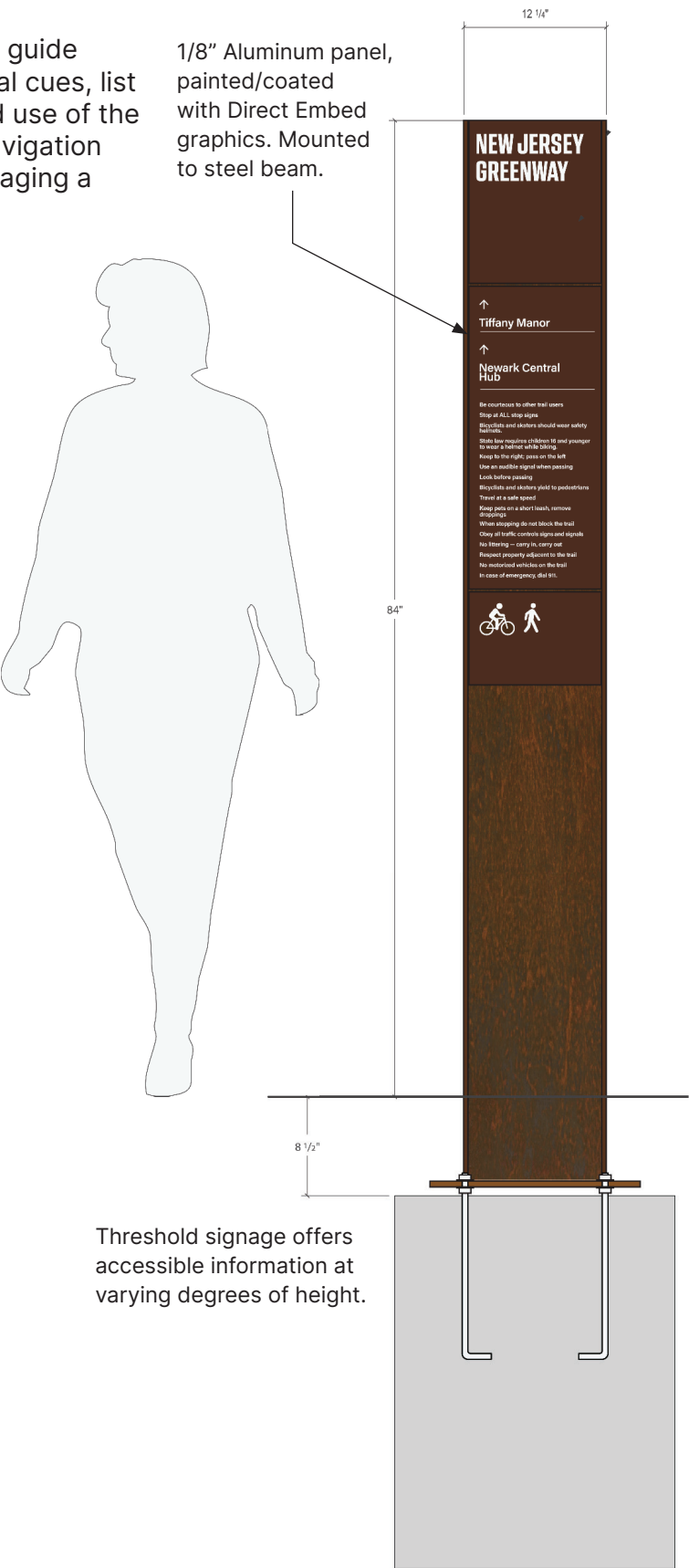
Wayfinding

Threshold Signage

Threshold signs, placed at key decision points, guide users through the park. They provide directional cues, list rules and regulations, and support safe, shared use of the space. Their clear design enhances intuitive navigation while reinforcing the park's identity and encouraging a respectful, inclusive visitor experience.



Enlargement: threshold signage

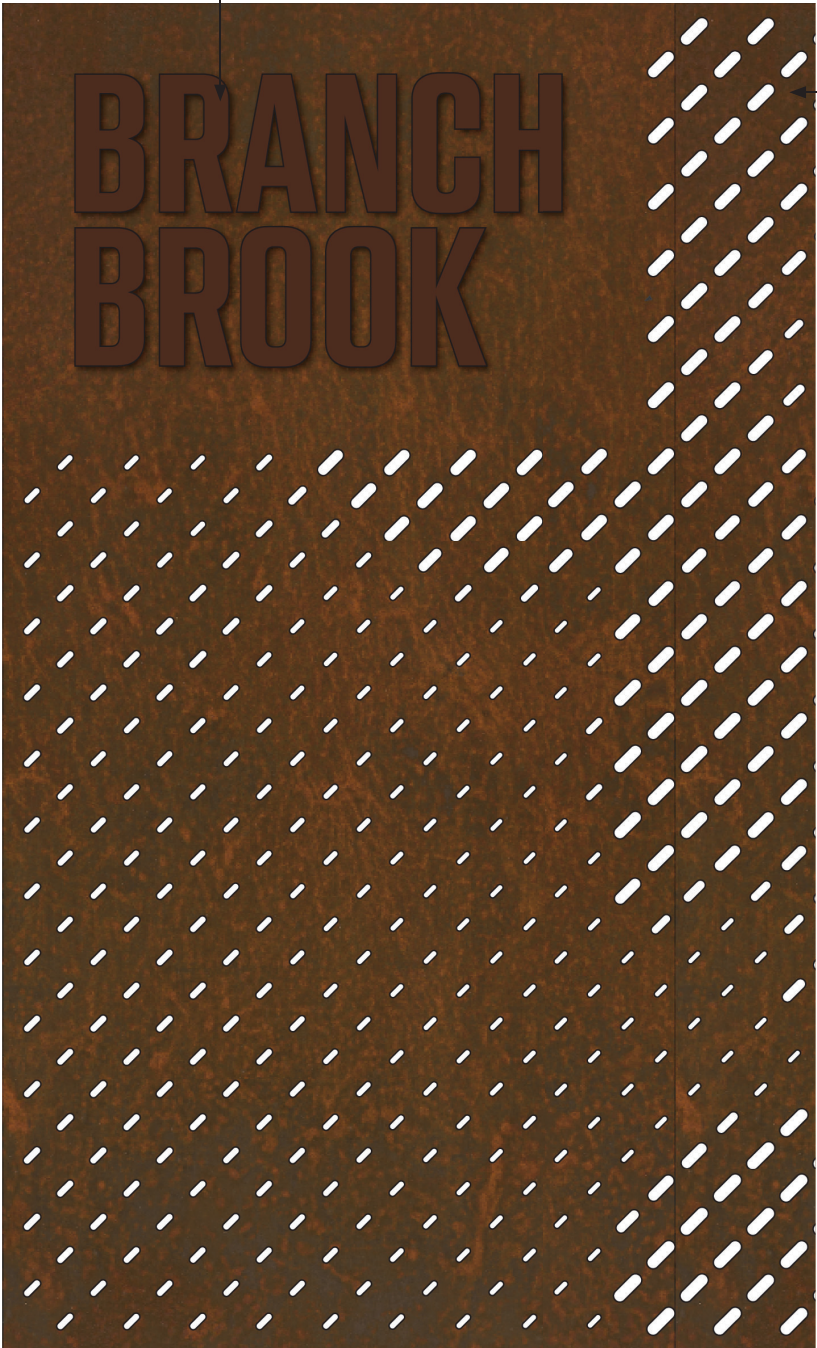


Threshold signage offers accessible information at varying degrees of height.

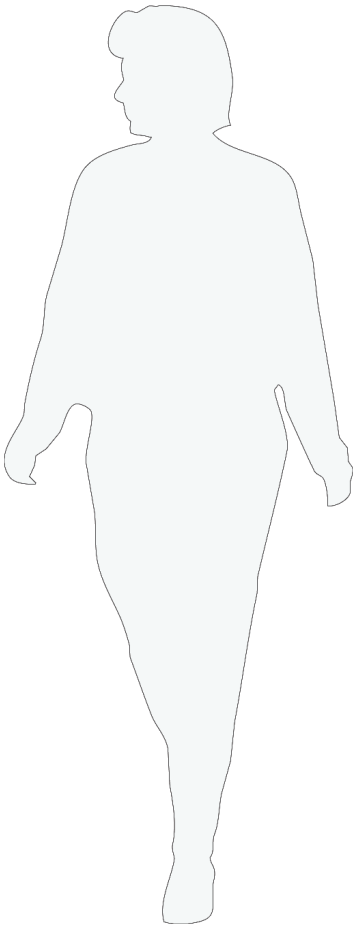
Activity Center Markers

Activity center markers situate each area within its context, while featuring patterns inspired by local history and ecology. Both interpretive and visually striking, they invite exploration of the park's industrial and natural past. These functional elements enrich the visitor experience, fostering connection to nature, community, and the site's layered history.

1/2" aluminum text, cut with a CNC router and painted faux finish to match Corten steel.



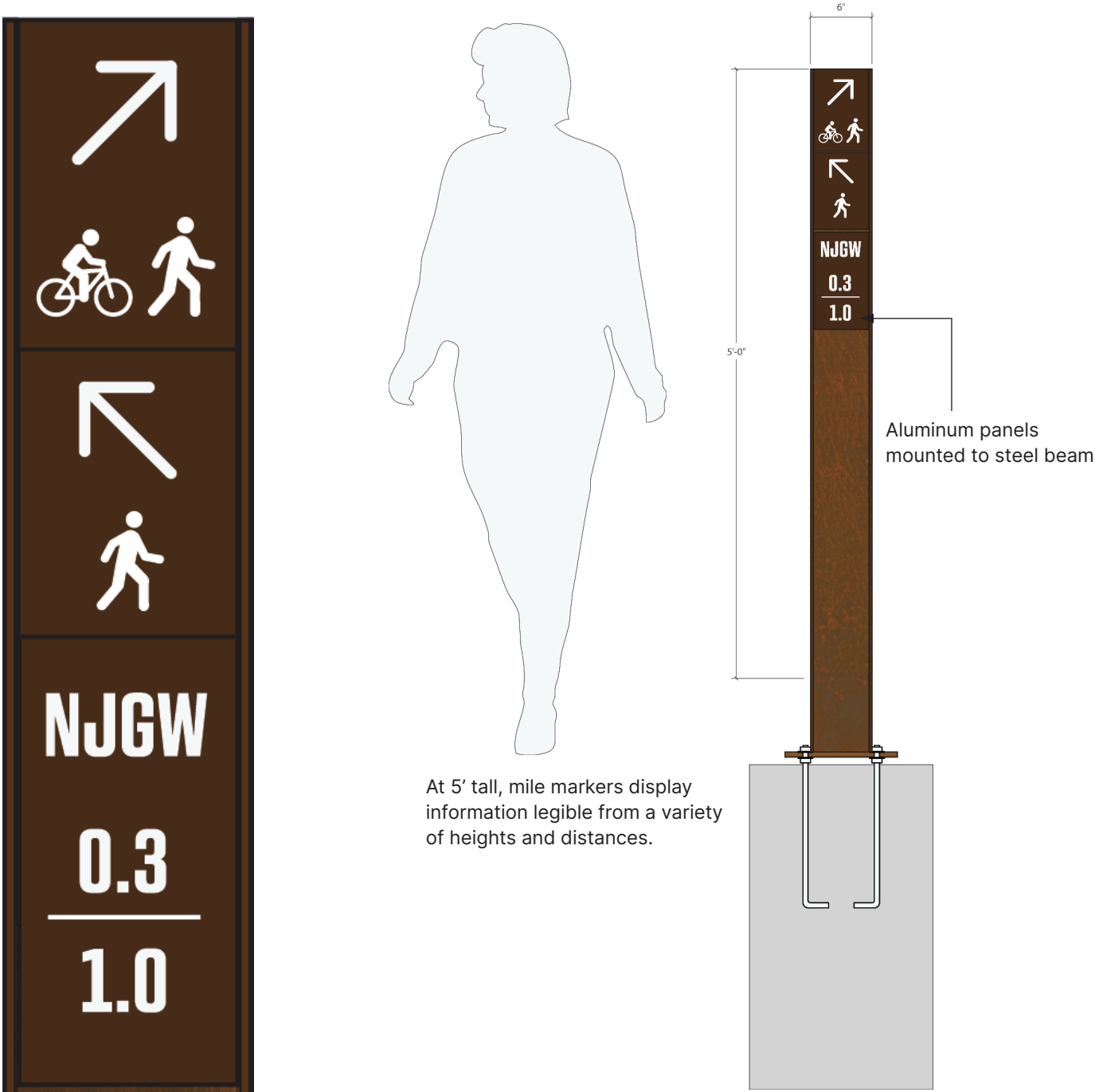
Enlargement: activity center marker



At 8' tall, activity center markers are visually enticing up close or far away.

Mile Markers

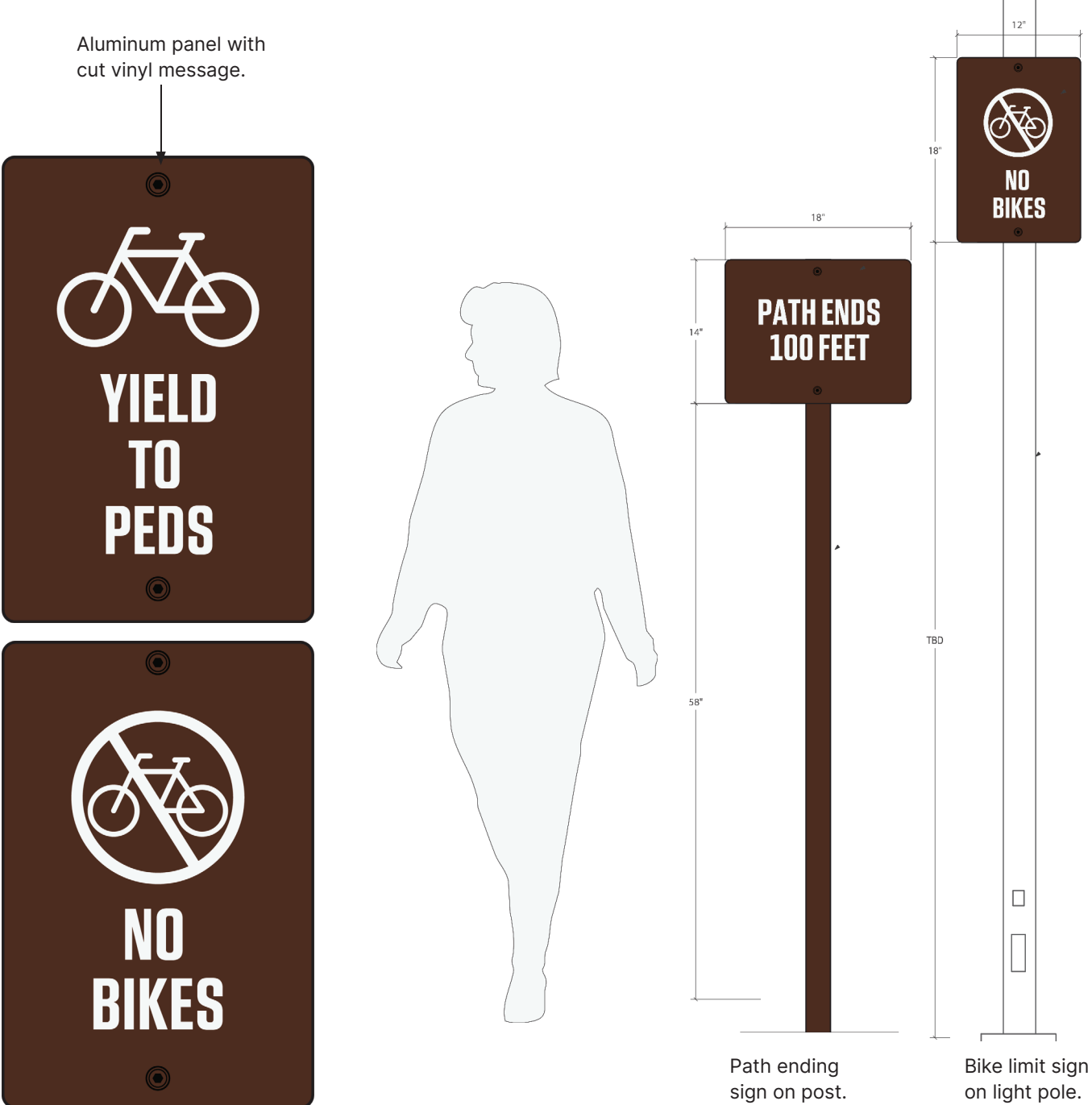
Inspired by traditional railroad mileposts, mile markers guide visitors along pathways while indicating specific distances traveled. Strategically placed for visibility, these markers support wayfinding and contribute to an intuitive navigation system that encourages active exploration and engagement with the park.



Enlargement: mile marker

Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrian safety signs clearly communicate park rules and guidelines while helping users stay on designated pathways. Strategically placed to enhance safety and accessibility. These signs contribute to a welcoming, orderly environment for pedestrians, cyclists, and other park visitors.



Enlargement: pedestrian safety sign

Informative

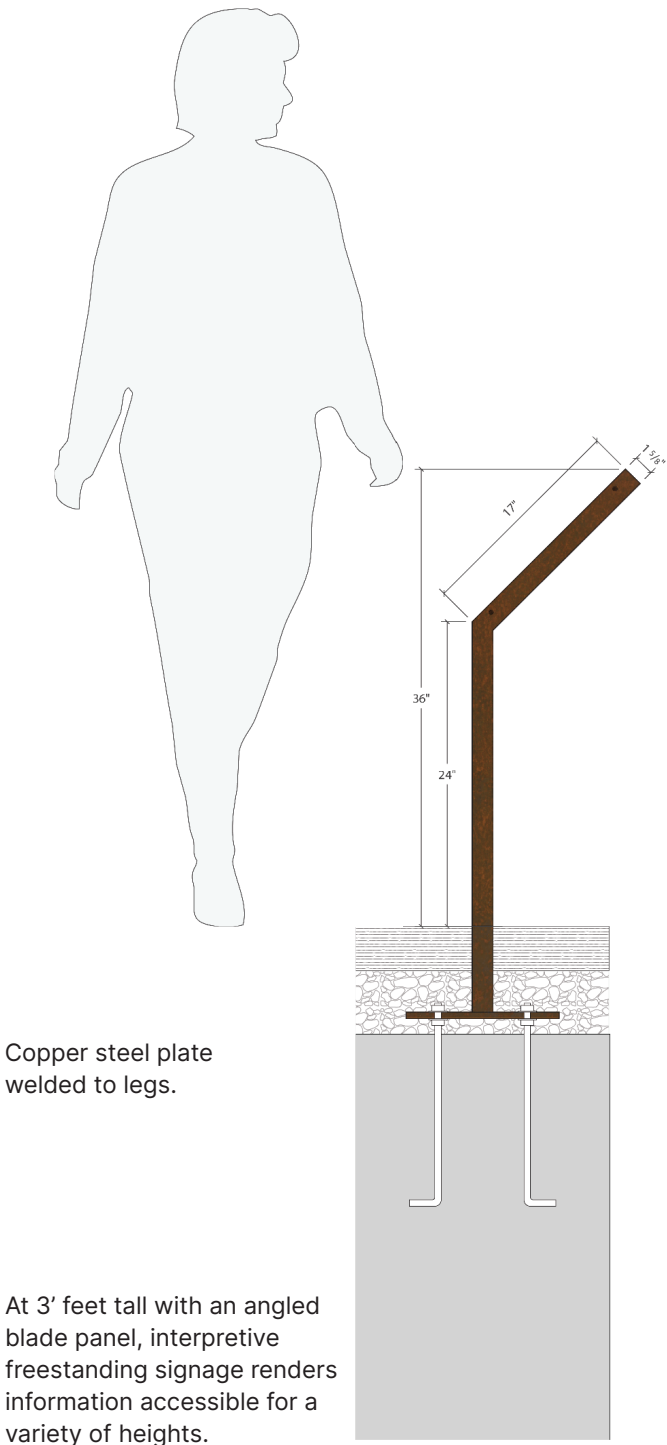
Standing Signage

Interpretive blade signs complement the perforated steel walls by explaining the imagery and patterns featured on each. They delve into the area’s ecological and cultural history, highlighting local flora, fauna, and the site’s industrial past, enriching the educational experience along the park.

Aluminum panel, painted with Direct Embed graphics.



Enlargement: interpretive freestanding sign

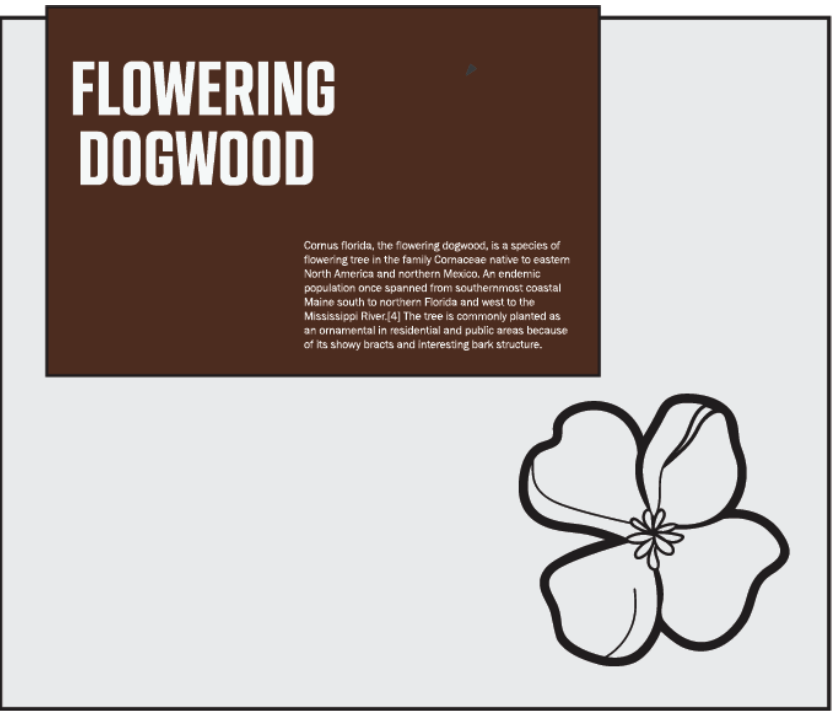


Copper steel plate welded to legs.

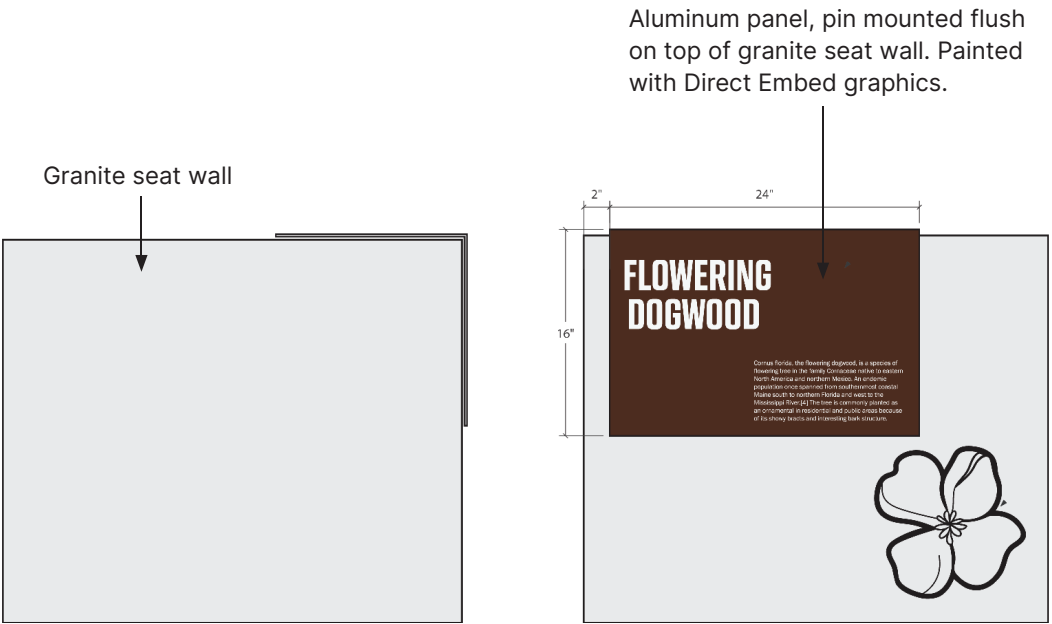
At 3' feet tall with an angled blade panel, interpretive freestanding signage renders information accessible for a variety of heights.

Bench Signs

Like the interpretive blade signs, the bench signs offer an added layer of education and interpretation, focusing on local site elements. Positioned for close, personal engagement, they provide accessible, bite-sized insights into the area’s ecology and history, enhancing the visitor experience through informal, reflective learning opportunities.



Enlargement: interpretive mounted / etched



Aluminum panel, pin mounted flush on top of granite seat wall. Painted with Direct Embed graphics.

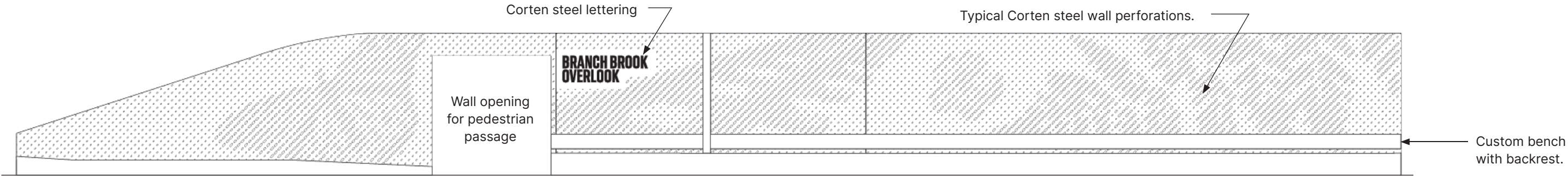
Granite seat wall

3'-tall granite seat walls form the base of wrapped aluminum bench signs, utilizing historically industrial materials in a modern fashion.

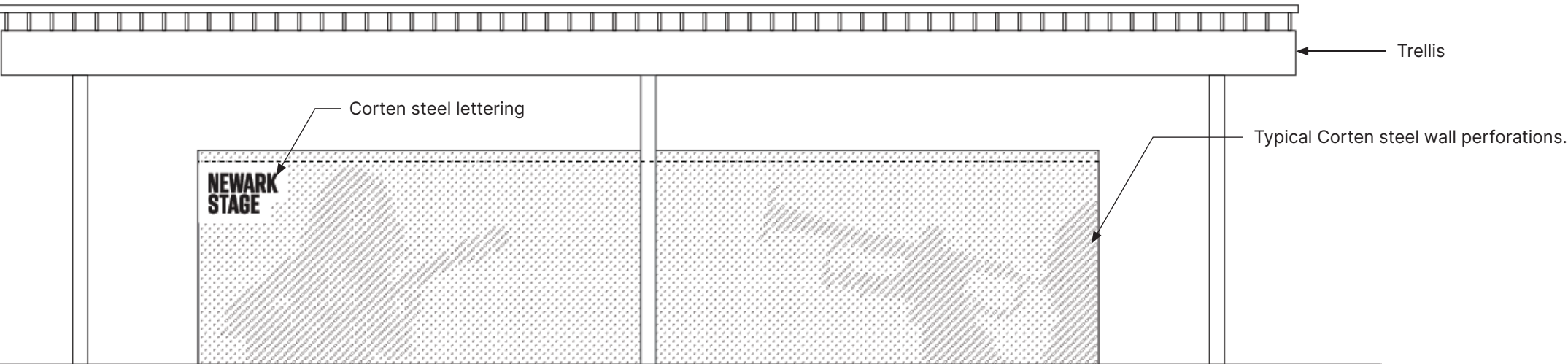
Interpretive

Perforated Corten Steel Walls

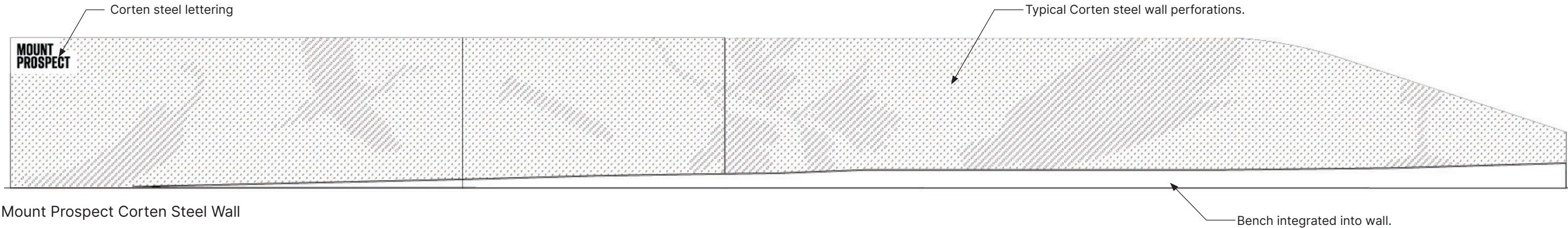
Perforated Corten steel walls incorporate imagery celebrating cultures, communities, and nature found along the park. These walls provide instances of public art and aid in spacemaking and screening. Examples of the perforated walls in Phase 1 are exhibited below, featuring potential perforated graphics.



Branch Brook Corten Steel Wall



Newark Stage Corten Steel Wall



Mount Prospect Corten Steel Wall

Section 05

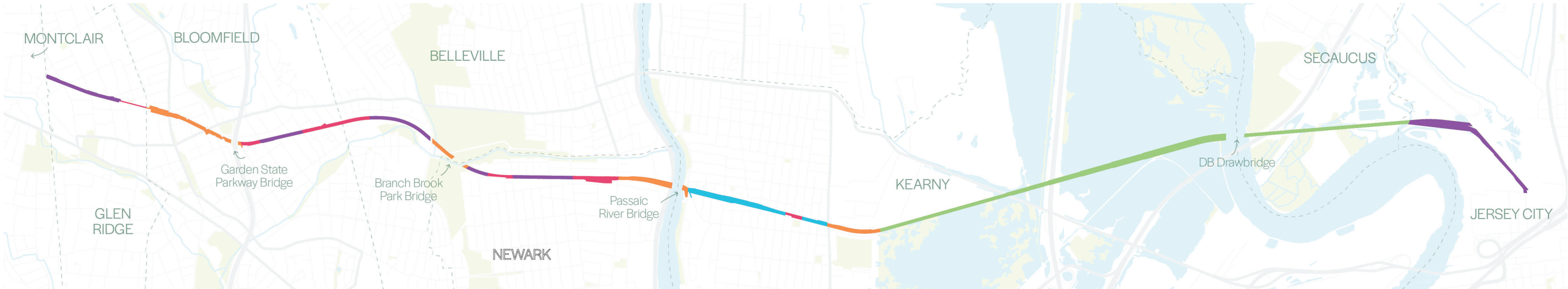
Ecology

Chapter 05

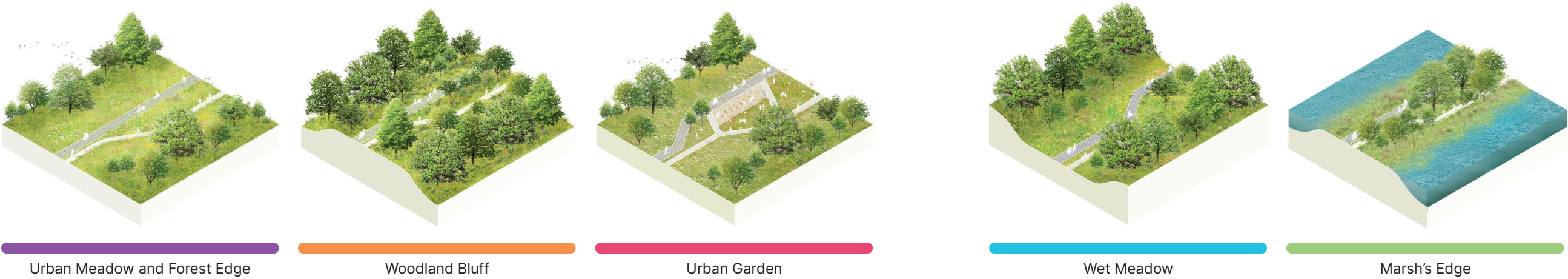
Design Standards

Ecological Typologies

There are five ecological typologies found throughout the park: Urban Meadow and Forest Edge, Woodland Bluff, Urban Garden, Wet Meadow, and the Marsh's Edge. These typologies feature plant species that celebrate the natural history of the New Jersey Piedmont, a geographic region of gentle slopes and flats, with occasional steep-sided stream valleys. It occurs southeast of the hilly New Jersey Highlands.



Ecological typologies of the park

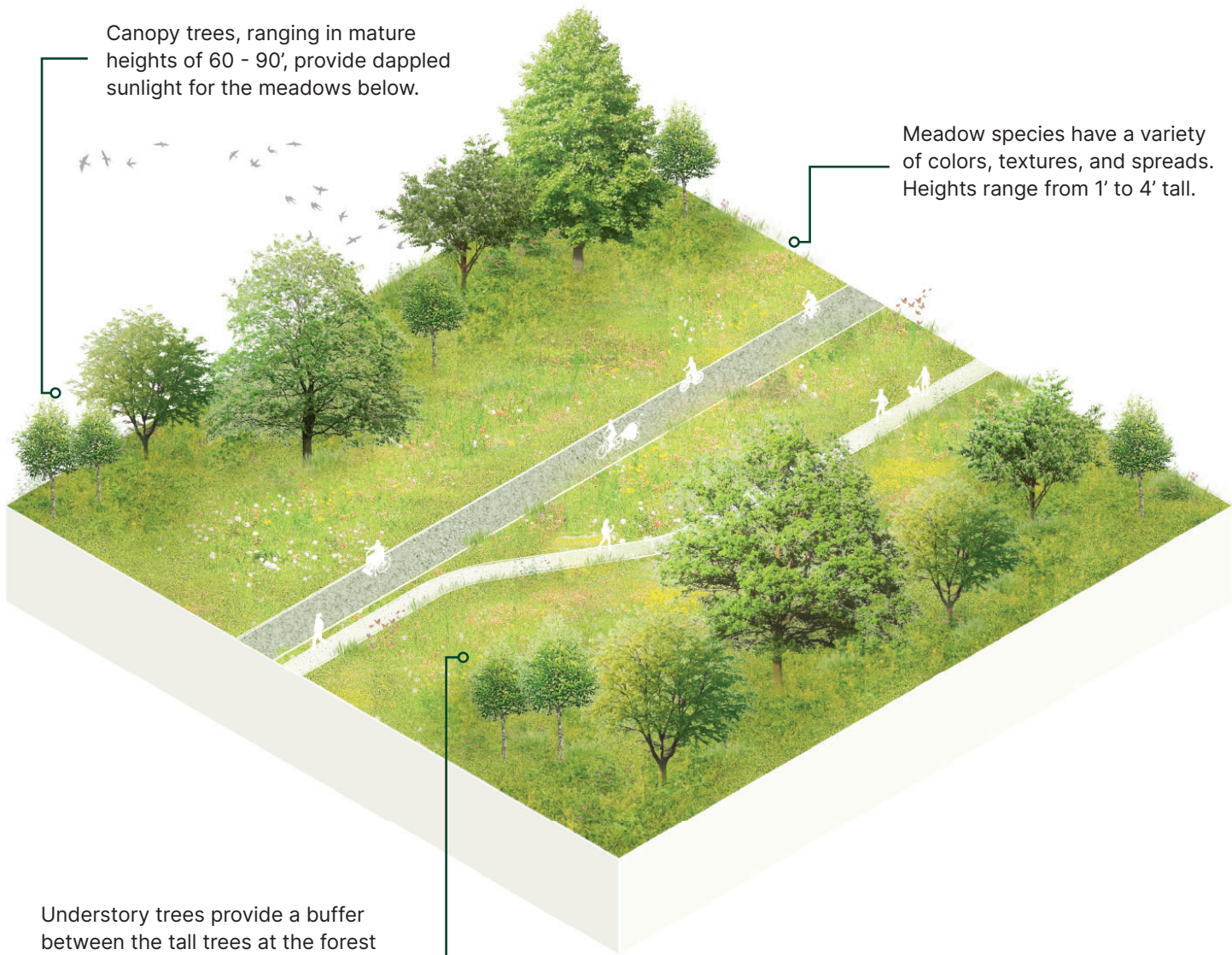


Urban Meadow and Forest Edge

Open sunny meadows with shrubs and early successional forest at the edges

In many stretches of the park, this habitat type occurs at grade. Open and sunny habitats allow meadow, shrubland, and early successional forest species to thrive. Many species are “showy”

with bright flowers that develop into colorful fruits, providing change throughout the seasons. Wild roses produce pink flowers and vibrant red rosehips, dangling white wild cherry blossoms are followed by dark purple berries in the fall. Wild black cherry leaves are food for 414 species of caterpillars in the park area, while the flowers support an array of pollinators, and the fruits feed birds and small mammals.



Canopy trees, ranging in mature heights of 60 - 90', provide dappled sunlight for the meadows below.

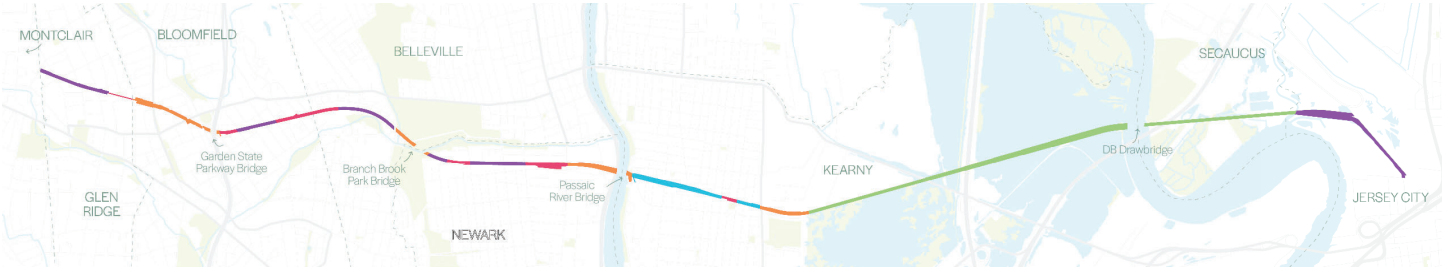
Meadow species have a variety of colors, textures, and spreads. Heights range from 1' to 4' tall.

Understory trees provide a buffer between the tall trees at the forest edge and the meadow, with mature heights ranging from 20 - 40' tall.

Planting Schedule

Canopy Trees	Understory Trees	Shrubs	Groundcovers	
Red Maple <i>Acer rubrum</i>	Eastern Redbud <i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Gray Dogwood <i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Milkweed <i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Blunt Mountainmint <i>Pycnanthemum muticum</i>
Gray Birch <i>Betula populifolia</i>	Flowering Dogwood <i>Cornus florida</i>	Witch Hazel <i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	Sedge <i>Carex pensylvanica</i>	Black-Eyed Susan <i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i>
Shagbark Hickory <i>Carya ovata</i>	American Holly <i>Ilex opaca</i>	Winged Sumac <i>Rhus copallinum</i>	Hay Scented Fern <i>Dennstaedtia punctiloba</i>	Little Blue Stem <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>
Sweet Gum <i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	Eastern Red Cedar <i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	High Brush Blueberry <i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	Marginal Wood Fern <i>Dryopteris marginalis</i>	Silverrod <i>Solidago bicolor</i>
American Sycamore <i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	Staghorn Sumac <i>Rhus typhina</i>	Black Haw <i>Viburnum prunifolium</i>	Tall Boneset <i>Eupatorium altissimum</i>	Early Goldenrod <i>Solidago juncea</i>
Black Cherry <i>Prunus serotina</i>		Black Chokeberry <i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	Purple Lovegras <i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>	Calico Aster <i>Symphyotrichum lateriflorum</i>
		Sweet Fern <i>Comptonia peregrina</i>	Oxeye Sunflower <i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>	New England Aster <i>Symphyotrichum novae-angliae</i>
		Inkberry <i>Ilex glabra</i>	Wild Bergamot <i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Little Blue Stem <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>
		Common Wild Rose <i>Rosa virginiana</i>	Bracken Fern <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	

Where it Occurs



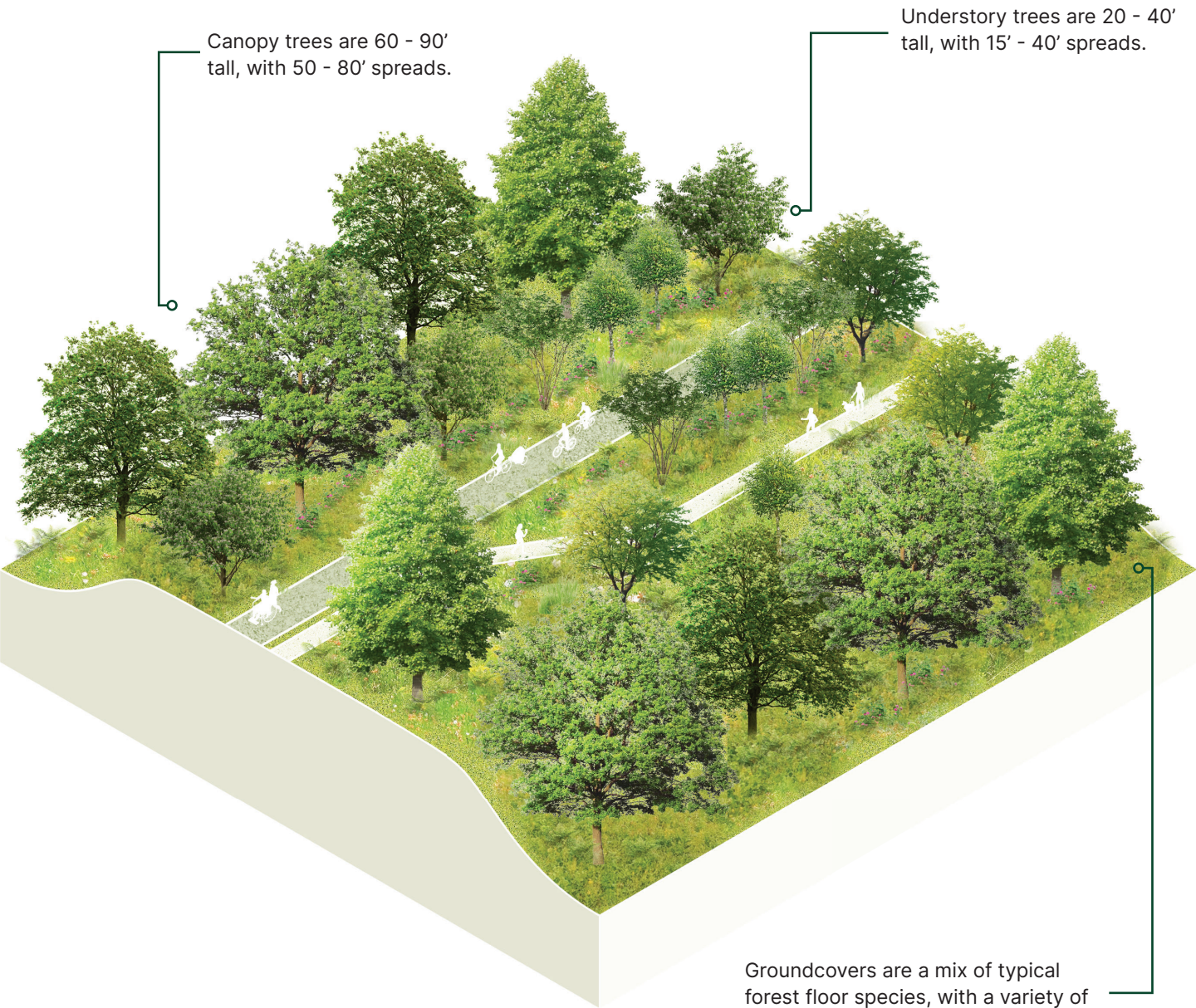
Urban Meadow and Forest

Woodland Bluff

High dry perches above steep slopes and waterways

Several areas have a “woodland bluff” condition, where the park is raised on a berm and includes many bridges over surface streets. The park is high and dry here relative to the locations at grade or in the “Wet Meadow” ecology typology. Species’ palettes change along the route and throughout

the seasons. There are deer here, which results in tree stem rubbing. Woody plantings will need to be protected until they are 4-5’ tall; herbaceous species must be deer-resistant or include interplantings of palatable and unpalatable species.



Canopy trees are 60 - 90’ tall, with 50 - 80’ spreads.

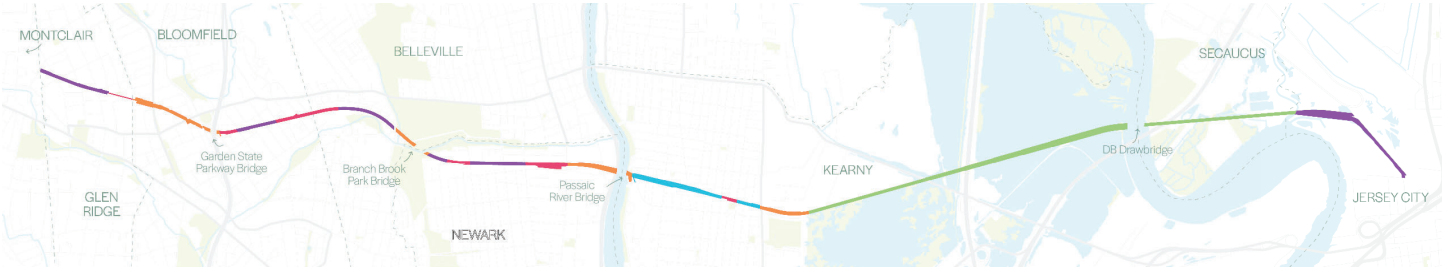
Understory trees are 20 - 40’ tall, with 15’ - 40’ spreads.

Groundcovers are a mix of typical forest floor species, with a variety of texture and pops of color.

Planting Schedule

Canopy Trees	Understory Trees	Shrubs	Groundcovers
Red Maple <i>Acer rubrum</i>	Eastern Redbud <i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Gray Dogwood <i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Hay Scented Fern <i>Dennstaedtia punctiloba</i>
Tulip Tree <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Flowering Dogwood <i>Cornus florida</i>	Witch Hazel <i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	Marginal Wood Fern <i>Dryopteris marginalis</i>
White Oak <i>Quercus alba</i>	American Holly <i>Ilex opaca</i>	Common Elderberry <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	Bottlebrush Grass <i>Elymus hystrix</i>
		Sweet Fern <i>Comptonia peregrina</i>	White Wood Aster <i>Eurybia divaricata</i>
		Inkberry <i>Ilex glabra</i>	Wild Geranium <i>Geranium maculatum</i>
		Carolina Rose <i>Rosa carolina</i>	Wild Bergamot <i>Monarda fistulosa</i>
		Common Wild Rose <i>Rosa virginiana</i>	Round-Leaved Ragwort <i>Packera obovata</i>
			Wreath Goldenrod <i>Solidago caesia</i>
			New England Aster <i>Symphyotrichum novae-angliae</i>

Where it Occurs



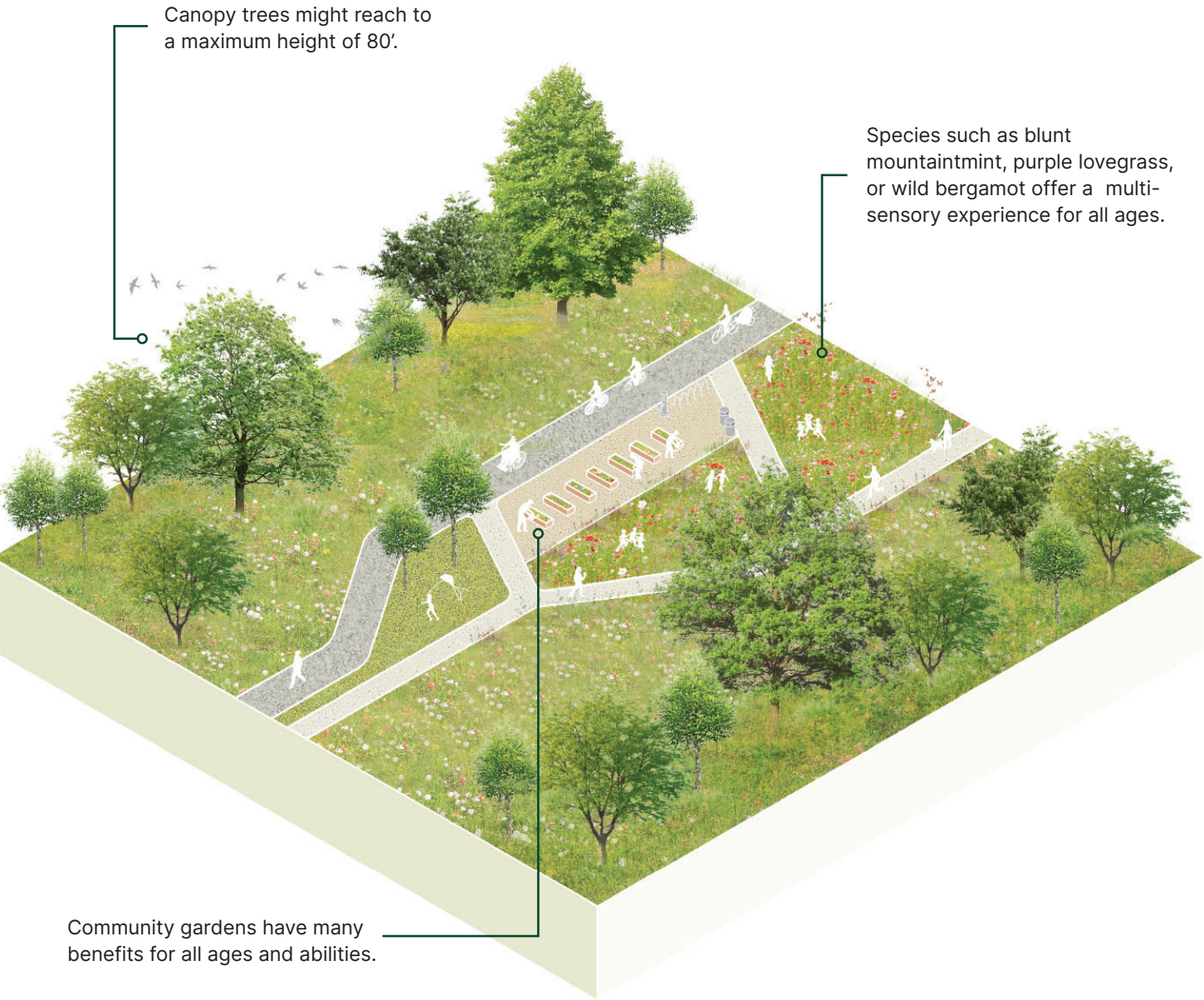
Woodland Bluff

Urban Garden

A communal backyard

An “Urban Garden” is possible where the park is wide and at grade. It might include community space for urban agriculture, pollinator gardens, lawns for active play and quiet relaxation, or sensory gardens to engage individuals with different abilities. A “nature’s pantry” garden celebrates food supplied by native plant species.

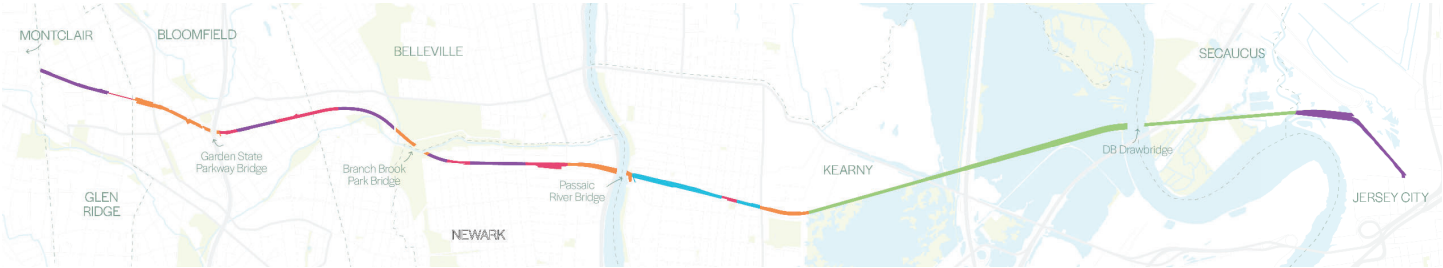
This communal backyard is a demonstration of the many wonderful native plants that residents and visitors can use at their homes and workplaces. This could ultimately result in a “homegrown national park,” which makes communities more sustainable and adaptable with climate change.



Planting Schedule

Canopy Trees	Understory Trees	Shrubs	Groundcovers	
Black Birch <i>Betula lenta</i>	Eastern Redbud <i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Red Twig Dogwood <i>Cornus sericea</i>	Hay Scented Fern <i>Dennstaedtia punctiloba</i>	Little Blue Stem <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>
Gray Birch <i>Betula populifolia</i>	Flowering Dogwood <i>Cornus florida</i>	Witch Hazel <i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	Marginal Wood Fern <i>Dryopteris marginalis</i>	Early Goldenrod <i>Solidago juncea</i>
Tulip Tree <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Eastern Red Cedar <i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Northern Bayberry <i>Morella pensylvanica</i>	Purple Coneflower <i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Old Field Goldenrod <i>Solidago nemoralis</i>
Sweet Gum <i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	Southern Crabapple <i>Malus angustifolia</i>	Winged Sumac <i>Rhus copallinum</i>	Purple Lovegrass <i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>	New England Aster <i>Symphotrichum novae-angliae</i>
Black Tupelo <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>		Common Elderberry <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	Wild Bergamot <i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Purpletop <i>Tridens flavus</i>
American Sycamore <i>Platanus occidentalis</i>		High Bush Blueberry <i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	Common Evening Primrose <i>Oenothera biennis</i>	
Black Cherry <i>Prunus serotina</i>		Carolina Rose <i>Rosa carolina</i>	Blunt Mountainmint <i>Pycnanthemum muticum</i>	
White Oak <i>Quercus alba</i>		Common Wild Rose <i>Rosa virginiana</i>	Black-Eyed Susan <i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i>	
		Black Raspberry <i>Rubus occidentalis</i>		

Where it Occurs



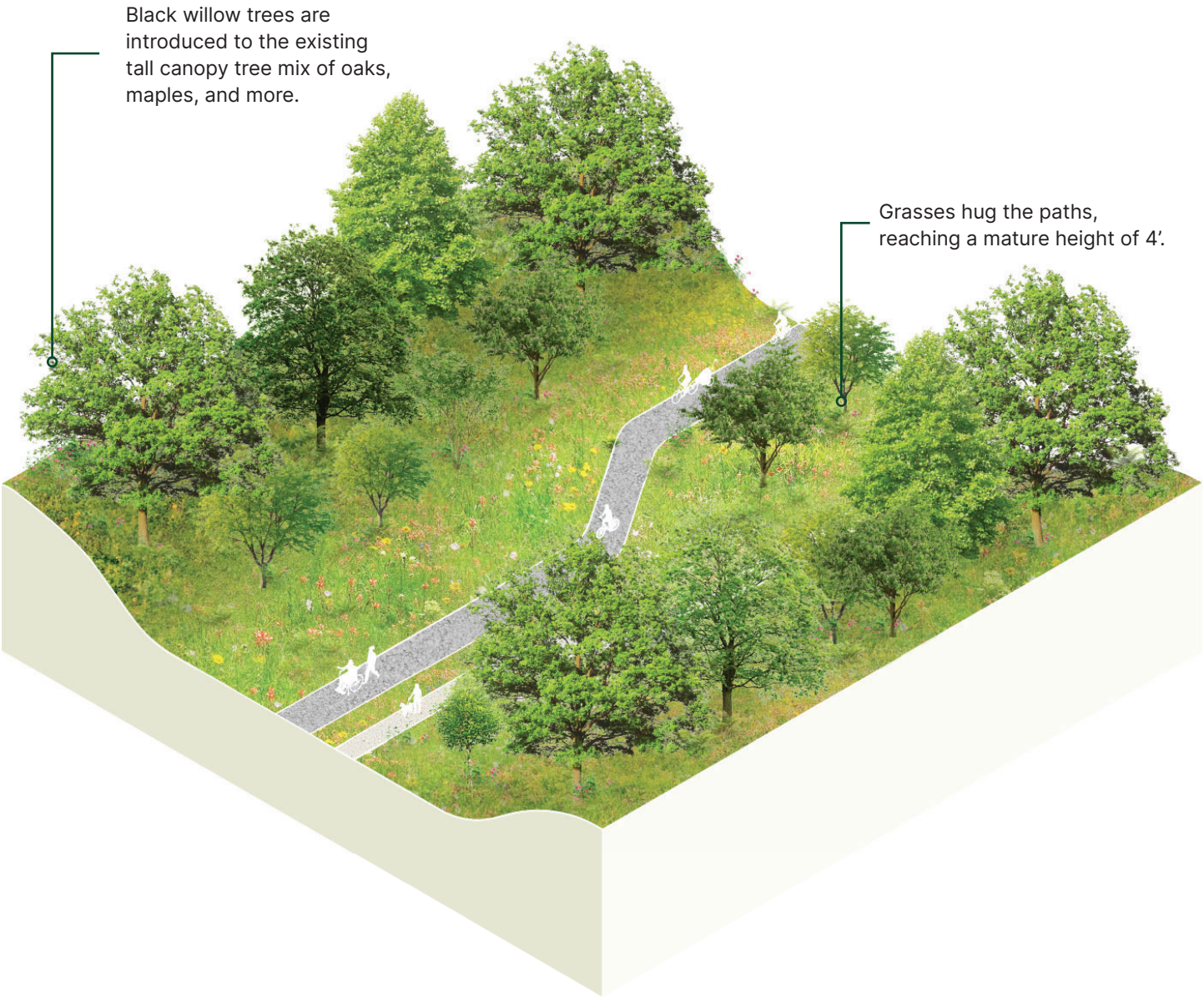
Urban Garden

Wet Meadow

Moist and shady

In parts of Montclair, Glen Ridge, Newark, and Kearny, a wet meadow condition can be encountered, where the path sits in a valley flanked by tall side walls. The height and slope of the sides vary throughout the park, affecting sun and moisture levels. Non-native Norway maple dominates these ravines, which are “volunteers” from urban and suburban landscaping. Large

oaks and maples perch at the upper edges of the slopes, remnants of past forests. Scattered sycamore, box elder, elm, and holly are present. Additional plantings of other native understory species such as dogwoods, rhododendrons, and ferns will enhance resilience and provide great beauty.

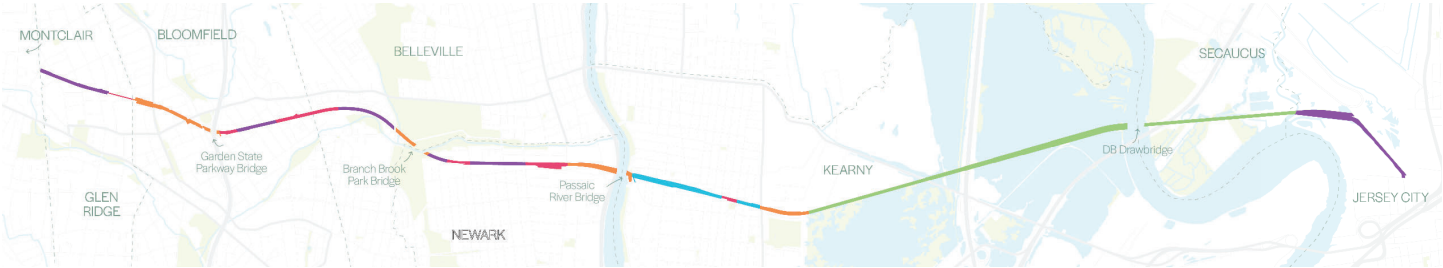


Planting Schedule

Canopy Trees	Understory Trees	Groundcovers
Black Willow <i>Salix nigra</i>	Winterberry <i>Ilex verticillata</i>	Little Blue Stem <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>
	Pussy Willow <i>Salix discolor</i>	Bottlebrush Grass <i>Elymus hyatris</i>
		Wire Grass <i>Juncus patens</i>



Where it Occurs



Wet Meadow

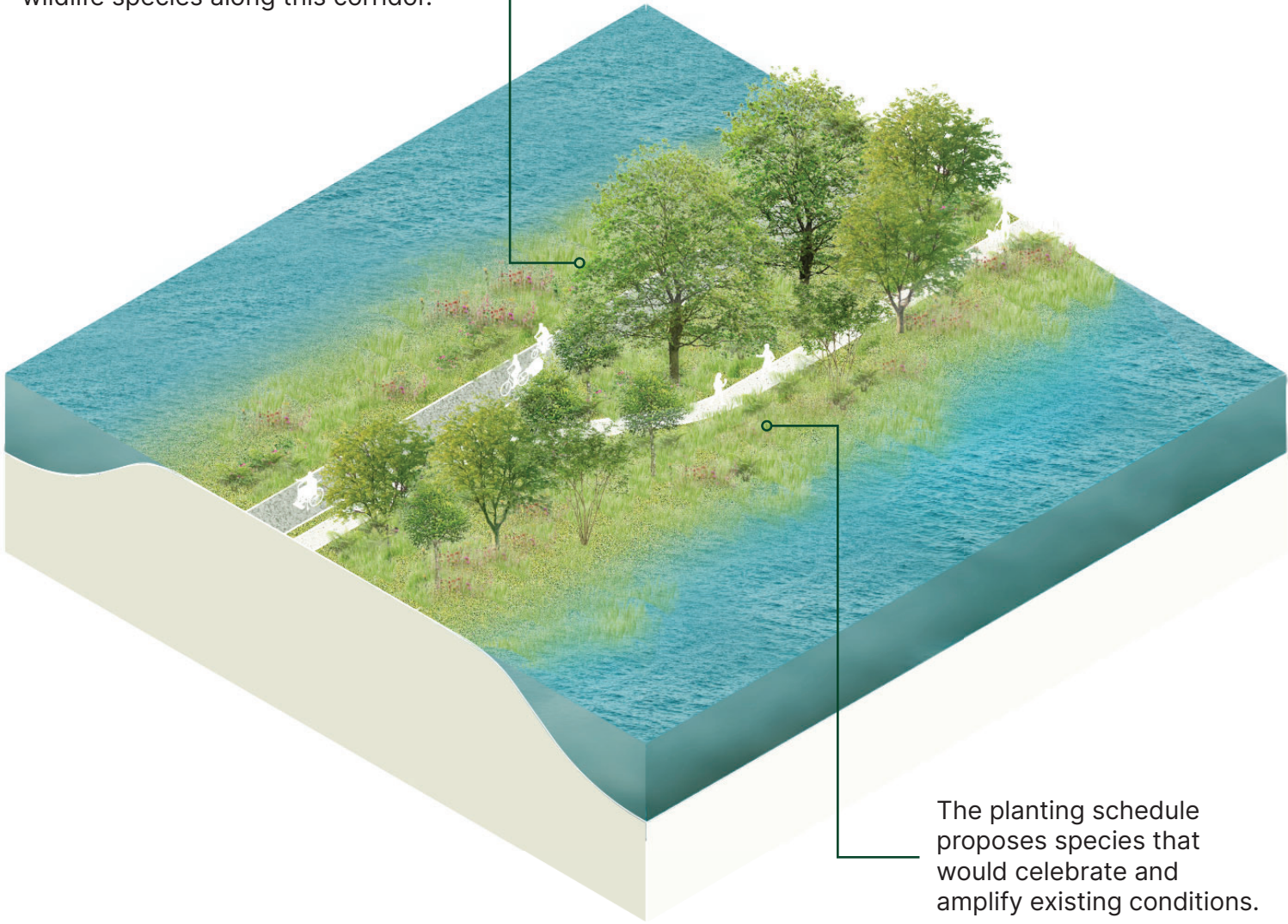
Marsh's Edge

Open water and marsh creeks

In parts of Kearny, Secaucus, and Jersey City, there are “Marsh’s Edge” conditions. A causeway crosses the open water of the Meadowlands, continues through the tall grasses and mudflats of the marsh creeks, and ends at the heavy industrial activity to the east. Salt-tolerant shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers could enhance this sensitive ecosystem, which supports more than

285 species of birds. Many of these species are on New Jersey’s threatened and endangered species list and are increasingly observed in the Meadowlands as water quality improves. Dense vegetation can clean stormwater of pollutants and retain sediment, contributing to better conditions for all visitors of the park.

Canopy trees range from 30’ to 80’ tall, providing habitat for the many wildlife species along this corridor.

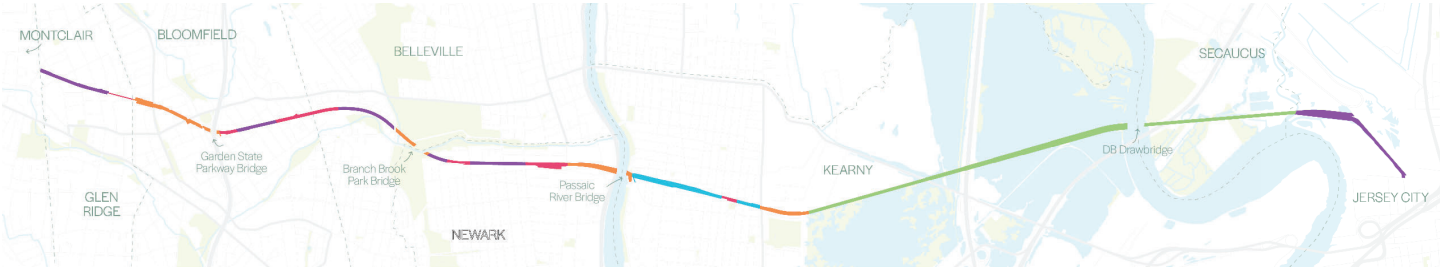


The planting schedule proposes species that would celebrate and amplify existing conditions.

Planting Schedule

Canopy Trees	Understory Trees	Shrubs	Groundcovers	
Hackberry <i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Shadblow <i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	Gray Dogwood <i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Milkweed <i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Seaside Goldenrod <i>Solidago sempervirens</i>
Honey Locust <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	Red Cedar <i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Bayberry <i>Morella pensylvanica</i>	Sweet Fern <i>Comptonia peregrina</i>	New York Aster <i>Symphotrichum novi-belgii</i>
Tupelo <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Crabapple <i>Malus angustifolia</i>	Staghorn Sumac <i>Rhus typhina</i>	Flat-topped Goldenrod <i>Euthamia graminifolia</i>	Ironweed <i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i>
Sycamore <i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	Sassafras <i>Sassafras albidum</i>	Elderberry <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	Marsh-mallow <i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	
Cottonwood <i>Populus deltoides</i>		Grounseel <i>Baccharis halimifolia</i>	Virginia Creeper <i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	
Wild Black Cherry <i>Prunus serotina</i>		Inkberry <i>Ilex glabra</i>	Foxglove Beardtongue <i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	
Black Willow <i>Salix nigra</i>		Marsh Elder <i>Iva frutescens</i>	Black-eyed Susan <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	
		Winged Sumac <i>Rhus copallinum</i>	Little Bluestem <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	
		Common Wild Rose <i>Rosa virginiana</i>	Rough Goldenrod <i>Solidago rugosa</i>	
		Black Raspberry <i>Rubus occidentalis</i>		
		Pussywillow <i>Salix discolor</i>		

Where it Occurs



Marsh's Edge

Endnotes

Endnotes

1

Jimmy Douglas, “Kearny Cut”, Digital image, August 19, 2024.

2

“Lenni-Lenape Communities”, Digital image. cityofpassaic.com. August 19, 2024. www.cityofpassaic.com/413/Passaics-Indigenous-People

3

Bill McKelvey, “The Old Boonton Line”, Digital image, njskylands.com, August 19th, 2024. https://njskylands.com/history-boonton-grace-lord-park

4

Jimmy Douglas, “Tiffany Manor”, Digital image, August 19, 2024.

5

Anita Ng, “The Highline”, Digital Image, August 29, 2024, https://www.thehighline.org/photos/by-photographer/anita-ng/?gallery=5126&media__item=2391

6

“Explore New Jersey’s National & State Parks”. Explore New Jersey’s National & State Parks | VisitNJ.org, August 15, 2024. https://visitnj.org/article/national-state-parks-new-jersey

7

Enrique Norton, “La Casita”, Digital image, August 29, 2024, https://asa-ten.com/project/casita/

8

Perkins & Will, “Destination Crenshaw”, Digital Rendering, August 29, 2024, perkinswill.com/project/destination-crenshaw/

9

The Neighborhood Design Center, “Darley Park Gateway”, Digital Rendering and Images, August 29, 2024, ndc-md.org/case-study/darley-park-gateway-improving-health-and-safety-through-communal-space

10

Roxanne Lee & James Wohlers, “Porous Public Space”, Digital Rendering, August 29, 2024, www.asla.org/2016studentawards/184035.html

11

.Culdesac, “Rendering of Murphy Crossing”, Digital Digital Rendering, August 29, 2024.https://www.axios.com/local/atlanta/2022/09/23/atlanta-beltline-names-developer-for-murphy-crossing-project

12

“Finding Affordable Housing Along the Beltline” , June 10, 2025, https://beltline.org/blog/finding-affordable-housing-along-the-beltline/

13

Max Ortiz, “Dequindre Cut Freight Yard”, Digital Photo, May 19, 2018, https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2018/05/19/dequindre-cut-freight-yard-opens-retail-entertainment/625951002/

14

Dequindre Cut Freight Yard, Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, https://detroitriverfront.org/DCFY

15

San Francisco Recreation and Parks, “India Basin Shoreline Park” Digital Image, April 30, 2024, https://www.instagram.com/sfrecpark/p/C6ZF0cbxyaU/?img_index=2

16

“India Basin Waterfront Park: a park for the community built by the community”, June 21, 2025, https://sfbayview.com/2025/06/india-basin-waterfront-park-a-park-for-the-community-built-by-the-community/

17

Aditi Nair, “What Homeowners Say About CLTs’ Benefits - And Pain Points”, Next City 2023, August 29, 2024, https://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/what-homeowners-say-about-clts-benefits-and-pain-points

18

John Becker, “Atlanta BeltLine Partnership”, Digital Image, August 29, 2024, https://www.afar.com/places/atlanta-beltline-inc-atlanta

19

Detroit Development News, “The Brooke at Bagley”, Digital Image, June 28, 2023, x.com/DetDevelopment/status/1674046428505669634

20

OLIN Labs, “11th Street Bridge Park: Community, Health and Equity”, Digital rendering, August 29, 2024, https://olinlabs.com/green-new-deal-superstudio/11th-street-bridge-park

21

Nichole Currie, “Homeownership assistance continues in Germantown”, Digital image, May 8, 2020, germantowninfohub.org/homeownership-assistance-continues-in-germantown/

22

MASNYC, “Save the Garment District”, Digital image, August 29,2024, www.mas.org/initiatives/save-the-garment-district

23

Dbsem, “Bay Street Station”, Digital Image, August 29, 2024, dbsem.com/bay-street-station-montclair-nj/

24

NJTransit, “Branch Brook Park Station”, Digital Image, August 29, 2024, www.njtransit.com/first-run/take-nj-transit-great-outdoors

25

NJTransit, “NJ Transit Map”, Digital Rendering, August 29, 2024, www.trains.com/trn/news-reviews/hews-wire/nj-transit-online-wagering-site-announce-naming-rights-deal/

26

Liberty Landing Ferry, “Liberty Landing Ferry”, Digital Image, August 29,2024, www.libertylandingcityferry.com

27

“Island Bike Ferry”, Digital Image, August 29, 2024, https://www.facebook.com/vtagencyofag/videos/island-line-bike-ferry/748632915922179/

28

“India Basin Waterfront Park”, Digital Image. August 29, 2024 https://ibwaterfrontparks.com/photos

29

ucd Annual Review, “UCD Safety Ambassador”, Digital Image, August 29, 2024, www.ucdannualreview.com/archive/annualreview2020

30

Mauricio Pena, “Sangamon into a temporary community garden”, Digital image, June, 28, 2018, blockclubchicago. org/2018/06/28/how-do-you-water-a-community-garden-hidden-among-high-rises-with-air-conditioner-condensation/

31

TinyWPA, “Playful Neighborhood Monuments”, Digital image, August 29,2024, www.tinywpa.org

32

Allen Eyestone, “Farmer’s Market”, Digital Image, April 13, 2019, https://reason.com/2019/04/13/arkansas-new-food-labeling-law-is-veg-on/

33

Mary Carter Taub, “NYC Asphalt Art Activations: Birds - Eye View”, Digital Image, August 3, 2022, visionzeronetwork.org/use-these-tools-to-save-lives/

34

Newark Community Garden X Operation Grow, “ Volunteers planting the garden”, Digital Image, August 3, 2022 https://www.operationgrowinc.org/

35

Newark Community Garden X Operation Grow, “ Final touches”, Digital Image, August 3, 2022 https://www.operationgrowinc.org/

36

Newark Community Garden X Operation Grow, “ Pop-up Garden”, Digital Image, August 3, 2022 https://www.operationgrowinc.org/

37

Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum, “Lake Hopatcong Ice Harvest” Digital Image, August 29, 2024, www.nj.com/news/local/2012/03/glimpse_of_histo ry_8.html

38

Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum, “Lake Hopatcong Ice House” Digital Image, August 29, 2024, https://lakehopatconghistory.com/lake-hopat congs-ice-age/

39

The Mountain Ice Company, “Lake Hopatcong Ice Near Railroad”, Digital Image, August 29, 2024, http://www.landingnewjersey.com/ice.htm

40

Rachel Whiteread, “Embankment”, Digital Image, August 29, 2024, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rachel__Whiteread,_Tate_Modern_London_April_2006_108.jpg

41

Richard Serra, “Between the Torus and the Sphere”, Digital Image, August 29 2024, www.guggenheim.org/artwork/17147

42

Atlanta BeltLine, “Eastside Trail near Ponce City Market”, Digital Image, August 29, 2024, exploregeorgia.org/atlanta/outdoors-nature/trails-tours/atlan ta-beltline

43

Choose Chicago, “Bike Stations Along the Chicago 606”, Digital Image, August 29, 2024, www.choosechicago.com/articles/parks-outdoors/ex plore-the-606/

44

Jill Jarvis, “Buffalo Bayou Park, Fish Family Play Area & Sabine Street Cistern”, Digital Image, August 29, 2024, https://www.jillbjarvis.com/fish-family-play-area-sabine-street-cistern-at-buffalo-bayou-park-visiting-houstons-parks-one-week-at-a-time/

45

Gina Clyde, “LA River Interpretive Signage”, Digital Image, August 29, 2024, clockshop.org/project/bowtie-aa/la-river-interpretive-signage-program/

46

Rob Bryson, “Ice Floes”, Digital image, August 19, 2024.

47

Jimmy Douglas, “Railroad Remnants”, Digital image, August 19, 2024.

48

Wheeler Antabanez, “Rail tie”, Digital image, August 19, 2024.

49

Joe Fletcher Photography, “Corten Screen”, Digital image, August 19, 2024.

50

Turner Design, “Interpretive Signage”, Digital image, August 19, 2024.

51

“Caboolture to Wamuran Rail Trail”, Digital image, August 19, 2024.

52

Wheeler Antabanez, “Stone Trail Marker”, Digital image, August 19, 2024.

53

Semple Brown, “Corten Screen”, Digital image, August 19, 2024.

54

Sasaki, “Granite interpretive Signage”, Digital image, August 19, 2024.

55

Benjamin Vogt, “Interpretive Signage”, Digital image, August 19, 2024.