VALLEY FALLS HERITAGE PARK
VISIONING MASTERPLAN

CUMBERLAND, RHODE ISLAND

DESIGN REPORT

AUGUST 2024

STOSS

Town of Cumberland
Rhode Island 1747

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As a team, we worked thoughtfully and intentionally to form a deep understanding to holistically plan for and design with a historically rich site nestled within the surrounding natural systems. The Valley Falls Heritage Park masterplan is centered on its ability to create a space that is accessible and resilient to be enjoyed for future generations to come. We worked against a backdrop of multiple histories, accessibility challenges, and social reckoning, and explored how these challenges can open up new pathways for programming, planning, and–ultimately–building community.

This effort was pushed forward by a collaborative and interdisciplinary effort that included a continuous robust engagement process led by **StarLuna Consulting**, an in-depth cost estimation and phasing strategy led by **Fennessy Consulting**, and a site existing plan brought by **Bryant Associates**.

Park Committee:
Council President Michael Kinch, At Large
Councilor Peter Bradley, ***At Large***
Councilor James Metivier, ***District 1***
Councilor Tim Magill, ***District 2***
Councilor Lisa Beaulieu, ***District 3***
Councilor Scott Schmitt, ***District 4***
Councilor Robert Shaw, ***District 5***

Park Committee:
Glenn Modica
Sarah King
John Marsland
Lindsey Neves Baillargeron
Barbara Paquette
Nancy Silva
Michael Boday

Town of Cumberland:
Mayor Jeffrey Mutter
Sarah King
Glenn Modica
Abby McVerry

Stoss:
Chris Reed
Joonyon Kim
Hala Nasr
Pam (Pitchapa) Setpakdee
Jemma (Jiangming) Liu

StarLuna Consulting:
Dr. Neenah Estrella-Luna
Valinda Chan
Denice Villar

Fennessy Consulting:
Seamus Fennessy

Bryant Associates:
Todd Brayton

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the design process to achieve the Valley Falls Heritage Park vision. It focuses on grounding the process with key background information, project considerations, grant requirements, context and site conditions, narratives, and critical challenges. The report then details the community's role in the project with our clear engagement agenda, presenting the different workshops, surveys, outreach, and fieldwork to inform the design process. Later, we look deeper at the designs, how they were achieved, and the key drivers that shaped them. The design worked to achieve a balance that tackled different grant requirements, major access and connectivity challenges, and a re-envisioning process that breathes new life into the park. This is supplemented with qualitative cost estimates to help quantify key funding considerations and expound on the potential phasing opportunities.



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PROJECT OVERVIEW



PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project aims to design a park that centers on revitalizing the Valley Falls Heritage Park, elevating the site's rich legacies. It focuses on creating equity through designing inclusive experiences and access. The park works on foregrounding connectivity, integrating expanded and inclusive interpretation, and creating active spaces where flexible programs can take shape. At large, the project seeks to complement the Amaral Building Community Center's pursuit to create a wellness hub that promotes health, education, work, and training for the community.

Situated at the intersection of Broad and Mill Street, across the Blackstone River, the new park redesign supports and connects to its surroundings, both physically and programmatically, to forge thoughtful and engaging experiences.



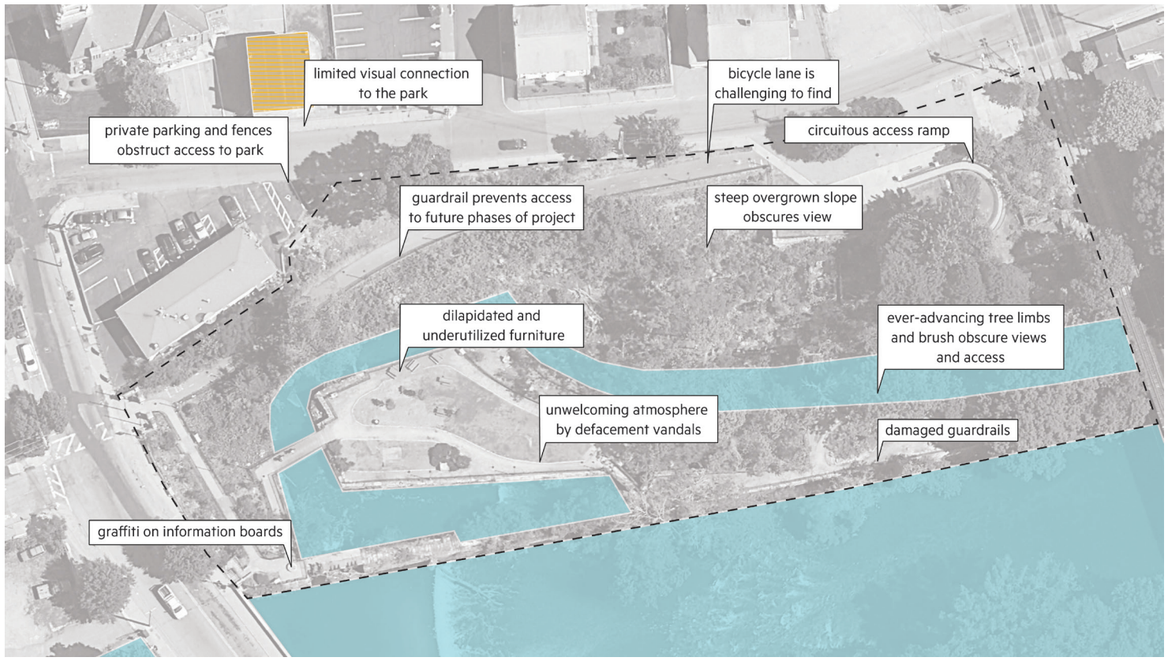
The site was revitalized and turned into Valley Falls Heritage Park in 1991

PROJECT PRIORITY GOALS

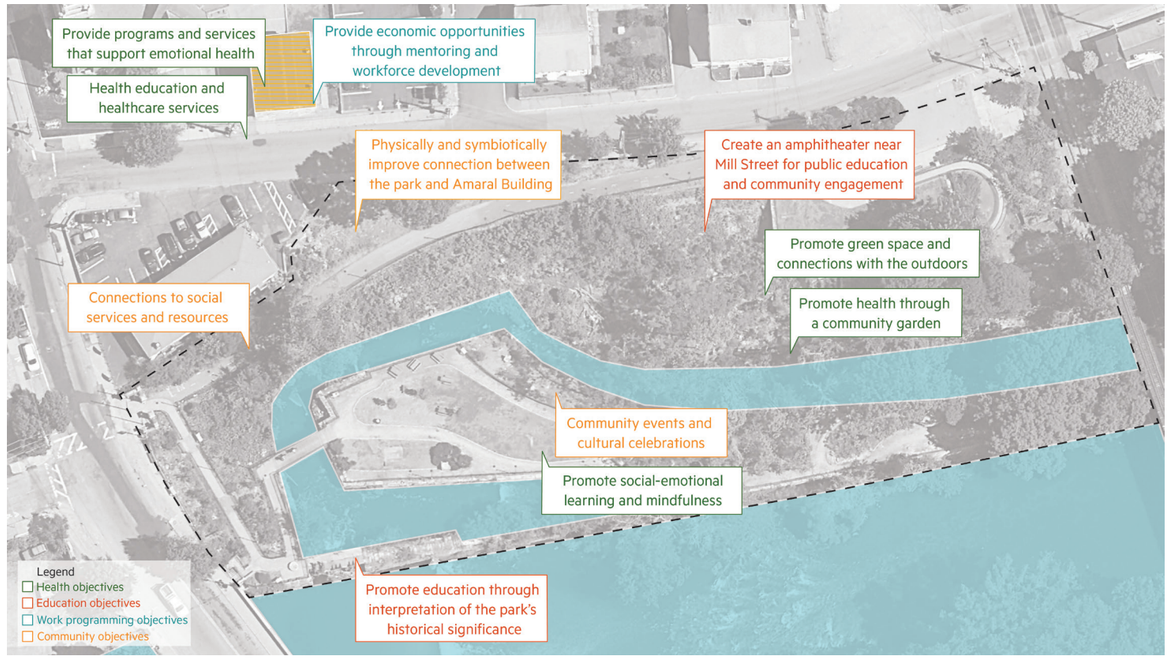
A deep understanding of the site, its context, and its existing characteristics helps define key project goals and aspirations that lay our design process.

The project priority goals include:

- Enable the park to become a space for health monitoring, education, work and training, all in harmony with the proposed Amaral Building Community Center
- Preserve and reveal the site heritage and inherent value. It ensures to uphold Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management covenants to function as a passive recreation space. It preserves the remaining historical structures and features
- Phase the project to allow for the greatest flexibility to meet current and future funding requirements
- Enhance the connection between the park and its civic surroundings
- Develop multi-layered program within the fulfill various community needs and grant requirements
- Lead community outreach in collaboration with the town and steering committee to ensure that opinions and voices are heard
- Provide a phased cost estimate for the design proposal
- Design a Master Plan Vision of the Valley Falls Heritage Park



Observed existing site conditions

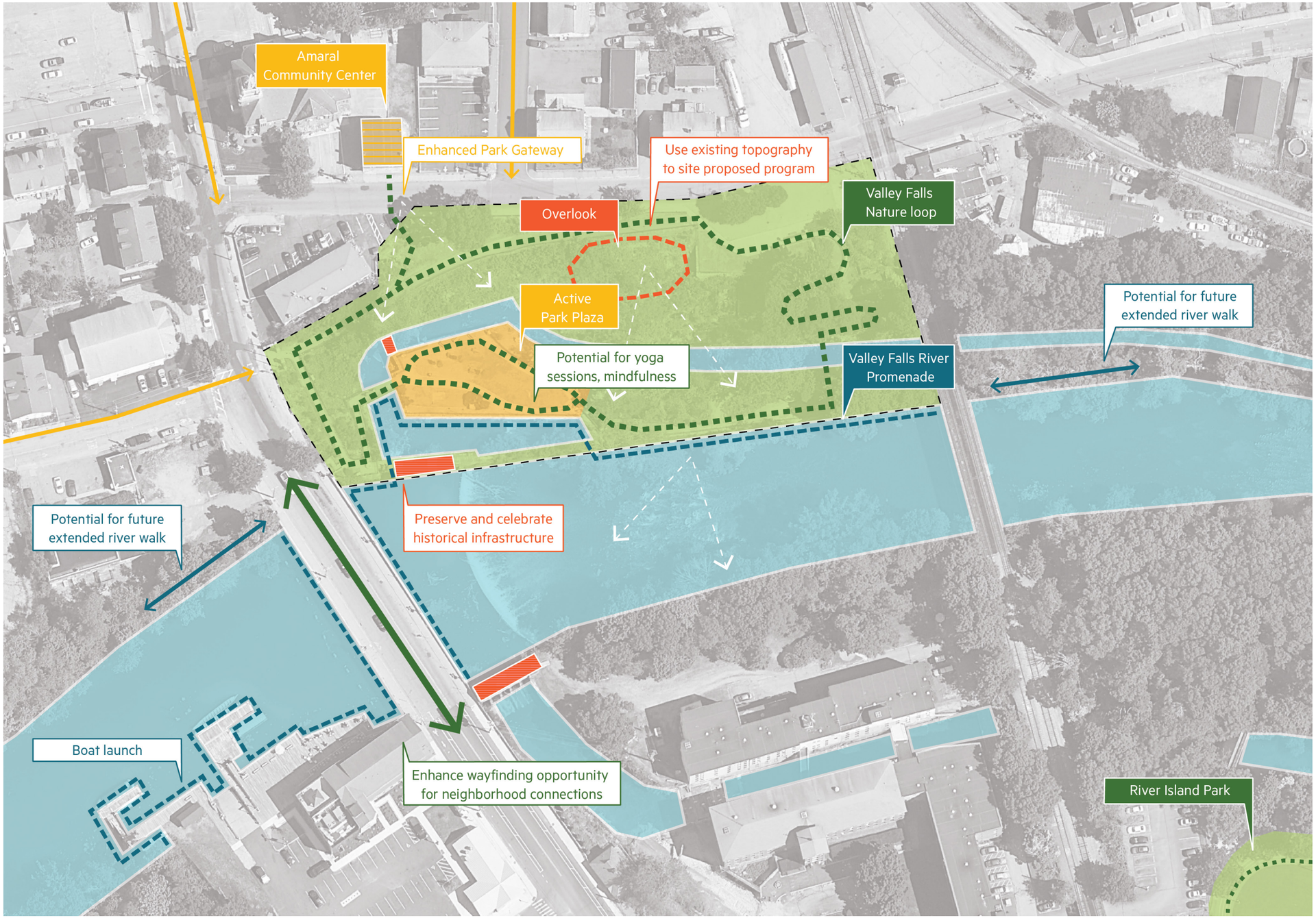


Potential design enhancements addressing health, education, work, and community objectives

OPPORTUNITIES

The Valley Falls Heritage Park has faced neglect, evident damage, widespread graffiti, overgrown vegetation, and minimal maintenance, prompting concerns about obscured views, vandalism, and underutilization.

However, its quirky charm lies in its rich history and nods to its multiple pasts as it transformed from a demolished mill site into a heritage park. Through our role, we have revealed new paths for the park that will help alleviate these concerns and revitalize its usage. We worked to understand the infrastructures present, the vegetation available, accessibility challenges, and the lack of connectivity, both within the park and with the surrounding civic context. We envisioned a layered and flexible and functionally adaptive program to serve the needs of the park's multiple users.



Opportunities for better connections, new programs, and integrated historic structures

PLANNING PROCESS

A deep understanding of the site, its context, and its existing characteristics helps define key project goals and aspirations that lay our design process.

The design process featured ***three community engagement workshops***, across four major project phases — ***Phase 1: Existing Conditions, Phase 2: Concept Options, Phase 3: Preferred Concept, Phase 4: Final Report.*** Through this hands-on design and engagement process, we had the privilege of working hand-in-hand with the community and committee, forging dialogues, relationships, and trust. This was pivotal to our team's process and ethos, which aims to reflect the needs and desires of the Valley Falls Community.





Poster Design

IMAGINE YOUR PARK! Posters/billboards were created as part of the outreach campaign

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:

Our process is deeply rooted in an equity-centered design approach, which guides us to engage with the community in a sensitive and sensible manner. This ensures that the project is not just about the park, but also about the people who will use and benefit from it. Our project approach was tailored to fit the unique needs of the Valley Falls Community. Through our partnership with the Town of Cumberland, we designed the park to become a wellness hub that creates a programmatic extension to the revitalized Amaral Building.

A Phased Process

Our design approach was centered on collating consensus and understanding the community's needs and desires for the park and its future uses. Therefore, designing the process hand-in-hand with community engagement was vital to foreground these voices. During **Phase 1: Existing Conditions**, our efforts were focused on understanding essential deed restrictions and zoning considerations. Our attention was poured to highlight the multiple stories and narratives within the park. We held a series of interviews and our first community engagement event, where the community's input was instrumental in shaping the project. This phase culminated in a set of core questions that helped inform how we approach design and program:

Accessibility: *How can we rethink accessibility in a way that is inclusive of all mobility and activities? How can we ensure it is safe and seamless?*
Visibility: *How can we choreograph the user's experience to highlight vignettes enhancing the user's experience?*
Safety: How can we minimize hazards, deter vandalism, and incite feelings of safety?
Connectivity: *How does the park fit within its context–both physically and programmatically–to speak to the identity of the Town of Cumberland?*
Culture and Heritage: *How can we design this park to celebrate and honor the site's multiple narratives and histories?*
Program: *How can we design a layered and flexible park to host the different programmatic needs to work with and as an extension of the Amaral Building?*
Ecologically: *How can we complement the Town's current efforts in addressing concerns about water flow, fish ladders, and invasive species?*

As we transitioned into **Phase 2: Design Options**, we began by conducting a thorough analysis of the site, its context, and existing characteristics. This analysis revealed key insights such as the lack of access and connectivity, the presence of slopes, and the site's rich historical layers, particularly its industrial history. Multiple site visits allowed us to document the structural remnants and ruins of the site and their juxtaposition within the park. Features such as edges, materiality, sound, and the various water qualities within the site informed our design solutions as we embarked on the envisioning process. Following an extensive and robust design charrette, we developed two design approaches, each highlighting different possibilities for access, connectivity, program, and views.

As we presented ***Valley Rooms*** and ***River Overlooks***, we were conscious of offering the Town not only two different designs but also two different budgetary requirements. We concluded this phase with an in-person community event where we shared our designs and had the opportunity to address questions, and get feedback as we moved into the next design stage.

As we moved into **Phase 3: Preferred Concept,** we gained clarity on which key features of the designs worked and what aspects needed to be adjusted or addressed. Through our design refinement, we were able to further develop the spatial and tectonic qualities of the design, express material qualities, and develop a holistic landscape identity that integrates minimal maintenance requirements and allows for layered and multi programmatic uses that fosters the site's adaptive ability, enhancing the sense of place. Our layered program emphasized the opportunity for healthy trails and spaces, work training and education, flexible social spaces, ecological and environmental features, its nod to the historical remnants, and its approach to environmental equity.

In **Phase 4: Final Report,** the final phase of our design process, we worked to understand the quantitative construction cost and requirements. We worked closely with Fennessey Consulting to provide a cost that is reflective of the proposed design. In addition to that, we developed a supplementary cost where we value engineered the material costs to provide a possible lower tier cost assumption. This was done to provide a range that explored using cheaper materials without compromising the design intent. We later studied how the design can be phased, focusing on the island and later constructing the surroundings as it connected to its civic context.

Opportunity to build climate resilience

Developing a Master Plan for protected open space provides an opportunity to couple plan development and design with climate resilience planning and action. Given the location of this park and it's proximity to critical assets and vulnerable residents, the Master Plan incorporates climate resilience considerations. This would also provide potential pathways for funding of design and construction focused on building climate resilience.

A detailed project schedule and deliverables is outlined the following pages.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

In alignment with the Town's focus on community engagement and our core value in threading equity and inclusivity, the design process included a robust community engagement process. This is done to rebuild the community's needs and ensure their involvement during every stage of the process. The engagement took form in three main events: **a storytelling and community dinner event, an in-person community event, and a hybrid community engagement.** Here are some key principles that grounded our approach:

Principles of equity-centered engagement

1) Involvement and engagement happens before key decisions are made. This is to ensure that the needs, goals, assets, and aspirations of community members, particularly those most vulnerable, are incorporated into the final plans, programs, and designs.
2) Engagement happens in the places and spaces where people already congregate. This was a key consideration as we thought of ways to help reduce participation burden. This was key in helping us decide where and when our community events would take place. We met at Joseph L. McCourt Middle School, Club Juventude Lusitana, Cumberland town hall, for our first, second, and third community engagements, respectively.
3) Expand accessibility for all abilities. There are many dimensions to accessibility.

- Linguistic access: Key documents are translated into the predominant non-English languages of the community as well as designed to be read by screen-readers.
- Physical access: Community meetings or group gatherings are held in spaces where those living with mobility or sensory challenges are able to enter and participate safely.

4) Engagement is designed to be welcoming and inclusive.

Equity-centering engagement attempts to keep grant money as local as much as possible. We made sure to:

- Include a local residents as community liaisons or ambassadors to support outreach and engagement.
- Use catering services that are owned by local residents.
- Use of local businesses for printing services.

Community engagement is later detailed in the report with key images, responses, and observations.

ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS:

Bryant Associates prepared a Masterplan level AutoCAD base plan using available information, which included previous surveys, GIS information, and aerial imagery, for our use in preparing initial project drawings. After input and adjustment field data was compiled into an AutoCAD base plan with applicable line work, contours, symbols, and labels for use by the design team.

COST ESTIMATION:

Fennessy Consulting provided cost estimation for development of final preferred concept design. Their services utilized the measurements generated from AutoCAD to assist in building accurate cost assumptions as appropriate unit rates are established. Building preliminary calculations based on a projected construction schedule is designed to demonstrate more accurate totals.

With that in mind, the estimations also included a design and pricing contingency with a lower and higher tier rate. The value included is influenced by an understanding of the project requirements, directed by the design team, and ultimately agreed to by the project ownership. A phasing strategy outlined how funding and construction can be adequately broken down.

PROJECT TASKS

PHASE 0: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Task 0.1: Bi- Weekly Virtual Meetings

- Regular meetings with the Town of Cumberland with Stoss for the duration of the project. Stakeholders and subconsultants will be invited as needed to review progress and provide input.

PHASE 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Task 1.1: Meeting - Kickoff with Steering Committee

- In person meeting on site to meet the Client team with all the subconsultants present

Task 1.2: Review of Town Provided Data

- Available construction drawings, planning documents, and reports will be studied in detail to establish a base understanding of the site.
- Site observation and existing condition analysis will begin for the phase.

Task 1.3: Poster Design

- Poster design to be used as part of the project campaign used by the Town. The poster would include a QR code linking directly to the Town's website

Task 1.4: Base CAD Topography Plan

- Existing tree and GIS data will be incorporated into the development of a base plan

Task 1.5: Community Engagement Workshop #1: Storytelling and Community Dinner

- This workshop will be the initial information gathering community meeting.
- The goal is to ensure that the needs, goals, assets, and aspirations of community members, particularly those most vulnerable, are heard and applied to the next design phase.
- The workshop will include an artist who will collect and collate the community's narratives

Task 1.6: Interviews

- The team will conduct a series of interviews as part of a week-long fieldwork. We will meet with key community members, shop owners, teachers, and other members of the community.

Task 1.7: Goals & Objectives

- Based on Workshop #1 data the Design Team will distill information into actionable design principles and tasks

Task 1.6: Meeting - Existing Conditions Presentation

- Presentation will include: existing condition analysis drawings

Task 1.7: Deliverable - Existing Conditions Draft Report

- An initial PDF draft of Phase 1 findings will be shared.
- Design team will make revisions based on feedback and incorporate into the Final Master Plan Draft.

PHASE 2: CONCEPT OPTIONS

Task 2.1: Meeting - RIDEM and RIHPHC design parameters

- Design team will attend an in-person meeting to present Phase 1 findings and receive design parameters feedback to be included in the development of Concept Options.

Task 2.2: Preliminary Concept Options Development

- Using the base plan developed in Phase 1 and with input from the Steering Committee and the Town, Stoss will prepare (2) Concept Options to be presented in Workshop #2 to collate the community's feedback.
- Concept Options will include: Site analysis diagrams illustrating typical sections, programming, circulation, materials, furnishing, and planting.

Task 2.3: Community Engagement Workshop #2: In-Person Community Engagement

- This workshop will seek active participation in providing input on the two alternative concept options designed with the data collected from Workshop #1 and other outreach activities.
- The event will include an interactive design toolkit as a participatory workshop.

Task 2.4: Survey

- Supplementary to the workshop event, the team will design an online survey to ensure wider outreach participating in the design process.

Task 2.5: Masterplan guiding principles development

- Based on Workshop #2 data the Design Team will distill information into actionable design principles and strategies for Phase 3 Preferred Concept Development.

Task 2.6: Meeting - Concept Options Presentation

- Presentation will include: Summary of Workshop #2 and initial Phase 3 design principles and strategies

Task 2.6: Deliverable - Concept Options Draft Report

- An initial PDF draft of Phase 2 Concept Options and Workshop #2 will be submitted for review and comments.
- Design team will make revisions based on feedback and incorporate into the Final Master Plan Draft.

PHASE 3: PREFERRED CONCEPT

Task 3.1: Preferred Concept Development

- Using the input from the Steering Committee and the previous community engagement events, Stoss will prepare (1) Preferred Concept Design to be presented in Workshop #3.
- Preferred Concept Design will include: Illustrative site plan, site analysis diagrams illustrating typical sections, programming, circulation, materials, furnishing, and planting.
- Develop 3D model of the site
- Develop perspective renderings illustrating key spaces and concepts
- Develop interpretive and educational signage.
- Develop a series of layered programmatic diagrams in-line with the grant requirements

Task 3.2: Community Engagement Workshop #3: Hybrid Community Engagement Workshop

- The final workshop will present the community with a summary of all collected data and seek consensus for a preferred option with more detailed project and program imagery.
- All input will be recorded for design refinements in Task 3.3

Task 3.3: Preferred Concept Refinement

- Based on Workshop #3 data the Design Team will distill information into actionable design refinements for discussion with the Steering Committee.
- Refined concept plan to include an illustrative site plan and refined study diagrams.
- Cost estimate will be coordinated with Cost Consultant

Task 3.4: Meeting - Town Council evening presentation

- In person meeting to present the Refined concept plan.

Task 3.5: Deliverable - Preferred Concept Draft Report

- An initial PDF draft of Phase 3 Preferred Concept and Workshop #3 will be submitted for review and comments.
- Design team will make revisions based on feedback and incorporate into the Final Master Plan Draft.

PHASE 4: FINAL REPORT

Task 4.1: Master Plan Draft

- The design team will submit a full draft that incorporates all reviewed and edited Phase 1,2, and 3 drafts.

Task 4.2: Meeting - Master Plan Draft Review

- This meeting will allow a platform to receive feedback from Steering Committee members and stakeholders.

Task 4.3: Master Plan Draft Refinement

- Design team will make revisions based on feedback and incorporate into the Final Master Plan.

Task 4.4: Deliverable - Final Master Plan

- The consultant will provide three (3) hard copies Final Master Plan.

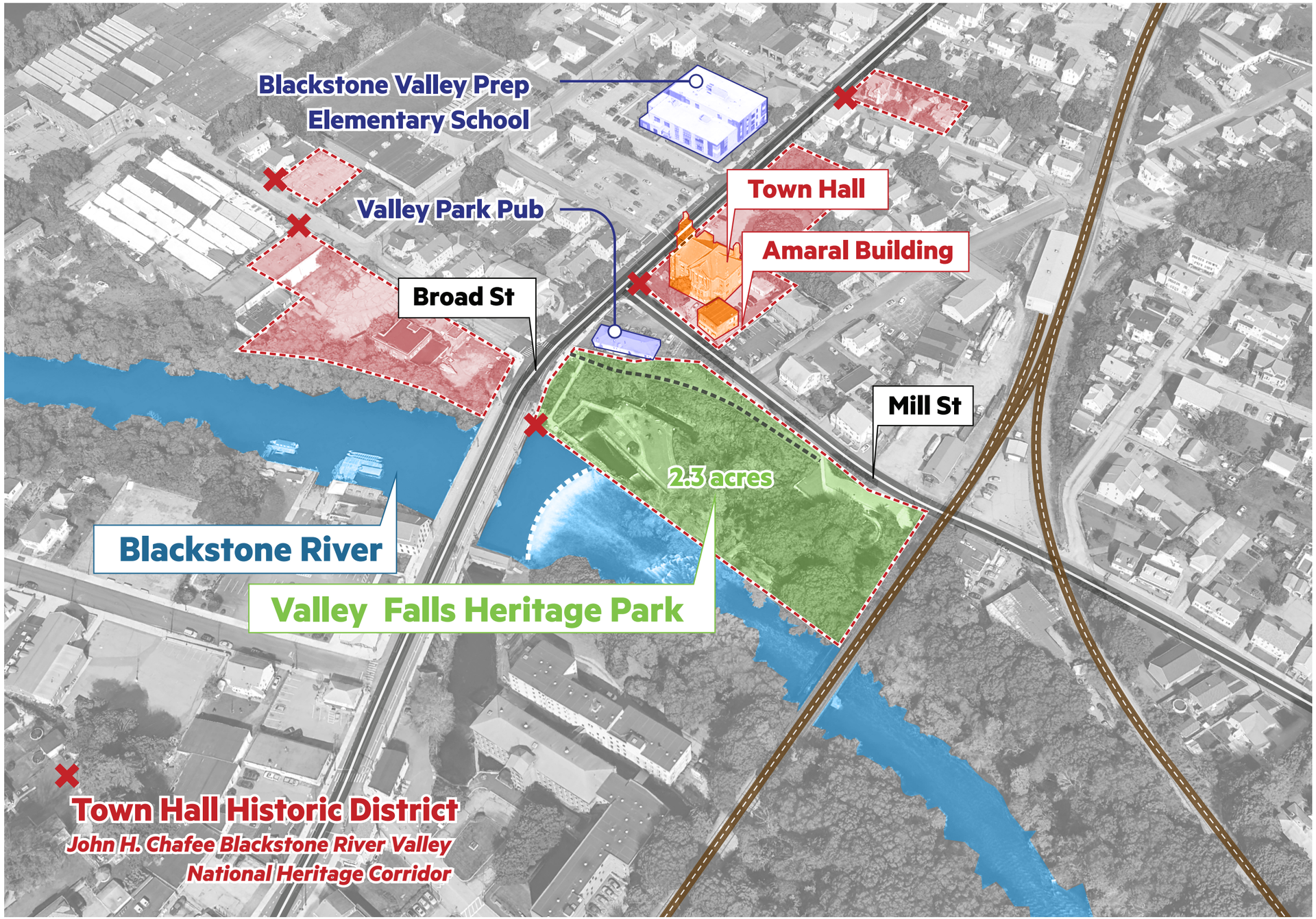
PROJECT SCHEDULE

		March			April				May				June				July				
		Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Wk 7	Wk 8	Wk 9	Wk 10	Wk 11	Wk 12	Wk 13	Wk 14	Wk 15	Wk 16	Wk 17	Wk 18	Wk 19	Wk 20	Wk 21
		3/11	3/18	3/26	4/1	4/8	4/15	4/22	4/29	5/6	5/13	5/20	5/27	6/3	6/10	6/17	6/24	7/1	7/8	7/15	7/22	7/29
		EXISTING CONDITIONS					CONCEPT OPTIONS					PREFERRED OPTION						FINAL REPORT				
	Phase 0: Project Management																					
0.1	Bi- Weekly Virtual Meetings (Project Duration)																					
	Phase 1: Existing Conditions (4-5 weeks)																					
1.1	Meeting - Kickoff with Steering Committee																					
1.2	Review of City Provided Data and Site Analysis																					
1.3	Poster Design																					
1.4	Base CAD Topography Plan																					
1.5	Workshop 1: Storytelling and Community Dinner																					
1.5B	Workshop 1: Site Analysis Drawings																					
1.5C	Workshop 1: Prompt Toolkit Materials																					
1.6	Interviews																					
1.7	Goals & Objectives																					
1.8	Meeting - Existing Conditions Presentation																					
1.9	Deliverable - Existing Conditions Draft Report																					
	Phase 2: Concept Options (6 weeks)																					
2.1	Meeting - RIDEM and RIHPHC design parameters																					
2.2	Preliminary Concept Options Development																					
2.3	Workshop 2: In-Person Engagement Workshop																					
2.3B	Workshop 2: Design Masterplan Layouts																					
2.3C	Workshop 2: Interactive Design Toolkit																					
2.4	Survey																					
2.5	Masterplan guiding principles development																					
2.6	Meeting - Concept Options Presentation																					
2.7	Deliverable - Concept Options Draft Report																					
	Phase 3: Preferred Concept (5-6 weeks)																					
3.1	Preferred Concept Development																					
3.2	Workshop 3: Hybrid Engagement Workshop																					
3.3	Preferred Concept Refinement																					
3.4	Meeting - Town Council evening presentation																					
3.5	Deliverable - Preferred Concept Draft Report																					
	Phase 4: Final Report (3-4 weeks)																					
4.1	Master Plan Draft																					
4.2	Meeting - Master Plan Draft Review																					
4.3	Master Plan Draft Refinement																					
4.4	Deliverable - Final Master Plan																					

SITE OVERVIEW

SITE CONTEXT

The park falls within the designated historic ***Town Hall Historic District, part of the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.*** The site's historic designation has been vital in our approach to pushing forward a sensitive yet bold design proposal that celebrates the rich cultural heritage of Cumberland's people. Our approach closely considers its significance and understands Rhode Island's Historic Commission's goal to center important resources to serve as important cultural and educational resources and properties important for Rhode Island's tourism industry.



TOWN HALL
1894
VALLEY FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

GRANT REQUIREMENT AND DEED COVENANT

WORK / EDUCATION / HEALTH /TRAINING / CONNECTION TO AMARAL BUILDING

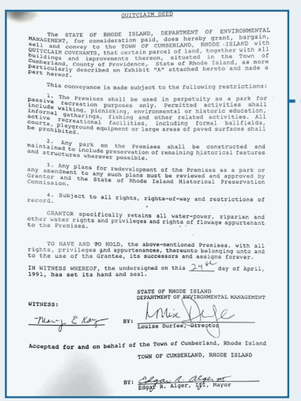
The proposed design reflects the Town's focus on creating a park that is aligned with the deed and covenant of the site while fulfilling the Multipurpose Community Learning Center Municipal Grant Program requirement. These requirements include health, education and work, and outlines some potential opportunities (extracted from RFQ):

- Support emotional health
- Health education and healthcare services
- Promote health through a community garden
- Promote green space and connections with the outdoors
- Promote social-emotional learning and mindfulness
- Provide economic opportunities through mentoring and workforce development
- Connections to social services and resources
- Community events and cultural celebrations
- Promote education through interpretation of the park's historical significance

Therefore, we approached the design and engagement, ensuring we communicated these principles as important opportunities that aid in the revinsioning of the park.

DEED COVENANT

"The premise shall be used in perpetuity as a park for passive recreation purposes only. Permitted activities shall include ***walking, picnicking, environmental or historic education, informal gatherings, fishing and other related activities.*** *All active recreational facilities including formal ballfields, courts, playground equipment or large areas of paved surfaces shall be prohibited."*



QUITCLAIM DEED

The STATE OF RHODE ISLAND, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, for consideration paid, does hereby grant, bargain, sell and convey to the TOWN OF CUMBERLAND, RHODE ISLAND with QUITCLAIM COVENANTS, that certain parcel of land, together with the buildings and improvements thereon, situated in the Town of Cumberland, County of Providence, State of Rhode Island, as more particularly described on Exhibit "A" attached hereto and made a part hereof.

This conveyance is made subject to the following restrictions:

1. The Premises shall be used in perpetuity as a park for passive recreation purposes only. Permitted activities shall include walking, picnicking, environmental or historic education, informal gatherings, fishing and other related activities. All active recreational facilities, including formal ballfields, courts, playground equipment or large areas of paved surfaces shall be prohibited.

2. Any park on the Premises shall be constructed and maintained to include preservation of remaining historical features and structures wherever possible.

3. Any plans for redevelopment of the Premises as a park or any amendment to any such plans must be reviewed and approved by Grantor and the State of Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

4. Subject to all rights, rights-of-way and restrictions of record.

GRANTOR specifically retains all water-power, riparian and other water rights and privileges and rights of flowage appurtenant to the Premises.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, the above-mentioned Premises, with all rights, privileges and appurtenances, thereunto belonging unto and to the use of the Grantee, its successors and assigns forever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned on this 24th day of April, 1991, has set its hand and seal.

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

WITNESS:

BY: Louise Durfee, Director

Accepted for and on behalf of the Town of Cumberland, Rhode Island

TOWN OF CUMBERLAND, RHODE ISLAND

BY: Edgar A. Alger, III, Mayor

April 24, 1991

NARRATIVES

VALLEY FALLS HERITAGE PARK KEY TIMELINE

Our park serves as a custodian of the diverse historical narratives that have shaped the site over the years. The timeline presented here offers a comprehensive overview of these narratives, from the site's Indigenous roots to its industrial history as the Valley Falls Cotton Mill, its involvement in the reform movement, the community-wide role of the Amaral building, its redesign in 1991 as a park, and its current efforts to highlight ecological uses. Each of these narratives contributes to the park's rich historical significance.

As we overlay the site's timeline against a broader US timeline, our role is to remember the critical histories that make the park and reimagine how a new design vision creates a new, community-driven identity in line with today's narratives.



EARLY 17TH CENTURY

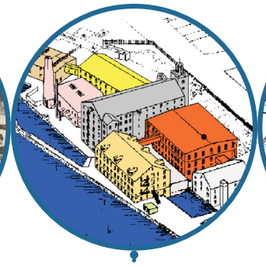
Blackstone Valley was a home to three Northeast Woodland tribes: the Narragansett, the Nipmuc and the Wampanoag.

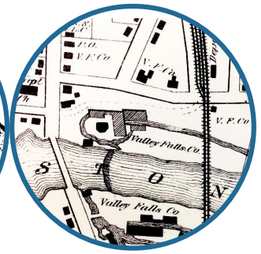


CIRCA 1890

Amaral Building









1991

Park Masterplan



1635

First European Settlement

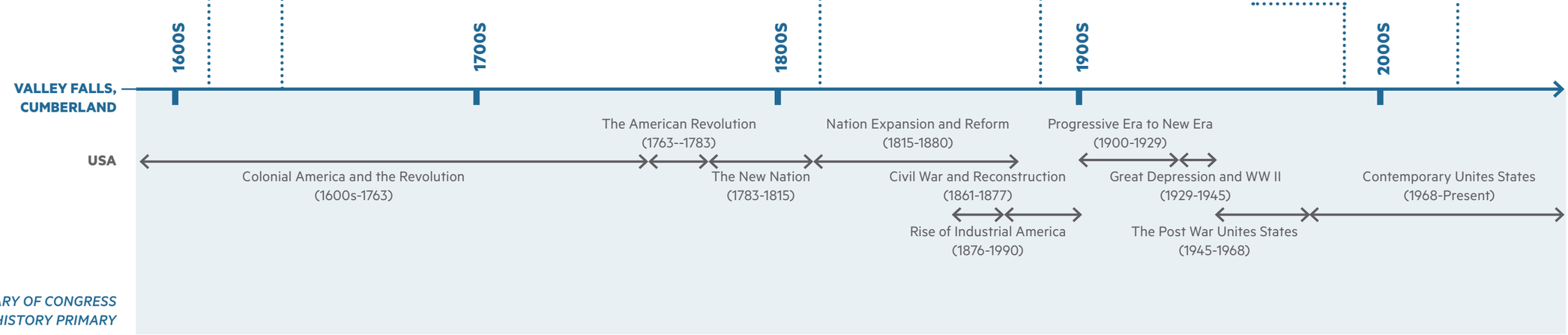
1820-1934

Making of the Mill



2020-2025

Valley Falls Heritage Park Conservation and Management Plan



TIMELINE SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS U.S. HISTORY PRIMARY

INDIGENOUS HISTORY

The Blackstone River's original name was ***Kittacuck***, meaning 'the great tidal river.' Indigenous communities have had a deep relationship with the river for millennia and historically depended on it for transportation and fishing, as it used to be plentiful with salmon and lamprey. Rich in its species and diversity, ***Kittacuck*** was home to many migratory fish that lived between fresh and salt habitats.

Over the years, as the characteristics of the water changed after the European colonization, the relationship to the water changed. The construction of 39 dams on the main stem of the Blackstone River altered the hydrology and ecology of the river and its watershed. This prevented migrating fish from reaching their historic breeding habitat and led to a significant decline in the fish populations. Ultimately, it impacted the aquatic organisms and the people who depend on it

It is crucial to approach planning with intention and foster a long-term relationship with the area's Indigenous history. This is not just a task but a responsibility that, when fulfilled with respect and empathy, will significantly contribute to the health and well-being of Cumberland's Indigenous residents and its history.

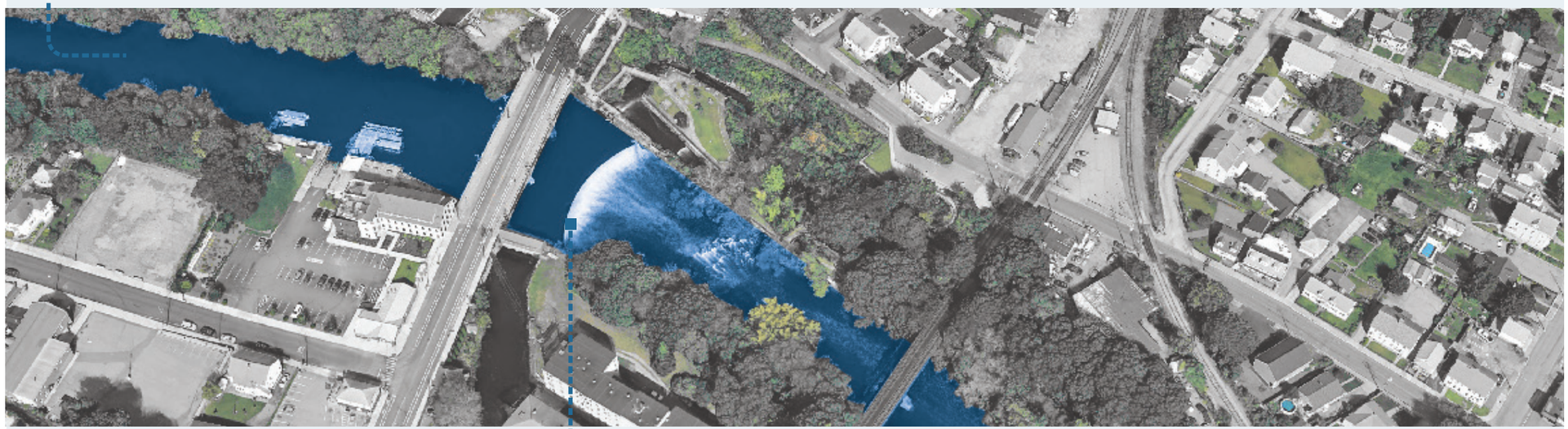
Kittacuck

Fish Passage: Bringing Back the Herring

The Blackstone River is located in the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Narragansett, Nipmuc, Pokanoket, and Wampanoag Nations.

Kittacuck is the original Nipmuc name for the Blackstone River which means "great tidal river." Indigenous communities have had a deep relationship with the river for millennia and historically depended on the river for transportation and fishing.





Kittacuck is the original Nipmuc name which means **"great tidal river."**

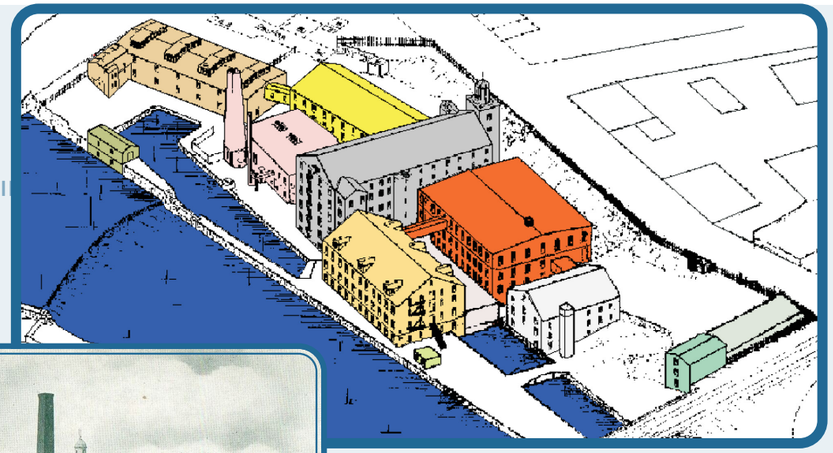
Prior to European colonization, the Blackstone River had abundant populations of migratory fish including shad, herring and salmon that lived and migrated between fresh and saltwater habitats. The construction of 39 dams on the main stem of the Blackstone River prevented migrating fish from reaching historic breeding habitat and led to a significant decline in the fish populations.

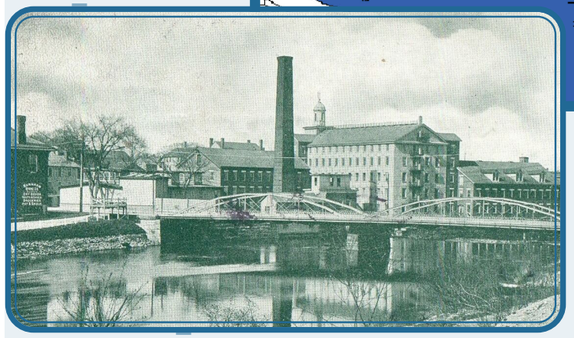
Nineteen dams still remain on the main stem of the river, many of which do not serve a purpose and are in varying states of disrepair.

VALLEY FALLS COMPANY

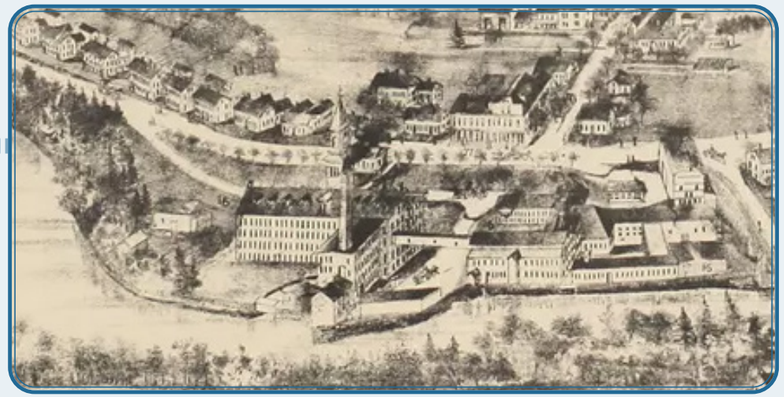
The river, a great source of hydropower, fueled water-powered cotton-spinning mills. By the mid-1800s, the river and its tributaries were home to over 100 mills, each dammed nearly every mile for its natural power. The Valley Falls mill, a cornerstone of our community's identity, was one of several industrial centers. It ran for over a hundred years (until 1934), and helped make Valley Falls the political center of Cumberland. Its water power resources and railroad connections made it an important textile manufacturing center in the 1800s and early 1900s.

The structures and remnants on site reflect the multiple expansions and demonstrate what once was a booming economic industry. Today, the historic structures are often the most prominently remembered history of the site.

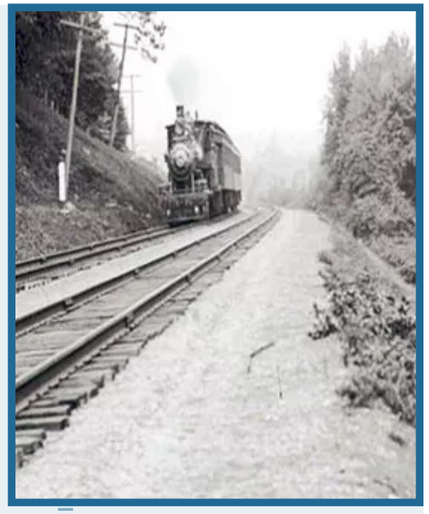


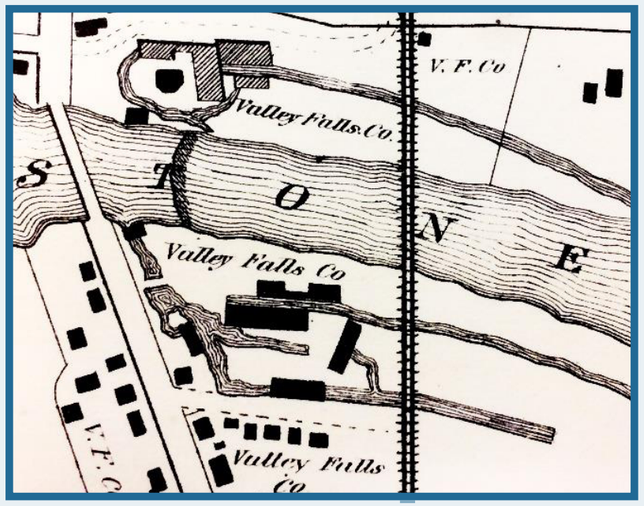


Storehouse
Chemical Storehouse
Harris Picker House
Boiler House



Industrial Connector





Providence and Worcester Railroad

SOCIAL REFORM

The Chaces chose to use their social and economic prominence to take leading roles in their social and economic prominence to take leading roles in the antislavery movement.

The home of Samuel B. Chace and Elizabeth Buffum Chace, once situated across the street, was a beacon of hope in the antislavery movement of the 1840s and 1850s. Serving as a crucial stop on the 'underground railroad' network, providing a safe haven for those seeking to escape Southern slavery. The Chaces hosted prominent reformers visiting the Blackstone Valley to lecture on the antislavery or abolitionist movement.

In 1835, Elizabeth helped to found the Fall River Female Antislavery Society after the original group struggled to integrate the free black women who wished to join as members. She and her sisters held the point of view of working to end all racist practices and not just working toward abolition as the original group intended. She named the group the "Fall River Antislavery Sewing Society" ***(the word Sewing was later changed to include Female).***



Cotton Workers



The **Chaces**, active abolitionists, lived in this house from 1847 -1857



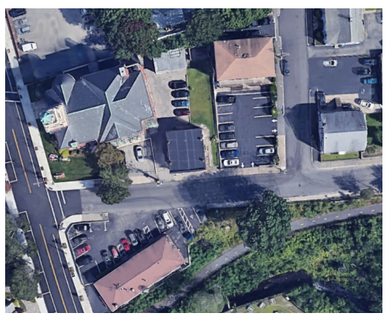
The Underground Railroad

AMARAL BUILDING

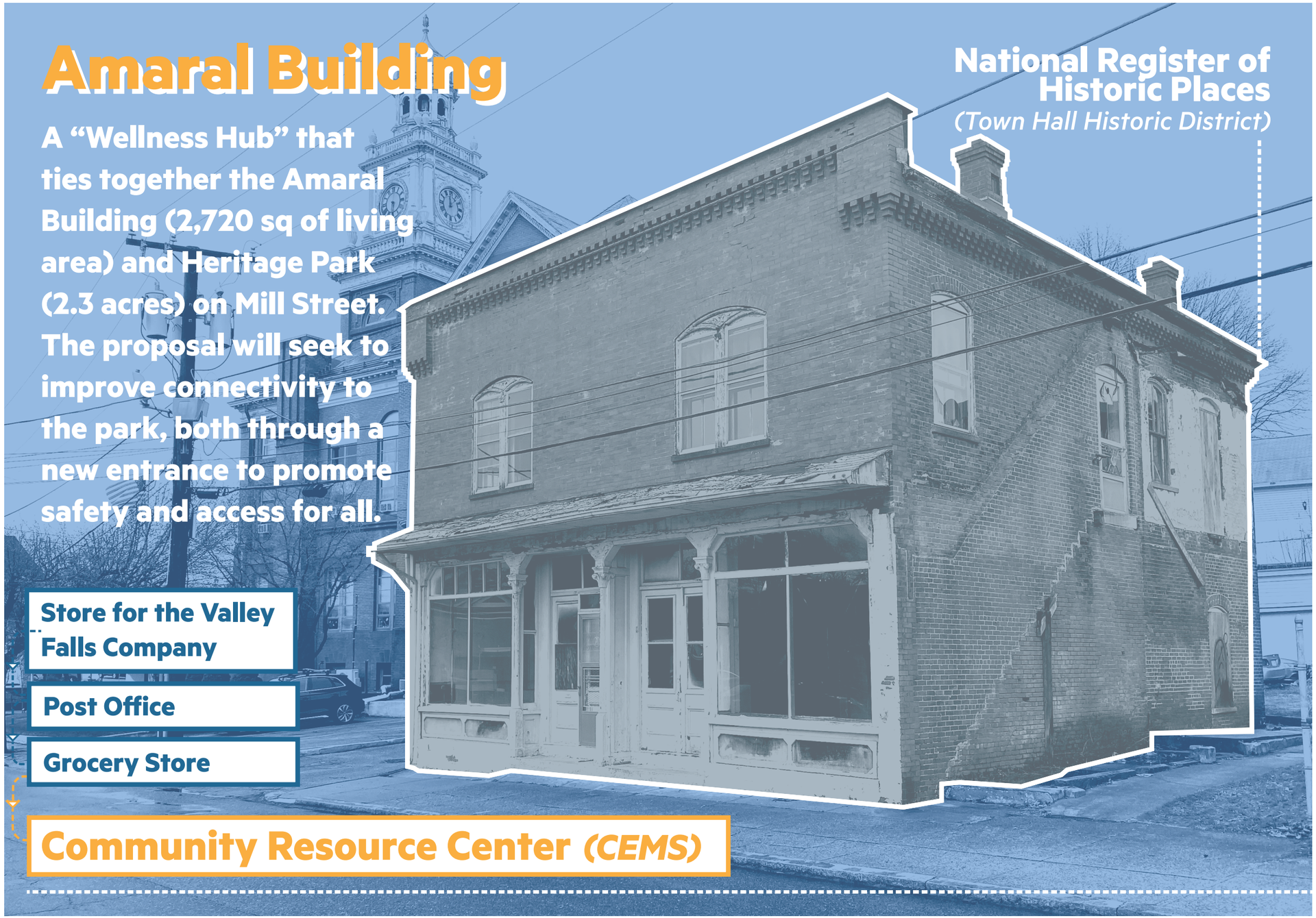
The Amaral Building, also known as the old post office, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource to the Town Hall Historic District and is in a locally-designated historic district. The building may have originally served as a company store for the Valley Falls Company, which operated the textile factory across the street along the Blackstone River in what is now Valley Falls Heritage Park.

During the early 20th century, a portion of the building housed a post office and library. By 1921, Portuguese immigrants Ezequiel Pires and Seraphim Cardanha converted the ground floor to a grocery store and added a three-bedroom apartment above. Eventually in 1937, the building was sold to Joaquim and Maria Amaral, who continued to operate the store and live in the apartment above from to 1988.

Today, the Amaral Building is not just a structure, but a part of the community's story. It is set to transform into a new community center, a hub that will enhance health outcomes and civic engagement. By partnering with local non-profits and civic groups, it will connect neighbors with resources, each other, and the community. The Amaral building continues to be a cornerstone of Cumberland's community's history and has played a significant role in its collective narrative.

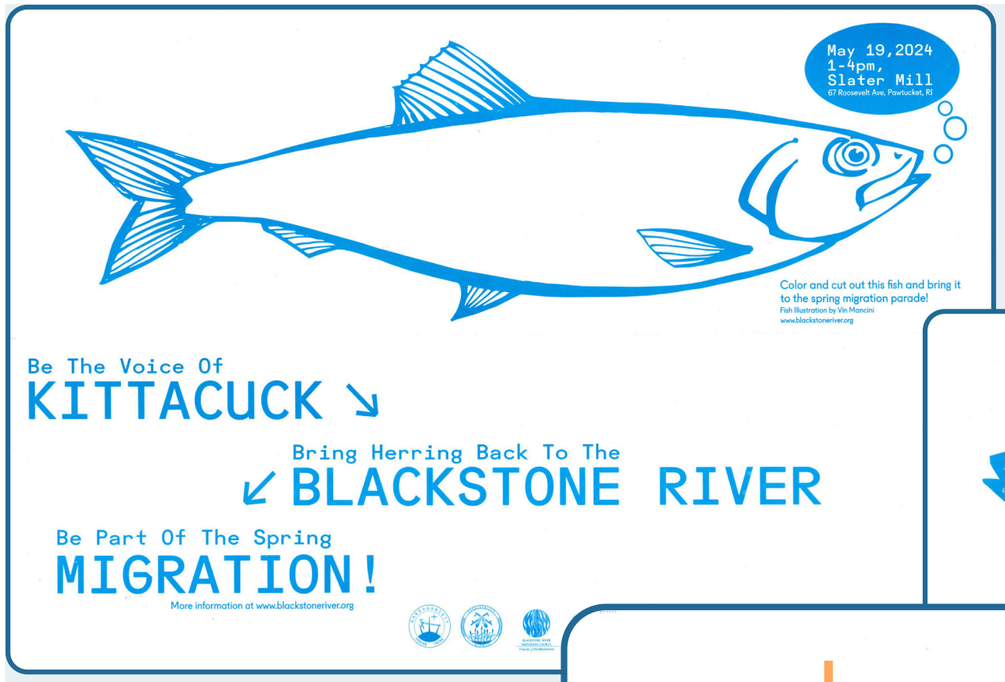


Town of Cumberland

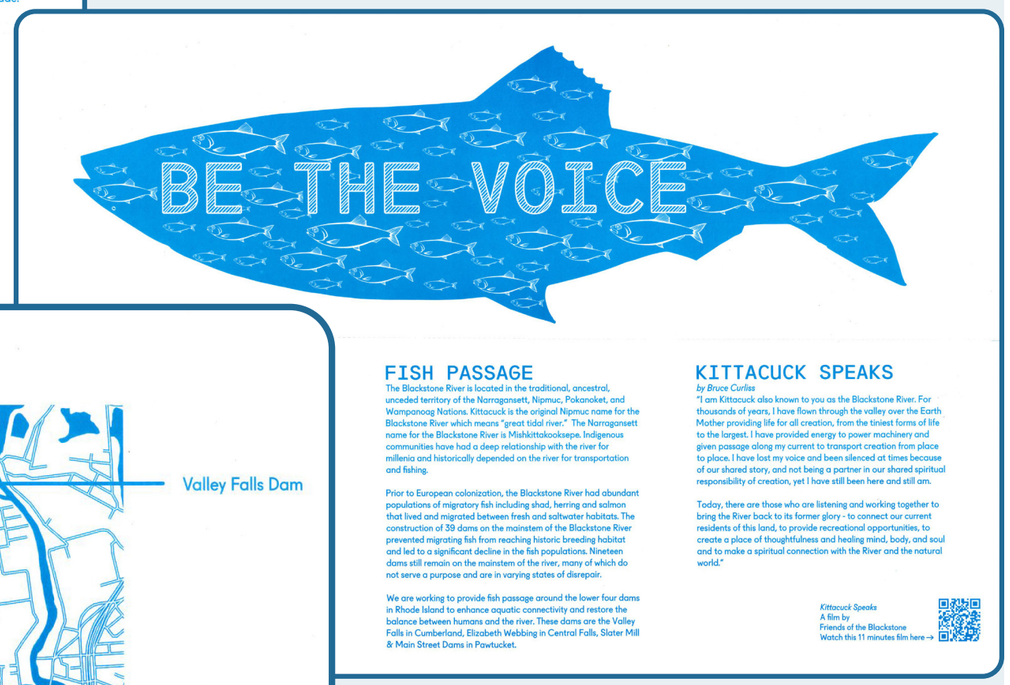


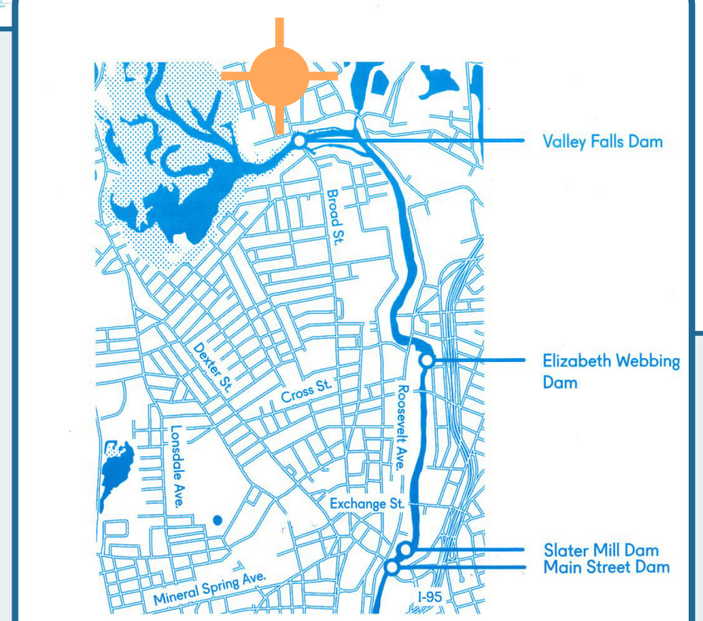
ECOLOGICAL EFFORTS

One of the nineteen remaining dams is located right across the site. Significant efforts have been made to revitalize the site's ecology, enhance aquatic connectivity, and restore the balance between humans, fish, and other ecological users. The proposed fish ladders, which aim to bring back the herring, are part of a more extensive regional campaign that ties back to the efforts to bring back Indigenous connections to the land.



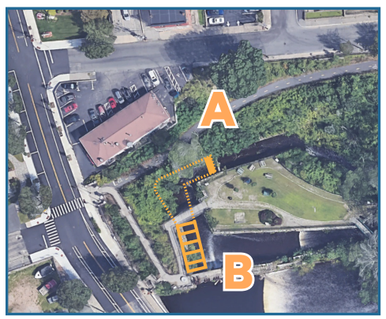
Source:
Blackstone River Watershed Council





Fish Passage: Bringing Back the Herring

Source:
New England Hydropower Company



SITE ANALYSIS

SITE OBSERVATIONS

Our site understanding is rooted in our thorough and detailed site analysis, which examined the site's conditions, characters, and challenges. We studied its slopes and ramps, ADA accessibility and compliances, connectivity, materiality and textures, remnants and ruins, water qualities, and other essential aspects - all of which helped shape our experience with the site.

With the community at the heart of our design process, the site analysis served as a powerful tool. It not only revealed the opportunities to thread connections, view sheds, and design possibilities, but also guided us in creating a design that is a true reflection of and response to the community's needs.

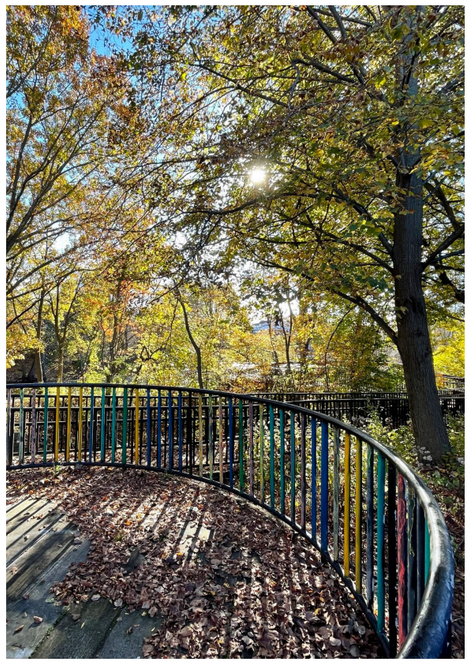
This series of images, taken in November 2023, presents the site's current condition, neglect, lack of maintenance, and widespread graffiti, all of which promote concerns about safety, experiences, vandalism, and underutilization.

















SITE SURROUNDINGS

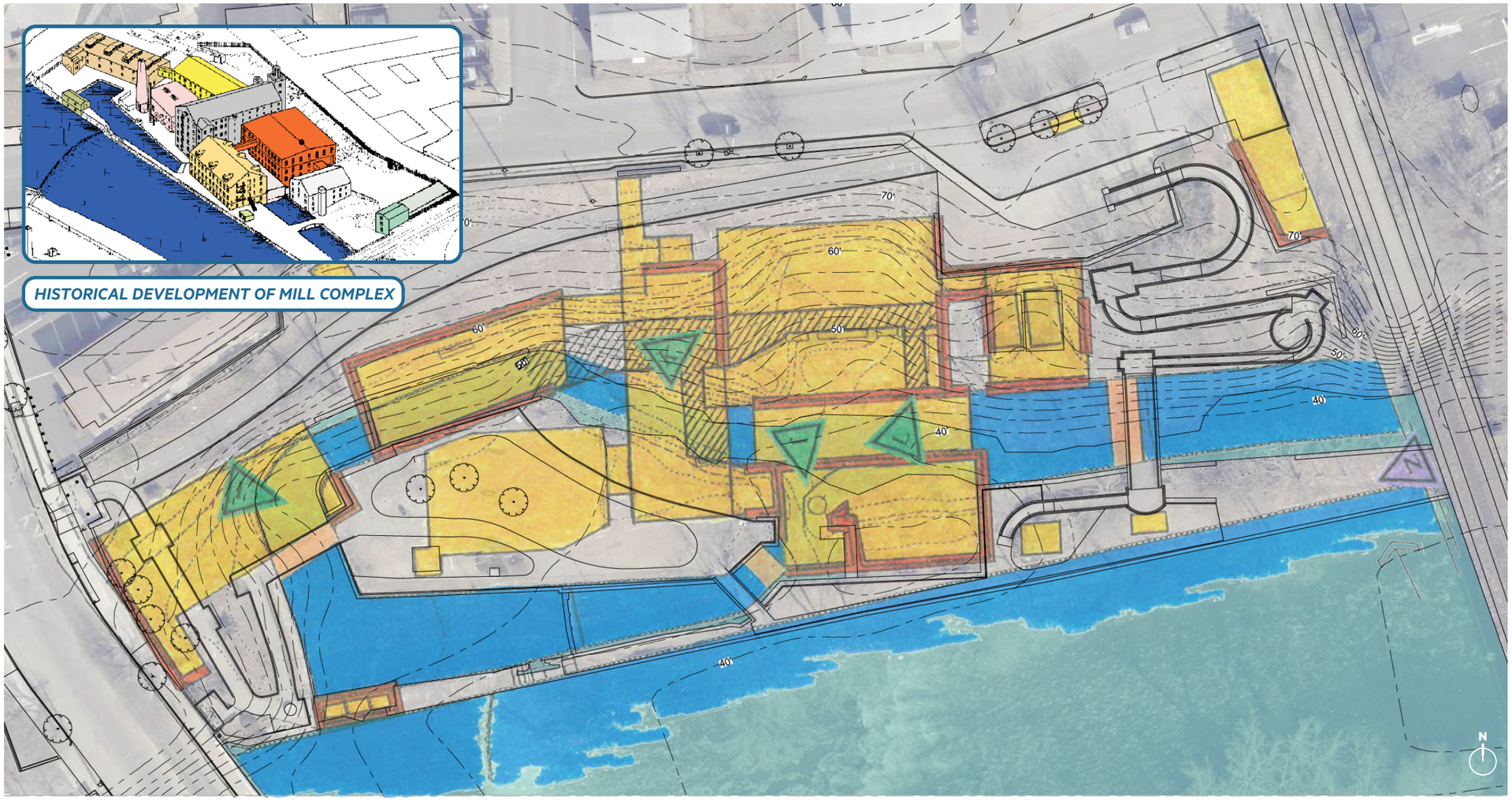
The site, located amidst town landmarks, is an opportunity for connectivity and extended program. To the North of the site, the Amaral and Town Hall buildings stand proudly across Mill Street, forming a visual and functional connection with the park. The west side is intersected by Broad Street, a key link between Valley Falls and Central Falls. The park's southern edge offers a breathtaking view of the Blackstone River dam, while the P&W Railroad to the west provides a unique experience of walking underneath the rail and enjoying the lookout.



SOURCE: *(Background) Google Earth (Callouts) Site visit images*

HISTORICAL LAYERS

Sourced from the Gates, Leighton & Associates masterplan documents, we overlayed the historic plan of the Mill complex over a satellite image of today's current site condition. This began to inform us of the spatial extent mill complex and outlined some of the remaining remnants and foundation walls in relation to the park and water present today today.

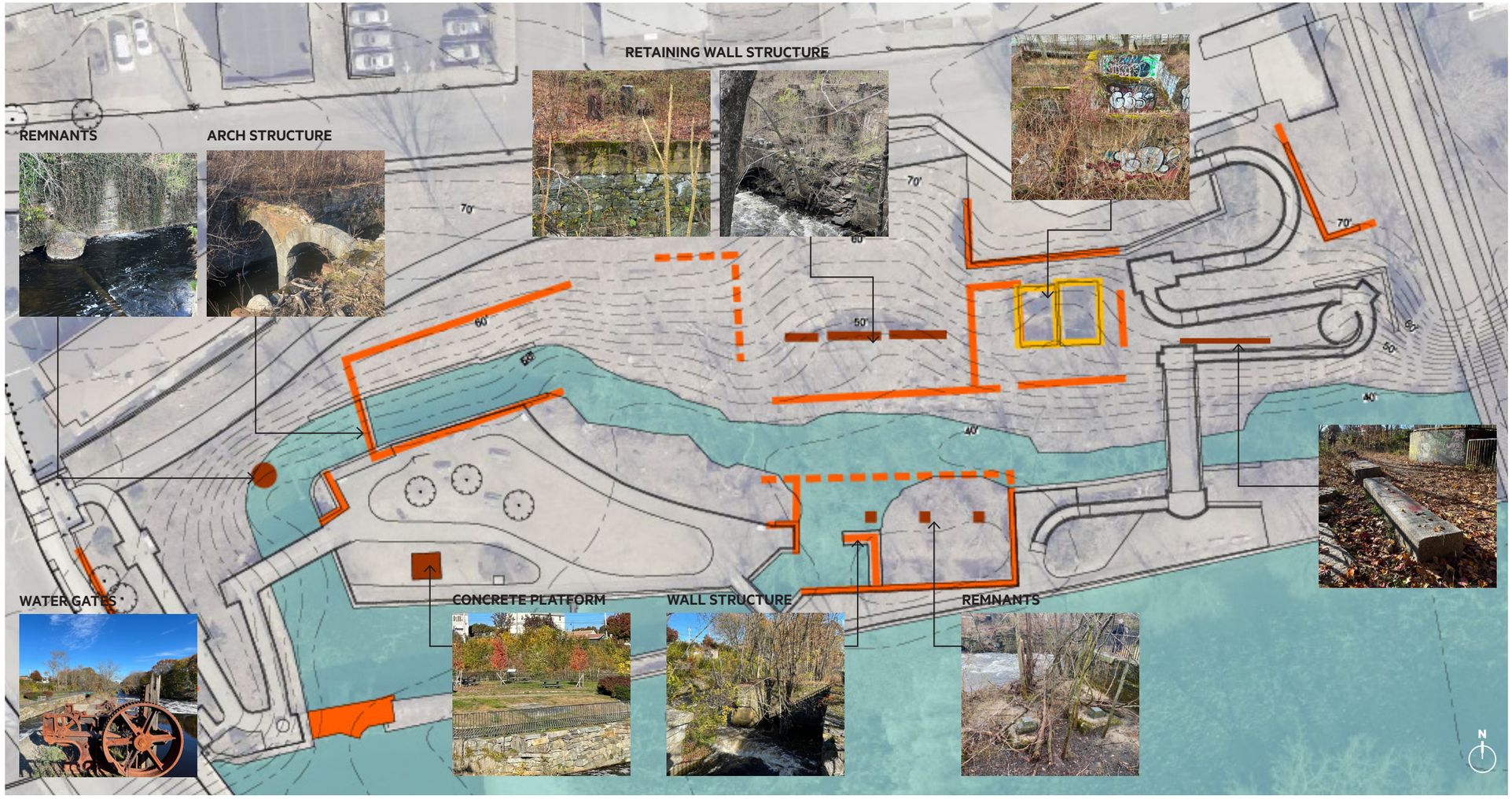


HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MILL COMPLEX

***SOURCE:** (Main Drawing) GATES, LEIGHTON & ASSOCIATES MASTERPLAN, 1991 (Top Left) On-Site Interpretive Sign*

RUINS AND REMNANTS

The collection of remnants we see here not only informs the extent of the historic mill but also describes the richness of the industrial legacy we are working with. Footing remnants, structural bearing walls, and erected structures are all part of the site's character and richness, serving as a reminder of the mill's former life and a canvas for its potential redevelopment.

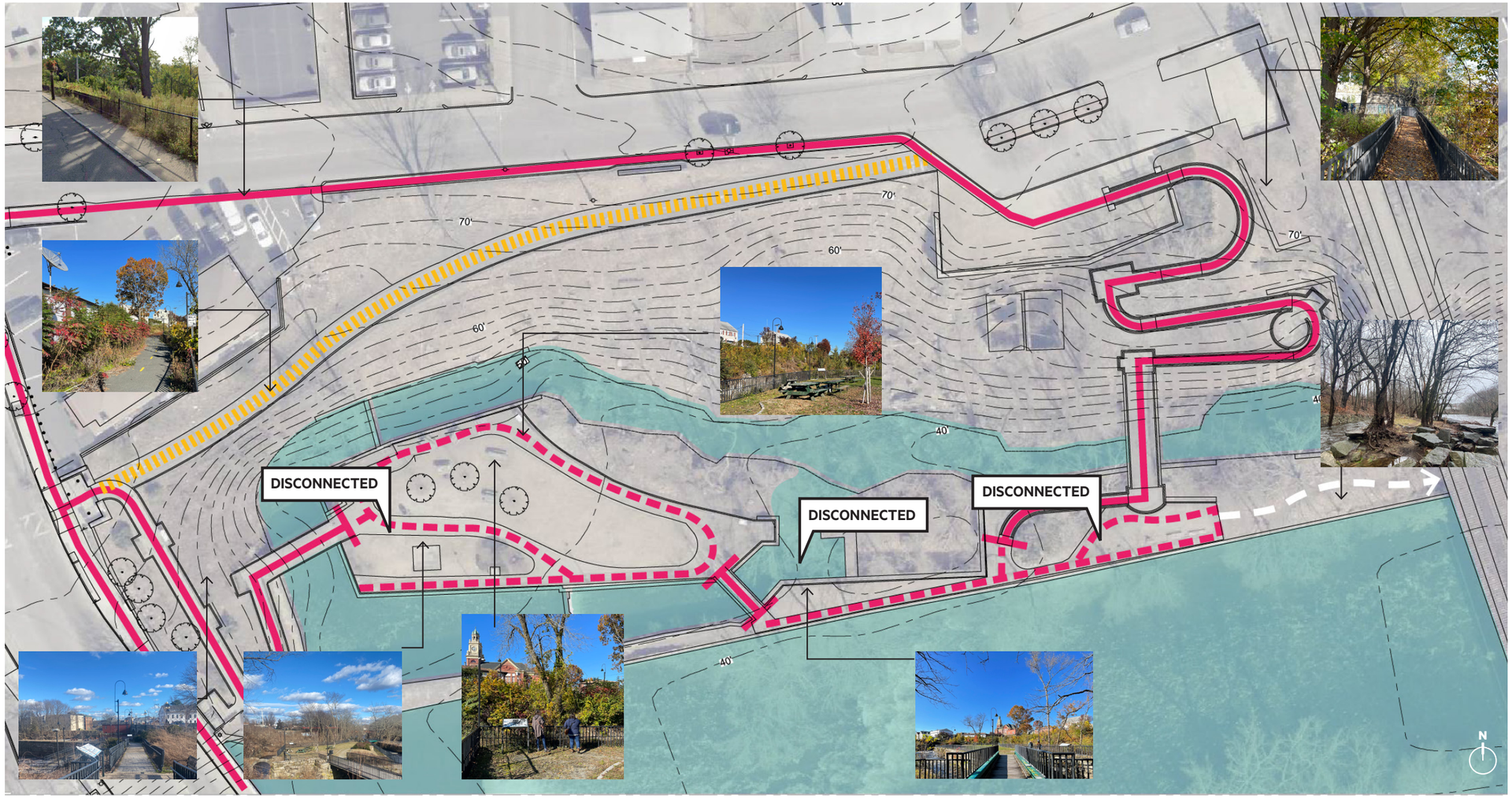


FOUNDATION WALLS REMAINING TODAY
FOUNDATION FOOTINGS REMAINING TODAY
WALLS REMAINING TODAY

SOURCE: *(Callouts) Site visit images*

ACCESSIBILITY

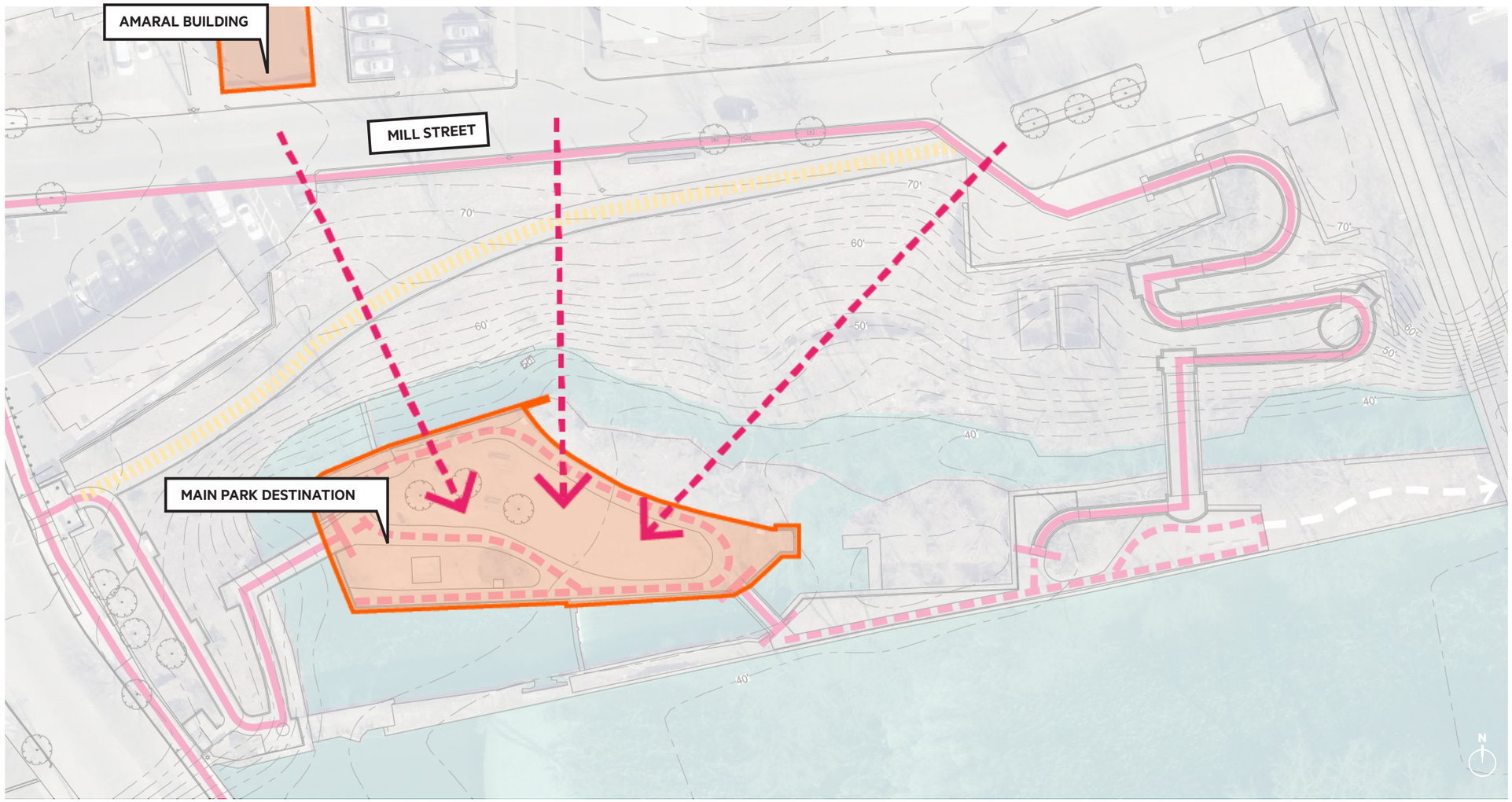
The current physical access from Mill Street to the island at the center of the park is challenging, leading to a limited number of people venturing into the park. This situation poses safety concerns that need to be addressed as we design the park. The east and west entries, initially designed as accessible ramps, do not connect and require immediate upgrades. Once these upgrades are in place, they will not only meet today's accessibility standards but also help significantly increase the number of park visitors.



***SOURCE:** (Callouts) Site visit images*

DESIRED ACCESS

Ideally, new direct connections would create access from Mill Street to the Island and would need to be supplemented by a network of universally accessible pathways.

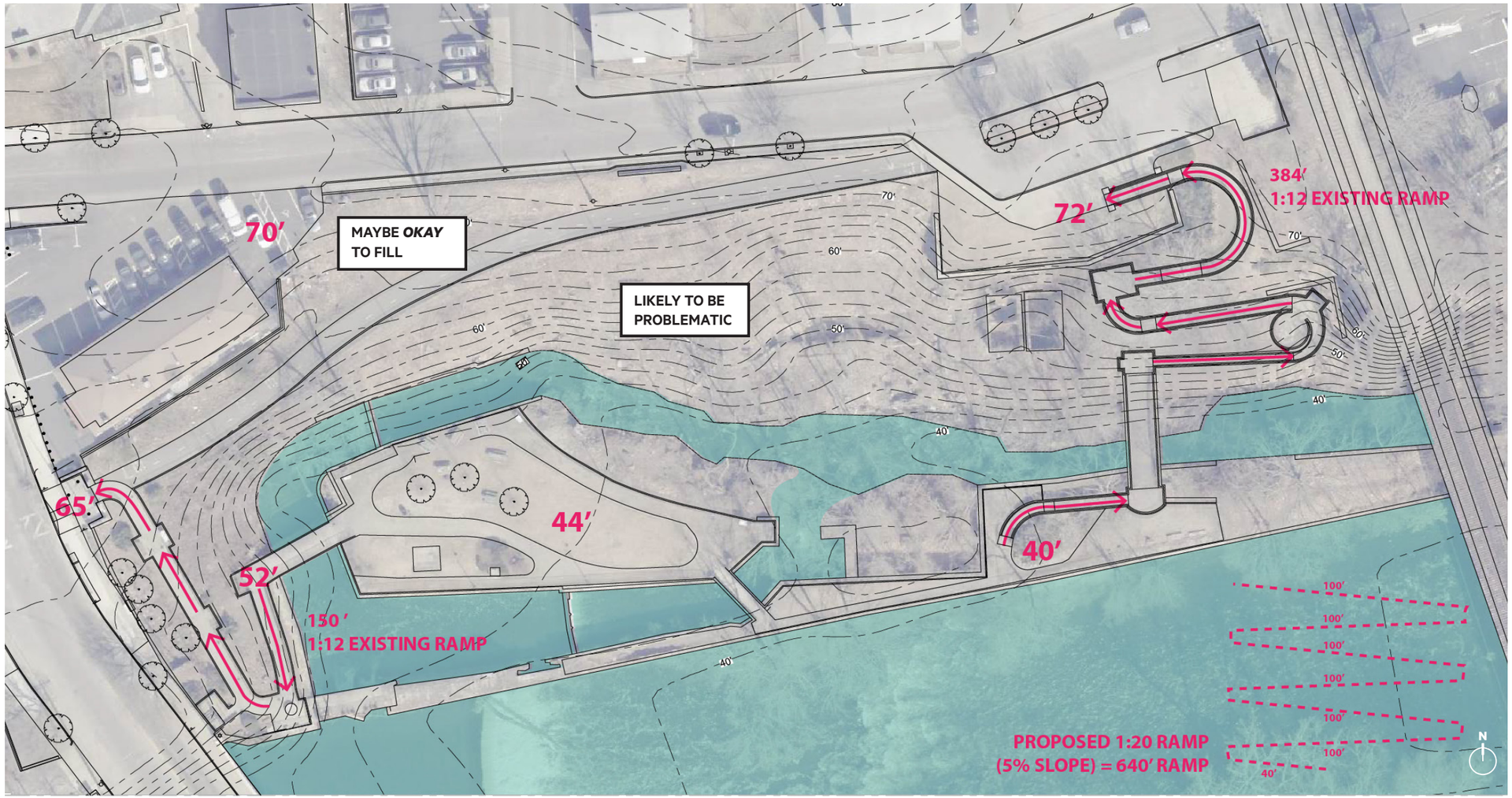


MAIN PARK DESTINATION

EXISTING SLOPE & ADA

Understanding the current access and ramps of the park is essential as we begin to understand the upgrades needed.

By determining the elevational changes present in the site, we can speculate about the different path opportunities and lengths needed to help create the desired experiences connecting Mill Street to the island.



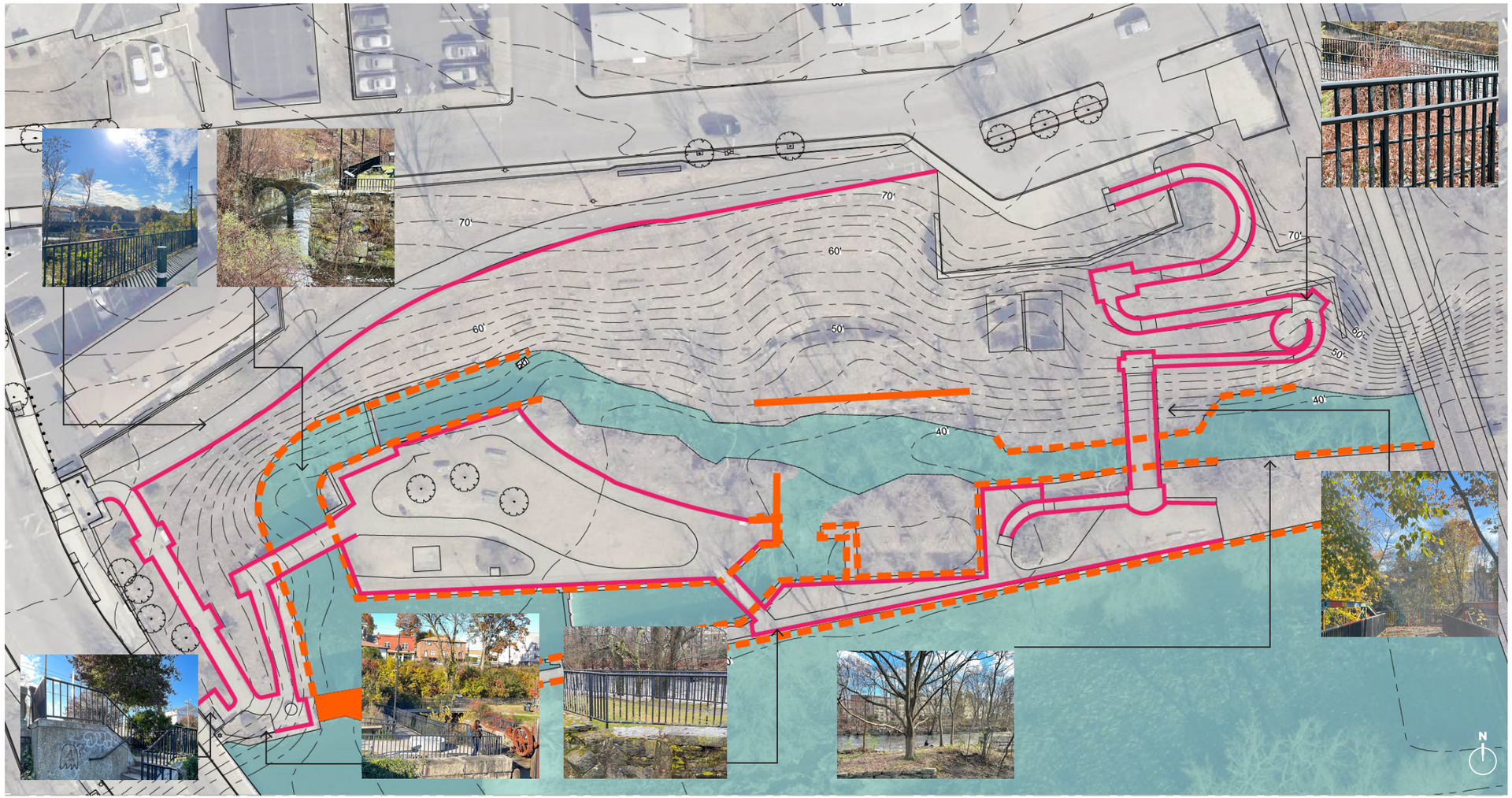
EXISTING MATERIAL

By studying the existing material palette, we can appreciate the current materials that lend the park its unique character. The use of asphalt, timber pavers, and concrete in paving blocks connects different parts of the park. In contrast, the island and the southeast of the park feature ground/grass as its finish.



EDGE CONDITION

The park's edge condition varies between handrail or stonewall edges. The series of ramps necessitates the use of handrails, but the heaviness of the black railing significantly obstructs views, limiting the openness and connection possible with the river. In other conditions, the remnants of the historic stonewall edges and arches characterize the connection between water and its surroundings.



WATER FLOW + PROGRAM

Water flow is not only vital to the site but plays a significant role in shaping its characteristics. From the different sounds, water gushes, dams, and flows, it is critical in the ways it informs us how we can rethink the possibilities of new programs, what views we want to highlight, and where we can emphasize the experience with the water.



The diagram overlays the water flow on the site.

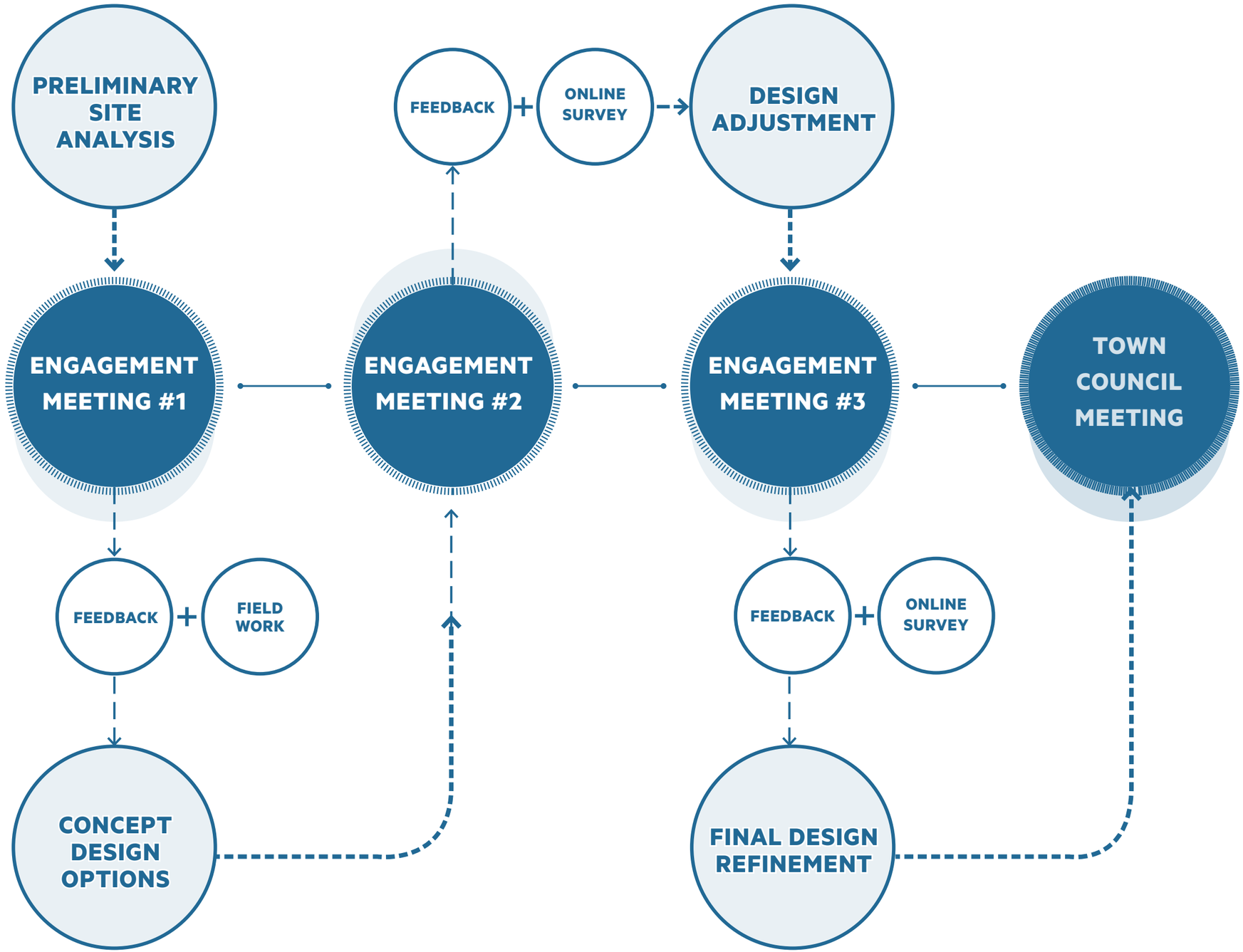
ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

In line with the Town's focus on community engagement and our core value of equity and inclusivity, our design process integrated a robust engagement process to facilitate the community's ownership as we reenvisioned the park. Our goal was to build on the momentum initiated by the Town's decision to allocate grant funds, extending the park's potential and the benefits it can bring to the community. This engagement took form in three main events, each with a specific purpose: a **storytelling and community dinner** event to foster a sense of community, an **in-person community engagement** to gather direct feedback, and a **hybrid community engagement** to reach a wider audience.

This process was designed with multiple goals in mind:

- A robust engagement process ensures people feel included, provides multilingual support, builds excitement about the project, and gathers substantive input and feedback about design and programming
- Early action to test ideas and generate interest
- Building in long-term pragmatic considerations, including operations, maintenance, and economic planning
- Designing for flexibility of use by integrating an open-ended, multipurpose park that reflects the focus on education, health, work, and training



NOTE: DETAILED ENGAGEMENT MEMOS ARE PLACED IN THE APPENDIX

ENGAGEMENT #1: STORYTELLING AND COMMUNITY DINNER

STORYTELLING & COMMUNITY DINNER AT JOSEPH L. MCCOURT MIDDLE SCHOOL - ***APRIL 15, 2024***

The overarching goal of the first engagement event was to provide the community with an opportunity to share their thoughts regarding their hopes for the park. Through this effort, we repeatedly heard participants express wanting the park to feel like a connection to the heritage of Valley Falls. The park is a space to connect the past and the present, embracing where multiple heritages weave together. The ideas shared with us are two types of intersecting opportunities: creating a space for connection and activating the park.

The event was divided into three main themes:

- ***Memories of Valley Falls***
- ***Park Priorities***
- ***Hopes and Dreams***

The exercises within each theme were carried out in smaller groups with a facilitator at each table. This was done to ensure they were engaging and meaningful to the community. This also enabled efficient collection of information from participating residents. During the event, we had artist Felipe Álvarez de Toledo López-Herrera illustrate in real-time and provide illustrations reflecting the themes documented.

We collected different narratives, stories, desires for the park's future, potential programming and events, and an emphasis on the relaying site's history (both Indigenous and post-colonial) through education. Equally, the community had the opportunity to voice their concerns and skepticism of the process. Concerns regarding safety, ADA connectivity, and maintenance were recurring among many participants.





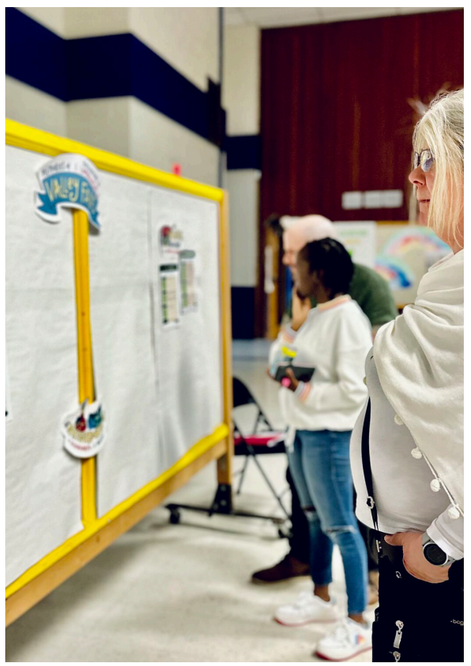






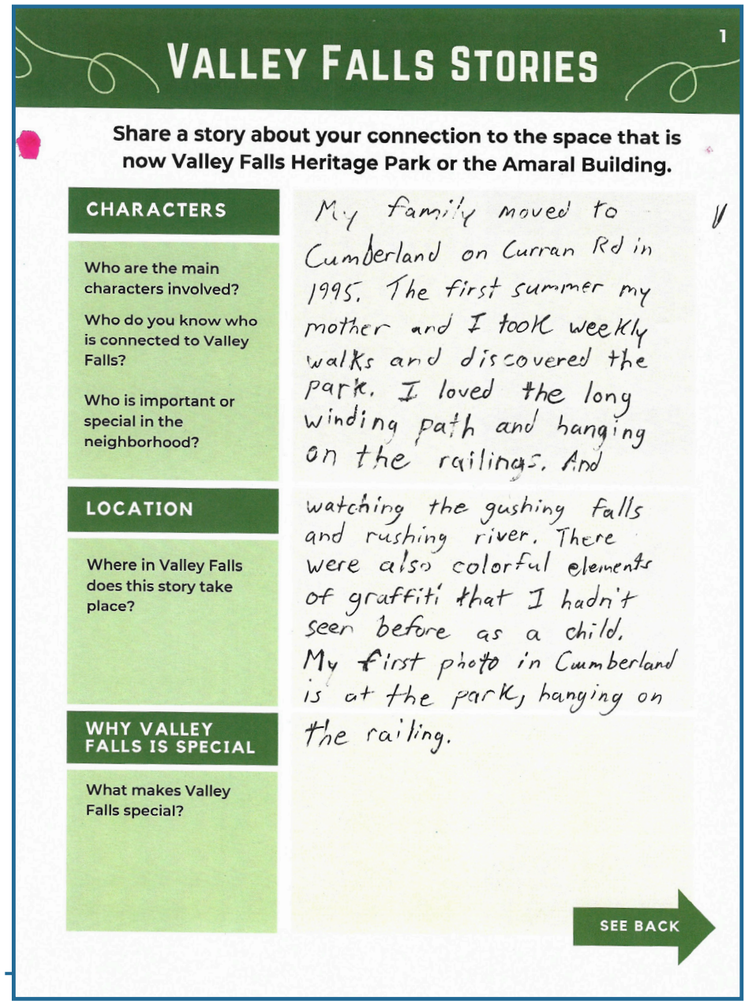






ENGAGEMENT #1: WORKSHOP RESPONSES

STORYTELLING & COMMUNITY DINNER AT JOSEPH L. MCCOURT MIDDLE SCHOOL - *APRIL 15, 2024*



VALLEY FALLS STORIES

1

Share a story about your connection to the space that is now Valley Falls Heritage Park or the Amaral Building.

CHARACTERS

Who are the main characters involved?

Who do you know who is connected to Valley Falls?

Who is important or special in the neighborhood?

LOCATION

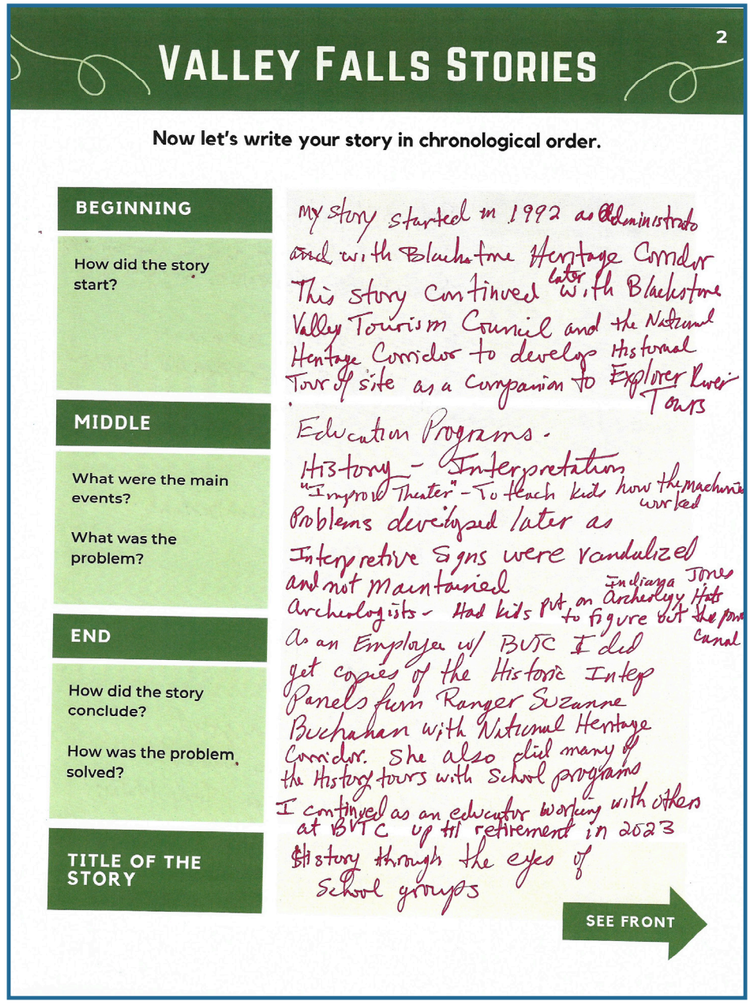
Where in Valley Falls does this story take place?

WHY VALLEY FALLS IS SPECIAL

What makes Valley Falls special?

My family moved to Cumberland on Curran Rd in 1995. The first summer my mother and I took weekly walks and discovered the park. I loved the long winding path and hanging on the railings. And watching the gushing falls and rushing river. There were also colorful elements of graffiti that I hadn't seen before as a child. My first photo in Cumberland is at the park, hanging on the railing.

SEE BACK



VALLEY FALLS STORIES

2

Now let's write your story in chronological order.

BEGINNING

How did the story start?

MIDDLE

What were the main events?

What was the problem?

END

How did the story conclude?

How was the problem solved?

TITLE OF THE STORY

my story started in 1992 as Administrato and with Blackstone Heritage Corridor This story continued later with Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and the National Heritage Corridor to develop Historical Tour of site as a Companion to Explorer River Tours

Education Programs.

History - Interpretation

"Improv Theater" - To teach kids how the machine worked

Problems developed later as Interpretive Signs were vandalized and not maintained

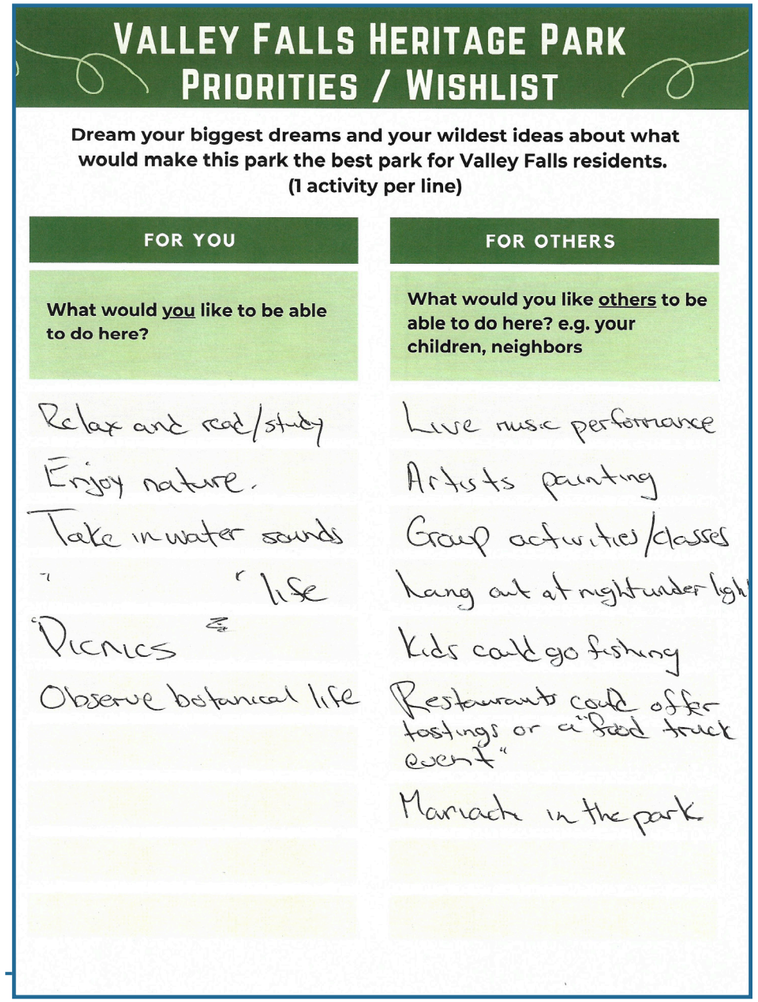
Archeologists - Had kids put on Archeology Hats to figure out the pond canal Indiana Jones

As an Employee w/ BVTC I did get copies of the Historic Intep Panels from Ranger Suzanne Buchanan with National Heritage Corridor. She also did many of the History tours with School programs

I continued as an educator working with others at BVTC up til retirement in 2023

History through the eyes of School groups

SEE FRONT



VALLEY FALLS HERITAGE PARK PRIORITIES / WISHLIST

Dream your biggest dreams and your wildest ideas about what would make this park the best park for Valley Falls residents. (1 activity per line)

FOR YOU	FOR OTHERS
What would you like to be able to do here?	What would you like others to be able to do here? e.g. your children, neighbors
Relax and read/study	Live music performance
Enjoy nature.	Artists painting
Take in water sounds	Group activities/classes
" " life	hang out at night under light
Picnics	Kids could go fishing
Observe botanical life	Restaurants could offer tastings or a "food truck event"
	Mariach in the park

FRONT: WE ASKED THE PARTICIPANTS TO WRITE A STORY ABOUT THEIR CONNECTION TO THE SPACE THAT IS NOW THE VALLEY FALLS HERITAGE PARK OR THE AMARAL BUILDING. THEY HAD TO TELL THE STORY BY SHARING CHARACTERS, A LOCATION, AND WHY VALLEY FALLS IS SPECIAL

BACK: IN THE SECOND PART OF THE EXERCISE, WE ASKED THEM TO WRITE THEIR STORY CHRONOLOGICALLY.

TO UNDERSTAND THEIR WISHES AND DREAMS, WE ASKED PARTICIPANTS TO LIST THEIR WILDEST IDEAS ABOUT WHAT WOULD MAKE THIS PARK THE BEST PARK FOR VALLEY FALLS RESIDENTS—FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR OTHERS.

ENGAGEMENT #1: MEMORIES OF VALLEY FALLS

STORYTELLING & COMMUNITY DINNER AT JOSEPH L. MCCOURT MIDDLE SCHOOL - *APRIL 15, 2024*

ARTIST CREDIT: FELIPE ÁLVAREZ DE TOLEDO LÓPEZ-HERRERA





My family moved to Cumberland in **1995**. That first summer, my mother and I discovered the park. I loved hanging on the railings and watching the rushing river. **My first photo in Cumberland** is at the park, hanging on the railing.

MEMORIES of | RECUERDOS de LEMBRANÇAS de
VALLEY FALLS



Walkable, strong sense of community. Neighbors check in. Food scene.



Valley falls has **a great history** and **natural resources** – trees, water, birds.

Just beyond the fence of my backyard are miles and miles of conservation land, and main street (Broad) is only **3** blocks away. It's **the best of both worlds.**

I had my first picnic here with my boyfriend on a cool spring night in **2023**, on the benches by the water. He used to come here with his mom when he was a kid more than **20** yrs ago. It's **a place that inspires love.**



On the Blackstone shores, we packed out what we packed in, feeling fellowship.





My Eagle Scout troop **cleaned up Heritage Park** in the late **'90s**.

I think of **the Lusitana Club**'s commitment to culture. Also the area's vibrancy when Ann & Hope was in its heyday. Valley Falls was the place to be. I want the area to **embrace its heritage** and culture.

I have been involved in Education Programs since **1992**. We used to do "Improv Theater" – we had kids put on **Indiana Jones Archaeology Hats** to figure out how the machines worked.

My Mother's **high school graduation** took place at town hall. My Grandmother had to walk from Curran Rd.







I bought my house in **1991**. Used to like walking to the park and seeing the different places as they were completed. Slowly, it became **overgrown and neglected.**

I started **voluntering** in **1992** clearing trees for new park, keeping the brush down so you could see the river. The park became a reality, but has gotten overgrown again.



The building is **part of a legacy of giving back**, of working for the American Dream, stories of immigration, opportunity and community. During the Great Depression, my great-grandfather gave away food from his store to feed the hungry. His wife also fed many children in the middle of their schoolday. The picnic table area housed chickens, goats and stray cats.

The building was whatever the community needed.

When Almac's Supermarket went on strike in the **1970s** the grocery store was open **24/7** – had to feed the community.



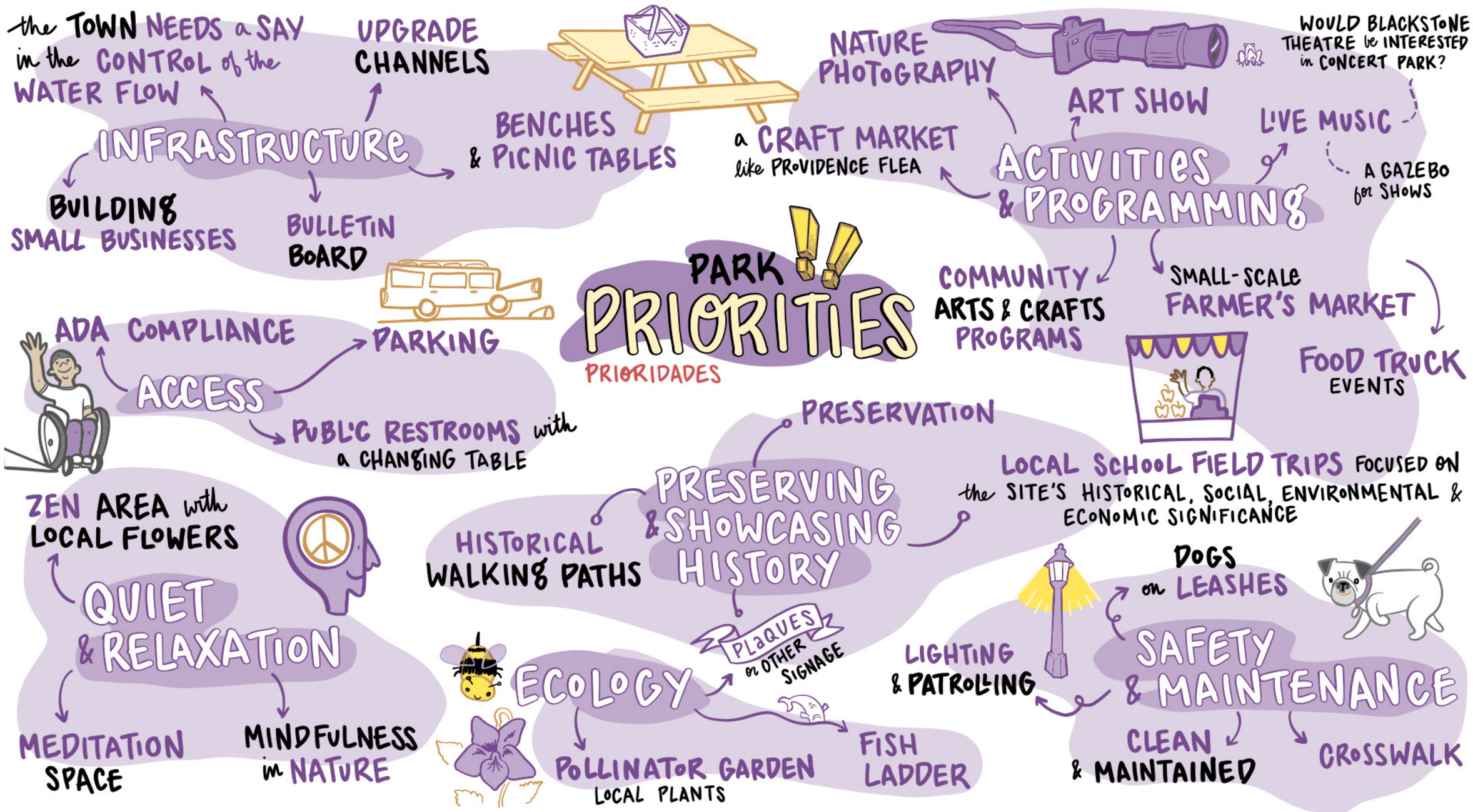
The building **housed several generations of my family**. My great-grandfather, Joaquim Amaral and his family operated the grocery store and lived upstairs for fifty years. He emigrated from Portugal and met his wife, who had also emigrated from Portugal, here.



ENGAGEMENT #1: PARK PRIORITIES

STORYTELLING & COMMUNITY DINNER AT JOSEPH L. MCCOURT MIDDLE SCHOOL - ***APRIL 15, 2024***

ARTIST CREDIT: FELIPE ÁLVAREZ DE TOLEDO LÓPEZ-HERRERA



ENGAGEMENT #1: HOPES AND DREAMS

STORYTELLING & COMMUNITY DINNER AT JOSEPH L. MCCOURT MIDDLE SCHOOL - *APRIL 15, 2024*

ARTIST CREDIT: FELIPE ÁLVAREZ DE TOLEDO LÓPEZ-HERRERA



FIELDWORK

WEEK-LONG FIELDWORK (APRIL 22-26, 2024)

To supplement our community outreach, a week-long community fieldwork took place to meet with and interview key community members. We needed to have in-depth conversations with them and facilitate the opportunity for informal discussions to emerge and lengthier conversations to occur.

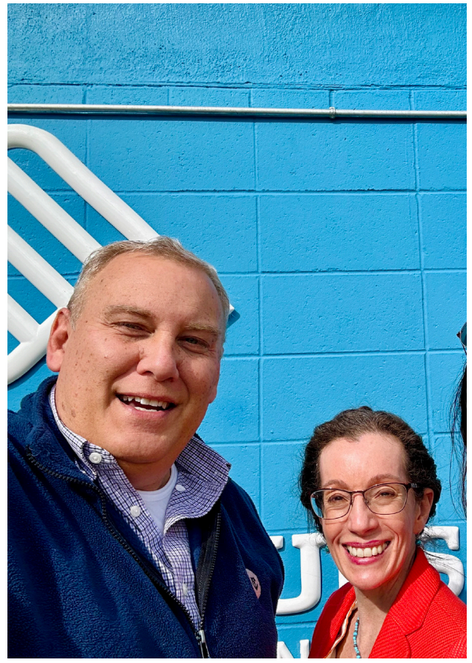
All formal interviews took place in Cumberland, with three taking place either via Zoom or over the phone. Informal conversations were also had with staff at local restaurants and other local businesses. Completed interviews were with:

- Four Residents
- McCourt Middle School
- Norton Elementary School
- Clube Juventude Lusitana
- Owner, Colonial Bakery
- Blackstone Watershed Council & Member of Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band
- Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
- Owner, Brancos Barbershop
- Owner, Broad Street Hair Salon

These conversations were vital in bringing our attention to their specific concerns, such as the importance of considering school curriculum as part of the design, fish ladders and current ecological efforts, and security needs. They were also crucial in describing usage patterns and likes of the community.

"I go up the stairs and sometimes two times around.
I love the river. I sit and think ... you know what keeps me alive? My songs. ... I write one or two songs a day. I write about the river."

- Resident who lives near the park













ENGAGEMENT #1: OUTCOMES AND FEEDBACK

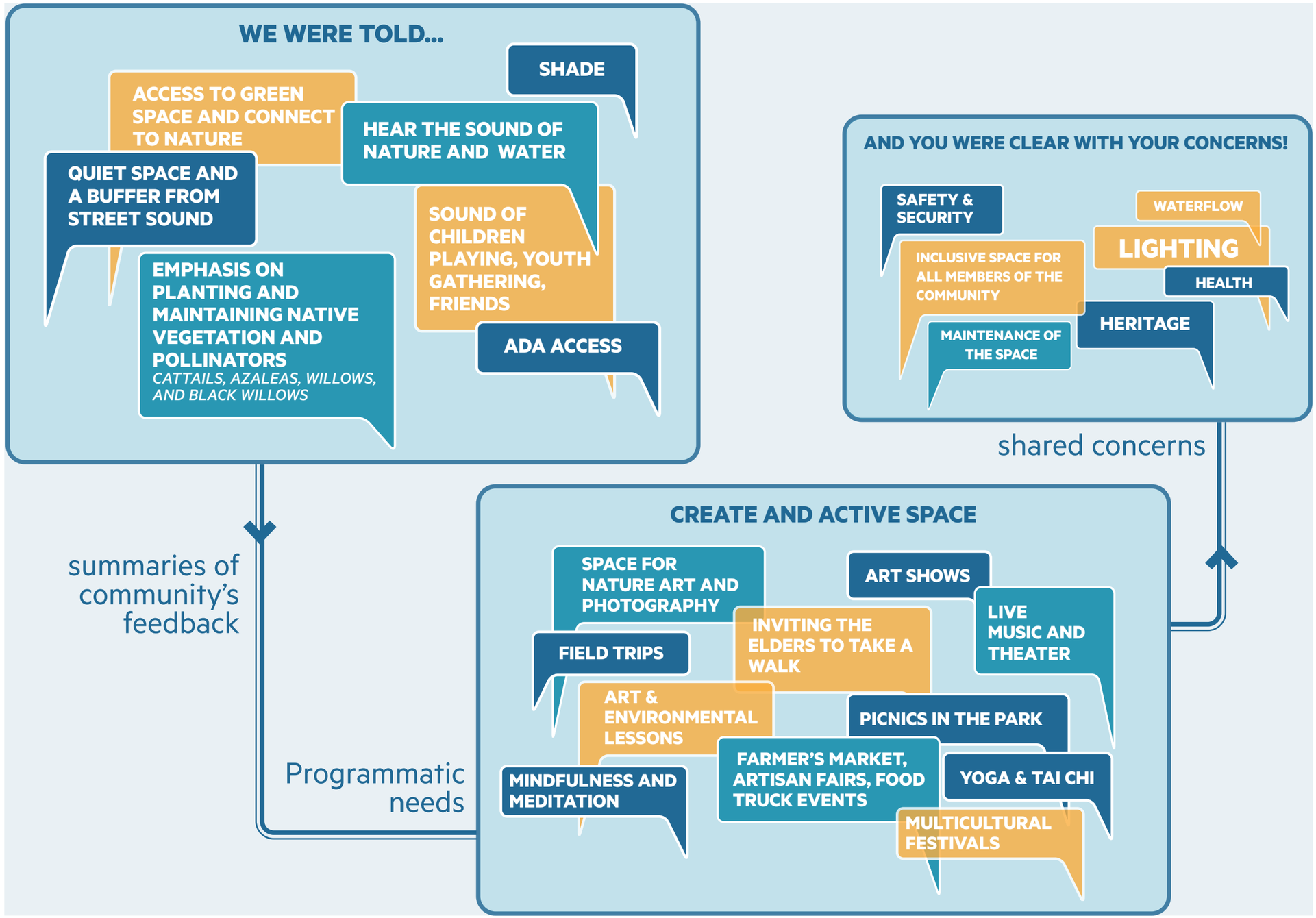
STORYTELLING & COMMUNITY DINNER - *POST ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK*

As we distilled the feedback we had collected over the first phase of the project, it became clear that there are important pieces to the work that needs to be foregrounded and acknowledged as we move forward.

Foreground and Acknowledge:

- Indigenous caretakers
- People who worked in the mill
- People who built Valley Falls
- Immigration to the Town
- River's role and current efforts to restore
- Historic/revilitalized role of the Amaral

Residents emphasized that the park needed to be activated, inviting, well-maintained, and safe. These themes would be repeated throughout each phase of the engagement process.



ENGAGEMENT #2: IN-PERSON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

IN-PERSON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT CLUB JUVENTUDE LUSITANA - ***MAY 14, 2024***

We presented the community with two design options during the in-person event: Valley Rooms and River Overlooks. We designed the engagement space to allow people to move and rotate around the room, ask us questions, and create personable conversations with various team members. Each of the design options was supplemented with a set of diagrams outlining passive and active programs, canopy and ground cover, and trail paths. Participants had the opportunity to rate each design, what they liked, and what they were concerned about. Later, we offered the participants a chance to leave their notes as we presented them with two questions: What did we miss? What are your concerns?

We supplemented this with an online survey over the course of approximately two weeks. We received 39 survey respondents (in English and Portuguese).

Using the results of this process, we worked with the Town to review feedback, alleviate concerns, and revise the design as we built consensus.



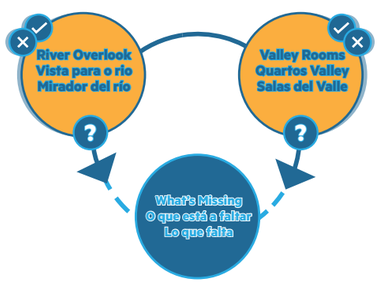












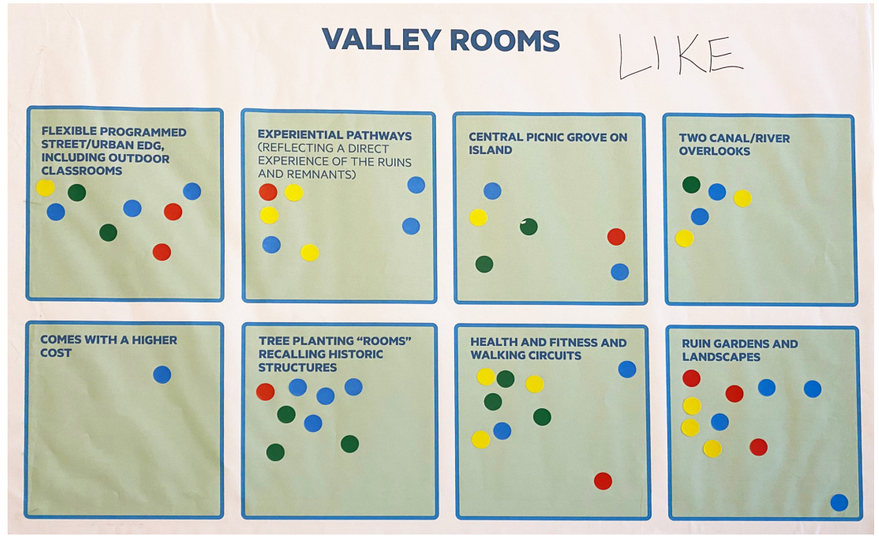
ENGAGEMENT #2: WORKSHOP RESPONSES

IN-PERSON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT CLUB JUVENTUDE LUSITANA - *MAY 14, 2024*

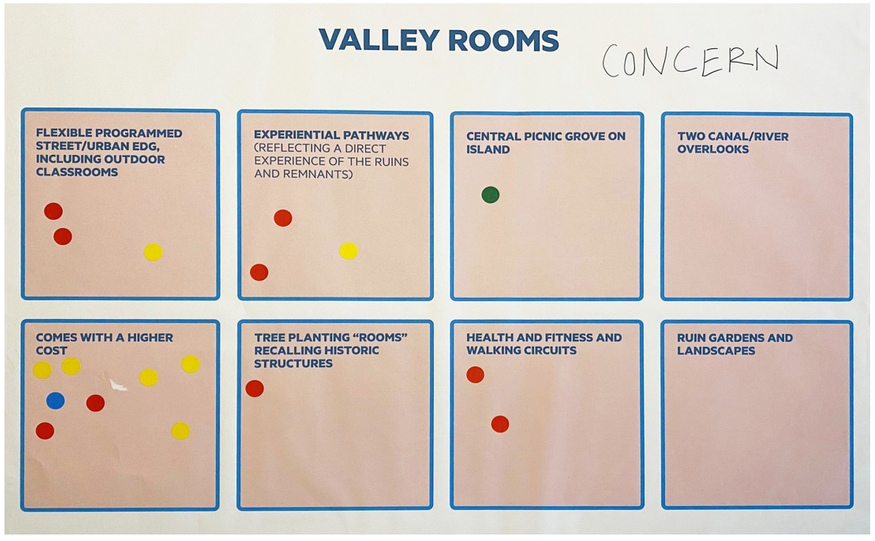
VALLEY ROOMS ----------> LIKES



- FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMED STREET/ URBAN EDGE, INCLUDING OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS
- EXPERIENTIAL PATHWAYS (REFLECTING A DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF THE RUINS AND REMNANTS
- CENTRAL PICNIC GROVE ON ISLAND
- TWO CANAL/RIVER OVERLOOKS
- COMES WITH A HIGHER COST
- TREE PLANTING “ROOMS” RECALLING HISTORIC STRUCTURES
- HEALTH AND FITNESS AND WALKING CIRCUITS
- RUIN GARDENS AND LANDSCAPES



CONCERNS



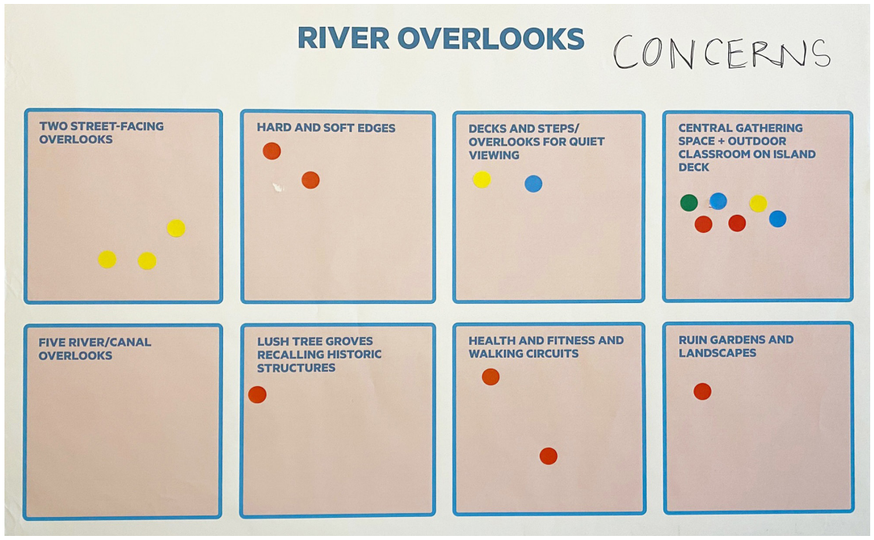
RIVER OVERLOOKS ----------> LIKES



- TWO STREET-FACING OVERLOOKS
- HARD AND SOFT EDGES
- DECKS AND STEPS/OVERLOOKS FOR QUIET VIEWING
- CENTRAL GATHERING SPACE + OUTDOOR CLASSROOM ON ISLAND DECK
- FIVE RIVER/CANAL OVERLOOKS
- LUSH TREE GROVES RECALLING HISTORIC STRUCTURES
- HEALTH AND FITNESS AND WALKING CIRCUITS
- RUIN GARDENS AND LANDSCAPES



CONCERNS



ENGAGEMENT #2: WHAT DID WE MISS?

IN-PERSON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT CLUB JUVENTUDE LUSITANA - *MAY 14, 2024*

As we reflected on the responses and feedback we had received during the in-person engagement event, we were able to categorize the input into three main categories: **Program and Activities, Logistics and Management, and finally, Amenities and Utilities.**

In this portion of the responses, we asked, ***What did we miss?*** This straightforward question aims to reveal the key values the community is looking for, which our design proposals should have accounted for. Additionally, it showed that as we moved forward, clearer and simpler diagrams needed to accompany the proposal to help explain key design features, particularly regarding ADA access and ramps.

PROGRAM & ACTIVITIES

- **kayak / paddling** (at the very end)
- **Flower garden / create a destination at the "ruin garden"**
- **Adaptability & multipurpose**
- **Historical stories of the area** (create a curriculum for schools)
- **Interactive area for kids**

LOGISTICS & MANAGEMENT

- **Future upkeep of the park / Maintenance problems**
- **Security and security cameras**
- **Trees adaptability**

AMENITIES & UTILITIES

- **Lighting**
- **Seating**
- **ADA access**
- **Dedicated food truck space**
- **Additional parking**

FEEDBACK SUMMARIZED BY THE TEAM

ENGAGEMENT #2: WHAT ARE YOUR CONCERNS?

IN-PERSON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT CLUB JUVENTUDE LUSITANA - ***MAY 14, 2024***

We collected the concerns of all participants to share their opinions with the Town and the team on what they think could potentially jeopardize the project moving forward or the viability of the proposals in the long run.

PROGRAM & ACTIVITIES

- **Attraction for kids** (all ages)
- **ADD: elevated island platform to Valley Rooms**
- **ADD: dramatic overlook to Valley Rooms**

LOGISTICS & MANAGEMENT

- **Maintenance** (regular upkeep) **+ winter maintenance**
- **Hydro power taking over the river water**
- **Island river noise may not be conducive to classroom**
- **Watering of plants and trees**

AMENITIES & UTILITIES

- **Parking**
- **School bus parking / Drop off**
- **Parking idea: Backing into Mill St** (highly trafficked road)

FEEDBACK SUMMARIZED BY THE TEAM

ENGAGEMENT #2: DESIGN REFLECTION

After we had reviewed the community's feedback, a detailed process took place with the Town to hear their input and design preferences. We were able to identify some of the likes, concerns, and suggestions for each of the proposals. This information was critical as it highlighted the key elements desired to remain, or be altered, or removed as we developed the preferred design.

As you will see in the later sections of the report, the final design captures elements from both proposals to create a comprehensive approach to the park. For instance, we incorporated the Town's preference for a larger porch at Broad Street from Valley Rooms, while also integrating the simpler path from River Overlooks.

LIKES

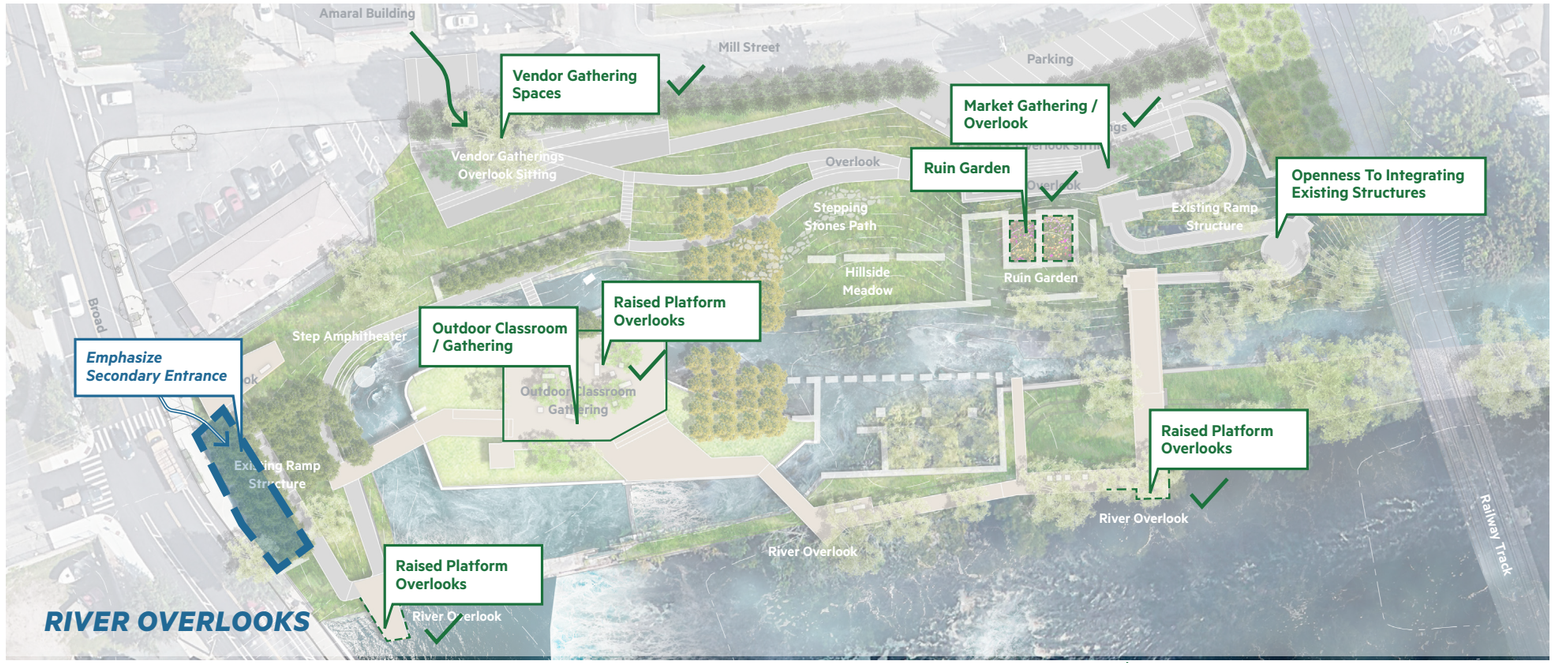
- Raised platform for viewing dramatic overlooks
- Vendor gathering spaces
- Natural circulation

SUGGESTIONS

- *Incorporate Broad St. porch to emphasize secondary entrance*

OTHER CONCERNS

- Bathrooms *(at Amaral Building)*
- Interpretive signage
- Lighting
- Maintenance
- Safety and security

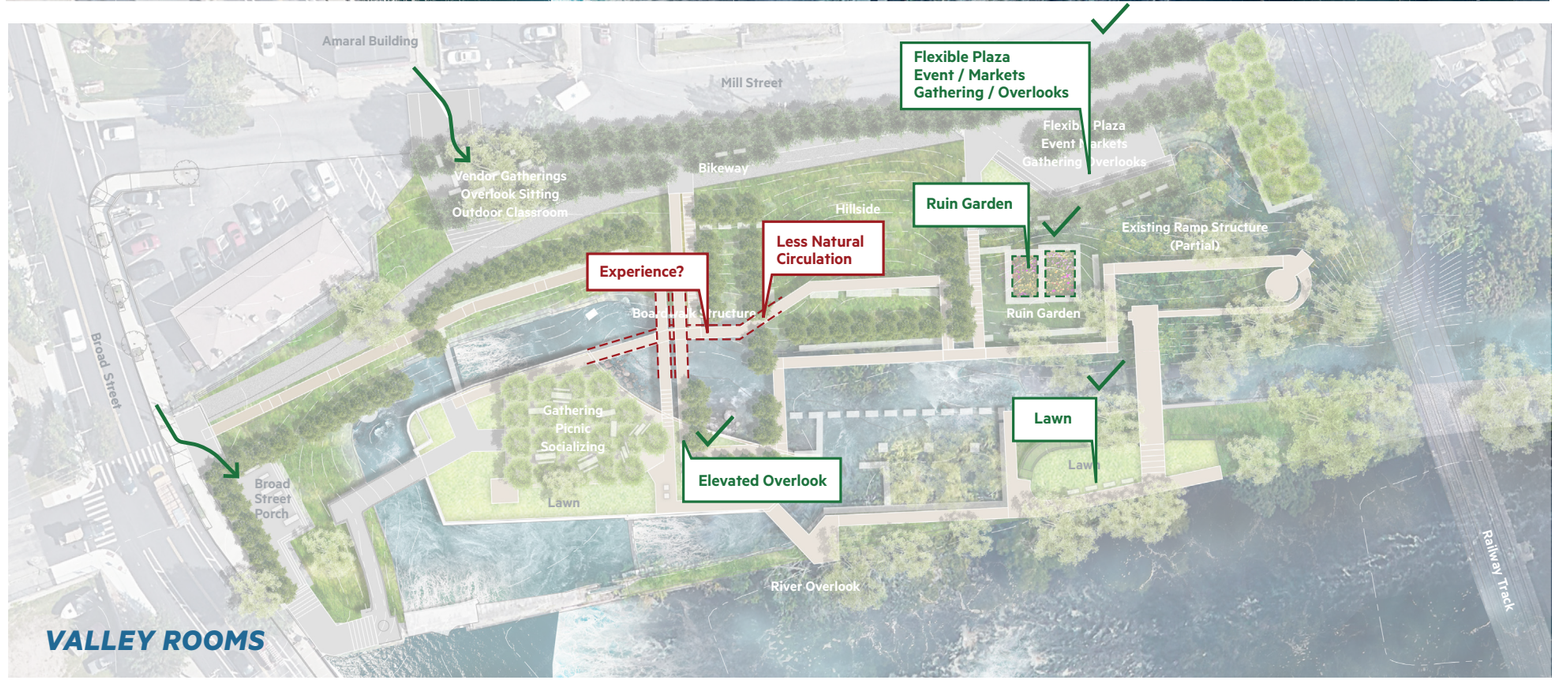


LIKES

- Like gathering space *(prefer River Overlooks)*
- Flexible plaza space
- Vendor gathering spaces
- People liked the ruin garden

CONCERNS

- Questions on how are these tracings actually experienced
- Circulation feels less natural
- Bathrooms *(at Amaral Building)*
- Interpretive signage
- Lighting
- Maintenance
- Safety and security



ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES

LAUNCHED AFTER THE WORKSHOP AND RAN FOR 13 DAYS

39 TOTAL RESPONSES
38 (ENGLISH) + 1 (PORTUGUESE)

VALLEY ROOMS



LIKES

Valley Rooms - Survey	English	Portuguese	TOTAL	%
*Ruin gardens and landscapes	18	1	19	54%
*Flexible programmed street/urban edge; outdoor classrooms	17	0	17	49%
Central picnic grove on island	17	0	17	49%
Experiential pathways	16	0	16	46%
Health and fitness and walking circuits	13	0	13	37%
Two canal/river overlooks	9	0	9	26%
Tree planting “rooms” recalling historic structures	5	1	6	17%
Comes with a higher cost	0	0	0	0%

CONCERNS

Valley Rooms - Survey	English	Portuguese	TOTAL	%
Comes with a higher cost	18	1	19	53%
I have no concerns	11	0	11	31%
Flexible programmed street/urban edge, including outdoor classrooms	5	0	5	14%
Tree planting “rooms” recalling historic structures	5	0	5	14%
Central picnic grove on island	4	0	4	11%
Two canal/river overlooks	2	0	2	6%
Health and fitness and walking circuits	2	0	2	6%
Ruin gardens and landscapes	2	0	2	6%
Experiential pathways (reflecting a direct experience of the ruins and remnants)	0	0	0	0%

RIVER OVERLOOKS



LIKES

River Overlooks - Survey	English	Portuguese	TOTAL	%
Five river/canal overlooks	20	1	21	58%
Ruin gardens and landscapes	17	1	18	50%
Central gathering space + outdoor classroom on island deck	17	0	17	47%
Decks and steps/overlooks for quiet viewing	15	0	15	42%
Lush tree groves recalling historic structures	11	1	12	33%
Health and fitness and walking circuits	12	0	12	33%
Two street-facing overlooks	6	0	6	17%
Hard and soft edges	2	0	2	6%

CONCERNS

River Overlooks - Survey	English	Portuguese	TOTAL	%
I have no concerns	22	1	23	64%
Lush tree groves recalling historic structures	7	0	7	19%
Ruin gardens and landscapes	4	0	4	11%
Two street-facing overlooks	3	0	3	8%
Hard and soft edges	2	0	2	6%
Decks and steps/overlooks for quiet viewing	2	0	2	6%
Central gathering space + outdoor classroom on island deck	2	0	2	6%
Health and fitness and walking circuits	2	0	2	6%
Five river/canal overlooks	0	0	0	0%

ENGAGEMENT #3: WORKSHOP RESPONSES

HYBRID COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT CUMBERLAND TOWN HALL - ***JUNE 17, 2024***

Presenting the final design to the community was an exciting opportunity to see the community come together one last time and review the design they have eagerly awaited since the very beginning. This hybrid engagement was intended to allow the participants to continue to do so without the burden of needing to be there in person. The hybrid portion of the engagement was held via Zoom.

We presented the design in an interactive manner. Participants were given the opportunity to move around the Town Hall, ask questions, and examine the proposal closely. Zoom participants also received a link to a slideshow with the same images that participants at the Town Hall were able to look at. This interactive approach allowed the participants to engage with the design and understand the design narrative visually as it unfolded.

The response portion of the engagement was structured into three main parts. First, we asked how they felt about the design overall. As seen below in the diagram, we used a simple voting technique to understand their general feeling.



HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE DESIGN OVERALL?



FEEDBACK FROM FIRST PORTION OF THE ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGEMENT #3: HYBRID COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

HYBRID COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT CUMBERLAND TOWN HALL - ***JUNE 17, 2024***

Participants met in small groups to discuss their questions, concerns, and suggestions about the proposed design. Online participants were also put into breakouts where they could engage in the same conversation. Each small group and breakout was facilitated. At the end of the discussion period, each group facilitator shared their group's top 2 questions, concerns, or comments.

This portion was equally critical to understand where additional clarifications may be needed or trust-building to emphasize.

Participants expressed a strong appreciation for gardens with native plants and the self-maintaining pollinator meadow. They were excited about improved accessibility, river overlooks, and historical-modern design integration. Overall, there was much enthusiasm for features like the fish ladder, Broad Street deck, and overall sanctuary-like feel of the park.

Maintenance and safety continue to be key concerns that residents have. In addition, participants asked questions about the impact that climate change, specifically flooding, might have on the park as well as about parking availability during events.

Importantly, participants urged the Town to continue to engage the community and promote the park's redesign process to ensure a successful reconstruction and activation.

















PROPOSED DESIGN


Cumberland Town Hall
Amaral Building
Mill Street
Vendor Gatherings
Overlook sitting
Overlook
Market Gatherings
Overlook sitting
Stepping
Stones Path
Existing Ramp Structure
(Partial)
Boardwalk Structure
Hillside
Meadow
Ruin Garden
Broad Street
Outdoor Classroom
Gathering
Lawn
Lawn
Broad
Street
Porch
River Overlook
Railway Track
Blackstone River
0
25'
50'
N
Town of Cumberland

PROPOSED DESIGN

BY WORKING ON CREATING NEW, DIVERSIFIED, FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMATIC SETTINGS, THE DESIGN IS A REFLECTION OF HOW THE PARK IS REVITALIZED FOR NEW USES, NEW PROGRAMS, AND A BROADER AUDIENCE.

The design celebrates the site's built and natural history through its reference to the historic mill and building configuration all the whilst celebrating the existing hydrological condition. It aims to create a multi-layered design that speaks to history, topography, water flows, and the existing remnants and ruins, making a visible connection across these narratives.

Respecting the historical mill's footprint, the project's design carefully integrates circulation, planting, and open spaces in, around, and within these remnants. They balance subtle and bold design gestures, rethinking the user's experience by introducing overlooks and plazas. Tree planting, new infrastructure, and intentional application of ecologies become opportunities to address the need for more visibility and create meticulously choreographed sightlines and viewsheds.

Functionally, the design works through layering several programmatic possibilities to create designated social spaces that can work independently or collectively. This is done through designing spaces that embed a great deal of flexibility as these sites perform different functions and roles depending on needs, users, and seasons to accommodate various functions. Through this layered programmatic approach, the park spaces become opportunities that foster resiliency, vitality, social equity, health, community, and environmental health, expanding new possibilities to the site. The potential benefits for the community, environment, and social equity are significant, offering a hopeful outlook for the future of the park.



DESIGN ELEMENTS



PATHWAYS: INCLUSIVITY IS AT THE HEART OF OUR DESIGN APPROACH. WE HAVE CAREFULLY CRAFTED A SERIES OF PATHWAYS THAT CONNECT THE DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS AND ELEVATIONS, ENSURING THAT EVERYONE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR ABILITIES, CAN FULLY EXPERIENCE THE PARK.

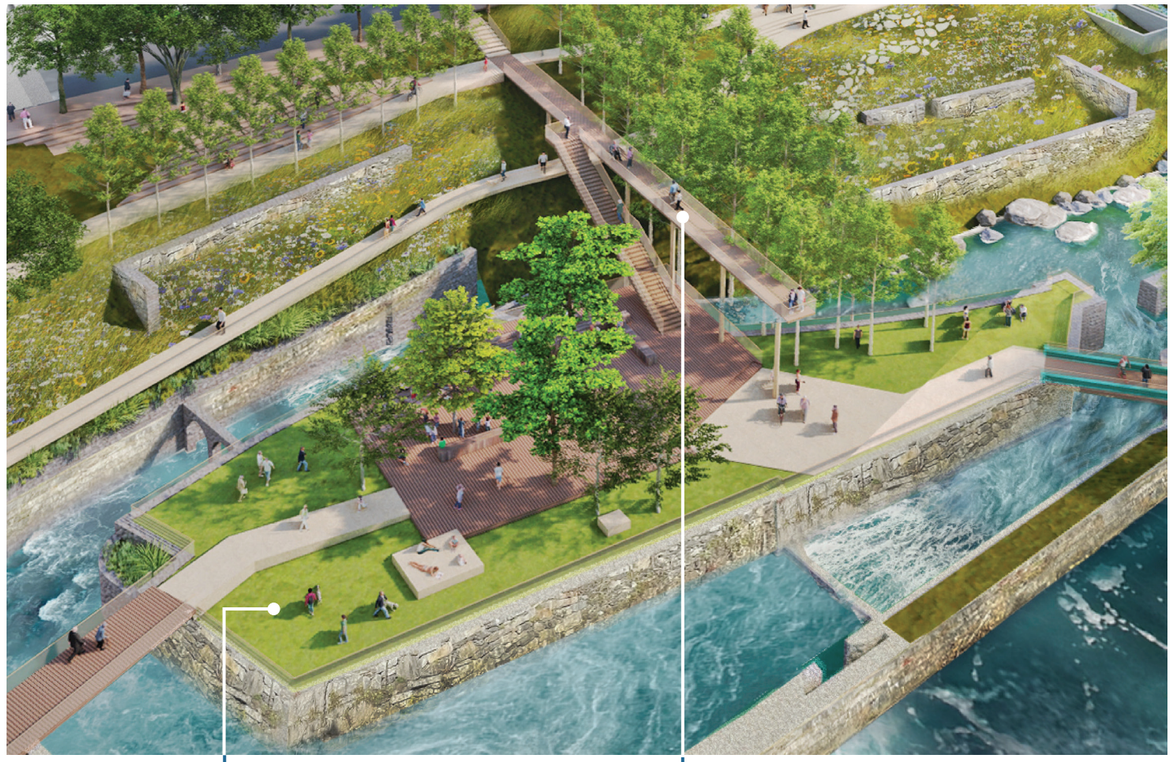
EXPERIENCE

***PATHS:** THIS IS A MEDIUM USED TO EXPERIENCE THE PARK AND ITS VIEWS. PAUSING, MEANDERING, OR MOVING ALONG THE SITE ARE CRAFTED AS PART OF THE DESIGN GESTURES USED ACROSS THE PARK.*

FLEXIBLE PLAZA: USING A SERIES OF ACCESSIBLE PATHS, RAMPS, AND STEPS, UNIQUE KEY MOMENTS CREATE DEFINED VIGNETTES AND INTEGRATE SEATWALLS AND OVERLOOKS THAT NOT ONLY FRAME VIEWS BUT ALSO CREATE SOCIAL AND ENGAGING EXPERIENCES, DRAWING PEOPLE INTO SMALL AND LARGE EVENTS ALL YEAR LONG.

EXPERIENCE

***FRAMED VIEWS:** TREE PLANTING AND SUBTLE ELEVATIONAL CHANGE FRAMES VIEW VANTAGES CONNECTING CIVIC SURROUNDINGS WITH THE RIVER.*



ISLAND: THE ISLAND FEATURES A TIMBER DECK PLATFORM THAT CLEVERLY OUTLINES THE HISTORIC MILL'S FOOTPRINT WITH LAWN SPACES AROUND THE DECK. MULTIPURPOSE AND MULTI-FUNCTIONAL, THE ISLAND BECOMES THE HEART OF THE PROJECT, HOSTING FLEXIBLE PROGRAMS/FUNCTIONS. USING MINIMAL AND INTENTIONAL PLANTING ON THE ISLAND, IT BECOMES A BACKDROP TO THE MATERIALS AND NATURAL SYSTEMS AROUND IT.

GRAND OVERLOOK: A STRUCTURALLY ELEVATED OVERLOOK THAT CONNECTS FROM THE STREETSCAPE ACROSS THE SITE BECOMES A DESTINATION POINT FOR PARK USERS.

EXPERIENCE

SENSORIAL EXPERIENCES: *WE CREATE AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE WITH THE SITE'S VIEWS, SOUNDS, AND SURROUNDINGS, FOSTERING A SENSE OF CONNECTION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT.*

DESIGN ELEMENTS



RUIN GARDEN: THIS SUBTLE FEATURE OF COLORFUL PERENNIALS CONTRASTS THE HARSHNESS OF THE EDGES AND RUINS. THE PERENNIAL'S VISUAL IMPACT ON THE RUINS CREATES A HARMONIOUS BLEND OF NATURE AND HISTORY WITHIN THE PARK.

POLLINATOR MEADOW: THE JUXTAPOSITION OF THE POLLINATOR GARDEN AGAINST THE SLOPE WITH A SERIES OF REMNANTS AND RUINS HIGHLIGHTS THE KINSHIP BETWEEN THE HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN USERS OF THE SITE -- CONNECTING THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.



VENDOR AND PARKING SPACE: USING PERMEABLE PAVERS, THIS SPACE IS AN EXTENSION OF THE STREETSCAPE. ON THE ONE HAND, IT CREATES A FUNCTIONAL SPACE NEEDED TO ACCOMMODATE VENDOR SPACE WITH STREET-LEVEL AND VEHICULAR ACCESS. ON THE OTHER, IT HOSTS MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS AND USES ALL YEAR ROUND WITH UNIQUE VIEWS THAT FOREGROUND THE RUIN GARDEN AND THE SURROUNDING REMNANTS.

EXPERIENCE

***REMNANTS:** A KEY POINT THAT THREADS IN DIFFERENT STRUCTURES AND HISTORIES OF THE SITE.*

PORCH: THIS GATEWAY AT BROAD STREET CONNECTS THE PARK TO ITS CIVIC SURROUNDINGS. THE PORCH ACTS AS A VIEWING SPACE FEATURING SEATING THAT OVERLOOKS THE ISLAND.

RIVER OVERLOOKS: SEVERAL OVERLOOKS ARE FEATURED ALONG THE WATER, OFFERING A UNIQUE EXPERIENTIAL OPPORTUNITY. USERS ARE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARK AND WATER WHERE THE NATURAL WATERFLOW, SOUND, AND MOMENTUM ARE ALL PART OF THE DESIGN EXPERIENCE.

EXPERIENCE

CANTILEVER: *BOLD GESTURES CREATE AN INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE WITH THE WATER*

VIEW: FROM RIVER OVERLOOK TO WATERFALL & ISLAND



VIEW: FROM POLLINATOR MEADOW PATH LOOKING EAST ALONG HILLSIDE



VIEW: FROM FLEXIBLE EVENT PLAZA TO RUIN GARDEN & RIVER



Town of Cumberland

VIGNETTES

ADDITIONAL VIEWS/EXPERIENCE STUDIES

View form overlook **1**
View from Broad Street **2**

1



2



Porch overview at Broad **3**
Street
Study of proposal **4**
without grand overlook

3



4



SECTION


Mill Street
Street level
Entry / Overlook
“Storehouse Grove”
Sitting Overlook
Deck
Stepping Stones Path
Flexible Event Plaza / Parking
Connection to Amaral building
+72.00’
+68.00’
+54.00’
+45.00’

Ruin Garden

Improved Existing Ramp Structure

Blackstone River

Railway Track

River Overlook

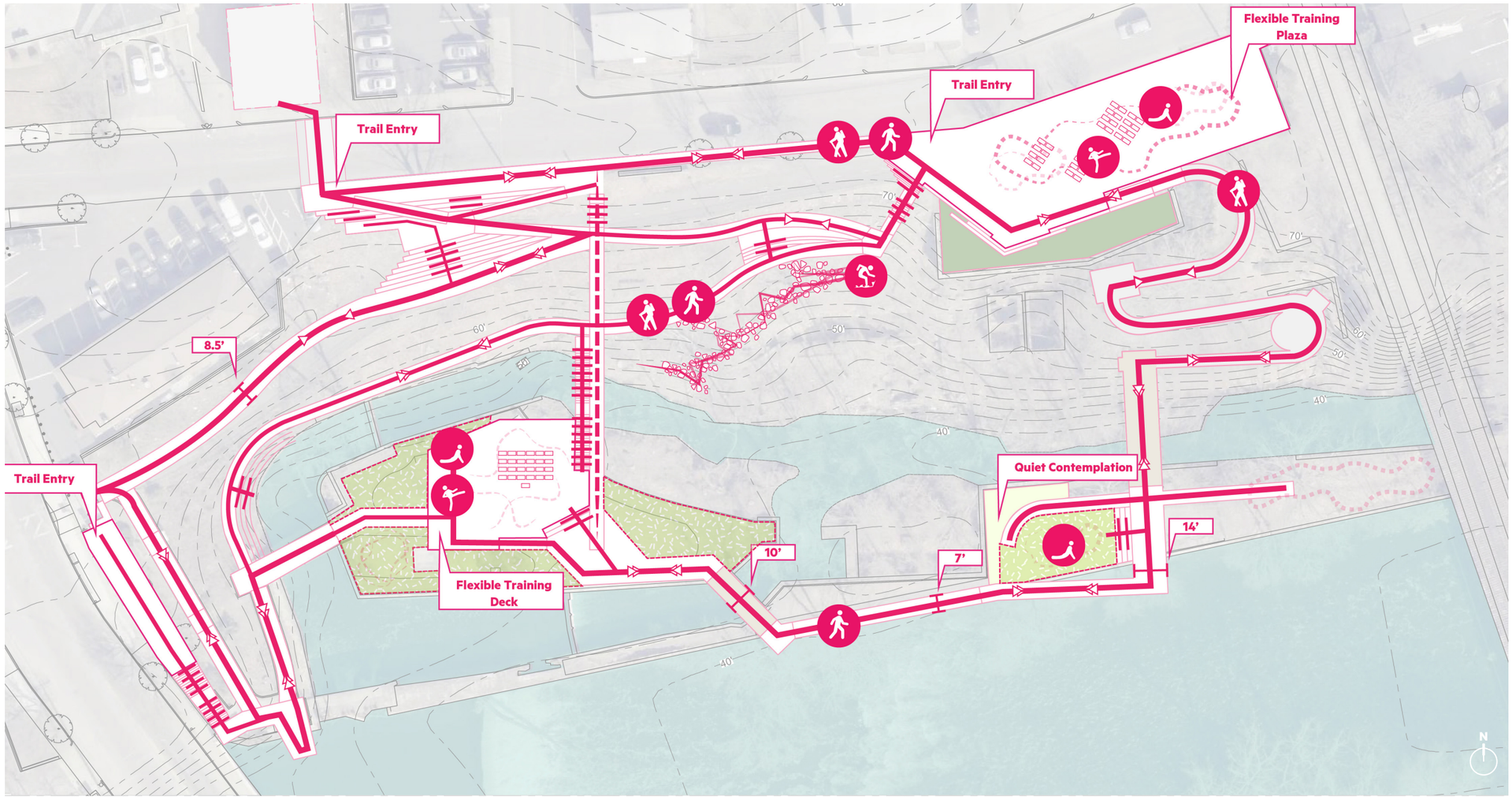
+44.00’

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

LAYERED AND FLEXIBLE PROGRAM: HEALTHY TRAILS AND SPACES

Our program is designed with a strong focus on health, a critical layer we have prioritized in our proposal. The park is not just a place for leisure, but a space that promotes physical well-being. The interconnected paths, stairs, and stepping stones offer a variety of ways to traverse the site, each contributing to the users' physical health. They each offer different lengths, with stepped variations to create a varied level of desired physical activity. This emphasis on health offers a way to rethink the possibilities of flexibility in designing and experiencing the site.

Open spaces like the deck and flexible training plaza are designed to foster community bonding and connection through health-focused activities. They provide community classes and training settings that overlook key site features, all the while ensuring strong programmatic links across the park, creating a cohesive and integrated experience for all users.

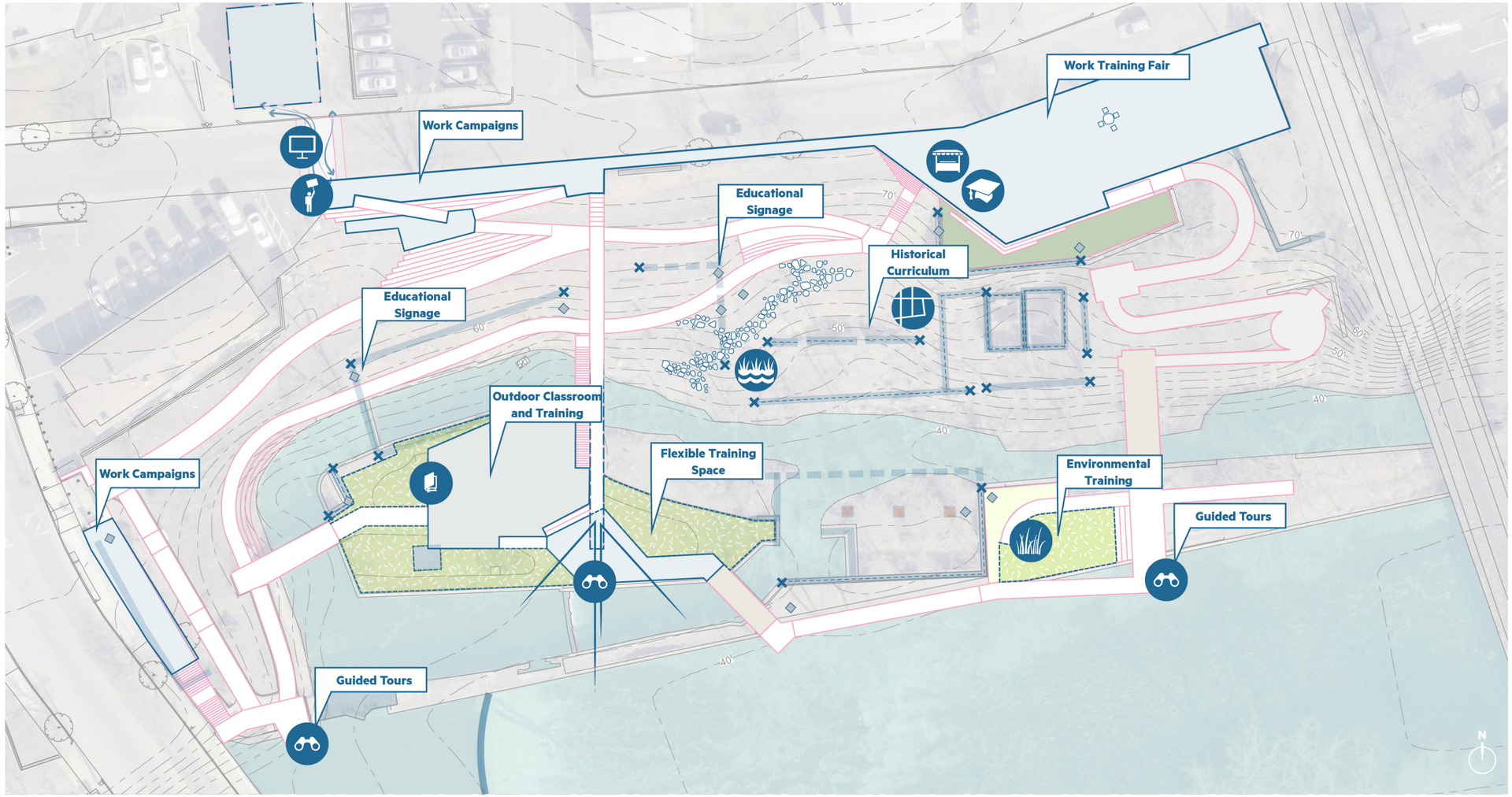


WALKING / EXCERCISE LOOPS, TRAILS, & STEPS

LAYERED AND FLEXIBLE PROGRAM: WORK, TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Work, training, and education are critical features in the park program linked to the Amaral building as it creates a dynamic learning environment. Open spaces become opportunities to create temporary programs, while decks and overlooks are important as they offer connections between learning and experiencing the site surroundings.

This is also an opportunity where educational and interactive signage is embedded within the different park areas to experience and learn about the site. It outlines the opportunity to rethink the potential of an integrated curriculum, highlighting the site's histories, legacies, and environmental features.



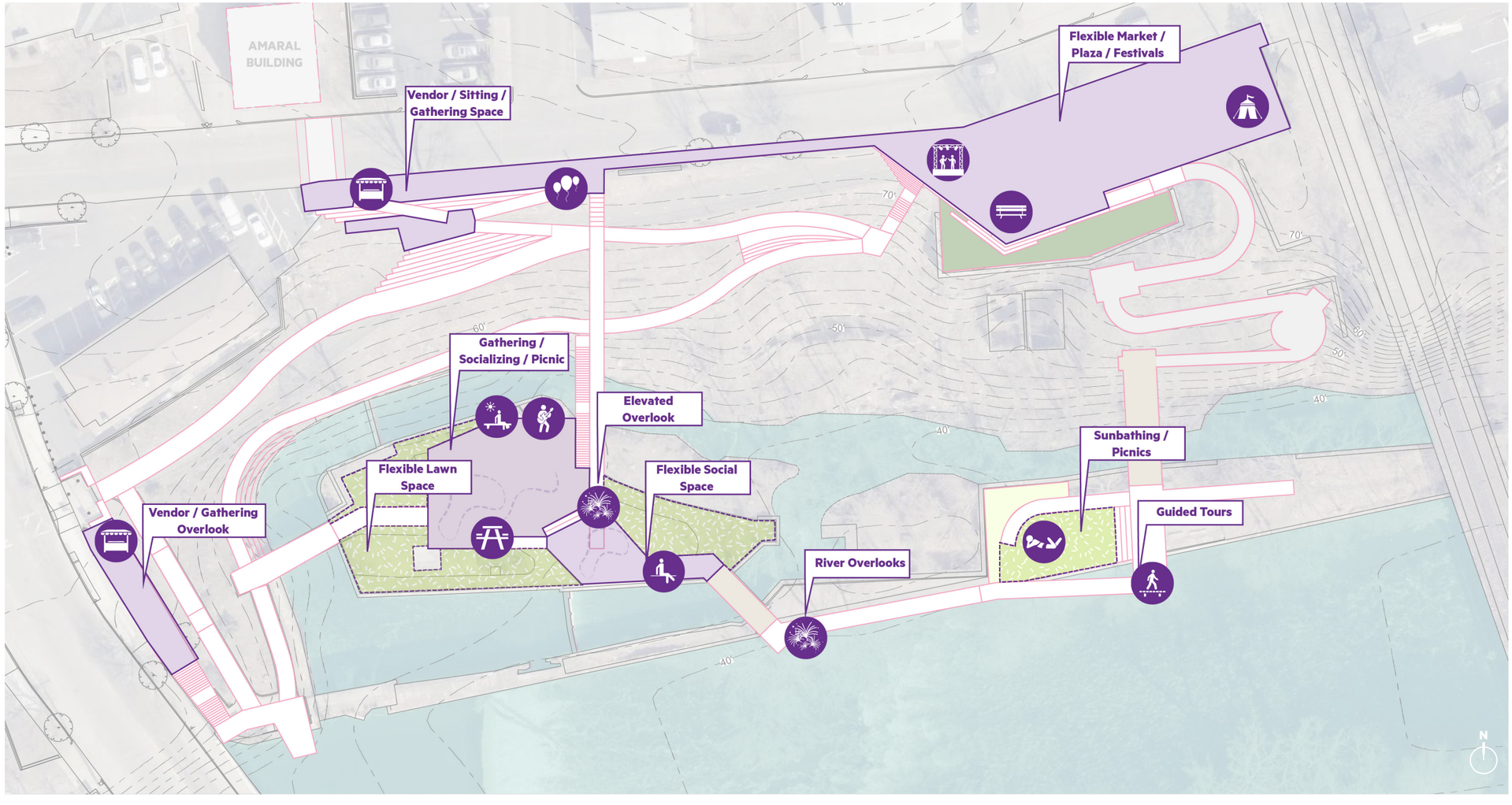
CURRICULUM INTEGRATION (ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS)

LOCATION FOR EDUCATIONAL & INTERACTIVE SIGNAGE

LAYERED AND FLEXIBLE PROGRAM: FLEXIBLE SOCIAL SPACES

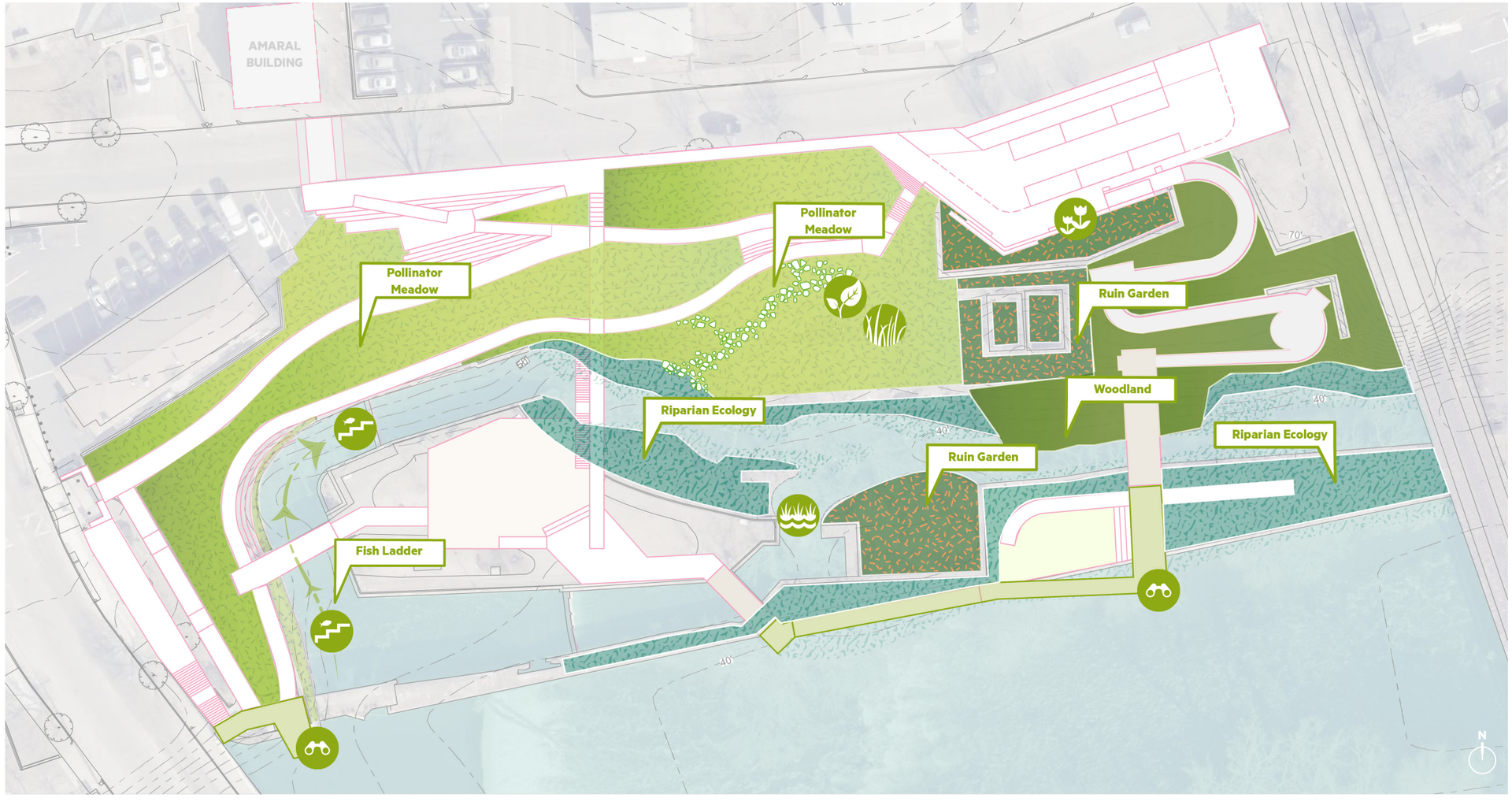
The park is more than just a green space. It's a vibrant hub designed to host a wide range of social activities, uniting the community and offering a space for all its users. This is facilitated by a series of open spaces strategically located in the park. For instance, at Broad Street and Mill Street, flexible open spaces are located where civic connection is easy. Strategically, this is also important to service and support events where vehicular access is vital for many vendors participating in programs such as festivals, markets, and other social events.

The island maintains its role as a leading destination in the park, supported by picnic spaces, open social space, and lawn, as it not only appeals to additional park visitors but also enhances the park's potential for more casual and leisurely activities.



LAYERED AND FLEXIBLE PROGRAM: ECOLOGICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL

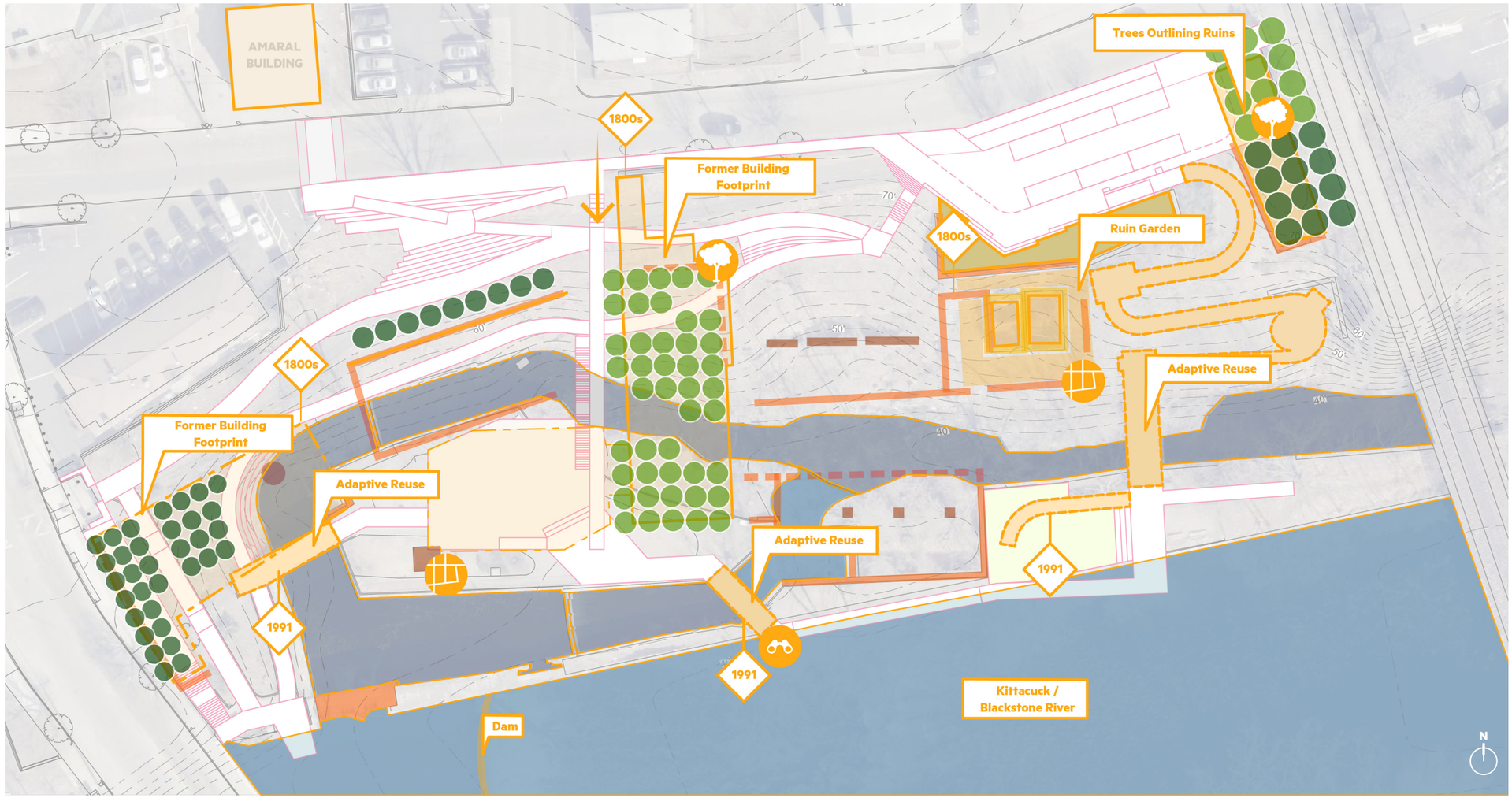
The ecologies flourishing within the park are not isolated entities, but rather interconnected systems that work in harmony to create a rich and diverse environment. The pollinators, ruined gardens, riparian ecologies, woodlands, and fish and aquatic ecologies all play a part in this interconnected web of life, each contributing to the overall ecological balance of the park.



LAYERED AND FLEXIBLE PROGRAM: HISTORICAL REMNANTS

Given this site's unique legacies and histories, we have put in significant efforts to ensure these distinctive features are not only preserved but also experienced and expressed across the park.

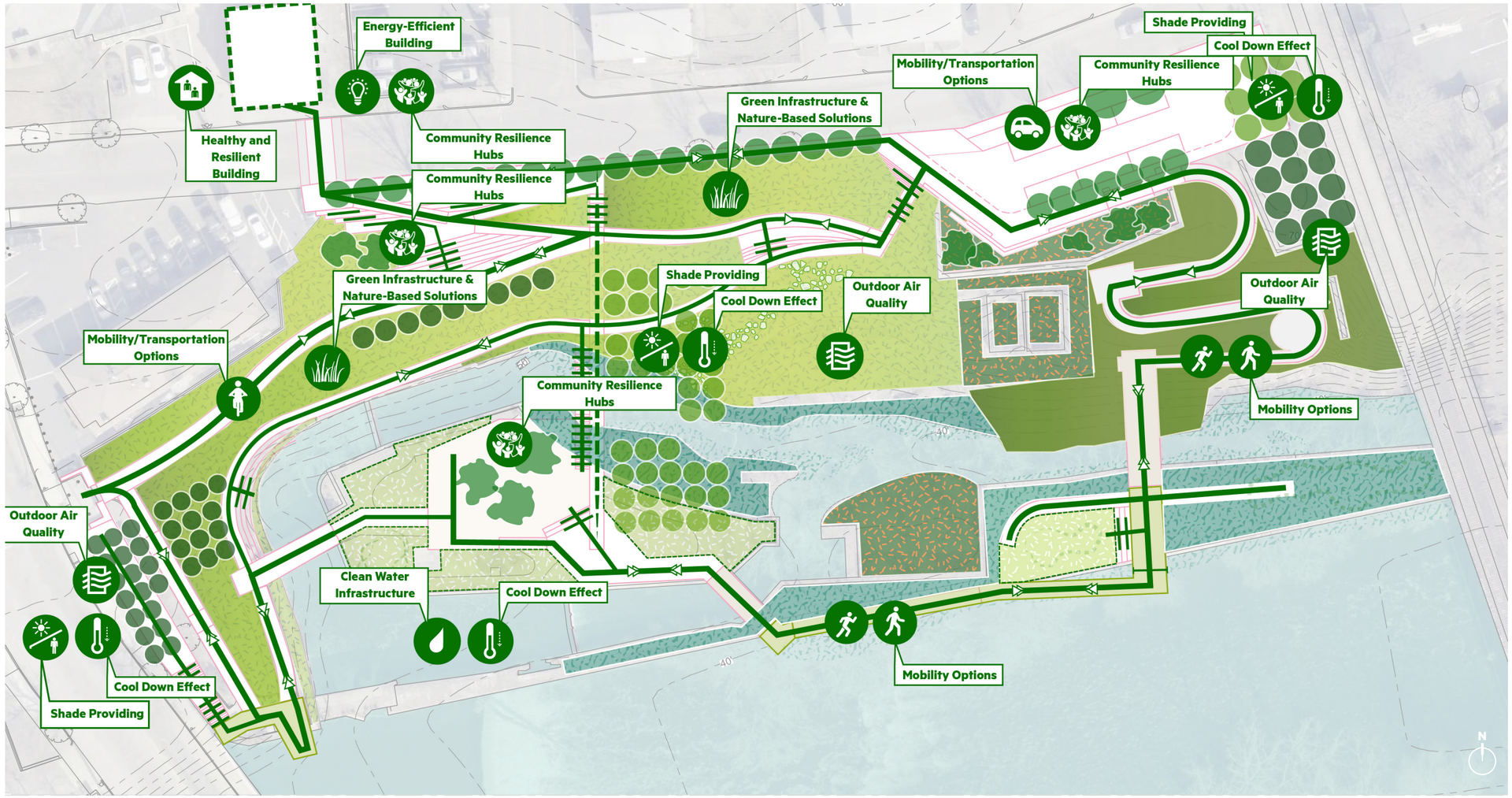
This can be experienced as one moves around the site. Planting and vegetation work together to express the park's rich history. For instance, one can spatially experience the historic building footprint as one walks through the groves, threading in important historical legacies. The design, which meticulously integrates structural elements such as bridges and walls, ensures that these features are celebrated across the site, fostering a sense of connection and engagement with the site's history. This can be seen across different ruins and remnants across the site, and it is emphasized more clearly in areas such as the ruin garden where erected walls still exist.



LAYERED AND FLEXIBLE PROGRAM: ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY

Our proposal is built on the park's adaptive ability, a key strength that we aim to leverage to enhance environmental resiliency. We translate this strength into the site through pollution reduction and climate action strategies, fostering engagement and agency.

We do this through a comprehensive series of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions for stormwater management, vegetation to provide shade and cooling effect, enhancing air qualities, clean water infrastructure for the aquatic ecologies, and equal and accessible mobility and transportation options.



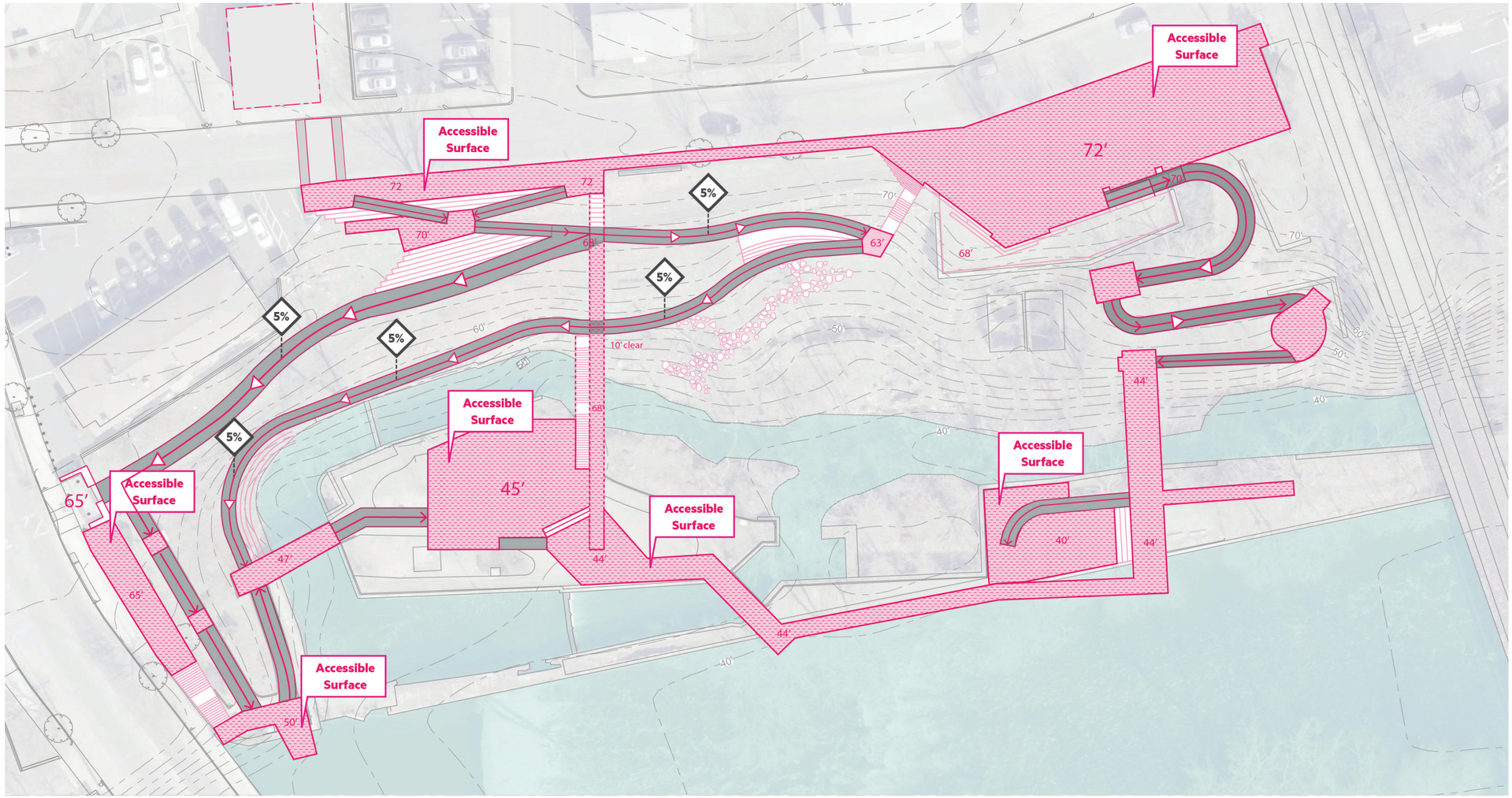
INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES

CONNECTIVITY: MOBILITY AND CIRCULATION

UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY TO ALL PARTS OF THE PARK

Our design philosophy is firmly rooted in the principles of equity, which seeks to create equal experiences and qualities for all users. We strive for the park to embed equity through visibility, mobility, accessibility, and inclusivity, creating a space enjoyed and valued.

Using a series of paths, ramps, bridges, and steps, the park allows all users, regardless of their mobile ability, to move around and experience every aspect of the site. As previously demonstrated in our site analysis, the existing ramps, although lead you into the park, are disconnected. Therefore, with the introduction of the deck and overlooks, we are able to connect the design functionally, programmatically, and experientially together.



This diagram illustrates, in pink, the connecting surfaces that would be accessible for a person in a wheelchair.

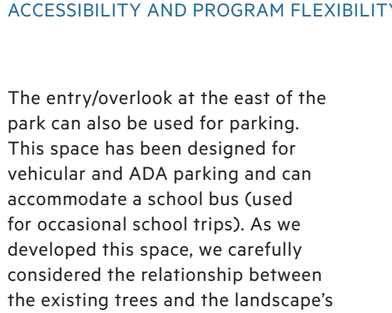
PARKING

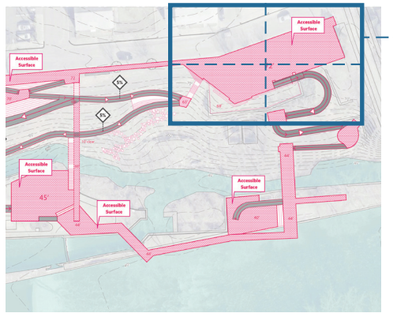
ACCESSIBILITY AND PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY

The entry/overlook at the east of the park can also be used for parking. This space has been designed for vehicular and ADA parking and can accommodate a school bus (used for occasional school trips). As we developed this space, we carefully considered the relationship between the existing trees and the landscape's connection with the streetscape to create a buffer yet maintain visual connectivity.

Key design features:

- 6 parking spots total
- 1 ADA parking spot
- Tabletop flexible plaza with parking integrated parking
- Integrating existing trees with new proposed tree groves







VISIBILITY AND VISUAL CONNECTIVITY

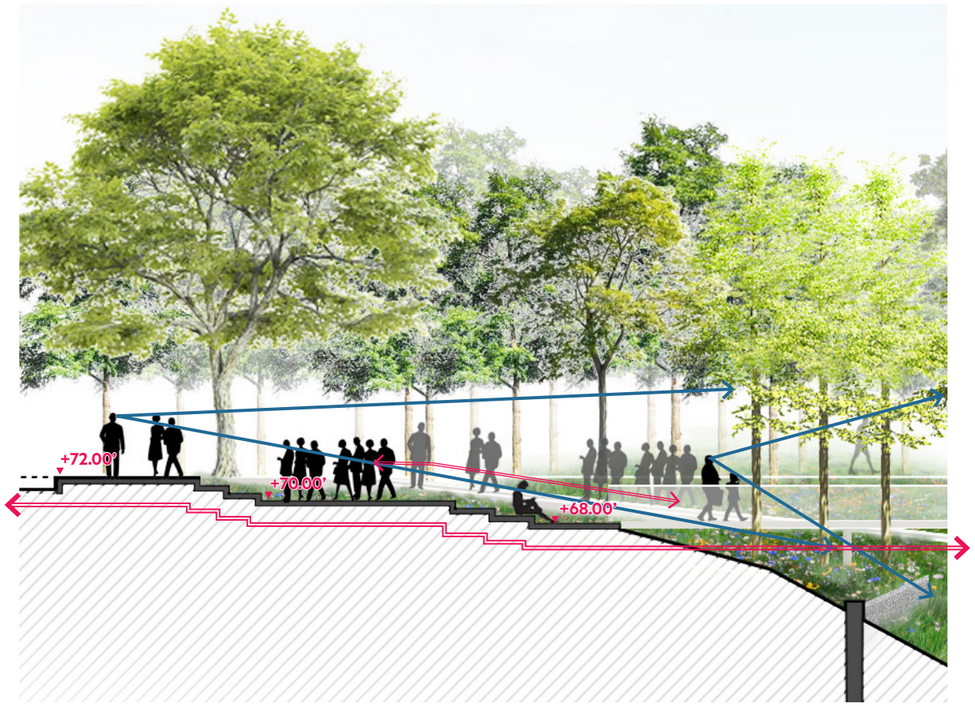
Visual openness is a critical challenge that we need to prioritize in our design approach. Through the connected plazas, steps, ramps, and deliberate planting design, we create opportunities for framed view vestiges, choreographed experiences, and visual connection, enhancing the sensory experiences our design creates. This includes elements such as color, texture, and sound to create a dynamic and engaging environment.

As these design experiences are layered, they become integral to the park's identity and immersive experience. The design creates that openness by clearing out the visual impact of the overgrown vegetation using circulation to bridge the streetscape and river.



EXISTING





PROPOSED

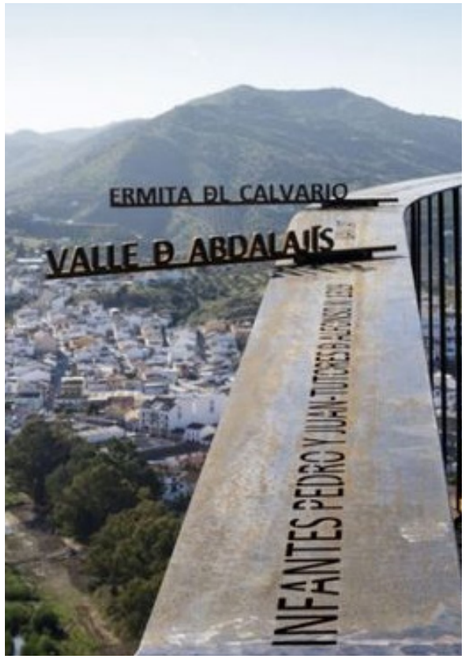


INTEGRATED AN INCLUSIVE INTERPRETATION

Interpretive signage plays a crucial role in our design, serving as a medium to share knowledge and reveal the park's rich history. This approach not only informs but also engages the park's users, offering a comprehensive curriculum as part of the overall design.

Our approach to interpretive signage is strategic and intentional. Placed thoughtfully across the park, these signs serve as an interactive guide, defining the park's character through their ***informative***, ***playful***, ***measured***, and ***revealing*** nature, ***woven*** seamlessly into the design.

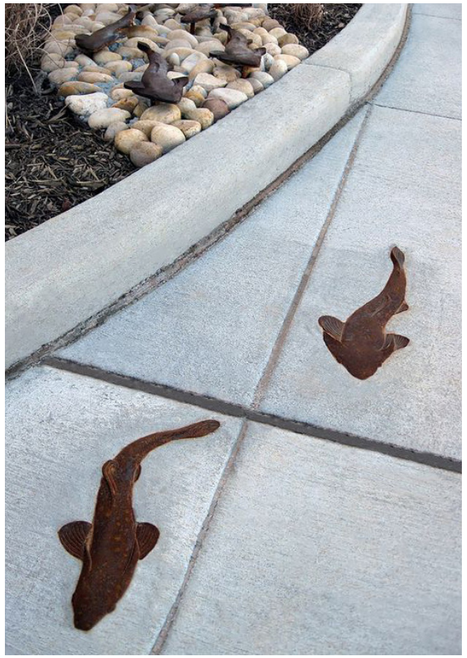
INFORMATIVE



MEASURED







PLAYFUL



REVEALING

WOVEN

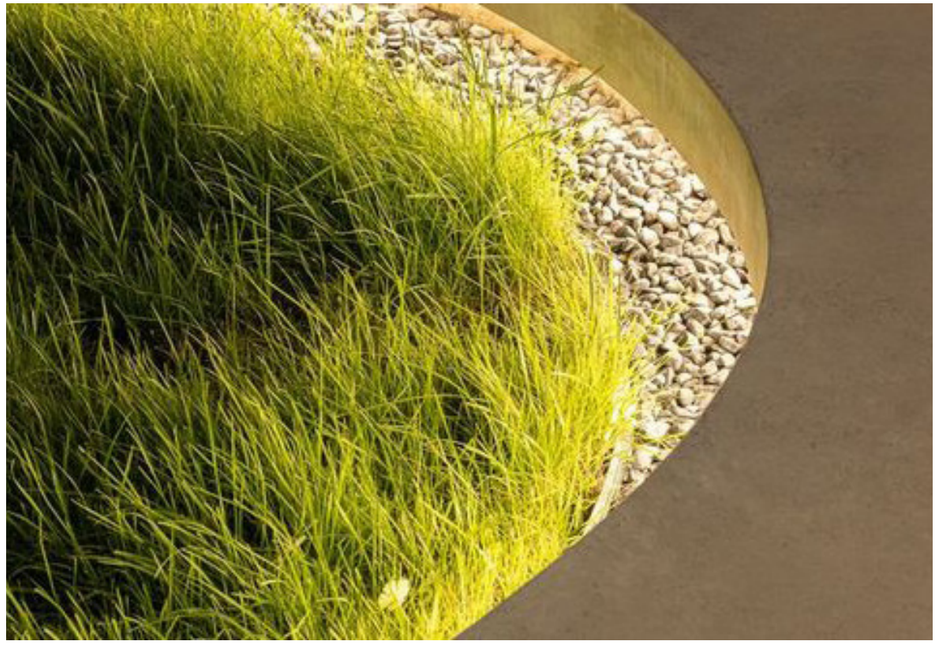
SECURITY AND LIGHTING

Integrated lighting is designed to highlight unique features across the site. Textures are illuminated, edges are cleverly highlighted, and social areas are emphasized creatively using lighting design.

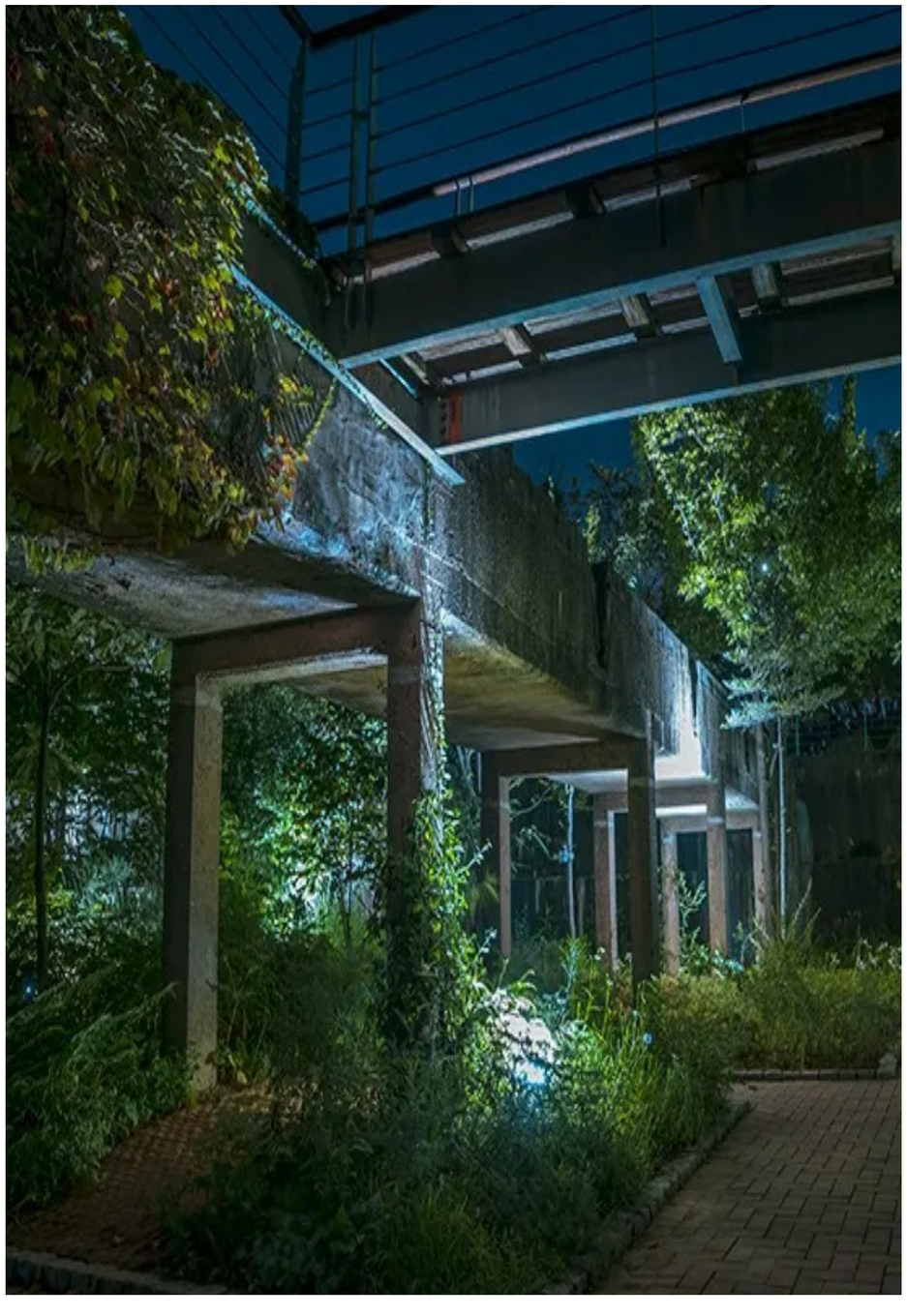
Lighting design not only enhances the visual appeal of a space but also instills a sense of safety and security. It ensures visibility, particularly in areas that may feel unseen or tucked away.

VERUDELA ARTPARK / STUDIO RAŠIĆ + VRABEC / PULA





SEONYUDO PARK /JOH SUNG-YONG URBAN ARCHITECTURE / SEOUL



LONG-TERM LOW MAINTENANCE

APPROACH TO PLANTING DESIGN

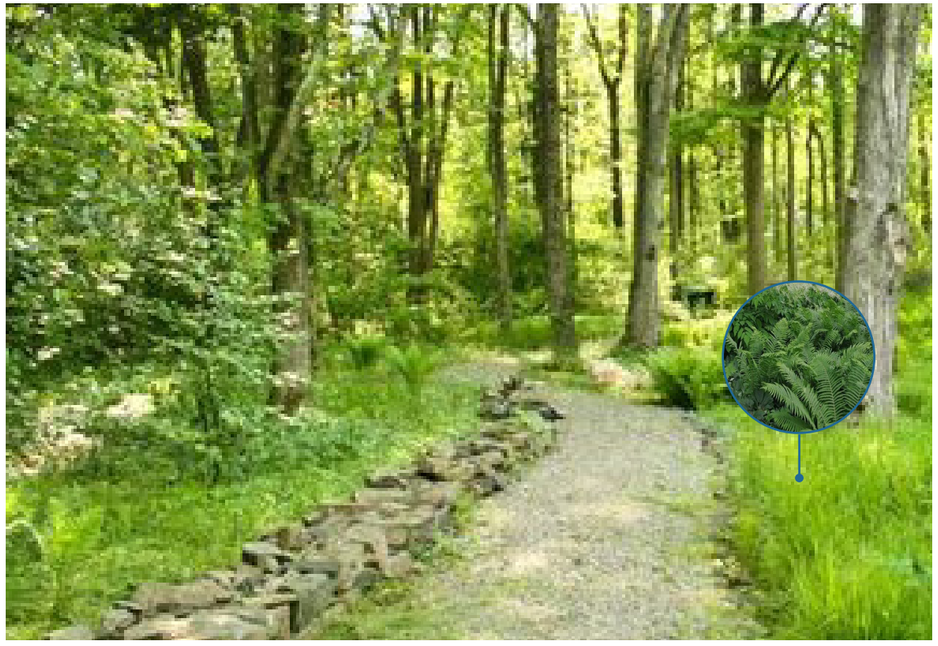
Long-term maintenance is a critical factor when considering the planting palette in the design. By balancing the ecological needs and the practical performances of the landscape, we create a design that is not only adaptive to today but also future-proof, ensuring its resilience in the seasons and years to come.

With that in mind, we worked carefully to maintain existing healthy trees and introduce trees that help create visual buffers and framed experiences in the park. We introduced a diverse range of vegetation for our understory, combining different visual qualities: woodland, native meadow for the pollinator garden, lawn, riparian ecology at the edges of the river supporting the existing and moving ecology, and the ruin garden, which playfully balances the softness and sharpness that exist in the site. This variety promises an exciting ecological diversity in the park.





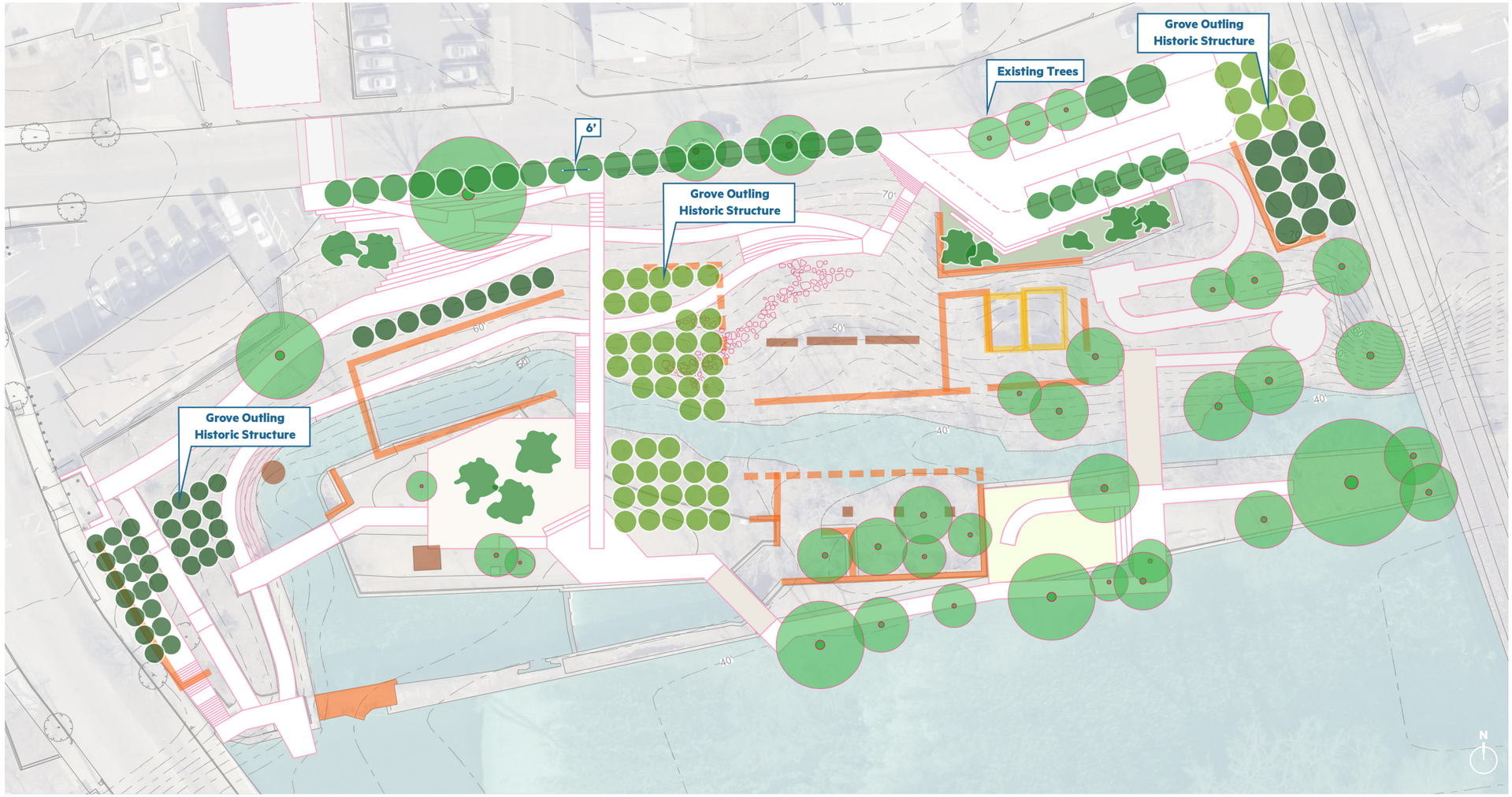




LOW MAINTENANCE DESIGN: PLANTING

The planting design is focused on creating intentional experiences while maintaining and preserving existing trees.

By creating a clear street edge and vegetation, it not only serves as a visual buffer that divides the streetscape and park but also maintains a visual connection, striking a perfect balance between division and connectivity. This is achieved by carefully choreographing the relationship of the canopy, tree trunk, and visual openness, ensuring that the site's unique features are always in view. As the site slopes, trees are assembled to articulate some of the historic mill's spatial legacies. This is seen in the trees lined up across the path, resembling historical structures and the grooves that outline building footprints.



EXISTING TREES

LOW MAINTENANCE DESIGN: UNDERSTORY

The planting palette is designed to support the ecologies and aesthetic features in harmony, creating a balanced and unified design that responds to the diverse programmatic needs. This includes the ruin garden, where vegetation is used to highlight remnants of historic structures, pollinator meadows on the slope to support ecologies, riparian areas to thread the relationship with the water and aquatic ecologies, woodland understory that sustain the existing trees, and lawn spaces that provide flexibility for different programmatic uses at the island.



NATIVE MEADOW / POLLINATOR
RUIN GARDEN
RIPARIAN
LAWN
WOODLAND

FUNDING AND PHASING

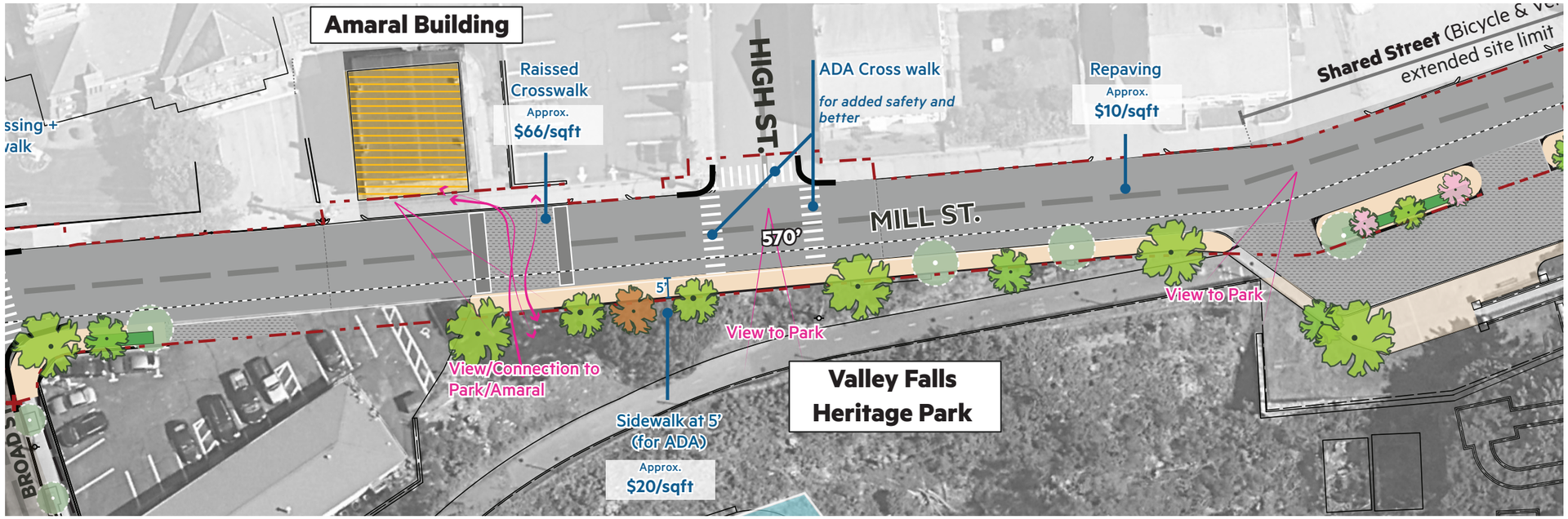
FUNDING

We have worked with the Town of Cumberland to create a feasible, cost-effective design that reflects the community's needs. We have sought practical ways to align the design, cost, and phasing strategies closely with potential financial constraints.

The Town of Cumberland has acquired the Multipurpose Community Learning Center Municipal Grant Program, which led the masterplan vision RFQ. In addition to that, the Town recently has been able to secure the Main Street Rhode Island Streetscape Improvement Program, an additional grant for improving the streetscape. All of these have helped inform the process as we seek to support the Town in the fruition of the project.

Given the potential challenge of finding funding for the construction of the design, we have proposed ways for the Town to actively seek new potential funding opportunities. These opportunities, which may be acquired through federal, state, or private entities, should be considered for future applications, even if some of the deadlines for the current cycles have passed.

1



2



3



Potential streetscape enhancement **1**

View from pollinator meadow ***with*** grand overlook **2**

View from pollinator meadow ***without*** grand overlook **3**

FUTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

FEDERAL

EPA: INFLATION REDUCTION ACT COMMUNITY CHANGE GRANTS PROGRAM (TRACK 1 - COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INVESTMENTS FOR CHANGE)

DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 21, 2024



NOAA: CLIMATE RESILIENCE FUND (CRF)

MULTIPLE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES: CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

DEADLINE PASSED FOR THIS YEAR. SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR NEXT YEAR



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

ESPECIALLY TO INTEGRATE INDIGENOUS HISTORIES INTO THE PARK SPACE



STATE

DEPT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, GREEN SPACE GRANT PROGRAM

2024 GRANTS ALREADY AWARDED. NEED TO BE PREPARED FOR APPLICATIONS FOR NEXT YEAR.



PRIVATE

RHODE ISLAND FOUNDATION, JUNE ROCKWELL LEVY FOUNDATION GRANTS

MULTIPLE DEADLINES DEPENDING ON THE CATEGORY YOU APPLY TO / REQUIRES NON-PROFIT LEAD PARTNER



RHODE ISLAND INFRASTRUCTURE BANK, MUNICIPAL RESILIENCE PROGRAM (MRP)



PHASING

Cumberland Town Hall

Amaral Buidling (includes bathrooms)

Tabletop Crosswalk

Grand Overlook

BROAD STREET

Entry / Overlook

Sitting Overlook

Stepping Stones Path

"Storehouse Grove"

Pollinator Meadow

Flexible Event Plaza / Parking

Improved Existing Ramp Structure

existing ADA Ramp bridge

Ruin Garden

East

North

existing bridge

Deck

Lawn

Porch

Fish Ladder Gathering

River Overlook

existing ADA Ramp bridge

Lawn

"Harris Mill" Grove

existing bridge

existing bridge

River Overlook

River Overlook

existing ramp

temp ADA connection

West

Island

South East

Railway Track

Blackstone / Kittacuck River

0' 25' 50'

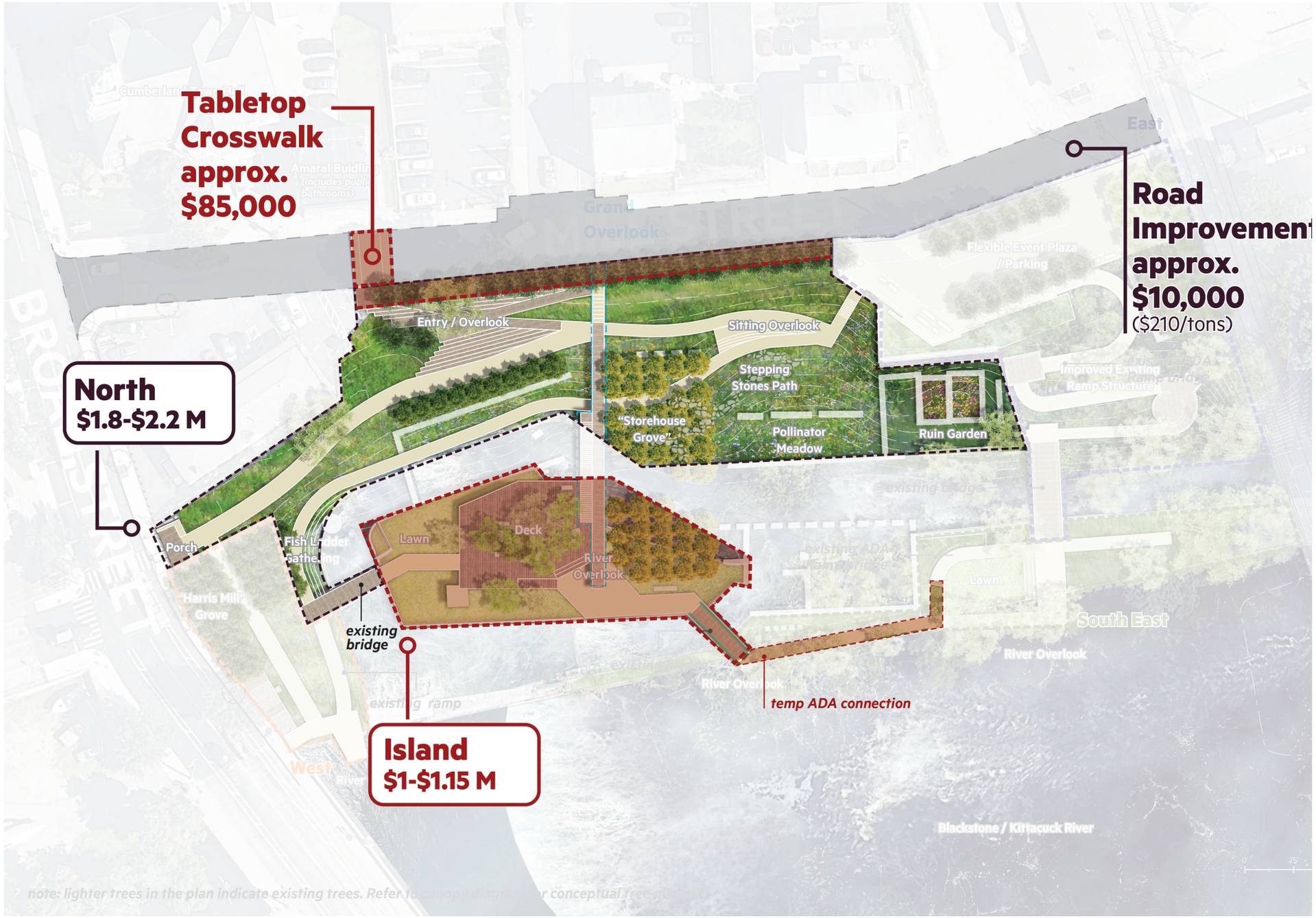
N

Town of Cumberland

PHASING & PRIORITIES

We have explored potential ways to divide the design into feasible portions while considering critical access points as additional funding is secured. We have divided the design into five major areas, following a phased approach. The primary areas are: ***island, north, west, east***, and ***southeast.*** In addition, we have also included the tabletop crosswalk and grand overlook as 'specialty items,' presenting potential opportunities for the project's expansion in the future once additional funding is secured.

With that in mind, we have identified key priority areas that would be critical to start with if funding the project in total is not possible. First, as the 'Island' is the park's focal point, it would become the phase one of construction. This is not only strategically important but also practical, as vehicular access is a necessity. For the second phase, we recommend prioritizing the 'North' to connect the streetscape and the park through the pollinator meadow, steps, paths, overlooks, and flexible plaza. Then, in support of that, integrating the streetscape on Mill Street and the park becomes critical.





Valley Falls Heritage Park Masterplan

APPENDIX

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StarLuna Consulting, LLC
Dr. Neenah Estrella-Luna
c: info@starluna.net

Valley Falls Heritage Park Master Planning
Phase 1 Community Engagement Summary

Phase I of the Valley Falls Heritage Park ("VFHP") Master Planning Process involved a Community Dinner and a series of interviews. We found that underutilization and lack of awareness among residents justify the current revitalization efforts to maximize its potential as a community asset.

"A lot of people don't even know that park exists. For so many years, that park has been forgotten." - Member, Lusitana Club

The ideas that were shared with us could be seen as two types of intersecting opportunities: creating a space for connection and activation of the park. There are many connections that can be made in the park including connection to histories, to peoples, to nature, and to each other. Activating the park can create a safe and welcoming place for learning as well as a space to simply be. Importantly, we also heard a strong desire to connect to heritage.

Narratives

Currently, VFHP primarily is thought of as telling the story of the rise and fall of industrialization primarily through the mills that were powered by the Blackstone River. However, there is a fuller story that has yet to be told. These include the stories of:

- The original Indigenous caretakers of the area.
- The people who worked in the mill.
- The people who built Valley Falls and its many spaces, past and present.

Several participants also mentioned that connecting historical immigration of European immigrants to the continuing story immigration plays in the vitality of Valley Falls specifically and the area generally is important. This connecting of past to present is possible at VFHP.

Another reframing we heard is focused on the river's own story. A fuller story about the role the Blackstone River played during industrialization, the sacrifice of the river to economic development, and the efforts at restoration could be told in this park. Equally important, working with local Indigenous leaders, VFHP should incorporate the names and stories of the river before European conquest.

"How do we get people to gather around more? Gathering more. It's such an important part. Water has been important to us for thousands of millions of years." – Member of Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band

The Town already wants VFHP to be connected to the redevelopment of the Amaral building on Mill Street as a health and wellness hub. This is another place where connecting to history and heritage is possible. There are many individual stories that are worthy of learning but cannot be told in the limited number of interpretive signs that are possible in the park. However, the Amaral building offers a space where an ongoing rotation of stories can be placed. We heard many stories of the Amaral market and the family that owned it.

"Whatever the community needed, that's what the building was." "The Amaral Building has always served the community. During the Great Depression, for example, my great-grandfather gave away lots of food from his store to feed the hungry." – Residents at Community Dinner

Ms. Alice Clementine already plans to donate photos of the Portuguese families that helped to build Valley Falls. Clube Juventude Lusitana also has a treasure trove of photos as well. We spoke with many people who have stories of the people who made Valley Falls the special place it is. There is no doubt that a collaboration with the local schools, the Town library, local organizations, and potentially local universities with the aim of collecting, curating, and designing public displays for placement in the Amaral Building is feasible. The park would only then need to incorporate wayfinding to point people in the right direction.

Amenities/ Aesthetics

The park currently serves as a sanctuary for reflection and connection to nature for those who are regular users of the park.

"I go up the stairs and sometimes two times around. I love the river. I sit and think … you know what keeps me alive? My songs. … I write one or two songs a day. I write about the river." - Resident who lives near the park

One of the major assets that this park can provide is simply access to green space and connection to nature that is needed in this area. Attendees at the Community Dinner as well as interviewees described wanting to be able to hear the sounds of nature at this park, most importantly the water. Regular users described wanting to maintain the park as a quiet space and a buffer from street sounds. With that said, no one envisions this park as an unpeopled space. They want to hear the sound of children playing, youth gathering with friends, and couples falling in love.

"I had my first picnic here with my boyfriend on a cool spring night in 2023. My boyfriend used to come here with his mom when he was a kid more than 20 years ago. My boyfriend's family live in the area. This happened on the benches in the park by the water. It's a place that inspires love." – Story told at the Community Dinner

Improved ADA access, parking, and access to public bathrooms (with changing tables) were also listed as priorities for the park.

Residents would like the redesign of VFHP to save as much of the existing mill ruins while also restoring the natural landscape. We heard a lot of emphasis on planting and maintaining native vegetation as well as plants for pollinators. This would include cattails, azaleas, willows, and black willows.

We also heard many happy stories of fishing at this site during the time it was abandoned land and after it was turned into a park. There is also a decades-long ongoing effort to construct fish passages and dams to enable the return of fish migration up the Blackstone River, including a fish ladder at the dam next to VFHP. Fishing is one of the few activities specified as allowable in the current deed. However, given the current level of contamination of the Blackstone River, it may not be advisable to encourage fishing given the high likelihood that some people might eat whatever is caught regardless of any warning signs posted.

Activities

Residents and other stakeholders agree that activating the park is a high priority. There are many activities that have been suggested. Overall, the desire is to use the space for education, health and wellness; social interaction; and for community engagement. In addition, there's significant potential in fostering more intergenerational connections – especially for socially isolated elders – while providing a much needed "third place" for youth to hang out safely. There are three types of activities that we heard about: education, wellness, and community events.

Education

As discussed earlier, everyone agrees that VFHP is a space for learning about history. In addition, this is also a space for learning about the environment and ecology. The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council provides educational programming just across the bridge on the other side of the river. They see plenty of opportunities to connect both sides of the river in expanded educational programming. Educators at local schools expressed interest in taking students on field trips to the park to conduct environmental and art lessons in their effort to foster a deeper appreciation for both nature and local history. Others suggested that the park is a good space for nature art and photography classes and programs.

> *"How can we integrate what [the students love now] with what we want them to love to get them outside to experience it?...Things that they can explore and things that they might not experience with their parents ..." – Educator, McCourt Middle School*

VFHP also presents an opportunity to learn about the people in the area prior to European conquest. It is important to note that ***this should only be done in collaboration with the area's original Indigenous nations***. There is already a working relationship between two Indigenous nations (Nipmuc and Narragansett) and the Blackstone River Watershed Council which may be able to help facilitate those conversations. In addition, VFHP was the first park in the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and as such is within the orbit of the National Park Service (NPS). The NPS currently has a particular emphasis on uplifting Indigenous histories and reconnection to space which can be leveraged for such learning.

Wellness

Health and wellness activities were frequently mentioned or fully embraced. These included yoga and tai chi classes, walking clubs, mindfulness and meditation programs, and a community garden. Valley Falls residents recognize that health and wellness is not based entirely on individual action but is also strongly correlated with social connections. Clube Juventude Lusitana stated that they could see inviting the elders to take a walk in the park after club activities and also hosting bingo in the park. Community based arts and crafts programs would also facilitate social connection. Residents want the ability to have picnics in the park, however we also heard that they are limited by the lack of grills.

This park also presents an opportunity to build resilience to climate change. A number of residents stated that maintaining shade and building a splash pad would be desired. While it is unclear whether a splash pad specifically would be allowable under the deed, it would certainly supplement any cooling centers that might already exist in Cumberland.

Community Events

Everyone we spoke with is excited about the potential for organized events and programs. These included:

- Farmer's markets
- Artisan fairs
- Food truck events
- Art shows
- Live music and theater
- Multi-cultural festivals celebrating the many cultures in the area.

Such activities would require partnerships between the Town, local schools, businesses, community organizations, and residents.

They would also potentially bolster economic development opportunities for local businesses in both Valley Falls as well as potentially Central Falls. Most of the businesses in the area we spoke with did not believe that they directly benefit from proximity to the park. Indeed, the staff in some of the nearby restaurants were unaware of the existence of this park. Community events would create opportunities for local businesses to promote themselves as well as publicize the existence of the park. Wayfinding within the park to local businesses and nearby related spaces would also help connect the park to the rest of Valley Falls.

While there is a bike path within the park, it is not connected to the Blackstone Valley Bikeway, which terminates a half mile up the road at Jones Street. Connecting this park to that Bikeway through wayfinding signs might also activate the park and bring bikers down Broad Street to local restaurants and businesses.

Concerns to Address

Safety is a primary concern for everyone we interacted with. While lighting and regular patrols by the local police were frequently suggested, the best way to create a safe public space is to create a place that is in regular use. Increasing foot traffic and engagement in the space not only provides opportunities for enjoyment and enrichment but also contributes to the creation of a secure and inviting public space for all members of the community.

The other common concern we heard was related to the maintenance of the space. Several people described volunteering in 1992 to clean up the space and build the park were disappointed that the park became overgrown. The overgrowth creates hiding spots for people as well as ticks, creating two different health and safety concerns. The redesign of the VFHP needs to take into account the need for long term maintenance of the park itself.

> *"Hopefully, … we don't go through all this effort, put all this work into it, and then, kind of like we are now, the park, 30 years later [becomes] overgrown and just not sustained."*
> *– Amaral Family Member*

Embracing Heritage

We repeatedly heard people refer to this park as "Heritage Park." And almost everyone we spoke with expressed wanting this park to feel like a connection to heritage. Valley Falls is a place with many ways to grapple with the concept of heritage, to connect the past and the present, to connect with the future – seven generations from now, and to connect with each other. Embracing this park as a space where multiple heritages weave together may mean accepting this space not as Valley Falls Heritage Park but as simply Heritage Park.

Appendix – Community Engagement Process

Community Dinner

Date: April 15, 2024

Time: 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Location: Joseph L. McCourt Middle School, 45 Highland Ave, Cumberland, RI 02864

Supports: Dinner, childcare, and interpretation (Spanish and Portuguese) were provided.

Approximate attendance: 30-35 people

Agenda:

- Welcome
- Description of planning process
- Description of known limitations on use of space
- Rotation across 3 stations (3 rounds to enable participation at each station):
  - Hopes and Dreams for the park
  - Priorities for the park
  - Stories and Memories of the park, the Amaral Building, Valley Falls neighborhood
- Visual notetaker show draft of one station's notes
- Closing

Interviews

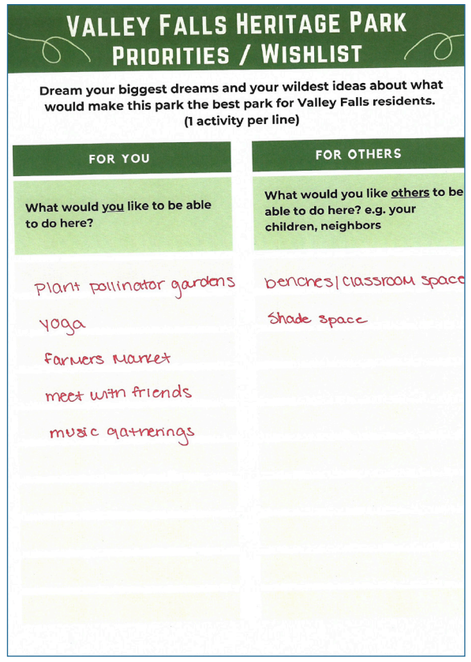
All formal interviews took place in Cumberland, with three taking place either via Zoom or over the phone. Informal conversations were also had with staff at local restaurants and other local businesses. Completed interviews as of this writing were with:

- Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
- Blackstone Watershed Council & Member of Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band
- Owner, Colonial Bakery
- Clube Juventude Lusitana
- Norton Elementary School
- McCourt Middle School
- 4 Residents

ENGAGEMENT #1: PRIORITIES WORKSHEETS

RESPONSE SAMPLES - *APRIL 15, 2024*

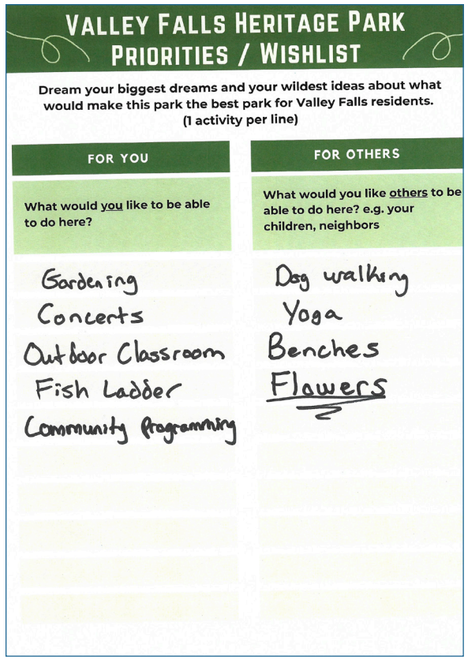
SCANS OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSES



VALLEY FALLS HERITAGE PARK PRIORITIES / WISHLIST

Dream your biggest dreams and your wildest ideas about what would make this park the best park for Valley Falls residents. (1 activity per line)

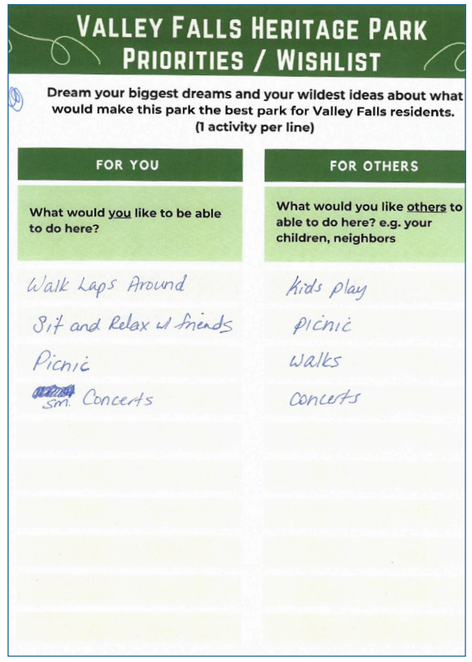
FOR YOU	FOR OTHERS
What would you like to be able to do here?	What would you like others to be able to do here? e.g. your children, neighbors
Plant pollinator gardens	benches/classroom space
Yoga	Shade space
Farmers Market	
meet with friends	
music gatherings	



VALLEY FALLS HERITAGE PARK PRIORITIES / WISHLIST

Dream your biggest dreams and your wildest ideas about what would make this park the best park for Valley Falls residents. (1 activity per line)

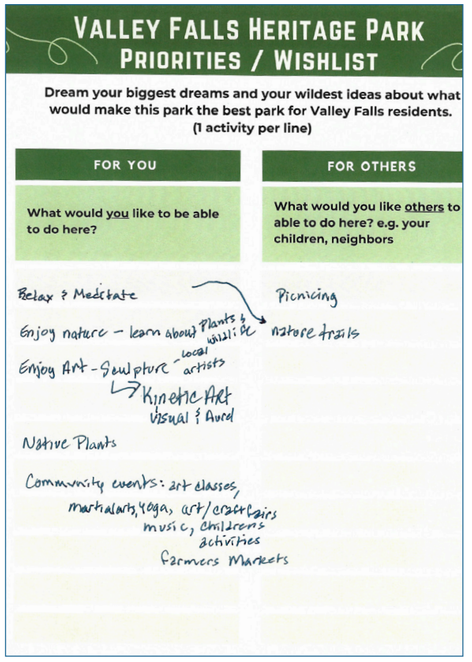
FOR YOU	FOR OTHERS
What would you like to be able to do here?	What would you like others to be able to do here? e.g. your children, neighbors
Gardening	Dog walking
Concerts	Yoga
Outdoor Classroom	Benches
Fish Ladder	Flowers
Community Programming	



VALLEY FALLS HERITAGE PARK PRIORITIES / WISHLIST

Dream your biggest dreams and your wildest ideas about what would make this park the best park for Valley Falls residents. (1 activity per line)

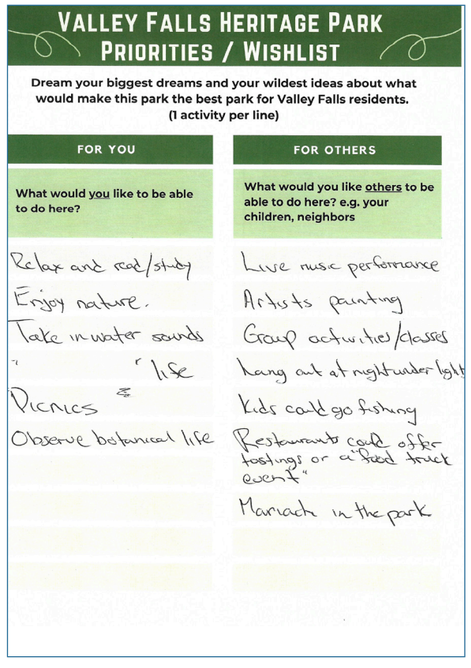
FOR YOU	FOR OTHERS
What would you like to be able to do here?	What would you like others to be able to do here? e.g. your children, neighbors
Walk Laps Around	Kids play
Sit and Relax w friends	picnic
Picnic	Walks
sm. Concerts	concerts



VALLEY FALLS HERITAGE PARK PRIORITIES / WISHLIST

Dream your biggest dreams and your wildest ideas about what would make this park the best park for Valley Falls residents. (1 activity per line)

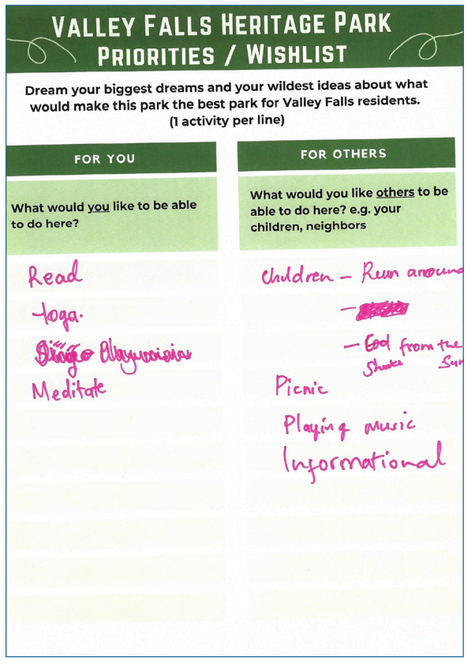
FOR YOU	FOR OTHERS
What would you like to be able to do here?	What would you like others to be able to do here? e.g. your children, neighbors
Relax & Meditate	Picnicing
Enjoy nature – learn about Plants & wildlife	nature trails
Enjoy Art - Sculpture - local artists	
↳ Kinetic Art	
Native Plants	
Community events: art classes, martial arts, yoga, art/craft fairs, music, childrens activities	
Farmers Markets	



VALLEY FALLS HERITAGE PARK PRIORITIES / WISHLIST

Dream your biggest dreams and your wildest ideas about what would make this park the best park for Valley Falls residents. (1 activity per line)

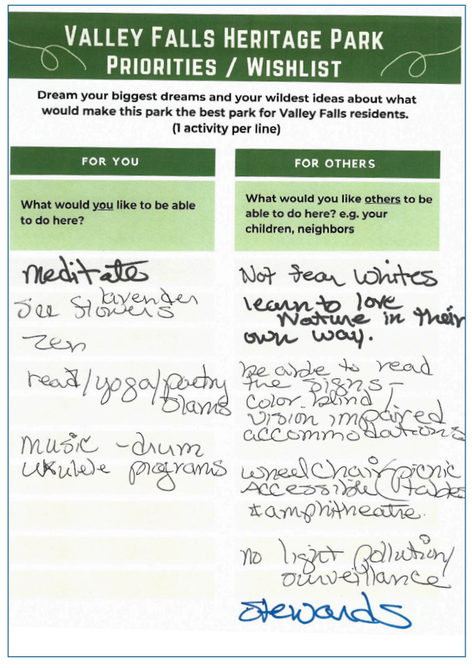
FOR YOU	FOR OTHERS
What would you like to be able to do here?	What would you like others to be able to do here? e.g. your children, neighbors
Relax and read/study	Live music performance
Enjoy nature.	Artists painting
Take in water sounds	Group activities/classes
life	hang out at night under light
Picnics	Kids could go fishing
Observe botanical life	Restaurants could offer tastings or a food truck event"
	Mariachi in the park



VALLEY FALLS HERITAGE PARK PRIORITIES / WISHLIST

Dream your biggest dreams and your wildest ideas about what would make this park the best park for Valley Falls residents. (1 activity per line)

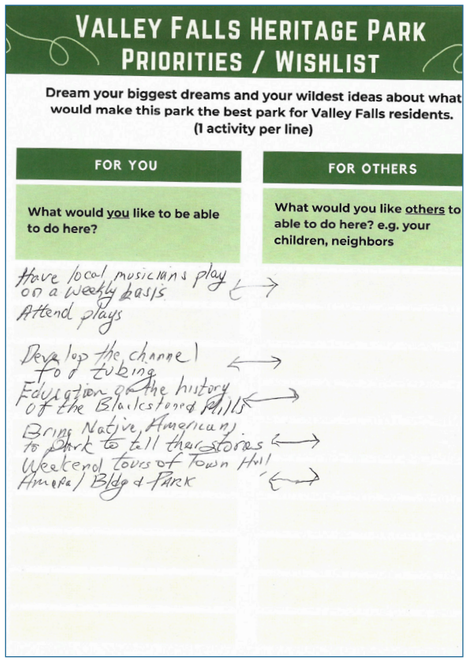
FOR YOU	FOR OTHERS
What would you like to be able to do here?	What would you like others to be able to do here? e.g. your children, neighbors
Read	Children – Run around
-yoga.	– Cool from the Shade
Meditate	Picnic
	Playing music
	Informational



VALLEY FALLS HERITAGE PARK PRIORITIES / WISHLIST

Dream your biggest dreams and your wildest ideas about what would make this park the best park for Valley Falls residents. (1 activity per line)

FOR YOU	FOR OTHERS
What would you like to be able to do here?	What would you like others to be able to do here? e.g. your children, neighbors
meditate	Not fear whites
See flowers lavender	learn to love Nature in their own way.
zen	
read/yoga/poetry plants	Be aware to read the signs - color blind vision impaired accommodations
music - drum ukulele programs	wheelchair picnic accessible tables
	& amphitheatre.
	no light pollution surveillance
	stewards



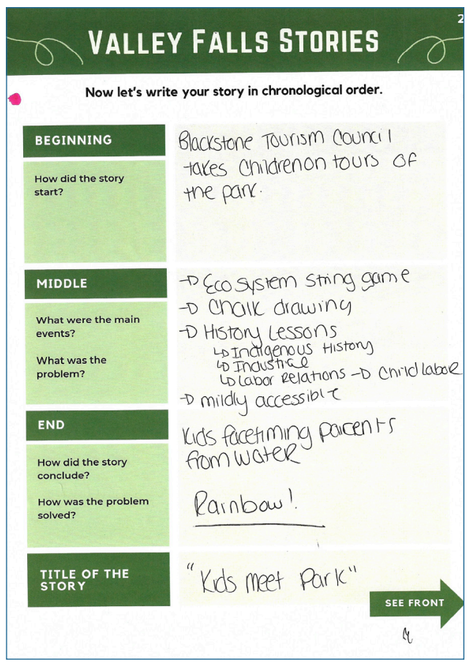
VALLEY FALLS HERITAGE PARK PRIORITIES / WISHLIST

Dream your biggest dreams and your wildest ideas about what would make this park the best park for Valley Falls residents. (1 activity per line)

FOR YOU	FOR OTHERS
What would you like to be able to do here?	What would you like others to be able to do here? e.g. your children, neighbors
Have local musicians play on a weekly basis	
Attend plays	
Develop the channel for tubing	
Education on the history of the Blackstone River	
Bring Native Americans to Park to tell their stories	
Weekend tours of Town Hall Museum/ Bldg & Park	

ENGAGEMENT #1: STORIES WORKSHEETS

RESPONSE SAMPLE - *APRIL 15, 2024*



VALLEY FALLS STORIES

Now let's write your story in chronological order.

BEGINNING

How did the story start?

Blackstone Tourism Council takes Children on tours of the park.

MIDDLE

What were the main events?

What was the problem?

→ Eco system string game
→ Chalk drawing
→ History Lessons
↳ Indigenous History
↳ Industrial
↳ Labor Relations → Child labor
→ mildly accessible

END

How did the story conclude?

How was the problem solved?

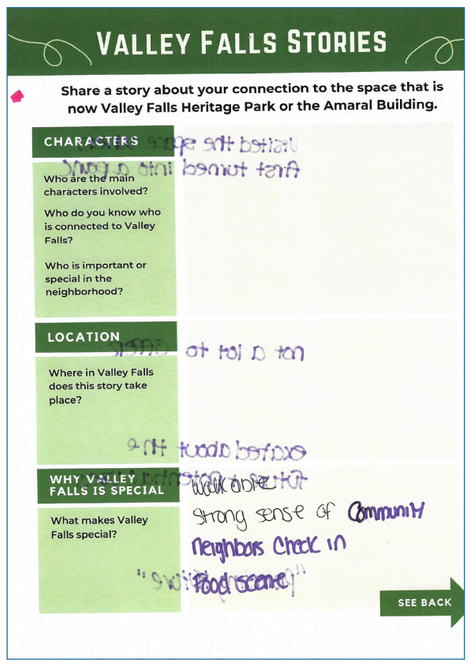
Kids facetiming parents from water

Rainbow!

TITLE OF THE STORY

"Kids meet Park"

SEE FRONT



VALLEY FALLS STORIES

Share a story about your connection to the space that is now Valley Falls Heritage Park or the Amaral Building.

CHARACTERS

Who are the main characters involved?

Who do you know who is connected to Valley Falls?

Who is important or special in the neighborhood?

LOCATION

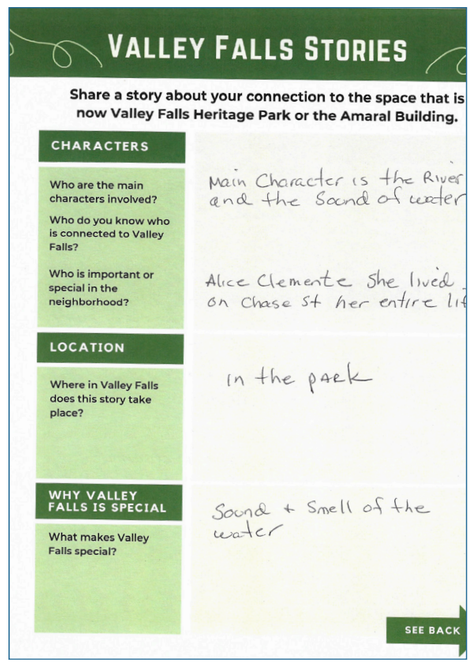
Where in Valley Falls does this story take place?

WHY VALLEY FALLS IS SPECIAL

What makes Valley Falls special?

Walk able
Strong sense of Community
Neighbors Check in
Food scene

SEE BACK



VALLEY FALLS STORIES

Share a story about your connection to the space that is now Valley Falls Heritage Park or the Amaral Building.

CHARACTERS

Who are the main characters involved?

Who do you know who is connected to Valley Falls?

Who is important or special in the neighborhood?

Main Character is the River and the Sound of water

Alice Clemente She lived on Chase St her entire lif

LOCATION

Where in Valley Falls does this story take place?

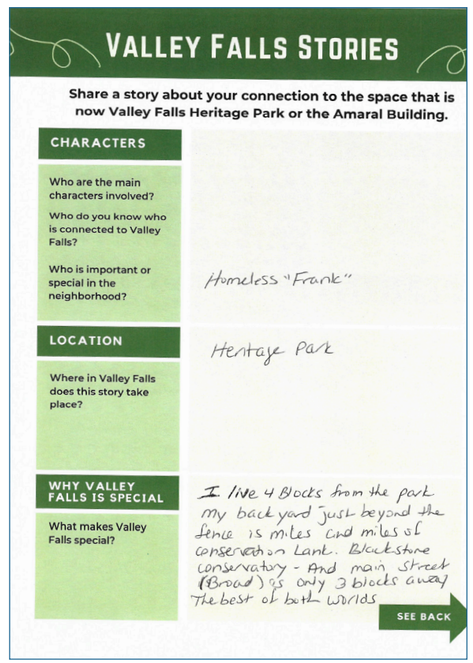
in the park

WHY VALLEY FALLS IS SPECIAL

What makes Valley Falls special?

Sound + Smell of the water

SEE BACK



VALLEY FALLS STORIES

Share a story about your connection to the space that is now Valley Falls Heritage Park or the Amaral Building.

CHARACTERS

Who are the main characters involved?

Who do you know who is connected to Valley Falls?

Who is important or special in the neighborhood?

Homeless "Frank"

LOCATION

Where in Valley Falls does this story take place?

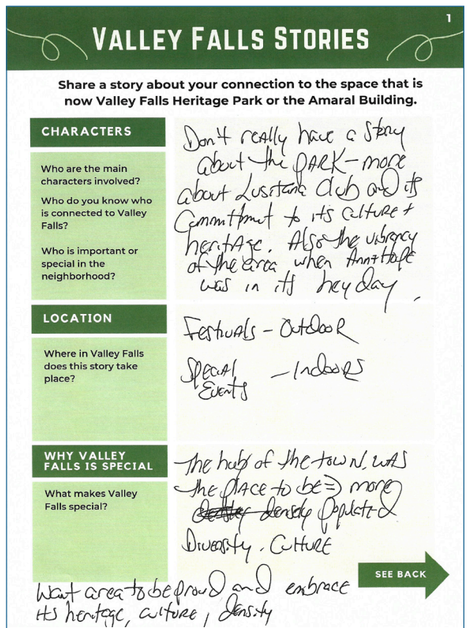
Heritage Park

WHY VALLEY FALLS IS SPECIAL

What makes Valley Falls special?

I live 4 Blocks from the park my back yard just beyond the fence is miles and miles of conservation Lank. Blackstone conservatory - And main Street (Broad) is only 3 blocks away The best of both worlds

SEE BACK



VALLEY FALLS STORIES

Share a story about your connection to the space that is now Valley Falls Heritage Park or the Amaral Building.

CHARACTERS

Who are the main characters involved?

Who do you know who is connected to Valley Falls?

Who is important or special in the neighborhood?

Don't really have a story about the PARK - more about Lusitania club and its Commitment to its culture + heritage. Also the vibrancy of the area when Ann+Hope was in its heyday.

LOCATION

Where in Valley Falls does this story take place?

Festivals - Outdoor
Special Events - Indoors

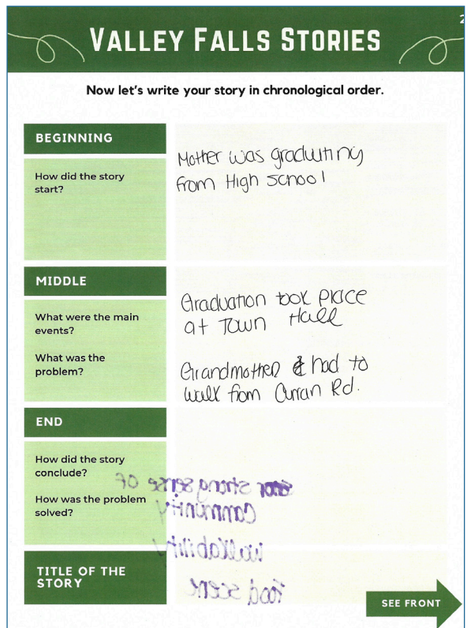
WHY VALLEY FALLS IS SPECIAL

What makes Valley Falls special?

The hub of the town, was the place to be ⇒ more ~~[illegible]~~ densely populated
Diversity, Culture

Want area to be proud and embrace its heritage, culture, density

SEE BACK



VALLEY FALLS STORIES

Now let's write your story in chronological order.

BEGINNING

How did the story start?

Mother was graduating from High School

MIDDLE

What were the main events?

What was the problem?

Graduation took place at Town Hall

Grandmother had to walk from Curran Rd.

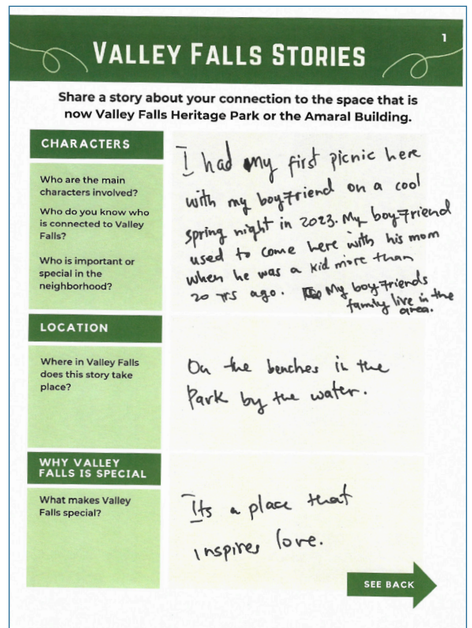
END

How did the story conclude?

How was the problem solved?

TITLE OF THE STORY

SEE FRONT



VALLEY FALLS STORIES

Share a story about your connection to the space that is now Valley Falls Heritage Park or the Amaral Building.

CHARACTERS

Who are the main characters involved?

Who do you know who is connected to Valley Falls?

Who is important or special in the neighborhood?

I had my first picnic here with my boyfriend on a cool spring night in 2023. My boyfriend used to come here with his mom when he was a kid more than 20 yrs ago. My boyfriends family live in the area.

LOCATION

Where in Valley Falls does this story take place?

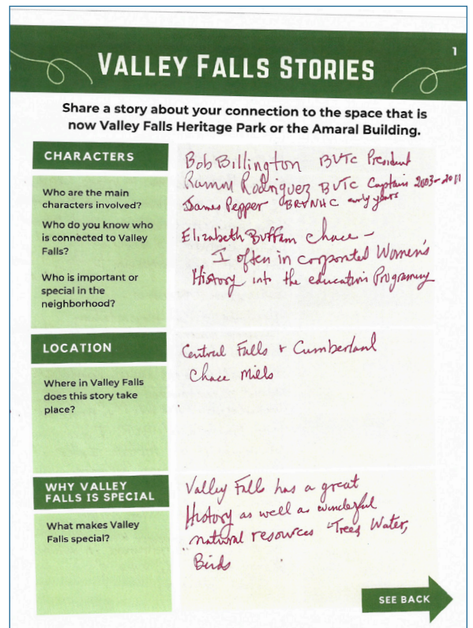
On the benches in the Park by the water.

WHY VALLEY FALLS IS SPECIAL

What makes Valley Falls special?

Its a place that inspires love.

SEE BACK



VALLEY FALLS STORIES

Share a story about your connection to the space that is now Valley Falls Heritage Park or the Amaral Building.

CHARACTERS

Who are the main characters involved?

Who do you know who is connected to Valley Falls?

Who is important or special in the neighborhood?

Bob Billington BVTC President
Ramon Rodriguez BVTC Captain 2003-2011
James Pepper BRYNHC early years
Elizabeth Buffum chace - I often in corporated Women's History into the education Programming

LOCATION

Where in Valley Falls does this story take place?

Central Falls + Cumberland Chace Mills

WHY VALLEY FALLS IS SPECIAL

What makes Valley Falls special?

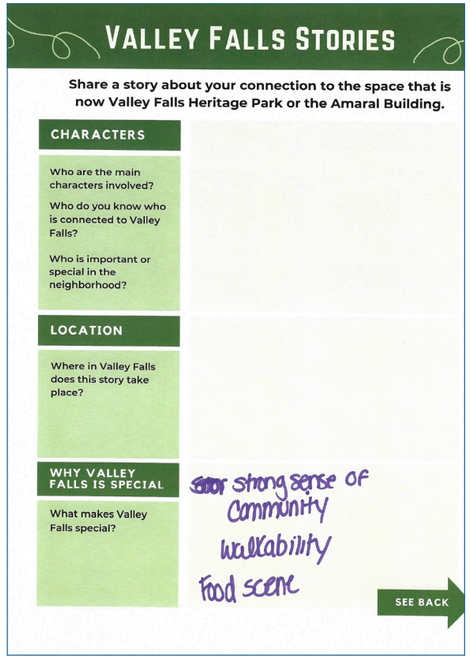
Valley Falls has a great History as well as wonderful natural resources - Trees, Water, Birds

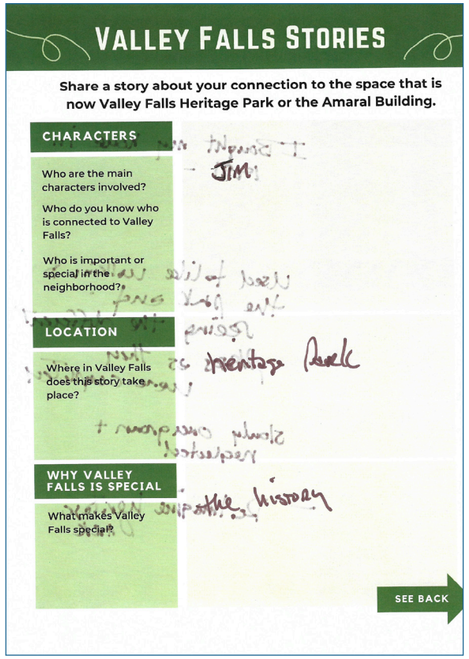
SEE BACK

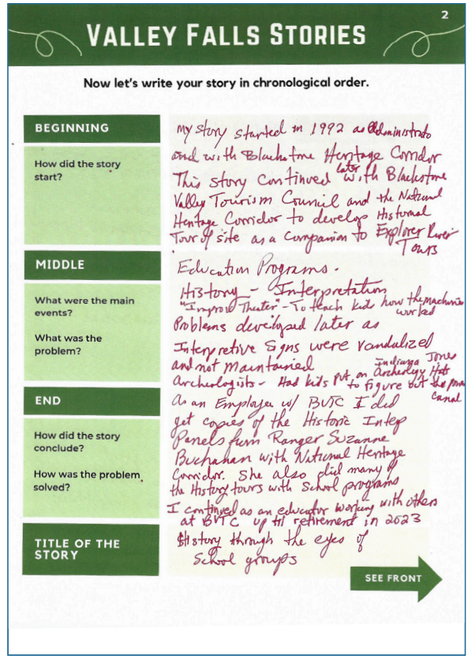
SCANS OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

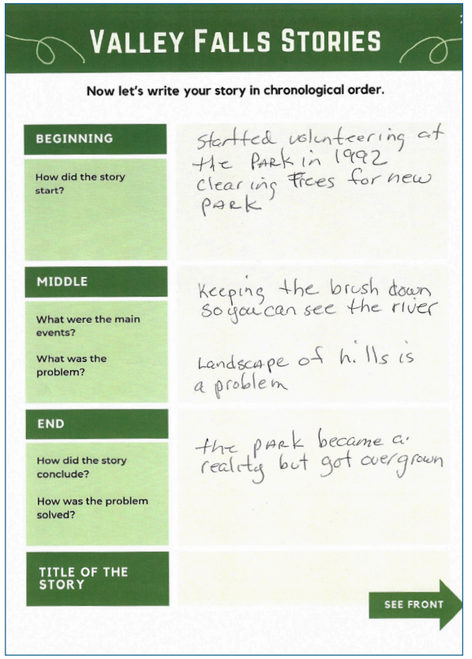
ENGAGEMENT #1: STORIES WORKSHEETS

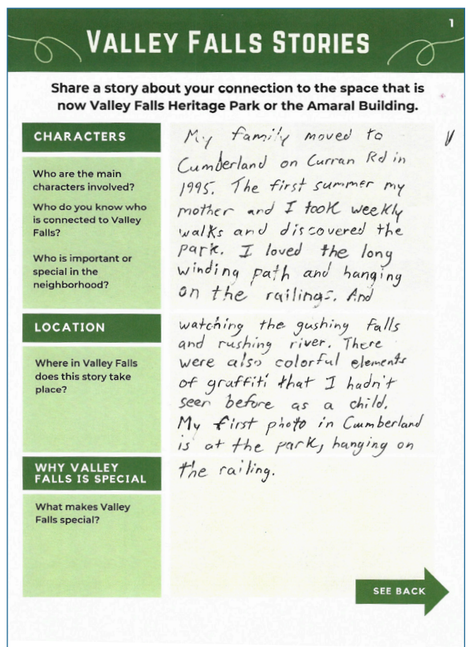
RESPONSE SAMPLE - *APRIL 15, 2024*

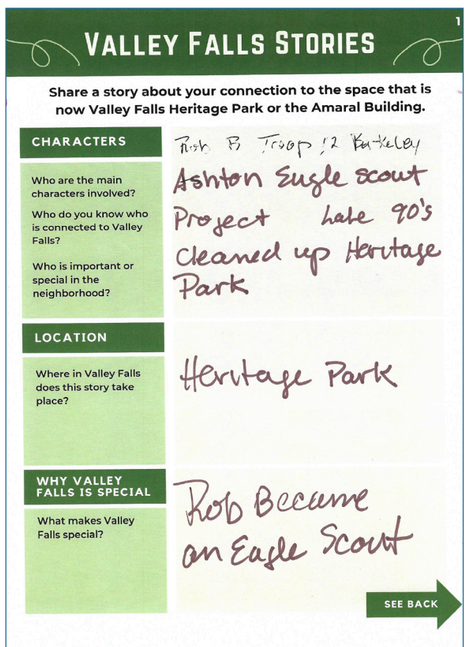


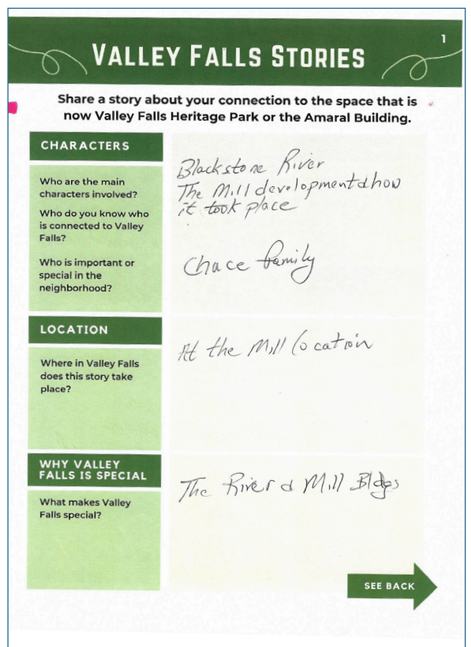


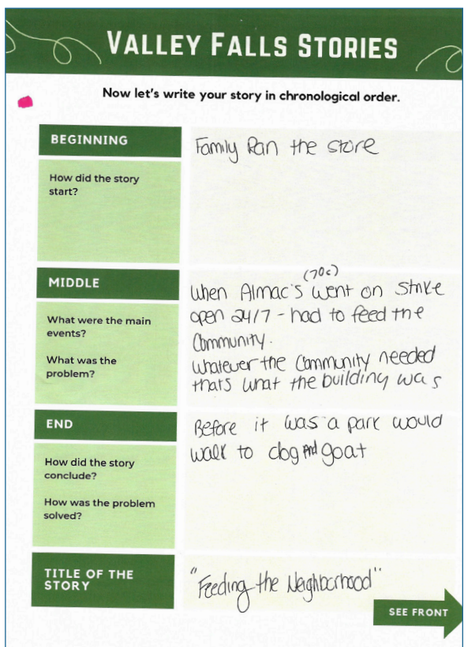












SCANS OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

Legacy: Common themes

Community Workshop

- Embody and preserve the area's rich history and cultural heritage, including inclusive representations of women's suffrage, immigrant stories, industrial heritage such as mills, and the legacy of the Underground Railroad.
- Recognize the significance of the river in the area's heritage
- Highlight the river's role as a central feature
- Incorporating elements related to the region's industrial past
- Ensure adaptability for the future.
- Gathering place for multiple generations and families
- Opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and social interaction
- Promote environmental sustainability

Survey

History	37%	Accessible	3%
Nature	16%	Resilient	3%
Loved/ cared for	11%	Clean	3%
Activated	8%	Design	3%
Neighborhood	8%	Health	3%
Safety	8%	Kids	3%
Aesthetics	5%	Quality	3%
Asset	5%	Quiet	3%
Community	5%	River	3%
Fun	5%		
Integrated	5%		

Juicy quotes

[I want] an attractive and lasting place that makes people want to stay here

Iconic and timeless activated space that doesn't become overlooked and then run down and unwelcoming.

Solid construction, that won't fall apart in 20 years. --- This was done right.

I would like it to be a place that preserves history, and provides an easily accessible and well-loved place for people to congregate safely in that part of town as it does not seem to receive as much love as other parks and areas in town. --- Connecting past to future.

That Valley Falls is beautiful and not just a stereotype of town location.

Valley Falls Heritage Park Main Results May 2024

Like Most

River Overviews

River Overlooks – Community Workshop	English
Central gathering space + outdoor classroom on island deck	13
Five river/canal overlooks	10
Ruin gardens and landscapes	10
Decks and steps/overlooks for quiet viewing	8
Lush tree groves recalling historic structures	3
Health and fitness and walking circuits	2
Two street-facing overlooks	2
Hard and soft edges	3

River Overlooks - Survey	English	Portuguese	TOTAL	%
Five river/canal overlooks	20	1	21	58%
Ruin gardens and landscapes	17	1	18	50%
Central gathering space + outdoor classroom on island deck	17	0	17	47%
Decks and steps/overlooks for quiet viewing	15	0	15	42%
Lush tree groves recalling historic structures	11	1	12	33%
Health and fitness and walking circuits	12	0	12	33%
Two street-facing overlooks	6	0	6	17%
Hard and soft edges	2	0	2	6%

Comment Themes

- Flexible use of spaces
- Interconnection to river and to roadways
- Natural elements in the design
- Attention to ruins
- Keeps curving path
- Parking

Juicy quotes

Bringing the river back into the equation as resource rather than a drainage

I like the thoughtful multipurpose design.

Valley Rooms

Valley Rooms – Community Workshop	English
*Ruin gardens and landscapes	10
Health and fitness and walking circuits	9
*Flexible programmed street/urban edge; outdoor classrooms	8
Tree planting “rooms” recalling historic structures	8
Experiential pathways	7
Central picnic grove on island	6
Two canal/river overlooks	5
Comes with a higher cost	1

Valley Rooms - Survey	English	Portuguese	TOTAL	%
*Ruin gardens and landscapes	18	1	19	54%
*Flexible programmed street/urban edge; outdoor classrooms	17	0	17	49%
Central picnic grove on island	17	0	17	49%
Experiential pathways	16	0	16	46%
Health and fitness and walking circuits	13	0	13	37%
Two canal/river overlooks	9	0	9	26%
Tree planting “rooms” recalling historic structures	5	1	6	17%
Comes with a higher cost	0	0	0	0%

Comment Themes

- Overall design
- Inclusion of bike path
- Both passive and active use spaces
- Native plantings

Juicy quotes

I like that each of the distinct spaces of the park seem more connected to one another.

The idea of activated edge spaces with experiential walkways leading to a central activated space helps brings life into all parts of the space.

NOTE

- There is definitely a difference in what elements are liked between those who attended the Community Workshop and those who completed the survey for the Valley Rooms elements. There was also less engagement with the Valley Rooms elements at the Workshop compared the survey. Asterisks denote what are top-liked elements across both the Workshop and Survey.

Concerns

River Overviews

River Overlooks – Community Workshop	English
I have no concerns	N/A
Central gathering space + outdoor classroom on island deck	6
Two street-facing overlooks	3
Hard and soft edges	2
Decks and steps/overlooks for quiet viewing	2
Health and fitness and walking circuits	2
Lush tree groves recalling historic structures	1
Ruin gardens and landscapes	1
Five river/canal overlooks	0

River Overlooks - Survey	English	Portuguese	TOTAL	%
I have no concerns	22	1	23	64%
Lush tree groves recalling historic structures	7	0	7	19%
Ruin gardens and landscapes	4	0	4	11%
Two street-facing overlooks	3	0	3	8%
Hard and soft edges	2	0	2	6%
Decks and steps/overlooks for quiet viewing	2	0	2	6%
Central gathering space + outdoor classroom on island deck	2	0	2	6%
Health and fitness and walking circuits	2	0	2	6%
Five river/canal overlooks	0	0	0	0%

Comment Themes

- Maintenance
- Safety
- Missing bike path

Juicy quotes

With the decks and overlooks I am concerned it will break up the park too much and leave some spaces well-loved while others neglected as that appears to be a bit of the case now. Additionally, the more groves and gardens that are built in the more there is to maintain.

This park has always had visibility issues where people are concerned about safety because it’s so much lower than the roads around it. While there’s certainly a need for shade, over planting could hinder visibility and prevent people from feeling safe in the space.

NOTE

- There is definitely a difference in what elements people have concerns about between those who attended the Community Workshop and those who completed the survey for the Valley Rooms elements. There are few common elements of top concern across the Workshop and Survey. There appear to be similar levels of lack of concern.

Valley Rooms

Valley Rooms - Survey	English
Comes with a higher cost	8
I have no concerns	N/A
Flexible programmed street/urban edge, including outdoor classrooms	3
Experiential pathways (reflecting a direct experience of the ruins and remnants)	3
Health and fitness and walking circuits	2
Tree planting “rooms” recalling historic structures	1
Central picnic grove on island	1
Two canal/river overlooks	0
Ruin gardens and landscapes	0

Valley Rooms - Survey	English	Portuguese	TOTAL	%
Comes with a higher cost	18	1	19	53%
I have no concerns	11	0	11	31%
Flexible programmed street/urban edge, including outdoor classrooms	5	0	5	14%
Tree planting “rooms” recalling historic structures	5	0	5	14%
Central picnic grove on island	4	0	4	11%
Two canal/river overlooks	2	0	2	6%
Health and fitness and walking circuits	2	0	2	6%
Ruin gardens and landscapes	2	0	2	6%
Experiential pathways (reflecting a direct experience of the ruins and remnants)	0	0	0	0%

Comment Themes

- Cost
- Maintenance
- Safety
- Proximity of outdoor classroom to the street

Juicy quotes

> … the safety of park patrons (especially at the river overlooks spots) concerns me, because an accidental fall into the river could lead to severe injury (or worse) with the strong possibility of follow-up lawsuits against the town for negligence.
>
> Folks don’t want to go into the park because they don’t feel safe in a lower space and adding a lot of tree canopy could exacerbate that issue. And again, without proper maintenance planting areas like the ruins gardens can quickly get out of hand and invasive plants will take over.

NOTE

There is less difference in what elements people have concerns about between those who attended the Community Workshop and those who completed the survey for the Valley Rooms elements with the main concern being the higher cost. There appear to be similar levels of lack of concern.

Valley Falls Heritage Park Main Results May 2024

Missing

- Lighting
- Maintenance plan
- Parking
- Connection to Blackstone River bike path
- Sculpture/ art piece
- Playground and/ or water play (e.g., splash pad)
- Restrooms
- Community garden
- Fish passage
- Cameras/ security
- Safe access to the park (i.e., crossing street to get there)
- Kayak/ paddling access

Juicy quotes

> I would like to see a sculptural piece and/or interesting lighting to help spark interest, create a strong feature worth visiting, and allow for the space to be active at all times. This is a gateway to the town and a great opportunity to create a showstopper piece.
>
> I was hoping community garden space would be part of the plan

Potential improvements

- Maintenance plan
- Integrate with bike path
- Lighting
- Parking
- Make more visible at street level
- Playground
- Maintain/ improve flow of river
- Signage
- Restrooms

Juicy quotes

> I think that keeping the central area as an active space as opposed to a passive picnic grove allows for the town to meet its goal of having activities and classes. I would again urge the designers to think about future visibility into the space as it pertains to tree planting and having areas requiring high maintenance or a high level of involvement from the community on a prolonged basis.
>
> I don't think this park needs to be overly programmed.

ENGAGEMENT #2: DETAILED MEMORANDUM

IN-PERSON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Valley Falls Heritage Park Main Results May 2024

Most excited about

- Safe, beautiful, and activated space is being created for the Valley Falls neighborhood
- The design integrates nature and history (including the ruins)
- Flexible use spaces make many activities possible
- Particularly like outdoor classrooms and that the design supports health and fitness
- That it's happening; another greenspace is being added to the river and the area is being cleaned up
- Lack of cameras and promoting sense of community

Juicy quotes

I'm excited that after a long time of talking about it someone is doing something.

Ruins are cool.

Having a beautiful park in our town!

Other

Concerns

- Changes in water flow

Potential improvements

- Curriculum for schools

Juicy Quotes

Hydropower taking all the river water.

Who is in charge of the park?

ENGAGEMENT #2: SURVEY RESULTS

QUOTES FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Iconic and timeless activated space that doesn't become overlooked and then run down and unwelcoming	Legacy
Solid construction, that won't fall apart in 20 years.	Legacy
I would like it to be a place that preserves history, and provides an easily accessible and well loved place for people to congregate safely in that part of town as it does not seem to receive as much love as other parks and areas in town.	Legacy
That Valley Falls is beautiful and not just a stereotype of town location	Legacy
Bringing the river back into the equation as resource rather than a drainage	RO Liked Comments
I like the thoughtful multi purpose design.	RO Liked Comments
With the decks and overlooks I am concerned it will break up the park too much and leave some spaces well loved while others neglected as that appears to be a bit of the case now. Additionally, the more groves and gardens that are built in the more there is to maintain.	RO Concerns Comments
This park has always had visibility issues where people are concerned about safety because it's so much lower than the roads around it. While there's certainly a need for shade, over planting could hinder visibility and prevent people from feeling safe in the space.	RO Concerns Comments
I like that each of the distinct spaces of the park seem more connected to one another.	VR Liked Comments
The idea of activated edge spaces with experiential walkways leading to a central activated space helps brings life into all parts of the space	VR Liked Comments
… the safety of park patrons (especially at the river overlooks spots) concerns me, because an accidental fall into the river could lead to severe injury (or worse) with the strong possibilty of follow-up lawsuits against the town for negligence.	VR Concerns Comments
Folks don't want to go into the park because they don't feel safe in a lower space and adding a lot of tree canopy could exacerbate that issue. And again, without proper maintenance planting areas like the ruins gardens can quickly get out of hand and invasive plants will take over.	VR Concerns Comments
I would like to see a sculptural piece and/or interesting lighting to help spark interest, create a strong feature worth visiting, and allow for the space to be active at all times. This is a gateway to the town and a great opportunity to create a showstopper piece.	Missing
I was hoping community garden space would be part of the plan	Missing
I think that keeping the central area as an active space as opposed to a passive picnic grove allows for the town to meet its goal of having activities and classes. I would again urge the designers to think about future visibility into the space as it pertains to tree planting and having areas requiring high maintenance or a high level of involvement from the community on a prolonged basis.	Improvements to designs
I don't think this park needs to be overly programmed	Improvements to designs
I'm excited that after a long time of talking about it someone is doing something	Excited about
ruins are cool	Excited about
Having a beautiful park in our town!	Excited about

ENGAGEMENT #2: DETAILED RESPONSES

CONCERNED COMMENTS

River Overlooks		
No Bike path	Missing bike path	
The cost of maintenance of the growth of the vegetation and trees.	Cost	Maintenance
With the decks and overlooks I am concerned it will break up the park too much and leave some spaces well loved while others neglected as that appears to be a bit of the case now. Additionally, the more groves and gardens that are built in the more there is to maintain.	Maintenance	
This park has always had visibility issues where people are concerned about safety because it's so much lower than the roads around it. While there's certainly a need for shade, over planting could hinder visibility and prevent people from feeling safe in the space. Also, the maintenance required for heavier planting like the ruins gardens can easily become overrun with invasive plants like what has happened since the last redesign.	**Safety**	Maintenance
No If the groves become too dense over time it may invite unwanted behaviors and pose a negative image causeing a reduction in usage.	Maintenance	
Safety concerns with a lush park. You felt trapped Former park felt	Safety	
Open areas so that patrons are not hidden for safety, regular maintenance on the park	Safety	Maintenance
The plan shows fully watered canals and races. How will a restricted 3cfs flow planned by Blackstone Hydro and several state and fed agencies seems to support, restrict natural aquatic life support within all sections of watered space? Water quality should the driver.seemingly supported by RIDEM, RI history	Water flow	
No Yes, I already sent them to the Mayor and Glen M. on top of others!		
I do not see the bike path included in this design. Where are the restrooms	Missing bike path Restrooms	

Valley Rooms		
none		
The higher cost is my number one concern (including regular maintenance following the completion of the renovations). History has shown us over and over again that government is hardly the best steward of taxpayer funds, and there almost always seems to be much higher costs with the end result of any infrastructure project than what was originally estimated. In addition, **the safety of park patrons (especially at the river overlooks spots) concerns me, because an accidental fall into the river could lead to severe injury (or worse) with the strong possibilty of follow-up lawsuits against the town for negligence.**	Cost	Safety
Higher cost is always a bit of a concern. This plan also doesn't appear to have any designation for parking. There also appears to be more open land (like the medow) so I'd be curious to understand what the upkeep of this plan v. the other plan would look like.	Cost	Maintenance
As I mentioned in the previous plans concerns - visibility and over planting are major issues that the current space has dealt with. Folks don't want to go into the park because they don't feel safe in a lower space and adding a lot of tree canopy could exacerbate that issue. And again, without proper maintenance planting areas like the ruins gardens can quickly get out of hand and invasive plants will take over.	Safety	Maintenance
I don't know if I like the outdoor classroom up by the street	Proximity of outdoor classroom to the street	
More costly	Cost	
I don't like that it removed the curved path	Removal of curved path	
May lessen the legacy of river as a resource	Downplays river legacy	
No		
Yes, the above ground walkway for starters. My other concerns have been emailed to people.	Walkways	
no I do not like the outdoor classroom area so close to the street	Proximity of outdoor classroom to the street	

Maintenance	5
Safety	3
Missing bike path	2
Cost	1
Water flow	1
Restrooms	1

Cost	3
Safety	2
Proximity of outdoor classroom to the street	2
Maintenance	2
Removal of curved path	1
Downplays river legacy	1
Walkways	1

STARLUNA
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Valley Falls Heritage Park Master Planning
Phase 3 Community Engagement Thoughts

Phase 3 of the Valley Falls Heritage Park ("VFHP") Master Planning Process involved a hybrid Community Workshop to capture feedback on the design concept developed based on the feedback received in Phase 2. This workshop made space for community members to share what they are most excited about, and their final questions, concerns, and suggestions about the latest design concept. Online participants were placed into breakout rooms allowing them to engage in the same discussions with other online participants that the people in the room also engaged in.

Overall Themes

Community members expressed excitement about various features of the design concept, including the river overlooks, the integration of historical elements, and connection to the river. They also raised questions, concerns, and suggestions related to maintenance, climate change, parking, safety, and future community engagement.

Highlights

- Strong appreciation for gardens with native plants and the self-maintaining pollinator meadow.
- Excitement about improved accessibility, river overlooks, and historical-modern design integration.
- Enthusiasm for features like the fish ladder, Broad Street deck, and overall sanctuary-like feel of the park.

Key Concerns, Questions, and Suggestions

- Emphasis on the need for robust long-term maintenance and upkeep plans.
- Concerns about the impact of climate change, including high water and flooding.
- Questions regarding parking availability during events.
- Safety and accessibility are recurring themes from previous engagements.
- Hope among community members that there is continued community engagement and promotion about the park to ensure its adoption and activation.
- Suggestions for park elements and materials reflect a desire for sustainability and durability.

Below we outline the major themes from the feedback we gathered at this workshop with quotes illustrating the various comments received.

Most Excited About / Most Liked Aspects of the Design Concept

Gardens and Natural Elements

- Gardens with native plants and trees.
- Pollinator meadow and self-maintaining pollinator garden, contributing to both aesthetics and ecological health.

"The self-maintaining pollinator garden contributes to the aestheticism and ecological health of the park."

"Gardens with native plants and trees are a wonderful addition."

Accessibility and Connectivity

- Improved ADA accessibility throughout the park.
- Enhanced river overlooks and smaller outlooks, allowing for different heights and perspectives of the river.
- Connection between the river and park, enhancing the bond between community and water.

"I like how you can view the river from different heights."

"The design ensures better opportunity for the 'passive' visitors of the Valley by opening viewsheds."

Historical and Modern Integration

- Mixture of modern design with historical remnants.
- Use of historical structures and materials that blend with the environment.
- Balance between river-focused and historical elements, creating a cohesive design.

"The design beautifully centers both the river and history. Great balance."

Additional Exciting Features

- Broad Street deck and entrance.
- Fish ladder and ramp, which add unique and functional aspects.
- Ruin gardens and historical structures.
- Flexibility of the park to cater to a variety of visitors and uses.

"I love the increased visibility of the river."

"Something for everyone."

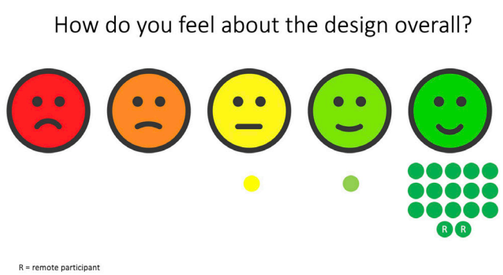
Overall Design and Feel

- Increased visibility and views of the river from different heights.
- Sanctuary-like feel, offering a peaceful and reflective space.
- The design's contribution to connecting the community to the water.

- General appreciation for the park's balance, aesthetic appeal, and thoughtful integration of natural and historical elements.

"I am most excited about the sanctuary-like feel of the park."

"[I am most excited about t]he design's contribution to connecting the community to the water."



R = remote participant

Top Concerns, Questions, and Suggestions

Maintenance and Upkeep

- Long-term maintenance and upkeep of the park and its materials.
- Ensuring the park's cleanliness and addressing potential vandalism.

"Will the Town of Cumberland include the Heritage Park in the recreational maintenance program?"

Water Rights and Access

- Protection of water rights and support for aquatic life.
- Kayak and fishing access for the river.

"Will there be fishing or kayak access for the river?"

"Are we as a community able to protect the water rights which is a focal point in the River Project?"

Parking

- Adequacy of parking spaces during events, including secondary parking options.

"Is there enough secondary parking for events?"

Safety

- Ensuring the safety of park visitors, including path widths for emergency access.
- Addressing concerns related to the boardwalk structure's cost and visual impact.

"How do we ensure the safety of those using this new park?"

Continued Community Engagement

- Strong desire for continued promotion of and excitement about the park after its completion.
- Concern that children may not enjoy the park due to lack of interactive play elements.

"How do we as a community continue the excitement and interest in the park after its completion?"

"Will the local residents utilize the park?

"I worry about kids not enjoying the park because there are no amenities to entertain them."

Climate Change Impacts

- Preparing for the impact of climate change, including huge storms and high water/flooding.
- Consideration of the canal and canal wall infrastructure resilience.

"How will high water and flooding affect the park and infrastructure?"

Conclusion

Most of the main concerns are issues that require deliberation and commitment of resources on the part of the Town's leadership and residents. Overall, participants were very excited with the design concepts. Participants expressed enthusiasm to continue working to make the redesign of this park a reality.

"I really like what the designers have done with the information we've already given them. They've managed to create a very accessible park, even for people like me who get around with walkers and wheelchairs. And they've managed to create a park with a lot potentially going on in it, yet retaining the feeling of open space. Great use of the pollinator gardens and of trees that permit a fair amount of visibility."

Community Dinner

Date: June 17, 2024

Time: 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Location: Zoom and in-person at 45 Broad St, Cumberland, RI 02864

Supports: Dinner, childcare, and a remote option were provided.

Approximate attendance: 17 people in-person; 4 on Zoom (2 of the remote participants participated in the breakout rooms)

Agenda:

- Welcome
- Feedback heard from previous community engagement events
- Update on design
- Activities and conversations
    - Likes and what community members are most excited about
    - Questions, concerns, and suggestions
- Closing

ENGAGEMENT #3: TRANSCRIBED ARTIFACTS

HYBRID COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES - *JUNE 17, 2024*

Valley Falls Heritage Park Main Results May 2024

Likes / Most Excited About

- Broad Street deck
- Mixture of modern and historic
- Historical remnants
- Access to Amaral Building
- River overlooks x4
- Smaller overlook
- The outlooks
- Ruin gardens x2
- Fish ladder
- The ramp
- Better opportunity for the “passive” visitors of the Valley by opening viewsheds
- How the river water into the park connects the two together
- Accessibility x2
- River views
- Pollinator meadow
- Something for everyone
- Connecting the community to the water
- Flexibility
- Using historical structures
- I like the fish ladder
- Broad Street entrance
- Multiple sites to visit
- The design beautifully centers both the river and history. Great balance.
- The self-maintaining pollinator garden contributes to the aesthetics and ecological health of the park.
- I like how the materials blend in with the environment more as opposed to the metal grates
- I like how you can view the river from different heights
- I love the increased visibility of the river
- I am most excited about the sanctuary-like feel of the park.
- It's clean, tidy and multi purpose. I appreciate it has parking, shade and especially like to see the rain garden!
- I like the overlooks, handicap accessible paths (because steep drops), and meadows. I like the fish ladder if that comes through. Overall, I think it's nice, clean and comprehensive.

Valley Falls Heritage Park Main Results May 2024

Concerns, Questions, and Suggestions

Top Items Surfaced by Facilitators

- Maintenance of the park (upkeep)
- Long-term maintenance (materials used, water rights)
- Impact of climate change
- I worry about parking (spaces during events)
- Designated area for the children is not clear
- Will the Town of Cumberland protect the water rights to protect aesthetics, habitat, aquatic life, fish passage?
- Will the Town of Cumberland include the Heritage Park in the recreational maintenance program?

Concerns (shared on stickies)

- Critical design feature not considered maintaining adequate river water into raceways for aquatic life support without adequate flow – no water features
- I want the park to draw kids in, it could some interactive play space. Maybe on the right by the ramps
- Operation/maintenance: landscape maintenance budget and schedule with adequate access for landscape equipment

Written individually (on worksheets and online)

- Easily cleaned or vandalized?
- Replacement of glass, broken stairs, and other materials
- Is vegetation low maintenance?
- Safety?
- Effect of climate change
- Trees and plants
- Introduction of new plants
- Huge storms
- Will the community adopt this park?
- Will the town continue to promote the park
- Will the park be an integral part of the future of Cumb
- Maintenance by the town?

ENGAGEMENT #3: TRANSCRIBED ARTIFACTS

HYBRID COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES - *JUNE 17, 2024*

Valley Falls Heritage Park Main Results May 2024

- My main concern is maintenance and upkeep.
- A kayak launch area would be nice
- Could a small turbine run the lighting?
- Will the paths be wide enough for a motorized vehicle like a quad for maintenance or EMS access?
- Will there be a ring buyout or other water operations?
- Who will maintain the garden?
- Will there be fishing or kayak access for the river?
- Does the bike path removal trigger any approval from Ride or RIDOT?
- Is this site on any historical record? Does this trigger any approval need from SHPO?
- Concern: Little has been said about the state of the canal or the canal wall infrastructure resilience
- Suggestion: work closely with private Hydro owner to de-silt the canals for more clean water and fish passage
- Will high water and flooding affect the park and infrastructure?
- How will residents discover the park?
- What other events will there be other than farmers markets?
- I wonder how other residents will eventually find out about the park.
- This might have been addressed, but I wonder how we will discourage littering at the park.
- I wonder how the outdoor classroom will work with the noise level of the water.
- Aesthetics
- Consider using crops like micro clover mixes to limit mowing needs in open green spaces
- Consider using microclover instead of rye grass seed mix in some open green spaces; trees; tulip for fall expression and flow; black gum for fall color; sweet gum for wildlife away from human spaces
- Consider using raceways as fishways at the very least
- Protect water rights
- Allow flow for aquatic life support
- Consider tree planting, such as tulips, oak, catalpa, sweet gum, and black gum for color, interest, and wildlife
- Consider a maintenance operations budget for maintaining the park
- How do we as a community continue the excitement and interest in the park after its completion?
- Long-term maintenance and upkeep
- Are we able to provide a quality design and end product within budgetary constraints?

Valley Falls Heritage Park Main Results May 2024

- Are we as a community able to protect the water rights which is a focal point in the River Project?
- I wonder if there will be water stations
- I worry about kids not enjoying the park because there are no amenities to entertain them
- I am suggesting there be other shading other than trees because trees are seasonal
- Not adhering to deed – too much hard surfaces; cannot use de-icing on them near water; cannot block handicap parking access
- Plant for species in greatest need of conservation – RIDEM WAP list!!! My research that was given to Pres. of RIWPS
- Will park be closed in the winter? Maintenance – liability steps – ice and leaves. Snow removal?
- Signage – vision impaired, color blind, and braille. Spanish too. RI. Audubon doing
- I wonder if this will be used by many residents daily? And for the bigger events, will there be enough secondary parking to allow for visitors to come use the park?
- Is there enough secondary parking for events?
- What are the long-term maintenance plans?
- Concern: Boardwalk structure: Cost
- Concern: Boardwalk structure: does it break up the side view too much
- Will the local residents utilize the park?
- How do we ensure the safety of those using this new park? Will it naturally become safe when individuals use it?
- Will there be an obstructed view of the river from the Amaral Building?

Additional Notes Taken by Facilitators

- Not adhering to the deed
- Suggestions: Dem wep list?
- Shading other tree or until mature
- Water stations
- Signage recc. accessible (blind/language)
- Play element for children
- Plan for parking during events
- I wonder what the materials will be
- My concern: handicap parking
- Will parking be open year round?
- Protect H20 rights

ENGAGEMENT #3: TRANSCRIBED ARTIFACTS

HYBRID COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES - *JUNE 17, 2024*

Valley Falls Heritage Park Main Results May 2024

- Long-term maintenance upkeep
- Control stormwater runoff and litter
- Maintenance
- State of canal and walls
- Will milkweed be part of the plantings?

Post-Workshop feedback

Just finished watching the zoom presentation re the Heritage Park. I really like what the designers have done with the information we've already given them. They've managed to create a very accessible park, even for people like me who get around with walkers and wheelchairs. And they've managed to create a park with a lot potentially going on in it, yet retaining the feeling of open space. Great use of the pollinator gardens and of trees that permit a fair amount of visibility. My main worry is one without a solution. How can they do all that without creating further disruption to the already overburdened Mill Street?

ENGAGEMENT #3: IN-PERSON WORKSHEETS

HYBRID COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES - *JUNE 17, 2024*

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design?
Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design?

Comments and Notes
Comentários e notas

1) Control Stormwater Runoff + litter
2) maintenance, ~~water~~.
3) State of canal + walls.
4) will milkweed be part of the plantings?

Top 2 Responses the Group Reached a Consensus on

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
will the town of Cumberland protect the water rights to protect aesthetics, habitat, + aquatic life support. Fish Passage

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
will the Town of Cumberland include Heritage Park in the recreational maintenance program.

INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitator

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design?
Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design?

Comments and Notes
Comentários e notas

I wonder what the materials will be
My concern handicap parking
Will park be open year around
Separation
Pervious Mix
Shading other trees or artificial material
Water Stations
Transit Rec accessible (Wind/Landscape)
Protection of the Keyhole
Play elements for children
Long term maintance upkeep
Plan for parking during events

Top 2 Responses the Group Reached a Consensus on

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
I worry about Parking (Spaces during events)

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
long term maintance (Materials used, water rights)
#3 Play park children not clear

INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitator

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design?
Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design?

Comments and Notes
Comentários e notas

Top 2 Responses the Group Reached a Consensus on

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Maintance of the park. (upkeep)

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Impact of climate change

INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitator

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design? (Write up to four responses.)

Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design? (Escreva até quatro respostas.)

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Will high water/flooding effect the park + infrastructure?

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
How will residents discover the park?

3. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Other than farmers market what kind of events?

4. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
1

Participant

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design? (Write up to four responses.)

Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design? (Escreva até quatro respostas.)

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Will high water/flooding effect the park + infrastructure?

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
How will residents discover the park?

3. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Other than farmers market what kind of events?

4. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
1

Participant

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design? (Write up to four responses.)

Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design? (Escreva até quatro respostas.)

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
- Does The Bike Path Removal Trigger Any Need For Approval From RIDEM or RIDOT?

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
- Is This Site Or Any Historic Record? Does That Trigger SHPO Approval Need?

3. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Little Has been Said About The State Of The Canal & Canal Wall Infrastructure Resiliency.

4. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Work Closely With Private Hydro Owner To Re-Set The Canal For More Clean Water + Fish Passage

Participant

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design? (Write up to four responses.)

Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design? (Escreva até quatro respostas.)

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
My main concern is maintenance + upkeep

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
A Kayak launch area would be nice.

3. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Could a small turbine run the lighting?

4. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão

Participant

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design?
Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design?

Comments and Notes
Comentários e notas

1) Control Stormwater Runoff + litter
2) maintenance, ~~water~~.
3) State of canal + walls.
4) will milkweed be part of the plantings?

Top 2 Responses the Group Reached a Consensus on

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
will the town of Cumberland protect the water rights to protect aesthetics, habitat, + aquatic life support. Fish Passage

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
will the Town of Cumberland include Heritage Park in the recreational maintenance program.

INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitator

SCANS OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

ENGAGEMENT #3: IN-PERSON WORKSHEETS

HYBRID COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES - *JUNE 17, 2024*

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design? (Write up to four responses.)

Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design? (Escreva até quatro respostas.)

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Easily cleaned if vandalized?

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Replacment of Glass, Broken stairs, other material?

3. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
is Vegitation low maintenance?

4. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Safty?

Participant

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design? (Write up to four responses.)

Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design? (Escreva até quatro respostas.)

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
I wonder how local residents will eventually find out about the park.

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
This might have been addressed, but I wonder how we will discourage littering at the park.

3. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
I wonder how the outdoor classroom will work with the noise level of the water.

4. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
aesthetics

Participant

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design? (Write up to four responses.)

Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design? (Escreva até quatro respostas.)

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Consider using crops such as micro clover mixes to limit mowing need in some open green spaces

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Consider using raceways as fishways at very least; protect water rights to adequately allow flow for aquatic life support

3. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Consider tree plantings such as tulip, oak, caltalpa, sweetgum + blackgum. For color interest & wildlife

4. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Consider an operations + maintainance budget for maintaining park

Participant

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design? (Write up to four responses.)

Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design? (Escreva até quatro respostas.)

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
How do we as a community ~~keep~~ continue the excitement and intrest in the Heritage Park project once completed

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Long term maintenance & upkeep

3. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Are we able to provide a quality design and end product within budgetary constraints

4. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Are we able as a community to protect the water rights which are a focal point of the river project.

Participant

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design? (Write up to four responses.)

Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design? (Escreva até quatro respostas.)

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
I wonder if there will be waterstations

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
I am concerned about kids not enjoying the park because it doesn't have ~~sta~~ amenities to entertain them

3. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
I am suggesting having other shades beside trees. Trees are seasonal.

4. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão

Participant

HERITAGE PARK

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design? (Write up to four responses.)

Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design? (Escreva até quatro respostas.)

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
I'm concerned that the park may not have "play" elements to draw in kids and make them want to spend time there.

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
I wonder if parking will be problematic when the plaza is being used.

3. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão

4. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão

Participant

HERITAGE PARK

Deborah Vine-Smith

What questions, concerns, and/ or suggestions do you have about the design? (Write up to four responses.)

Quais são as suas questões, preocupações e/ou sugestões sobre o design? (Escreva até quatro respostas.)

1. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
① Not adhering to Deed — too much HARD surfaces
② cannot use de-icing chem. near
③ cannot block handicap parking access.

2. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
plant for species in Greatest Need of Conservation — FIDEM WAP list!!! & my research that was given to Pres. of FIWPS.

3. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Will park be closed in the winter? maintenance — locability — steps — ice + leaves. Snow removable?

4. Question, concern, or suggestion
Pergunta, preocupação ou sugestão
Signage — vision impaired — color blind & braille. Spanish too! R.J. Audubon doin

Participant

SCANS OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

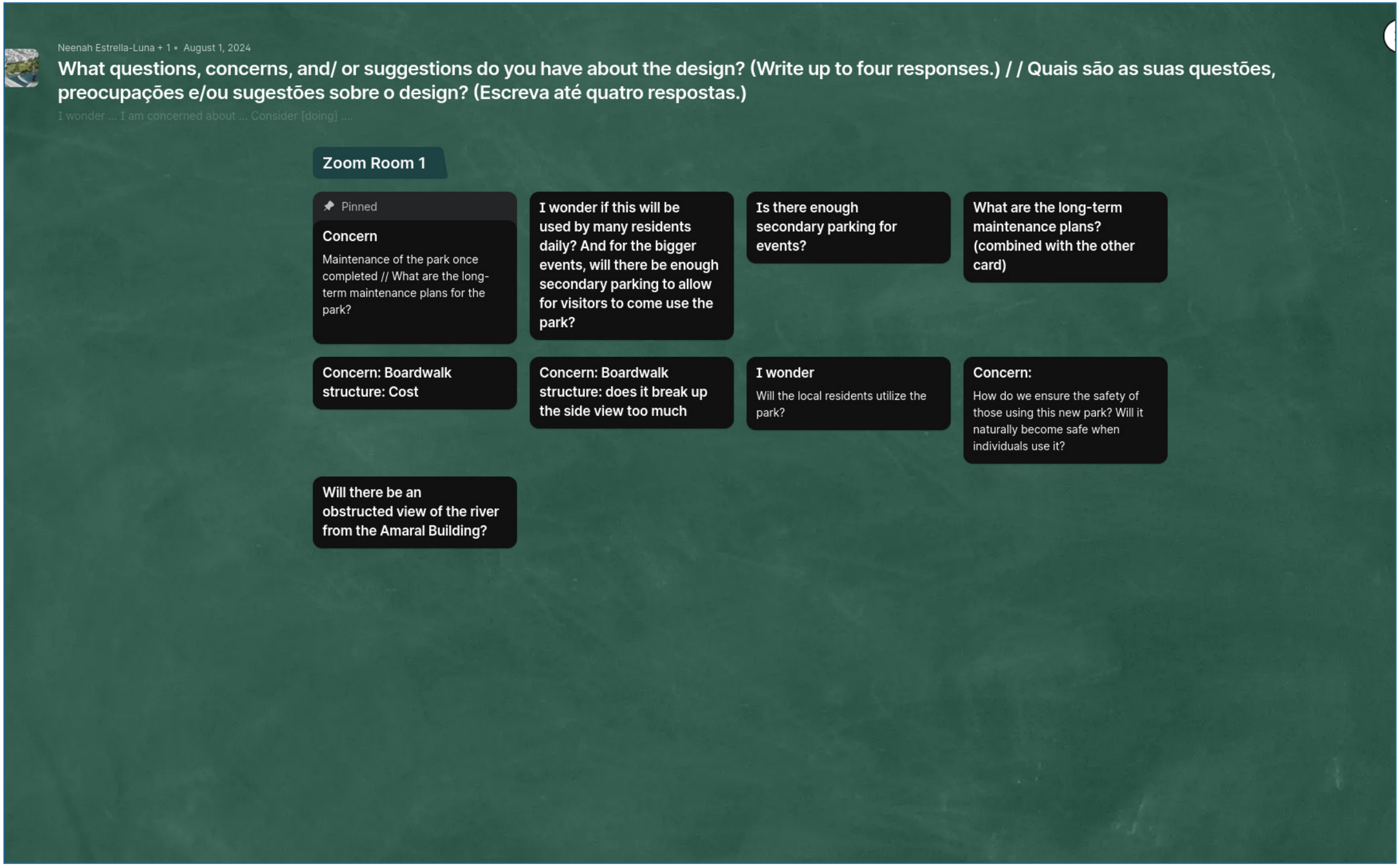
ENGAGEMENT #3: ZOOM PARTICIPANTS ONLINE POLL

HYBRID COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES - ***JUNE 17, 2024***



ENGAGEMENT #3: ZOOM PARTICIPANTS ONLINE POLL

HYBRID COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES - *JUNE 17, 2024*

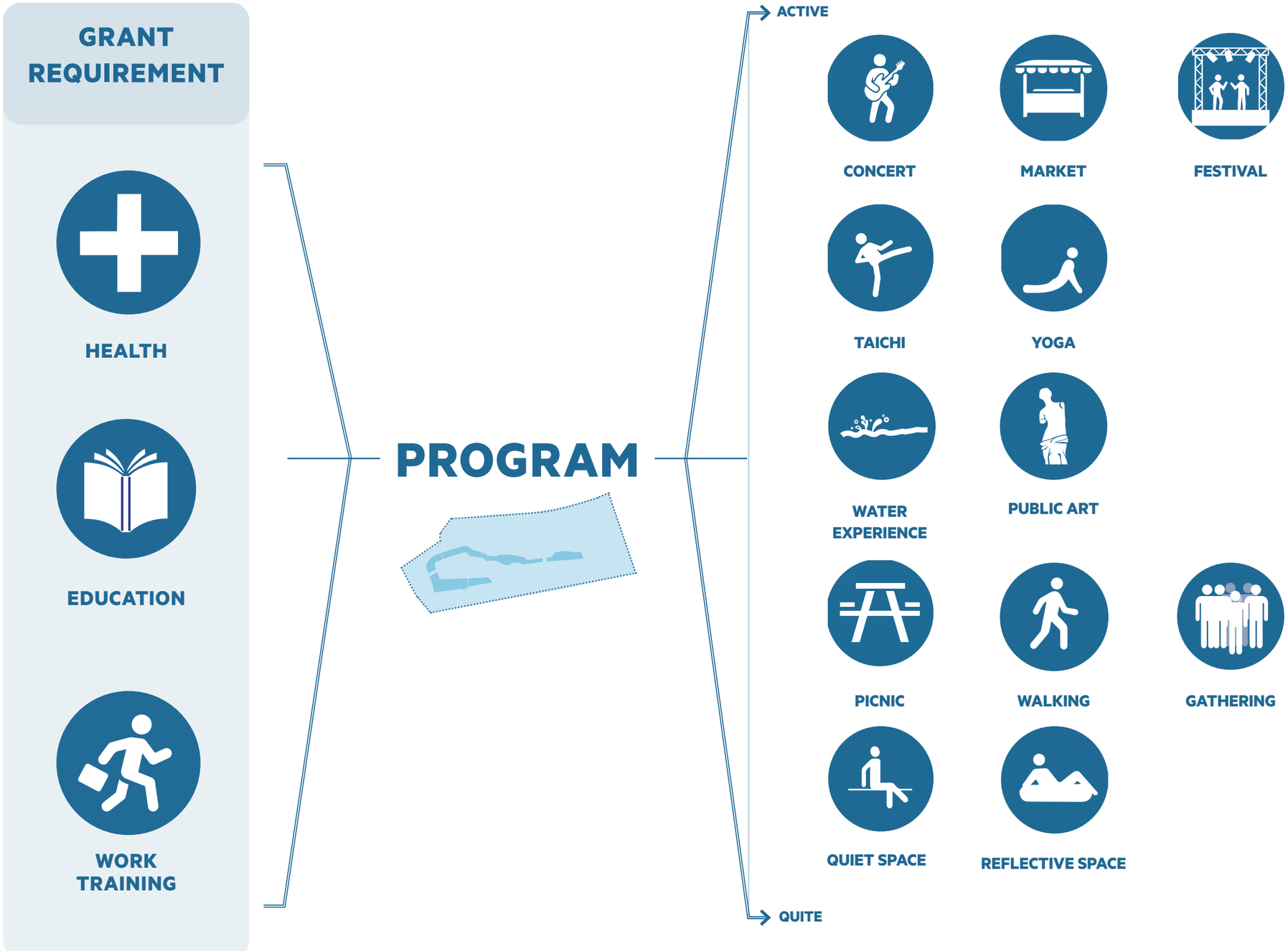


DESIGN STUDIES

PROGRAM

DEED, GRANT, AND FUTURE USES

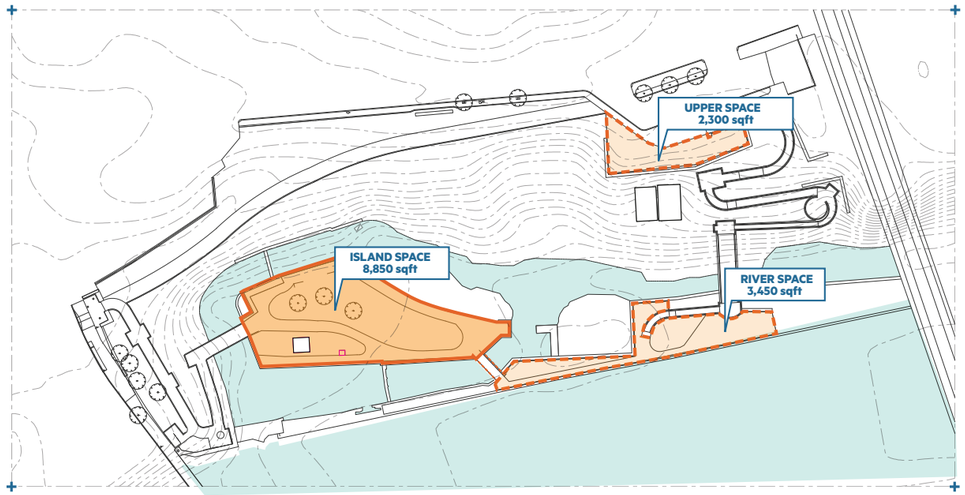
To ground our design proposals through a more comprehensive understanding, we ran a series of possible density/capacity analyses. These analyses involved studying the potential number of users the park can accommodate, the types of activities that can be hosted, and the impact on the surrounding environment. This process helped reveal what the possible programs are and where the potential overlaps are. The project's potential to increase footfall and provide a flexible space to host different programmatic activities across the site is an exciting prospect. It promises to attract more visitors and host diverse activities, enhancing the park's vibrancy and appeal.



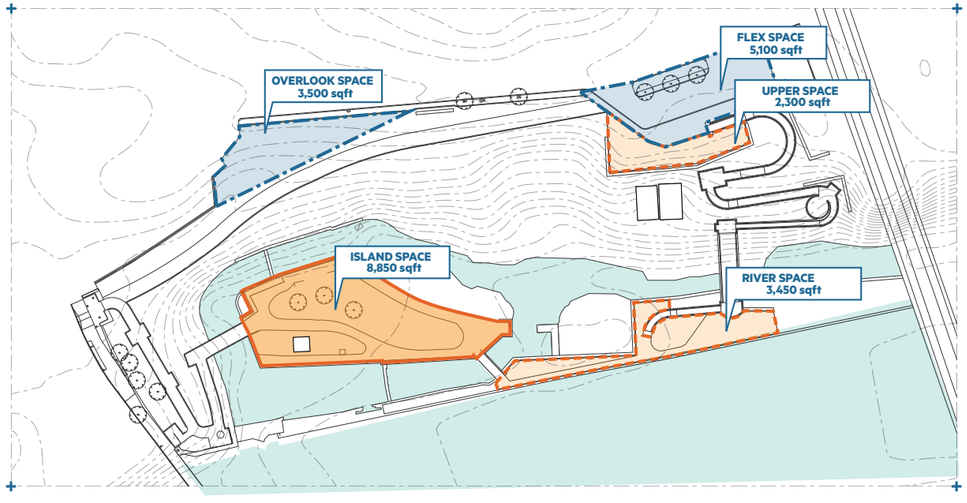
PROGRAM: DENSITY ANALYSIS

ACTIVE AND QUITE LANDSCAPES

CURRENT SPACE

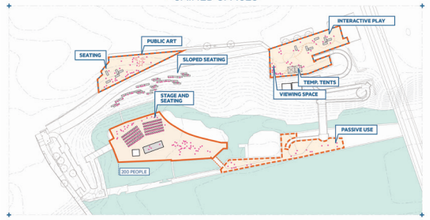


GAINED SPACE

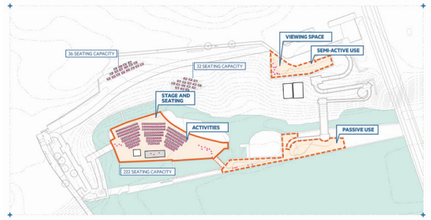


ACTIVE

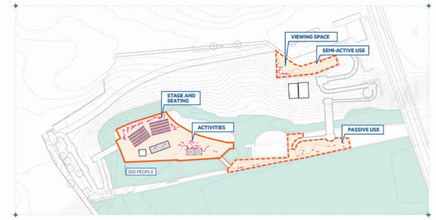
LARGE DENSITY - CONCERT/FESTIVAL
+ GAINED SPACES



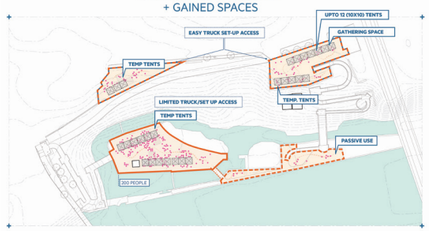
LARGE DENSITY - CONCERT/FESTIVAL



LARGE DENSITY - CONCERT/FESTIVAL



LARGE DENSITY - MARKET
+ GAINED SPACES



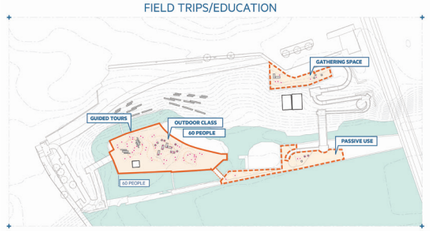
LARGE DENSITY - MARKET



LARGE DENSITY - 200 PEOPLE (3' BUFFER)
SEASONAL



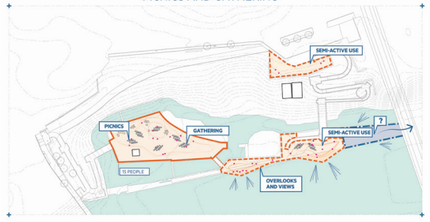
MEDIUM DENSITY
FIELD TRIPS/EDUCATION



MEDIUM DENSITY
SEASONAL/REGULAR



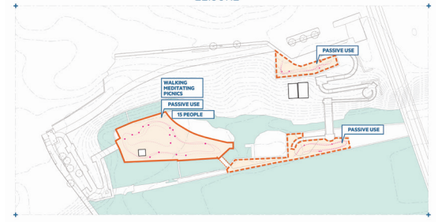
LOW DENSITY
PICNICS AND GATHERING



LOW DENSITY
MEDITATION AND GATHERING



LOW DENSITY
LEISURE



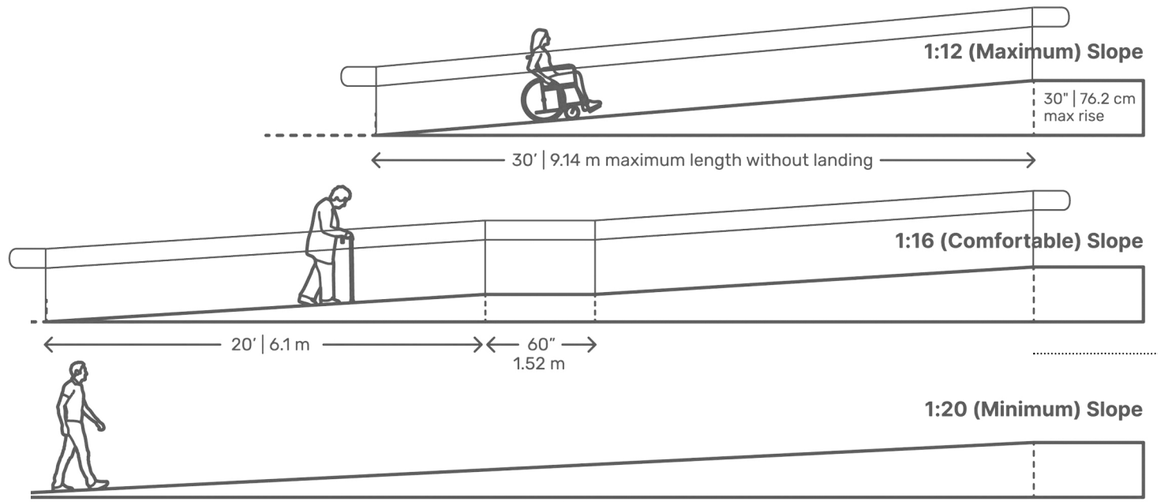
QUITE

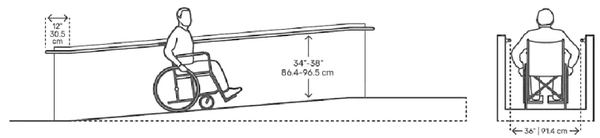
ACCESSIBILITY: ADA REQUIREMENTS

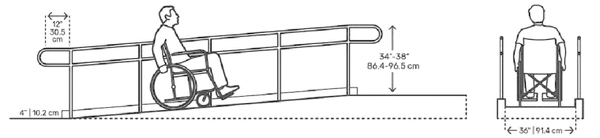
Our site's elevation change from the streetscape to the Island is approximately 24 feet. Access to and from every point within the park is non-negotiable and critical to our design. We understand the importance of accessibility and have made it a top priority in our design, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their physical abilities, can fully experience the park.

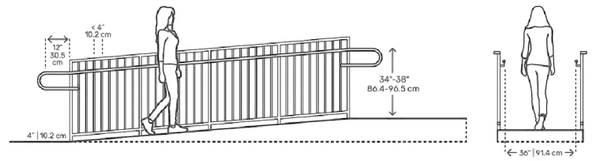
Since the site's revitalization in 1991, ramps have existed at the northeast and west of the site. However, these ramps do not create connected loops, which ultimately means the site is not accessible. With this in mind, we studied thoroughly the current conditions and led a series of analyses that would create direct connections from the streetscape to the Island.

Here, we outline some fundamental principles regarding the slopes allowed with and without handrails. To eliminate the need for ramps yet maintain a 5% slope, we worked on creating a series of analyses that would study the potential ways we can create accessible paths with required switchbacks.









1 : 12 SLOPE RAMP IS MAXIMUM ADA SLOPE WITH ADA HANDRAIL REQUIRED
1 : 20 SLOPE PATH WAY (NOT CONSIDERED AS A RAMP), NO HANDRAIL REQUIRED

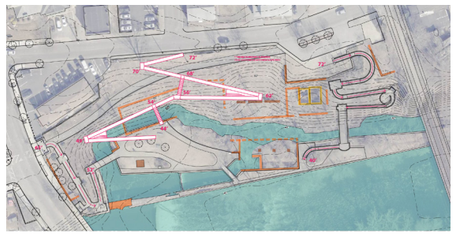
	MAXIMUM RISE		MAXIMUM HORIZONTAL PROJECTION	
Slope	in	mm	ft	m
1:12 to < 1:16	30	760	30	9
1:16 to < 1:20	30	760	40	12

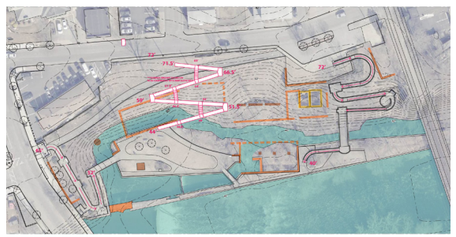
HANDRAIL, BETWEEN 34" AND 38", IS REQUIRED FOR A RAMP SURFACES WITH A SLOPE GRATER THAN 1:20

Source:
(Diagrams) Dimension.com
Architectural Graphic Standards by American Institute of Architects, Charles George Ramsey, Harold Reeve Sleeper

ACCESSIBILITY: RAMP STUDIES

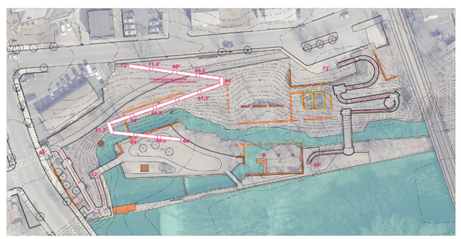
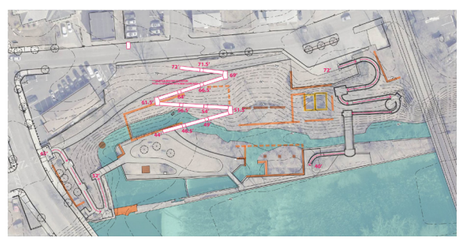
ZIGZAG SLOPE WALKWAY / RAMP INTEGRATED WITH STAIRS



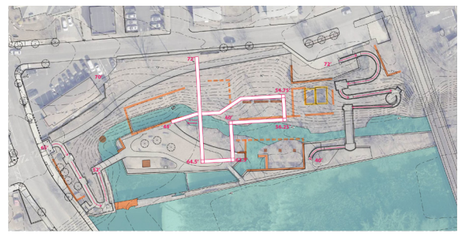
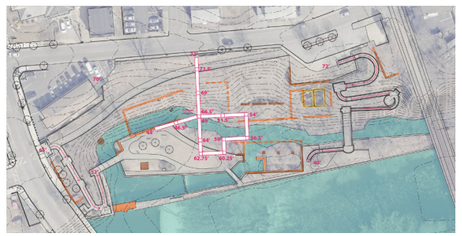
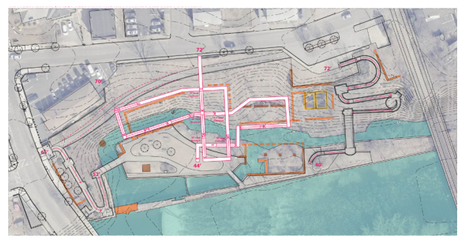


ZIGZAG SLOPE WALKWAY / RAMP

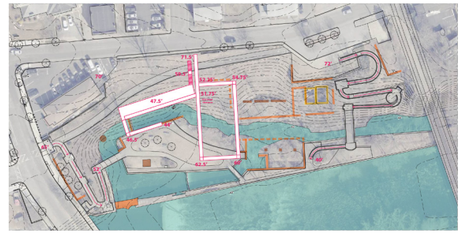
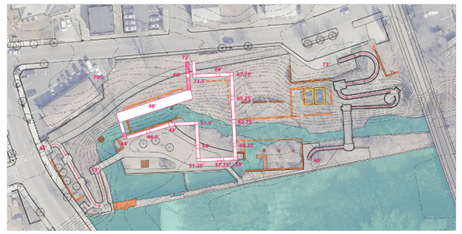



RECTILINEAR WALKWAY / RAMP TO OUTLINE THE HISTORIC BUILDING

RECTILINEAR WALKWAY / RAMP WITH INTEGRATED TERRACE DECK

INITIAL CONCEPT DESIGN OPTIONS

PHASE 2 - OPTION 1: VALLEY ROOMS

During our **Phase 2: Concept Options** phase, we worked on developing two design options: **River Overlooks** and **Valley Rooms**. Each option focused on leveraging different approaches, ultimately creating two-tier price design options.

In **Option 1: Valley Rooms**, the design proposes an expansive series of paths and connecting ramps that trace or outline the footprints of the historic structures. These design moves pay homage to the site's industrial structures by playing a clever balance between subtly hinting at these outlines and, at times, explicitly outlining the experiences.

Key features include:

- Flexible programmed street/ urban edge, including outdoor classrooms
- Experiential pathways (reflecting a direct experience of the ruins and remnants)
- Central picnic grove on island
- Two canal/river overlooks
- Comes with a higher cost
- Tree planting "rooms" recalling historic structures
- Health and fitness and walking circuits
- Ruin gardens and landscapes

1



2



3



4



Valley Rooms Plan **1**
Section **2**
Flexible Program **3**
Tree Planting Plan **4**

INITIAL CONCEPT DESIGN OPTIONS

PHASE 2 - OPTION 2: RIVER OVERLOOKS

In **Option 2, River Overlooks** leveraged the sloped meadow and introduced a path integrated into the slope, directly connecting the island. The flexible vendor/plaza to the east connects the streetscape and the park. To the west, at Broad Street, the design connects the streetscape by creating a secondary entrance.

Key features include:

- Two street-facing overlooks
- Hard and soft edges
- Decks and steps/overlooks for quiet viewing
- Central gathering space + outdoor classroom on island deck
- Five river/canal overlooks
- Lush tree groves recalling historic structures
- Health and fitness and walking circuits
- Ruin gardens and landscapes

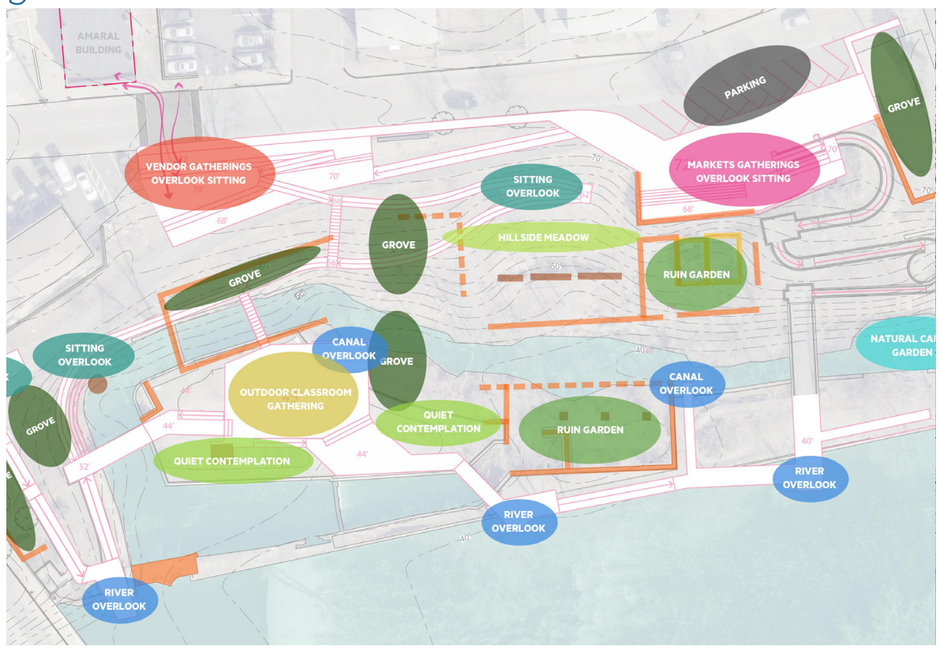
1



2



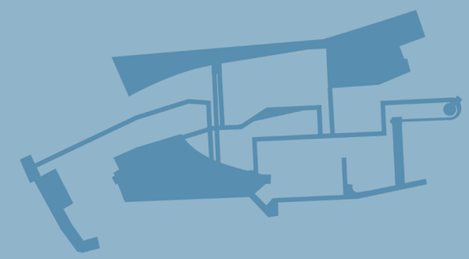
3



4



Valley Rooms Plan **1**
Section **2**
Flexible Program **3**
Tree Planting Plan **4**



VALLEY ROOMS

PLAN
VALLEY ROOMS

Cumberland Town Hall

Amaral Building

Mill Street

Vendor Gatherings
Overlook sitting
Outdoor Classroom

Bikeway

Hillside
Meadow

Flexible Plaza
Event Markets
Gathering Overlooks

Existing Ramp Structure
(Partial)

Boardwalk Structure

Ruin Garden

Broad Street

Gathering
Picnic
Socializing

Lawn

Broad
Street
Porch

Lawn

River Overlook

Railway Track

Blackstone River

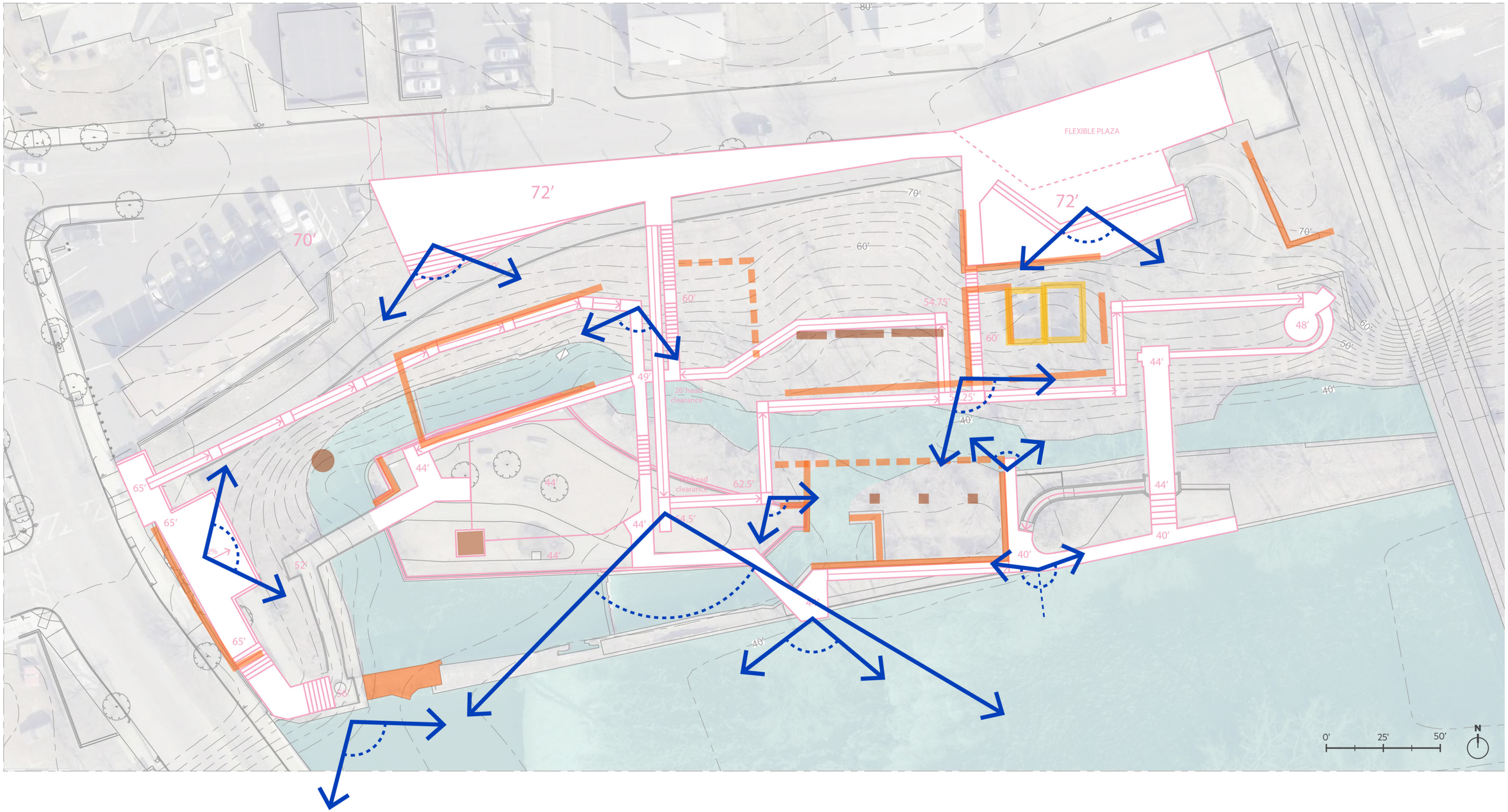
0' 25' 50'

N

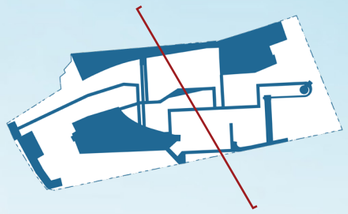
VIEWS

VALLEY ROOMS

5% SLOPE PATH (1:20) FOLLOWING THE HISTORIC BUILDING FOOTPRINTS



SECTION
VALLEY ROOMS



Flexible Plaza Events Market
Gathering Overlook Sitting Views

River Overlook

Boardwalk Structure

Blackstone River

Railway Track

***
Part of old ramp structure
to be removed

River Overlook

Street level

Vendor Gatherings
Overlook sitting
Outdoor Classroom

Gathering Picnic
Socializing

Connection to
Amaral building

Mill Street

+72.00'

+68.00'

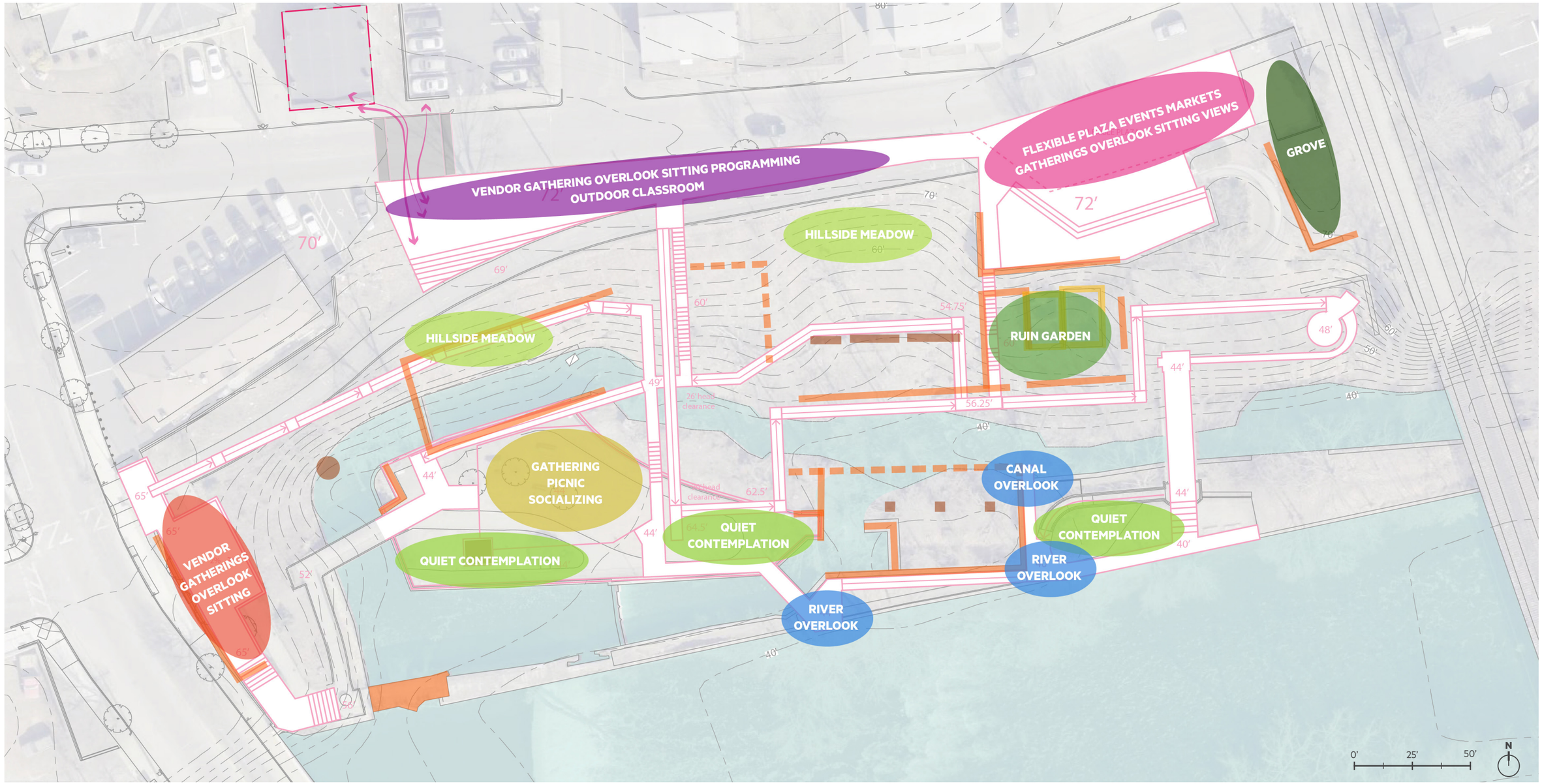
+54.00'

+44.00'

+40.00'

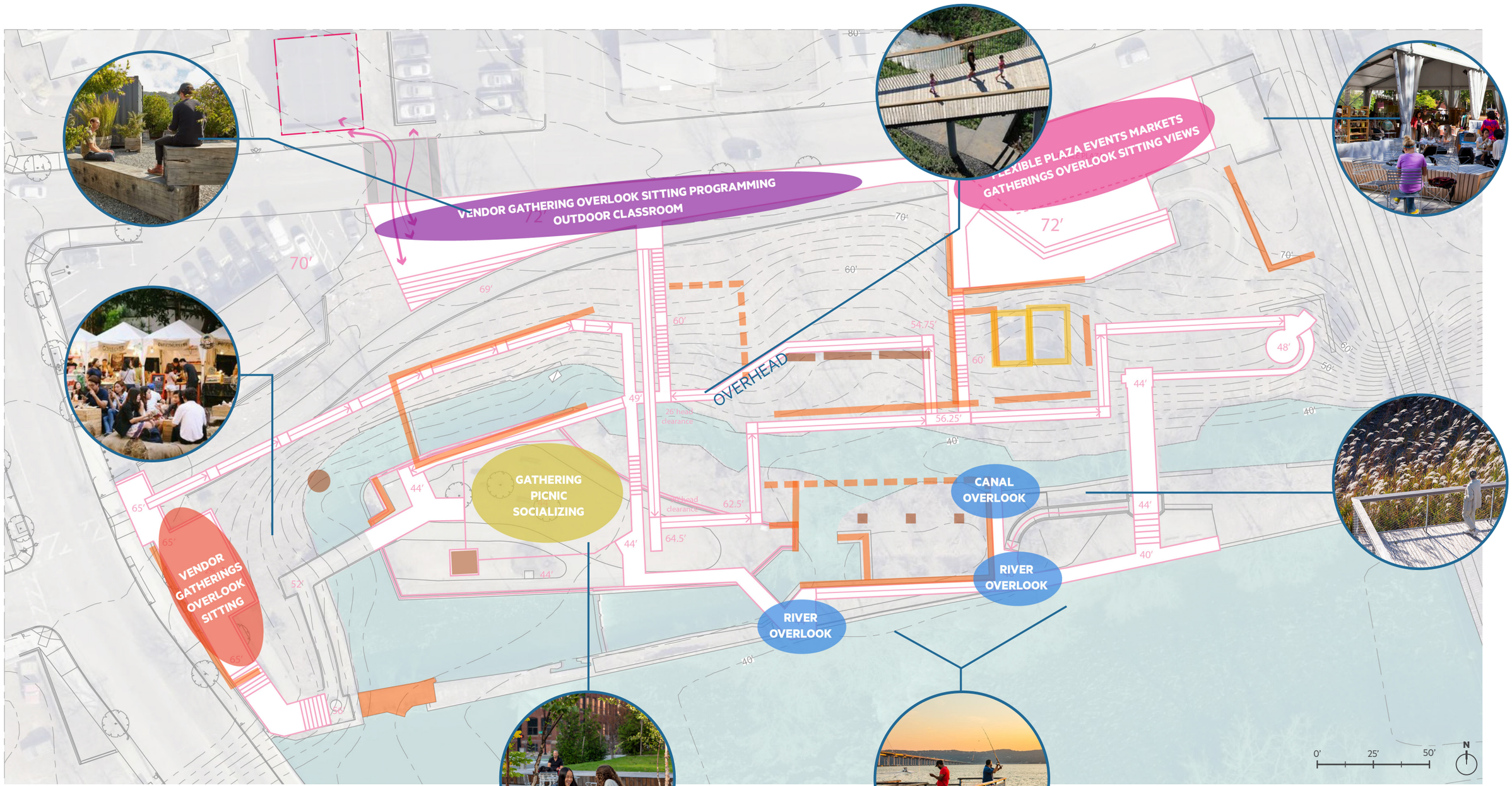
OVERALL PROGRAM

VALLEY ROOMS



ACTIVE

VALLEY ROOMS



QUIET LANDSCAPES

VALLEY ROOMS



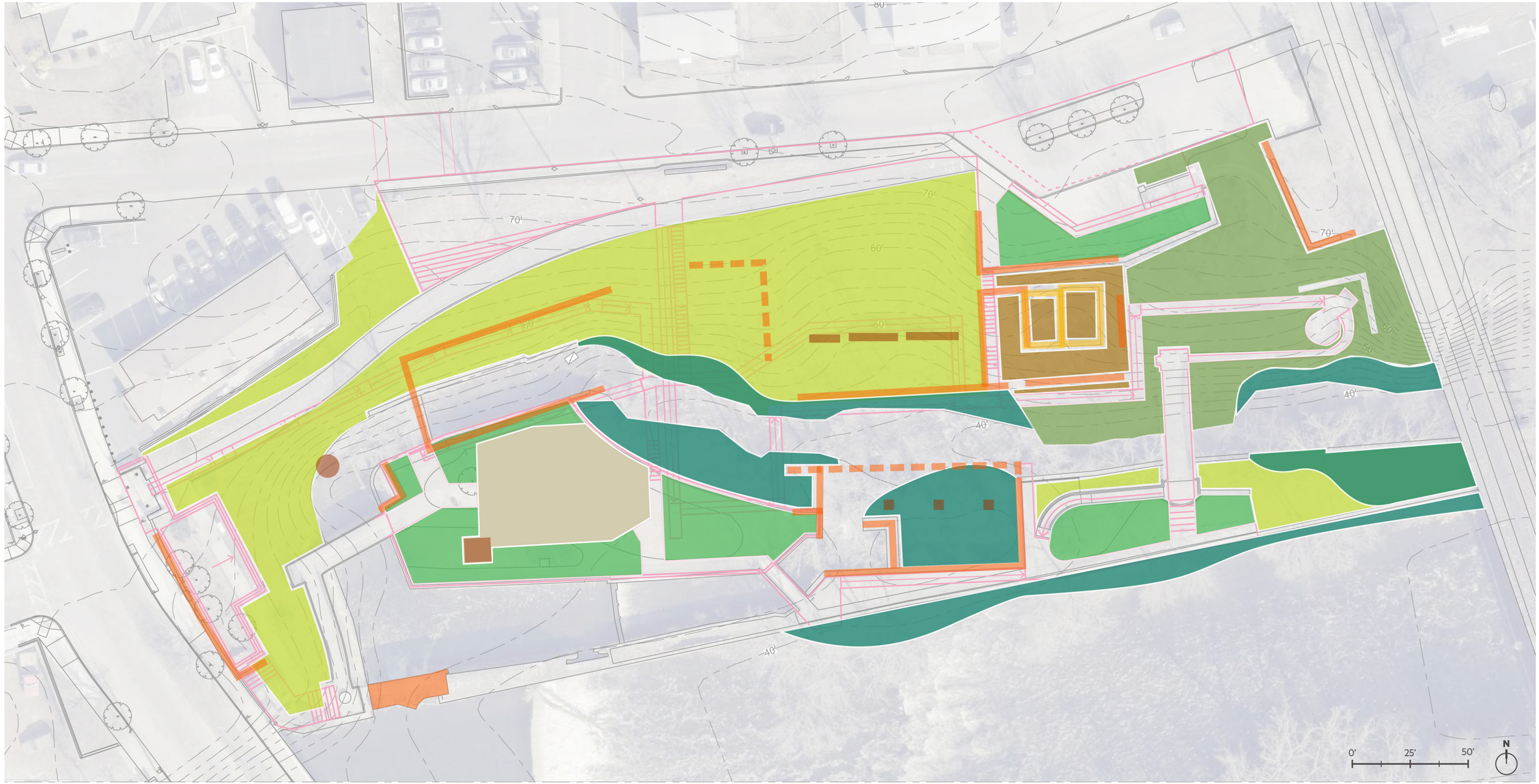
CANOPY

VALLEY ROOMS



GROUND COVER

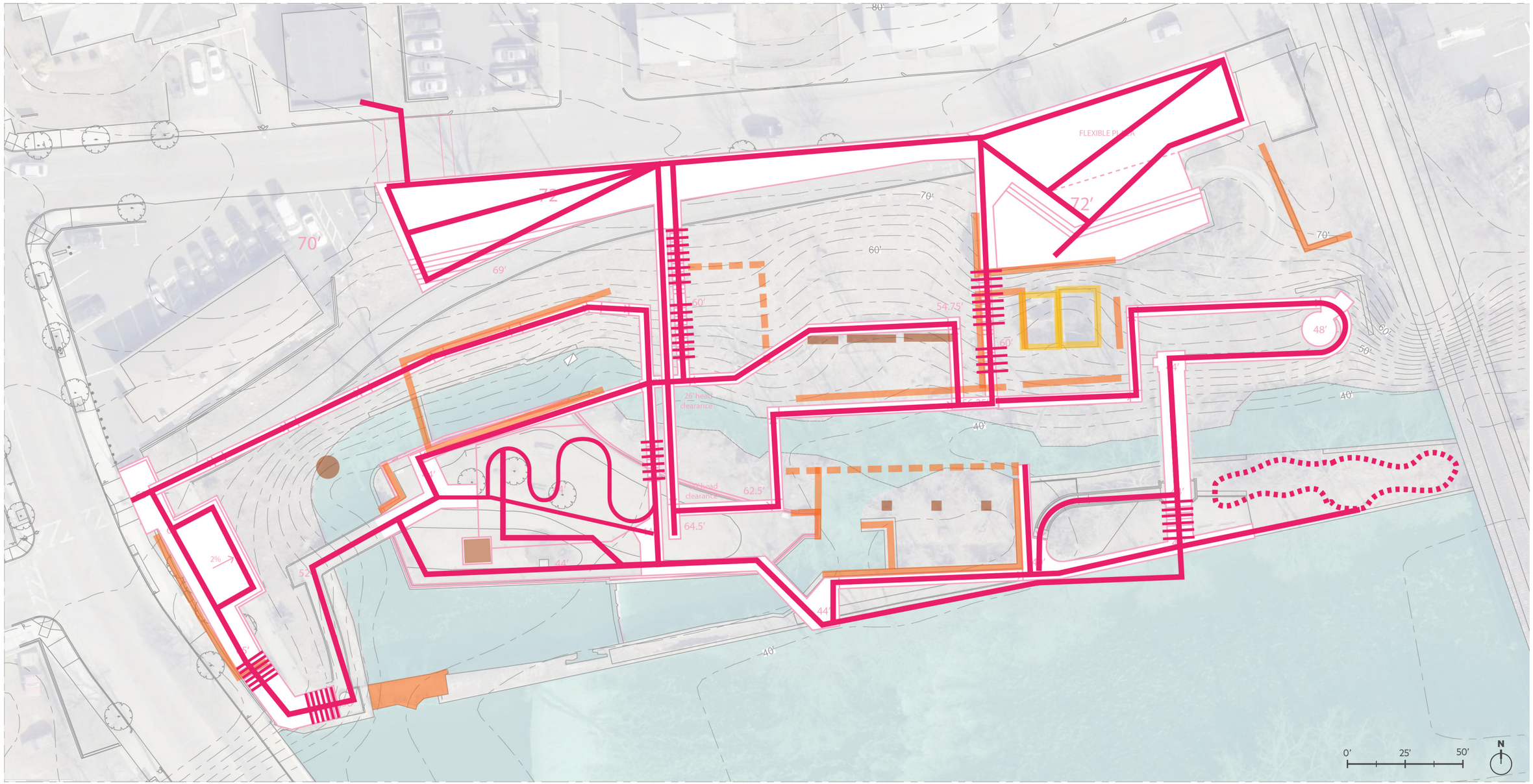
VALLEY ROOMS



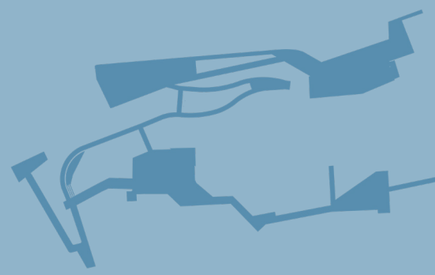
TRAILS

VALLEY ROOMS

5% SLOPE PATH (1:20) FOLLOWING THE HISTORIC BUILDING FOOTPRINTS



WALKING / EXCERCISE LOOPS, TRAILS, & STEPS



RIVER OVERLOOKS

PLAN
RIVER OVERLOOKS

Cumberland Town Hall

Amaral Building

Mill Street

Parking

Market Gatherings
Overlook sitting

Vendor Gatherings
Overlook sitting

Overlook

Sitting Overlook

Stepping
Stones Path

Existing Ramp
Structure

Hillside
Meadow

Ruin Garden

Broad Street

Step Amphitheater

Overlook

Outdoor Classroom
Gathering

Existing Ramp
Structure

River Overlook

River Overlook

River Overlook

Railway Track

Blackstone River

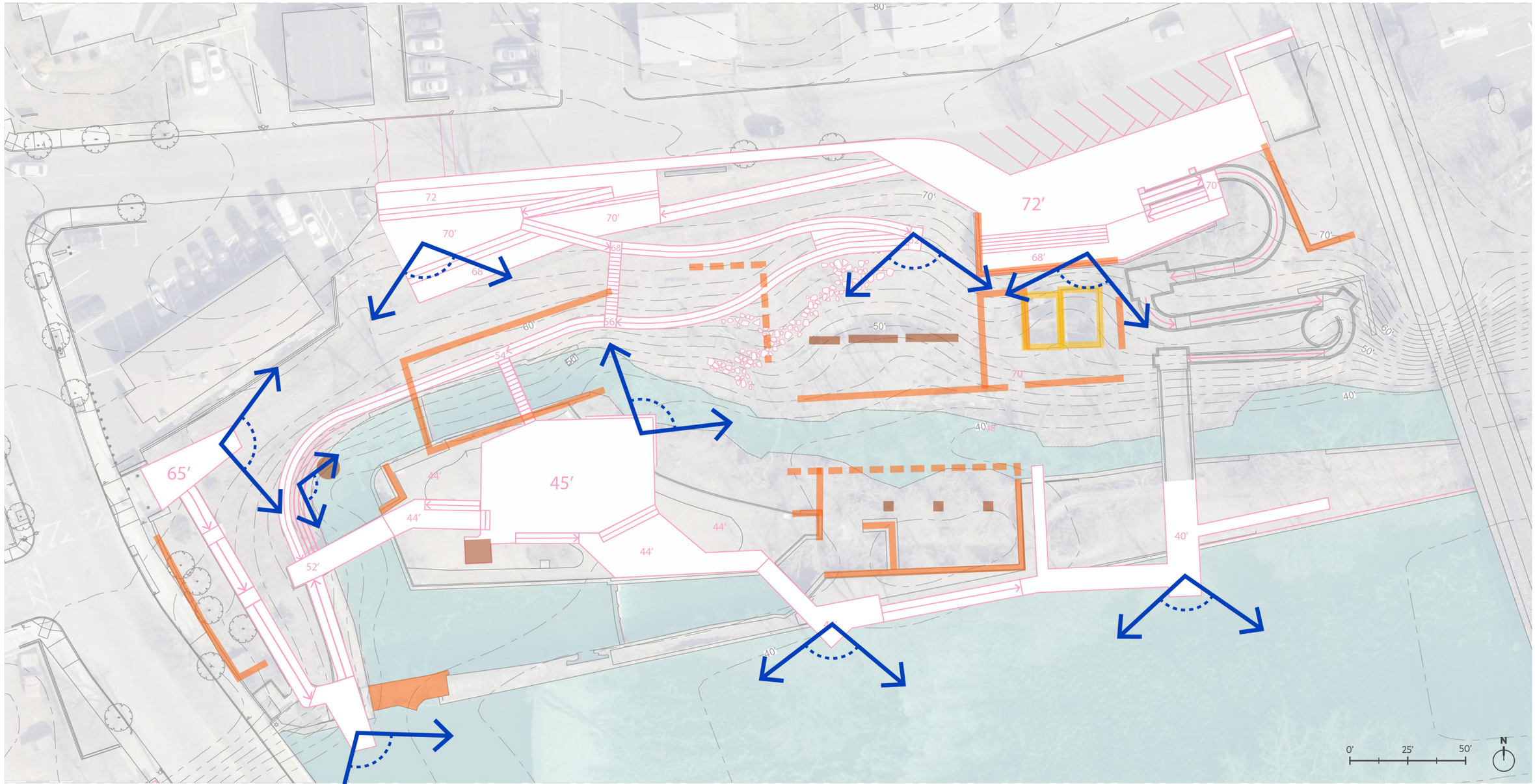
0' 25' 50'

N

VIEWS

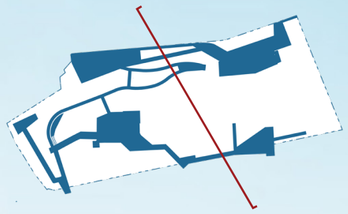
RIVER OVERLOOKS

5% SLOPE PATH (1:20)



SECTION

RIVER OVERLOOKS



OVERALL PROGRAM

RIVER OVERLOOKS



ACTIVE

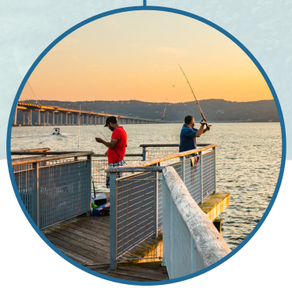
RIVER OVERLOOKS







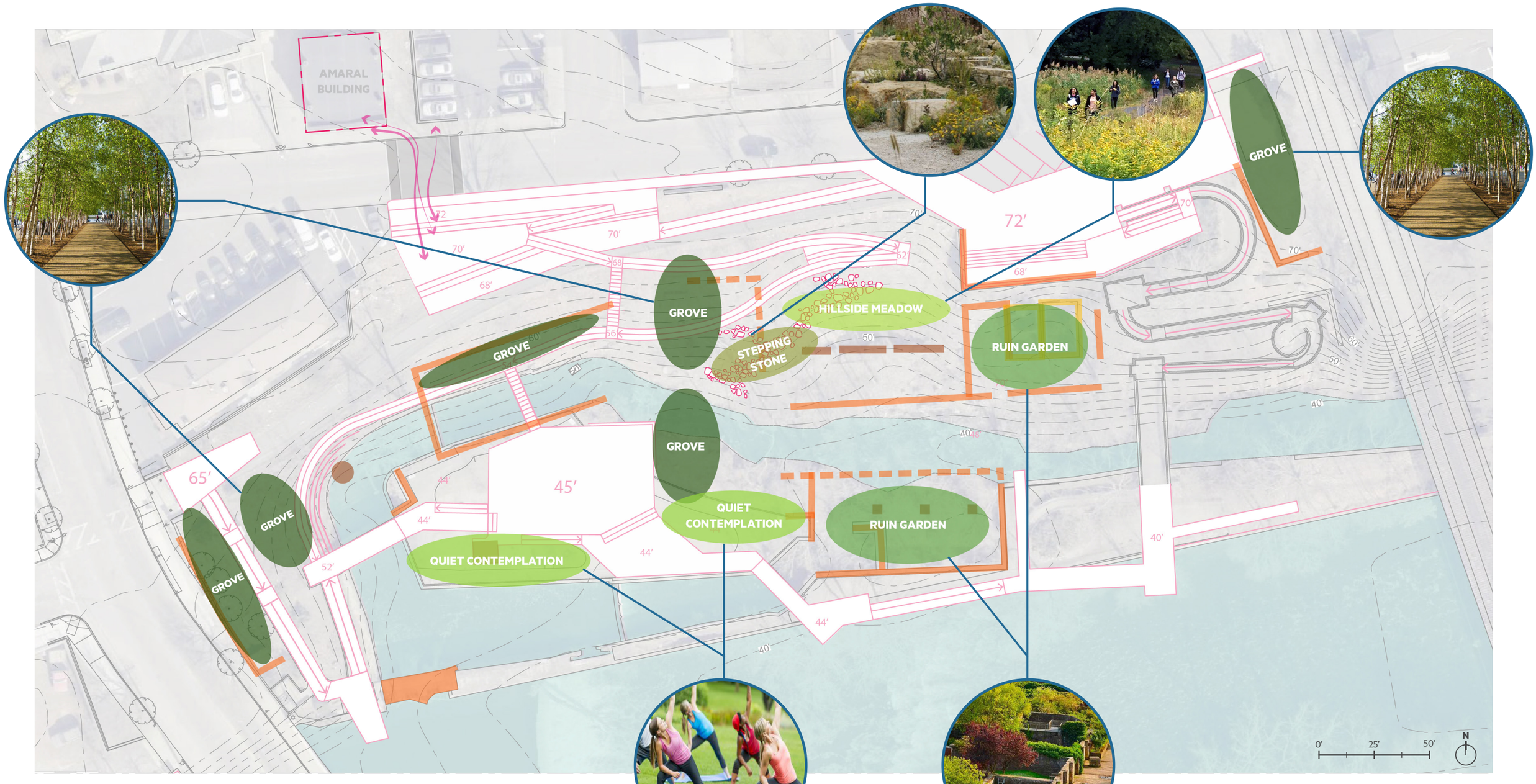






QUIET LANDSCAPES

RIVER OVERLOOKS



CANOPY

RIVER OVERLOOKS



EXISTING TREES

GROUND COVER

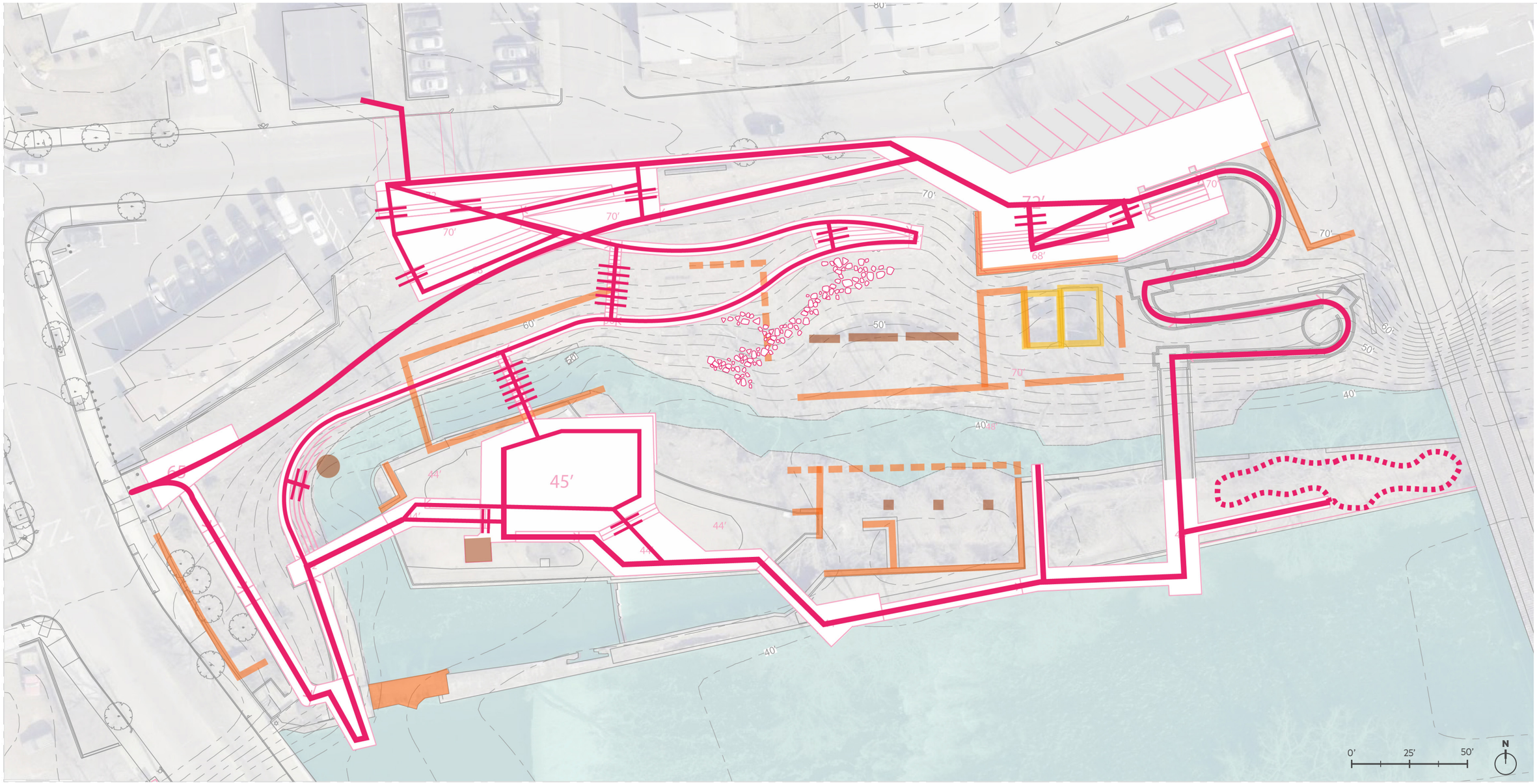
RIVER OVERLOOKS



TRAILS

RIVER OVERLOOKS

5% SLOPE PATH (1:20)



WALKING / EXCERCISE LOOPS, TRAILS, & STEPS