

# THOMPSON PARK MASTER PLAN

June 2023



City of Watertown  
NEW YORK

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*Park stairs under construction, 1903.  
Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site*

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*View of downtown Watertown from Thompson Park, once known as Watertown Park, 1902. Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site*

A black and white photograph showing a large, leafy tree in the foreground on the left, its branches extending across the top of the frame. In the middle ground, a long, low stone wall runs across the scene. Behind the wall, a town with many houses is visible, set against a backdrop of rolling hills. The foreground is a dirt or gravel area with some sparse vegetation.

# 01 MASTER PLAN GOALS

# Master Plan Goals

This master plan draws inspiration from the original landscape design intent and the Olmstedian belief that public parks are vital to the health of communities. The plan sets forth a vision for park restoration and enhancement, balancing the needs for increased access and recreational needs with demands for preservation, ecological integrity, and ongoing maintenance.

Guided by our understanding of the site's topography and vital natural areas, we developed the following master plan goals through a combination of historic research, on site assessment and stakeholder input. A framework guiding park improvements into the 21st Century follows.

## ENHANCE EMERGENT ECOLOGIES

Enhance the park's ecological value by addressing invasive vegetation. Introduce new tree plantings to define program areas while remaining sensitive to historic viewsheds and landscape character. Create meadow habitats for pollinators and ground nesting birds. Designate sensitive areas as nature preserves.

## INCREASE CONNECTIVITY

Improve navigability and accessibility of the site's dramatic landscape, expand and unify the path system, preserve and enhance the emergent system of nature trails.

## UPGRADE INFRASTRUCTURE

Preserve and upgrade existing roads, walls, staircases, pathways and structures to protect the park's historic character and cultural assets. Add and upgrade essential infrastructure such as lighting, water features, paved program areas, paths and roads.

## FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS

Engage local stakeholders in the Master Plan development and long-term park stewardship. Work with the Friends of Thompson Park, Zoo New York, local schools and recreational organizations to achieve common objectives.

## EXPAND PARK PROGRAMMING

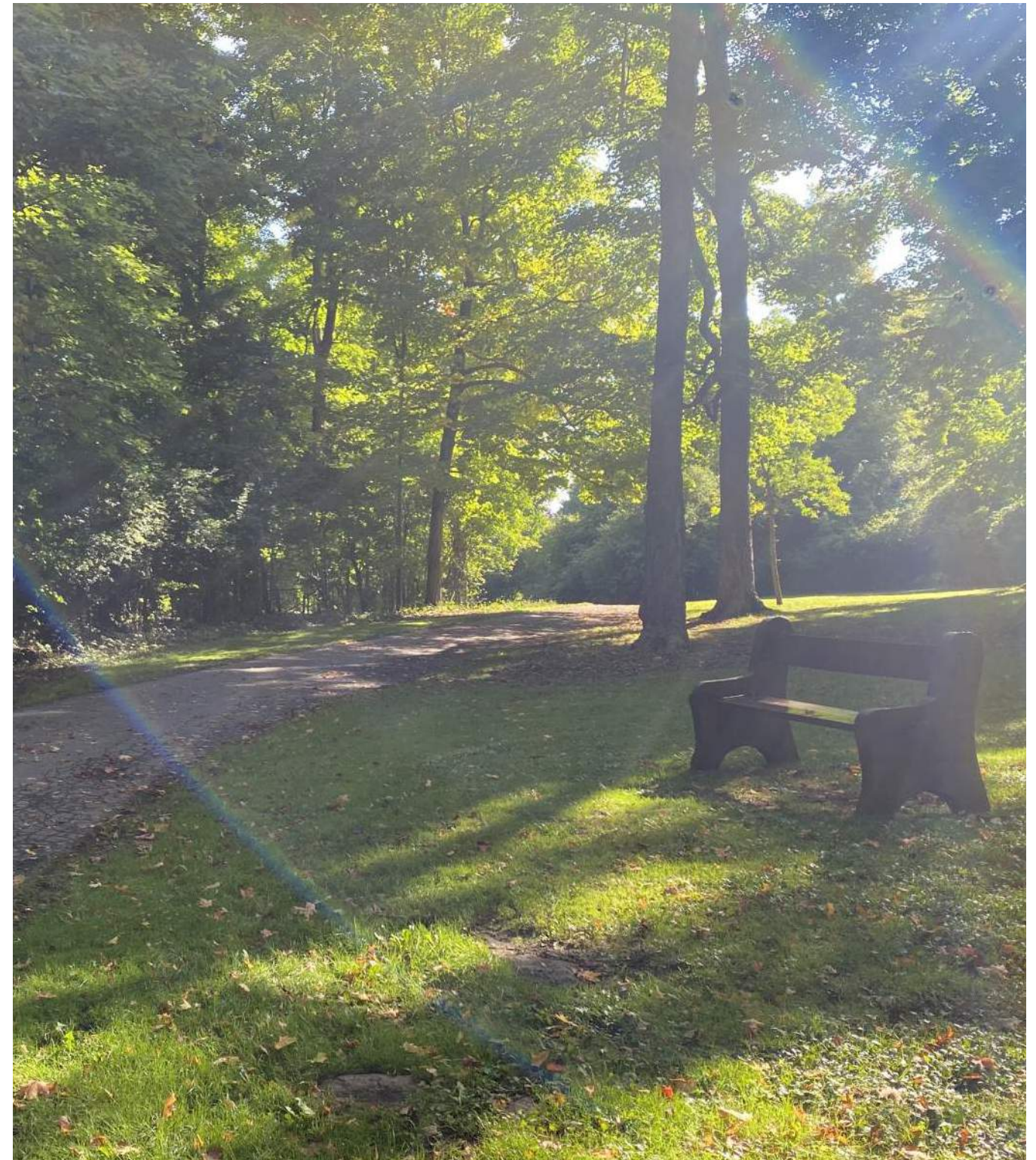
Introduce programming to activate underutilized areas while improving connections to existing programming, roads and utilities. Revive the park as a cultural and social destination with strengthened connections to Watertown and the surrounding region.

## RESTORE HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Restore, revitalize, and repurpose historic structures. Celebrate the park's history through education and interpretation within the park.

## ENRICH PARK IDENTITY & EDGES

Create a welcoming and safe environment for people of all ages and abilities.



View of an existing path through a wooded area of the park, Fall 2022

# Thompson Park - 1903 Park Plan

This comprehensive park plan is prepared by the Olmsted Brothers in 1903. The plan, rendered by the firm after construction started, reflects some of what exists today, though there are elements of the plan that are either removed or never implemented.

For example, the entrance at Academy Circle is one of the earliest pieces of the plan to be implemented but an entrance from Gotham Street into the park is never realized. The wading pool, already open by 1902, is a very popular park feature and in use until it's removed in 1970. Other notable features that aren't realized are two water bodies: "Swan Lake" and "Goose Pond". Despite these discrepancies, the road and path network of today - from Academy Circle to the park's core and tower square - closely resembles the original plan.

This plan is integral to understanding the configuration of Thompson Park today. In total, approximately 100 acres of the park are realized, with development occurring predominantly in the northeast corner.



Park Plan, 1903. Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

*View of the park entrance drive and parallel pedestrian path in construction, 1902. Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site*



# 02 PARK EVOLUTION



# Thompson Park Beginnings

J. C. Thompson is a prominent figure in Watertown, NY in the late 19th Century. His company, New York Air Brake Company, amasses a healthy fortune and he wishes to share his prosperity by creating a park in Watertown; a locale of civic pride and respite.

Thompson acquires the land for the park that bears his name today and anonymously gifts it to the city in 1917. Prior to donating the land, he seeks the services of Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and John C. Olmsted from "The Olmsted Brothers Firm", a continuation of the practice begun by Frederick Law Olmsted, the preeminent landscape architect of his time.

The farmland set aside for the new park is defined by rocky soils and rugged topography. While the design for Watertown Park, (as it was then known), begins in 1899, the park's design evolves as the park is built and a final rendition of the park plan is issued in 1903.

The passing of J. C. Thompson in 1924 and financial pressures following World War I limit further implementation of the park plan.

Consequently, the first 100 acres of the park are implemented and remaining natural areas, especially on the steeper slopes, remain relatively undeveloped. The time is long overdue to reclaim underutilized areas of the park and consider anew the value of the park to its citizens.



*Photo of an existing farm road on the park parcel, 1902. Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site*

# Park Development Timeline

**1800:** The first settlers arrive and the village of Watertown is named after the Black River, attracting mills and factories to utilize the river's hydropower.

**1816:** Watertown is incorporated as a village. Due to its proximity to Lake Ontario, Watertown becomes a popular location for transporting supplies into Canada, attracting many entrepreneurs.

**1869:** Watertown is incorporated as a city.

**1899:** John C. Thompson, treasurer and secretary of New York Air Brake Company, hires the Olmsted Brothers firm to design a park as an anonymous gift to the city. The Olmsted Brothers work on a majority of the park for the next 2 years.

**1903:** Boulevards, playgrounds, a wading pool, meadows, water tower and stone pavilion on top of Pinnacle Hill, which provides scenic vistas over Watertown and toward Lake Ontario, are all constructed and a final park plan is rendered.

**1917:** Ownership and responsibility for maintenance of 191 acres of Thompson Park is transferred to the City of Watertown as a gift from J.C. Thompson.

**1920:** The Zoo Club builds a bear cage and Zoo New York expands to the 25 acres it is today.

## THOMPSON PARK MASTER PLAN

**1926:** The Watertown Golf Club establishes a 9-hole golf course and expands in 1964 when they lease the south east side of the park.

**1931:** The idea of a picnic pavilion is introduced.

**1978:** The new water tower is built on the site of where the old wading pool exists until 1970. The water tower is still there today.

**1985:** The first Master Plan for Improvements of Thompson Park is prepared by City Officials.

**2015:** The Friends of Thompson Park is founded. In 2018, they co-sponsor a new splash pad adjacent to the Pool, along with the Watertown Noon Rotary Club.

**2017:** The existing wooden playground (constructed in 1991) is replaced by an accessible playground made of contemporary materials. In July, the North Country Honors the Mountain monument is designed.

**2019:** The City of Watertown Comprehensive Plan is adopted by the City Council.

**2022:** Thompson Park Master Plan commences. City votes to acquire the privately owned portion of land adjacent to the southern portion of the park, currently operated as a Golf Course.



Construction team, 1902. Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site



The newly completed wading pool and adjacent landscape, 1902. Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

# Historic Thompson Park & Downtown Watertown

Integral to the 1903 Park Plan is the connection between Thompson Park and the adjacent neighborhoods, historic center of Watertown and Black River which was and is an essential driver of the city's economy.

In the original design, the park's entrances are strategically located and connect the park to key streets which link the park to the city and surrounding region. An elaborate park entrance at Academy Circle integrates the park with State Street, designating itself as the principal park entrance while remaining park entrances function as the terminus to tree-lined corridors running along Gotham and Franklin streets into downtown Watertown. These streets still function as important connections between the park, its immediate community, and downtown Watertown today.

At the time of development and construction, the neighborhoods surrounding the park are also growing as the park and its immediate environs remain as farmland into the later part of the 19th century. At the time, designated park land is mostly cleared of trees and scattered with small farm structures and low stone walls, prompting a larger consideration of how this piece of land can strategically tie into downtown Watertown.





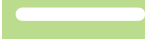






Plan of the City of Watertown and Thompson Park, 1901. Image Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

# Historic Circulation - Built & Unbuilt

Although it closely resembles the 1903 plan, the park circulation system as outlined in the historic plan is never fully implemented and derivative vehicular and pedestrian circulation routes are added. Over time, contemporary park roads, originally intended for use only as maintenance roads, become formalized pieces of the circulation even though these additions do not follow the original Olmsted design.

The most important part of the original plan is a complete park loop, and the current configuration of the golf course impedes a vehicular loop, though a continuous multi-use trail loop is possible. The park's southern and eastern boundaries abut private property and impede access from both sides of the park into its core.

**LEGEND**

-  Historic Canopy
-  Existing Park Boundary
-  Vehicular Existing (not consistent with 1903 plan)
-  Vehicular Existing (consistent with 1903 plan)
-  Vehicular Unbuilt
-  Pedestrian Existing (consistent with 1903 plan)
-  Pedestrian Unbuilt
-  Proposed Tree Canopy
-  Proposed Waterbodies



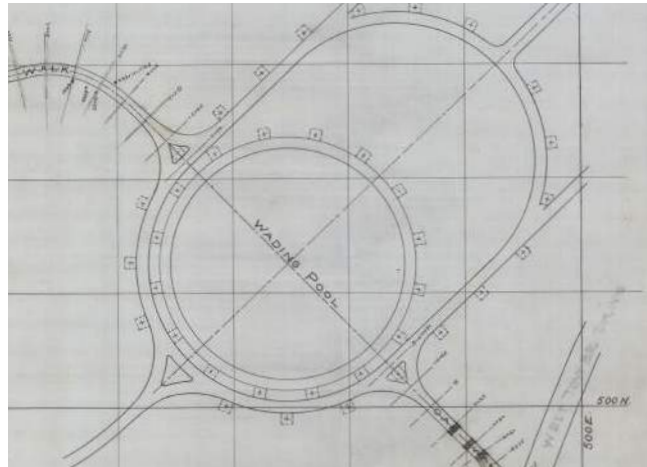
# Historic Structures & Landscape Features - Built & Unbuilt

- LEGEND**
- Historic Structures - Unbuilt
  - Historic Structures - Removed
  - Historic Structures - Still Existing
  - Historic Structures - Unbuilt
  - Historic Structures - Removed
  - Historic Structures - Still Existing
- 1 Academy Circle
  - 2 Vista Terrace Unbuilt
  - 3 North Outlook
  - 4 Gate Lodge
  - 5 Reservoirs
  - 6 Quarry
  - 7 Overlook Terrace Allee
  - 8 Sheep Fold
  - 9 Water Tower Partially Built & Removed
  - 10 Gardens and Pool
  - 11 Horse Shed
  - 12 Sand Court
  - 13 Wading Pool
  - 14 Little Pinnacle
  - 15 The Pinnacle
  - 16 Cliff Garden



# Historic Structures & Landscape Features

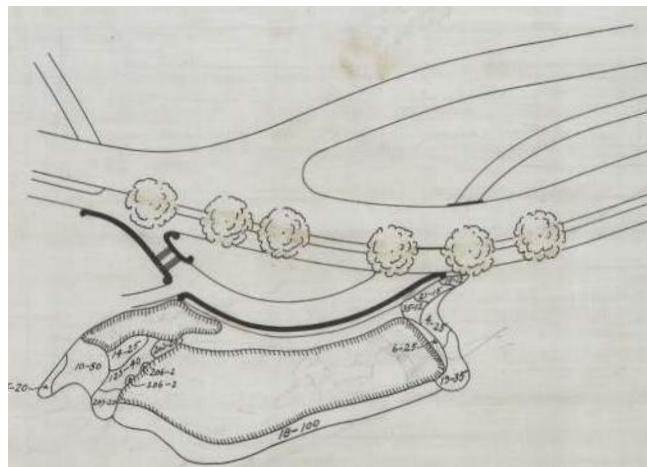
## Unbuilt or Built and Subsequently Removed



The Wading Pool



The Wading Pool is constructed in 1902 and, until 1970, provides respite for patrons in the summer



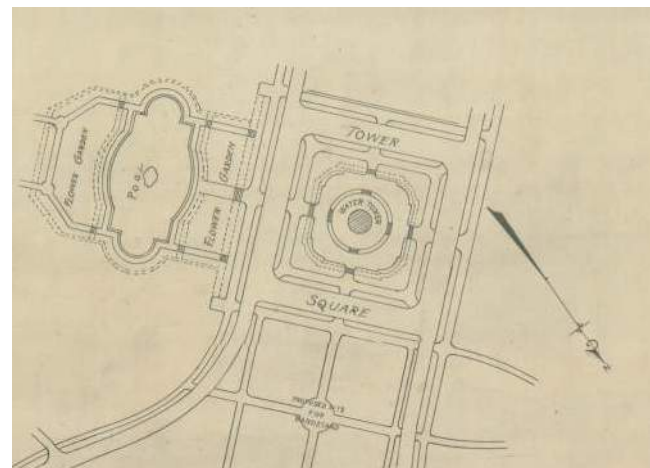
Plan for North Outlook Cliff Garden which is partially constructed



North Outlook Cliff Garden is partially constructed

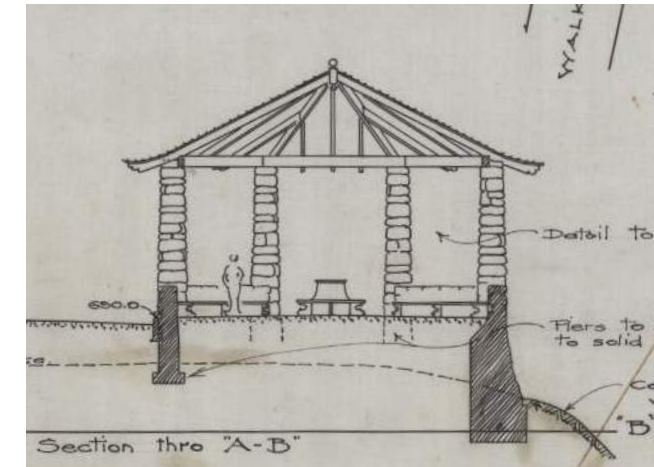


The inner tank of the Water Tower is built, since removed



Though it is planned for, the Water Tower as designed is never fully implemented

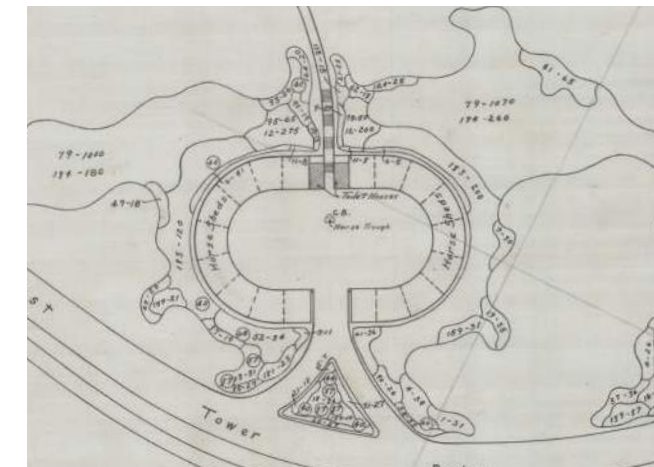
## Extant Structures



The Pinnacle is planned and constructed



Historic photograph of Pinnacle under construction



The Horse Shed as per the original Olmsted Plans



The Horse Shed is renovated and repurposed as a Picnic Pavilion



Stone retaining walls, 1902, frame park roads











Photograph of a grand staircase leading to the park from the park circle

# Historic Planting Typologies

A comprehensive planting plan for the park is provided in the 1903 Plan and, though it's never fully implemented, key canopy trees planted include Lindens, Red Oaks, Maples and Catalpa trees. The historic plant palette consists of primarily native tree species, many of which are still commonly planted today.

The historic planting plan features large swaths of low ornamental shrubs bordering park paths and roads as well as tree allees along Thompson Boulevard, Academy Circle and Park Road (Now Olmsted Drive). Only at Academy Circle are the street tree plantings ever fully realized as an integral feature of the park entrance.

## LEGEND

-  Lawn
-  Tree Allees
-  Deciduous Woodland
-  Pastoral
-  Ornamental Planting/Herbaceous Gardens
-  Wetland
-  Waterbodies
-  Meadow





# Landscape Typologies - 1903 Plant Palette

Historically, park edges, neighborhood streets and park drives are proposed to be planted with a selection of large deciduous canopy trees and carefully placed clumps of ornamental woody shrubs such as Viburnum, Bayberry and Sumac. While many of the original park trees remain, the lower shrub borders do not.

Tree Allée



Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)



American Linden (*Tilia americana*)



Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)



Northern Catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*)

Woodland



Hawthorn (*Crataegus coccinea*)



American Hazelnut (*Corylus americana*)



Arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*)



Common Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)

Ornamental/Herbaceous



Blackcurrant (*Ribes nigrum*)



Wild Rose (*Rosa virginiana*)



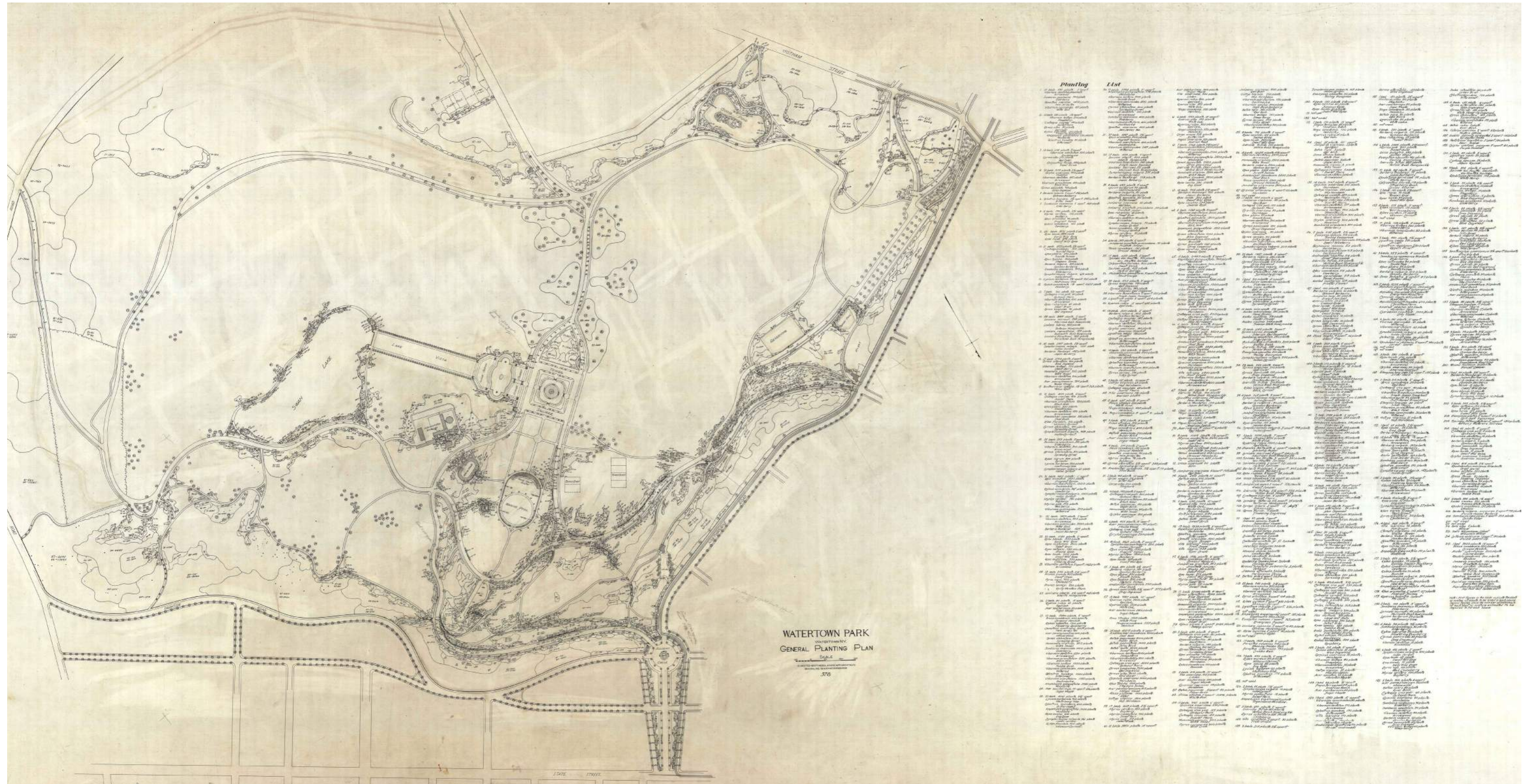
Dwarf Bayberry (*Myrica cerifera*)



Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*)



# Historic Planting Plan

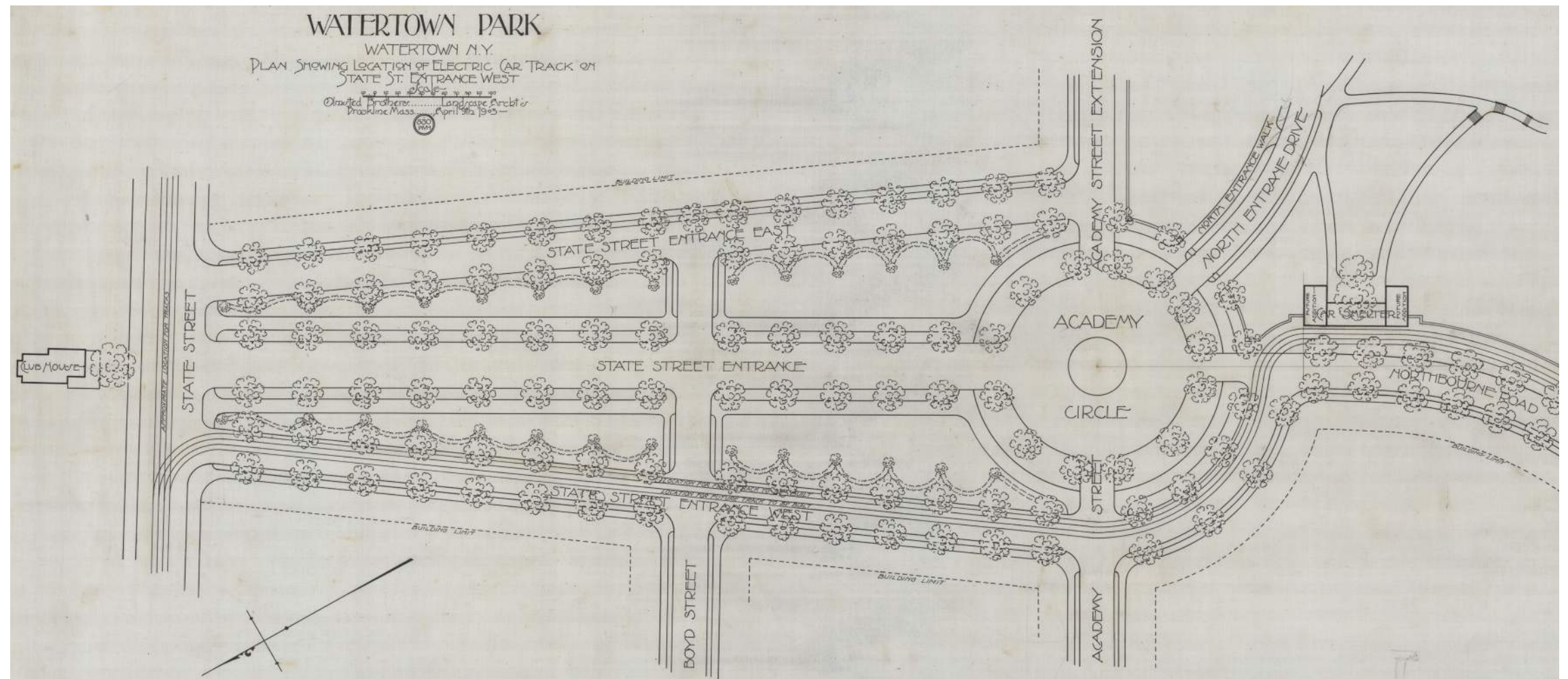


Park Planting Plan and List, 1903. Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

# Historic Landscape Features

The Olmsted Brothers produced multiple iterations of plans for Academy Circle. This circle serves as the main gateway to the park and extends the park's feel into the surrounding streets. The design consists of three formal allées of canopy trees, simple lawn panels and scalloped shrub borders. The original planting plan calls for Silver Maples (*Acer saccharinum*), Northern Catalpa Trees (*Catalpa speciosa*), Berberry (*Berberis vulgaris*), Common Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), American Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*), as well as roses and ornamental grasses.

Ongoing care and restoration of the tree canopy in its original configuration is key to maintaining the verticle structure of the design and thus the identity as a gateway to the historic park. The tree planting and communal lawn area strengthen the park's connection to the surrounding neighborhood. Reintroduction of the planting beds would require a greater level of care on an ongoing basis. The framework of the design reads with or without the ornamental beds.



Plan of Academy Circle, 1903. Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site



View of Academy Circle, 1903, looking towards the park



View of Academy Circle, 2022, looking towards the neighborhood

*View of downtown Watertown from Thompson Park, 2022. Image courtesy of Gympo Architecture, Engineering & Land Surveying.*

# 03 REGIONAL & LOCAL CONTEXT



# Thompson Park Today

Situated in Jefferson County, nestled along the banks of the Black River and 5 miles from the banks of Lake Ontario, Watertown, NY offers the best aspects of a small city, with its historic downtown, leafy residential neighborhoods, strong public school system, and the 429-acre oasis that is Thompson Park.

The city's population of 25,000 people is roughly triple the size of what it was after incorporation in 1869. Nearby Fort Drum adds another 13,000 residents to the region.

Today, the park is a vibrant destination for the residents of Watertown, adjacent villages, families of Fort Drum, and visitors exploring sites within the North Country from the Erie Canal to the Thousand Islands. The Park commands spectacular views of downtown and offers locals and explorers alike a multitude of recreational experiences such as picnicking, a destination playground, pool and splash pad, concessions run by the Watertown Golf Course and Zoo New York as well as an emergent network of nature trails in mature woodlands. Special programming in the park includes the annual Harvest Festival and Concert in the Park which culminates in fireworks over Watertown.

While the park is beloved and the programs and events held there are critical to Watertown's social vibrancy, most of the activity in the park is clustered within the originally developed 100-acres. Given an increase in demand for recreational trails and park destinations, the plan explores increased access to other locations in the park, balancing habitat enhancement and protection with more intensive development of new park infrastructure.

The Master Plan explores themes of connectivity, programming, and park identity through the creation of a cohesive circulation system, improved access to existing programs, expanded park destinations and revitalized links to the adjacent neighborhoods. Expanding opportunities for year-round programming and curating the natural landscape ensures that the park will continue to serve people of all ages, origins and abilities into the future while maintaining the Park's historic character.



*The annual Watertown Rotary Concert in the Park and Fireworks are a popular community event.*

# Regional & Local Context

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

As the largest city in New York State's North Country Region, Watertown is located in close proximity to several land and water resources, including Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River, Erie Canal, and Empire State Trail. The history of the city is closely

intertwined with the Black River, the main source of power for industrial activities during the first decades of settlement. Another major economic generator for the region is Fort Drum, a 107,000+ acre US Army Military installation, only 5 miles away.



## LOCAL CONTEXT

There are four schools within 1/2 mile of the park: Case Middle School, Watertown High School, Harold T. Wiley School and Knickerbocker Elementary School. With relatively little capital investment, the natural areas to the east can better connect

to the park. Future trails can facilitate park access to schools and support Watertown High School's competitive cross country team. Mountain bikers utilize informal entrances to the park to access trails in the park's western quadrant



# Regional & Local Context

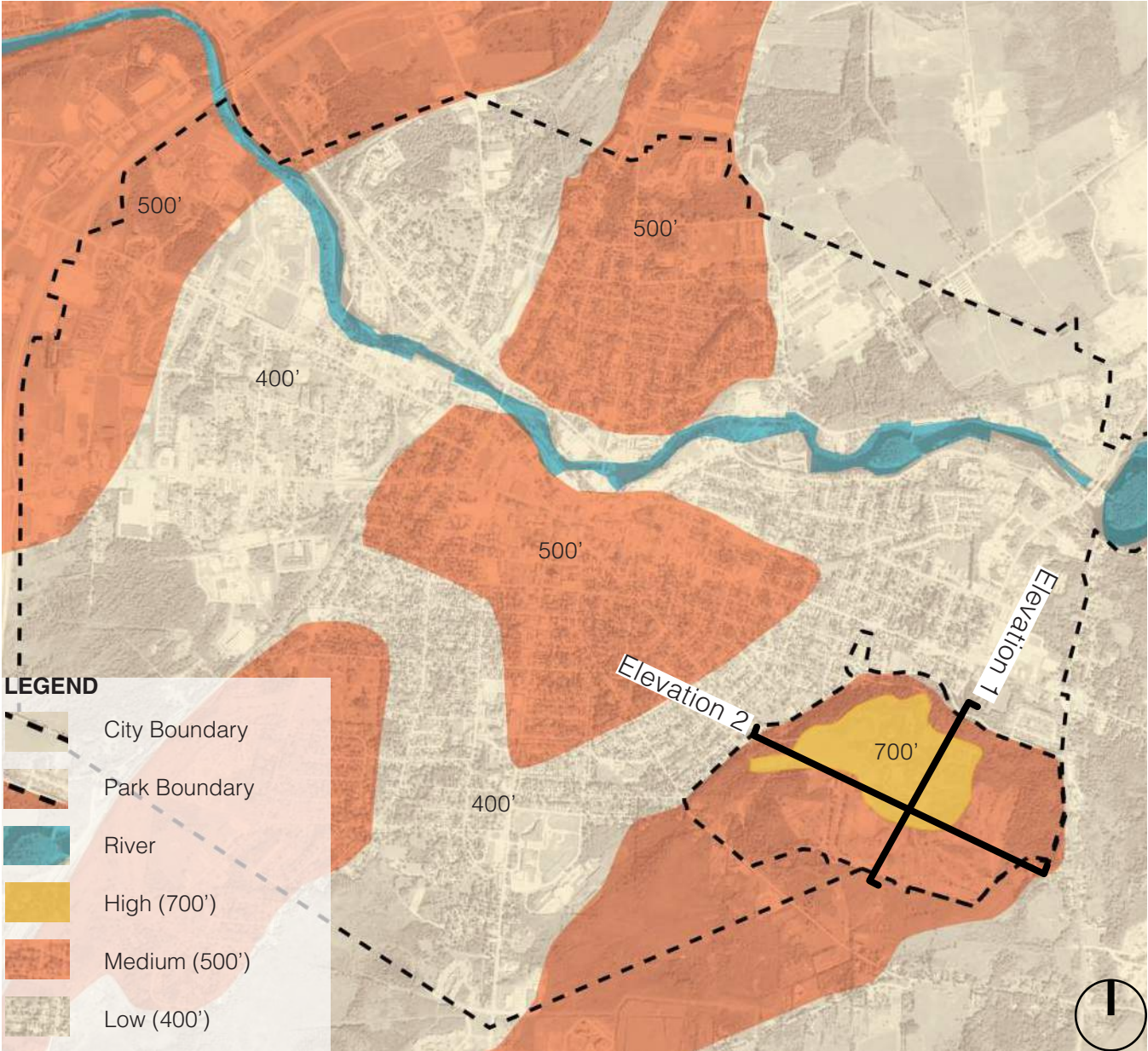
## TOPOGRAPHY

Thompson Park is in the highest area of the city, possessing beautiful views of Watertown—a defining feature of the park and an asset to be preserved and enhanced in the Master Plan. The topography of the

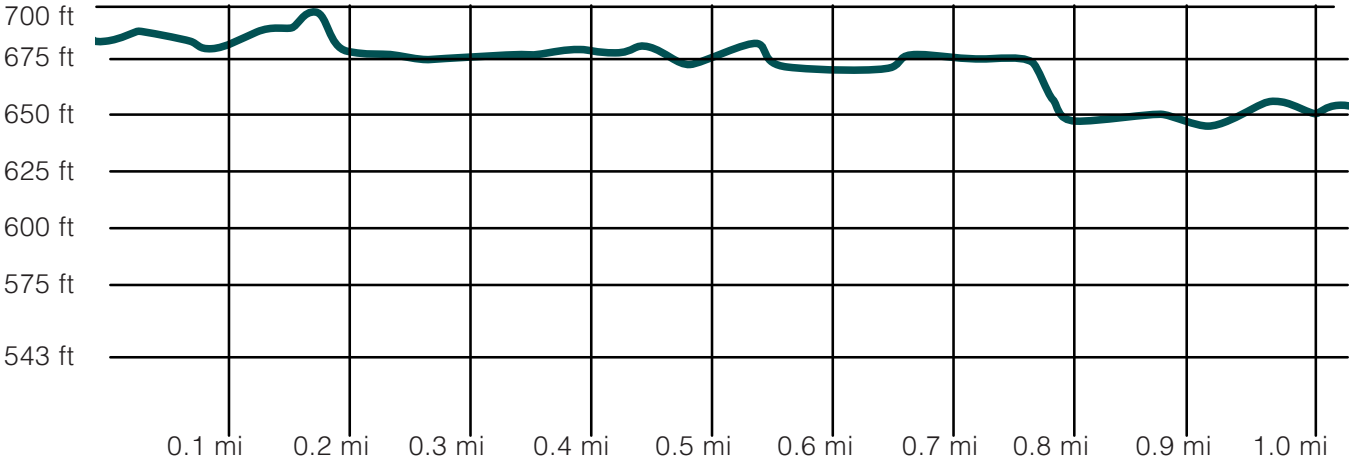
park also presents challenges in terms of universal accessibility, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods. The 2019 Watertown Comprehensive Plan shows the Park in a primarily residential neighborhood.

The northern portion of the park's edges have steep slopes with open drainage swales at the base. High vantage points add to park experience. The southern portions of the park, particularly the golf course,

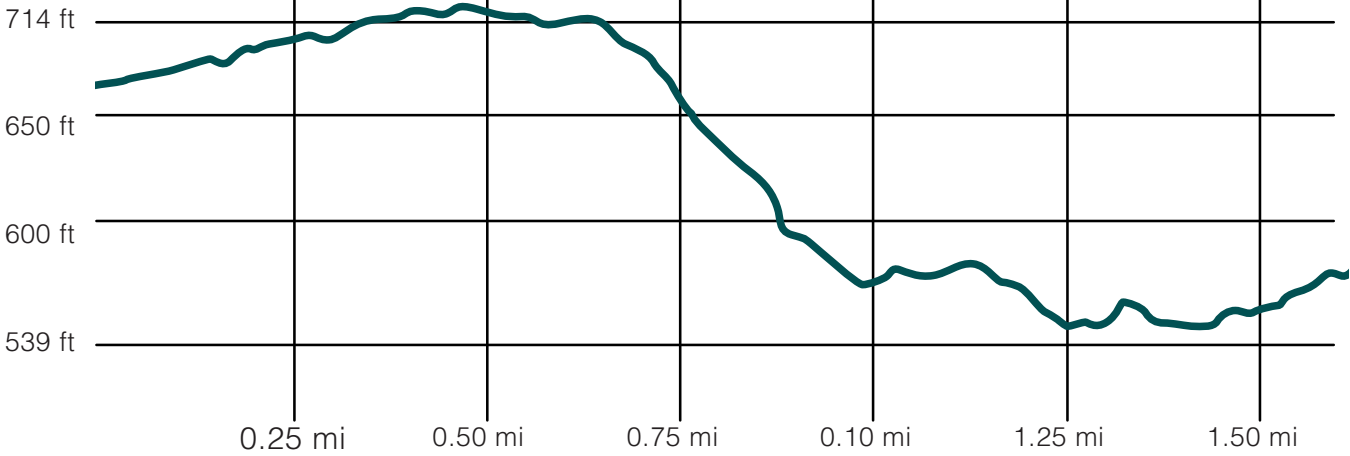
are relatively flat, with the exception of some localized bedrock.



**Elevation 1**



**Elevation 2**







*View of Watertown from the park under construction in 1902. The site's topography is a defining feature of the park. Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.*

*View of the emergent wetland in the area proposed as Goose Pond by the Olmsted Brothers, Fall 2022.*

# 04 NATURAL RESOURCES



# Natural Resources - Geology

The park is defined by its steep slopes and rocky soils. The underlying limestone contributes to soils with elevated pH levels and high porosity.

## LEGEND

- 


Od - Denmark Limestone - Thin to thick bedded, occasionally cross bedded, medium-to-medium-light gray, coarse textured fossiliferous limestone with shale partings
- 


Osh - Shoreham Limestone - Irregular lensing, thin-to medium-bedded, medium gray, medium-to coarse-textured limestone, The coarser limestone beds have wavy surfaces producing an irregular lensing appearance.
- 

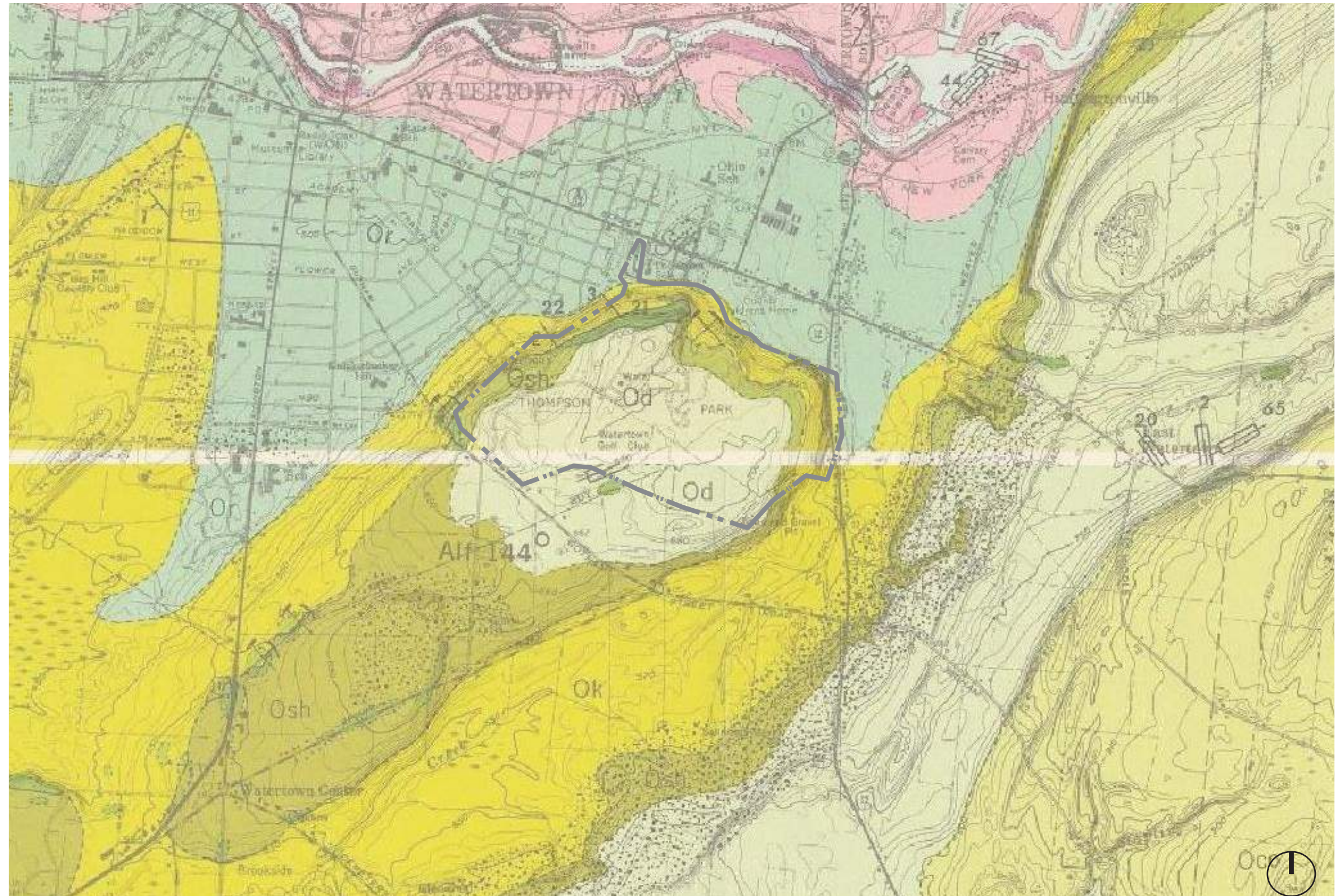

Ok - Kirkfield Limestone - Medium-to thick-bedded, medium-to light gray, medium-to coarse textures limestone; abundantly fossiliferous with obvious echinoderm columnals; frequently cross bedded.
- 


Och - Chaumont Limestone - Massive, medium to dark grey, fine textured cherty limestone, weathering light gray with silicified fossils and large cephalopods
- 


Or - Rockland Limestone - Thin-bedded, somewhat argillaceous medium-to dark gray, fine-to medium-textured limestone with shale interbeds
- 


Oco - Cobourg Limestone - Upper part (hillier) nodular and argillaceous medium-textured limestone, with interbeds of dark grey calcareous shale
- 

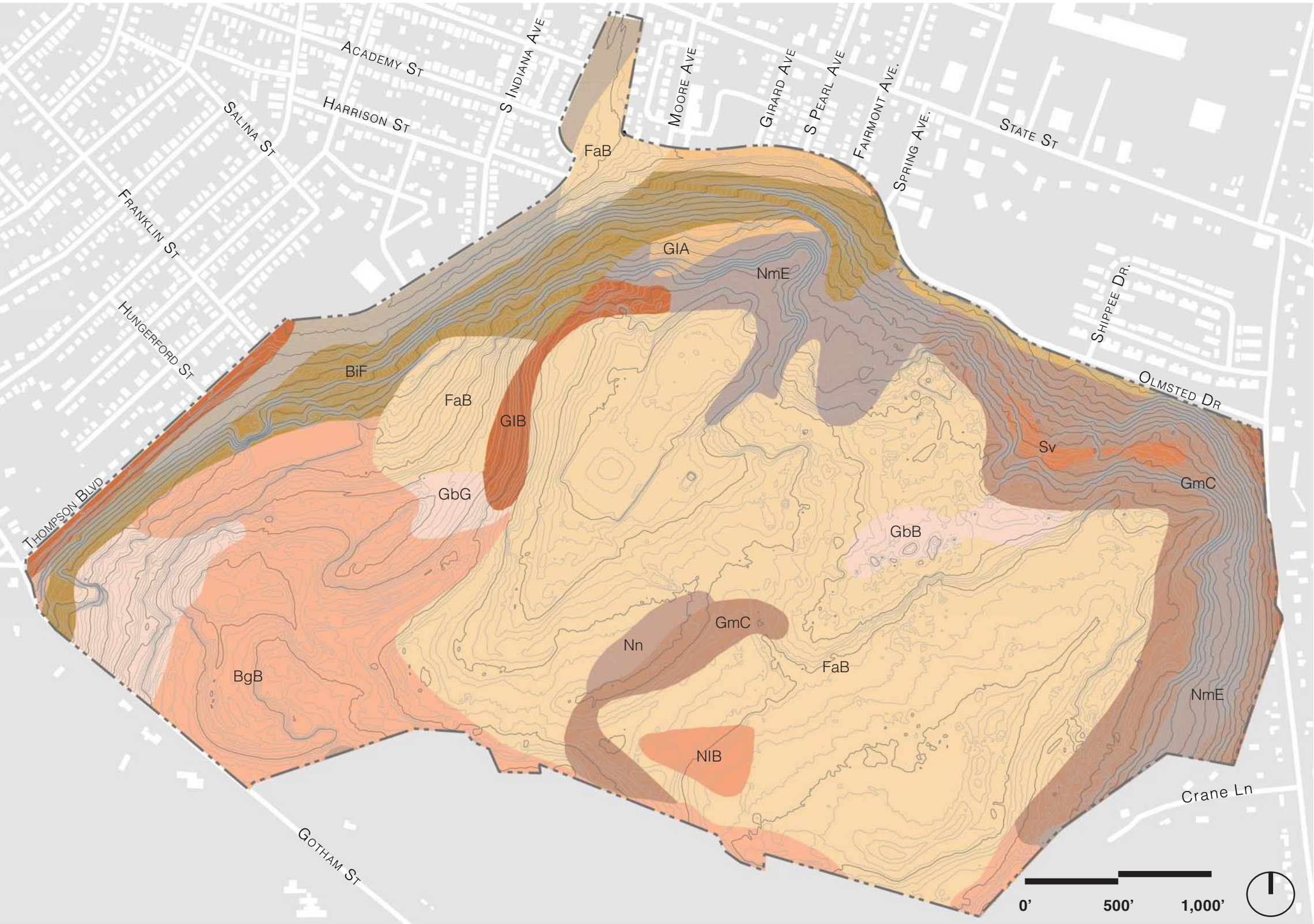
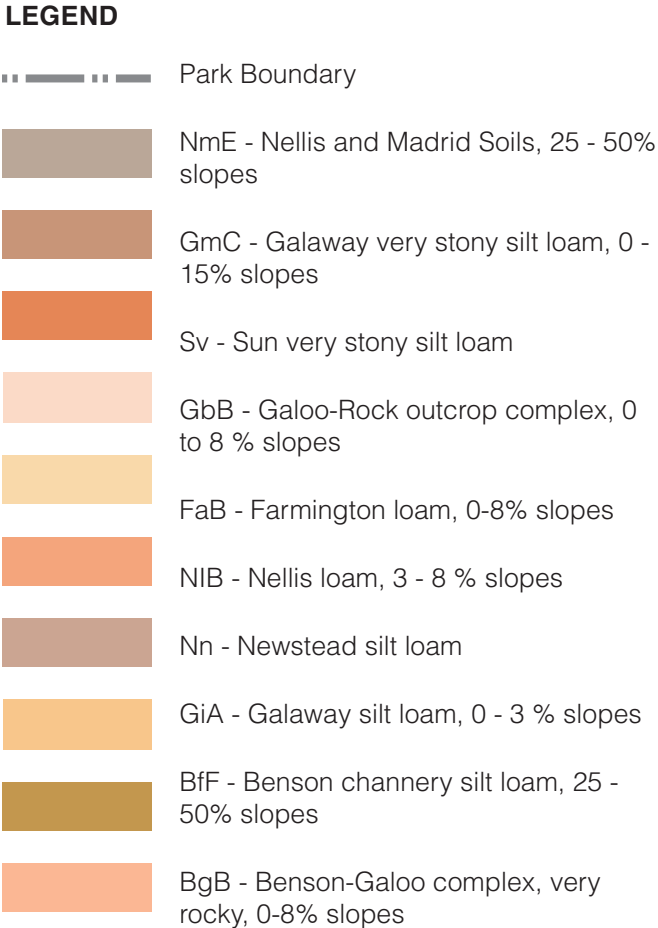

Park Boundary



Map Courtesy of United States Geological Service (USGS)

# Natural Resources - Soils

Existing park soils as mapped by the US Natural Resource Conservation Service. Localized conditions may vary based on the cultivation of the park landscape over time. The soils are predominately well-drained with some silt as characterized by the rocky substrate of the underlying geology.








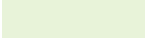

Map Courtesy of [www.nrcs.usda.gov/resources/data-and-reports/web-soil-survey](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/resources/data-and-reports/web-soil-survey)

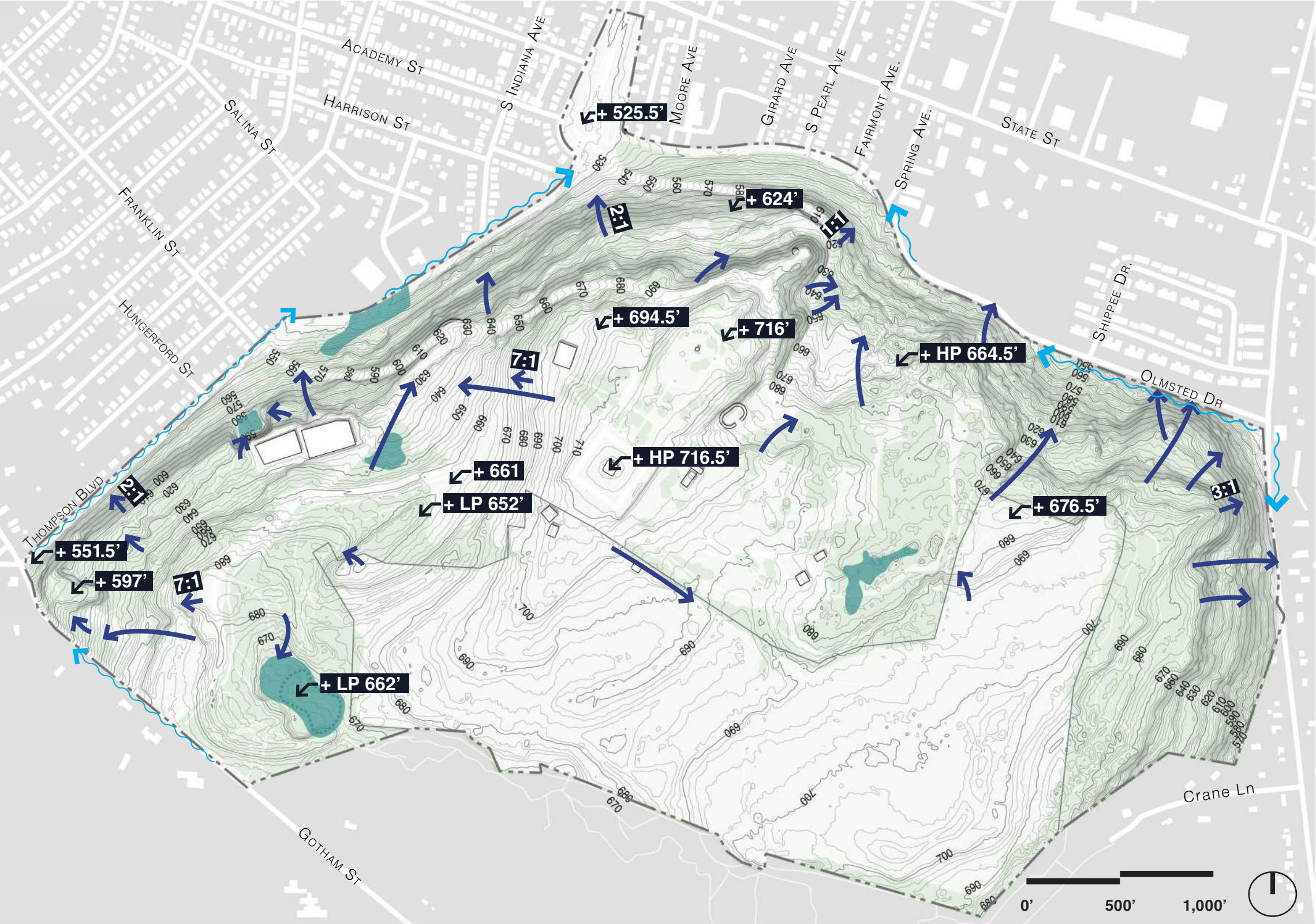
# Natural Resources - Hydrology

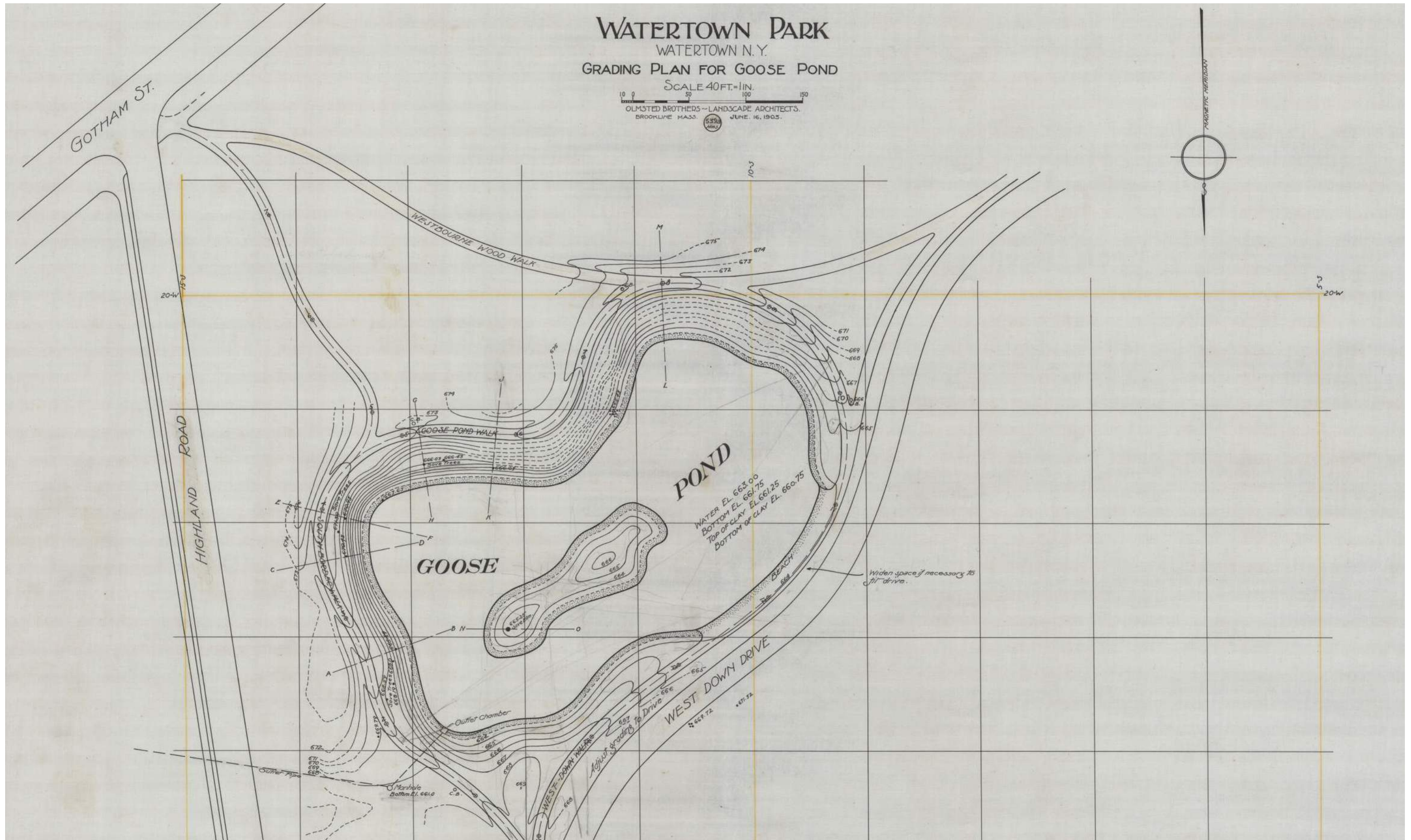
There are a number of existing and emergent wetlands within the park that serve as important wildlife habitat. There is also a naturally occurring spring adjacent to the Park's reservoir which results in a seasonal wet area in the center of the park. Wetlands and rain gardens play an important role in the landscape, controlling the flow of water while providing ideal planting areas for diverse plant species.

Water bodies planned, but not built in the original plan, are proposed in existing depressions within the perched landscape. The ability of existing rocky soils to retain water presents a challenge to the creation of those design features.

Swales at the bottom of the slope on Thompson Boulevard and Olmsted Drive inhibit the creation of a traditional at grade sidewalk and streetscape that a more gradual transition to the street grid allows.

-  Water Flow
-  Wetlands-Wet Areas
-  Zoo/Golf Boundary
-  Goose Pond
-  Canopy
-  Lawn
-  Bottom of Slope Swales





Preliminary plans by the Olmsted Bros. for the construction of Goose Pond, 1903. Investigation of the site soils and introduction of a clay or other type of liner would be necessary for this area to retain water year round. Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

*View of Thompson Park, 2022. Image courtesy of Gympo Architecture, Engineering & Land Surveying.*



# 05 SITE INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

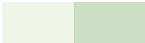
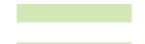












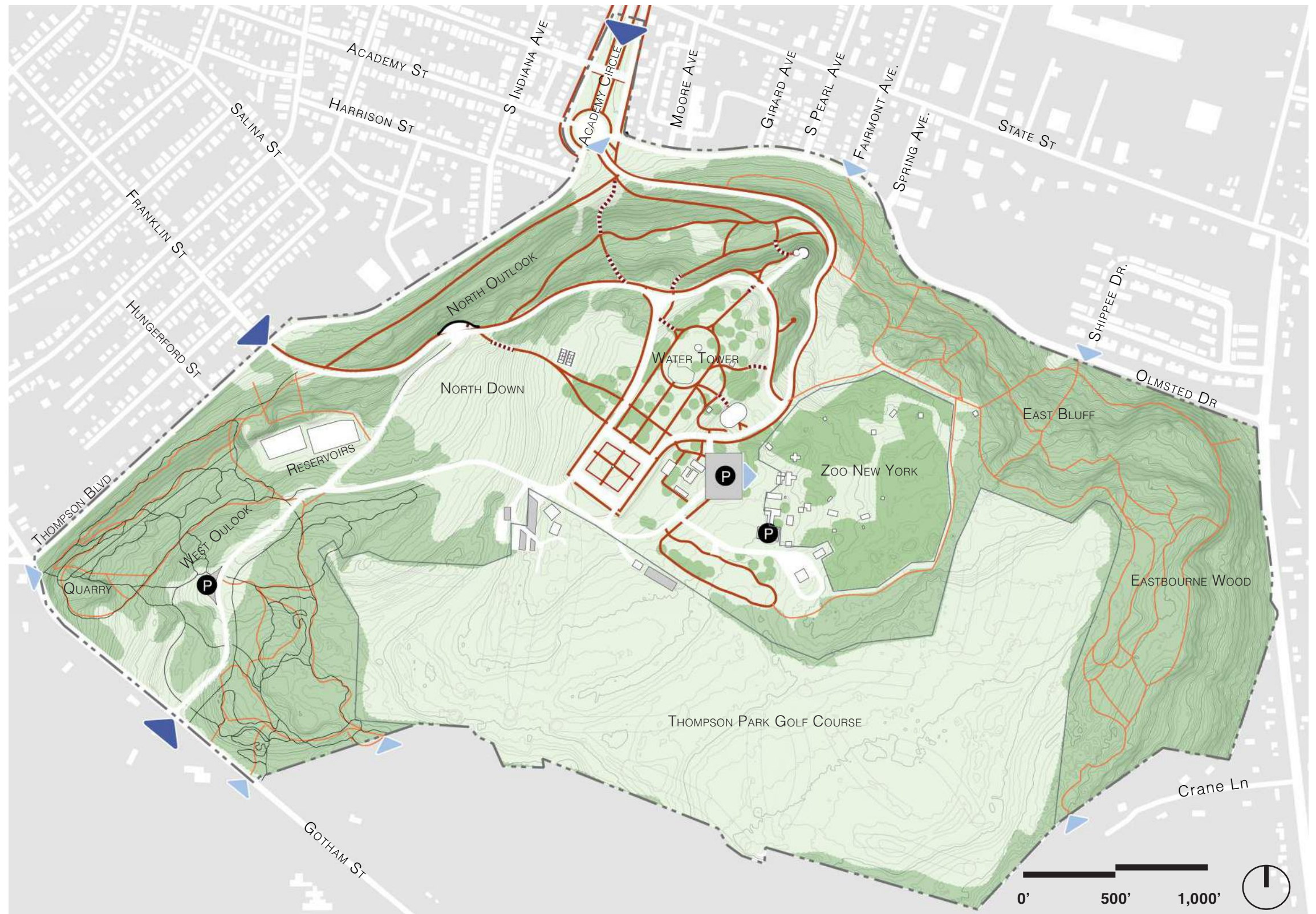
# Site Circulation

## Existing Paths, Roads & Parking

The design team conducted a thorough inventory of all park infrastructure i.e. roads, paths and park structures, to determine the quantity and condition across the park.

Existing circulation prioritizes access to the “Olmsted Acres”, which comprise approximately 100 acres of the 429 acre park. Numerous informal trails cut throughout the woodlands in the eastern and western portions of the park. Recent clearings of invasive plants presents the opportunity to reduce the number of redundant trails in natural areas and provide a better connected and easier to maintain trail network.

- LEGEND**
-  Canopy/Lawn Cover
  -  Park Roads
  -  Paved Paths
  -  Soft Trails: Groomed
  -  Desire Lines - Undeveloped Trails
  -  Parking
  -  Structures
  -  Park Boundary
  -  Vehicular Entrances
  -  Pedestrian Entrances (Formal & Informal)
  -  Staircases
  -  Zoo Fence Line and Golf Boundary



# Site Circulation

## Paths, Roads & Parking - Conditions & Analysis

### PAVED PATHS

With over 3.3 miles of paved pathway, Thompson Park's pedestrian and bicycle-friendly pathways are made of asphalt and vary between 6'-10' in width. Paved pathways are found only in the most developed portions of the park and not all of them meet current ADA standards due to the elevation changes in the park. Cracking caused by water damage and tree roots is a common condition.



Established network of paved paths - explored by foot or bike

### SOFT TRAILS: GROOMED

Totalling 3.9 miles, there are a series of soft trails that run throughout wooded areas and along the steeper margins of the park. This type of trail is well suited to hiking and a potential cross-country course. Utilization of site generated wood chips can help to prioritize, align and maintain the most desirable trails within the network.



A maintained hiking network runs throughout the park, but lacks overall connectivity

### SOFT TRAILS: INFORMAL

Thinner soft paths that cut across more formal paths or into woodlands, are narrow and overgrown. Often times they are deer trails or appear in the wake of recently cleared Buckthorn. In these recently cleared areas, the paths have yet to be defined or connected to a network. Consolidation of this type of trails would be beneficial to forest health by minimizing localized foot traffic to prevent erosion and compaction.



Paths exist in addition to established system in newly cleared areas.

### PARKING

Parking occurs haphazardly beyond the central parking lot, often compromising landscape areas.

The introduction of new programs will require the addition of smaller trailhead parking areas which help reduce or prevent errant side of the road parking or pressure on existing overlooks and adjacent landscapes.

Smaller, decentralized trailhead parking areas can relieve some of the pressures on the concentration of cars at the park center.

Decentralized lots at different elevations can also create universal access to program areas that are otherwise inaccessible without significant changes to the park topography and associated historic



Smaller trailheads could control haphazard parking



Pavement near the Pinnacle is showing signs of wear and cracking. Pedestrianization of this zone should be considered

### PAVEMENT CONDITIONS

The overall condition of the pavement surfaces within the park are in average to poor condition. A portion of Pinnacle Wood Drive is repaved, but most areas have significant cracking and are showing signs of deterioration. Many areas, overlaid in the past, are now in need of full-depth reconstruction. This should happen concurrent with any proposed utility work for new program areas.



The margins of roadway and pedestrian/bike path, show multiple layers and excessive pavement

# Structural Inventory

## Structures, Stone Walls, Pillars and Stairs

There are 14 active structures and 1 inactive historic structure in need of repair or restoration. With strategic restoration of existing structures and addition of smaller facilities in new program areas, ongoing upkeep of park amenities is made possible.

### LEGEND

- 1 West Outlook
- 2 Reservoirs
- 3 Golf Clubhouse
- 4 North Outlook
- 5 Former (Old) Bath House
- 6 Honor the Mountain Monument
- 7 Bandstand
- 8 Pool Bath House & Comfort Station
- 9 The Pinnacle Overlook
- 10 Water Tower
- 11 Former Horse Pavilion - Picnic Pavilion
- 12 Maintenance & Operations
- 13 Comfort Stations (Men's & Women's)
- 14 Maintenance Buildings - Golf Course
- ..... Staircase
- Masonry Retaining Wall
- Free Standing Masonry Wall
- Stone Pillars



# Structural Inventory

## Existing Structures - Conditions & Analysis

### THE FORMER (OLD) BATH HOUSE

The former bath house is in need of renovation. The type of use will determine the type of restoration and new infrastructure required. The structure itself is in good condition. The interior will need to be gutted and refinished for any type of re-use. The two wings of the building are shower rooms and the middle has a changing area and office. The high roof in the central section could be opened up as a welcoming open space or gallery.



The Former (Old) Bath house is closed, in need of rehabilitation.

### THE PINNACLE OVERLOOK

The Pinnacle is the iconic structure of Thompson Park. Featured in historic post cards and promotional material, it is a vital structure. The access road is in good shape and no longer functions as a park road. Considerations should be given as to whether this needs to remain fully paved in asphalt. Catch basins and drain pipes are broken and in need of repair. Vehicular access should continue to be limited to maintenance pedestrian friendliness.



The Pinnacle Overlook road pavement and curb need alignment.

### FORMER HORSE PAVILION

The roof of the Pavilion, recently renovated, renders the structure in good condition, however the interior asphalt is cracked and in poor condition. The main access path from the park road is currently just compacted soil, not optimal for event use. Drainage structures on the far side of the pavilion are clogged, some perimeter drains no longer capture site water. Some stone walls are in need of repointing and repair.



Interior pavement and event access to the Former Horse Pavilion/ Picnic Pavilion need improvement.

### BANDSTAND

An original structure, park-users currently use the band stand for picnicking. The concrete slab heaved as a result of freeze-thaw and the caps on the columns need to be replaced. While there is an ongoing fundraising campaign to provide a canopy or shade structure, structural issues must be addressed before making this investment.



View of the Bandstand from a historic postcard

### THE (NEW) BATH HOUSE

This structure is relatively new and in good condition (renewed in 2020). The bath house currently houses showers, changing rooms, and accessible restrooms. It plays a vital role in the park as the restrooms are open to the public year-round and the bath house is centrally located within the most active recreational area of the park.



View of the existing Bath house

### MEN'S & WOMEN'S RESTROOMS

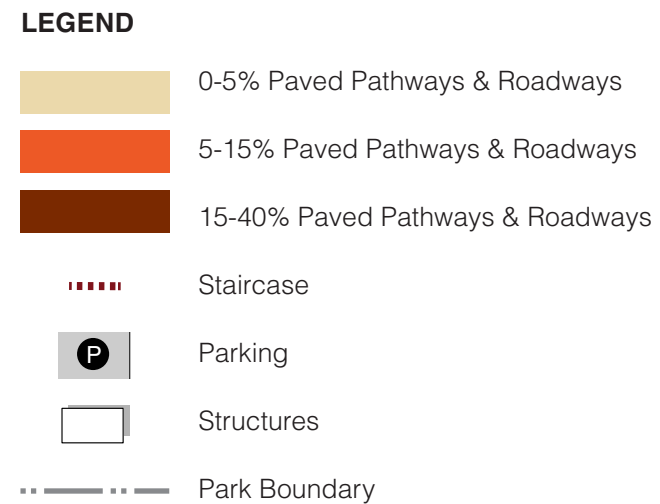
While they are both structurally in good condition, the Men's and Women's restrooms are in need of renovation. As a result of vandalism there is wire mesh over the windows that detracts from the visual appeal of the structures. Both roofs were replaced in the last ten years. Stone work requires minor repointing. The exterior should be preserved but interiors need to be reconstructed to increase privacy and meet current codes.



Men's Restroom

# Site Accessibility

The steep topography of the park makes transitioning from one program area to another challenging. There are very few accessible pathways in the park. However, the location of accessible parking areas can provide universal access at the different elevations and program destinations throughout the park.



# Structural Inventory

## Stone Walls & Stairs - Conditions & Analysis

### EXISTING STONE WALLS

Masonry walls would benefit from a multi-pronged maintenance plan. This plan would develop a long-term evaluation and upkeep program focused on preserving the historic character of the stone walls, cap stones and mortar joints as water-induced deterioration and damage in many locations is caused by deferred maintenance.

Wall restoration would follow a set of standards based on the wall's age and type of construction, ensuring that repairs match the stone, grout and mortar of the historic walls.

Restoration of the walls would be enhanced by a partnership with an apprenticeship program or other trade-based training initiative.

Archival drawings and photographs are important documents to reference during wall and stair restoration.



Grout not consistently colored on masonry walls



Existing retaining wall exhibits calcium efflorescence



Existing walls could benefit from stone caps.

### EXISTING STAIRS

There are stairways in nine different locations throughout the park with the two main staircases being at the Park Circle and the Pinnacle.

Though the stairs are in relatively good condition, each set of stairs could use maintenance and repair. There are a number of locations where the walls along the stairs have fallen away or, in some cases, are in need of full reconstruction. Most of the stone stairs treads are in good condition but could use some additional repointing to stabilize their position and minimize the effects of water intrusion.

Given the importance of these staircases and walls to the original Olmsted Brothers design and contemporary park circulation, ongoing repair and maintenance of these structures should remain a high priority for preservation and repair, either through in-house staff or ongoing capital improvement projects.



The historic stairs are an iconic fixture in Thompson Park



Stairs are generally in good condition



Existing stone stairs with monolithic stone treads

# Lighting Inventory

The park has an array of light fixtures of differing materials, styles and scales. The predominate fixtures are streetlights and do not contribute to the character of the park or quality of park experience at night. During the day the varying fixtures are visual clutter.

Lighting of the park perimeter and of main park roads should be balanced with pedestrian lighting to make connections to key program areas at dusk and after dark.

LED luminaires currently available are more energy efficient. They are brighter, thus requiring fewer fixtures.



- LEGEND**
- + LED - Monument & Pool
  - + Streetlights
  - + Metal - Medium Cobra
  - + Wood - Medium Cobra
  - + Ornate Gothic
  - + Metal - Long Cobra



# Lighting Inventory

## Existing Light Fixtures - Conditions & Analysis

### EXISTING LIGHT FIXTURES

The park has a wide variety of light fixture styles and types. A cohesive lighting plan with a reduced selection of lighting types could serve to unite program areas and give the park a cohesive look.

Lighting of the park perimeter and main park roads should be balanced with pedestrian lighting in the park's interior. Connections to key program areas at dusk and after dark is important, though any new lighting should be dark sky compliant. The introduction of solar powered as well LED fixtures could expand lighting in the park without increasing energy use.

The core of the park, or Olmsted Acres, along with new program areas such as the amphitheater should be well lit while nature trails and preserves should be kept free of lighting - although lighting at trailhead parking areas is recommended.

Survey respondents indicated a desire for additional lighting for safety and security, especially in the spring and fall seasons when it gets dark earlier in the day.



+ LED - Monument & Pool



+ Street Lights - Wooden Pole



+ Ornate Gothic



+ Wood - Medium Cobra



+ Metal - Medium Cobra



+ Metal - Long Cobra

# Utilities Inventory

The Park is serviced by water, sewer, electric, gas and telecommunications services via a combination of public and private providers. Most of these services are limited to 100 acres of developed park property. One of the challenges in developing facilities in undeveloped portions of the park is getting utilities to those areas.

Notably the Gotham Street side of the park lacks any utility connections. In some areas this might require rock removal thus increasing the cost of any projects which propose new sub-surface infrastructure.



**LEGEND**

- Water Lines
- Gas Lines
- Sanitary Lines
- Underground Communication
- Catch Basins
- Utility Pole (with or without overhead light fixture)
- ST
- SN

# Site Inventory

## Existing Site Furnishings - Conditions & Analysis

### EXISTING FURNISHINGS

There are several areas in the core of the park with benches and picnic tables. The predominate bench has a pre-cast concrete base with wooden slats. Durability, comfort, aesthetic appropriateness and ease of maintenance are essential design criteria when considering future public site furnishings.

Currently, there is a diverse array of signage scattered throughout the park. The park user experience would benefit from a unified approach to signage as patrons navigate the Park, its destinations, and trail system more easily. A signage plan could also determine strategic locations and appropriate amount of signage to guide and inform park visitors. The creation of a template for interpretive signage could be used to share multiple important facts about the parks design, social and natural history.



An example of interpretive signage within the Zoo.



The area 51 sign welcomes park visitor near the existing fitness loop.



A built in stone bench on a stair landing, from original park design.



Park signage that indicates the level of path difficulty.



A stone boulder commemorating Thompson for the creation of the park.



Unpainted bench with concrete base and wood slats



Directional signage system within the Zoo.



Signage designates program destinations.









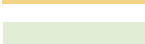


Painted bench with concrete base and wood slats-painted.

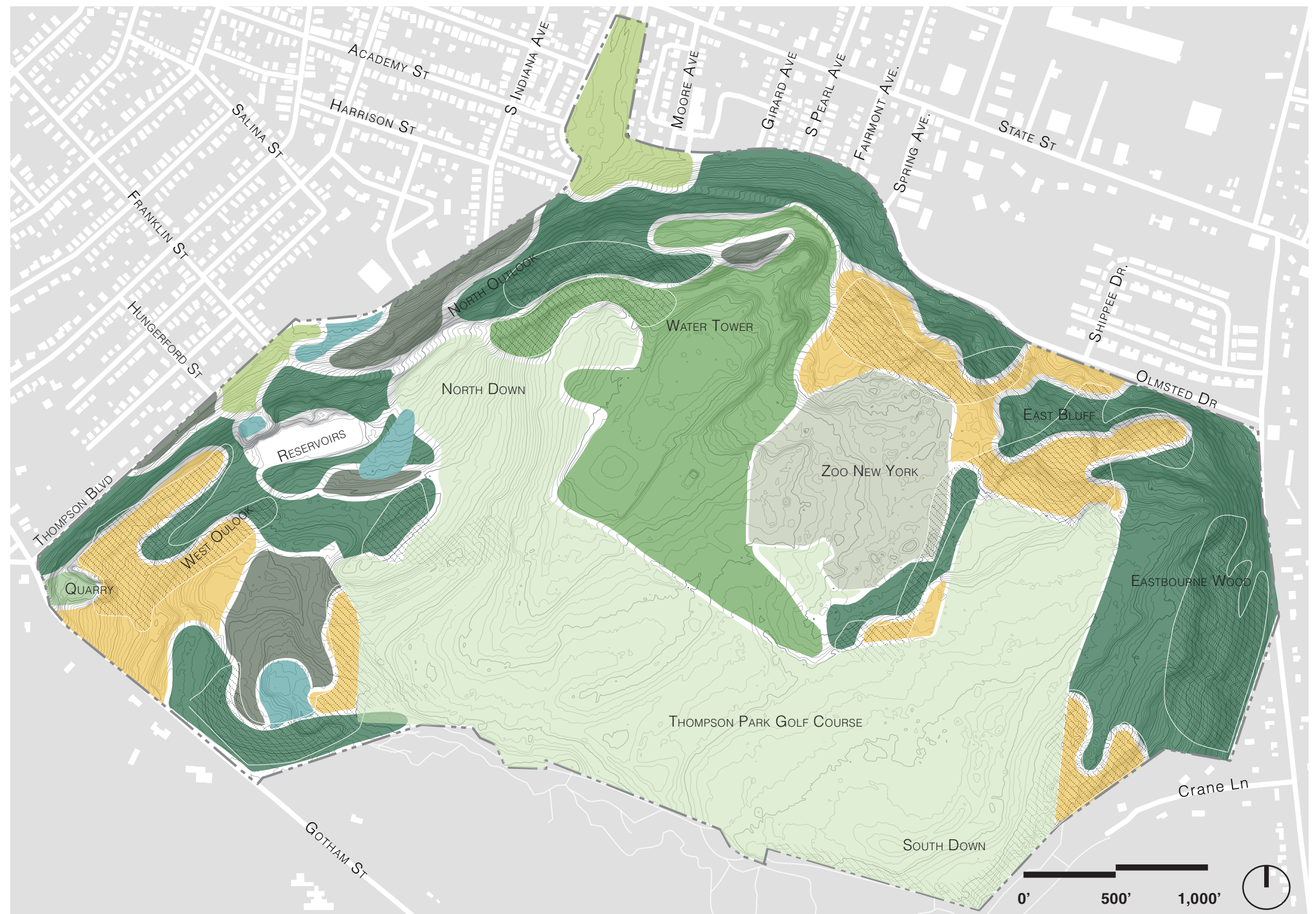
# Landscape Typologies Inventory

Over time, the existing planted landscape gathered additional layers, both intentional and unintentional. Certain areas became categorically degraded as post-agricultural successional shrublands. In the absence of an agricultural footprint, Buckthorn emerged.

The more curated core of the park has numerous original specimen canopy trees that reinforce the landscape structure of the park by framing open lawns or “downs” (as they were historically referred to) or lining the formal park entrance at Academy Circle.

## LEGEND

-  Coniferous Woodland
-  Deciduous Woodland
-  Park Grove
-  Parkland
-  Emergent Wetland
-  Meadow-Previously Disturbed Areas
-  Lawn
-  Zoo New York
-  Presence of Buckthorn



# Landscape Typologies Inventory

## Existing Conditions & Analysis

### CONIFEROUS PLANTATION

Intentionally planted conifers populate localized areas of Thompson Park. The groves are welcome patches of evergreen in winter. Soft trails connect these evergreen groves to areas with a more spontaneous deciduous second growth forests.



Coniferous Plantation

### OPEN LAWNS

While the existing park landscape has a broad spectrum of landscape types, the open and manicured lawns of the Golf Course and North Down are predominate. Open, unprogrammed flexible use areas are key for large scale events such as the concert in the park. The periphery of the golf course, which has a dedicated summer seasonal period, is successfully used for cross-country skiing in the winter.



Open Lawns

### DECIDUOUS WOODLAND

More than any other typology, the deciduous woodland is most threatened by the overgrowth of Buckthorn. This presents additional challenges to landscape management. Current efforts to clear the Buckthorn will require consistent follow-up for several years to establish new types of landscaped areas, ideally with native understory or, in more open areas, pollinator habitat.



Deciduous Woodland

### EMERGENT WETLAND

Low lying areas of the park have emergent wetlands. Of note is the larger area once proposed to be Goose Pond. It currently supports a variety of woody native wetland species such as Red-Stemmed Dogwood and Gray Dogwood.



Emergent Wetlands

### PARK GROVE/PARKLAND

Characterized by the strategically planted tree grove throughout the 'Olmsted Acres'. This landscape aesthetic should extend to the Gotham Street entrance and surrounding area. The strategic replacement of the mature tree canopy with the next generation of trees is an important ongoing task that can happen incrementally.



Park Grove/Parkland

### MEADOWS

Meadow landscapes gained increasing attention due to loss of the amount of naturally occurring grasslands across the state. Meadows serve as important habitat for ground nesting birds and pollinator species. A simple change in mowing regimes along with some overseeding and control of woody plant succession, can foster localized meadow areas which add both seasonal interest and ecological value.



Meadows

*Thompson Park Harvest Festival held in the picnic pavilion which was formerly a horse stable, Fall 2022.*

# 06 COMMUNITY OUTREACH



# Community Outreach

The Design team took a multi-pronged approach when soliciting the opinions of the Watertown community and beyond. These efforts can be summarized in four ways:

## TEAM SITE VISIT

The Friends of Thompson Park, City Staff, and the Design Team had a site visit at the park on Tuesday, September 20, 2022. During this visit to the park the design team toured all of the different areas of the park and listened to the ideas, challenges and visions for the park from experienced park managers.

## HARVEST FESTIVAL

The Design team attended the annual Harvest Festival at Thompson Park hosted by Watertown Parks and Recreation on October 29, 2022. The Design Team set up a booth at the Festival with boards explaining the project's history, existing park programming, early concepts of design and existing and future landscape character. The design team invited attendees to provide feedback on plans with sticky notes and markers.

## ONLINE OUTREACH SURVEY

The online survey successfully received 145 respondents. The survey had 20 questions and all participants completed a majority of the questions. Throughout the survey there were options to skip questions or pick more than one answer.

## PLAN | FEEDBACK SURVEY

Feedback from the online survey, distributed after the design team presented a draft of the Master Plan to the Watertown City Hall, follows.



*Residents giving feedback during the Harvest Festival, 2022*



*Photos from a site visit in September, 2022*



# Online Outreach Survey

## Survey Overview

Opened on October 14, 2022 and closed on November 6, 2022, the survey serves as an alternative form of feedback. The data generated from the online survey allows the Design Team to verify what we heard at Harvest Festival through community conversations

145 people responded and the age of survey takers was evenly distributed between 31-45 (38%), 46-60 (25%), over 60 (21%) with the least amount of survey takers in the 18-30 range (16%).

96% of people who responded to the survey have visited Thompson Park in the past 12 months.

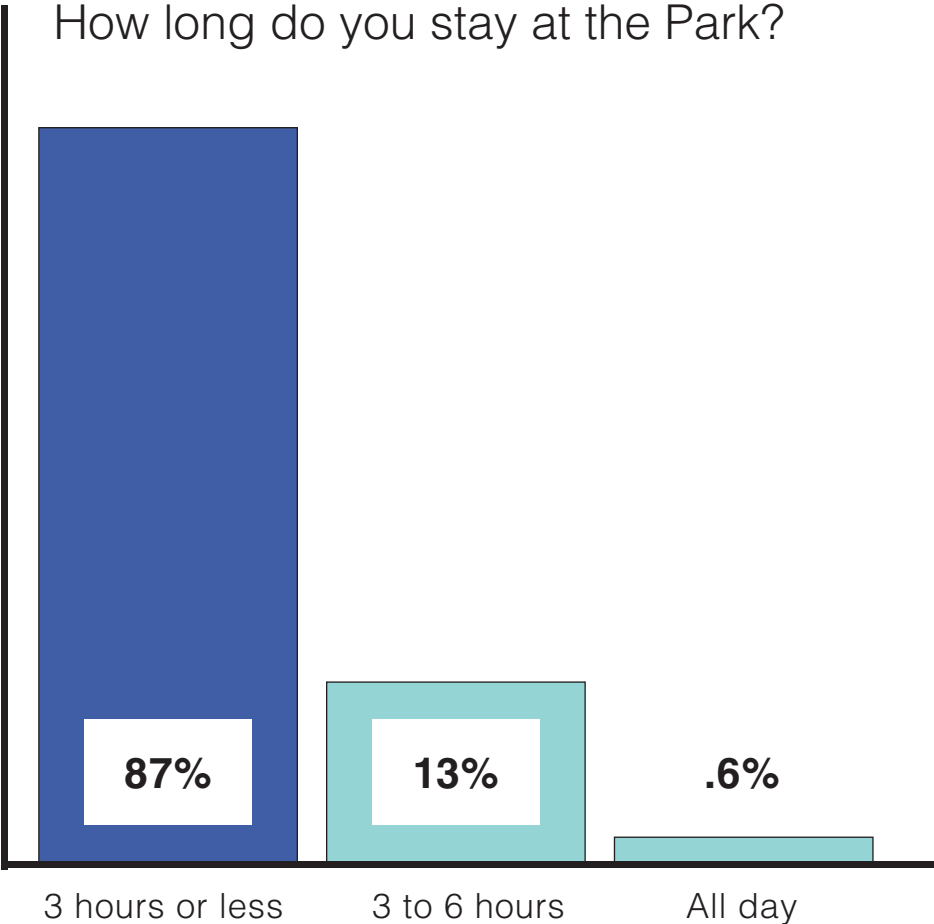
Park visitation by survey takers ranged from several times a week (23%) to once every few months (21%)

### How do you travel to Thompson Park?

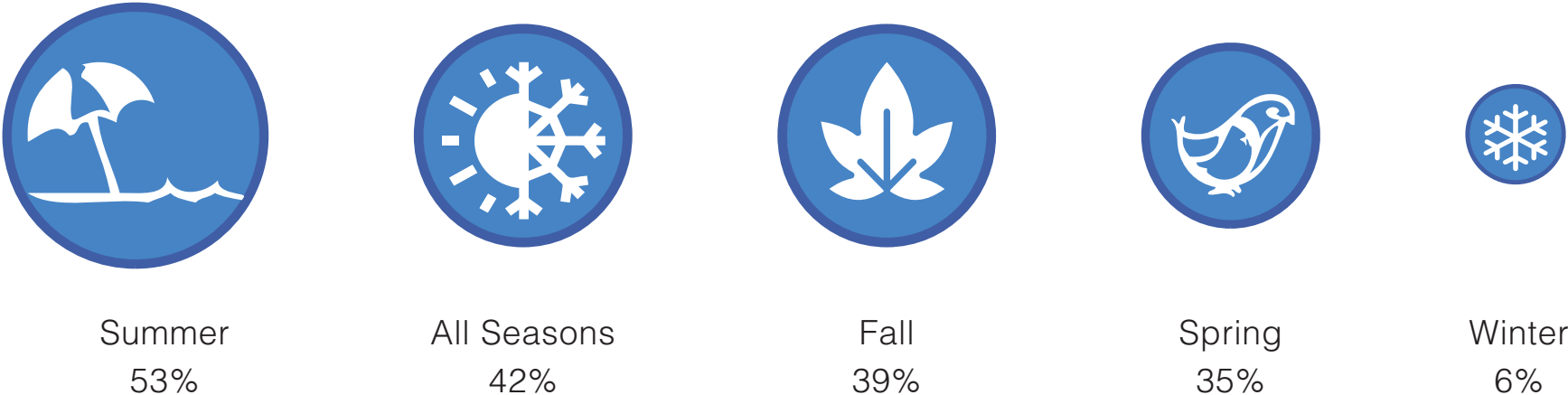


Other: bus, skateboard, run

### How long do you stay at the Park?



### What season do you visit?



# Online Outreach Survey

## What We Heard

### VISITING THE PARK

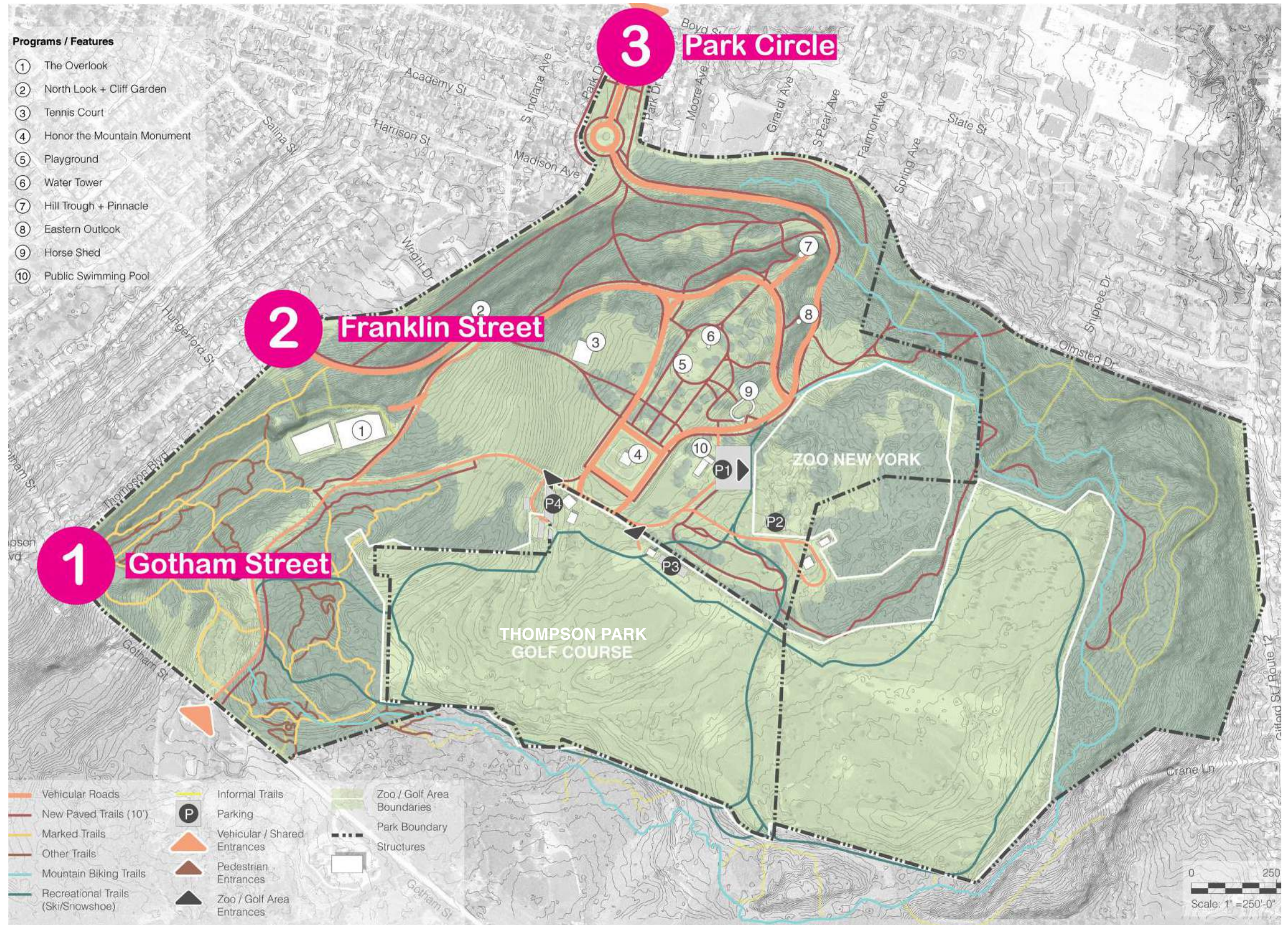
Respondents were asked where they typically enter the park and where they park.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

73% of survey takers park along the road followed by the parking lot (33%). 44% of survey takers enter the Park at Gotham Street followed by Park Circle (37%) and Franklin Street (36%)

### OTHER PARKING LOCATIONS

The Zoo and area around the Honor the Mountain Monument.



# Online Outreach Survey Activities at the Park

Please tell us which Thompson Park activity you or your household participate in. Select all that apply.

## TOP 5 ACTIVITIES PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN AT THE PARK:

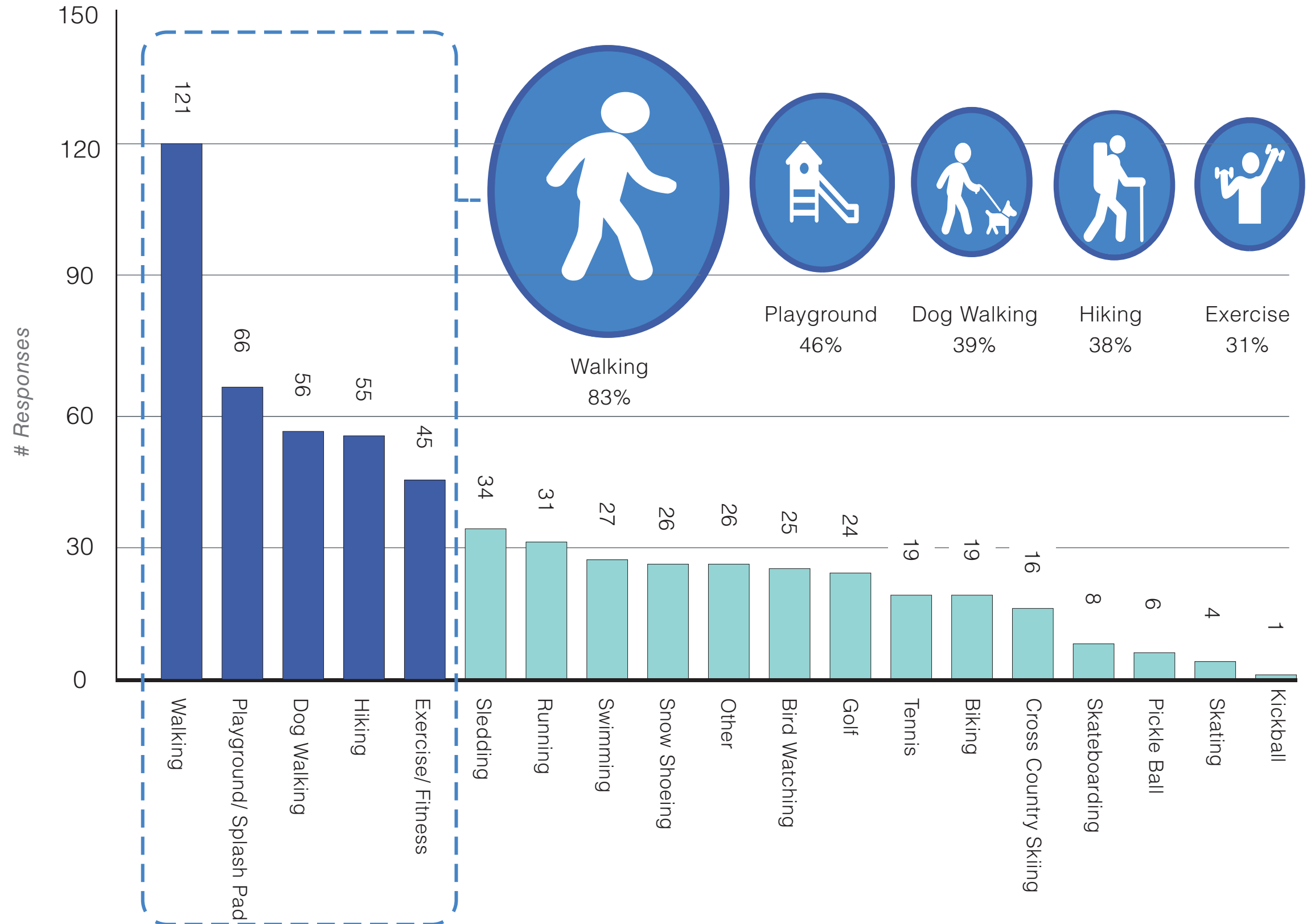
- Walking 83%
- Playground/Splash Pad 46%
- Dog Walking 39%
- Hiking 38%
- Exercise/Fitness 31%

## OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT COULD BE ADDED TO SERVE PARK VISITORS:

- More Trails
- Disc Golf
- Event Space/Concerts

### LEGEND

- Very Important
- Important



# Online Outreach Survey Programming

Please select each of the following existing and potential Thompson Park programs you or any member of your household enjoys participating in. Select all that apply.

## TOP 5 PROGRAMS PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN AT THE PARK:

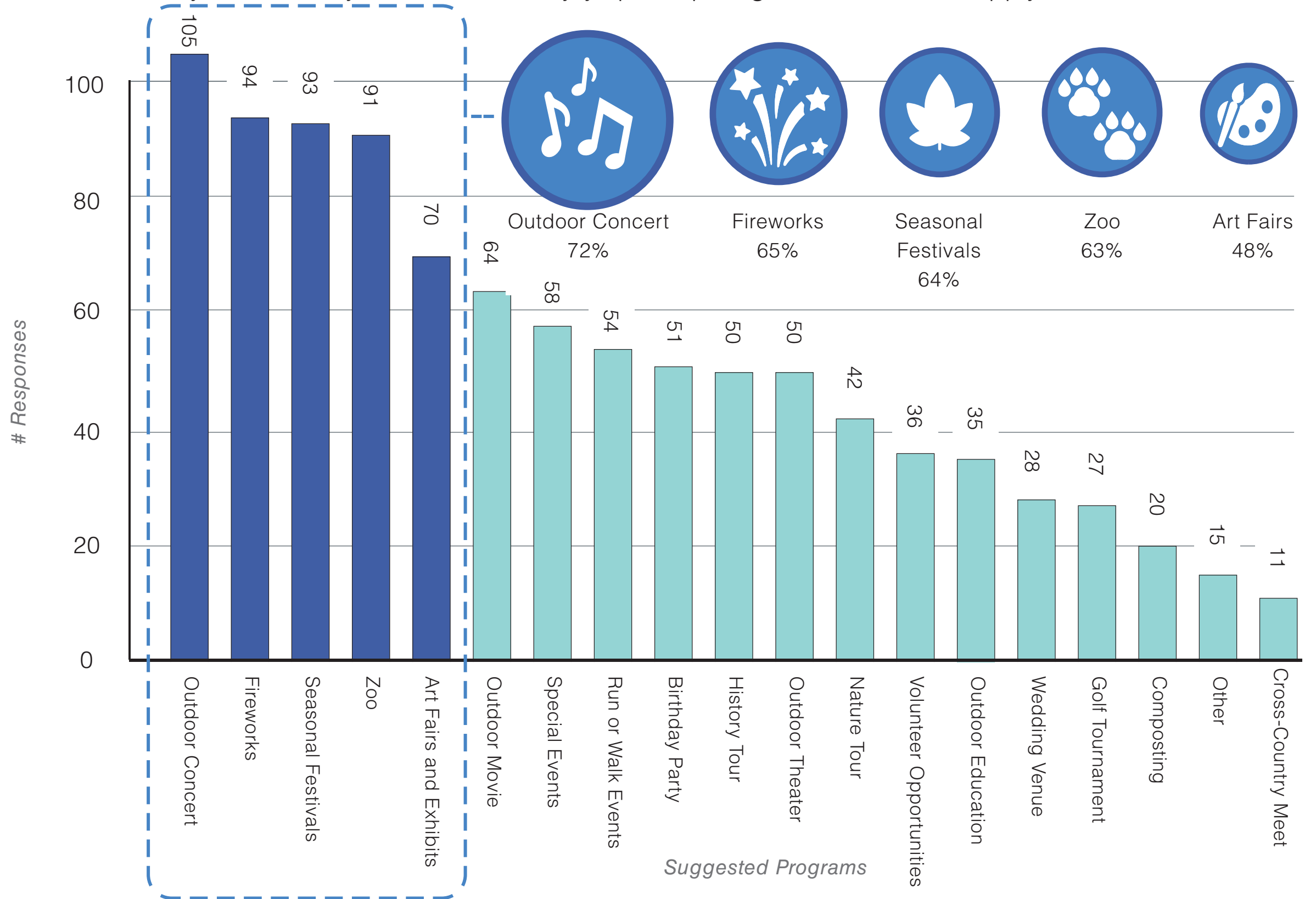
- Outdoor Concert 72%
- Fireworks 65%
- Seasonal Festivals 64%
- Zoo 63%
- Art Fairs/Exhibits 48%

## OTHER PROGRAMS THAT COULD BE ADDED:

- Tennis Tournament
- Community Gardens
- Kite Flying
- Disc Golf Events

## LEGEND

- Very Important
- Important



# Online Outreach Survey Destinations

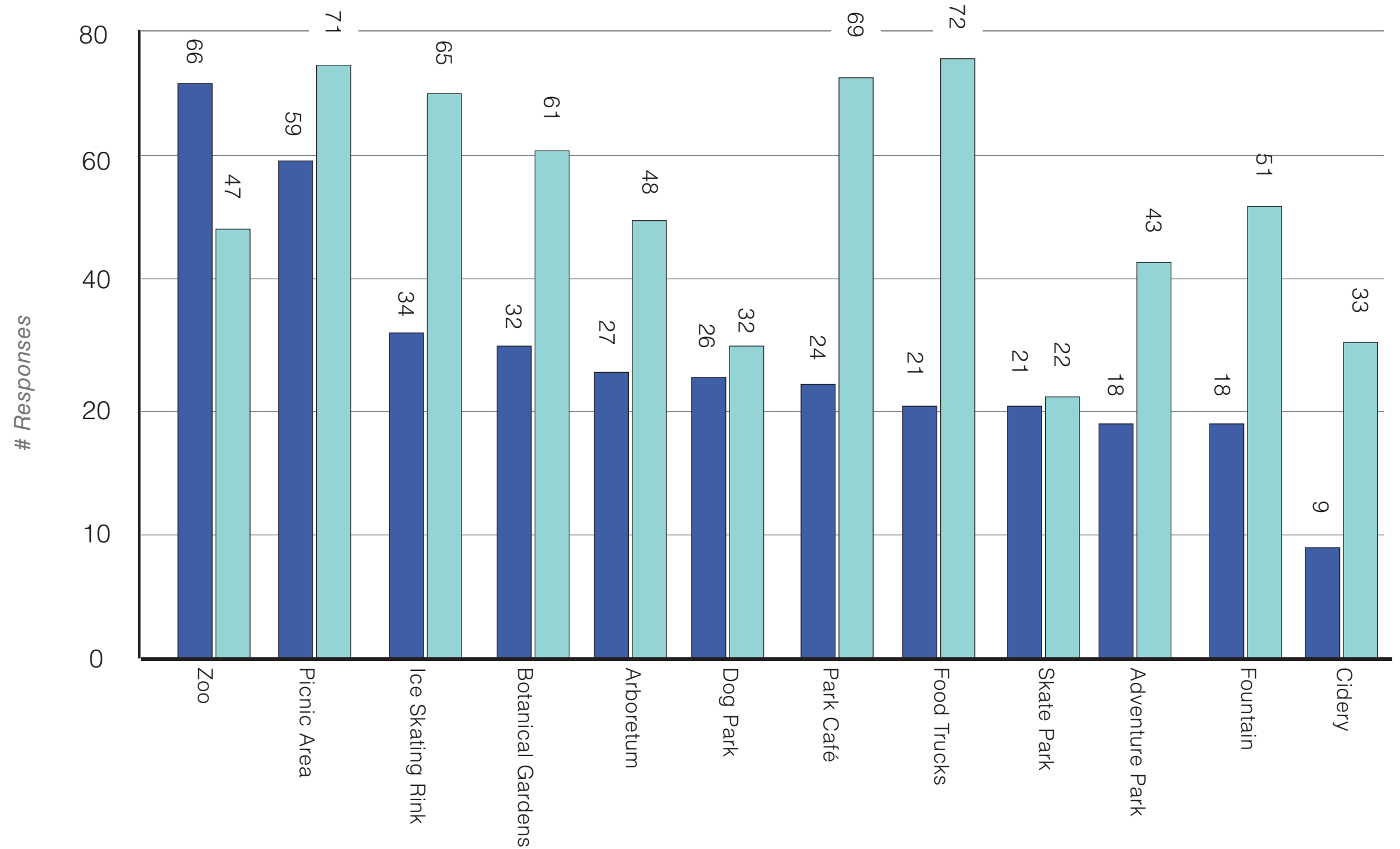
Please prioritize the following existing and potential Thompson Park destinations in terms of how they serve you and your household.

## TOP DESTINATIONS (EXISTING AND POTENTIAL):

- Zoo 46%
- Picnic Area 42%
- Ice Skating Rink 24%
- Botanical Gardens 22%

### LEGEND

- Very Important
- Important



# Online Outreach Survey Amenities

Please prioritize the following existing and potential amenities in terms of how they serve you and your household.

## TOP 5 AMENITIES (EXISTING AND POTENTIAL):

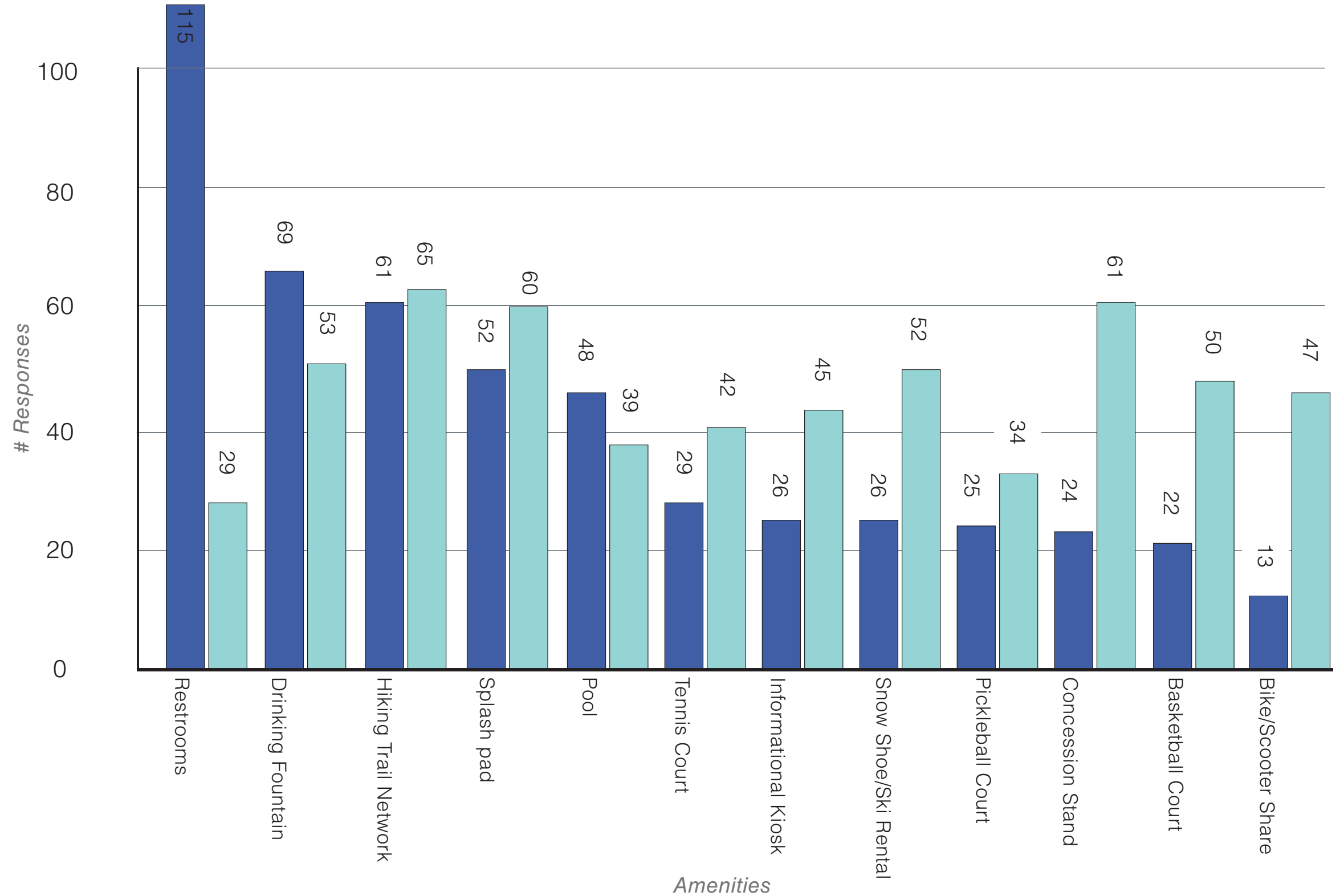
- Restrooms 79%
- Drinking Fountain 48%
- Hiking Trail Network 42%
- Splash Pad 36%
- Pool 34%

## ADDITIONAL AMENITIES

- Signage
- Outdoor ice rink
- Community garden
- Skate park and Dog Park

## LEGEND

- Very Important
- Important



# Online Outreach Survey Priorities for the Future

What are your priorities for the future of Thompson Park? Select all that apply.

## WHY IS THOMPSON PARK IMPORTANT TO THE CITY?:

Serves as a gathering place for friends and family

Allows residents time to unplug and spend time walking in nature

Historically significant

## TOP FUTURE PRIORITIES:

Trail preservation 75%

Sustainable design 67%

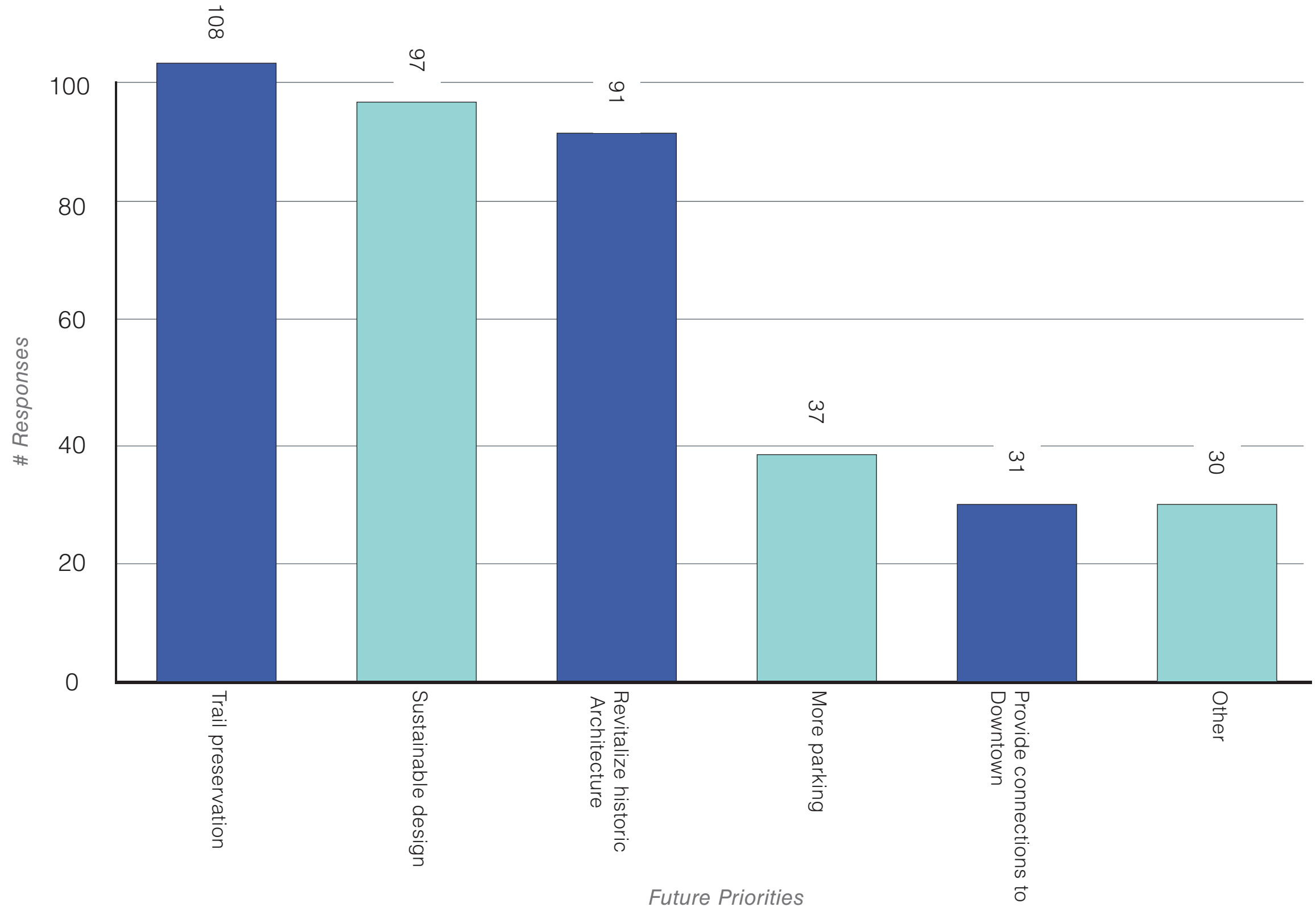
Revitalize historic park architecture 63%

## OTHER PRIORITIES:

Improving the Zoo  
Landscaping and Trash Pickup

## LEGEND

- Very Important
- Important



# Online Outreach Survey Concerns for the Future

What are your concerns for the future of Thompson Park? Select all that apply.

## TOP CONCERNS:

Safety 67%

Accessibility 44%

Access to concession/food 30%

## OTHER CONCERNS:

Over development

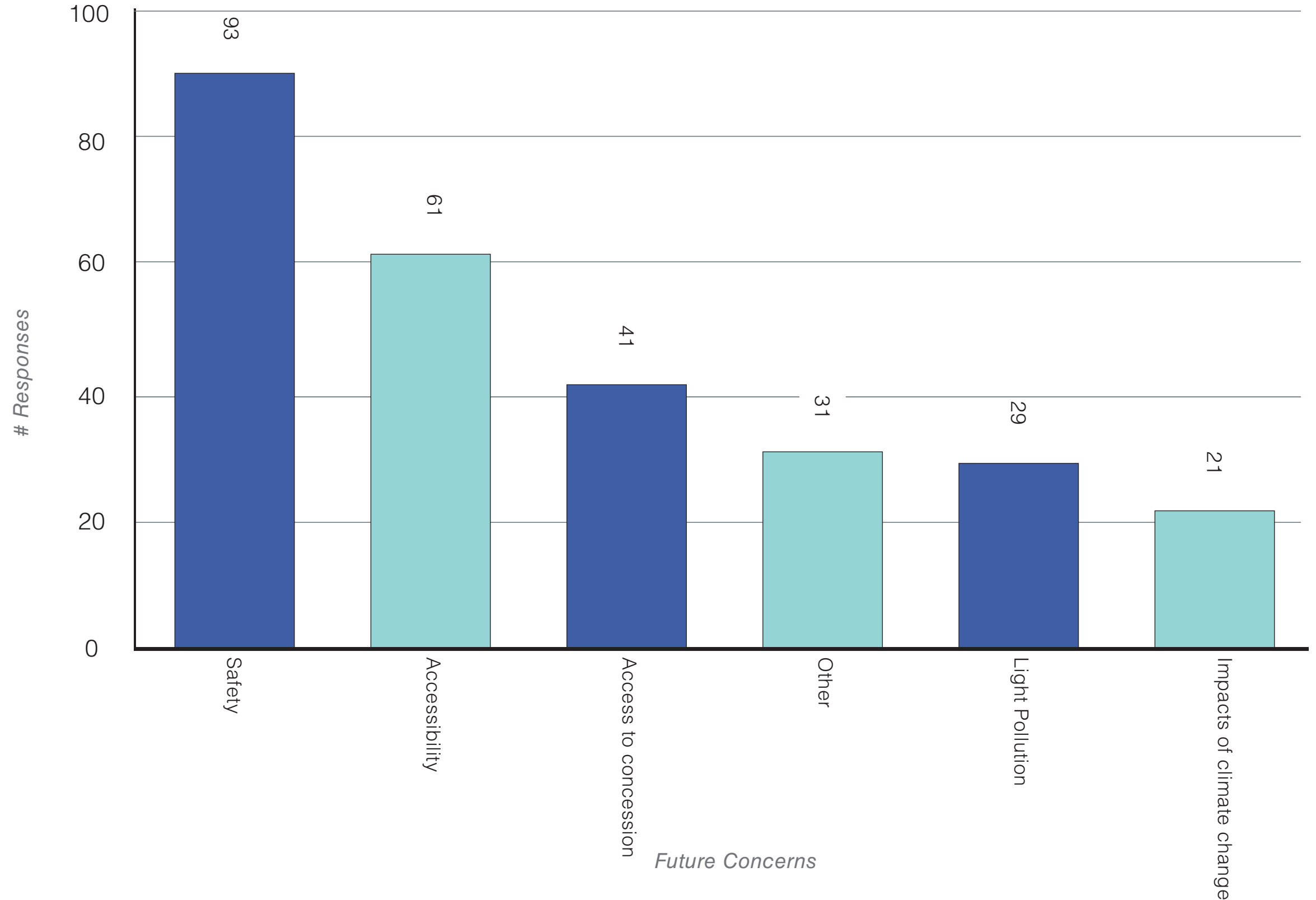
Invasive species

Tree preservation

Maintenance

## LEGEND

- Very Important
- Important





# Harvest Festival & Online Outreach Survey

## What We Heard Summary

While tabling at The Harvest Festival, we received a plethora of feedback.

As one participant said: “please consider keeping it a natural space. I’m concerned about over development and the views of the city and the surrounding areas are phenomenal! We really don’t advertise that as a benefit of living in this city.”

Another wrote: “preserve the cultural aspects of this beautiful place.”

The design team also heard from members of the Friends of Thompson Park who shared a written outline of their vision for the park, including the need for the creation of nature trails, additional parking and native plantings.

People expressed the desire for small food concessions such as food carts or trucks to serve busy program areas.

A permanent performance facility has been discussed off and on for many years. Location of a medium sized facility within the park would be well-received.

There was a desire for more winter activities such as a covered skating rink, sledding areas and more cross-country skiing trails.

Park managers and the design team met with a Disc Golf Club the day of the harvest festival. The club demonstrated how a disc golf route could be incorporated into the park.

### AMENITIES/FURNISHINGS

- Buy the golf club. We don’t need a dog park / We need a dog park.
- More food options of all sizes
- A skate park would be good for people on the other side of town from the fairgrounds. Also bring new generation of kids to the sport
- The lighting in the park could be upgraded to LED - it’s quite dark on the walking paths on winter and fall nights
- Increase lighting along main paths and roads without creating light pollution.
- Include a comfort station, informational kiosks. Equip park with the infrastructure to run larger events such as birthday parties.

### VEGETATION & ECOLOGY

- Replant trees and control invasive species and restore native plants
- Adopt animal husbandry as landscape management tool.
- Increase of pollinator gardens.
- Interest in a managed meadow, mainly perennials.
- Interest in turning the roof of the reservoir into a pollinator meadow.
- Opportunity for botanical garden at the Park like Downtown Arboretum in Watertown

### CIRCULATION

- Pedestrian crossing signs near trail heads (on roads coming from Franklin street and the traffic circle)
- Absolutely need traffic control officers for major events held at the park. Getting in and out can be very difficult.
- Invest in trail network by creating ADA access for people of all abilities and ages.
- Introduce traffic calming measures such as speed bumps for main roads to avoid conflicts between cars and pedestrians.
- Expand parking opportunities. Create more vegetated parking areas.
- Create groomed trails for recreational use



Residents giving feedback during the Harvest Festival, 2022



Photos from a site visit in September, 2022


























*Ice skating in the temporary rink at the entrance to the park at the intersection of Thompson Boulevard and Olmsted Drive.*

**07 MASTER PLAN CONCEPTS**



# Thompson Park Master Plan

## LEGEND

-  Lawn
-  Meadow
-  Deciduous Forest
-  Evergreen Forest
-  Existing Trees
-  Proposed Park Trees
-  Ornamental Trees
-  Wetland or Water Body
-  Tee Box (Golf Course)
-  1 Perimeter Path Extension
-  2 Enhanced Pedestrian Entrance
-  3 Picnic & Play
-  4 Outdoor Theater
-  5 West Outlook Trail head
-  6 Goose Pond
-  7 Reservoir
-  8 Expanded Tennis Courts
-  9 Water tower
-  10 Perimeter Park Loop
-  11 Thompson Park Golf Course
-  12 Adventure Course
-  13 Nature Trail System
-  14 Dog Park
-  15 Pinetum
-  16 All-Season Lodge
















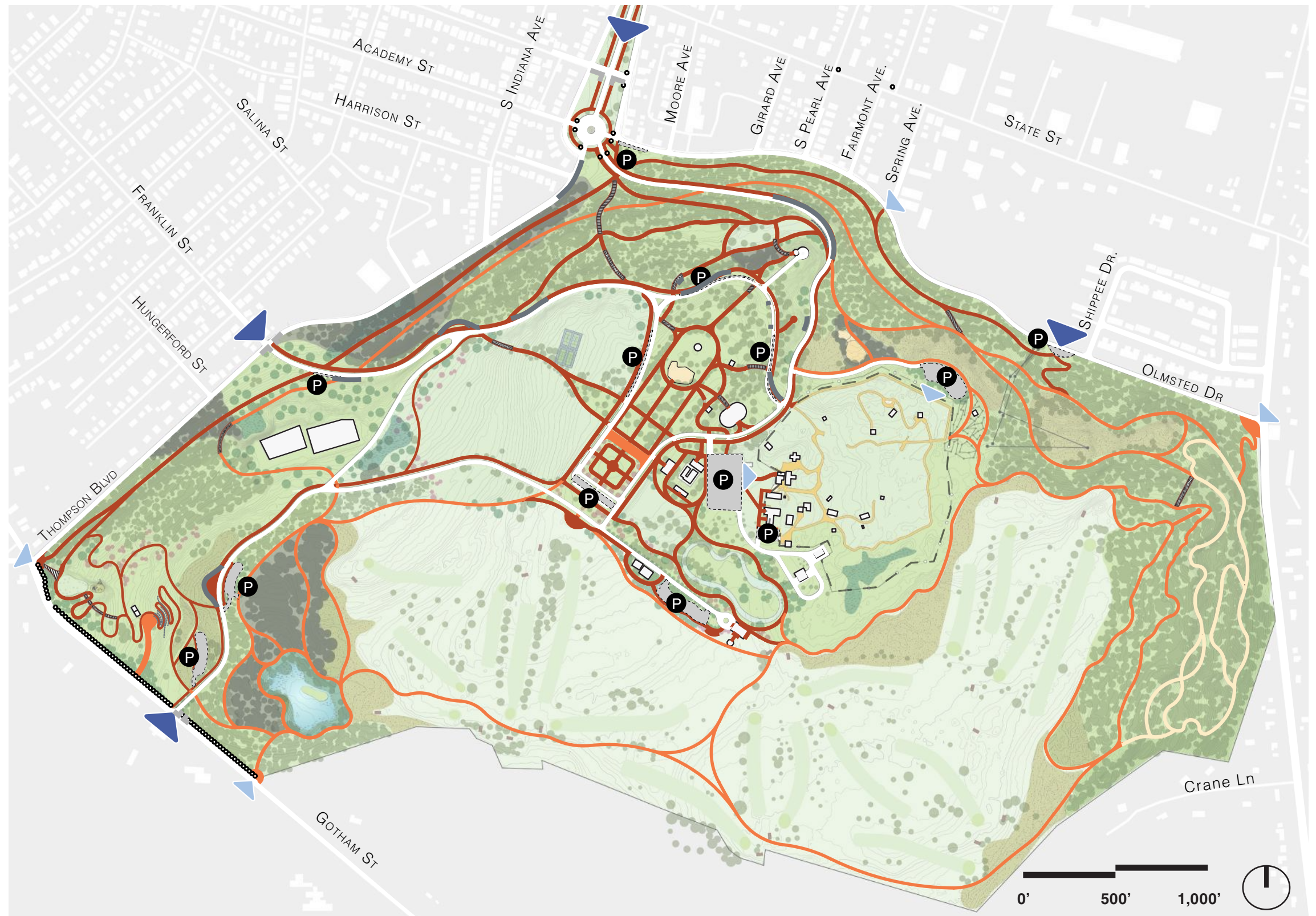
# Thompson Park Master Plan

## Proposed Circulation

Keeping with the gesture of the original pastoral park design, the proposed circulation network improves connectivity throughout the park while providing new path systems for proposed program areas beyond the original "Olmsted Acres".

### LEGEND

-  Vehicular Roads
-  Paved Paths
-  Soft Trails: Groomed
-  Soft Trails: Mountain Biking
-  Parking
-  Structures
-  Vehicular Entrances
-  Pedestrian Entrances
-  Staircases
-  Zoo Fence Line
-  Masonry Retaining Wall
-  Free Standing Masonry Wall
-  Stone Pillar



# Thompson Park Master Plan

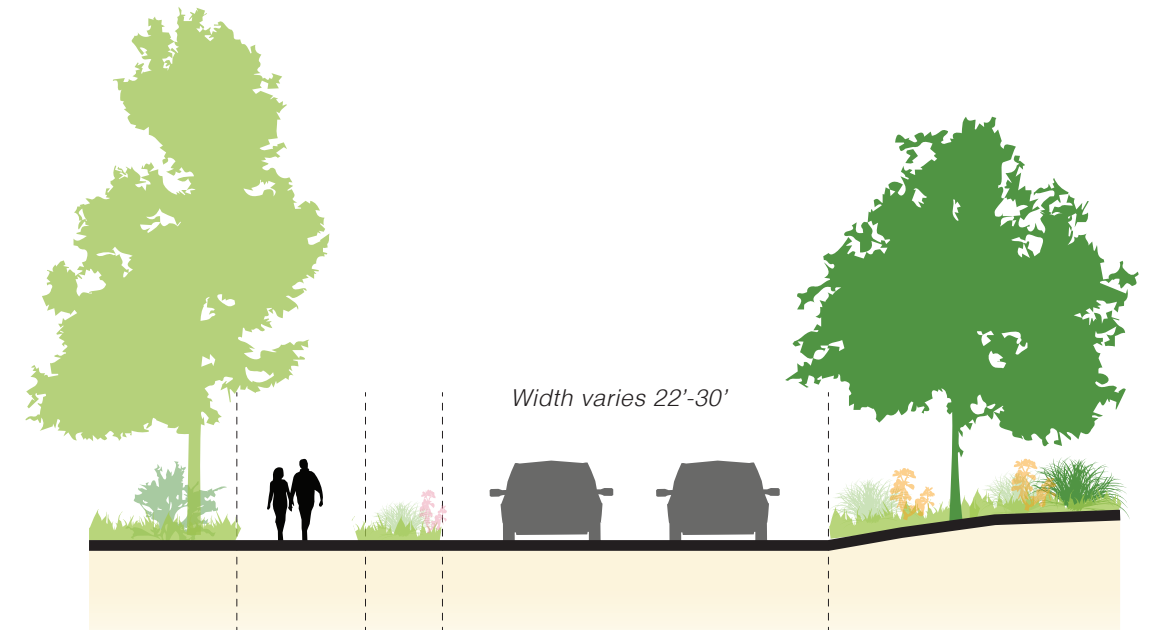
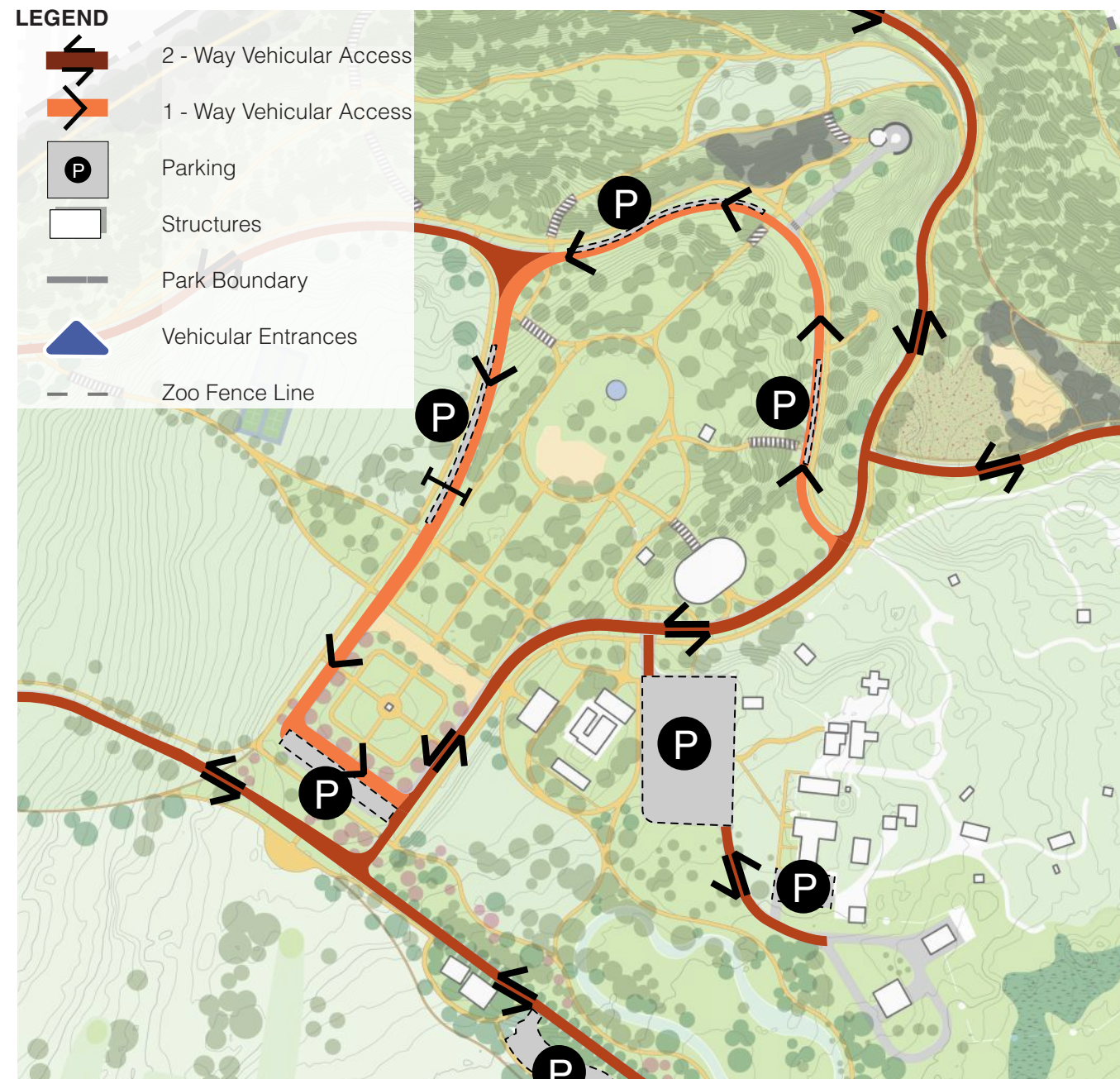
## Vehicular Directionality Study

Given there is adequate space within the existing road bed to reserve one lane for travel and one lane for parking, the plan explores a one-way system in the heart of the Olmsted Core. This scheme allows for parallel

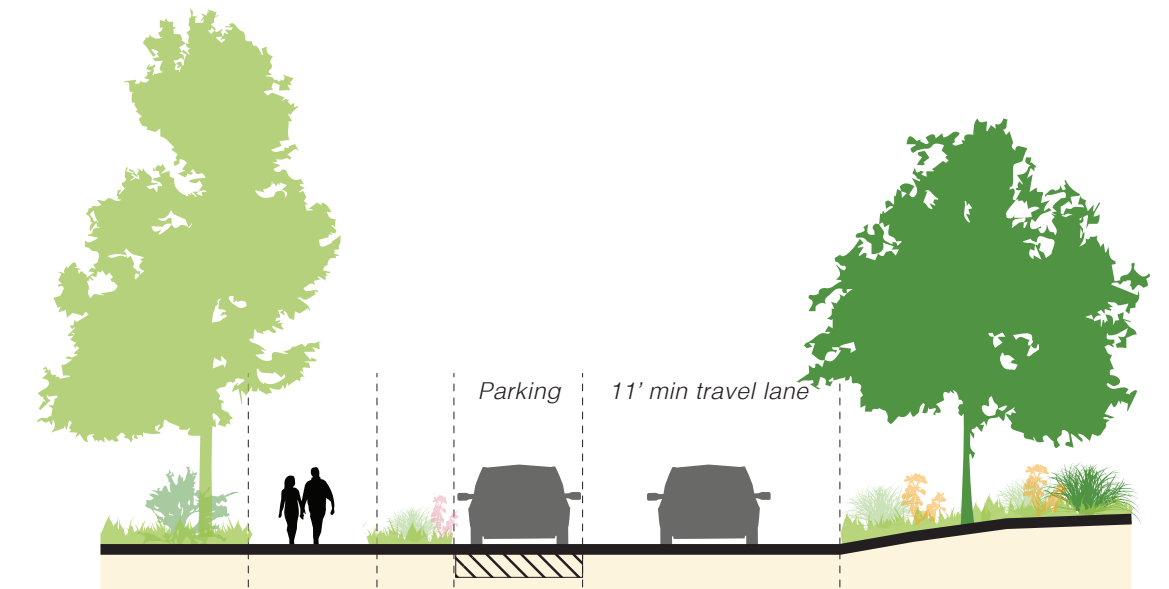
parking along a narrower park drive while a combination of signage, striping and curbs or barriers will be necessary to direct cars effectively.

Granite curbs should be installed as roads are resurfaced to prevent the overlap of parking onto landscaped surfaces. The parking "lane" should be enhanced and bracketed with landscape areas but inclusive of

breaks at key vistas and access points.



Existing Conditions - Two Way Road



Proposed Conditions - One Way Road

# Thompson Park Master Plan

## Proposed Parking Strategy

Parking areas can expand and decentralize as new program areas are developed. Satellite parking areas can also increase universal access to more areas of the park.

An evenly distributed parking plan along a Southwest / Northeast axis can help park users access every facet and level of the park. Given the steep topography, this strategy provides universal accessibility to all destinations within the park.



# Thompson Park Master Plan









## Proposed Recreational Loops

The topography and natural areas of the park are ideally suited for hiking, cross-country running and skiing, mountain biking and snow shoeing.

Groomed, competition grade cross-country trails within woodlands and along the edges of the golf course in the southern portions of the park are possible.

In winter, groomed cross-country skiing loops along the edges of the golf course (where the slopes are gentler) are made possible.



- LEGEND**
-  Vehicular Roads
  -  Pedestrian Soft Trail Loop
  -  5K
  -  3K
  -  1K
  -  Park Boundary
  -  Nature Trail Access Points
  -  Zoo Fence Line





*Connecting existing trails with new trails, that are now possible by the clearing of the Buckthorn, provides the opportunity to make walking and running loops throughout the park.*

*Sunset view of pinickers in Thompson Park before the annual concert in the park.*

# 08 PARK PROGRAMMING



# Thompson Park Programming

Park programming can take a wide range of forms. From the park's inception, the core of the park functioned as a hub for gathering. Thompson Park's meandering paths proved suitable for Sunday promenades. Areas dedicated for early childhood play ensured family-friendliness. Academy Circle doubled as a skating rink in the winter while the wading pool provided respite for park-goers in the summer.

The park continues to provide respite today; a space free from the noise and clutter of modern life, echoing the original sentiments expressed by J.C. Thompson, the park's benefactor, who is quoted in the 1985 Master Plan as saying, "a park appealed to me as something all the people of Watertown, men, women, and children, rich or poor, could and would enjoy; it would inculcate civic pride, benefit the City as a place of residence, help make and keep people well..." To Thompson and the Olmsted Brothers, access to natural areas for mental and physical health and the park's role in providing a space for social activity are key tenets to quality of life in American cities.

Despite being situated in a city where homes provide ample backyard space and schools are well-appointed with sports fields, the benefits of being in proximity to hiking trails and natural areas provides immeasurable benefits to locals. The need for structured and actively programmed open space must be balanced with the need for passive recreation. For example,

formal programming such as the pool, sports courts and play areas must be balanced by access to paths and trails within the park's natural areas. The park should continue to accommodate events like the Concert in the Park and community festivals, without compromising the fabric of the historic circulation system and emergent ecologies.

Currently almost all activities are concentrated in the core of the park. Within the park's core are a swimming pool which hosts swimming lessons, a state-of-the-art splash pad and newly renovated playground. These destinations draw families and visitors to the center of the park and serve as a social hub for Watertown.

The Master Plan recommends expanding active recreation near the park's core through the creation of a "Winter Village" south of the Water tower. There is also a plan to create a new park hub and neighborhood access point at the western edge of the park at Thompson Boulevard and Gotham Street. Throughout the park, areas that are currently under-utilized should be adapted for expanded park programming in a strategic fashion that does not detract from the overarching pastoral character of the landscape.

A quality neighborhood park provides measurable economic, environmental and social benefits. Many of these outcomes will be determined by the quality and considerate placement of the park's programming.



*The old bathhouse could become a park visitor center and museum sharing the history of the park.*

# Existing & Proposed Programming

- LEGEND**
- Program Destination
  - Passive Recreation
  - Active Recreation
  - Wooded Area
  - Golf Course
  - Outlook
  - Proposed
  - Existing
  - 1 Picnic + Play
  - 2 Outdoor Theater
  - 3 Ornamental Tree Planting
  - 4 Goose Pond Nature Preserve
  - 5 Disc Golf, Running Trails
  - 6 Fitness + Skating Area
  - 7 Zoo Concession/Park Cafe
  - 8 Zip line / Adventure Course
  - 9 Thompson Park Museum & Gallery
  - 10 All Season Lodge & Visitor Center
  - 11 Existing Playground
  - 12 Existing Tennis Courts (Expanded)
  - 13 Existing Informal Mountain Biking
  - 14 Existing Pool & Splash Pad
  - 15 Kite Hill - Flexible Open Lawn






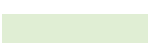
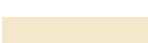
# Proposed Park Program Districts

The designation of distinct program zones provides a framework for park restoration and expansion that acknowledges the historic design intent while embracing the park's future as a community destination and place of respite in nature.

Program zones correlate to landscape character and provide an essential framework for the park. They serve to protect natural areas from inappropriate development and encourage program expansion in areas with existing neighborhood connections and adjacent park access roads.



**LEGEND**

	Olmstedian Core
	West Outlook
	East-West Meander
	The Green
	Zoo New York

# The Green - Highlights & Objectives

## MAINTAIN THE GOLF COURSE

Maintain the existing golf course as a municipal resource. Shift and consolidate golf operations and access to allow for better east-west connections along the edges of the course.

## CREATE A PINETUM

Consider the planting of specimen evergreen trees in ornamental groves to create a seasonal botanical destination. Select species could double as research specimens to better understand their adaptation to weather extremes and shifting climates.

## ALL-SEASON LODGE

Located in the heart of the park, a new all-season lodge will accommodate a variety of programs across all four seasons, providing indoor and outdoor year-round programming while also serving as a club house.

## ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY

Build connection with hiking trails in other programmatic areas of the park and expand cross-country trail system and opportunities for winter activities/winter village.



# Olmstedian Core - Plan Detail

**INCREASE PARK CONNECTIVITY**

The acquisition of the Golf Course property presents the opportunity to create a more cohesive park by better connecting its diverse geographies, especially along the east-west axis of the park.

**RE-ENVISION CLUB HOUSE**

A new all season lodge, doubling as a summer event space, will house a relocated clubhouse thereby improving relationships between all quadrants of the park. The lodge will expand park use in all seasons by serving as a warming station, equipment rental, public restroom and cafe.

**INCREASE WINTER ACTIVITIES**

Thematically inspired by residents' request for more winter recreational activities such as cross country skiing and snow shoeing, the ice skating trail will expand winter programming thereby increasing opportunities for active recreation within close proximity to existing park infrastructure, utilities and the central parking area.

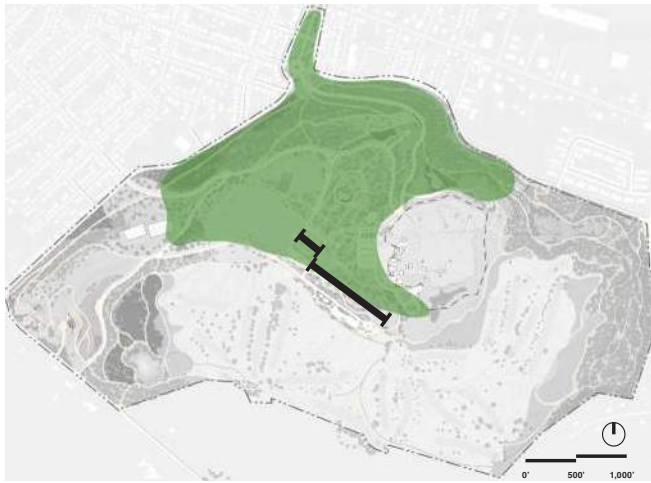
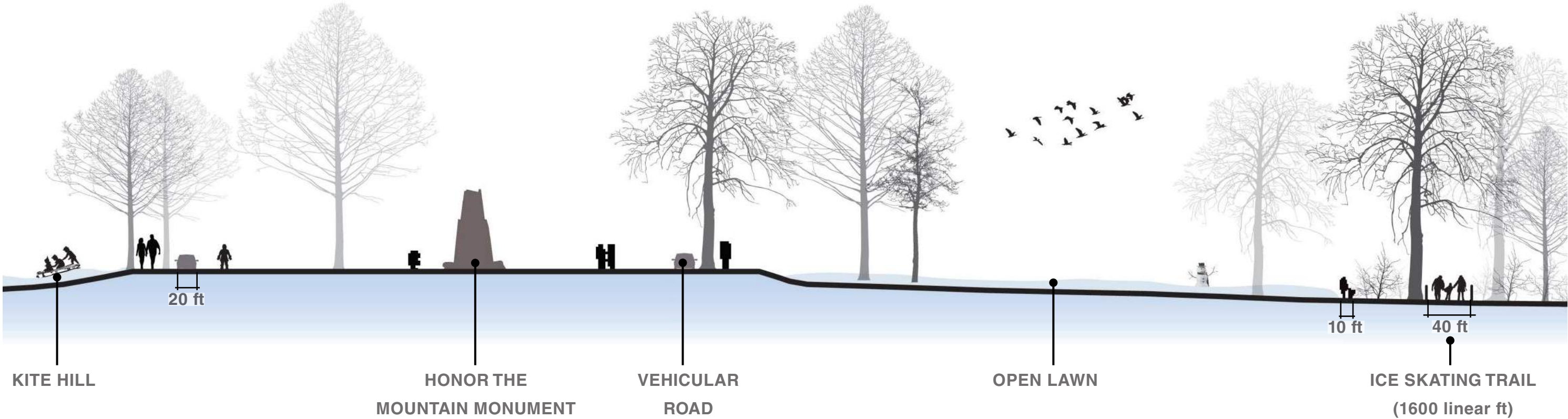
**RESTORE HISTORIC FEATURES**

Including structures, walls, stairs and paths. Plant new canopy trees.





# Olmstedian Core - Site Section



# West Outlook - Plan Detail

**NEW PARK ENTRANCE**

Because the northwest corner of the park has a wealth of natural features and is adjacent to neighborhood schools, it's primed for development that balances natural resource protection and new program destinations. To better serve this portion of the park, visitors will benefit from a new park entrance at the corner of Gotham St and Thompson Blvd.

**IMPLEMENT GOOSE POND**

Implementing this originally proposed water body will increase habitat and create a natural destination. An impermeable clay layer and supplemental water to retain water levels throughout the seasons will be required for installation and maintenance.

**NATURE PLAY & PICNIC AREA**

As an alternative to the destination playground in the park's core, there is an opportunity to re-envision the site's historic quarry, currently ecologically degraded, turning it into a playground for young children or rock climbing destination.

**OUTDOOR AMPHITHEATER**

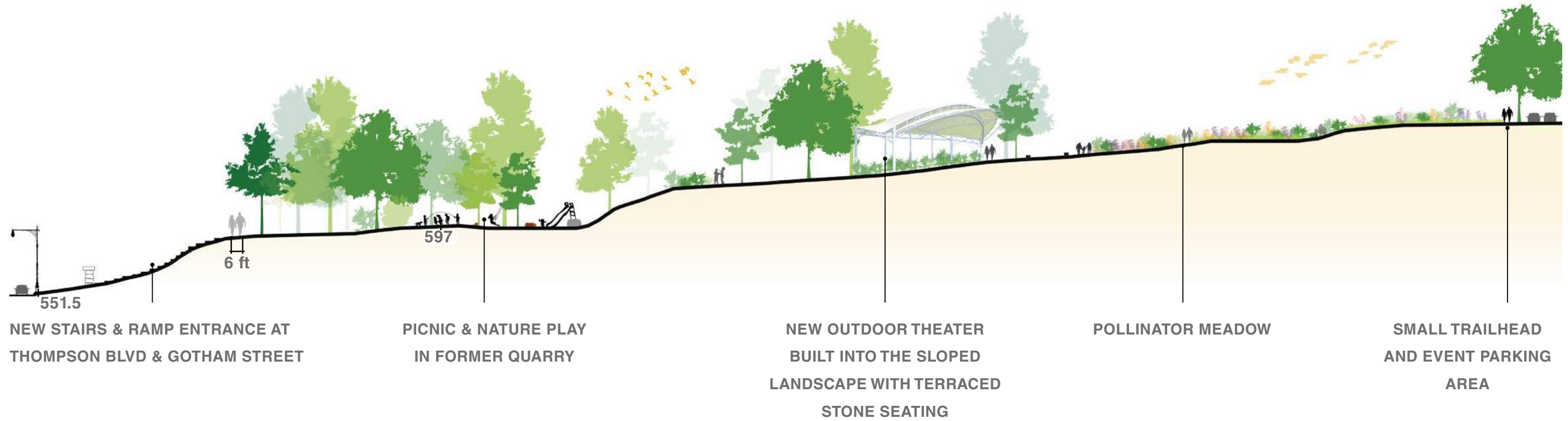
Implementing a 250-seat amphitheater with western views of the park will create more opportunities for cultural and educational programming.

**PUBLIC RESTROOM**

Associated with the new outdoor theater, these amenities serve the needs of all proposed programming in the West Outlook.



# West Outlook - Site Section



# East-West Meander - Plan Detail

## Eastbourne Woods

**INCREASE PARK CONNECTIVITY**

Path connections with new mixed-use trails will be made between the eastern and western portions of the park. There is potential to create a park-wide system of hiking, cross-country running and disc golf, despite the eastern portion of the park being where some of the steepest terrain exists

**SIMPLIFY TRAIL SYSTEM AND INCREASE HIKING TRAILS**

Within the park's woodlands, there exists a series of informal trails that will serve to be simplified and more clearly defined.

**MOUNTAIN BIKING LOOP**

As a dovetail to the upcoming adventure park, programming will include and improve an area specifically for mountain biking. Working with the local mountain bike community, specific courses will be created and managed.

**LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT**

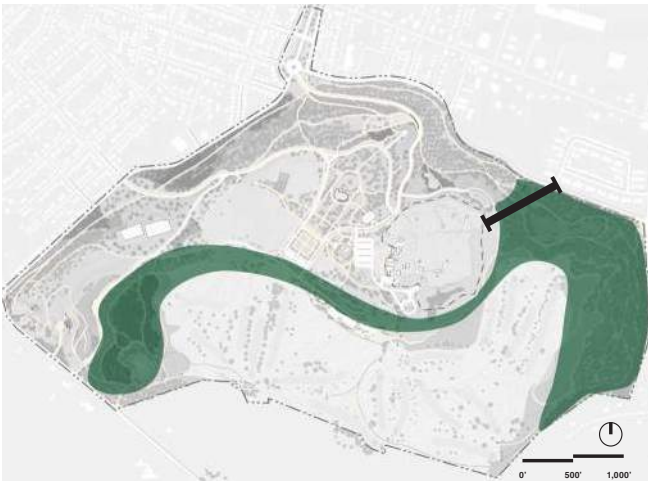
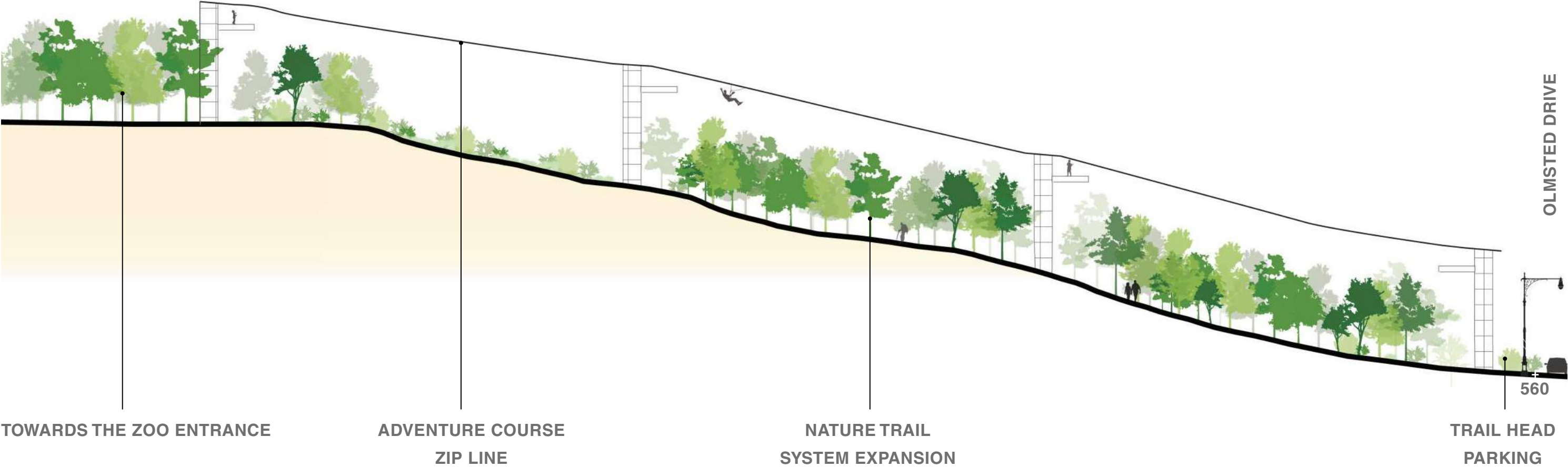
Recently cleared areas of Buckthorn, localized tree plantings and managed pollinator meadows that define and shape the landscape experience will be managed and maintained.

**ADVENTURE COURSE**

The Zoo at Thompson Park is in the planning stages to develop an adventure park to include a zip line and other features.



# East West Meander - Site Section





*Existing view of the former quarry at the southwestern corner of the park, Fall 2022.*

# West Outlook - Perspective

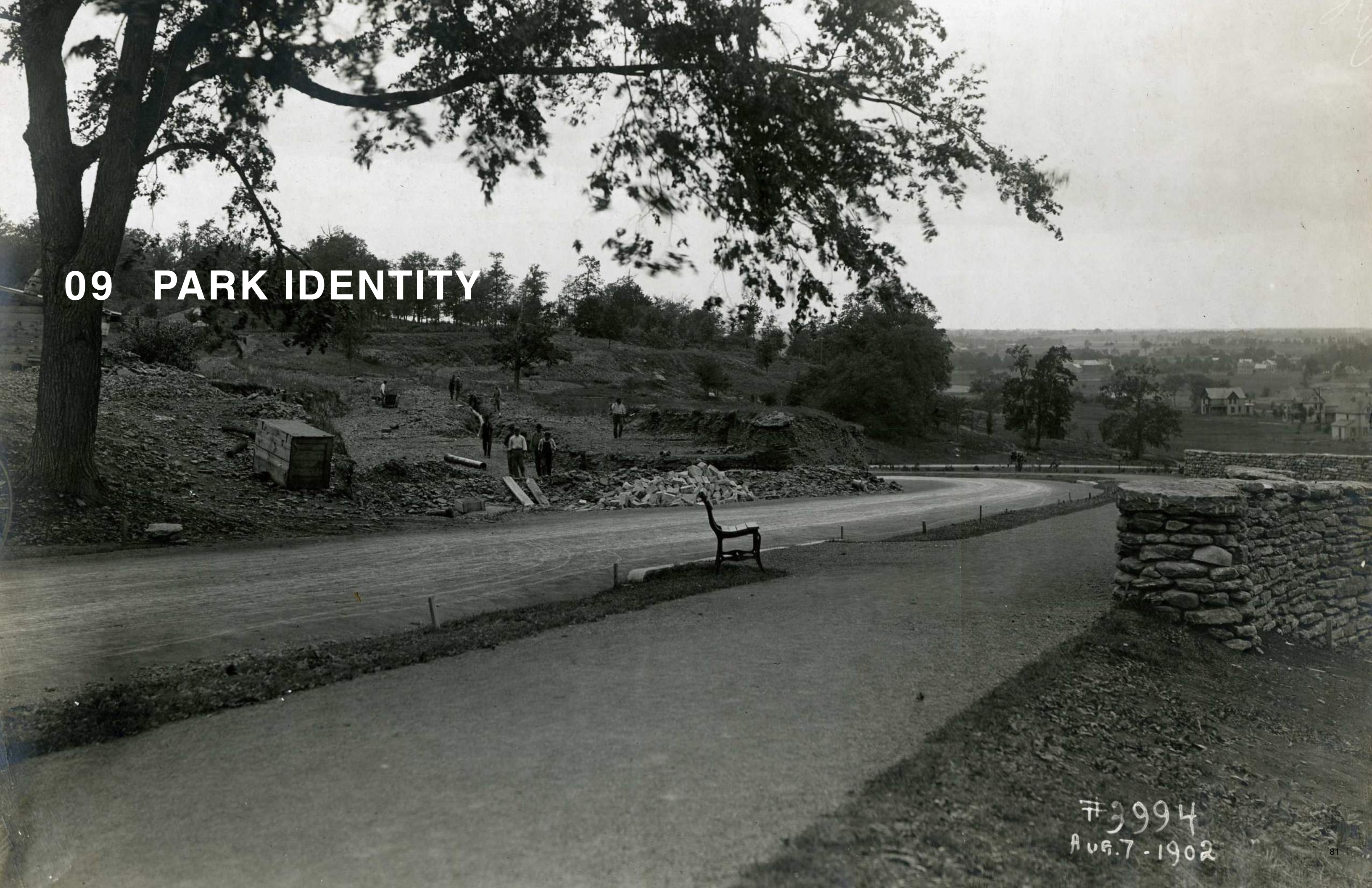


*Park patrons could enjoy a new park destination with a picnic and nature play area tucked inside of the former quarry.*





09 PARK IDENTITY



#3994  
AUG. 7 - 1902

# Park Identity - Site Furnishings Palette

Over time, different types of lighting, site furnishings, plantings, signage and structures were introduced into the park. Each era left a mark that didn't necessarily tie to the park's original design aesthetic and detracted from a unified material language across the landscape.

A cohesive set of site furnishing standards can help to establish park identity and contribute to the quality of the park going experience. In addition, having key features be of consistent material and type makes these furnishings easier to maintain over time. The master plan proposes that a simple, robust, recognizable materials palette that fits within the style of the park design be established and implemented as park improvements are made.

One example of how park identity can be improved and enhanced is through the park's benches. In early photographs of the park's construction, the bench was cast iron with wooden slats. This bench is still available and now known as the 'Central Park Settee', restored into production during the renovation of Central Park. While the original bench was not designed with hand rests, current models do include this feature and use of hand rests is advisable for increased accessibility. A protocol should be established that requires all new benches be of this type. Furthermore, any future

renovation projects will replace existing concrete benches with the Central Park Settee.

Key features of the parks' site furnishings palette should include: Benches with traditional cast ductile iron and wooden slats, a companion seating arrangement with benches and chess tables, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, pedestrian and park drive light fixtures, planting, way finding and signage. The park lighting in particular would benefit from a more focused palette and technical implementation strategy.

Implementation of a common material palette can happen over time, however it's beneficial to introduce a few short-term demonstration projects to illustrate the importance of a common lighting, site furnishings and signage plan.



## BENCH

**Manufacturer:** Kenneth Lynch & Sons

**Model No.:** Central Park Settee, 6735 (without armrests), 6735B (with armrests)

**Description:** This bench was and is used extensively in Olmsted designed parks. The design is simple, elegant and durable. New bench areas should also provide an additional adjacent space for companion seating (i.e. space for a wheel chair to sit side by side to a bench).



## BICYCLE RACK

**Manufacturer:** Kenneth Lynch & Sons

**Model No.:** Post and Loop Bike Rack, 6745

**Description:** Material is painted cast ductile iron. The design is very durable, compact and can be deployed in smaller or larger groupings as needed. Bicycle racks should be provided at all new satellite parking areas and trailheads to the park paths and trails.



## DRINKING FOUNTAIN

**Manufacturer:** Canterbury International

**Model No.:** Type E Hi-Lo Drinking Fountain

**Description:** This fountain has historic style and meets current ADA standards. Material is painted cast iron. The fountain can also have double headed bowl (with a child bowl) and/or dog bowl at the base as well.

# Park Identity - Lighting

## LIGHTING

Installing a uniform light fixture around the perimeter of the park and main park drives is a priority, especially along Thompson Boulevard and Olmsted Drive.

A uniform pedestrian fixture within the Olmstedian Core which lights principal paved park paths and a companion fixture for park drives and trail head parking areas would greatly enhance the park design.

One suggested fixture is the 'Riverside Luminaire' - still in production and available with an LED lamp. These fixtures were first used in 1911 along the mall in Central Park. It's a historic park standard in NYC parks.

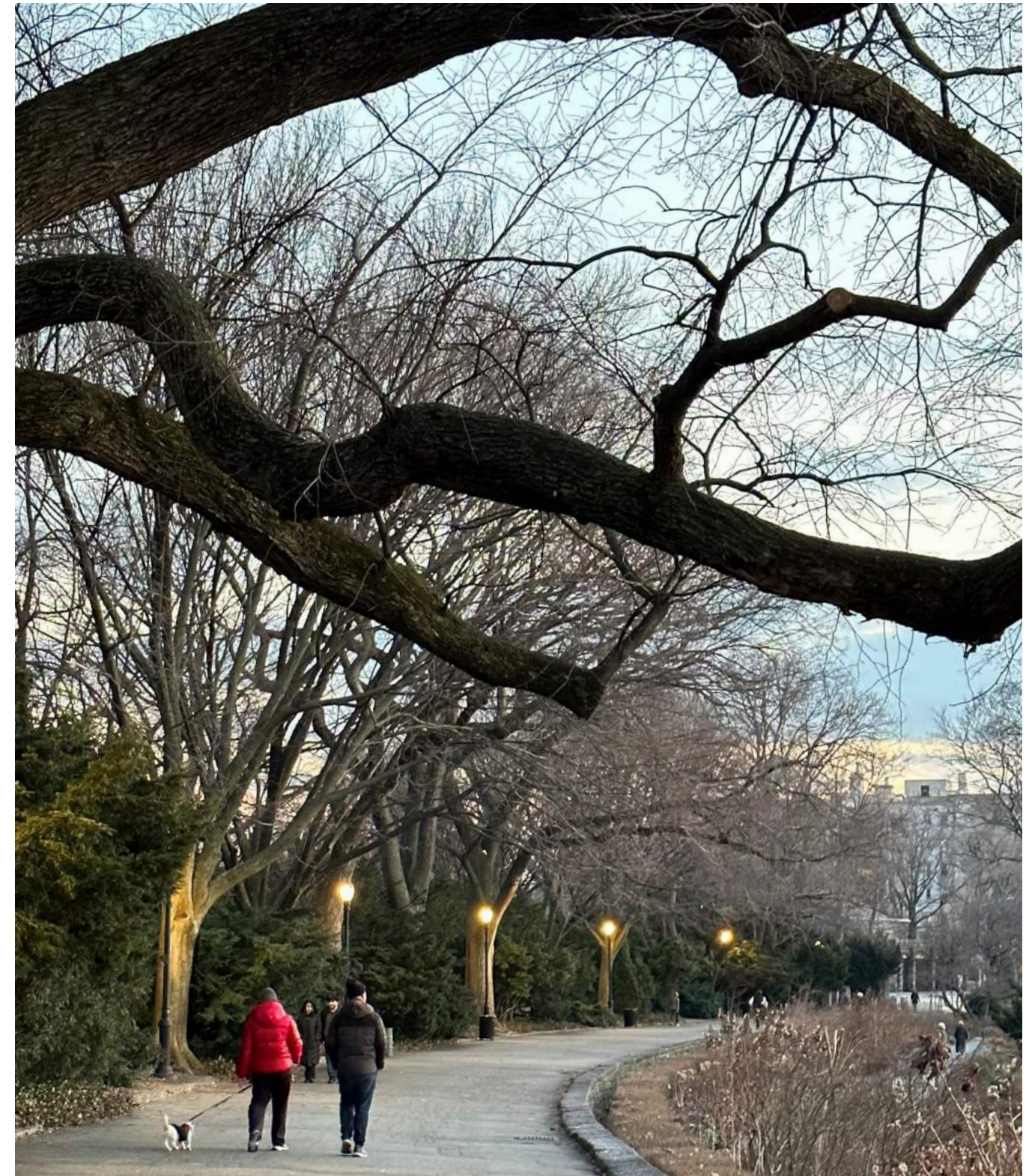
LED alternatives are more energy efficient and generate more light than traditional luminaires. These alternatives are found in a number of historic Olmsted Parks and require the use of less light fixtures in total.



Type M Roadway Luminaire



Type B Pedestrian Pole



The promenade in Fort Tryon Park, designed by the Olmsted Brothers in 1917, lined with B-Poles, a low masonry wall, oaks and elms.

# Park Identity - Wayfinding & Signage

## WAYFINDING & SIGNAGE

The park experience could be enhanced with the creation of a park wide map with associated signage correlating to key program areas and the expanded trail system. Interpretive signage and mapping of natural features or historic design elements could tell the story of Watertown's history and the park's evolution.

A physical map of the entire trail network should be available and strategically located at park entrances and trail head parking areas. An interactive live map could be developed and placed on the city's

website. A wayfinding plan for the existing and proposed trail networks should be developed for the park. The signage plan should identify the different trails including start points, distances along the trail and the end of each trail. A simple "blaze" system could correspond to specific trail routes with known access points, slopes and distances.



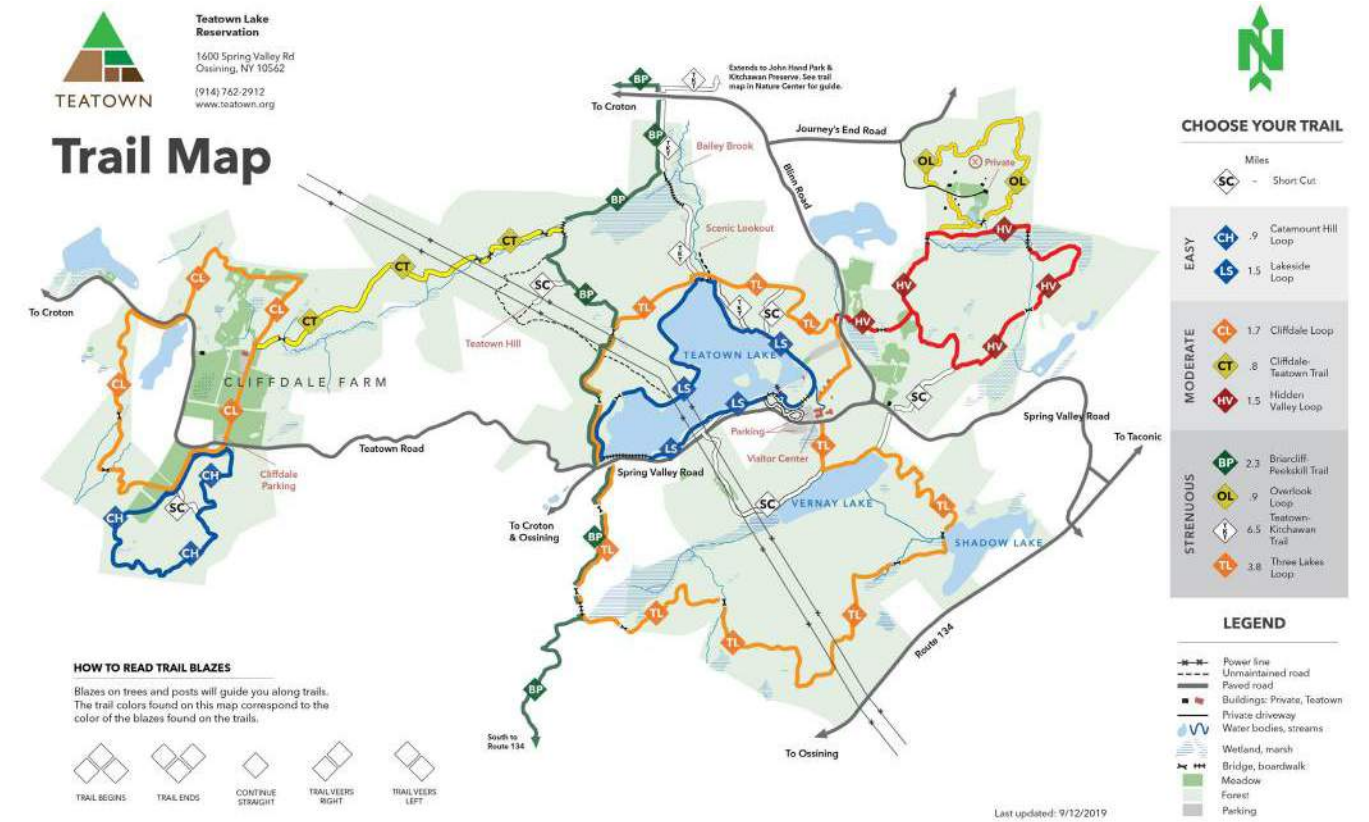
Trail markers



Interpretive signage by Hunt Design helps navigate pedestrians around Golden Gate National Recreation Area



Blazes at Teatown Lake Reservation help hikers navigate the network of trails



Teatown Lake Reservation Trail map is highly legible and clearly corresponds with the blazes along the trail.

# Park Identity - Park Edges

A key feature of all Olmsted Parks is how the park interfaces with its context. The designs have clear entrances often marked by stone gates or pillars, flanked with seating areas and framed by canopy trees. In many cases the perimeter of the park is defined by low stone walls, street tree plantings and special pavements, all creating a somewhat formal yet welcoming edge. The proposed plans for Thompson Park were no exception, showing tendrils of street trees extending into the adjacent neighborhoods.

Today, the park perimeter varies from well-developed (such as the park entrance at Academy Circle), to less developed (along Thompson Boulevard, and Gotham Street with remnants of stone pillars built in the 1930's), to completely undeveloped (rendering the site undefined and unwelcoming in some cases).

Curating the perimeter of the park with a simple set of common gestures including lighting, stone walls/pillars, planting and signage could strengthen the park's identity and sense of place within the urban fabric.



# Park Identity - Edge Conditions I

## PARK EDGES

The edge along Thompson Boulevard and Olmsted Drive has a continuous swale at the bottom of the slope, thus prohibiting a perimeter sidewalk on that level. The street lighting along Thompson Boulevard consists of wooden poles with metal cobra head fixtures on top. Along Olmsted Drive, the street lighting consists of metal poles with cobra head lighting.

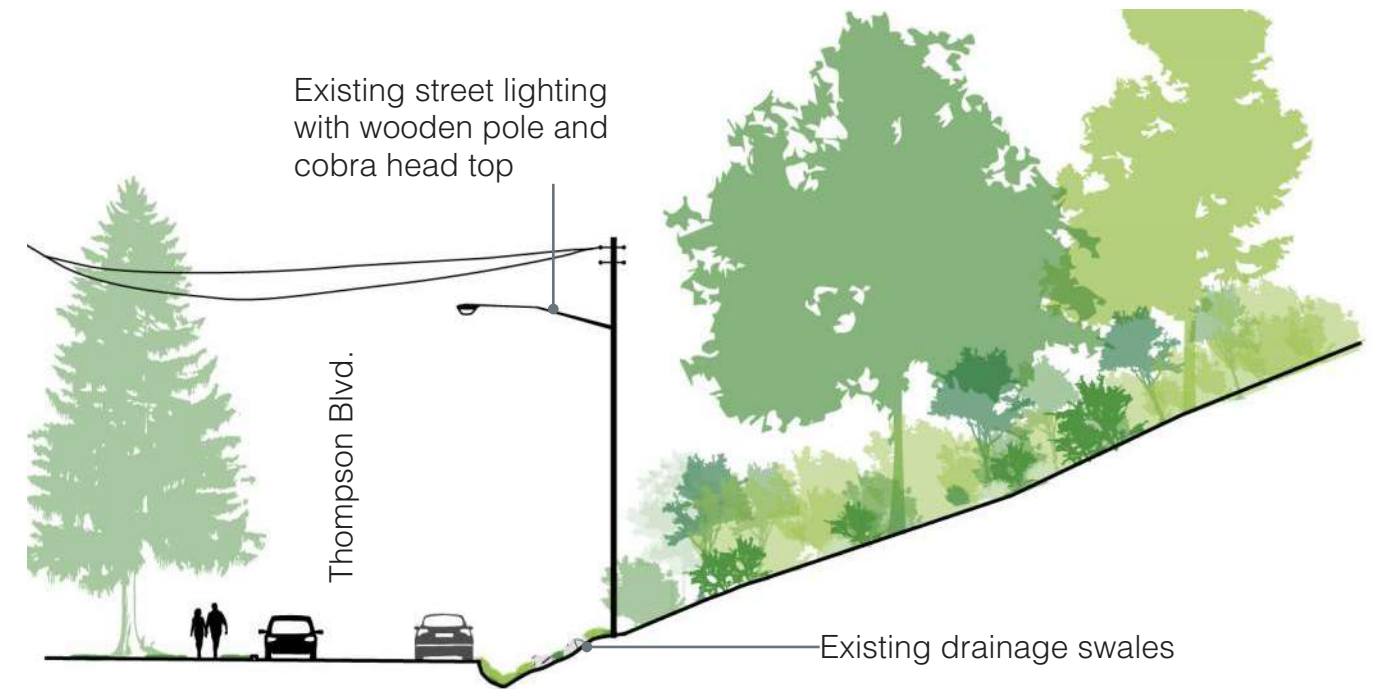
The landscape is overgrown in some places and lacks clear connections to the interior park path system. The park would benefit from a new formal entrance at Gotham Street and Thompson Boulevard.

The following cross-sections illustrate possible improvements to park visibility and identity.

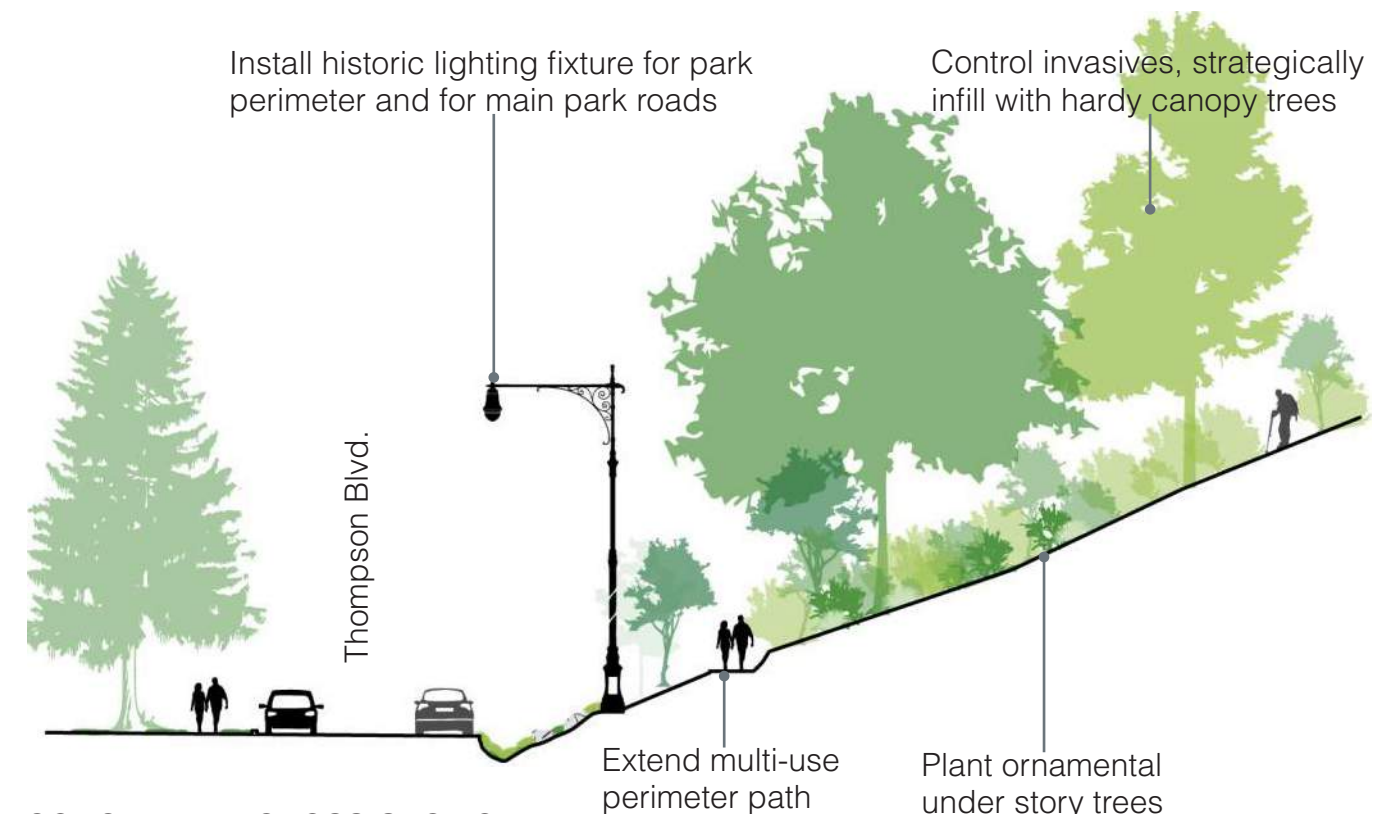
There are a few localized areas that are flat enough at the bottom of the slope, ideal for small trailhead parking and new secondary park access points. The trailheads should have features such as signage, lighting and masonry walls.



Existing conditions at the corner of Gotham Street and Thompson Boulevard, Fall 2022



## EXISTING CROSS-SECTION



## CONCEPTUAL CROSS-SECTION

# Park Identity - Edge Conditions II

## PARK EDGES

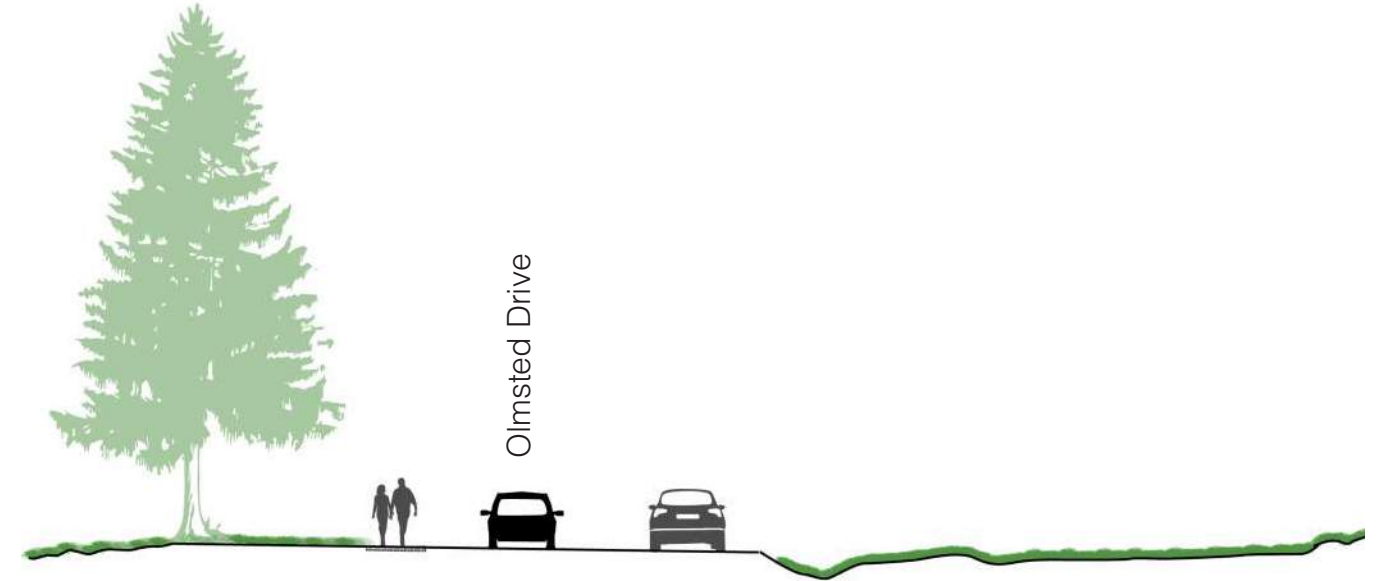
Clear connections to park paths and additional pedestrian entrances along Olmsted would improve connectivity to the adjacent neighborhood. The sections below illustrate possible improvements to improve park visibility and identity.

There are a few localized areas that are flat enough at the bottom of the slope, ideal for trailhead parking and new secondary park access points.

The trailheads should have features such as lighting and masonry walls. There are a few localized areas that are flat enough at the bottom of the slope, ideal for trailhead parking and new secondary park access points. The trailheads should have features such as lighting and masonry walls.



Existing conditions of the park along Olmsted Drive, Fall 2022

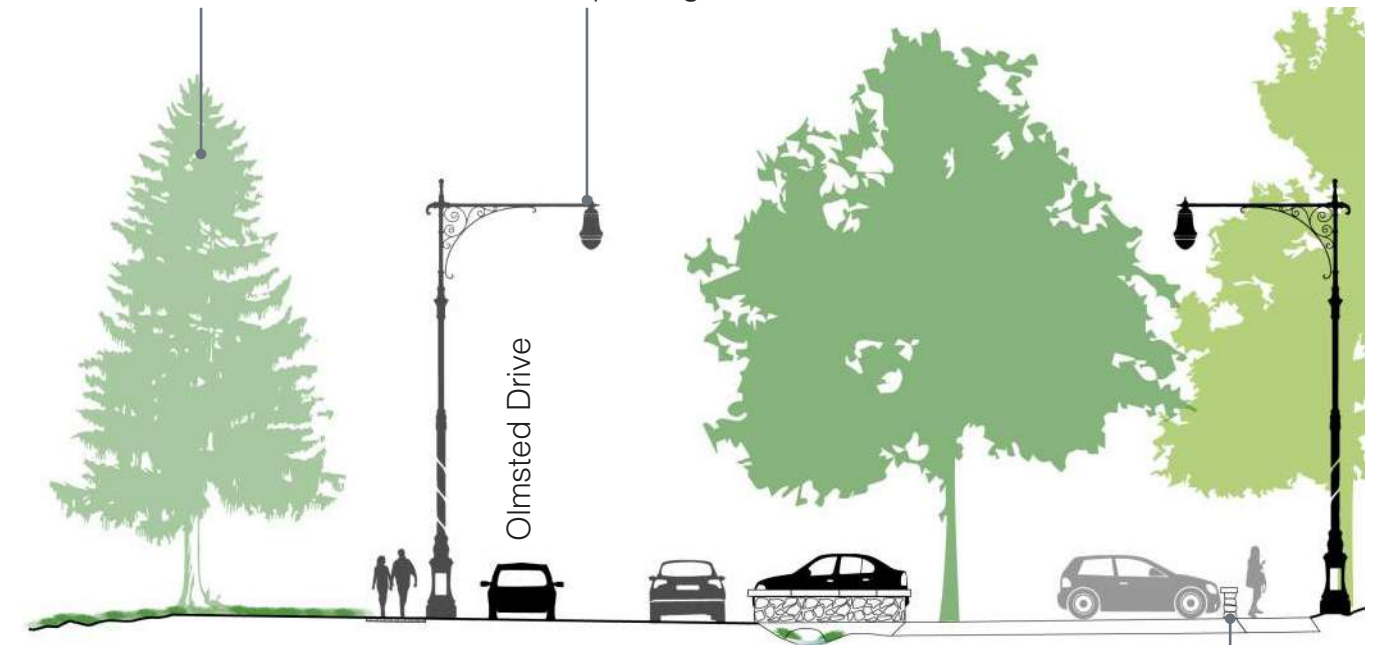


Plant canopy trees to define the border and provide shade for new trail heads

## EXISTING CROSS-SECTION

Foster the street scape on both sides & develop a neighborhood forestry plan

Install decorative lighting for park perimeter, trail heads & parking areas



## CONCEPTUAL CROSS-SECTION

Define new trail head areas with low masonry walls to bridge swales, install canopy trees

*Existing stand of Buckthorn in the southern portions of the park, Fall 2022.*



# 10. LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

# Landscape Management Overview

The way a landscape is cared for is a powerful design tool. Landscape management should balance the day to day needs of safety and lawn management with more far-reaching, ecological goals. The Master Plan seeks to delineate Thompson Park's naturally occurring landscape typologies in addition to managing that which threatens those typologies. To better understand these goals and challenges, it's important to situate Thompson Park in the greater ecological context of Northern New York.

Watertown lies in the St. Lawrence Lowlands, closely bordered by the Tug Hill Transition in the Northeastern Highlands. The climate of the St. Lawrence Lowlands is defined by temperate to moderately warm summers and cold winters with the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario having a moderating effect on temperatures. Soils are characterized by a belt of limestone and sandstone which form the parent material for the St. Lawrence Lowlands. In beginning to outline a management plan for Thompson Park, this summary starts to uncover the keys to understanding strengths and challenges associated with managing the range of naturally occurring landscape typologies across the park as well as the species that threaten its livelihood.

The greatest threat to the future health of Thompson Park's landscape

typologies is the invasive Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*). Common Buckthorn has a plethora of traits and characteristics that make it an onerous competitor in Thompson Park's ecological landscape. Once it's established, Common Buckthorn crowds and shades out native shrubs and perennials. It is allelopathic meaning that it precludes many native species from persisting and can inhibit seed germination for up to two years which impacts seedling survival and makes successional restorations more challenging. All exotic Buckthorns produce a fruit that is readily eaten by birds and has a severe laxative effect; prompting the birds to distribute seeds wherever they go. In addition to hosting pernicious agricultural pests, Buckthorn will reproduce from seeds or stump sprouting and seeds may remain viable in the soil for up to 5 years.

*Rhamnus cathartica* will be managed as resources allow - targeting areas of ecological or educational value for restoration first. Given the size of the property, proliferation tactics of Buckthorn, expenses of removal and extents of the invasion, it's hard to imagine the complete eradication of this infestation in Thompson Park. However, there are several steps that can be taken over the course of many years to help manage this problem.

Common management techniques can vary. While it is likely not feasible

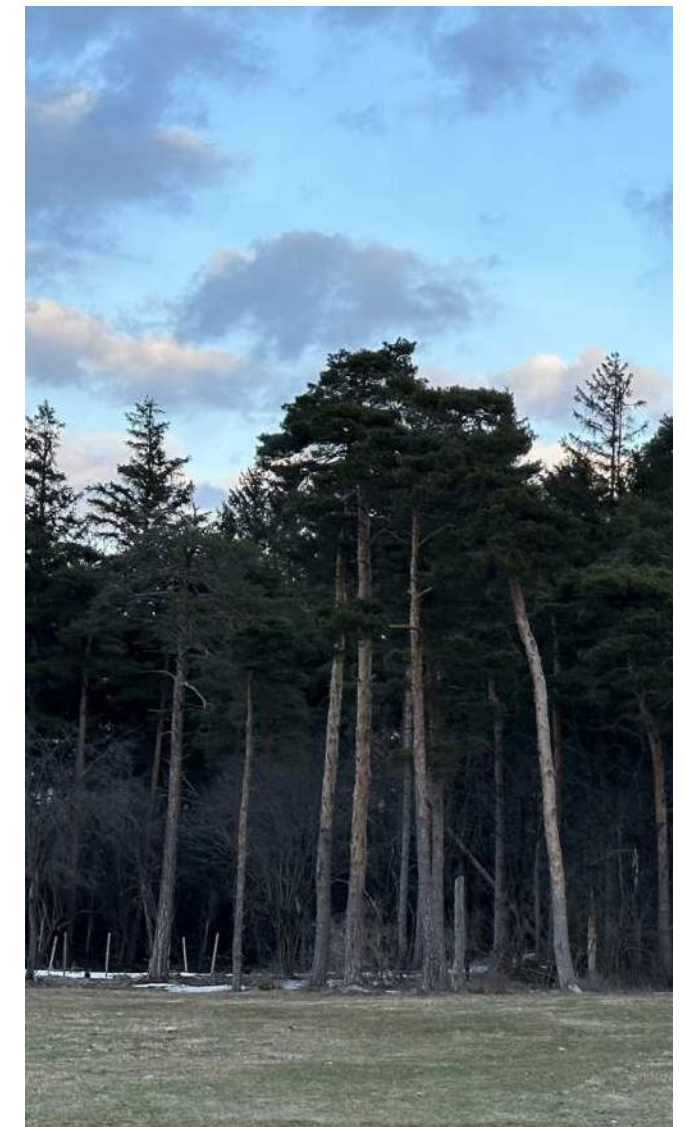
in this context, fire is an effective means of controlling Buckthorn and is the preferred method. For complete control in established area, burning yearly or every other year may be required for 5-6 years.

More likely in this context is the deployment of mowing which can be done with a large flail mower, preferably a hydro-ace, geoboy forestry mulcher. Finally, the most cost-effective treatment of Buckthorn is the application of glyphosate to cut stumps. Alternatively, you can apply triclopyr ester as a foliar spray to resprouts.

Given the allelopathic nature of Buckthorn, species reintroduction should be held off from happening too soon after treatment. For areas that are replanted, every tree needs to be caged with a 5' welded wire cage to keep deer off the young whips for long enough to escape browse pressure. Each tree or shrub is caged (roughly 2' diameter) and staked with an oak stake, metal T-post or U-Post. The cages need to be weeded once a year until the cages are removed.

Too much vegetation around the base of the tree provides good cover from voles and mice that may chew the bark. A thick layer of wood chips at the base of each planting helps retain moisture and temporarily suppress weeds.

To better counter the wide-spread presence of Buckthorn, the following plant palette reflects robust species choices with a special focus on native species which stand the greatest chances of out-competing and surviving in the context of the Buckthorn.



Mature groves of Red Pines near the proposed Goose Pond.

# Landscape Typologies

## Proposed Typologies

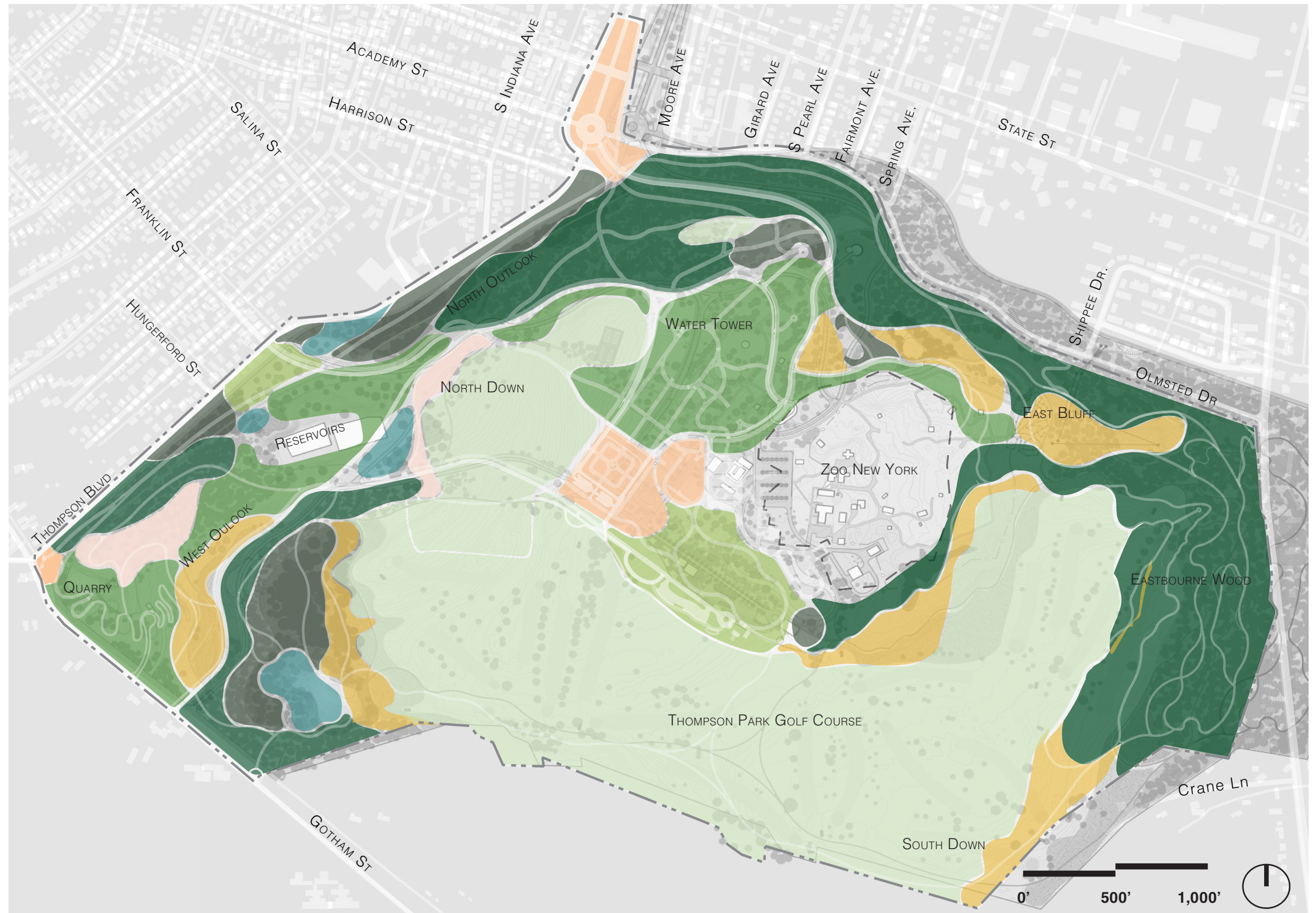
The Master Plan contains an ambitious proposal to optimize the site's ecological potential by further delineating and strengthening the naturally occurring typologies.

Implementation and maintenance of these areas will be phased and prioritized accordingly.

The existing plant palette of Oaks and Maples will remain and be enhanced by strategically placed ornamental plantings adjacent to new program areas such as the skating trail, goose pond preserve and amphitheater. Views from each of the outlooks should be preserved.

### LEGEND

- Coniferous Woodland
- Deciduous Woodland
- Park Grove
- Parkland
- Emergent Wetland
- Meadow-Previously Disturbed Areas
- Lawn
- Zoo New York
- Flowering Tree Grove
- Ornamental



# Landscape Typologies

## Woodland Plant Palette

To counter the presence of an aggressive invasive species such as *Rhamnus cathartica*, it's important to improve the quantity of native and naturalized tree species while enhancing the ecological value of Thompson Park.

The hardwood forest that has succeeded historical clearings and disturbances in Thompson Park are in the Pine, Oak and Maple families. Using our knowledge of this plant community, we can make suggestions of species within these families and beyond.



Quercus

White Oak (*Quercus alba*)



Scarlet Oak (*Quercus coccinea*)



Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)



Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)



Acer

Striped Maple (*Acer pensylvanicum*)



Mountain Maple (*Acer spicatum*)



Black Maple (*Acer nigrum*)



Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)



Pinus

Red Pine (*Pinus resinosa*)



Pitch Pine (*Pinus rigida*)



Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)



Scotch Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)

# Landscape Typologies

## Mid Story - Ornamental Species for Groves

There are number of circumstances in which the park will benefit from the introduction of a native and exotic combination of understory plantings.

The species selected are chosen for their hardiness and adaptability. For example, the colony-forming, sucker-spreading *Rhus typhina* stands to compete with the Common Buckthorn.

Trees <



Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.)



American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*)



Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)



Japanese Falsecypress (*Chamaecyparis pisifera*)

Shrubs < 10'



Common Witchhazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)



Inkberry (*Ilex glabra*)



Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)



Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*)



Chokecherry (*Aronia arbutifolia*)



Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*)



Disanthus (*Disanthus cercidifolius*)



Jetbead (*Rhodotypos scandens*)

# Landscape Typologies

## Wetland - Native Recommendations

Several low lying areas of the park have emergent wetlands. Of note is the larger area once proposed to be Goose Pond. It currently supports a variety of woody native wetland species such as Smooth Dogwood, Red-Stemmed Dogwood, and Amelanchier.

Other areas of the park with natural water sources could be enhanced with the planting of water loving native species. Once established these areas provide both botanical interest and increased habitat, with relatively little need for maintenance.



Trees

Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)



Grey Alder (*Alnus incana*)



River Birch (*Betula nigra*)



Black Willow (*Salix nigra*)



Shrubs

Red osier Dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)



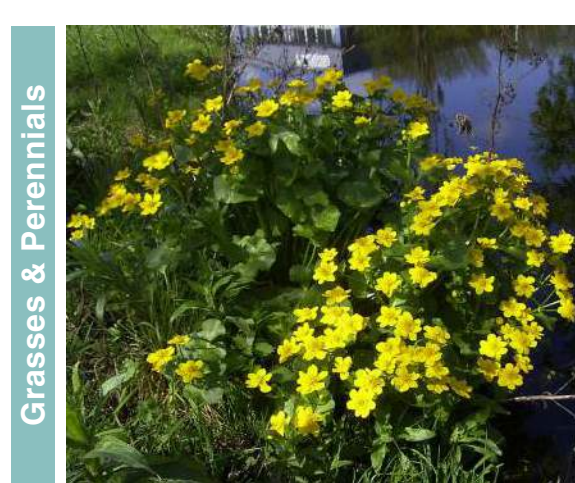
Bitter-Berry (*Prunus virginiana*)



Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)



Pussy Willow (*Salix discolor*)



Grasses & Perennials

Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*)



Lake Sedge (*Carex lacustris*)



Shallow Sedge (*Carex lurida*)



Swamp Verbena (*Verbena hastata*)

# Landscape Typologies

## Meadow - Native Recommendations

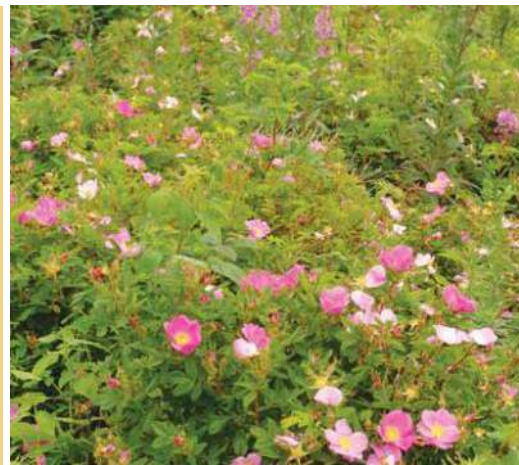
Meadows serve as important habitat for ground nesting birds and pollinator species.

A simple change in mowing regimes along with some overseeding and control of woody plant succession can foster localized meadow areas which add both seasonal interest and ecological value.

In June of 2016, updated in 2020, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation released the *New York State Pollinator Protection Plan*. This guideline outlines best management practices and suggestions for habitat enhancement projects, appropriate for New York State. (See [https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration\\_pdf/nyspollinatorplan.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/nyspollinatorplan.pdf) and <https://agriculture.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/02/pollinatorreport.pdf>)



Shrubs, Ferns & Perennials



Virginia Rose (*Rosa virginiana*)



Winged Sumac (*Rhus copallinum*)



Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*)



Showy Goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*)



Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)



Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)



Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)



New England Aster (*Aster novae-angliae*)

Grasses



Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*)



Indian Grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)



Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)



Pennsylvania Sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*)

# Landscape Typologies

## Evergreen - Native & Naturalized Recommendations

Given the naturally occurring and introduced Pine community in Thompson Park, designating a Pinetum, or collection of unique evergreen species, capitalizes on the suitable climate and soils.

The grove could be centrally located near the proposed All-Season Lodge and provide an added park destination throughout the year.

Select species can be monitored over time to ascertain which do best and later planted in other parts of the park. Unfortunately many native evergreens such as the Eastern Hemlock, are currently in decline due to exotic pests. Collaboration with a local University or Botanic Garden for monitoring and research would be beneficial.



Limber Pine (*Pinus flexilis*)



Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*)



Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*)



Himalayan Pine (*Pinus wallichiana*)



Colorado Blue Spruce (*Picea pungens*)



Cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*)



Korean Pine (*Pinus koraiensis*)



Japanese Black Pine (*Pinus thunbergii*)



Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)



Limber Pine (*Pinus flexilis*)



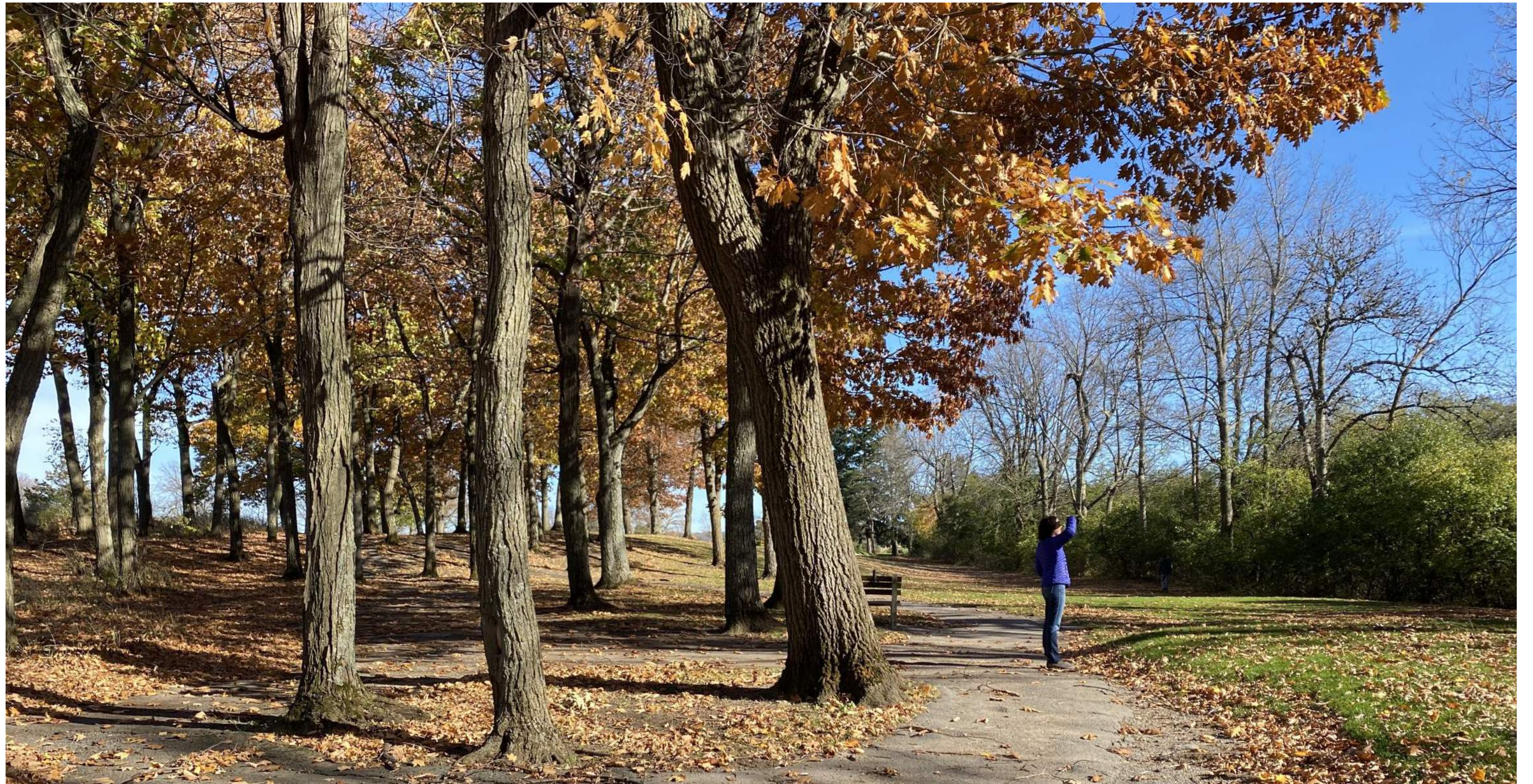
Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*)



Tanyosho Pine (*Pinus densiflora*)

Evergreens





*View of a mature stand of Northern Red Oak trees along the southern border of the Golf Course near the proposed Goose Pond Preserve, Fall 2022*

*View of Watertown in winter from the West Outlook, 2023.*

# 11 NEXT STEPS



# Phased Implementation Strategies

## Continuous Improvements

### INVASIVE PLANTS

Remove buckthorn and other invasives from wooded areas. Utilize downed trees and woodchips to define new path alignments. Install new tree plantings in groves with native saplings.

### MEADOW HABITAT

Alter mowing regimes where appropriate and cultivate meadow habitat. Limit mown lawns to active recreational and event areas.

### TRAIL SYSTEM

Curate and define a hiking trail system concurrent with the clearing of invasive species. Ensure new trails connect to a larger network.

### LOW IMPACT RECREATION

Work with local groups to install Disc Golf. Improve trails for cross-country training and meets as well as winter hiking and snowshoeing.

### WAY FINDING SYSTEM

Develop a park-wide system of signage and consider digital companion mapping with "All Trails" which designates trail distance and difficulty. Provide interpretative and directional signage at trailheads and intersections as part of a curated signage system. Install a "blaze" system to mark trail loops.

## Low Cost - High Impact

### PARKING

Strategically expand and decentralize parking by installing small trail head lots to improve access to nature trails and new program areas as they are implemented. Make the loop road one way and create opportunities for parallel parking.

### PHASED LIGHTING PLAN

Create a park-wide perimeter lighting plan. Quantify long term savings of LED and timers.

### MASONRY RESTORATION

Park wide restoration includes repointing of stairs and retaining walls.

### WETLANDS

Work with the existing topography and hydrology to foster and develop new and existing wetlands. Create a wetland area at the natural spring west of the north down and implement Goose Pond.

### PARTNERSHIPS

Continue to nurture and grow partnerships with the Friends of Thompson Park, local schools and neighborhood groups.

### ROAD CLOSURES

Explore closing the drive lane from the Golf Course to the main parking lot as an incremental step in a comprehensive plan to improve park circulation.

## Long Term Projects (4-10 Years)

### THE BANDSHELL

Restore the stone masonry and curate the adjacent landscape and circulation network.

### THE PERIMETER TRAIL

Extend the paved lower perimeter trail on Thompson Blvd as part of a larger effort to create a continuous loop.

### NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESS POINTS

Strengthen and improve connections to new program areas and destinations. Create a formal and accessible entrance at Thompson Blvd. and Gotham Street.

### CIRCULATION

Remove drive lane from the golf course to the main parking lot and restore with new granite curb, lawn and plants to reconnect landscape areas.

### DOG PARK

Create an area for an enclosed dog park with space for little and big dogs.

### PATH RECONSTRUCTION

Resurface existing path network, resurface and repave the Park Circle Drive and adjacent sidewalks. Restore the Upper portion of Pinnacle Drive

### WINTER VILLAGE

Create an Ice Trail, sledding hills and outdoor gathering places thereby expanding year-round access.

### ALL-SEASON LODGE

Defined by a permanent outdoor pavilion, parking and related amenities, an all-season lodge would serve the winter village and The Green.

### PUBLIC RESTROOMS

Renovate the interiors of the two existing restrooms near the playground.

### PARK MUSEUM & GALLERY

Housed in the renovated old bath house, work with the Olmsted Archives of the National Park Service to curate a permanent exhibit featuring early park development by the Olmsted Brothers and J.C. Thompson.

### NATURAL WATER FEATURES

Work with the existing natural topography and water sources to enhance wetlands and waterbodies.

### OUTDOOR THEATER

Build a permanent outdoor theater for 250 park patrons including parking and restrooms.

# Funding Sources for Capital Improvements

## COMPLETE STREETS

Announced in January 2023, the Legislation (S.3897/A.8936-A) provides funding for “Complete Streets” projects which approach street design scholastically. Thompson Park projects that are viable for funding could include perimeter lighting, drainage improvements, pedestrian safety enhancements, bicycle and amenity updates and increased accessibility via new park entrances.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND (EPF) GRANTS

Administered through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA), this annual grant is administered by the Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (OPRHP).

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), an important budget item in 2023 is the \$400 million expansion of the Environmental Protection Fund to include at least \$25 million for the Ocean and Great Lakes Program. This would enable New York to support and encourage the responsible growth of industries like fishing, tourism, and recreation, which continue to generate billions of dollars for the state.

## ENVIRONMENTAL BOND ACT

Though a plan for issuing bonds has not yet been formulated, the 2022 Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs is a competitive grant program to which municipalities can apply. Applications will likely not be accepted until Fall 2023. Projects that are suitable for application are:

- Climate Change Mitigation, Green Jobs (Horticulture)
- Wetland, floodplain and stream restoration
- Open space preservation and conservation
- Investments to reduce urban heat island, preserve open space, and plant urban trees are all available.

## AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Funds are to be centrally managed by the New York State Division of the Budget (DOB). General categories that could apply to Thompson Park include:

- Public health, arts, culture and recreation.
- Projects to be funded based on Statewide recovery plan.