

Berkley V. & Vincent M. Dawson Park

CONCEPTUAL REPORT
SPRING 2020





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1

introduction

1.1 summary



PAST & PRESENT USE

The project site has a complex history of developers, community groups, and the City of San Antonio. Dunaway was selected to help the City move forward and develop a plan that would create buy-in from the local community and create a place they felt was an attribute to the area. The community had requested a park and COSA/Dunaway was going to help visualize what this park could be.

PROJECT VISION

Having experienced similar projects with community involvement, the project vision focused on listening to the community's wants and needs looking past the recent turmoil.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Describe the project sites **CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**.
- Research the site's **HISTORY**.
- Research the community's **INTERACTION** with the site and the bridge.
- Evaluate the site's **CONNECTION** to the Hays Street Bridge.
- Listen to the community's **VISION** for the park.



PROJECT INITIATION

An initial kick-off meeting was held with COSA staff to discuss the existing conditions of the site. During this meeting, it was determined that three public meetings would be required to provide the community multiple opportunities to provide comments and review a conceptual plan with future phasing possibilities for the site. An accelerated schedule was required due to an ordinance requiring a concept design completed in December 2019.

RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

The design team walked the site to understand the existing site conditions.

A few key observations were made:

- The site was barren of any existing trees or vegetation.
- The site had recently been used as a staging area for road construction.
- Cherry Street to the east contained a large row section.
- Lamar Street is under construction.
- There is noise from the railroad to the west.
- Views from the park towards the bridge are important.
- There is a great opportunity for views from the bridge down to the park.
- A large drainage swale is located between the park and the adjacent parking lot. This flows to a large inlet under the bridge.
- The area under the bridge is currently under lease with a private developer.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public Meeting #1 - October 21, 2019

- What Could It Become?

Public Meeting #2 - November 13, 2019

- Public Comment Summary
- Two Conceptual Diagrams

Public Meeting #3 - December 11, 2019

- Final Conceptual Plan

CONCEPTUAL PLANS

The creation of the conceptual plans were based on the desires of the neighborhood as a whole. After Public Meeting #1, many options were discussed amongst the Dunaway team, and a final plan was proposed to house all required amenities.

After reviewing public comments and feedback from the first public meeting, two Concept Plans were made and presented at Public Meeting #2. Additional feedback was gained at this meeting which led to the development of a Final Conceptual Plan. Plan graphics and rendered perspective views were presented to the community for the Final Conceptual Plan.

1.3 location

ADDRESS

803 & 815 N Cherry Street
San Antonio, TX 78202

SURROUNDING CONTEXT

There are 3 parks within a 1/2 mile radius of Berkley V. & Vincent M. Dawson Park. These parks are:

- Healy Murphy Park
- Lockwood-Dignowity Park
- Maverick Park

These parks offer the following amenities:

- Bench Seating
- Picnic Tables
- Artwork
- Fitness Equipment
- Pavilions
- Playgrounds
- Walking Trail
- Restrooms
- Basketball Courts
- Water Fountains
- Dog Park
- Lighting
- Splash Pad



WHAT COULD IT BECOME?

- Active Spaces (playground, splash pad, dog park, open space, swings, trails)
- Passive Spaces (small community event space, pavilion, flexible green space)
- Community/Education Opportunities (community gardens, botanical garden, low impact development (LID) features, environmental education)
- Historic/Cultural Resource Elements (paying tribute to the significance of the bridge & the history of the area)





PARK SITE

The site is located to the east of an operating railway, with a parking lot located between the two. The noise from the railway could be a potential issue on the site. Water currently drains across the site from the southeast to the northwest, and the site is relatively flat. Hays Street Bridge is south of the park, with a stairway located on the southeast corner of the site to provide access to and from the site. There is an existing chain link fence between the parking lot and the site, and there is an existing sidewalk along N Cherry Street on the east side of the site.





AGENDA & GOALS FOR TODAY

- 1. Welcome & Introduction
- 2. Presentation of the Project
- 3. Q&A
- 4. Meeting Goals

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2 public engagement

2.1 first public meeting

GOALS OF THE MEETING

- Describe the Process for the Public Presentations
 - The First of Three (3) Public Meetings
- Introduce the Site Profile of the Park
 - Site Context
 - Known Historic and Cultural Resources
 - Existing Site Map and Analysis
 - Benefits of a Park
 - Adjacent Park Amenities (Existing & Proposed)
- Review Possible Program Elements of the Park
 - Active Space Elements
 - Passive Space Elements
 - Community/Education Elements
 - Historic/Cultural Elements
- Receive Community Input & Announce the Next Steps
 - Community Input - Questions & Comments
 - Interactive Exercise - Prioritizing Park Design Amenities

NEXT STEPS

- Provide the initial community input in a graphic and quantifiable method
- Provide initial concept diagrams of program elements

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Residents of the community spoke of their personal connections to Hays Street Bridge and the surrounding area.
- Many mentioned how the bridge was the connection between the African American community and the city of San Antonio.

- Members of the Hays Street Bridge Restoration Group were present and spoke to the story of the donation of the site to become a park, and of the namesake Vincent Dawson.
- A connection from the park to the existing Howard Peak Greenway was supported by many attendees.
- Many members of the skatepark community, including skateshop owners and skaters themselves, advocated for a new skatepark in the park.
- Skaters also mentioned that there are no safe areas to skate downtown, and this could be an area for local and visiting skateboarding, rollerblading, and BMX biking members.
- A community member spoke about being in communication with the Tony Hawk Foundation for help in designing the park.
- It was suggested that the skatepark could be a good opportunity to show the connection to the railroad and to educate the community about the history and environment of the site.
- The park was described as the perfect East-West connection for the city, as many North-South connections in the city already exist.
- Lighting was important to many community members.
- Community members expressed the importance of not losing sight of the history of the bridge, the previous segregation of the east side, and of the struggle and hard work by the community that lived there.
- Viewsheds to Hemisfair and Downtown were very important to community members and had to be protected to keep the unique identity of the park.
- It was suggested that parking should be located somewhere else, as to not lose valuable park space.
- Members mentioned again that restrooms and water were important to have in this park.



The community working together to provide input for the park design.



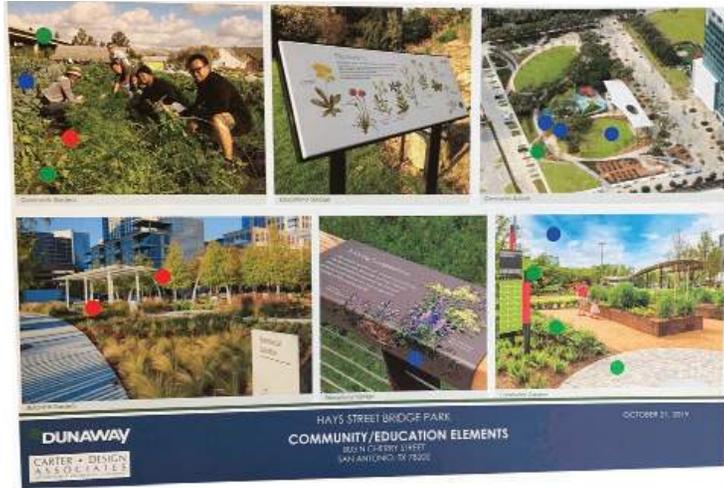
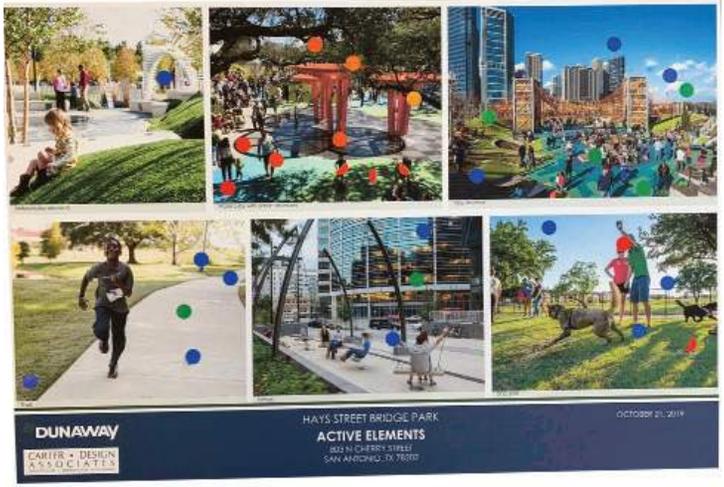
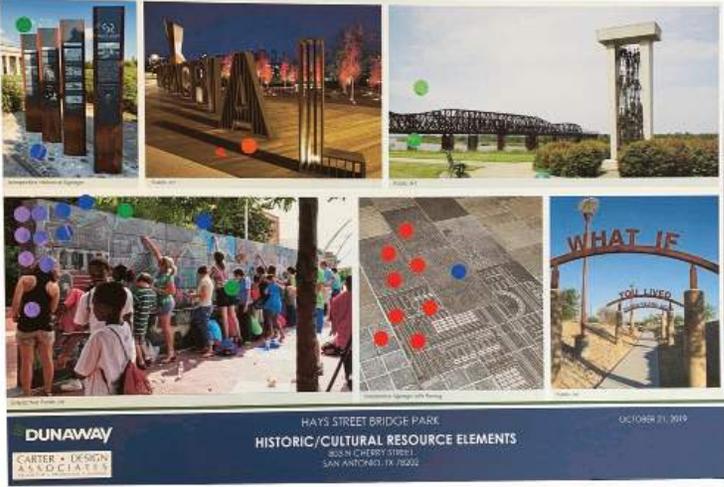
Interactive exercise in progress.



Residents decide on park amenities they would enjoy in their park.

FEEDBACK

The community was asked to place colored dots for their "vote" on whether or not they liked a program idea. Green, blue, and yellow dots were "yes" votes. Red was a "no" vote. Skatepark images were not provided, so an area for "Skatepark" program votes was created.



2.2 second public meeting



The design team provides feedback from previous meetings to the community.



The design team walks the residents through the process of design.



The design team presents the concept plans to the community.

GOALS OF THE MEETING

- Re-Introduction of the Project
 - Second of (3) Public Meetings
- Provide a Park Site Profile
 - Project Location Map
 - Existing Site Plan
- Review Initial Meeting Comments
 - Amenity Dot Image Boards
 - Public Meeting Image Board Graph
 - Public Meeting Comment Cards Graph
- Display the Two Concept Plans for the Park
- Provide time for Community Questions & Feedback

NEXT STEPS

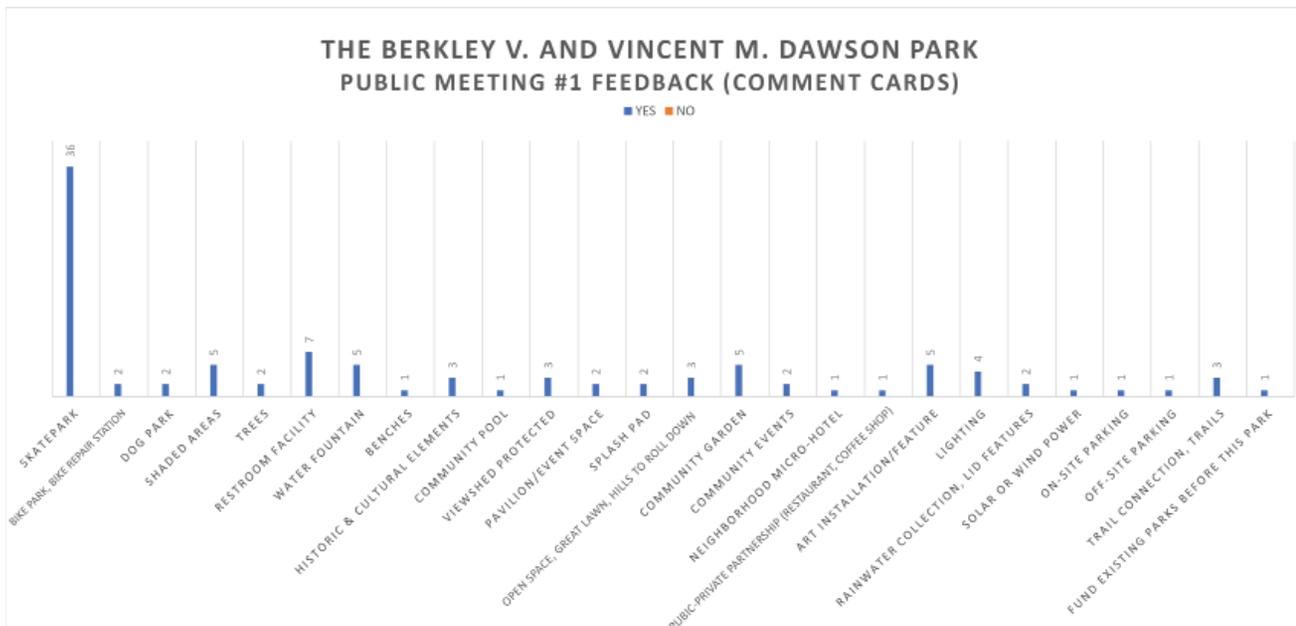
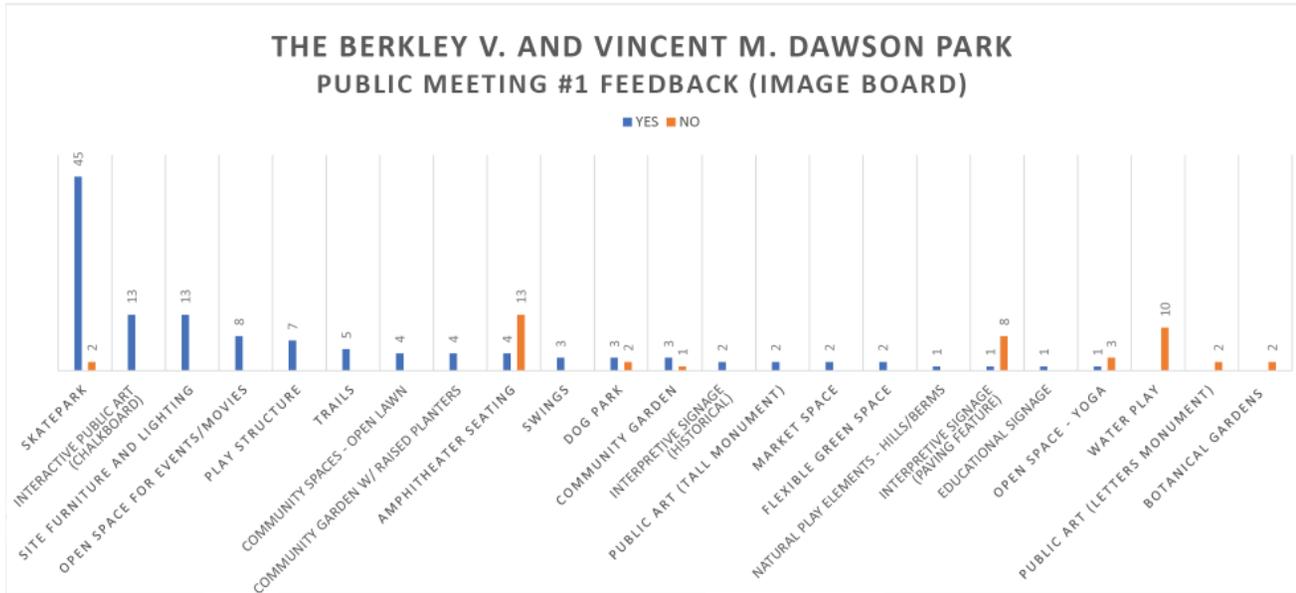
- Evaluate the initial Concept Plans after receiving feedback.
- Provide the community with a revised conceptual plan after coordination.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- A member of Parks confirmed that the size of the park is in fact 1.69 acres, not the size stated in a previous meeting.
- Community members restated that the park should be a part of the Howard Peak Greenway Trail and should include restrooms and water fountains.
- The importance of the viewshed to Downtown and Hemisfair was emphasized again and many supported protection of the viewshed.
- It was mentioned that a skatepark and pavilion were always a part of the plan for the park since gaining the site.
- Some members expressed concern about the new design of the park gentrifying the area. Emphasis was made on the park being consciously designed to invite all kinds of people.

- Community members suggested an advisory group be made for the activities of the park.
- Skateboarding community members advocated again for the design and implementation of a skatepark. Many supported the design of a park that could serve skaters, bikers, and rollerblading groups.
- Many community members supported the idea of integrating art and history elements throughout the park.
- Lighting was considered a top priority, as well as trees.
- A community member advocated for the incorporation of edible gardens such as fruit trees, grape vines, and blackberry shrubs. They stated that the park is in a USDA Food Desert and having edible plantings would help mitigate this issue.
- Adding a 911 phone, solar panels, gender neutral bathrooms, and a police sub-station were ideas that were mentioned.
- Many members expressed that the park should be kid- and family-friendly.
- It was suggested that the skatepark have three areas - beginner, intermediate, and advanced.
- Concern was brought up about the name 'Berkley V. & Vincent M. Dawson Park' being too similar to nearby 'Dawson Park.'
- A 10-year lease on the land under the bridge was mentioned as a possibility for future expansion. This would have to be coordinated with the land owner.
- Community members asked if any funds were available now for the park. It was stated that there are no funds available now, but short-term improvements (such as planting trees) may be made before the long-term improvements in the 2022 Bond.

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY



POSITIVE - High Level of Interest

- Skatepark
- Interactive Public Art
- Site Furniture & Lighting
- Open Space for Events/Movies
- Restroom Facility
- Play Structure
- Trails
- Shaded Areas
- Water Fountains

POSITIVE - Average Level of Interest (2-4 votes/comments)

- Open Lawn
- Community Garden
- Amphitheater Seating
- Lighting
- Swings
- Dog Park

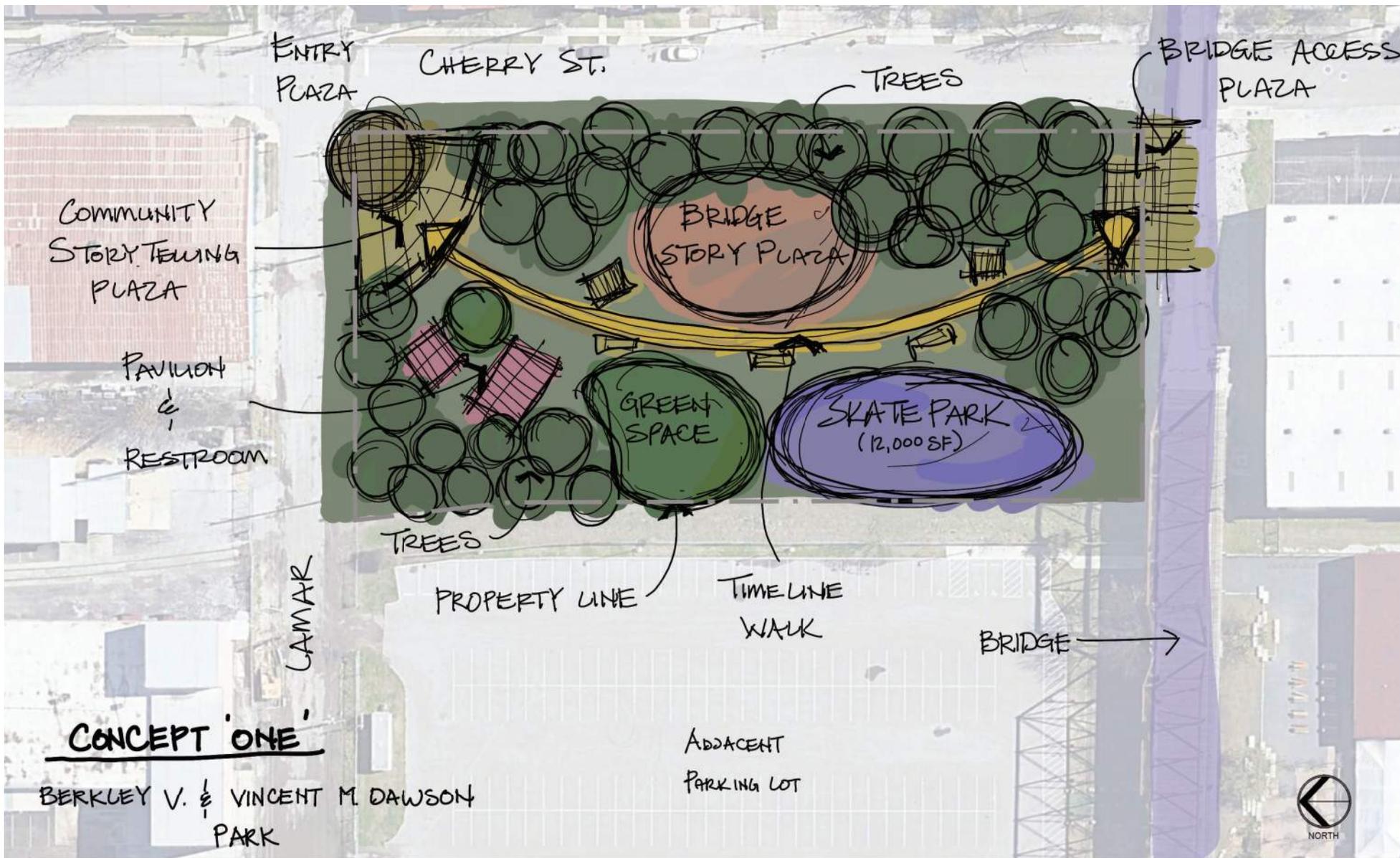
NEGATIVE - High Level of Responses (5+ votes/comments)

- Amphitheater Seating
- Water Play
- Paving Features

NEGATIVE - Average Level of Responses (<5 votes/comments)

- Open Space - Yoga
- Interactive Public Art
- Monument Letters
- Botanical Gardens

2.2 second public meeting



CONCEPT ONE

CONCEPT ONE

The first concept incorporates a community storytelling Entry Plaza with interpretive signage about the industrial story of the area, the history of the bridge, and the story of how the park came to be. A screen of trees and planting separates the area from Cherry Street. The plaza includes amenities such as benches, seat walls, and a drinking fountain.

From the Entry Plaza, a timeline walk takes visitors through the park with interpretive signage about the history of the bridge and surrounding area. A Bridge Plaza is located in the center of the park, containing play structures of the bridge, a train, historic houses, and downtown buildings for children to interact with.

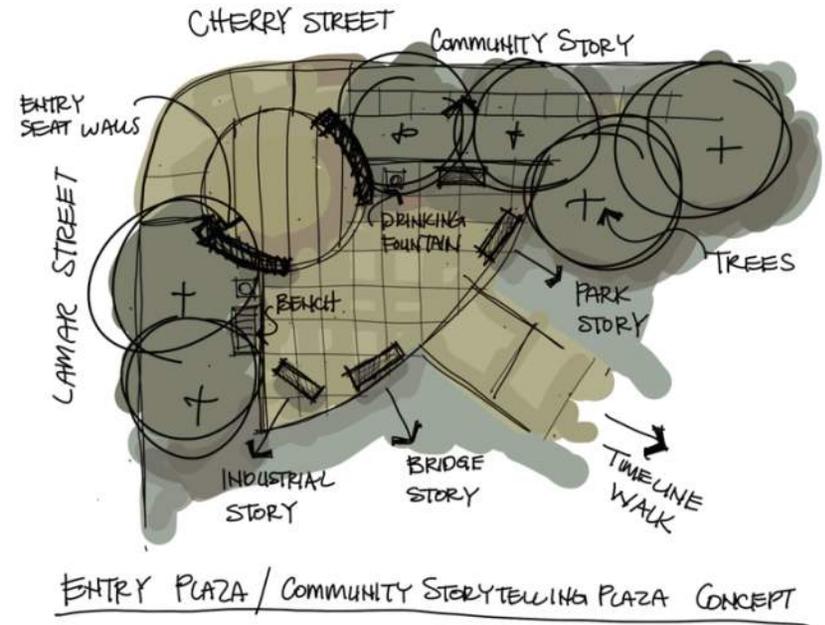
Other elements of the park include a pavilion and restroom, open green space, a 12,000 square foot skate park, and another plaza located at the bridge access point.



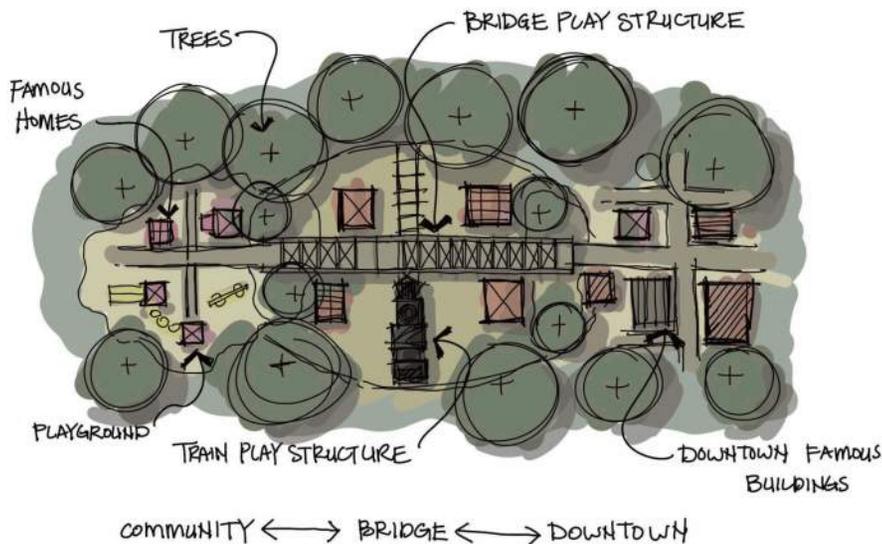
#008 PAPPL CARRIE MOON/ARTIST



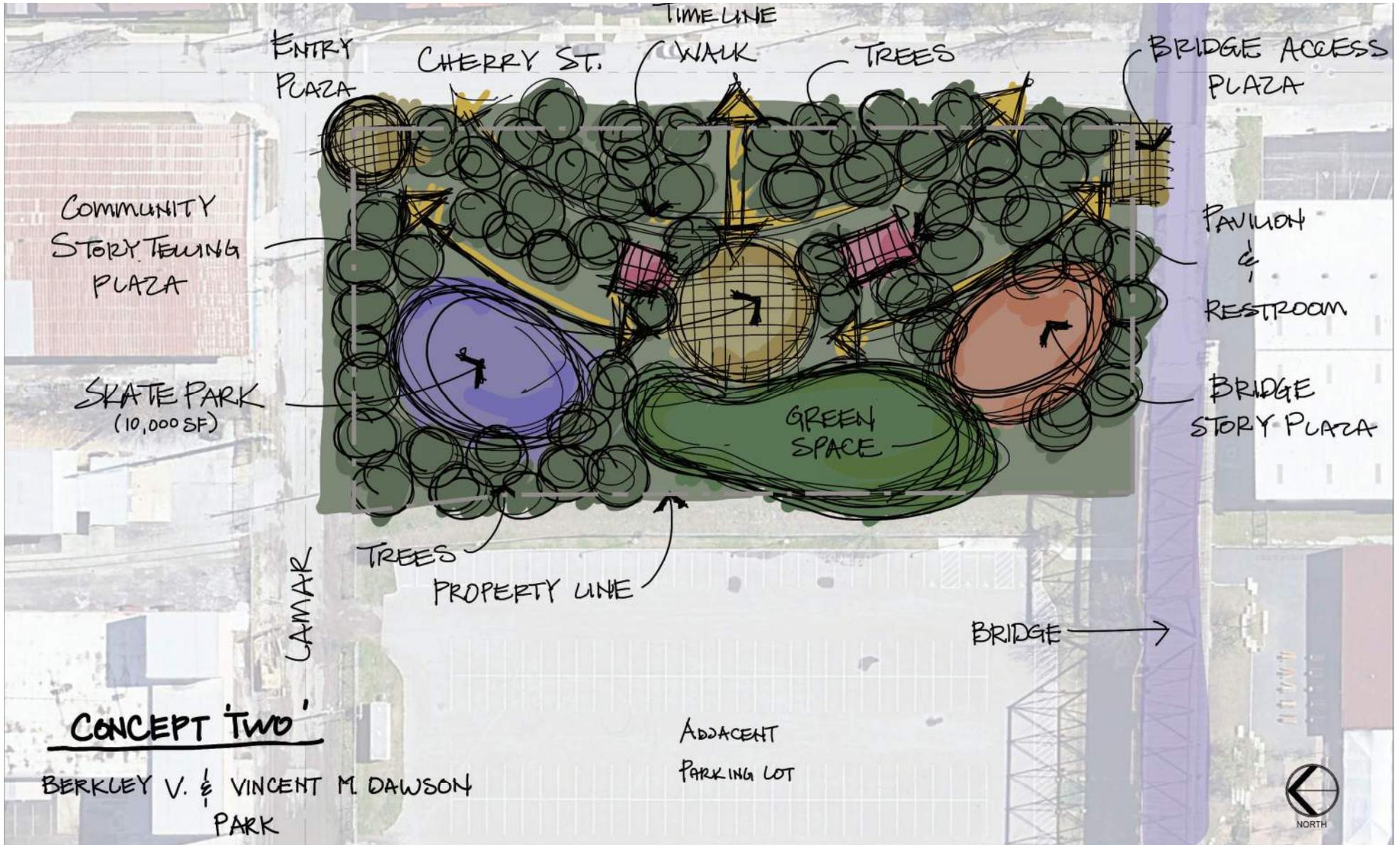
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BRIDGE PLAZA CONCEPT



2.2 second public meeting

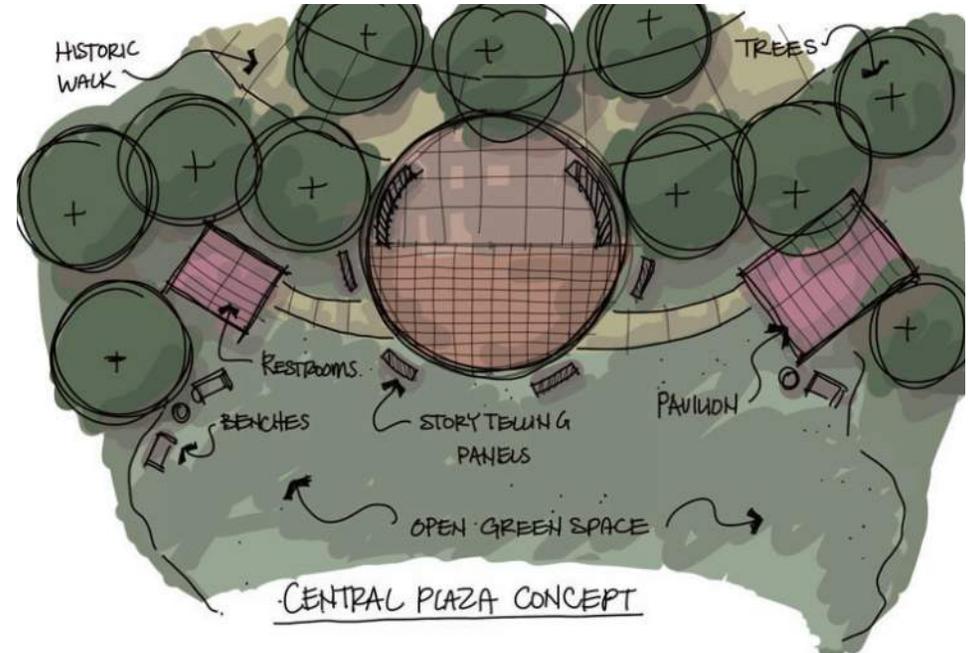


CONCEPT TWO

CONCEPT TWO

The second concept contains many similar elements to the first concept, with a Central Plaza being the main focus of this design. Storytelling panels surround the plaza. Walkways connect the plaza to a restroom building and pavilion nearby. Benches border a large open green space adjacent to the plaza.

The park also contains an Entry Plaza, a Timeline Walk connecting elements along the park, a 10,000 square foot skatepark, an open green space, a bridge storytelling plaza (with bridge, train, and building play features mentioned in Concept 1), and a bridge access plaza at the existing bridge connection. The park is populated with many shade trees that create privacy and shade for its visitors.



2.3 third public meeting

GOALS OF THE MEETING

- Brief Re-Introduction of the Project
 - Third (Final) Public Meeting
- Provide Park Site Profile
 - Project Location Map
 - Existing Site Plan
- Review Public Comments from Previous Meetings
 - First Public Meeting Comments
 - Second Public Meeting Comments
- Introduce the Final Conceptual Plan
- Opening for Questions and Comments from the public

NEXT STEPS

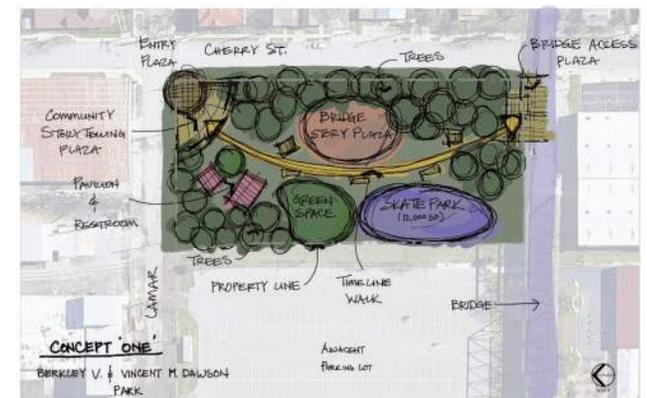
- Provide the community with a revised conceptual master plan after coordination with the City of San Antonio.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

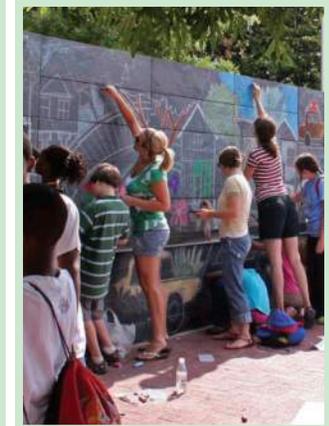
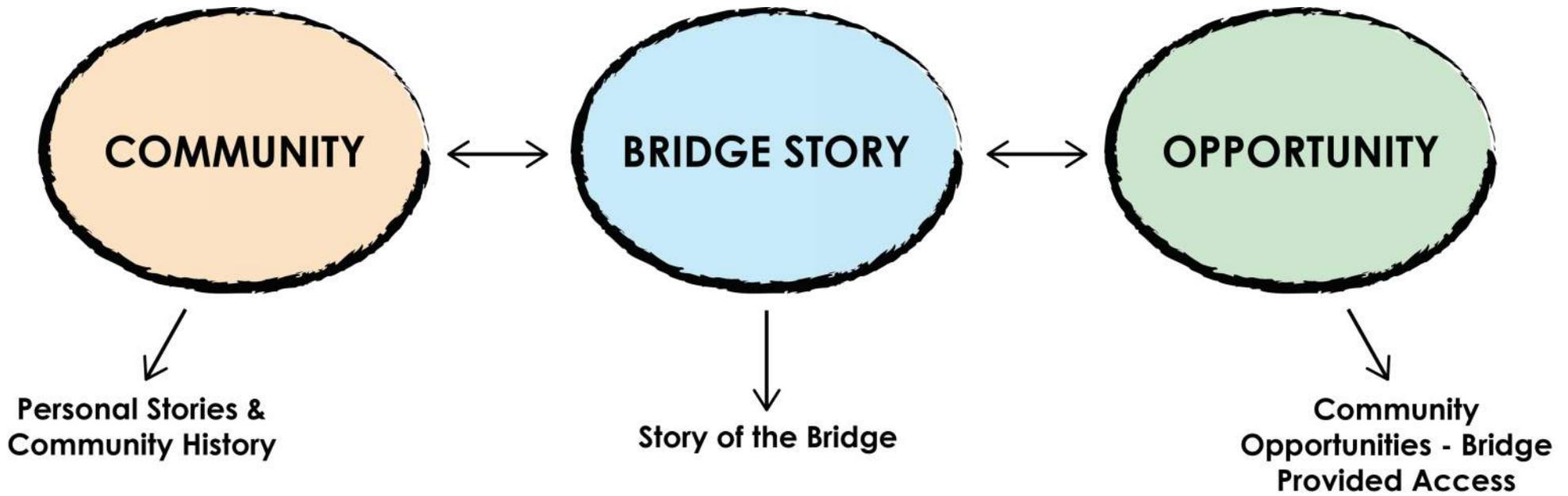
- It was stated by a parks member that the existing bandstand gazebo at the Alamo may be moved to the park to serve as a pavilion.
- A community member asked if the park was still part of the Howard Peak Greenway trail, and it was confirmed by a Parks member that it is.
- The similarity of names between 'Berkley V. & Vincent M. Dawson Park' and 'Dawson Park' was expressed as an issue again, but it was stated that this park must be called Dawson Park.
- It was suggested that the skatepark be moved to the other side of the park as to be closer to the hike and bike trail.
- Community members stated the viewshed towards Hemisfair and Downtown San Antonio was to be protected.

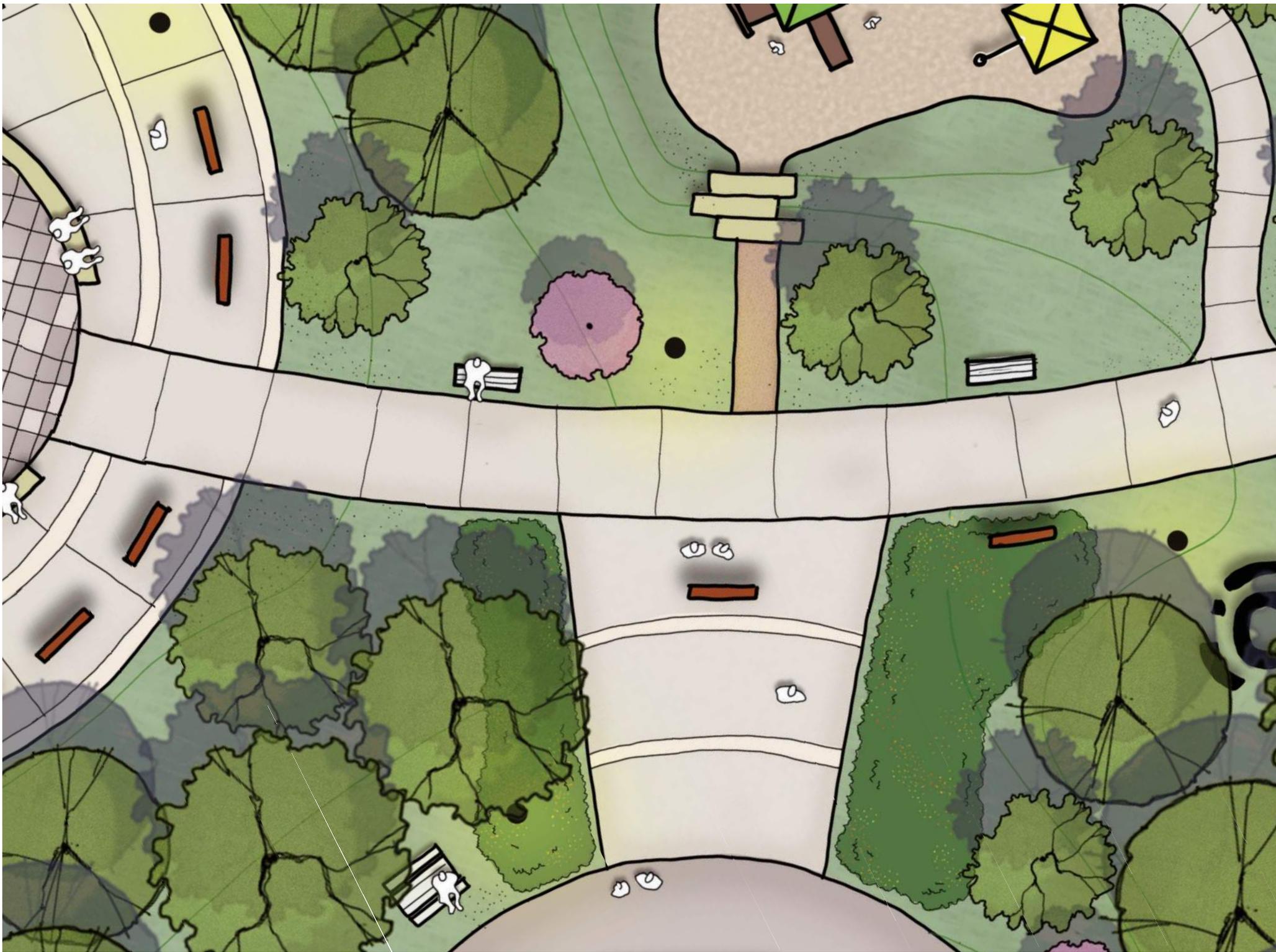


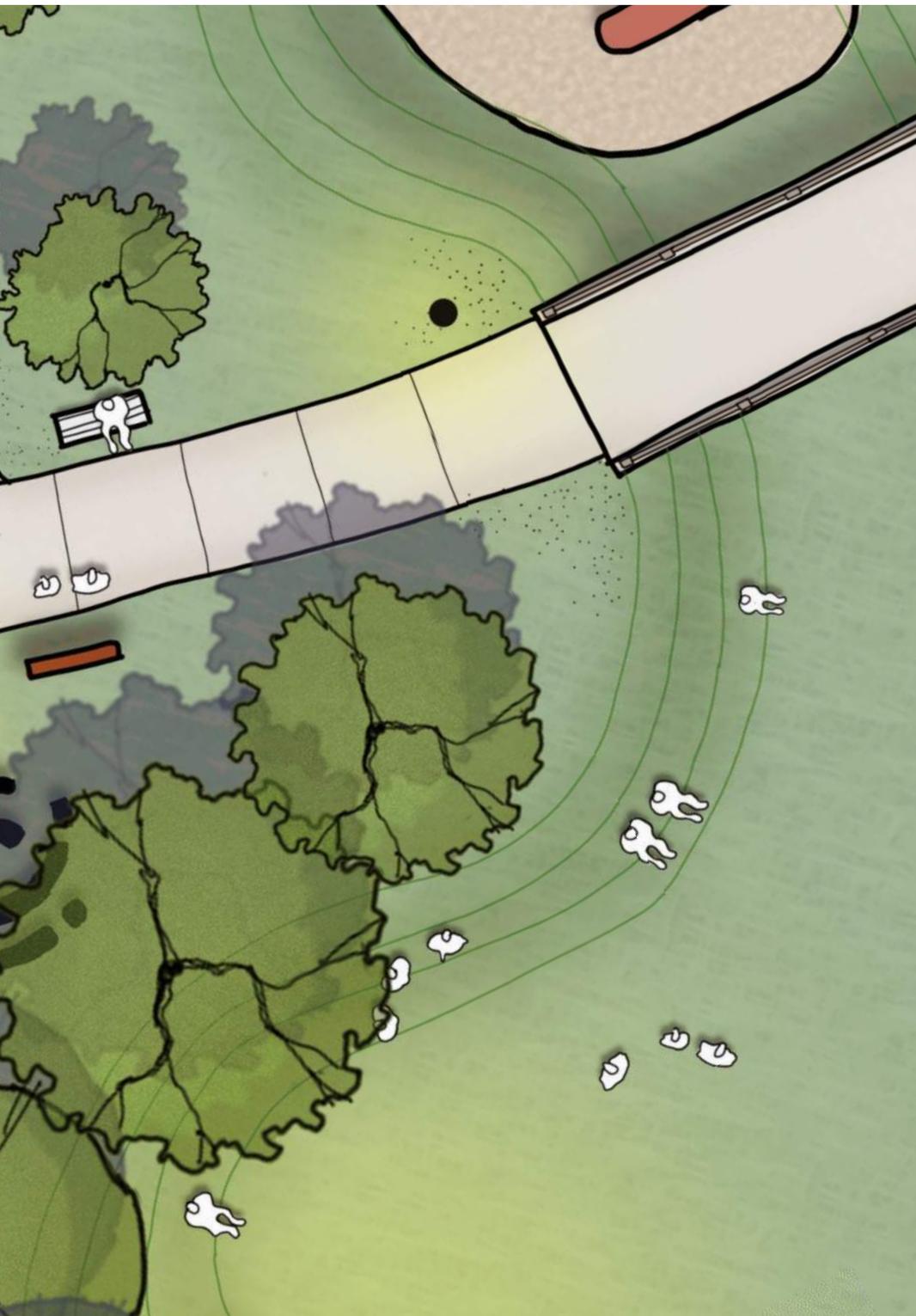
- Some community members were not fond of the Alamo bandstand but mentioned that it could be a temporary pavilion for the site until their own was built.
- A member praised the design and the lowered skatepark next to the tall bridge.
- It was suggested that the community propose a viewshed ordinance on the park so the view is maintained in the future.
- Local residents expressed their excitement about the park plans and the size of the skatepark in the concept.
- The Parks Director mentioned having some small programming implemented before the 2022 bond, such as taking down the existing fence and planting trees.



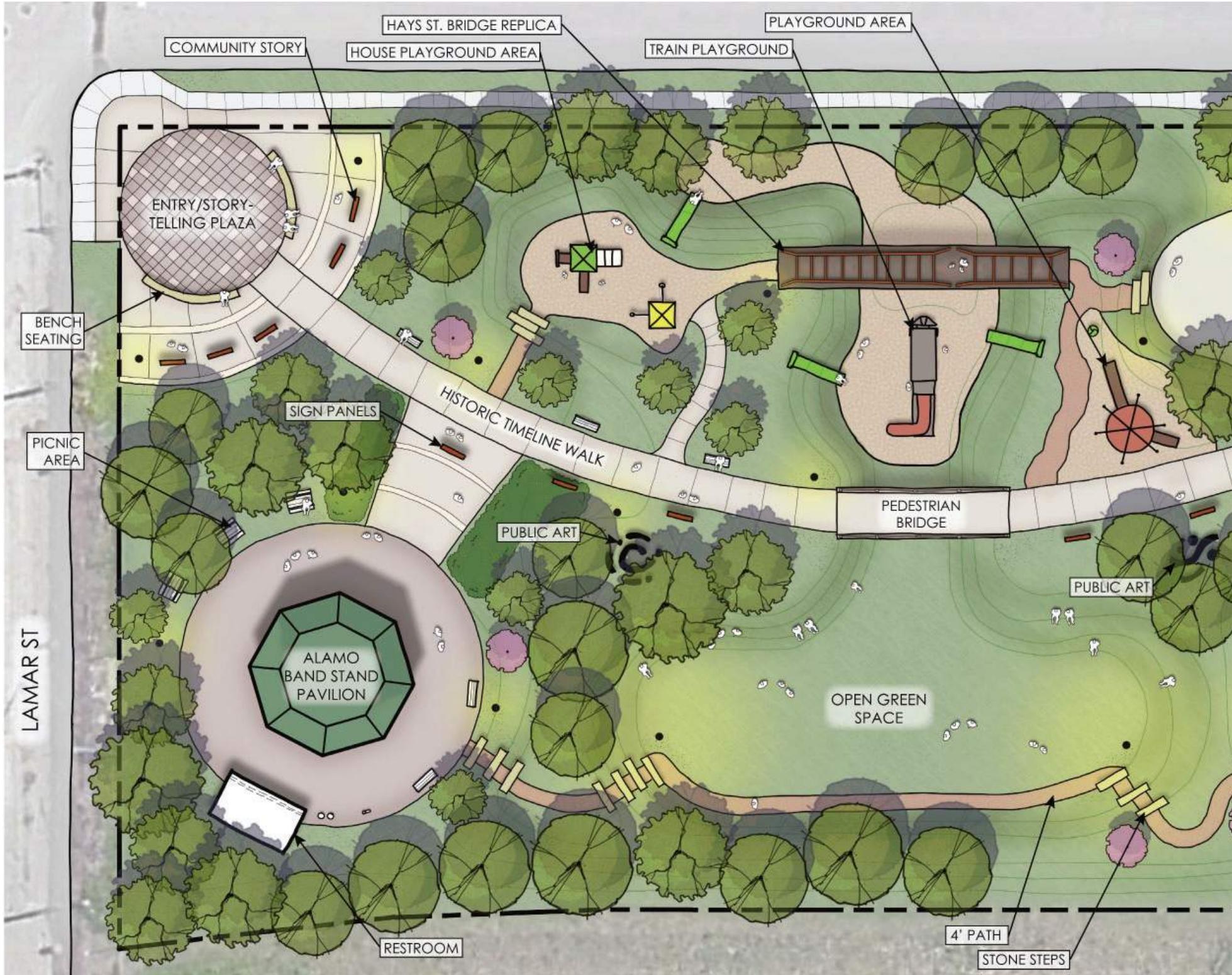
The final concept design was primarily based upon Concept One from Public Meeting Two.







3 conceptual master plan



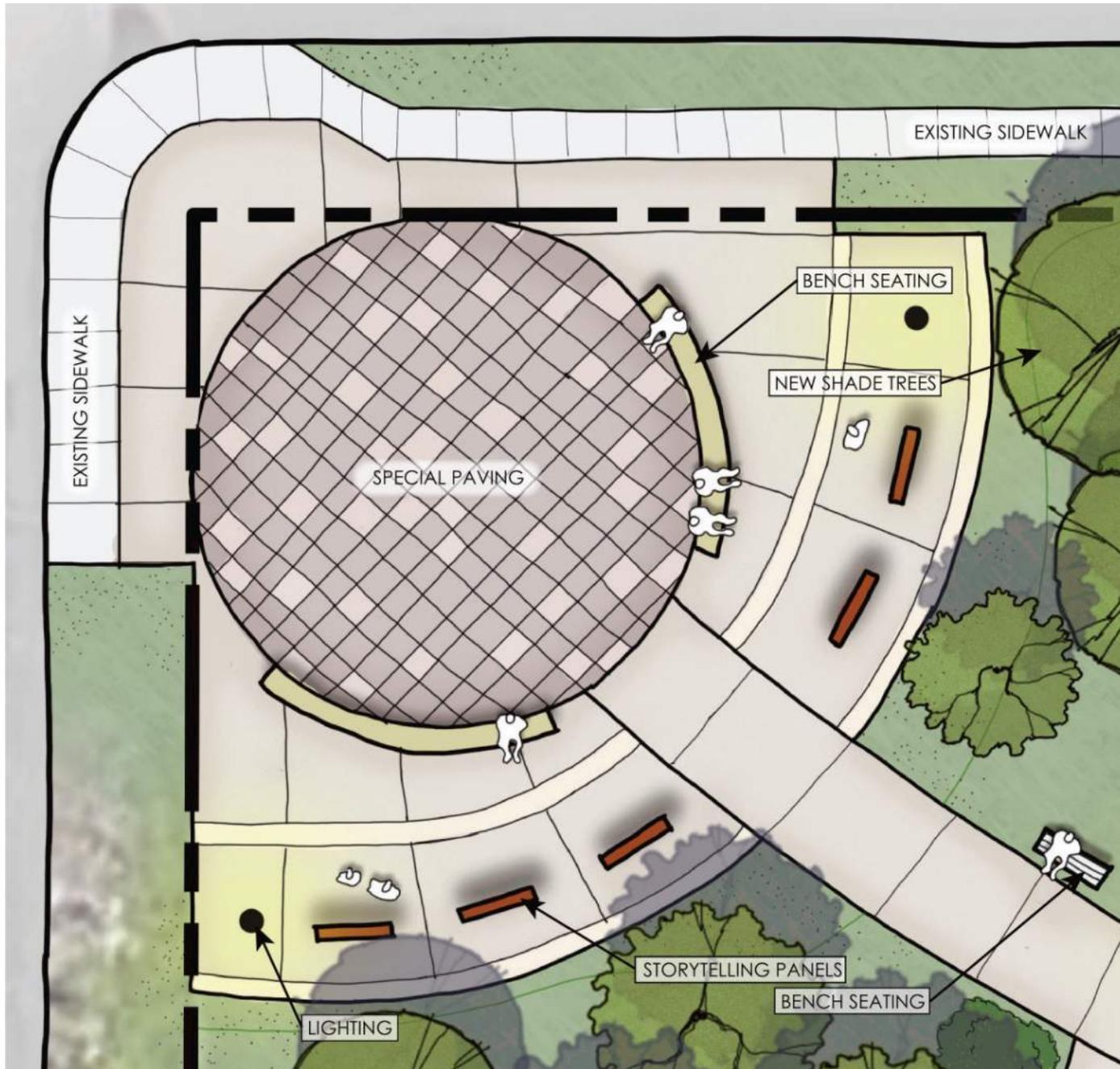


FINAL CONCEPTUAL PLAN

After being vacant for many years, the empty lot on North Cherry Street was recently realized to be an opportunity for a new neighborhood park by the City of San Antonio.

Historical, thoughtful, and purposeful elements will create a space that will not only provide amenities to the community, but will also bring people from all over to enjoy the park that highlights the bridge. The site elements provide whimsical representations of the community, the future, and the historical bridge that sparked this remarkable narrative on the culture of the East Side of San Antonio.

3.1 final conceptual plan



ENTRY/STORY TELLING PLAZA

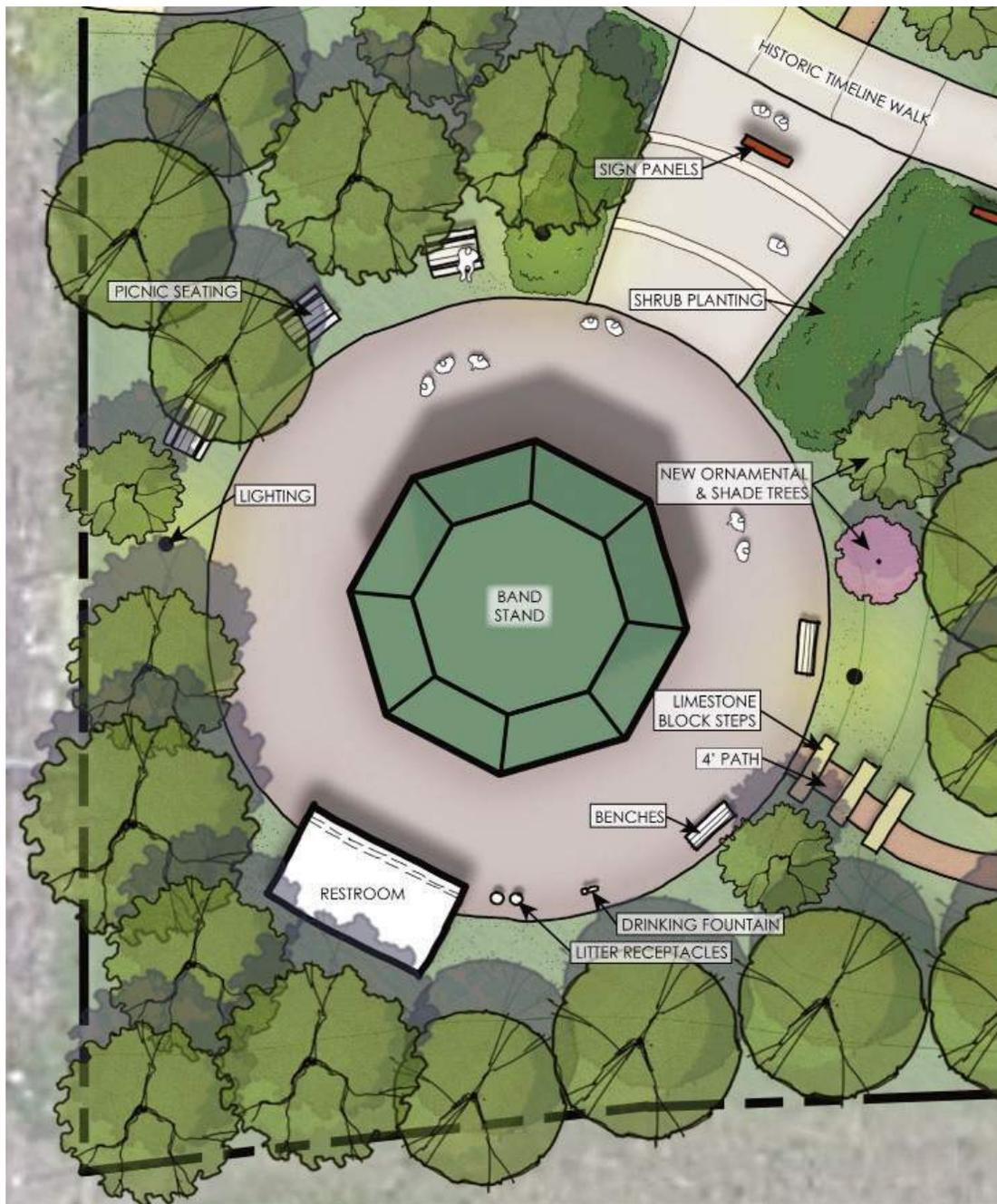
- Pedestrians enter the park through this plaza, which features interpretive signage telling the story of Hays Street Bridge and the surrounding area.
- Shade trees and bench seating provide comfortable rest stops for visitors.
- Paving changes lead pedestrians to the Timeline Walk which connects through the park.



Entry/Story Telling Plaza



3.1 final conceptual plan



BAND STAND PLAZA

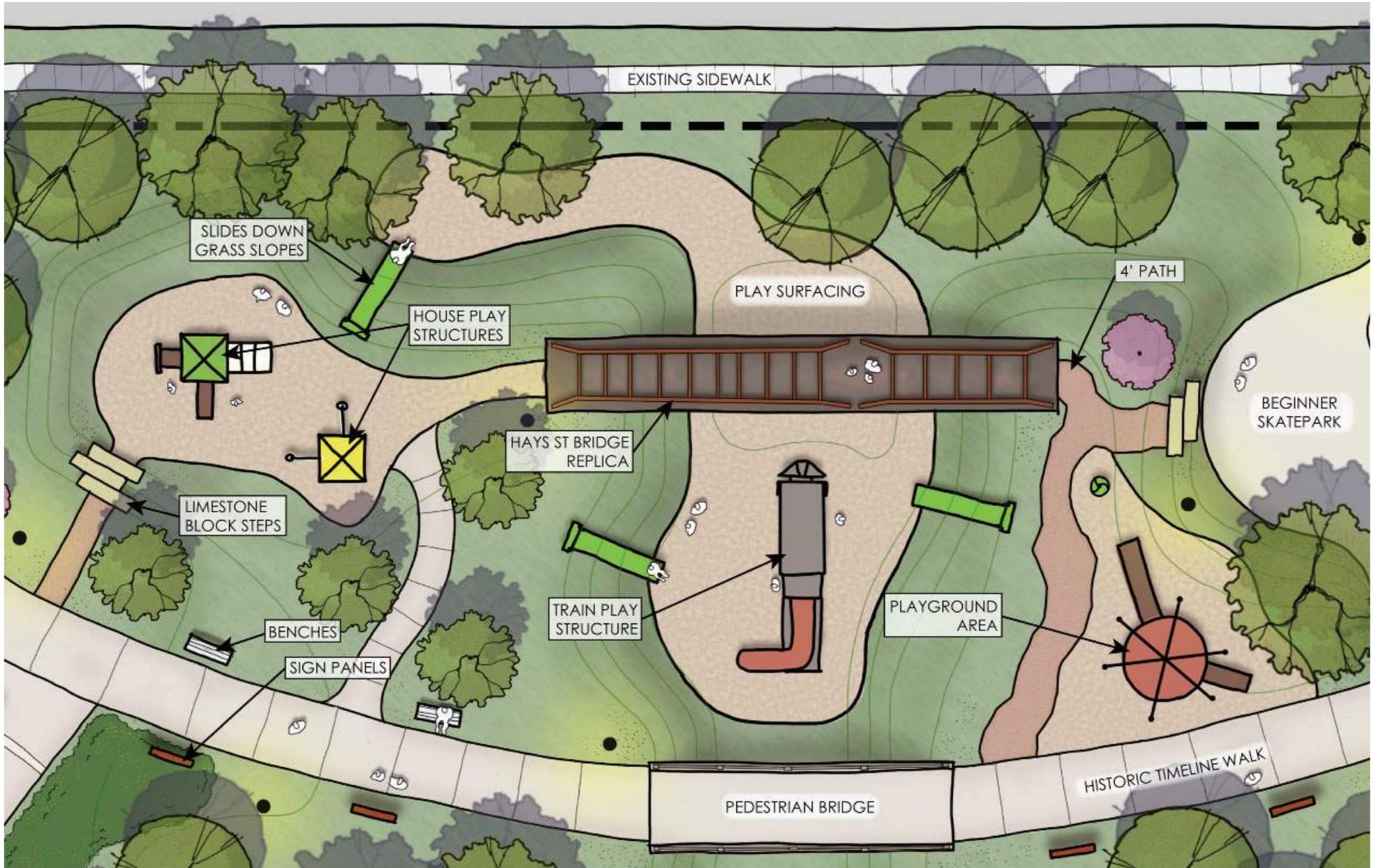
- Interpretive signage leads visitors from the Timeline Walk to the Band Stand.
- Shrub plantings and ornamental trees accent the entry to the Band Stand.
- Events and performances could be hosted in the Band Stand for viewing in the plaza surrounding.
- Picnic tables and benches provide seating for visitors to the park.
- A restroom building is located behind the Band Stand, along with litter receptacles and a drinking fountain.



Band Stand Plaza



3.1 final conceptual plan



BRIDGE STORY PLAZA

- Provides interactive, historically-inspired elements at a child's scale.
- Small house playgrounds imitate the historic houses of the area and displays their distinct character and significance.
- A pedestrian-scale model of Hays Street Bridge spans over a train play structure area below.
- Slides down the grass slopes lead to the play area surrounding the train playground.
- The train-inspired play structure allows children to interact with features historically significant to the site.

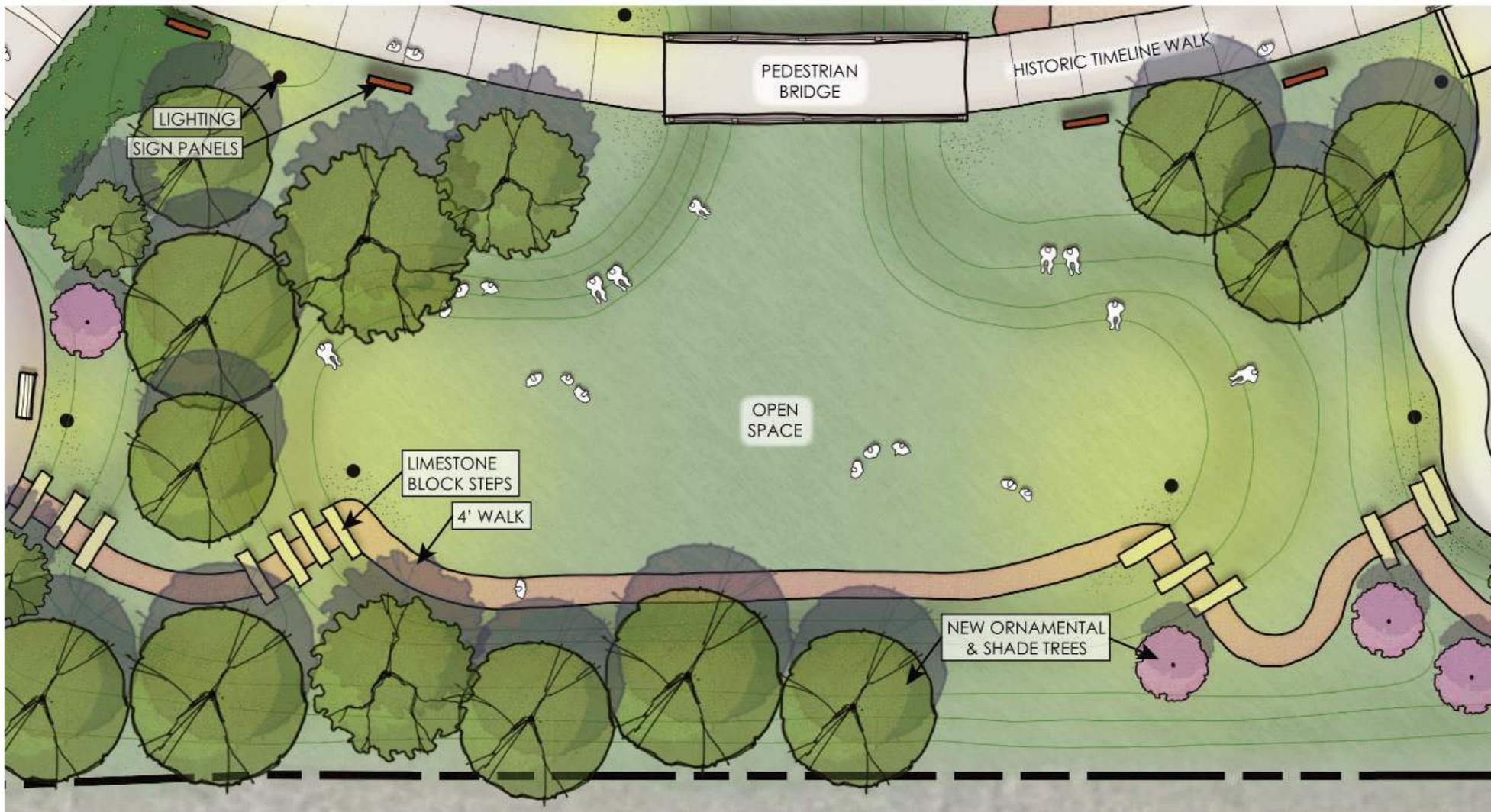


Bridge Story Plaza



Pedestrian Bridge at Bridge Story Plaza

3.1 final conceptual plan



GREEN OPEN SPACE

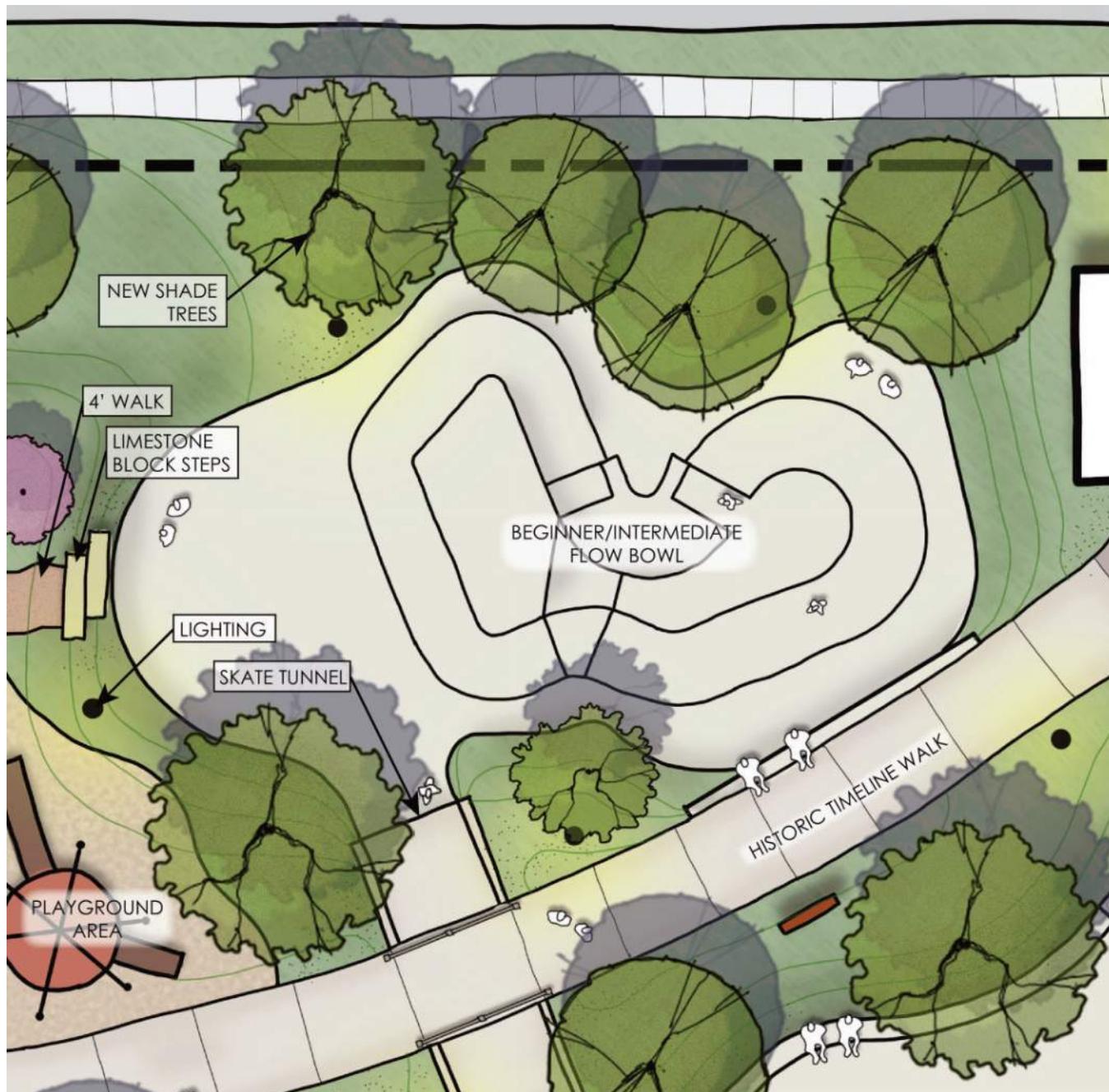
- A green space that is large enough to hold various community events was a significant piece of the final design.
- The green space allows for wide, expansive views to Hays Street Bridge and Downtown San Antonio.
- Movies in the park, fireworks viewing, and music events are examples of events that could be held in this area.
- Shade and ornamental trees set aside from the viewshed provide shade in summer months.



Green Open Space



3.1 final conceptual plan



BEGINNER SKATE PARK

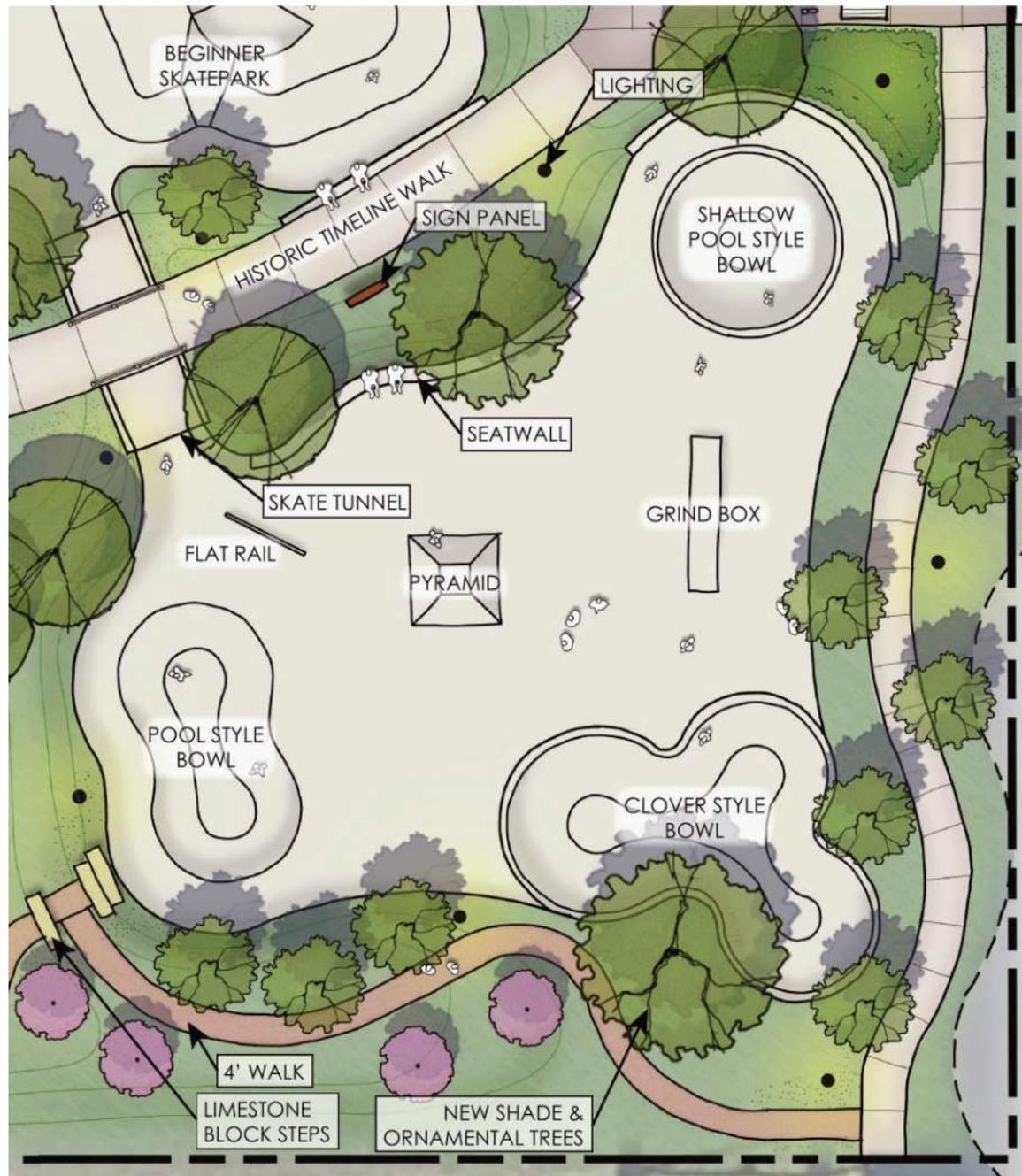
- A slower-paced, beginner area for children and those learning the ropes in skating.
- Open paved areas as well as a Beginner/Intermediate Flow Bowl provide different skating areas and experiences for beginners.
- A skate tunnel connects the Beginner Skate Park to the Advanced Skate Park by going underneath the Historic Timeline Walk.
- Shade trees surrounding the skate park give shade throughout the year.



Beginner Skate Park



3.1 final conceptual plan



ADVANCED SKATE PARK

- Different skate elements such as bowls, grinding areas, rails, and a pyramid allow for various experiences for advanced skateboarders.
- A skate tunnel underneath the Historic Timeline Walk connects the Advanced Skate Park to the Beginner Skate Park.
- A seatwall provides a place for skaters or pedestrians to watch other skateboarders practicing.
- Shade trees around the perimeter of the Skate Park provide shade throughout the year.
- The future expansion under the Hays Street Bridge provides more opportunities for skaters and provides a unique connection to the bridge from the park.

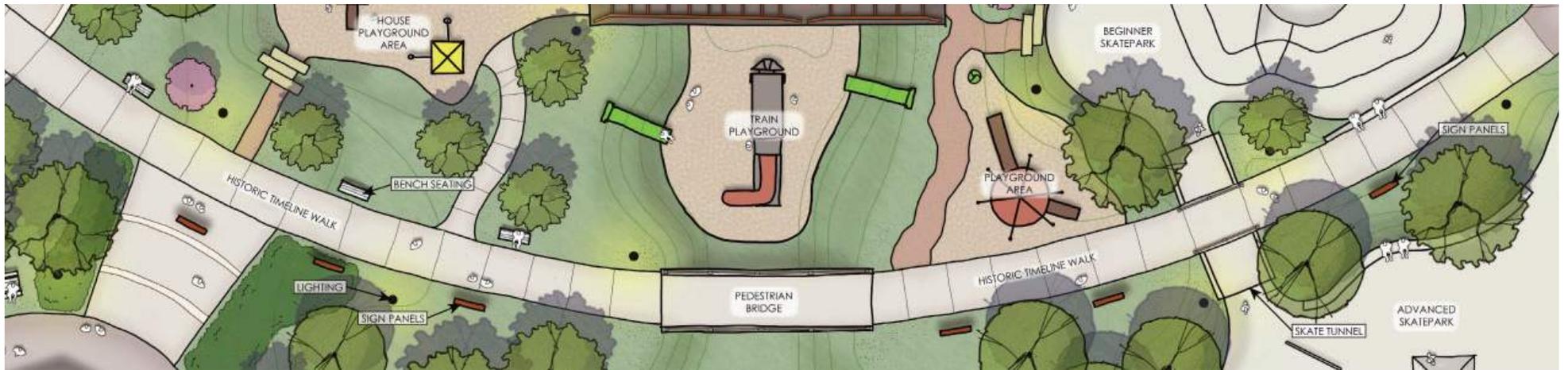


Advanced Skate Park



Future Expansion of Skate Park under the Bridge

3.1 final conceptual plan



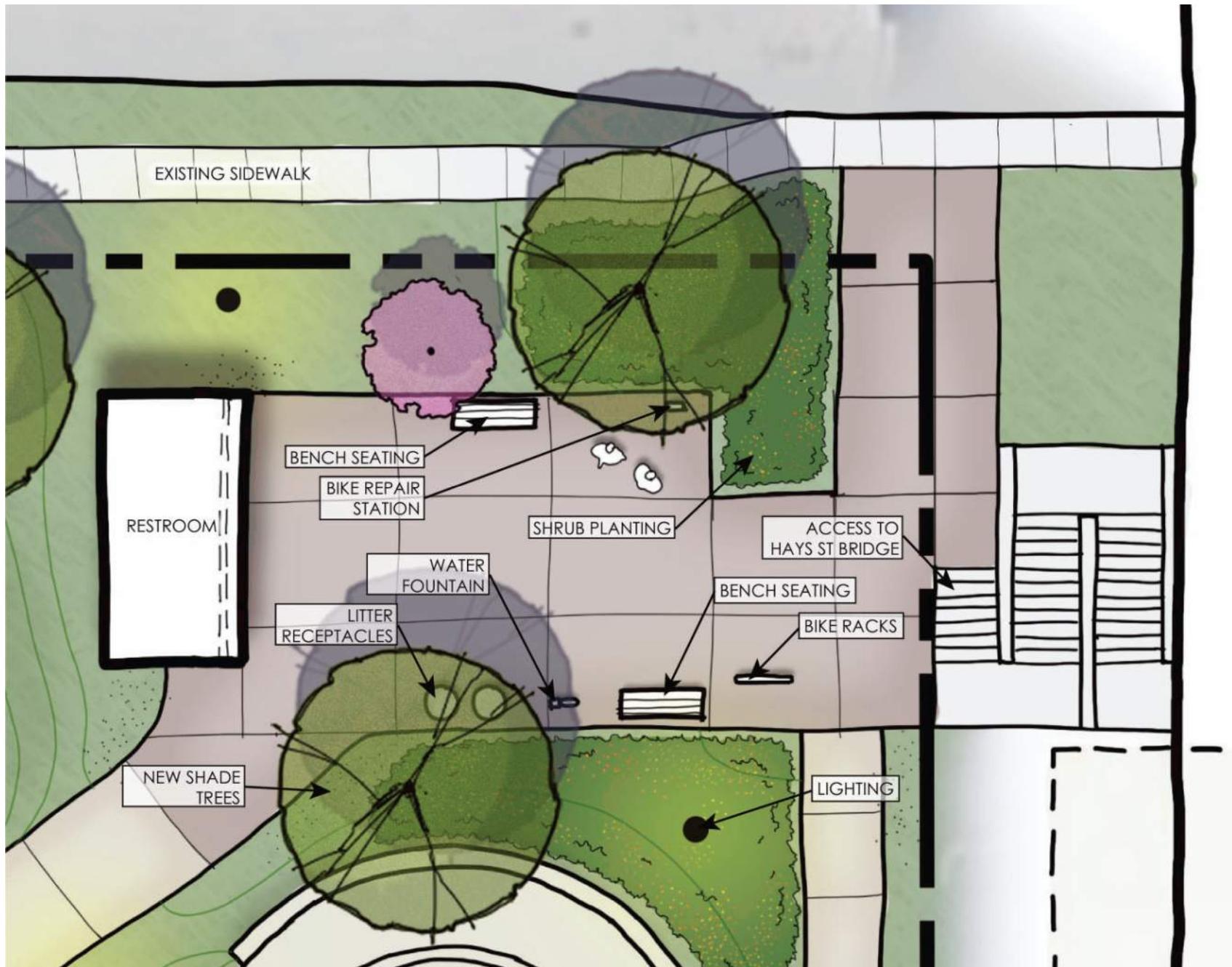
HISTORIC TIMELINE WALK

- Interpretive signage along the path tell stories of the area and its history.
- Bench seating and shade trees are placed along the walk to provide pedestrian comfort and rest points.
- The Timeline Walk serves as a connection point across the park linking the community to the Hays Street Bridge.



Timeline Walk

3.1 final conceptual plan



BRIDGE ENTRY PLAZA

- Special paving separates the plaza from the Timeline Walk and highlights the connection point to the Hays Street Bridge.
- Amenities such as a restroom, bench seating, a water fountain, litter receptacles, bike racks, and a bike repair station are located in the plaza.
- The plaza connects visitors to the existing stairway to Hays Street Bridge.



Bridge Entry Plaza



3.2 perspective views



Carefully placed trees and site elements protect the viewshed from the Timeline Walk towards Hays Street Bridge and Downtown San Antonio.



View of the Advanced Skate Park from Hays Street Bridge.

3.2 perspective views



View from North



View from East



CONCLUSION

The park site located at 803 N Cherry Street will bring ample opportunity to the community and to the city with proper programming and historical research. The City of San Antonio realized the importance of this site is to not only amplify the Hays Street Bridge, but also the community that made this park possible.

The most important factors of design were found through the course of three (3) public meetings and through collaboration amongst the design team. It was evident how important it was to provide the vision of the park that the community worked together to create.

The final conceptual plan for the Berkley V. Vincent M. Dawson Park provides the surrounding community with a historic timeline walk, educational/historical play spaces, an open green space for events, a skatepark for all levels and types of skaters, a pavilion gathering space, two entry plazas into the site, bike racks/repair stations, restroom facilities, outdoor seating, picnic areas, drinking fountains, and site lighting.

Certain site elements can be phased at a later date to allow construction as funds become available. A future skatepark expansion under the bridge with additional lighting will be discussed once the current lease for the property under the bridge is complete.

