



North End

Reservoir
Whiskey Hill

North Bridgeport

Brooklawn/
St. Vincent

Enterprise
Zone

Boston Ave/
Mill Hill

The
Hollow

East Side

East End

West End/
West Side

Downtown

South End

Black Rock

The Parks Master Plan 2011



THE
PARK CITY

Bridgeport,
Connecticut

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The background features a stylized landscape with a teal sky, light blue clouds, rolling green hills, a winding teal river, and several white flowers with yellow centers scattered across the terrain.

THE FUTURE OF *THE PARK CITY*

**What will the Park System
look like for the next
generation in Bridgeport?**

*“Perhaps most importantly,
Bridgeport should return to its
heritage as *The Park City*.”*

- Master Plan of Conservation & Development



As Connecticut's largest city with a growing population, Bridgeport's park system

will play a critical role in the future health of the City's ecosystem, economy, and community. More than just the sum of its forty-five parks, the plan for Bridgeport's park system represents a comprehensive understanding of the importance of green, healthy open spaces to the community and to city-wide revitalization.



“Diverse waterfronts provide a new legacy for Bridgeport: an interconnected network that sustains the Park City tradition...”

Above and Right:

Seaside Park hosts many well attended activities, from large events to daily use at the skatepark. Other high-quality parks throughout the city will help increase residents’ quality of life.



The vision for the Bridgeport Parks System creates a vehicle for engaging citizens and new partners in the parks, revitalizing the City and the region, and reconnecting to the city’s vast, but often hidden, waterfront. It achieves the key goals of the community: to enhance its existing parks, expand the system through creation of new parks, and provide better connections between parks and people.

Bridgeport’s expansive waterfront includes the beloved, well-used Long Island Sound, the centrally located Pequonnock River, and future restoration of the Yellow Mill Creek, and Rooster River. These diverse waterfronts provide a new legacy for Bridgeport: an interconnected network that sustains the Park City tradition set by Frederick Law Olmsted at Beardsley and Seaside Parks, while ending future generations with healthier ecological, social, and economic environments in their own neighborhoods. Most importantly, the plan seeks to ensure all citizens and visitors have easy access to the parks, through a new system of “hyper parks” and investment in the streets and pedestrian environment that connect people to parks. A high-quality Parks System will help to increase residents’ quality of life, attract and retain the next-generation workforce, and encourage residential and business reinvestment as Bridgeport builds toward a future with a revitalized

downtown, thriving neighborhoods, and parks that are accessible to all.

With over forty-five parks in the system, including two iconic Olmsted landscapes and dozens of neighborhood parks, the Plan celebrates unique places ranging from beachfront gathering spaces for hosting festivals and events to walkable playgrounds for the daily enjoyment by families in the East Side. Building on the path set out by BGreen 2020, Bridgeport’s recent sustainability plan, the master plan envisions improved access to waterfront park resources and highly-programmed hyper-parks that will serve the City’s highest need neighborhoods with diverse recreational options.



Bridgeport's Ecology

Bridgeport's parks are part of an ecological system and are defined within three distinct habitat zones. The Parks Master Plan seeks to restore the connection between urban parks and the City's rich natural environment.

Land Characteristics:

Physiography: Coastal plain along the Long Island Sound

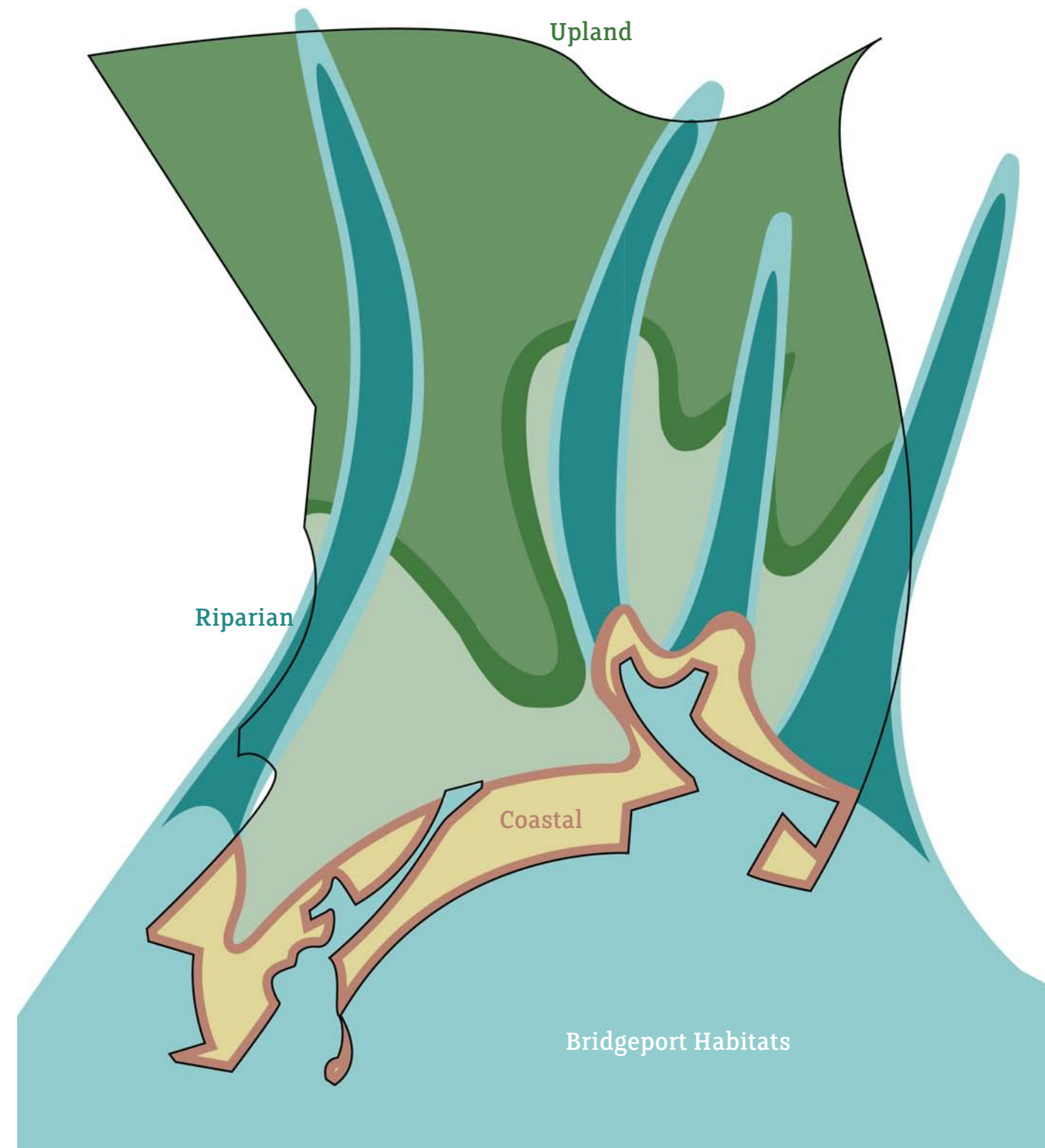
Geology: Glacial till deposits

Soils: Disturbed urban soils, with some native soils inland

Water Characteristics:

Watershed: Southwest coast drainage basin

Ecological Region: Southern New England Coastal Lowland.



Upland Habitats:

Includes urban forest, urban shrub/scrub, and urban grassland. Issues include runoff, pollution, nutrients, sediment, fragmented habitat, habitat loss, lost species diversity.

Riparian Corridors:

Defends against runoff, erosion, flooding, and filter pollutants. Provides habitat and corridors for wildlife, shade for waters and scenic value and recreational opportunities for people.

Coastal Habitat:

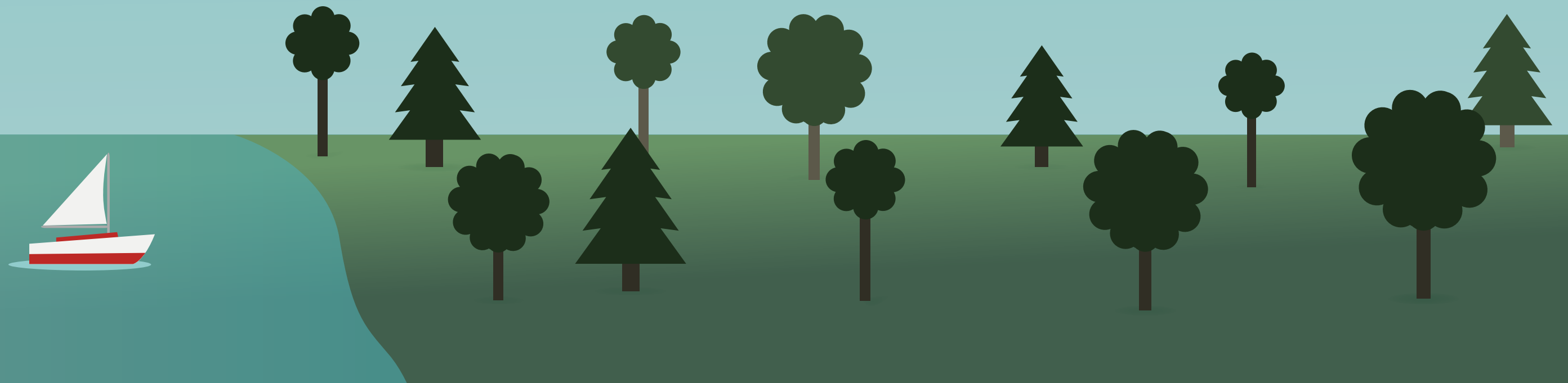
Tidal marsh, beaches and dunes are key for 45% of endangered species. Provides habitat, shoreline stabilization, food storage and natural filtration and dampens storm surges.

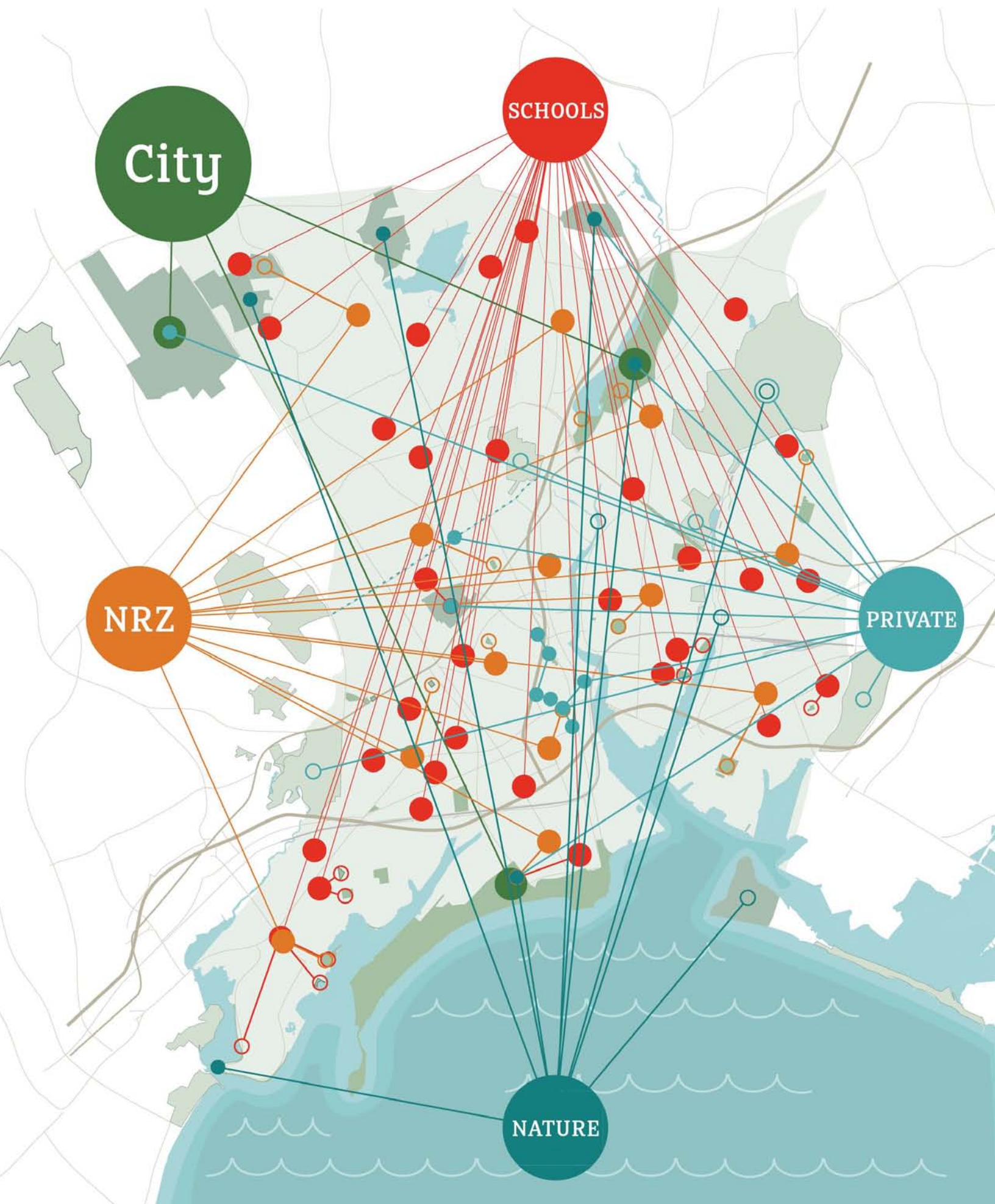
SHARED RESOURCES & RESPONSIBILITIES

We need everyone's help to keep the parks safe, clean, active, and living up to the Park City legacy.

"A deep and abiding belief that the new urban dweller, recently transplanted from the countryside, had a need and right to public parks."

-Mayor Bill Finch





Successful implementation of the parks plan will be the result of collaboration of many partners.

The Plan is based on the philosophy that the park system belongs to the Bridgeport public, and that it requires ongoing commitment and investment from residents and private partners in order to endure. Planning, developing, and maintaining an extensive park system like Bridgeport's is an enormous task, particularly in today's economic climate of shrinking funding and budget austerity. Successful implementation of the parks plan will be the result of collaboration of many partners. Although the list will grow over time, critical partners have already been identified and include the City of Bridgeport staff and leaders, Bridgeport residents, neighborhood groups and Bridgeport's Neighborhood Revitalization Zones (NRZs), business leaders, non-profits and cultural organizations (such as the Trust for Public Land and the Bridgeport Arts + Cultural Council), and the Bridgeport Board of Education.

Each partner will be a steward of a different park or park type, helping to ensure that the park system is well-cared for and benefits from the vision and hard work of its many users and supporters. For example, the City will remain as the main steward of the major city and regional parks: Beardsley, Seaside and Fairchild Wheeler. They will continue to protect the Olmsted Parks legacy in Bridgeport, and think creatively about seeking future revenue-generating opportunities in the parks, through vendors, activities, or partnerships. Neighborhood groups and the NRZs will gain new responsibilities for the smaller parks within their geographic neighborhoods. Each group will "adopt" a neighborhood park, and be responsible for contributing 'sweat equity', regular improvements, daily care, and general stewardship of that park.

Each partner will be a steward of a different park or park type, helping to ensure that the park system is well-cared for and benefits from the vision and hard work of its many users and supporters. For example, the City will remain as the main steward of the major city and regional parks: Beardsley, Seaside and Fairchild Wheeler. They will continue to protect the Olmsted Parks

Future Partners in the Parks:

A critical first step in implementation of the parks master plan is developing partnerships with the many groups who will help care for the parks in the future, including the Board of Education, neighborhood groups, private businesses and nature conservancies.

Engaging the Bridgeport Community in the Master Plan

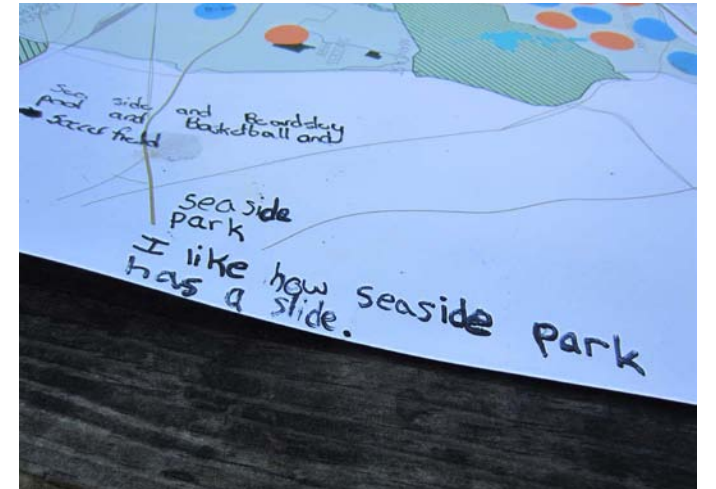
Below:
The planning process employed many tools for the community to provide feedback on the plan, including community forums and public outreach in the parks.

To gather support and input for the plan, and build a partnership base for future implementation, the City of Bridgeport led a diverse public outreach strategy as part of the parks plan. Public outreach was structured to ensure that the community not only contributed their voices to the planning process in order to shape the plan, but also found new ways to participate in the future maintenance and continuing implementation of the parks vision. To engage the broadest range of constituents outreach included traditional public meetings, but also reached beyond that format with an online survey, stakeholder interviews, in-park user interviews, and a charette with Seaside day-campers.

The project was launched in April 2011, with initial outreach that included focused stakeholder interviews, and a presentation to the Board of Park Commissioners. In late June, the City and stakeholders collectively reviewed the parks and recreation inventory of existing conditions and needs assessment.

An online survey was available openly throughout the process and distributed in hard copy to neighborhood groups and through City Hall. Hundreds of park users replied to the survey and used its interactive mapping tool to answer questions about park priorities, helping to shape the initial direction of the plan. From this survey, park users revealed that family-friendly parks and amenities, such as playgrounds, splash pads, picnic shelters, and swimming facilities are the most desired park improvements.

The survey also showed that users understand the value of the City's unique, large park assets, voting that the top three parks for focused improvements are Seaside, Pleasure Beach, and Veteran's Memorial Park. However, it also revealed that visibility and marketing of parks and recreation programs is an area that needs improvement: a little more than half of households who completed the survey have not participated in Bridgeport recreation programs or events in the last 12 months.



Above:
Community voices were heard at two public forums.

Top:
Children contribute to the planning process during a summer camp at Seaside Park.

Building off the survey feedback, Parks Master Plan Public Forums were held in the summer (August 10, 2011) and again in the fall (October 12, 2011). During the August meeting, over eighty members of the public gathered at Cesar Batalla School to discuss their vision for the plan and give feedback on three concepts for the parks master plan framework: 1) Connect; 2) Expand; and 3) Enhance. In October, a second public forum was held at Waltersville School to reveal and discuss the preferred master plan and implementation strategy for the future. The many participants who gave feedback on the City's parks and recreation needs have helped shape the comprehensive Parks Master Plan that will direct reinvestment in the park system for years to come.



MEET TODAY'S NEED & PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

**What are the
priorities of the
community today?**

*“Sustainability strategies will transform
the City’s image from a rust-belt city with
a post-industrial legacy to a clean, green
community with a high quality of life.”*

*– BGreen 2020: A Sustainability Plan for
Bridgeport, Connecticut*





Physically Connected

Envision Bridgeport's parks as part of a connected green infrastructure system throughout the city that keeps people and the environment healthy.

Connect Bridgeport's signature regional parks to its neighbors.



Ecologically diverse

Celebrate the range of open space types in Bridgeport's system.

Through environmental restoration, bring brownfields, vacant lots, and neglected lands into the open space system.



Accessible to All

Offer more diverse programming.

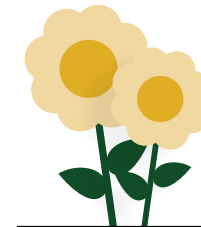
Improve communications and ensure parks are highly visible.



Economically Viable

Support growing population trends with new parks to serve needs.

Create value for future development.



Bridgeport's Parks Master Plan is a blueprint to guide decisions about investments in park improvements and development and recreation programs over the next 15 years, and beyond. The plan's goals include ensuring that the park system leads the way to the future with goals to be physically connected, ecologically diverse, accessible to all, and economically viable.

While these are long-term goals, they are balanced against an understanding that the master plan must also chart a path to meet the community's immediate needs today. A needs assessment of the City of Bridgeport's existing park system and recreation programs showed that there are existing deficits in many park amenities and recreation programs. The Bridgeport parks system was evaluated against national standards, peers, and model cities for overall system size, provision of different sports and play amenities, and park operations such as staffing and funding. The park system was organized into park types by scale or specialization: regional, community, neighborhood, mini, and special use. In terms of the overall system, accessibility and well-programmed neighborhood parks are the highest needs throughout the City. With Beardsley, Seaside, and Fairchild Wheeler as large, community wide assets, the City is well-served at the regional and community park scale. The focus of the plan is providing walkable

neighborhood parks with family-friendly play activities and durable fields and courts. The most needed amenities were established to be playgrounds (with a need for over fifty more playgrounds) followed by tennis courts, and basketball courts.

The quantity of park and amenities is only part of the story around park need. The needs assessment was also supported by a demographic analysis of Bridgeport's population that combined access to a car, population density, income, and diversity. Using this metric, the plan identified a central belt of high need running east-west across the center of Bridgeport extending from either side of downtown. Addressing the open space and recreation needs in this high need area is a priority of the master plan.



Diverse Park Types
 Bridgeport's park system benefits from a range of park types, from large regional parks like Seaside and Beardsley to local neighborhood playgrounds.

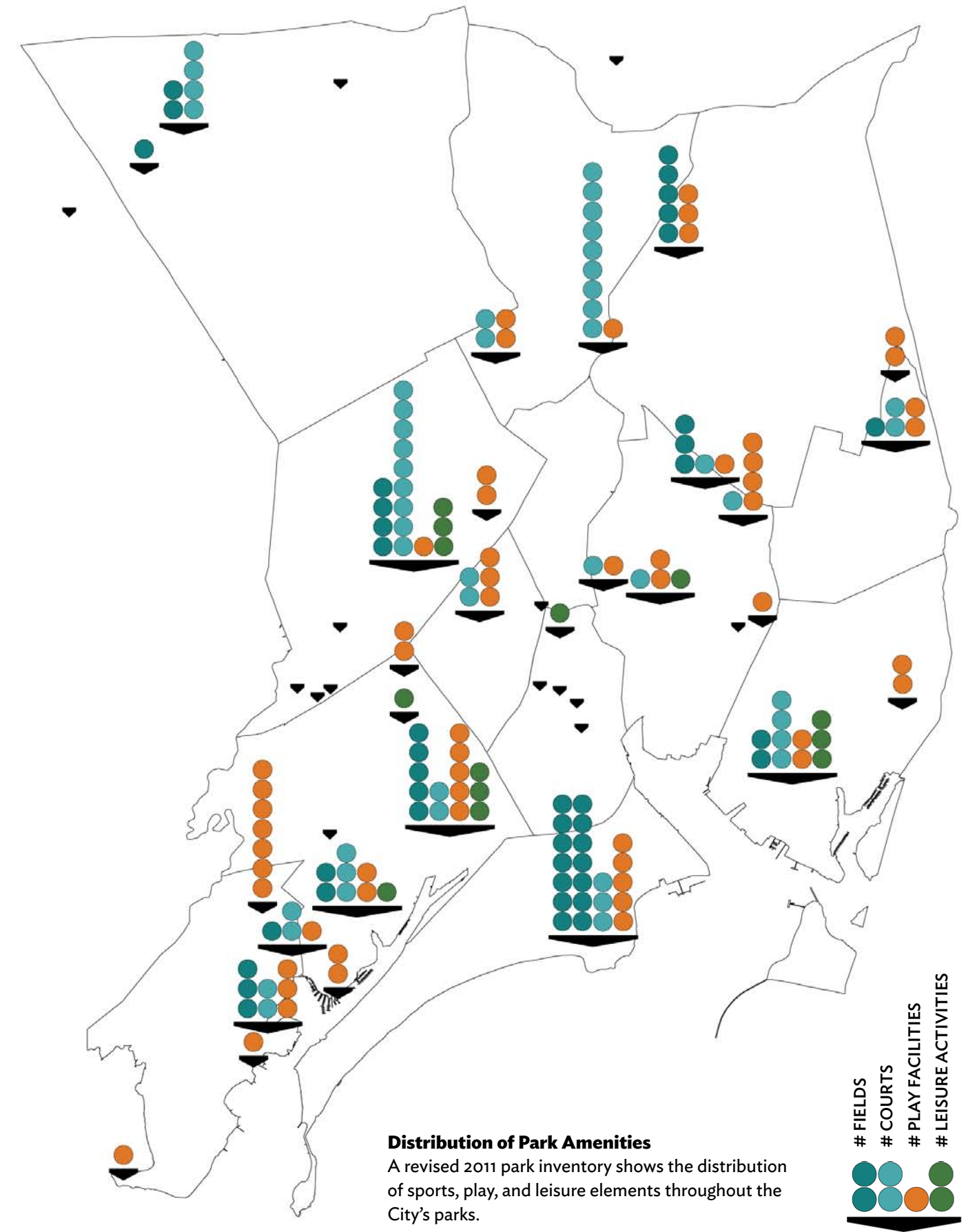
Park System
 1,346 acres
 45+ parks

- REGIONAL PARKS
- COMMUNITY PARKS
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
- MINI PARKS
- SPECIAL USE



City-wide Park Need
 Neighborhood need analysis combined car access, population density, income and diversity to show a high need belt through the center of the City

- HIGH NEED
-
-
- LOW NEED



Distribution of Park Amenities
 A revised 2011 park inventory shows the distribution of sports, play, and leisure elements throughout the City's parks.

- # FIELDS
- # COURTS
- # PLAY FACILITIES
- # LEISURE ACTIVITIES

THE MASTER PLAN

**Bridgeport's parks
will become the green
infrastructure of the city.**

"Cleaning this land isn't only necessary for economic development, but also to achieve healthy neighborhoods."

– BGreen 2020: A Sustainability Plan for Bridgeport, Connecticut



The Parks Master Plan envisions new connections to Bridgeport’s waterfronts – with continuous public access along the Pequonnock River and restoration of the Yellow Mill Creek corridor.



Above: The *Sliver by the River* site provides a potential future location for individuals and families to relax downtown and access the waterfront.



Left: Sliver by the River today
Right: A new downtown park, at night.

These waterfronts will draw people and investment to the downtown and east side neighborhoods, and provide recreation that benefit the entire city. They will be complemented by investment in durable, high-quality amenities in neighborhood parks. Together, Bridgeport’s parks will become the green infrastructure of the city, supporting the ecological, social, and economic health of the City. The following section highlights some of the priority projects that will be transformative for the community, including a new park at “Sliver by the River, restoration of the Yellow Mill Creek, designation of five “hyper parks,” and improved signage and wayfinding within and between parks.

Physically Connected

Bridgeport’s parks will be part of a connected open space system of parks, streets, regional trails, and linear waterfronts. In the future, Bridgeport’s significant waterfronts will become an even more important part of the park system, as a public access trail along the Pequonnock continues to take shape and a new partnership initiative is explored to restore ecological health and public access to the east side’s Yellow Mill Creek. Knowlton Park will open soon on the east side of the Pequonnock River, and the master plan has also identified a new downtown waterfront park location at the “*Sliver by the River*” site. A public park at this critical site north of the intermodal station will offer new gathering spaces for large concerts or summer movies, a launch site for kayakers, and play facilities – all within blocks of downtown.

Bridgeport’s local parks will be linked to regional open space resources along transportation corridors. Completion of a final link on the Housatonic Railway Trail system will connect many Bridgeport assets via a multi-use trail that spans fifteen miles and connects Bridgeport, Trumbull, and Monroe. The Water Street dock at the mouth of the Pequonnock River, Glenwood Park, Beardsley, and Fairchild Memorial Park will all be connected along this trail.

Future “complete streets” throughout Bridgeport will also help

improve walking or biking environments between parks and park users. Complete streets are roads that are designed or retro-fitted to enable safe travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transport users. Increasingly, street design also includes green infrastructure elements, such as bioswales, that treat water on site and promote environmental sustainability and awareness.

In Bridgeport, Park Avenue and Lincoln Avenue are envisioned as future complete streets, and each will serve to connect park assets. Park Avenue will ultimately connect major, regional and community parks on the west side of Bridgeport, linking Seaside Park to Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course, Veteran’s Memorial Park, and Puglio Park. Although it spans a shorter distance, Lincoln Avenue’s complete street project will improve neighborhood access to Kennedy Stadium and Leroy Brown Jr. “BJ” Memorial Park.

Ecologically Diverse

Bridgeport’s parks are part of a connected green infrastructure system, and will play an important role in improving the ecological health and diversity of the City over the next decades. Current and on-going restoration projects at Pleasure Beach Park and St. Mary’s by the Sea demonstrate the city’s commitment to protecting key habitat areas, while also providing public access to their natural resources. Re-naturalization of the edges of large parks such as Beardsley will support increased environmental health, while serving the dual purpose of minimizing maintenance over time for Parks staff. Additionally, continuation of a city-wide tree planting program will reinforce the tree canopy that provides critical shade and micro-climate along the streets.

Through concerted partnership efforts, restoration of the Yellow Mill Creek Corridor will be a transformative project for high need

neighborhoods on the east side, providing rehabilitated riparian corridors that improve wildlife habitat, water quality, and increase biodiversity. Public access paths are incorporated into the design vision to ensure this future park asset can be accessed and enjoyed by the community. Restoration of the Yellow Mill Creek can also generate social benefits and contribute to re-development of the East Side corridor by improving amenity and views, and opening up space for recreation.

Accessible to All

The Bridgeport Parks Master Plan will offer more diverse programs and services to all, improve communications and visibility of the parks system, and focus service improvements on the central high need neighborhoods of the city through creation of five “hyper-parks” that are strategically located. Design of the hyper-parks includes concentrating play and sports opportunities for families

and selecting highly durable materials that anticipate high use and minimize maintenance. The strategy for these five parks includes expanded amenities at Success Park, West Side II, and Went Field, and new designs for Old Mill Green and a combined Upchurch Park and James Brown Waterview Park.

The hyper-parks help Bridgeport close the gap between amenities that are provided in existing parks, and the high demand that was demonstrated through the parks survey and needs assessment. The plan allocates new amenities - particularly high-demand court sports, splash pads, sports fields - within Bridgeport’s parks by considering a combination of neighborhood need, the existing distribution of amenities across the city, and the physical potential of each park to accommodate more intense use. The five “hyper-parks” in the core need belt of the City will help address geographic inequalities throughout the system. Efforts were made to focus amenities in these parks across the center of the city so that highly programmed spaces are centrally accessible, and amenities are concentrated in order to help minimize maintenance logistics. Beyond the five hyper-parks, additional amenities are recommended for each of the City’s other parks, as appropriate, in order to serve individual neighborhood needs.

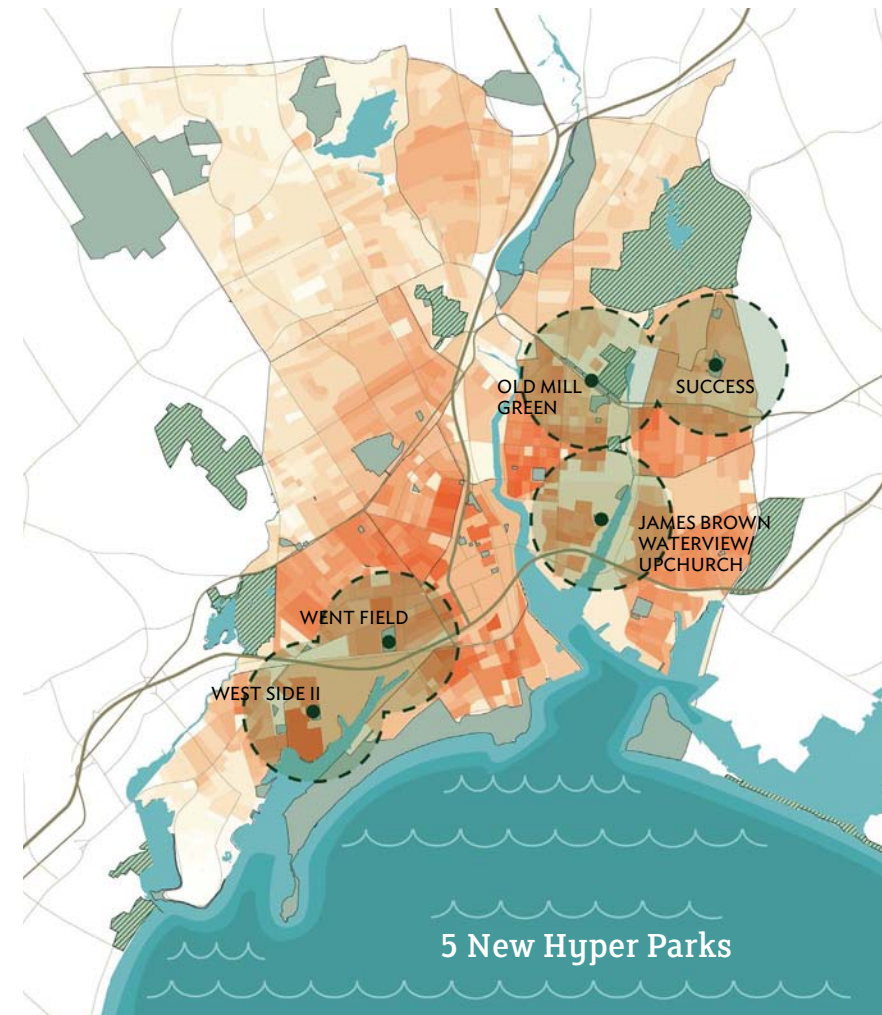
To ensure the community can take advantage of existing and future park resources, it is important to increase the visibility of parks within the community through improved website legibility, marketing, clarity and availability of parks and amenities maps,

publications, and signage and way-finding throughout the park system. The survey showed that many community members are not aware of the parks and recreation resources that the City already offers. An improved website with a clear hierarchy of information and a comprehensive, printed recreation programming guide will help better communicate the Parks Department’s offerings to the community.



Top: A future vision for a restored Yellow Mill Creek, with public access paths and new open spaces.

Bottom: Yellow Mill Creek, today.





McLevy Green provides a scenic setting for the City Trust Building, demonstrating that parks add value to downtown development.

Economically Viable

A renewed Bridgeport parks system will also be a critical contributor to the City’s economic health, and efforts should be made to minimize maintenance costs, increase revenue and vendor opportunities, and create private partnerships so that open space can be integrated into new development to increase value. The City should seek to increase vendor opportunities at Seaside Park and continue operating the Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course.

As has been shown in many other cities, increasing public access and waterfront revitalization is strongly linked to creating value for redevelopment. Restoration of the Pequonnock River and Yellow Mill Creek can be used to help stimulate redevelopment efforts on the east side, linking to strategic sites such as Steel Pointe, the Lake Success Eco-Business Park, or waterfront developments. In Bridgeport’s downtown, partnerships with local businesses and downtown arts or cultural groups can create stewardship opportunities for parks like McLevy Green and Baldwin Plaza that are essential to downtown activities and events.

Realizing the Vision



The Park City: Future parks will live up to the legacy set by Olmsted at Beardsley, above.

The Parks Master Plan charts a long-term vision for Bridgeport that will unfold over time. Yet, critical to long-term success is creating early implementation steps that can generate excitement among the community and set the stage for larger projects. Three immediate steps have been identified:

1. Develop and secure partnerships. Begin by developing partnerships with the Board of Education and the existing, established neighborhood groups (NRZs). Clarify the opportunities in each relationship, and define the current and future roles and responsibilities for each party. The City should continue building regional partnerships with the Trust for Public Land, the Fairfield County Community Foundation, and others to begin putting together a multi-partner initiative to restore and redevelop Yellow Mill Creek. The Yellow Mill Creek initiative will be a complex, multi-year effort, but it is important to build on current support and momentum and lay the groundwork now. demonstrated progress. Early progress on a new downtown park at “Sliver by the River” will mark a very public and visible project that links to the ongoing work on access to the Pequonnock River and serves as a gateway for arrival to Bridgeport at the intermodal station. Additionally, a wayfinding & signage study should be undertaken, with first steps to include a downtown signage and wayfinding system.
2. The East Side has been identified as a high need area for parks, and hyper-parks will be a key element of meeting this need. Early on, the City should identify the site of the first designated hyper-park on the east side and invest in these improvements. Depending on future conversations regarding Route 1/ Boston Avenue, either Old Mill Green or the Upchurch/James Brown Waterview composite park would be a catalytic first step toward providing much needed amenities and investment on the east side.
3. Downtown represents the civic, employment, and activity center of Bridgeport and is an important place to show

Partnership Opportunities

Neighborhood	Partners					
	City of Bridgeport	NRZ/Neighborhood	Schools	Regional/Non-Profit	Nature/Conservation	Private/Business
High Need						
Boston Ave / Mill Hill						
Success Park [Hyper Park]	█					
Manila [Renaturalized/Community Gardens]		█		█		
East End						
Johnson Oak Park & School Grounds	█		█			
Pleasure Beach improvements	█			█	█	█
Newfield/Jessup		█				
East Side						
James Brown/Waterview Park & Upchurch Park [Hyper Park]			█		█	
Knowlton Park	█					█
Luis Munoz Marin Open Space			█			
Washington Park		█				█
The Hollow						
Lafayette/Nanny Goat Park		█		█		
South End						
Seaside Park	█	█	█			█
West Side						
Went Field [Hyper Park]	█	█				
West Side II Park [Hyper Park]	█					
West End Park [Renaturalize]					█	

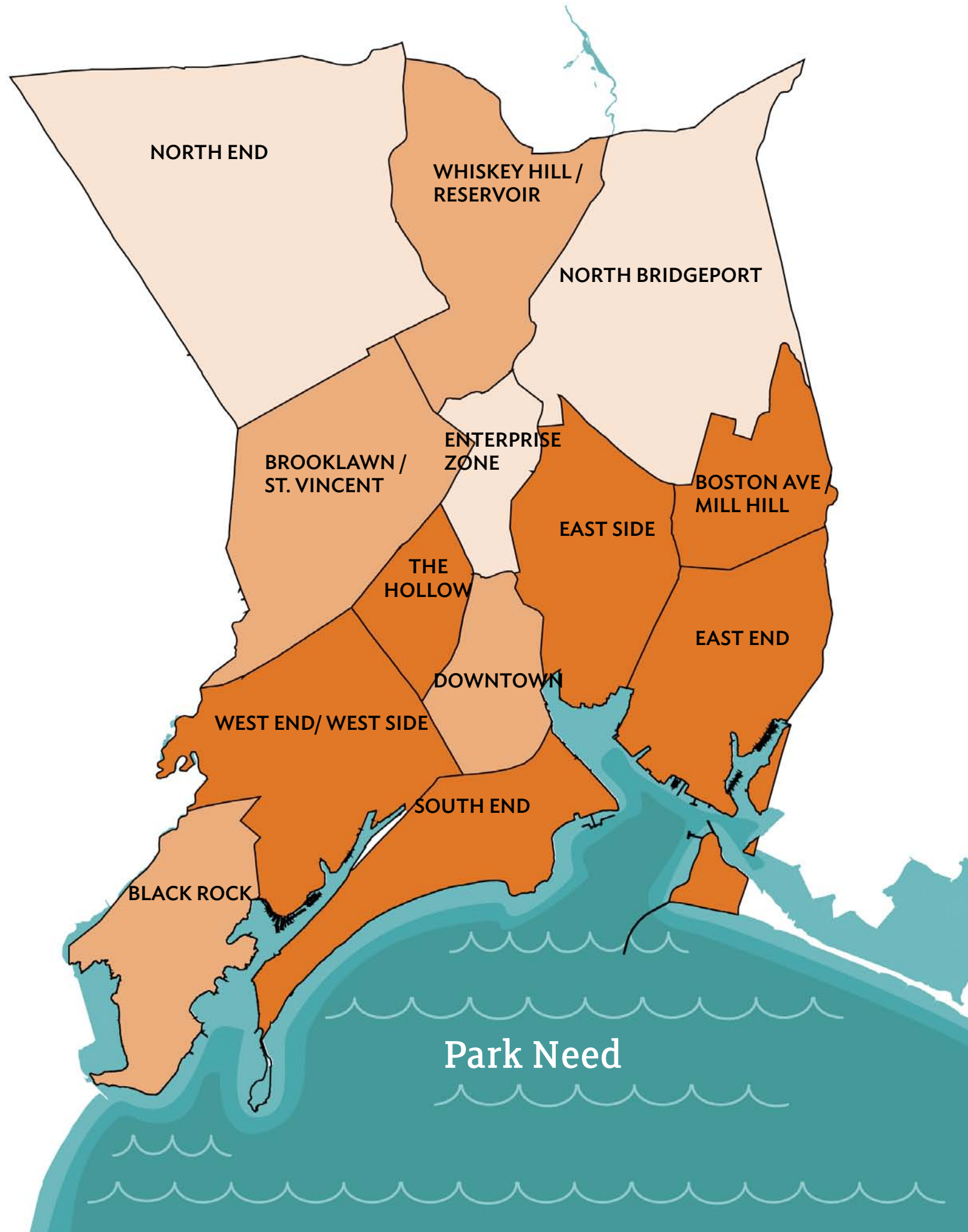
Partnership Opportunities

Neighborhood	Partners					
	City of Bridgeport	NRZ/Neighborhood	Schools	Regional/Non-Profit	Nature/Conservation	Private/Business
Moderate						
Whiskey Hill / Reservoir						
Glenwood Park		█		█	█	█
Svihra Park	█		█		█	
Brooklawn / St. Vincent						
Alice Street Lot		█				
Leroy Brown Jr. "Bj" Memorial Park			█			
Stratfield Burial Grounds & Stratfield Park & Clinton Park						
Downtown						
Baldwin Plaza		█				█
Majestic Park [Renaturalize]					█	
Mclevy Green	█					
Waterfront Park	█			█	█	
Black Rock						
Ellsworth Park		█				
St. Mary's By-The-Sea + Ash Creek	█	█			█	
Longfellow Park & Longfellow Playground						█
Low						
North Bridgeport						
Beardsley Park/Zoo	█	█		█		█
Old Mill Green [Hyper Park]	█					
North End						
Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course [Renaturalize]	█					█
Puglio Park		█				
Veteran's Memorial Park					█	█
Enterprise Zone						

THE PARKS

Plans for Bridgeport's
Regional, Community, &
Neighborhood Parks





Hyper-parks Strategy and Allocating Amenities

The Parks Master Plan Needs Assessment identified quantities of both specific park types and different types of recreational amenities that are needed throughout Bridgeport. The assessment was a city-wide study that calculated these needs based on Bridgeport's current population and growth projections.

The conclusions show that the City is performing well overall at providing regional and community-scale park space, but is underserved in walkable, neighborhood parks. The study, in combination with community feedback from the online and print surveys, also identified that the city was underserved mainly in playgrounds, court sports, and gathering spaces, such as pavilions or shelters.

The demographic portion of the needs assessment further determined that park and amenities need is not uniform across the city, but that six neighborhoods - concentrated in an east-west belt across the center and south of the city - have the highest need.

In the future, the plan proposes that new amenities will be allocated within Bridgeport's parks by considering a combination of neighborhood need, the distribution of existing amenities across the city, and the physical potential of each park to accommodate more intense use.

A strategy focused on five "hyper-parks" in the core need belt of the City helps address inequalities in the system in both geographic distribution of parks and access to amenities. Efforts were made to concentrate amenities in five hyper parks across the center of the city to focus highly programmed spaces within high need neighborhoods that are also centrally accessible. Concentrating amenities in five destination parks will also help minimize maintenance logistics.

Additional amenities recommended for each park are intended to help close the overall city-wide gap, as well as serve individual neighborhood needs.

Need by Neighborhood

Low

- North End
- North Bridgeport
- Enterprise Zone

Moderate

- Whiskey Hill / Reservoir
- Brooklawn / St. Vincent

Downtown

Black Rock

High

The Hollow

East Side

Boston Ave / Mill Hill

Concept Plans for Park Improvements

The following pages include concept plans that describe recommended improvements for the neighborhood, community, and regional parks within the Bridgeport parks system, based on community input during the master plan process. Bridgeport's many mini-parks serve a different functional role within the system, and strategies for them are outlined in the chapter of this document on parks standards.

Boston Ave/Mill Hill

Manila Street Playground [Renaturalize]
 Success Park [Hyper Park]
 Virginia Avenue [Future Park]

Black Rock

Ellsworth Park
 Longfellow Park & Longfellow Playground
 St. Mary's By-The-Sea

Brooklawn/St. Vincent

Alice Street Lot
 Leroy Brown Jr. "BJ" Memorial Park
 Stratfield Burial Grounds, Stratfield Park & Clinton Park

Downtown

Baldwin Plaza
 Majestic Park [Renaturalize]
 Mclevy Green
 Waterfront Park
 Sliver by the River [Future Park]

East End

Johnson Oak Park
 Newfield/Jessup Park
 Pleasure Beach [Restored Park]

East Side

James Brown Waterview Park & Upchurch Park [Hyper Park]
 Knowlton Park [Future Park]
 Luis Munoz Marin Open Space
 Washington Park

Enterprise Zone

No parks, but will connect to the Housatonic Trail

The Hollow

Lafayette Park (Nanny Goat)

North Bridgeport

Beardsley Park/Zoo
 Old Mill Green [Hyper Park]

North End

Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course [Renaturalize]
 Puglio Park
 Veteran's Memorial Park

South End

Seaside Park/Barnum Field

West Side

Captain's Cove (Wordin Park)
 Went Field [Hyper Park]
 West End Park [Renaturalize]
 West Side II Park [Hyper Park]

Whiskey Hill

Glenwood Park
 Svihra Park





BLACK ROCK

- Population-8,863
- 19.1 acres park space

Parks

- St. Mary's by the Sea / Ash Creek
- Longfellow Park & Longfellow Playground
- Ellsworth Park
- Captain's Cove



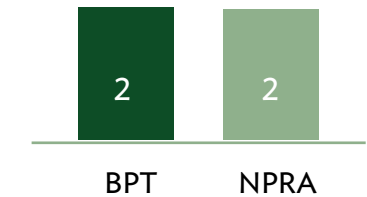
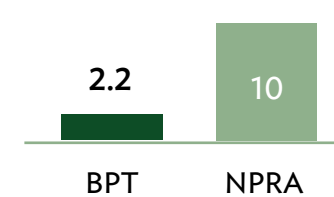
Black Rock

Key Park System Recommendations

- Create connections to a restored Ash Creek landscape from St. Mary's-by-the-Sea
- Enhance Longfellow Park & Longfellow Playground with expanded Cal Ripken Field baseball project
- Support local bike path improvements and continue to expand the South End/ Black Rock paths for greater city-wide and regional connectivity

Additional Neighborhood Opportunities

- Potential trolley route and future incorporation of historic trails
- Development of Brewster Street, and streetscaping in industrial and commercial areas
- Black Rock Waterfront Linear Waterfront Park and waterfront restoration project
- Connections to new Fairfield train station



ALL PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS

Ellsworth Park

Ellsworth Park recently underwent sizeable investment and improvements, including the addition of a new restroom and concessions facility, playgrounds and splash pad area, security lighting and sidewalk improvements. The park is well-used and modest future changes are suggested with the goal of better connecting the Park to its surroundings - the neighborhoods and Burr Creek to the north. Parking is an issue, and on-street parking is available and should continue to be open to park visitors. As a neighborhood park, Ellsworth should be accessible on foot.

An overarching principle of the master plan is to increase access to Bridgeport's waterfront. Ellsworth Park is one of the few parks with direct waterfront access, yet the water is not visible

or accessible from the park. Enhancements should be made to better visually, experientially, or physically link park users to the water by creating and preserving views to the water through the trees along the creek. A planted buffer and ecological zone along the water should be included to diversify and protect Ellsworth's unique ecosystem.

Key Recommendations

- Enhance views to waterfront location with an overlook and preserved view
- Restore tennis courts.

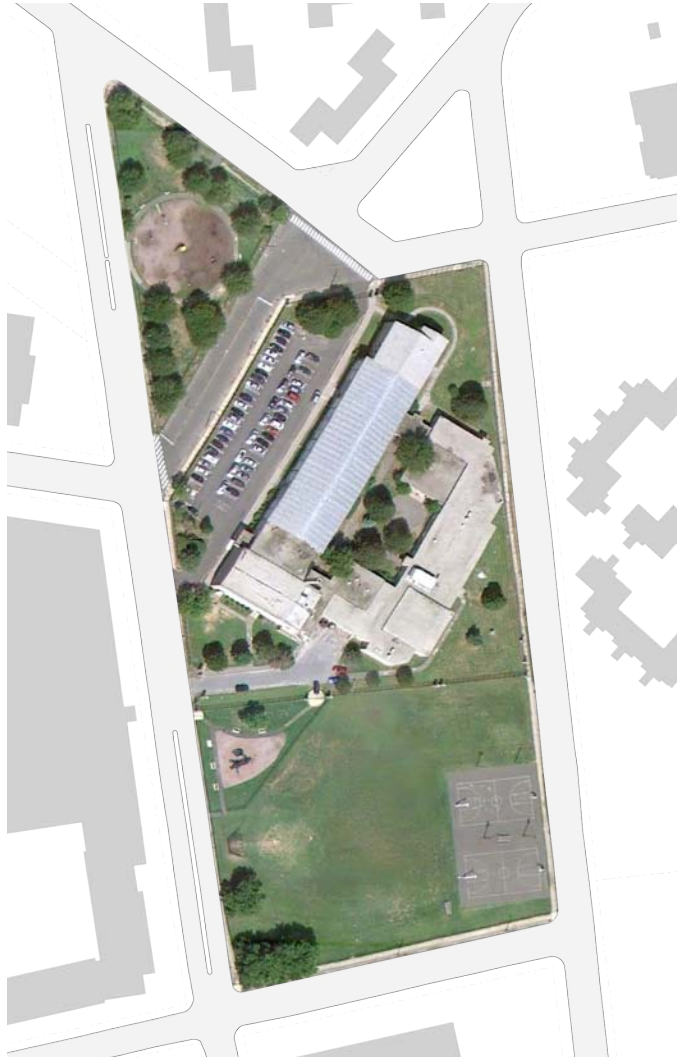


Longfellow Park & Longfellow Playground

Longfellow Park, Playground and School should be conceived of as a single area, with shared resources among the community and school. The recent closure of Ocean Place helps to unify the three areas. Improved access for pedestrians should be emphasized through street tree plantings and clear crossings. A rain garden will help manage stormwater and be an instructional tool about sustainability.

Key Recommendations

- Locate future site of Cal Ripkin playfields together with existing basketball courts to create a concentrated sports zone
- Improve important pedestrian crossings to better connect surroundings to both the parks and school. To further improve walkability, plant street trees to improve the edges and arrival, and provide shade.
- Seek parking partnerships with adjacent land uses, such as Longfellow School.





St. Mary's By-the-Sea & Ash Creek Sandspit

A key goal for the St. Mary's by the Sea and Ash Creek area is to create a meaningful, environmentally responsible means of public access to the sandspit that connects to the existing waterfront promenade and supplements current active uses such as jogging, fishing, birdwatching, and strolling.

Care should also be taken to restore and protect the large, gracious trees that line the promenade. Unfortunately, recent vandalism has threatened many valuable older trees. A long term preservation and protection plan can be developed to care for vandalized trees, and prevent future problems, and a monitoring schedule to review tree health and large tree replacement plan should be put in place. Educational signage about the significance of these trees and the dune landscape may help prevent future vandalism.

Key Recommendations

- Create a boardwalk for public access and enjoyment to the sandspit that does not impact the fragile landscape.
- Create two overlooks on the north and south sides of the spit for viewing of Ash Creek, the Long Island Sound.
- Add seating to increase picnicking sites.
- Restore and maintain the dune landscape.
- Add educational signage about the restoration landscape to encourage respect and stewardship of this unique landscape.



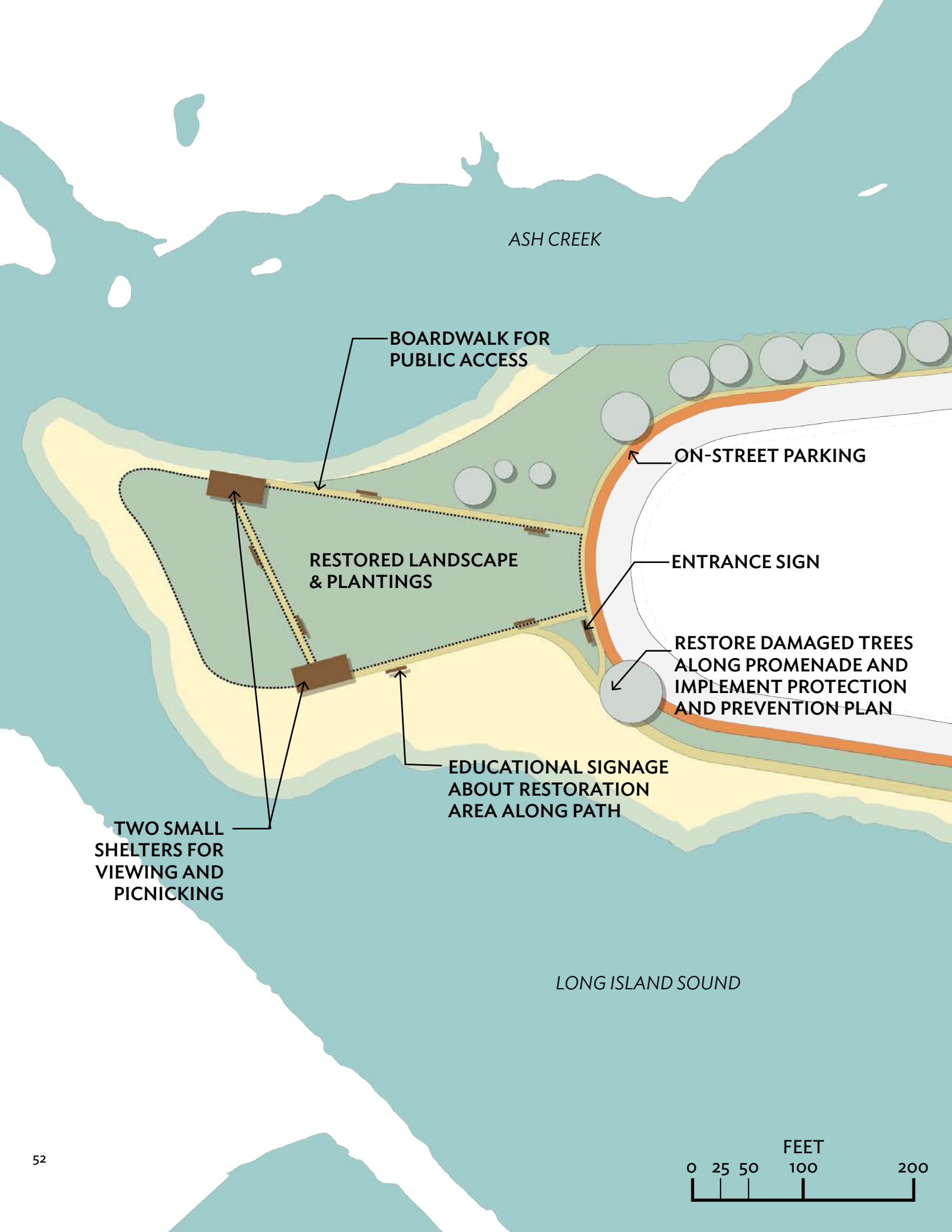
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Key Recommendations

- Create a boardwalk for public access and enjoyment to the sandspit that does not impact the fragile landscape.
- Create two overlooks on the north and south sides of the spit for viewing of Ash Creek, the Long Island Sound, and with seating for picnicking.
- Restore and maintain the dune landscape.
- Add educational signage about the restoration landscape to encourage respect and stewardship of this unique landscape.



BOSTON AVE/ MILL HILL

- Population - 10,322
- 9.8 acres park space

Parks

- Success Park
- Manila Street

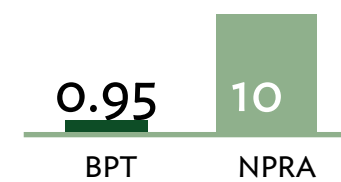
Boston Ave/Mill Hill

Key Park Recommendations

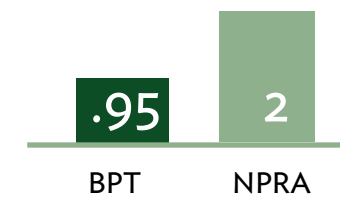
- Create a hyper-park at Success Park
- Transform Manila Street Playground to a more functional playground within a natural landscape

Additional Neighborhood Opportunities

- Potential East side train station and development zone south of Boston Ave/ Mill Hill
- Future conservation area or easement within development of the Lake Success Eco-Business Park



ALL PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS

Manila Street Playground

The Manila Street Playground offers an opportunity to renaturalize a portion of an underutilized park's landscape, minimizing maintenance and restoring ecological benefits. The strategic vision for the future of the neighborhood focuses investment in Success Park as a hyper park that will provide the Boston Ave / Mill Hill neighborhood with much of its needed formal play and sports amenities, freeing up Manila for a return to lower-intensity use.

The playground will remain as a walkable amenity for nearby families, but now be located within a well-defined path and renaturalized zone.

Key Recommendations

- Renaturalize the edges and rear portion of the Manila Street lot
- Clearly define the "active zone" of the park with the playground to include a small, maintained turf zone and a perimeter path.
- Plant street trees to improve the edges and arrival, and provide shade.





Success Park

Today, Success Park suffers from limited visibility with a location that is backed by housing and at the end of dead end roads. The on-site field is in poor condition, and already being studied for a synthetic turf upgrade to balance its high use.

For the future, Success Park is envisioned as the City's first new "hyper-park". Recommended amenities in this hyper-park reflect the neighborhood's demonstrated need of 2 basketball courts, 2 playgrounds, and a tennis court.

- New connective road provides better access, visibility, and overall neighborhood connectivity. Potential to incorporate green infrastructure, such as bioswales, into the new road and link to the rain garden.
- 2 basketball courts, 1 tennis court serve neighborhood sports needs
- New destination playground serves the Boston Ave/Mill Hill neighborhood need
- Additional buffer planting and entry signage help define the edges

Key elements include:

- Synthetic turf play field



BROOKLAWN & ST. VINCENT

- Population -22,600
- 29.2 acres park space

Local Parks

- Leroy Brown Junior Memorial Park / Kennedy Stadium
- Alice Street Lot
- Stratfield Burial Ground (with Stratfield Park and Clinton Park)

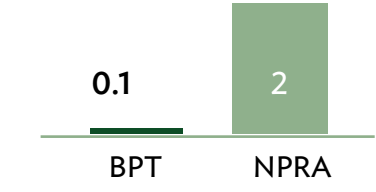
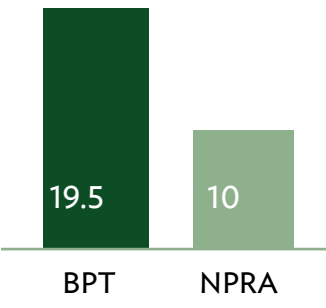
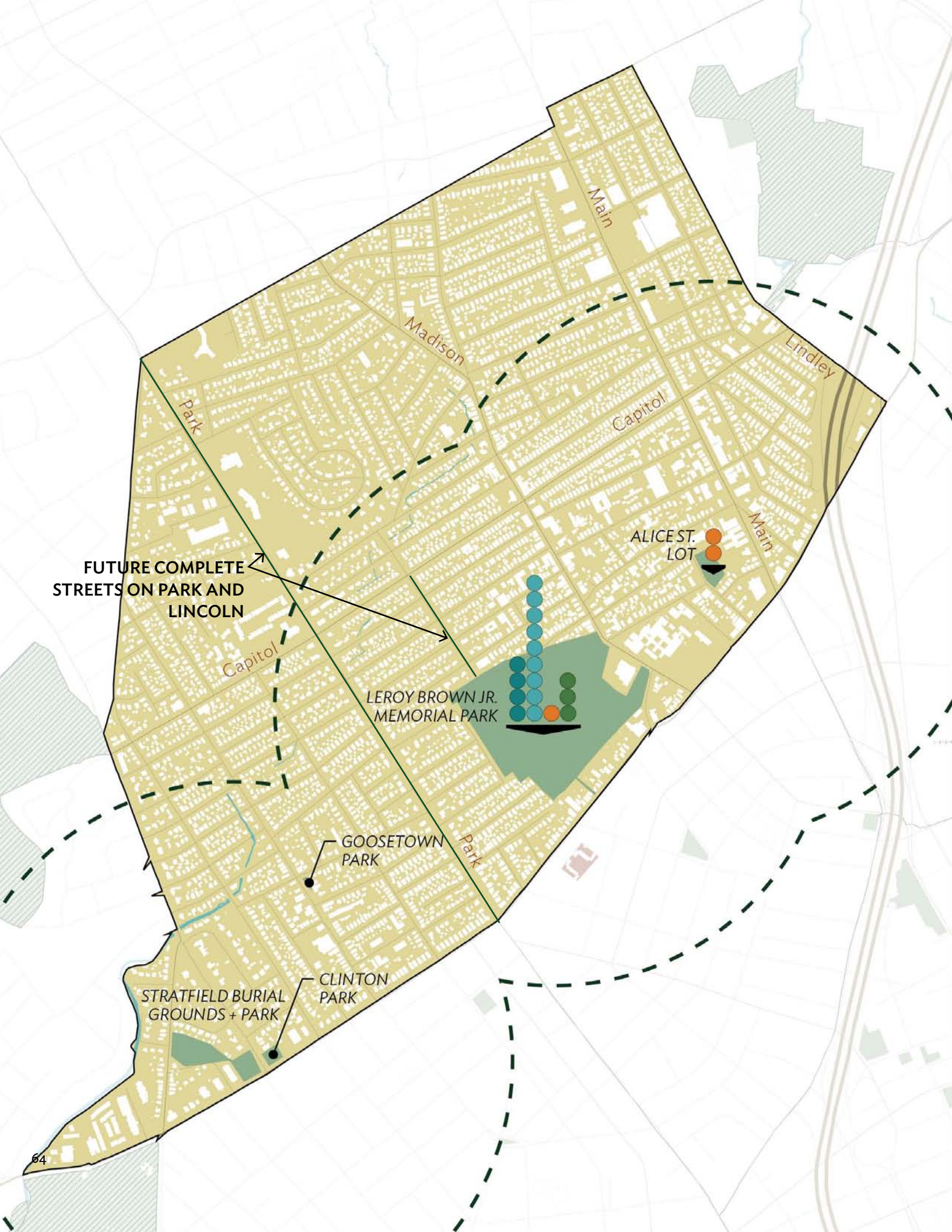
Brooklawn & St Vincent

Key Park Recommendations

- Improve accessibility and walkability to Leroy Brown Jr. “BJ” Memorial Park
- Consider future uses for Alice Street Lot

Additional Neighborhood Opportunities

- Complete street plans along Lincoln Avenue and Park Avenue



ALL PARKS
ACRES /1,000
RESIDENTS

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
ACRES /1,000
RESIDENTS

Alice Street Lot

Today, much of Alice Street Lot is dedicated to a single use activity, the remote-control race car track, that consumes a large amount of park space. One option is to repurpose this space for a new activity; a zone is outlined in orange on the map where three new basketball courts could fit and address neighborhood need. Comments from the public included noise complaints from nearby housing from the track. If this option is chosen, further detail about track utilization, community sentiment, and goals for new uses on the park should be explored.

If a less transformational option is chosen, key improvements should include renaturalizing park

edges, expanding the play furnishings, improving the streetscapes on approach to the park, and considering contracting a vendor who could grow the race track use.

Key elements include:

- Optional conversion of race track to three new basketball courts
- Renaturalize the park edges, retaining a “clean” entrance” along Alice
- Expand the play zone.





Leroy Brown Jr. "BJ" Memorial Park

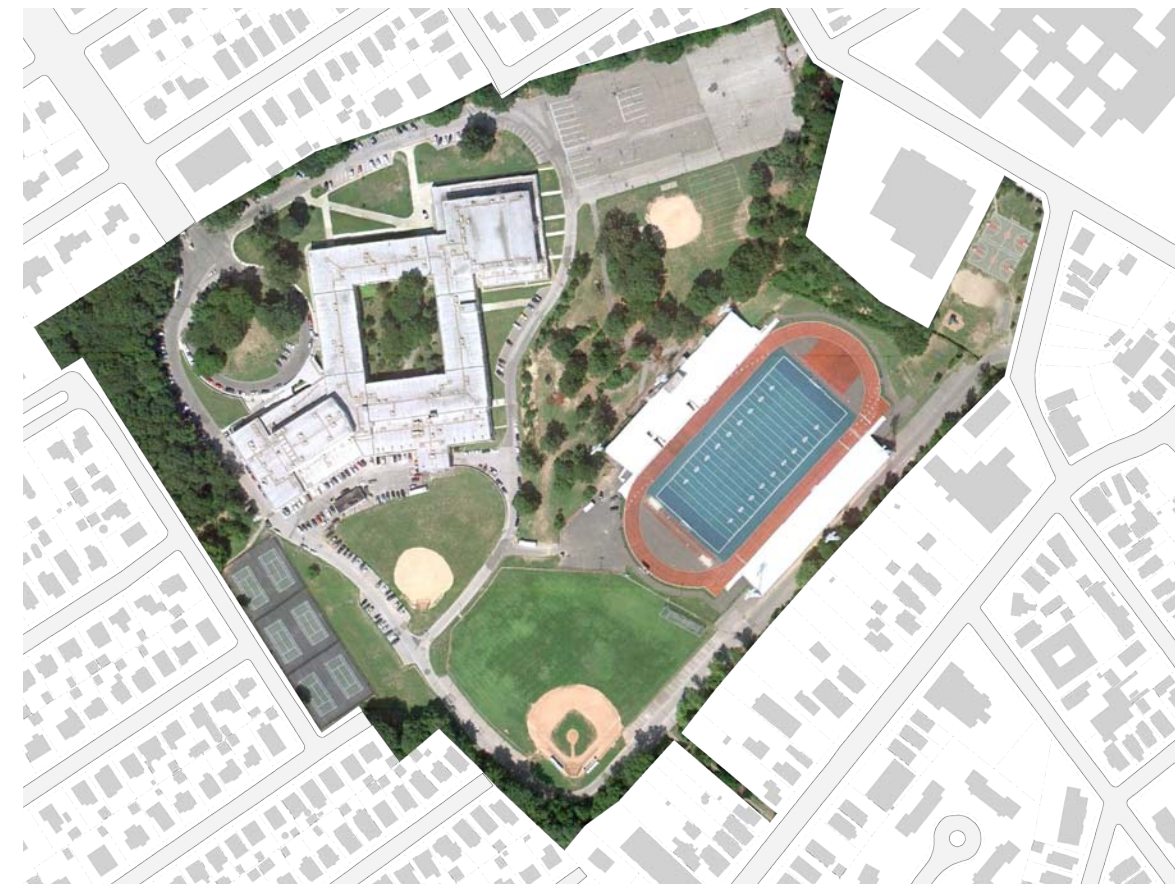
Leroy Brown Jr "BJ" Memorial Park and Kennedy Stadium is a large active sports complex that is a key asset to the neighborhood, as well as to the Hollow to the south, but access to the park is confusing and difficult. Efforts should focus on improving walkability on neighborhood streets to the park, and clarifying traffic for arrival by car.

Additionally, at Kennedy Stadium, a capital improvement plan to improve and maintain a synthetic turf field should be developed. This improvement project can integrate a running track that meets official high school regulation requirements, any necessary security improvements, and concession stand

improvements. The park is also appropriate for a future memorial sculpture.

Key elements include:

- Explore conversion of Center Street to two-way traffic to improve access to the Park
- Expand the play site, consider adding tennis courts, and improving existing courts
- Invest in improved landscaping and possible lighting on the "paper street" connection from North to the park to improve walkability.



Stratfield Burial Grounds (with Stratfield Park & Clinton Park)

Stratfield Park and Burial Grounds offer a counterpoint to Bridgeport's more active recreation spaces, and serve the need for quiet, contemplative open space. Edges of these parks should be renaturalized, leaving the portion of Stratfield Park maintained containing the existing monument.

Clinton Park should be treated as a walkable neighborhood park with uses serving the immediate neighbors, including expanded play and a restored fountain as the focal point and identity feature. In the future, if desired by the neighborhood, the City could consider the

possible conversion of the current formal fountain to an active splash pad.

Key elements include:

- Renaturalize edges to minimize maintenance.
- Expand playground at Clinton Park
- Retain historic marker at entrance to Stratfield Park.



DOWNTOWN

- Population-1,500
- 6.7 acres of park land

Parks

- Majestic Park
- Waterfront Park
- Baldwin Plaza
- McLevy Green
- Sliver by the River



Downtown

Key Park Recommendations

- Generate excitement for the waterfront through a new, active park on “Sliver by the River” site
- Improve accessibility and usability of Waterfront Park, a key gateway to Bridgeport from the Intermodal Station
- Continue to seek small interventions, such as Main and Gold, that are impactful and low maintenance
- Renaturalize Majestic Park to minimize maintenance
- Continue to seek additional programming to activate Baldwin Plaza and McLevy Green
- Pursue partnerships with the arts community and business leaders

Additional Neighborhood Opportunities

- Ongoing revitalization in Downtown North/ North Main Street
- Ongoing continuous public access efforts along the Pequonnock River



Baldwin Plaza

Baldwin Plaza is one of two main, civic “town greens” in Downtown Bridgeport. It should remain open and flexible to host programs and activities. Future improvements should support daily use of the park - such as opportunities to integrate vending or food service for lunchtime works - as well as special events.

Key elements include:

- Expand opportunities for vending and food trucks. Seating and shade to support these activities already exist.
- Pursue opportunities for event programming such as musical performances and civic gatherings.



Majestic Park

Majestic Park is a redevelopment site, and steeply sloped. Located at the confluence of several busy streets it is also difficult to physically access. These features make it a prime candidate for renaturalization, and the city will get large gains in minimized maintenance while continuing to hold the site for further development.

Key elements include:

- Renaturalize the majority of the park lawn to minimize moving.
- Maintain access through the park and to the shelter as well as visual access to the existing gateway sign via paths and strategic maintenance.



McLevy Green

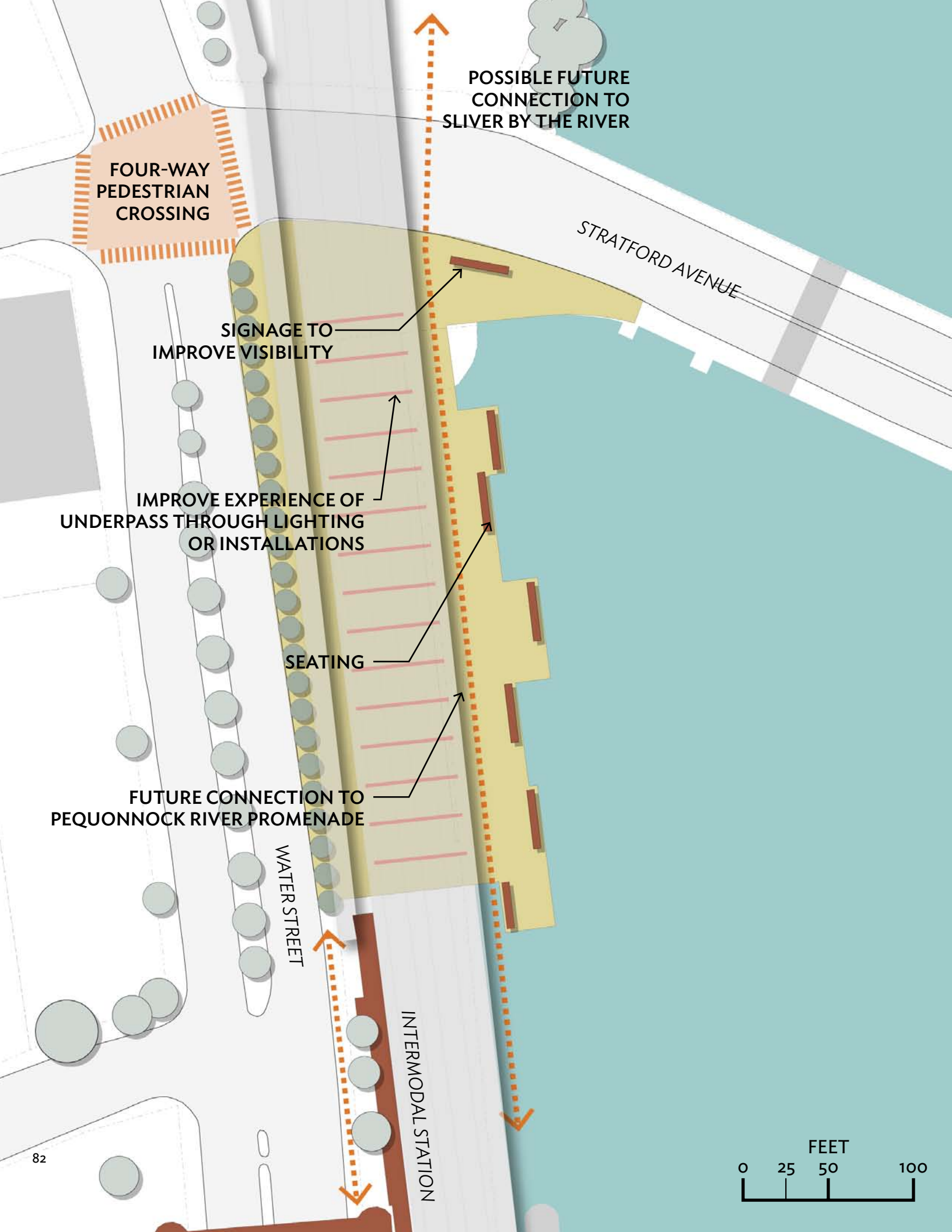
McLevy Green is a key civic park, in the heart of Downtown Bridgeport. It serves an important role in the life of city, hosting events such as the weekly farmer's market, concerts, auto shows, civic celebrations, cultural events, and daily dog walking.

This vibrant, urban activity should be supported and the flexible nature of the park should be maintained. Improved crossings on all corners, and a possible central shade structure for use by the farmer's market or other events could add to the identity of the park and serve as a focal point.

Key elements include:

- Shade structure for use by farmer's market or other stage events.
- Improved crosswalks to park at all corners, including the "back" door on Main Street.





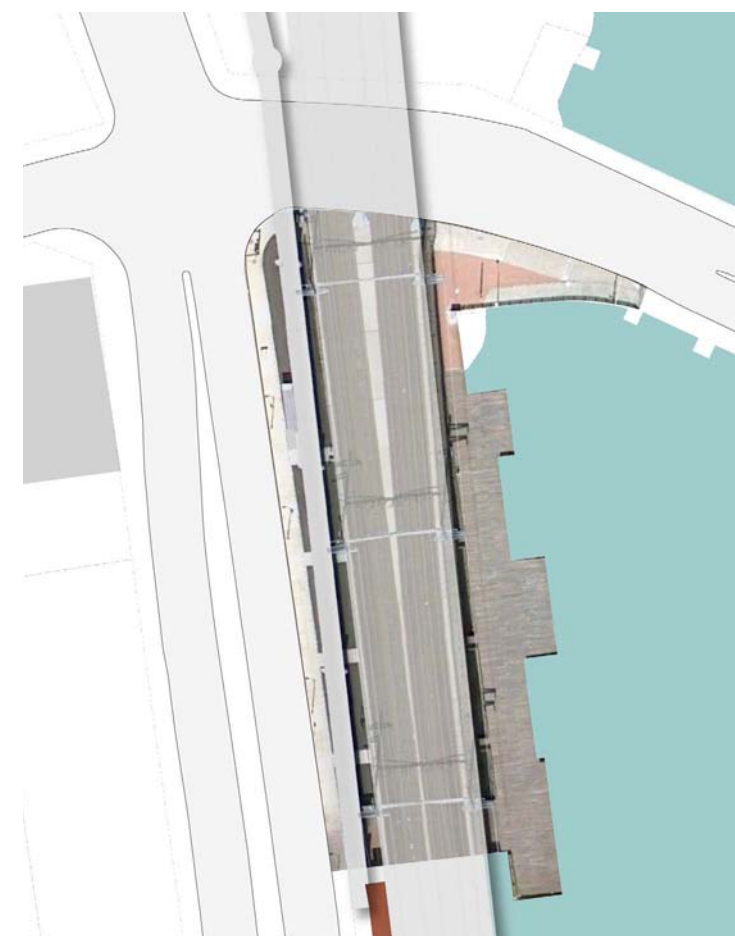
Waterfront Park

Waterfront Park has two critical assets: it is on the Pequonnock River, and located downtown at the transit hub. With the future Sliver by the River park to the immediate north, Waterfront Park can become part of a major downtown recreation presence on the riverfront.

However, currently the park is poorly signed and identified as part of the parks system. Additional signage and improvements to the pedestrian crossings below the rail will improve visibility and access. In the future, the park will also be a critical space along the Pequonnock River promenade.

Key elements include:

- Better visibility through identification signage at the north and south ends.
- Improved pedestrian experience from Water Street
- Create future connections to waterfront promenade and Sliver by the River to the north





Sliver By The River

“Sliver by the River” refers to the major opportunity site in Downtown Bridgeport and along the Pequonnock River. A new park is recommended for this site to complement Knowlton Park across the river and bring more energy to the waterfront, while helping to catalyze redevelopment downtown. It will be large enough to host events, contain a waterfront promenade linking to the future connected Pequonnock waterfront, and a site for kayaks and boat launches.

Key elements include:

- Providing public access to the waterfront for recreation including boating and fishing.
- Building a boundless destination playground to draw families to downtown
- Creating a public performance and gathering space.

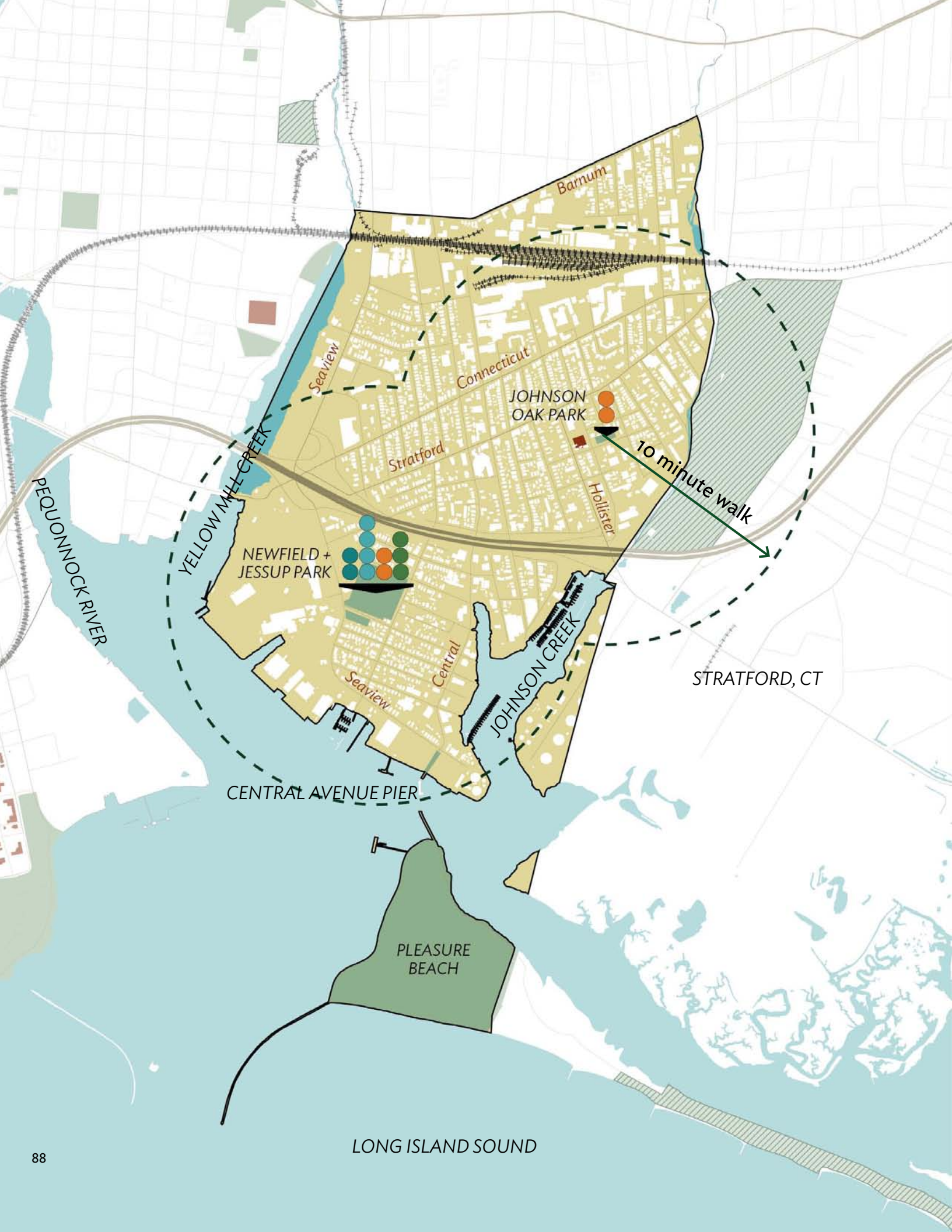


EAST END

- Population - 8,194
- 9.5 acres of park space

Local Parks

- Newfield-Jessup Park
- Johnson Oak Park
- Pleasure Beach



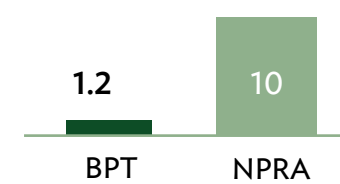
East End

Key Park Recommendations

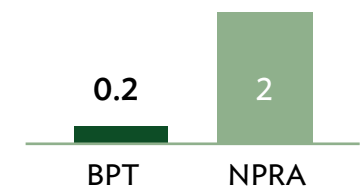
- Create a partnership with the Board of Education to share use and maintenance of park resources at Johnson Oak Park and school site.
- Re-open access to a restored Pleasure Beach.
- Begin implementation of a restored, revitalized Yellow Mill Creek corridor.

Additional Neighborhood Opportunities

- Large mill and industrial redevelopment along rail line
- Seaview Avenue improvements



ALL PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS

Johnson Oak + Tisdale School

Current utilization of Johnson Oak Park is inhibited by the public park's location: tucked within a neighborhood and among dead end or one-way streets. This lack of visibility is a condition that afflicts many of Bridgeport's smaller neighborhood parks, and site reconfiguration is recommended to provide better access for the public to the park amenities.

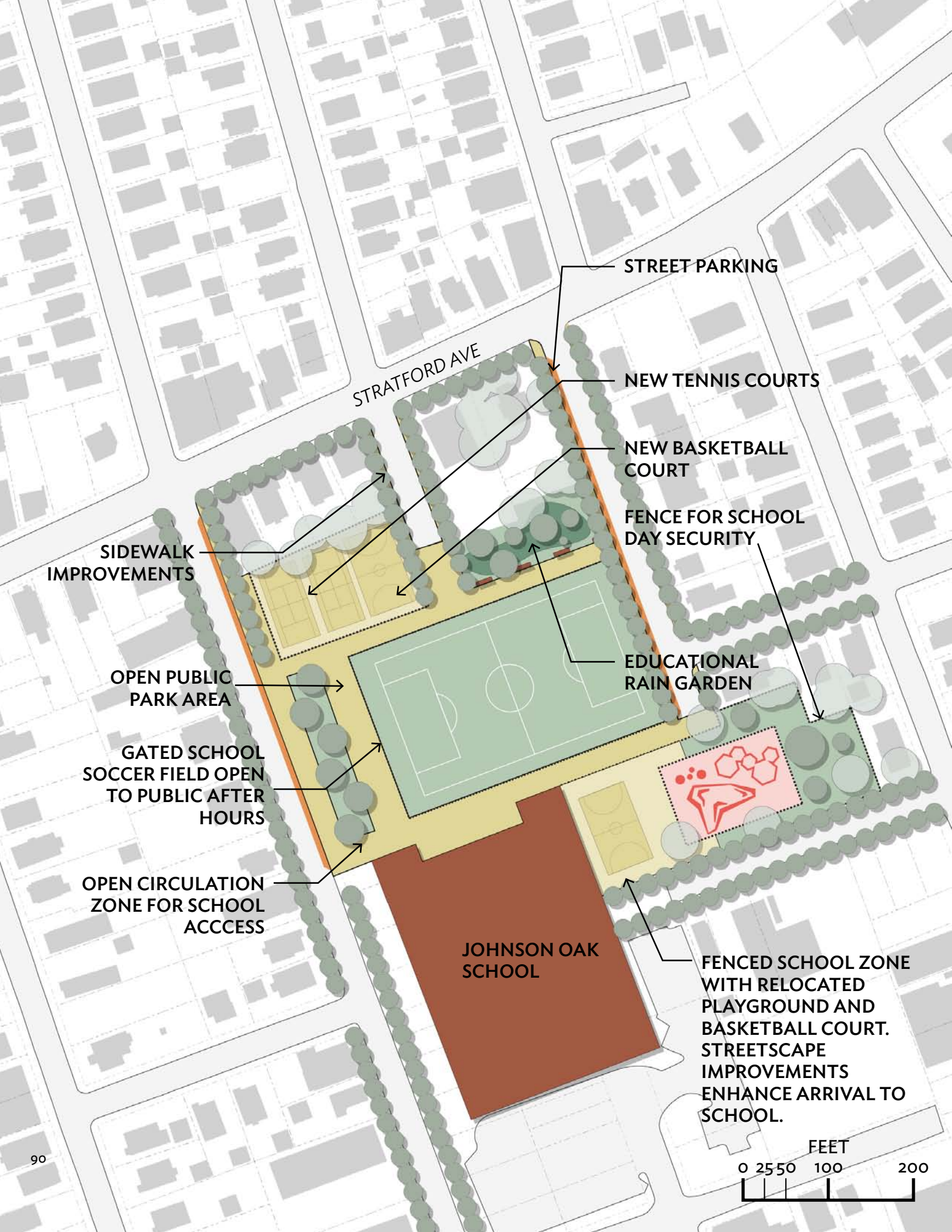
Johnson Oak is also emblematic of the Schools - Parks partnership, and shared use of the exterior school play amenities should be negotiated with the Board of Education. The proposed improvements at Johnson Oak can serve as principles to be applied in other parks adjacent to schools as well.

- Reconfigure layout and circulation so that the public park zone is more accessible off of main Stratford Ave.

- Allow public use of the school area during agreed non-school hours
- Shared maintenance and security through partnerships of Parks Department, school security, neighbors, the City of Bridgeport and police

Key elements include:

- Clarify public access to the park off of Stratford Ave at all entrance points through signage and improved streetscape.
- Reverse the locations of the public park and secured, school zone.
- Introduce 2 new courts - 1 tennis court and one basketball court - within the public zone.



Newfield/Jessup Park

Newfield/Jessup are contiguous open spaces and operate as a single neighborhood park location serving the high need East End. With Johnson Oak as the only other mainland park in the East End, Newfield/Jessup is a significant resource for family play and sports activities to the broader neighborhood.

However, the park currently has complicated access and adjacencies that hinder the experience. Access and visibility off of the major corridor, Seaview Avenue, is very limited and should be improved with entry signage. Similarly, the western edge of the park abuts industrial land. While the other three faces are more protected

by neighborhood blocks, the lots have some variability and vacancies that detract from a consistent frontage.

Key elements include:

- Wetlands buffer landscape to minimize visual impact of the adjaance industrial land uses along Seaview Ave and balance with environmental benefits
- Two signed, gateway locations at the Seaview Ave access and neighborhood side
- Improved perimeter streetscaping





Pleasure Beach

A comprehensive master plan for the restoration and enhancement of Pleasure Beach was undertaken by the City in 2011. This plan will bring Pleasure Beach back into the accessible park system, while protecting important natural habitat.

- Build partnerships with environmental organizations for conservation and stewardship
- Restore shelters and activities on site
- Ensure public safety

Key elements include:

- Provide access from mainland via water taxi and/or bridge





EAST SIDE

- Population-13,095
- 15.23 acres of park space

Local Parks

- James Brown Waterview and Upchurch
- Luis Munoz Marin Open Space
- Washington Park
- Knowlton Park

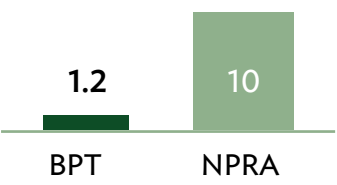
East Side

Future Related Neighborhood Opportunities

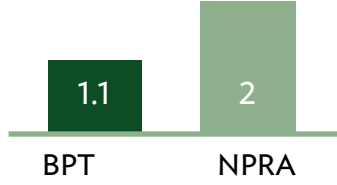
- East Side train station and potential East Side Development Corridor
- Ongoing Pequonnock Riverfront recapture with improved access and redevelopment

Key Park System Recommendations

- Re-imagine James Brown Waterview, Upchurch Park, Waltersville and Barnum schools, and the future Bridgeport Housing Authority sites as a cohesive, active district with connected, educational open spaces.
- Coordinate with the East Side neighborhood NRZ and residents to maintain Washington Park as a clean, safe civic center and town square to anchor the neighborhood.
- Begin a coordinated effort with regional and local partners to restore and redevelop the Yellow Mill Creek corridor.
- Prepare for connectivity to Downtown and Steel Pointe Harbor.

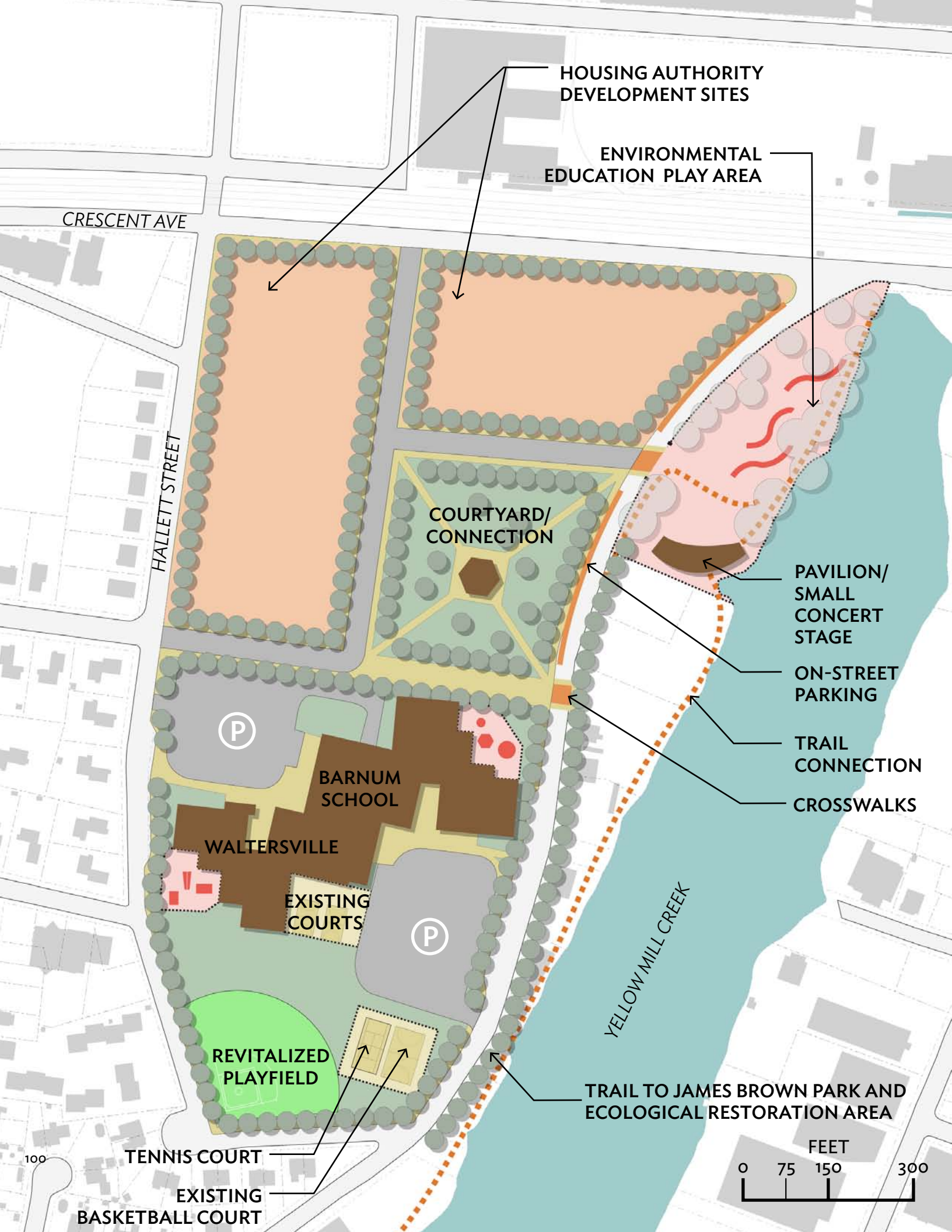


ALL PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS

Upchurch + James Brown Waterview + Waltersville Barnum Schools + Bridgeport Housing Authority Site



Re-imagine James Brown Waterview, Upchurch Park, Waltersville and Barnum schools, and the future Bridgeport Housing Authority sites as a cohesive, active district with connected, educational open spaces. This combined park area will be one of the five hyper-parks in the Bridgeport system where investment and amenities are focused.

The identity of the Upchurch/James Brown Waterview takes advantage of the park's site on

the Yellow Mill Creek, and will develop a focus on ecological education and serve as the gateway to the future restored Yellow Mill Creek.

Key Recommendations

- Create a waterfront path and internal trail circuit
- Create two destination playgrounds: 1) an educational and environmental focused waterfront play at the current James Brown Waterview site with interpretive signage and an educational focus and 2) a neighborhood play and recreation zone at Upchurch with a revitalized playfield and a new tennis court.
- Foster partnerships for the future of the site with the Board of Education to allow evening and off hours access to the public to school playgrounds and courts, and with the Housing Authority to ensure the large site is developed such that the open space takes advantage of its waterfront site and connects to existing park spaces. Utilize partnerships to offer more recreational programs at these new facilities.



Luis Munoz Marin Open Space

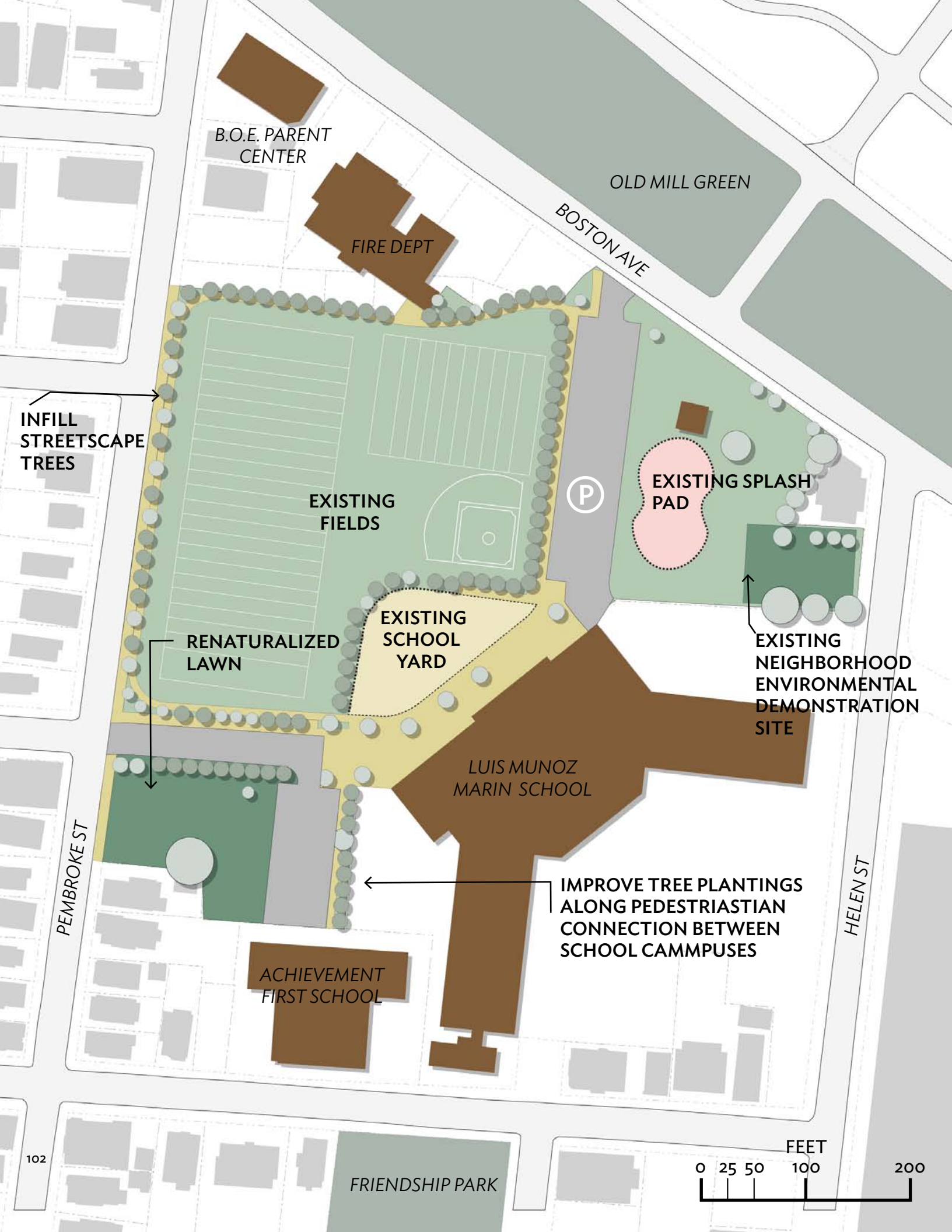
Luis Munoz Marin Open Space is a relatively new, small public park adjacent to a larger school park and fields site. It was created to be a community center, and several community services are located within the block. Minimal improvements are needed, and the most gains will be found from continuing partnerships with the school and Groundworks Bridgeport, as well as new connections to Old Mill Green.

This parks-school site would benefit greatly from a shared use policy, codifying access to the school open space during non-school hours. Additionally, the park is located across Boston Ave from Old Mill Green, where a new hyper-park with significant investments in courts and playgrounds, as well as traffic calming measures across Boston Ave, are proposed.

Small investments in infill streetscape trees will help define the edge of the park from the neighborhood.

Key Recommendations

- Build on the multi-partner community uses in the area to create a large community resource, with a school-parks partnership with Luis Munoz Marin School, and the co-location of the Board of Education Parent Center, Fire Department, and Groundworks Bridgeport's Community Garden project.
- Create connections to a future hyper park at Old Mill Green across Boston Ave to capitalize on additional activities there.
- Enhance connectivity from Boston Avenue to the East Main Street Business District as well as Luis Marin Garfield Open Space and Friendship Park.



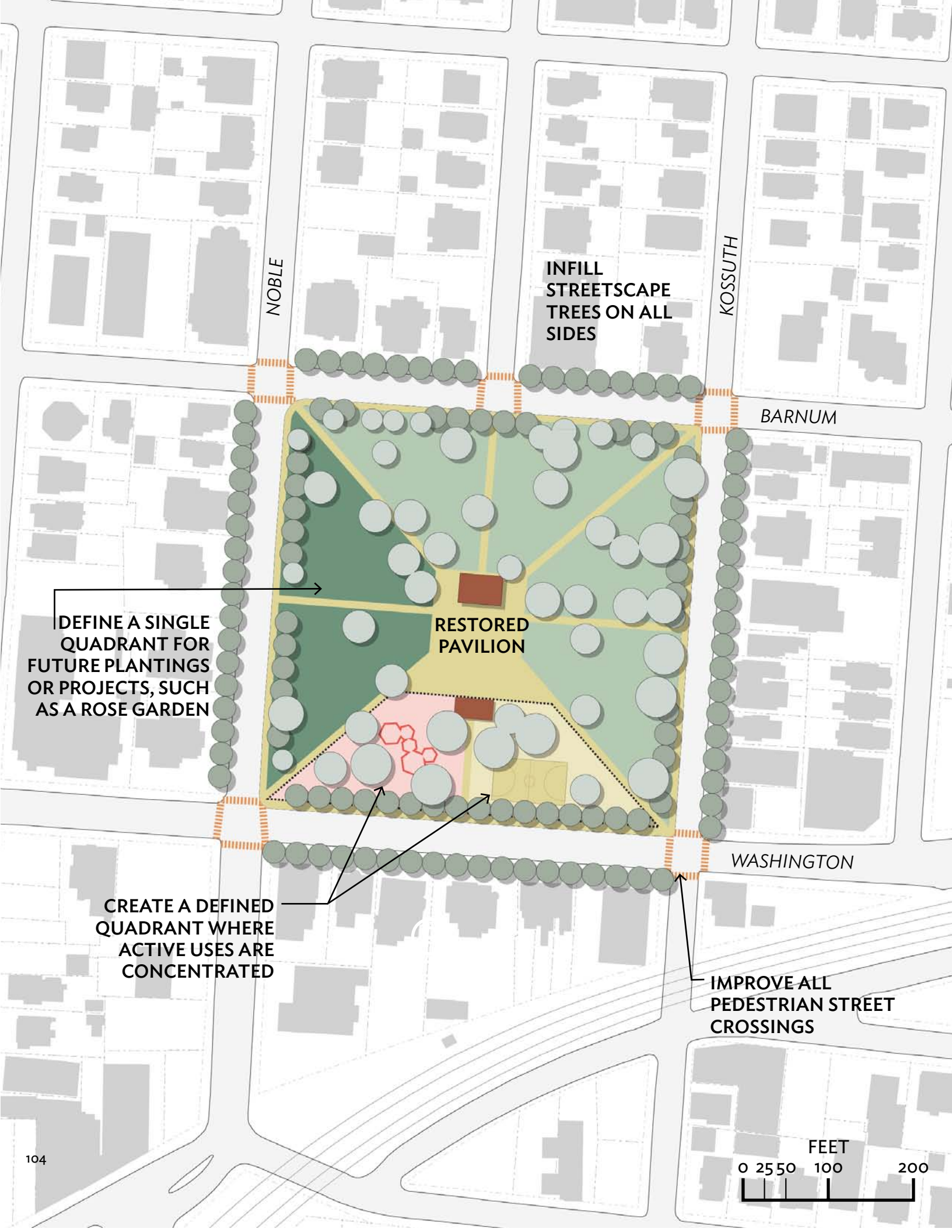
Washington Park

Washington Park plays a unique role in Bridgeport's Park system and should be protected and enhanced as a classic, civic green. The park's tree canopy is of great significance to the park experience and should be maintained for longevity and to the benefits of each tree's health. After restoration, the paths and layout should be maintained, with future amenities or projects sited carefully, while the rest remains an open, canopied and restful space.

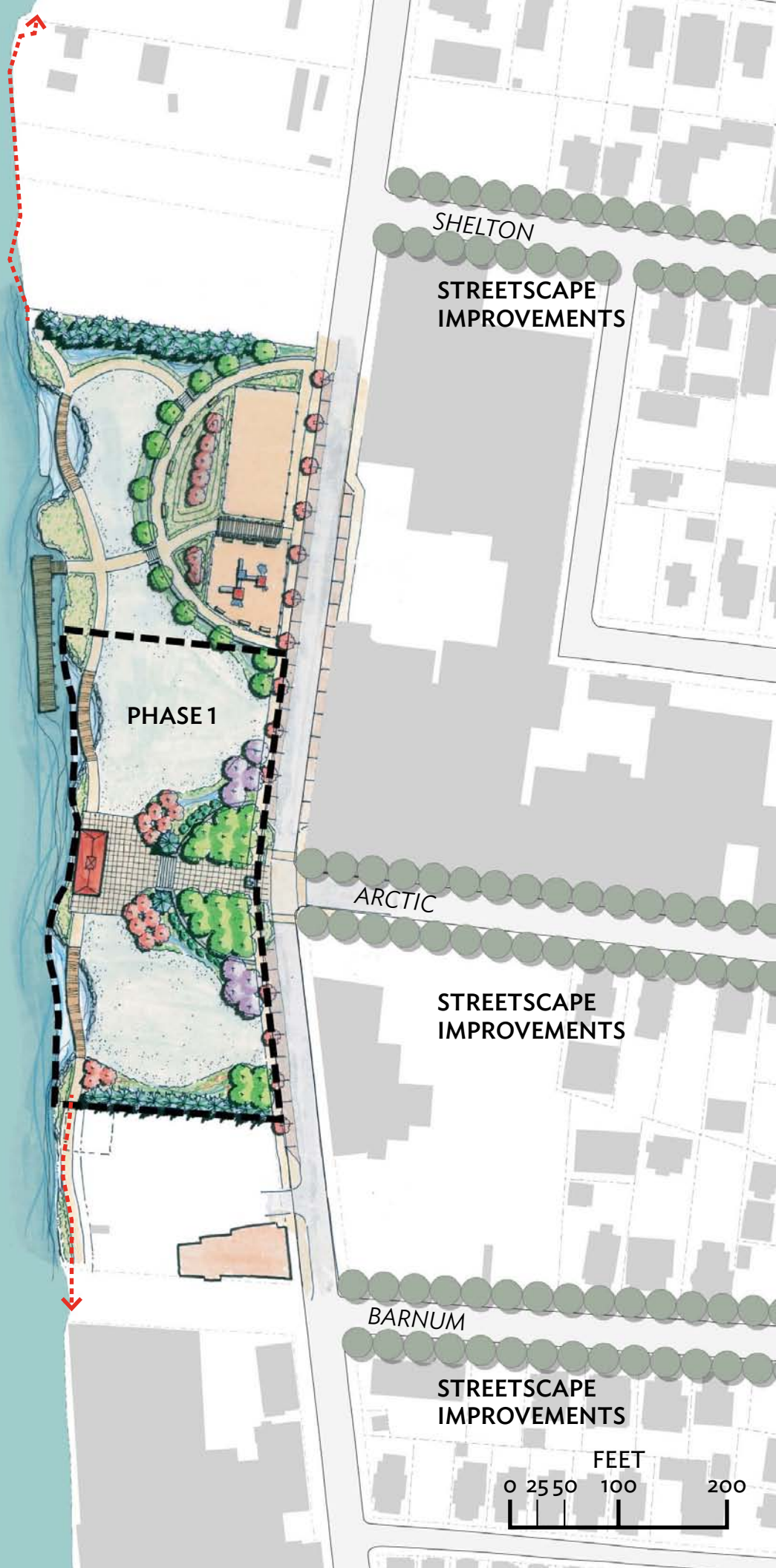
Working with the NRZ, Washington Park should become the designated park for neighborhood partnership in maintenance and shared responsibility. Meridian Hill Park in Washington, D.C. provides an inspirational model for transformation of a neglected neighborhood park into the heart of the neighborhood and a model for others. As a neighborhood park, walkability is important and attention should be paid to nearby sidewalks and crosswalks.

Key Recommendations

- Protect the historic layout of the park, even while siting new activities. Washington Park is laid out into 8 triangles radiating from a central gazebo. Designate four triangles (or two quadrants) to be sites for active uses such as the existing playground and courts to anchor them more logically within the park.
- The streets surrounding the park are an integral and important part of the park, providing a strong frame. Invest not only in restored trees within the park, but also in creating a strong system of street trees in the blocks surrounding the park to extend the experience to the neighborhood.
- Restore a useful, contemporary central pavilion that can become a new icon for the park and the neighborhood.



LINK TO FUTURE PUBLIC ACCESS



Knowlton Park

Knowlton Park will be a significant new park for the East Side and one of the City's best waterfront parks, with direct linear frontage along the Pequonnock. It is currently under design by Fuss & O'Neill with construction underway on Phase One at Arctic Street.

- Create streetscape improvements along the east-west streets, beginning with Arctic Street, to improve walkability and access to this new park amenity from East Side neighborhoods. Improving streetscape connections along north-south streets will also improve the experience of walking to the park.

Key Recommendations

- Plan for future connections from Knowlton Park paths and uses to the pedestrian path along the Pequonnock River edge.



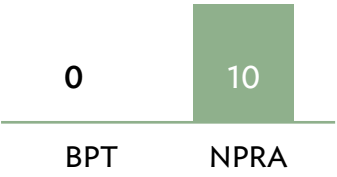


ENTERPRISE ZONE

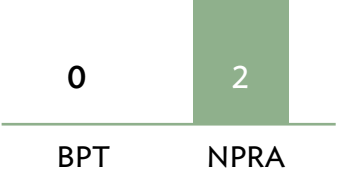
- Population - 872
- 0 acres of parkland

No Parks

Enterprise Zone



ALL PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS

THE HOLLOW

- Population - 9,562
- 2.25 acres of parkland

Local Parks

- Nanny Goat (Lafayette Park)

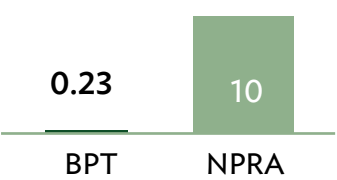
The Hollow

Key Park Recommendations

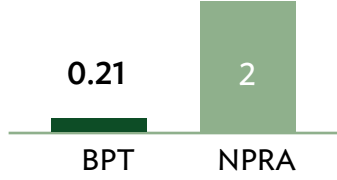
- As the Hollow’s main park, Nanny Goat Park should be a priority and be highly amenitized to increase activity.
- Improve walkability and connections between the Hollow and the major park asset to the north - Kennedy Stadium, Central High School and BJ Brown Park.
- Seek small infill opportunities to create low maintenance open space in the form of mini-parks.

Additional Opportunities

- Enhance connections to the Downtown.



ALL PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS

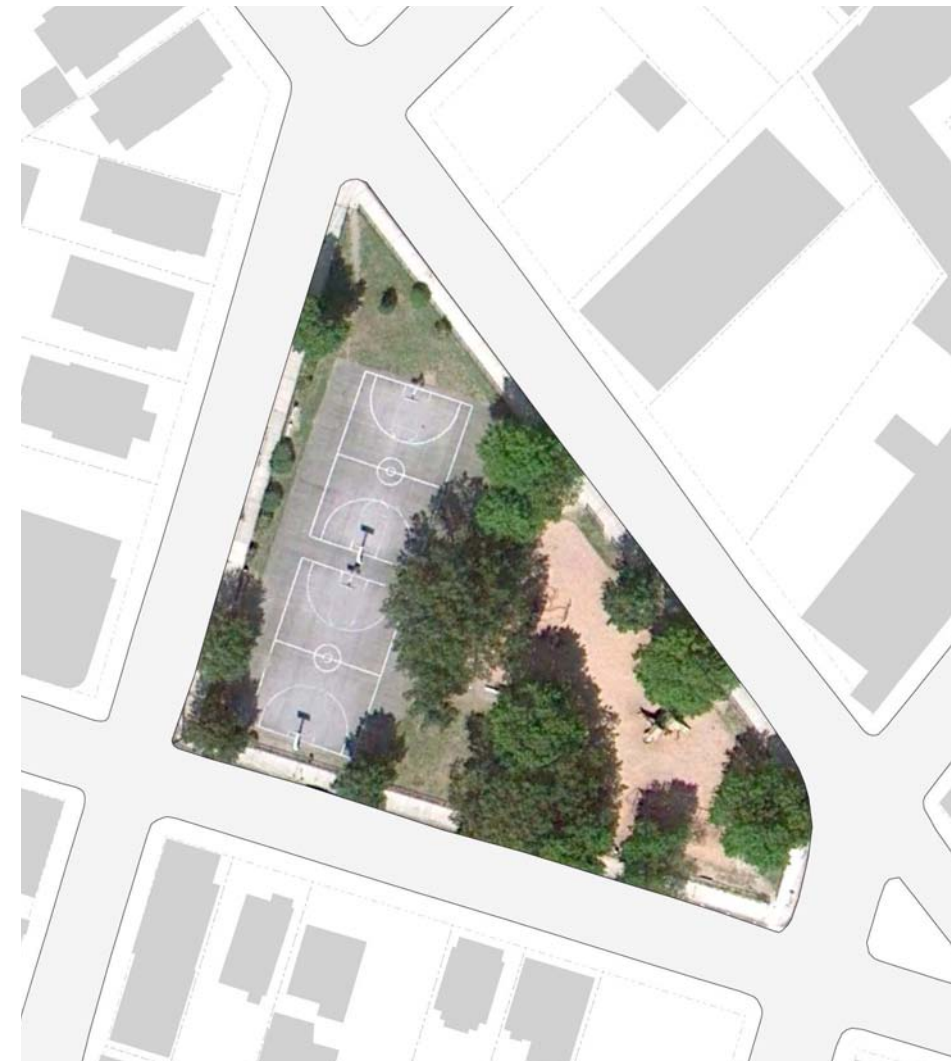


Nanny Goat (Lafayette Park)

The Hollow is a high need area of Bridgeport that is currently not well served by park space. However, it is built out and no major opportunities exist for large, new open spaces. Nanny Goat Park must be improved with expanded play and sports options to serve the needs of the community.

Key elements include:

- Expand existing playground, and introduce a splash pad along Oak.
- Add one additional basketball court
- Fill in street trees on all four sides to create a strong frame for this small park.



A stone bridge with a single arch spans across a pond. The bridge is constructed from grey stone blocks. In the foreground, there are tall green reeds. The background is filled with lush green trees under a clear sky. The text 'NORTH BRIDGEPORT' is overlaid in large white letters on the right side of the image.

NORTH BRIDGEPORT

- Population - 11,505
- 200.3 acres of park space

Parks

- Beardsley Park
- Old Mill Green

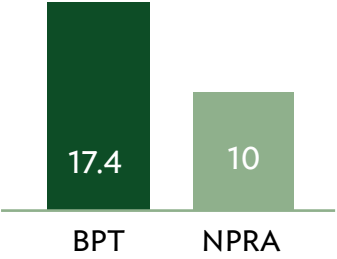
North Bridgeport

Key Park Recommendations

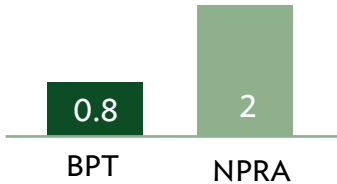
- Create a linear hyper-park at Old Mill Green that serves both North Bridgeport and the East Side to the south
- Develop a landscape maintenance plan for Beardsley to renaturalize park edges and lower maintenance.

Additional Opportunities

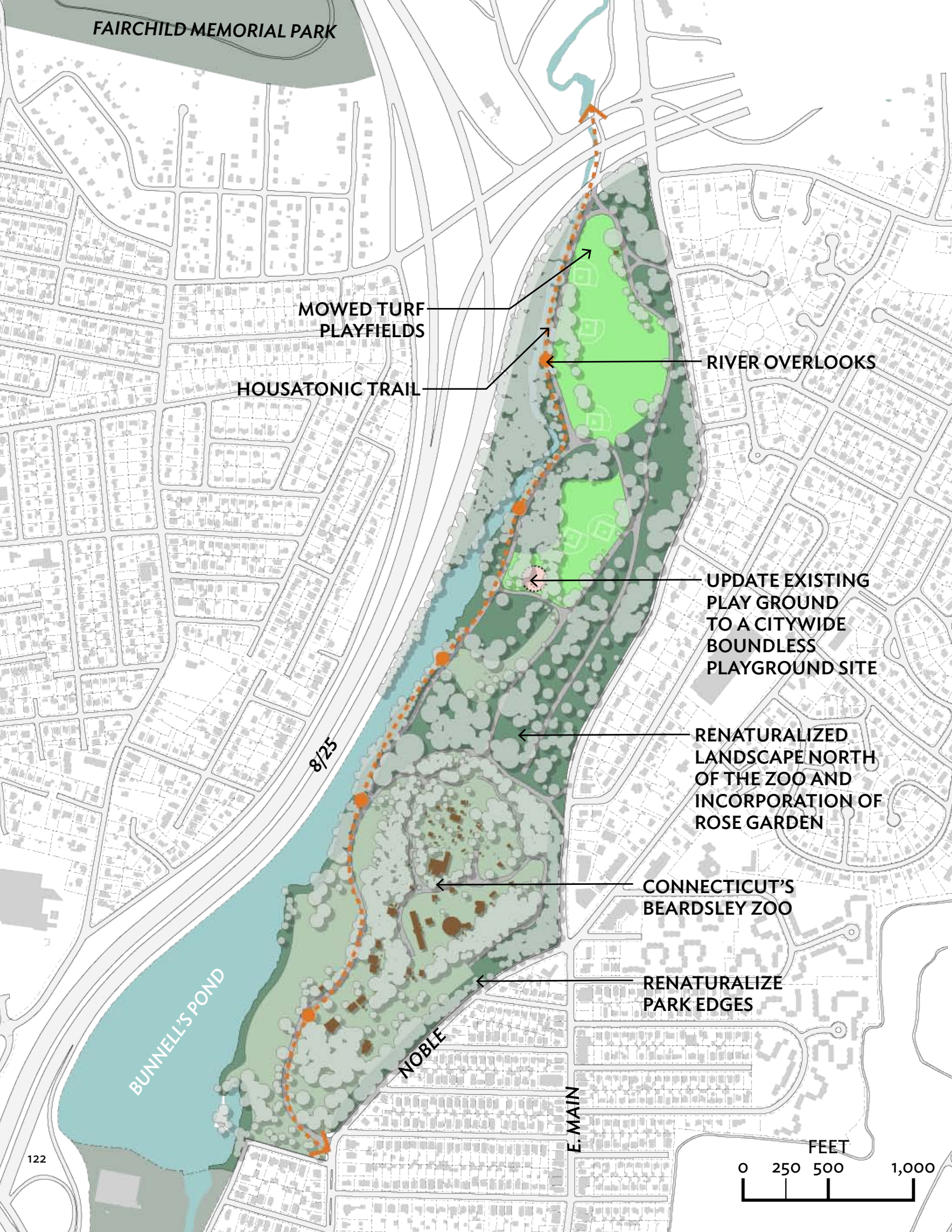
- Future development of the Lake Success Eco-Business Park
- Redevelopment of the Remington Arms site
- Restoration and redevelopment of the Yellow Mill Creek corridor.



ALL PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS



Beardsley Park/Zoo

Beardsley Park and Zoo is an integral part of the Bridgeport Parks system. As an original Olmsted landscape, its mature trees, waterfront paths, and playfields provide enjoyment for the city and beyond. Many Olmsted landscapes across the country are moving toward a lower maintenance system, and are renaturalizing open portions of their large parks. Beardsley's landscape can retain its beauty and its active role in Bridgeport's system by renaturalizing the edges and passive open spaces. This will create a dramatic landscape backdrop for the Housatonic Trail's passage through Bridgeport.

Key elements include:

- Renaturalize the landscape north of the Zoo, except for the playfields which should be transformed to durable synthetic turf.
- Beardsley will be a critical site along the regional Housatonic Trail to provide inter-city connections.



Old Mill Green

Old Mill Green is an “in-between” space in the Bridgeport Parks system. While it offers a large amount of park space, it is unprogrammed and difficult to access. For an underutilized space, it requires a high degree of maintenance by the parks crew.

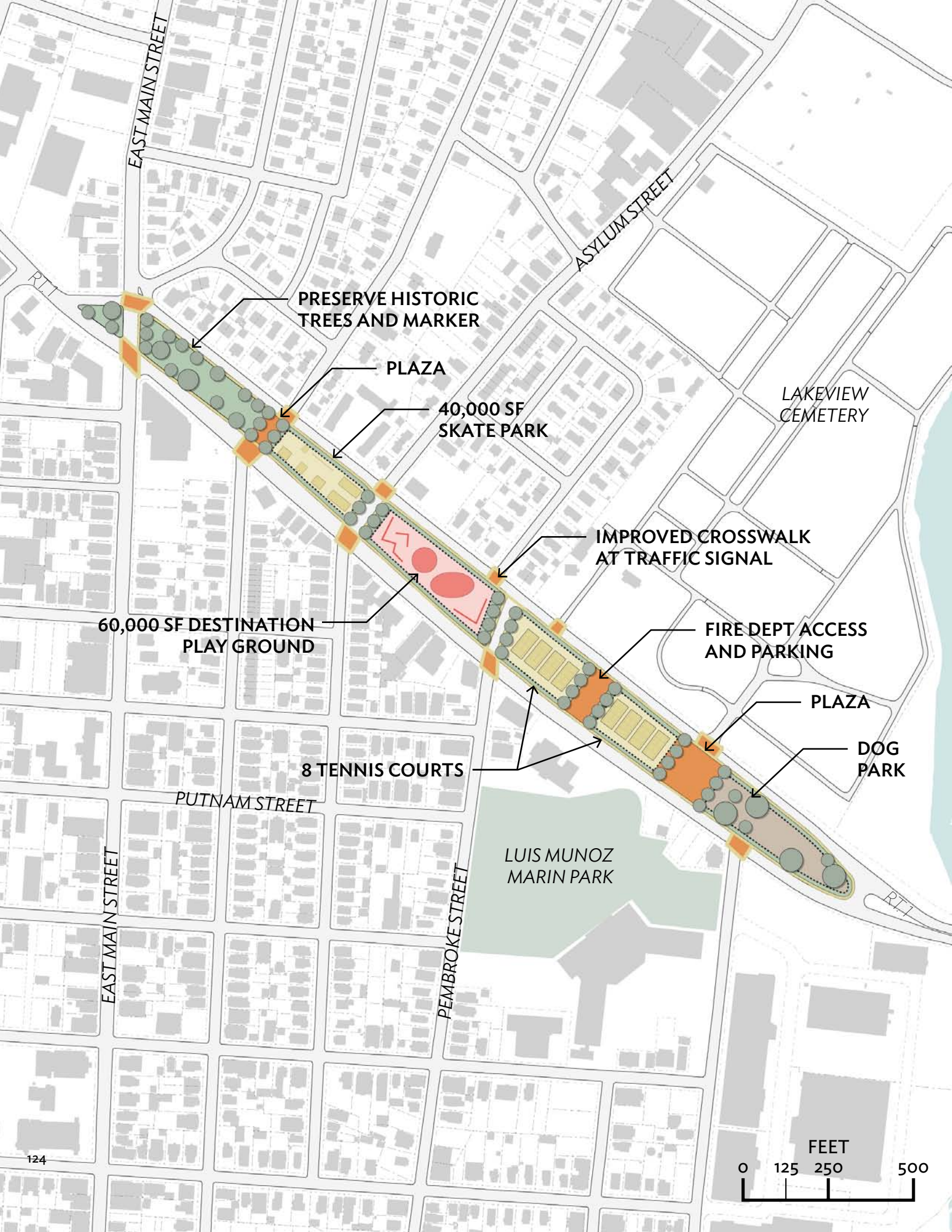
Old Mill Green is located at the edge of the East Side, which qualifies as a high need neighborhood and is in need of play and sports amenities. The esplanade can be transformed into an active, highly used play space with different zones of activities - one of five hyper parks in the Bridgeport system.

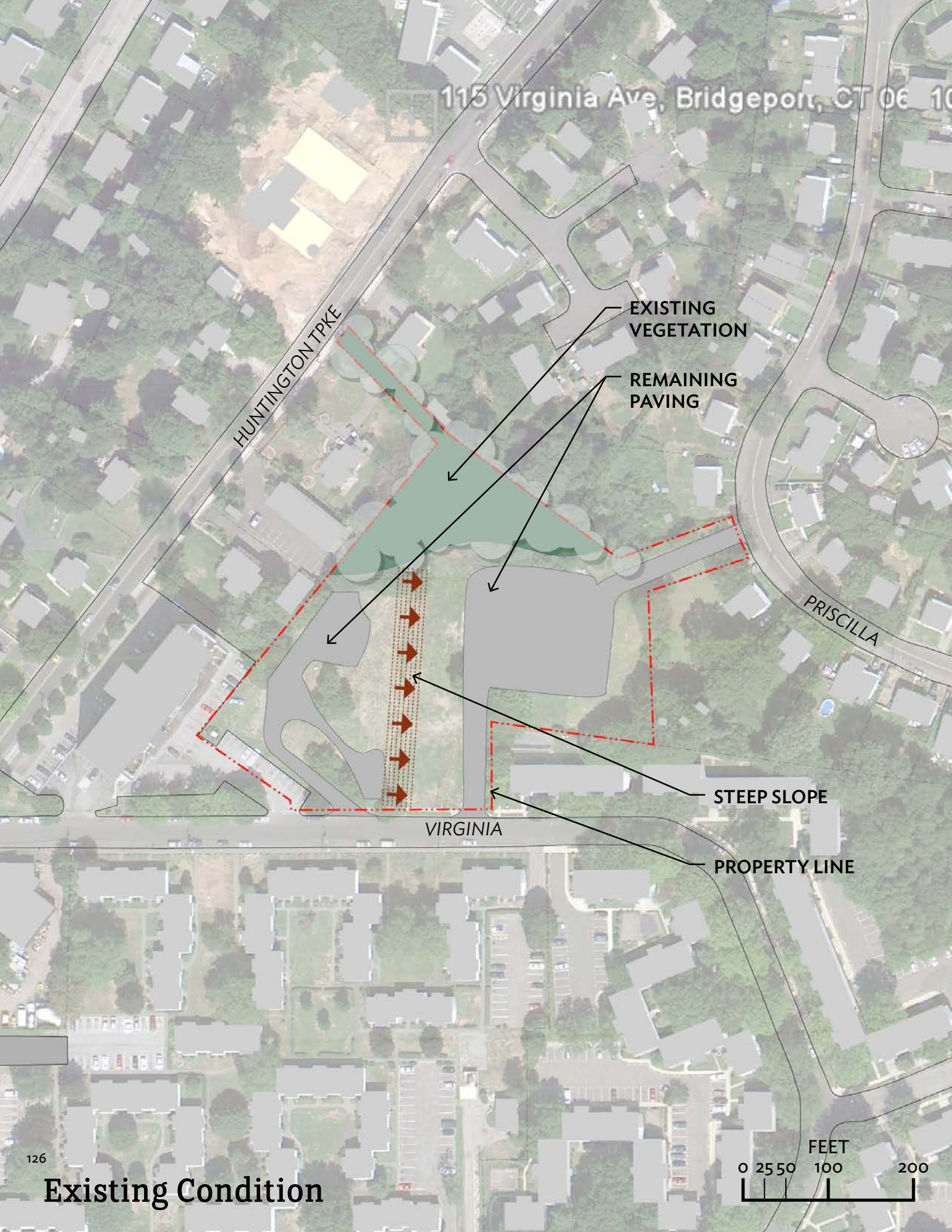
Traffic calming measures throughout the corridor are needed to improve safety and park access. Additional collaboration between the Bridgeport Engineering Department and Connecticut

Department of Transportation should be a priority to determine next steps for street closures and pedestrianization of Boston Ave. Street connections to Luis Munoz Marin Park should also be improved so that restroom facilities may be shared between the two adjacent parks.

Key elements include:

- New amenities - 8 tennis courts, skate park, dog run, playground, and historic park
- 2 street closures and improved pedestrian access for safety
- Historic, shaded open space serves as gateway to the park





115 Virginia Ave, Bridgeport, CT 06 10

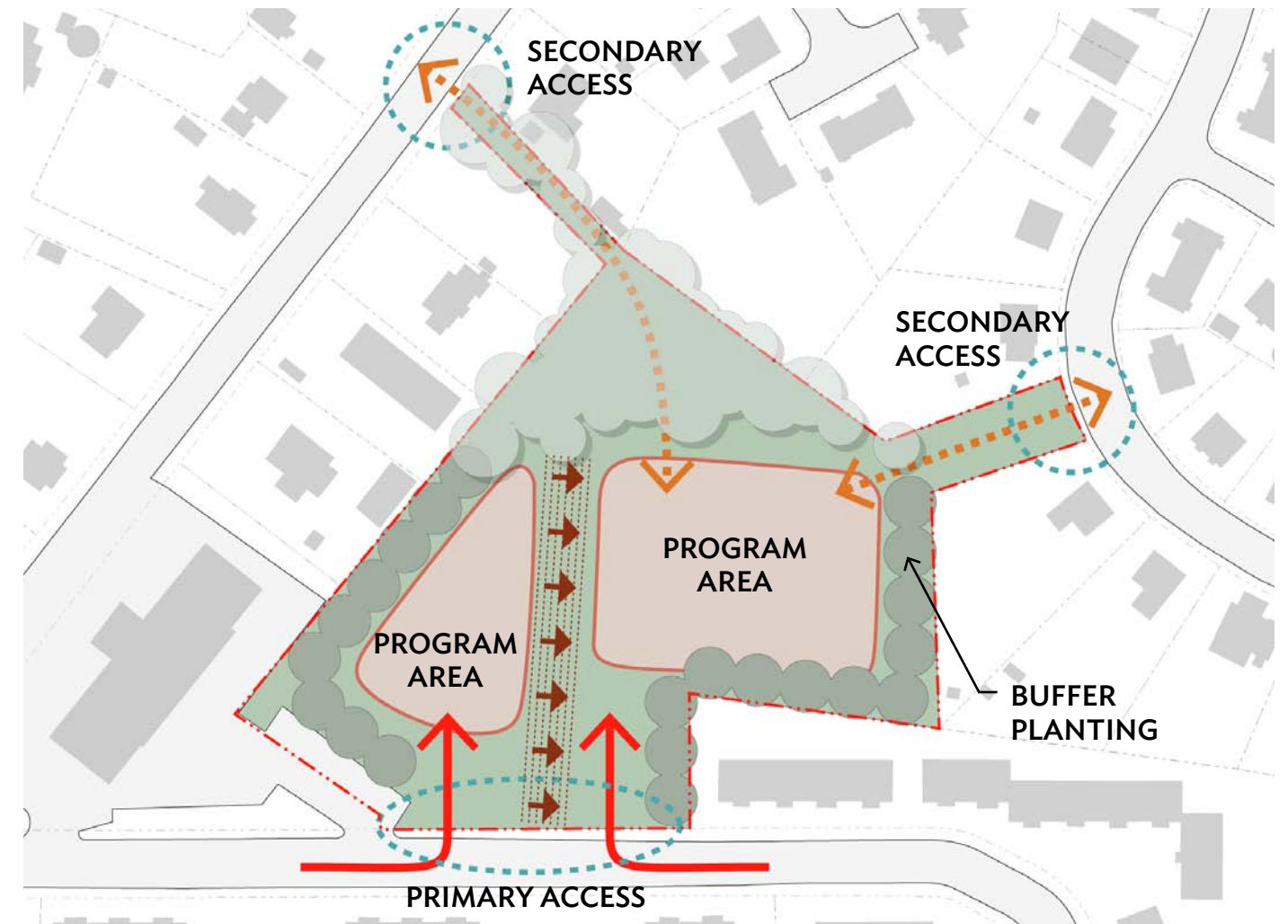
115 Virginia Avenue

The vacant 115 Virginia Avenue site offers potential to create a new neighborhood park in North Bridgeport, complementing the larger assets in the neighborhood. Visioning should be done to determine community needs, and layout should respect the complex topography and access.



Possible Program Includes:

- Dog Run
- Holistic Garden for Senior Citizens
- Playground and Basketball Court
- Parking





NORTH END

- Population-21,566
- 320 acres of park land

Local Parks

- Puglio Park
- Veteran's Memorial Park
- Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course
- Elton Rogers

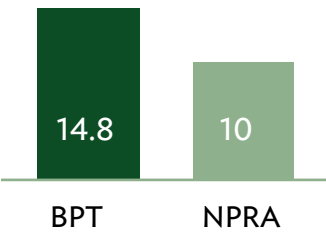
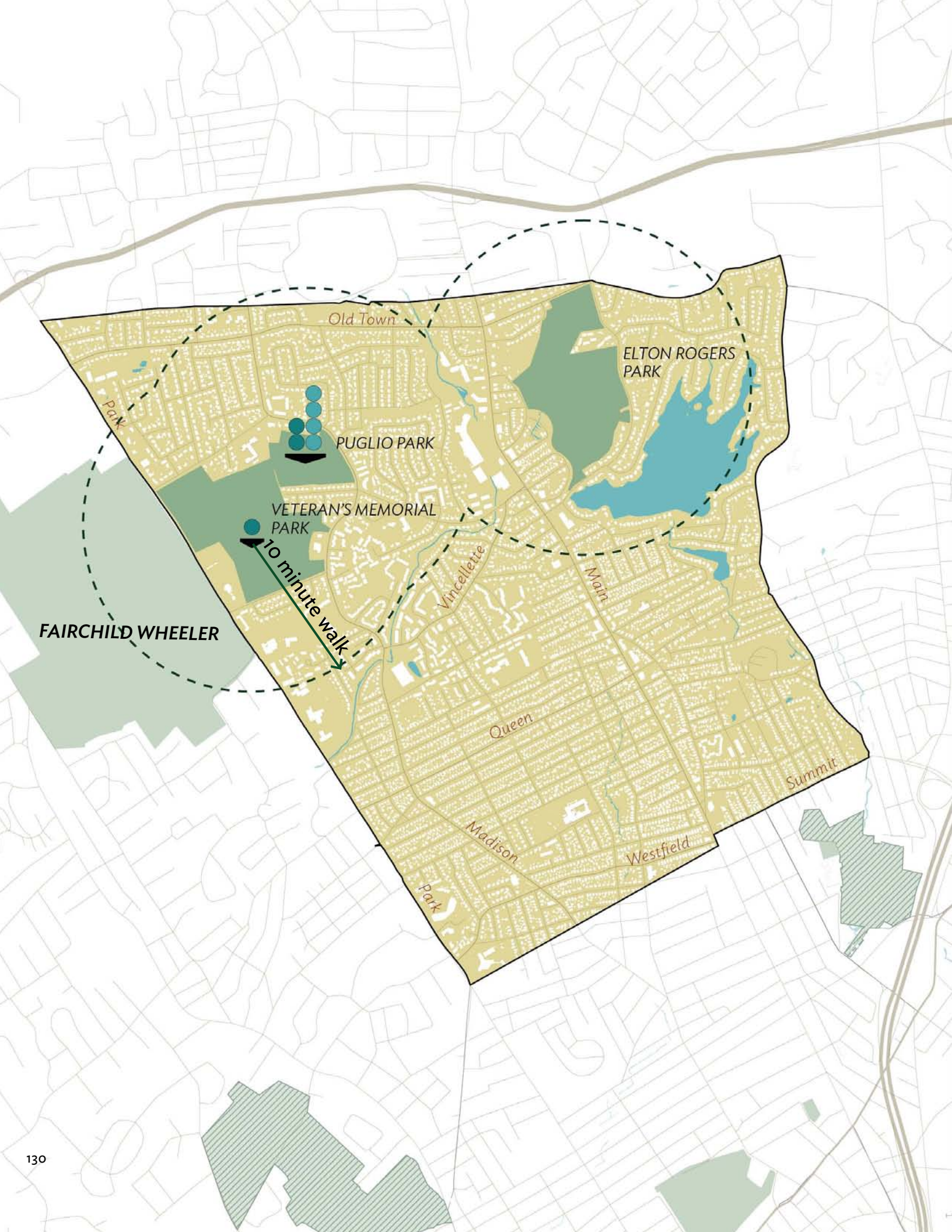
North End

Key Park Recommendations

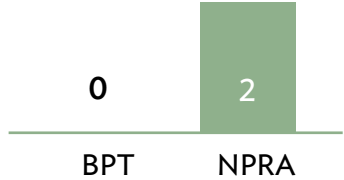
- Gain maintenance efficiencies by renaturalizing perimeter of golf course through removal of invasive species and planting of native species.
- Improve connections between Puglio and Veteran’s Memorial Park.

Additional Opportunities

- Future phase of Park Avenue complete street.



ALL PARKS
ACRES /1,000
RESIDENTS



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
ACRES /1,000
RESIDENTS

Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course

Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course provides a regional amenity, and has been seeing increased revenue in recent years. Efforts at the golf course should focus on continuing to seek revenue generation opportunities and to minimize maintenance of the large landscape. The edges and roughs of the golf course can be renaturalized to minimize moving and labor.

Key elements include:

- Renaturalize the edges of the park and the rough
- Improve streetscape and connections across Park Avenue through continuation of Park Avenue Complete Street.



Puglio Park

Puglio is the main, active park in North Bridgeport, with existing tennis courts, soccer fields, a small playground, and connections to the community library. Puglio, Veteran's Memorial Park, and Fairchild Memorial form a contiguous parks precinct at this northern end of the city. Efforts should be made to connect these parks, including linking the active corner of Veteran's to the sports zone at Puglio.

Key elements include:

- Create a trail connection to Veteran's Memorial Park to link to the baseball field and other amenities.
- Renaturalize the edges of the park
- Expand the playground and add a splash pad for North Bridgeport

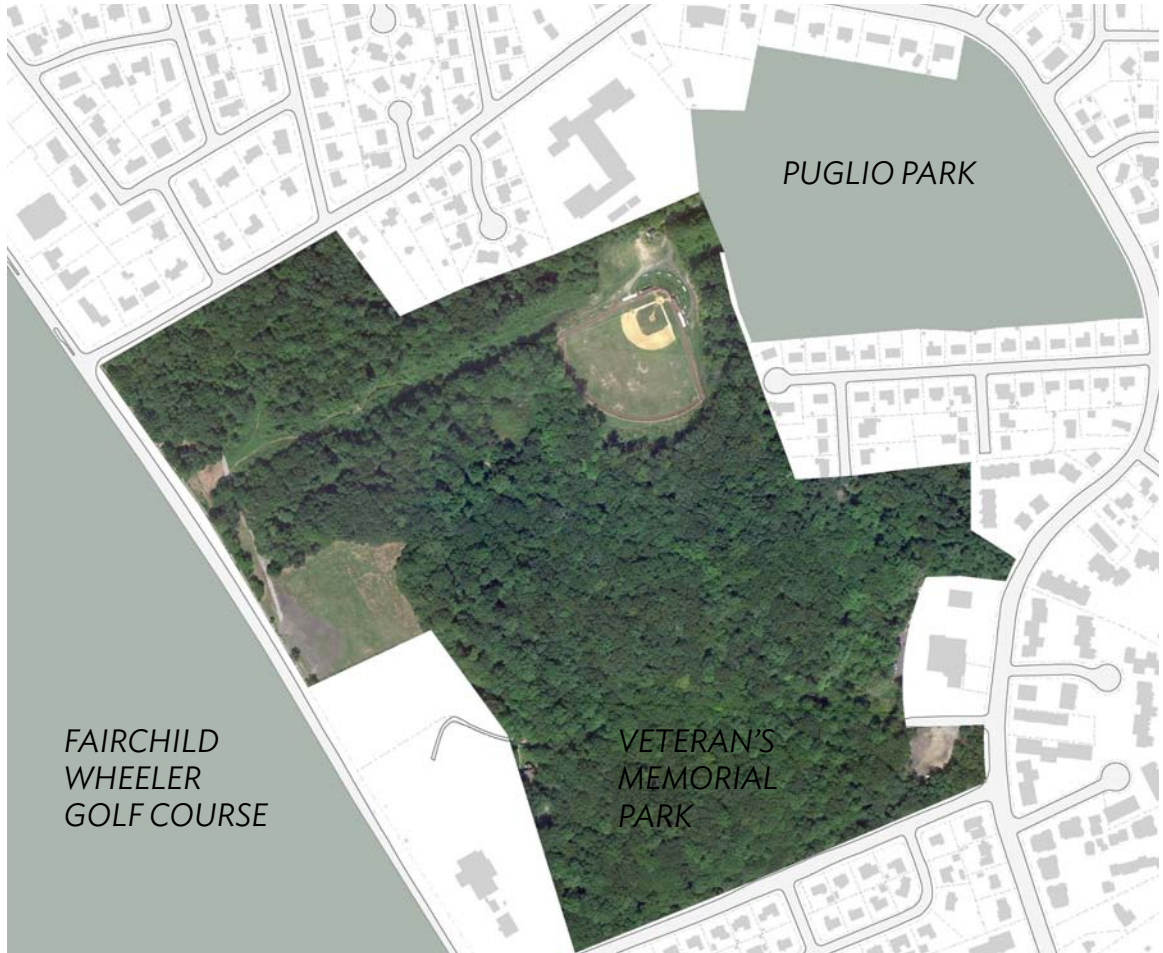


Veteran's Memorial Park

Veteran's Memorial is one of only a few undeveloped parks within the Bridgeport system and this unique asset should be protected and enhanced. Active uses, such as a disc golf course and proposed ropes course are already taking advantage of this unique site. Security efforts should be made to make sure uses on site are appropriate, particularly within the unique forested area. Improved entrance points - along Park and Madison and the connection to Puglio - and trailhead treatment can increase security. The North Bridgeport neighborhood needs additional playground and courts access, and these elements can be thoughtfully integrated along Park Avenue for maximum visibility without impacting the forested zone.

Key elements include:

- Create partnerships with the Discovery Magnet School and Museum, who is developing a new proposed ropes course.
- Potential for four additional tennis courts and a new playground along Park Avenue. These active uses should be kept close to the developed zone of the park for safety and in order to not infringe on the unique, undeveloped trail and wild area just beyond. Tennis courts may be developed in the long term since improvements at Puglio Park were recently made.



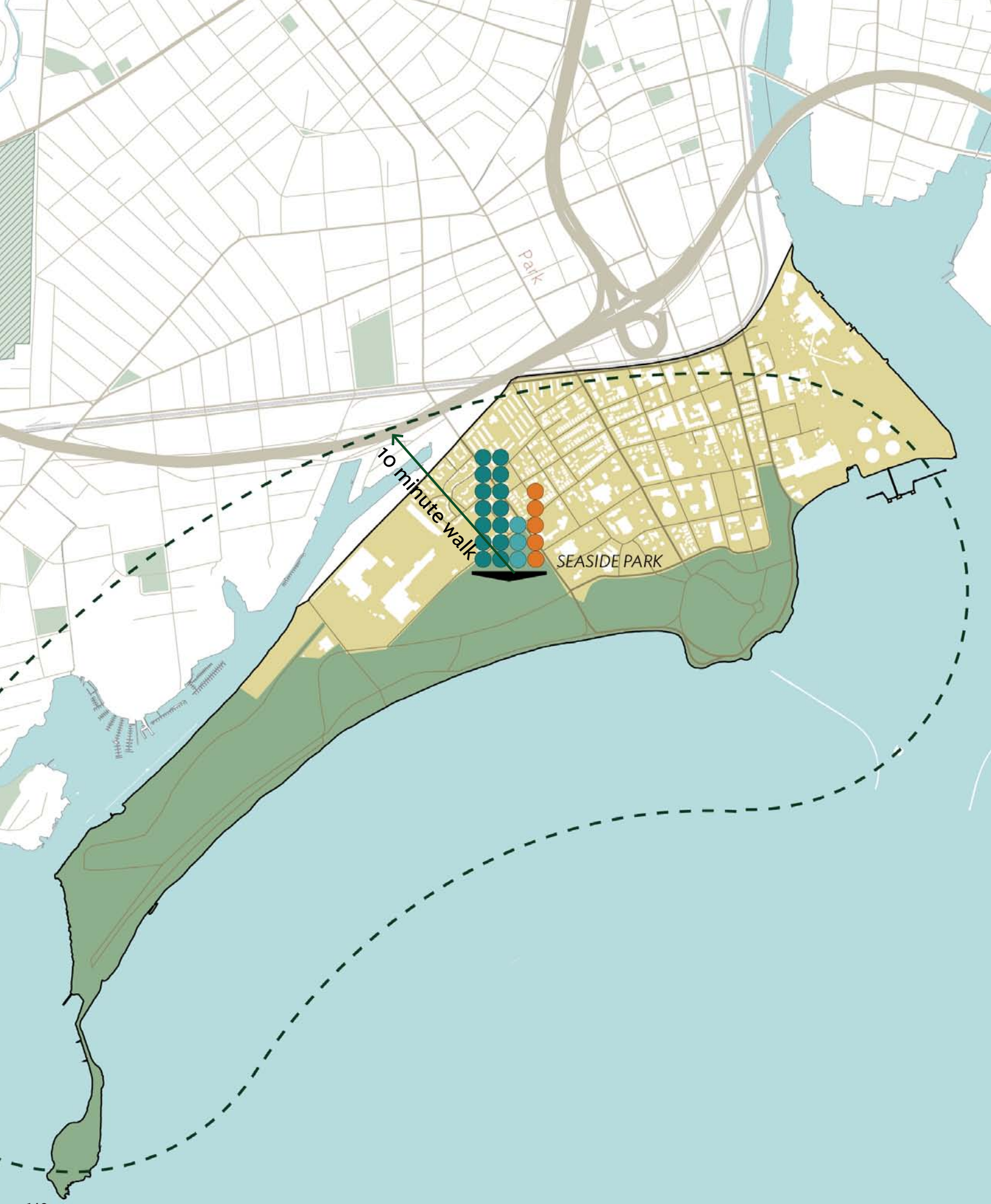
SOUTH END

- Population - 4,697
- 370 acres park land

Local Parks

- Seaside Park





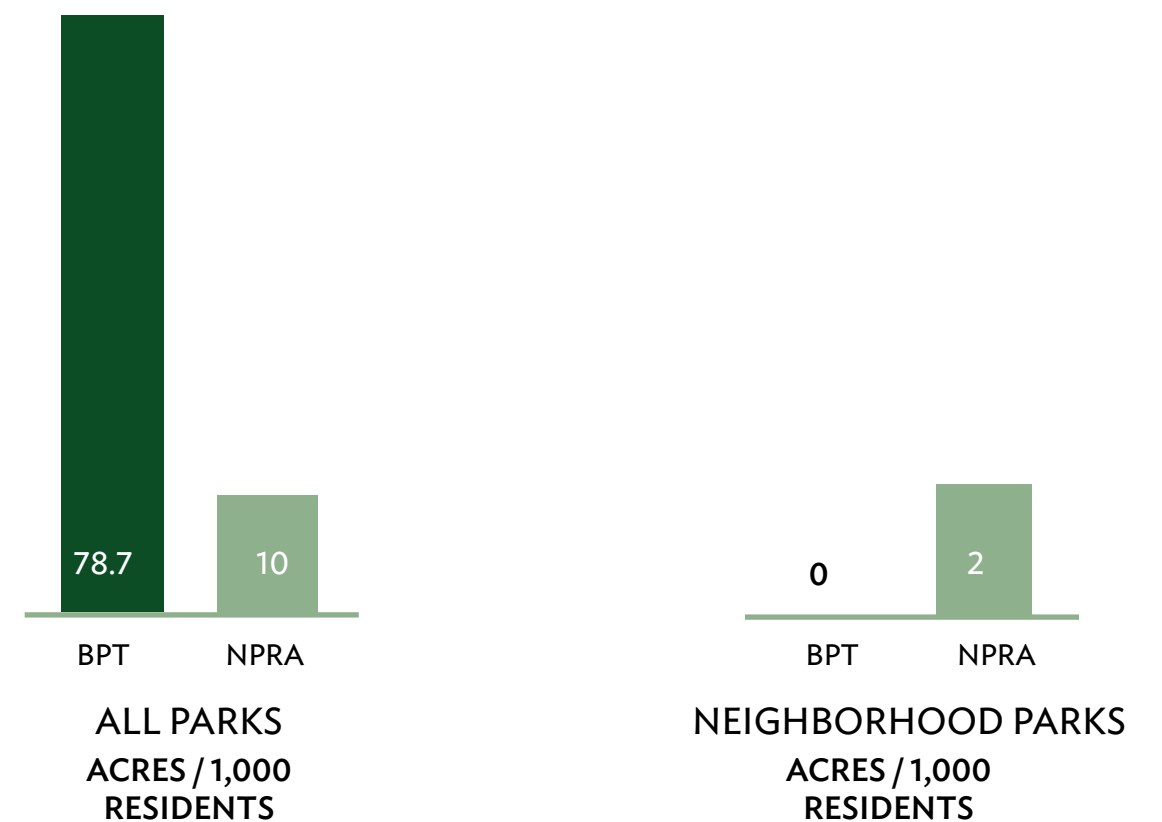
South End

Key Park Recommendations

- Continue to build on Seaside as an iconic, showcase park for Bridgeport, and seek revenue generating opportunities here, such as additional vendors or reuse of historic structures.
- Create partnerships with the University of Bridgeport for maintenance and use of fields.

Additional Opportunities

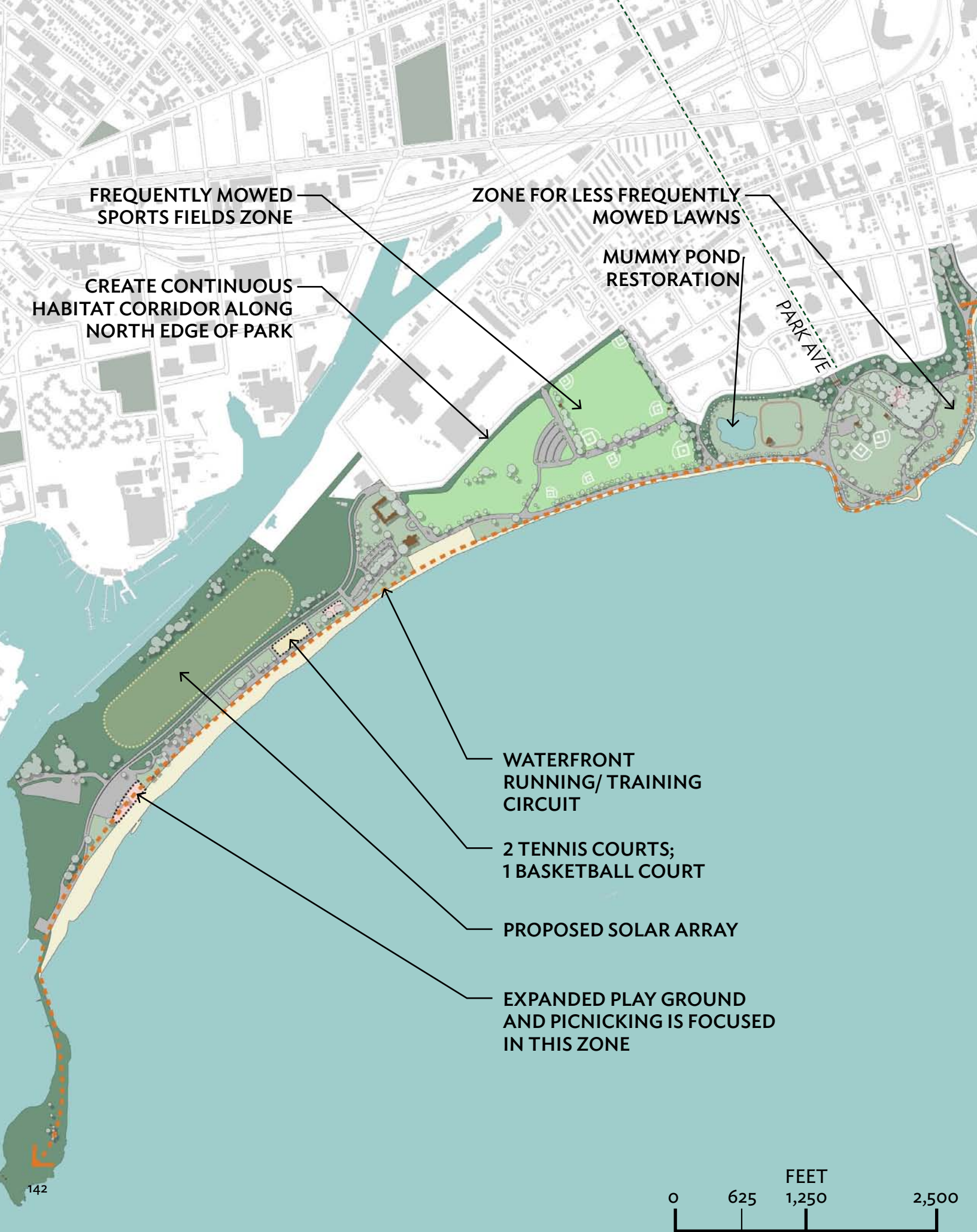
- First phase of Park Avenue complete street improvements
- Improvements to Sikorsky District at South Avenue and a gateway at Iranistan Avenue to enhance sense of arrival.



Seaside Park/Barnum Field

Seaside Park is one of Bridgeport’s legacy landscapes, and also one of its most well loved and used. Efforts have been made to seek ways to integrate sustainable maintenance into the regime by creating four distinct park zones: 1) an active play and picnic beach space along the southwestern water’s edge; 2) an active, frequently mowed sports field area at the center; 3) a more informal sports zone containing Mummy Pond and several fields and lawns that are maintained less frequently; and 4) a renaturalized, continuous habitat zone along the northern edge of the site that widens or narrows according to adjacent program needs.

- Key elements include:**
- 4 distinct zones with different uses and maintenance needs (see narrative to left)
 - A proposed solar array on the landfill
 - A single continuous trail for runners and walkers along the water’s edge
 - Connect to City via Park Ave Complete Street
 - Protection and restoration of historic elements in Seaside Park, including Perry Memorial Arch, and the Barnum, Elias Howe and Soldiers and Sailor Statues.

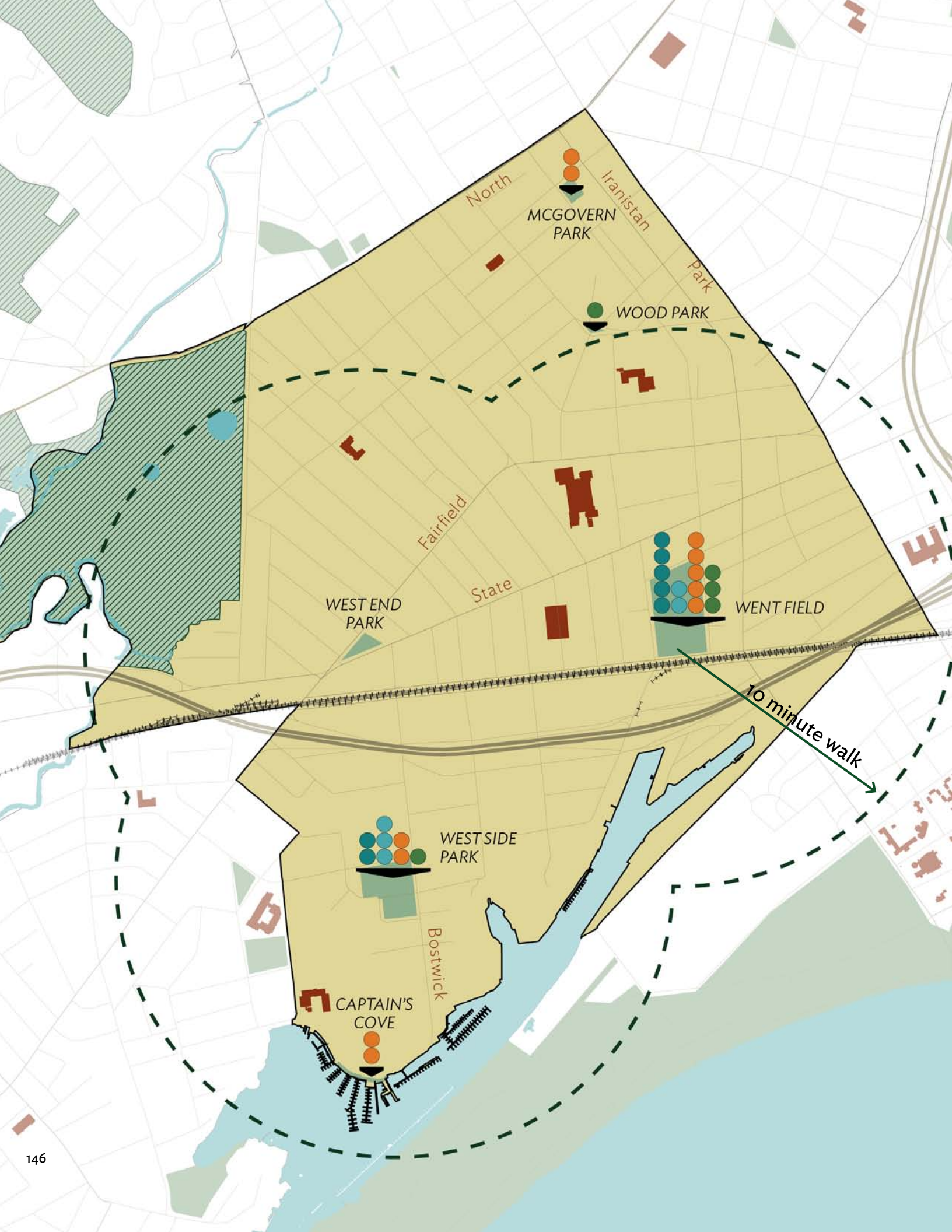


WEST SIDE

- Population - 17,514
- 28.3 acres park land

Local Parks

- Went Field
- West Side II
- Captain's Cove
- West End Park
- McGovern Park



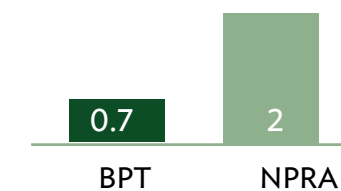
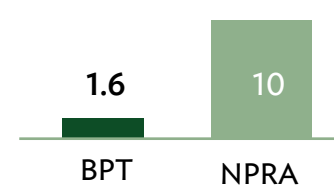
West Side

Key Park Recommendations

- Reinforce investments at Went Field and West Side Park by establishing them as two of the city’s hyper-parks and continuing to invest in active programming.
- Introduce synthetic fields and fitness-oriented amenities in the hyper-parks.

Additional Opportunities

- Bike routes and trail improvements along Railroad Avenue.



ALL PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS



Went Field

Went Field is a well-used, newly renovated park that serves as a community centerpiece.

Despite recent significant investments in new structures and field improvements, vandalism has been an ongoing issue, particularly with the restroom facilities. Neighborhood engagement should be a focus at Went Field with programs and strategies that are focused on building ownership of the park with the neighbors to include them in its protection and maintenance. Through the NRZ process, it is recommended that the West End “adopt” Went Field and support its stewardship through park clean-ups, some maintenance, and build trust and respect of the community open space.

With this relationship in place, Went Field should be envisioned as one of the City’s five hyper-parks where active sports and play areas are concentrated.

Key Recommendations

- Introduce synthetic fields that can be shared with Bassett High School for additional practice space. This partnership can help support initial field improvements or transition to a turf field, as well as future maintenance. An alternative option is to retain natural turf, but improve and protect the site from overuse.
- Destination playground for the West Side with a splash pad.
- Add park signage at the Wordin Ave plaza.
- Increase buffer planting along Wordin Ave and Norman Streets to buffer against industrial uses on Norman and give a sense of enclosure to the park.
- Building on the existing gathering space along the southern edge, create a shaded promenade with viewing to fields and parking along Railroad Avenue.



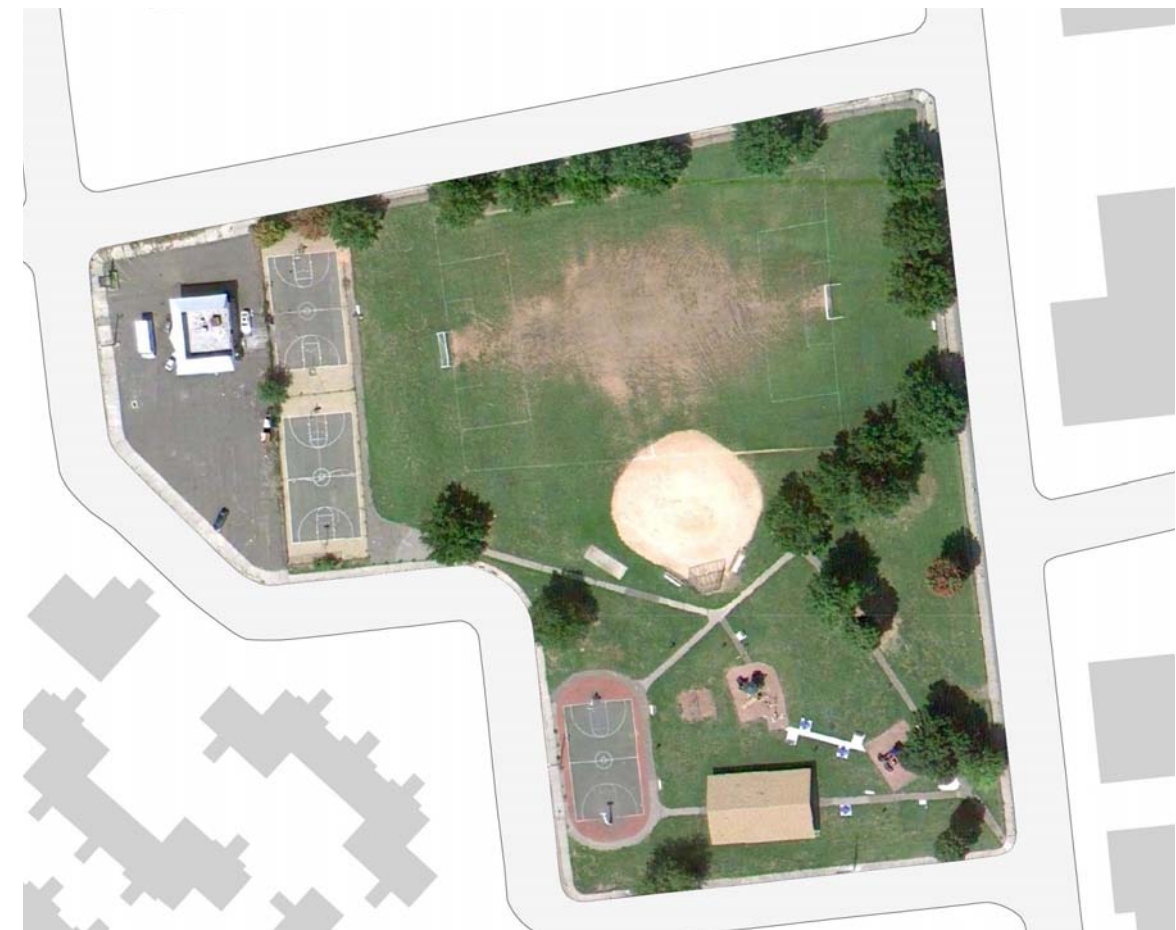
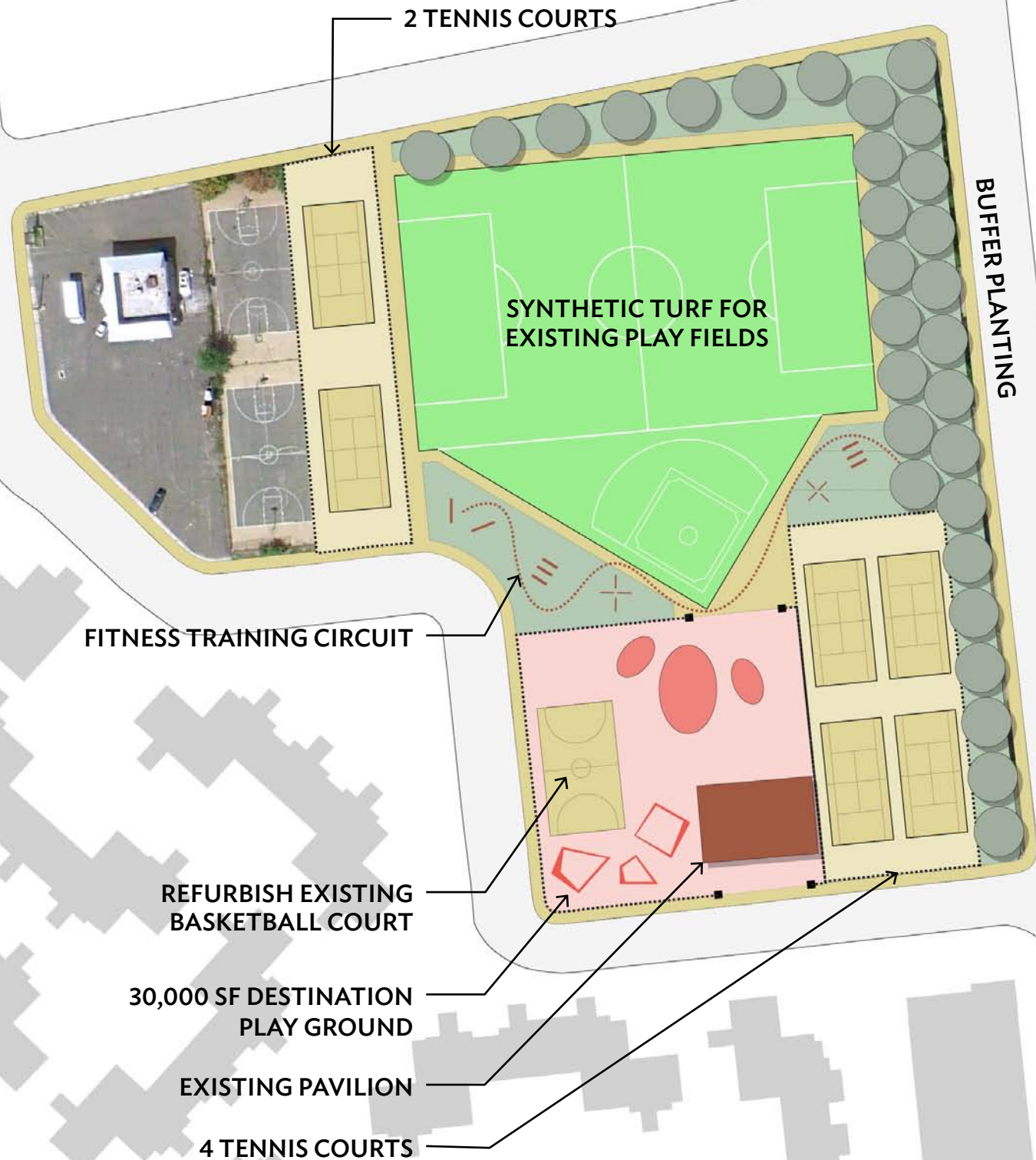
West Side II

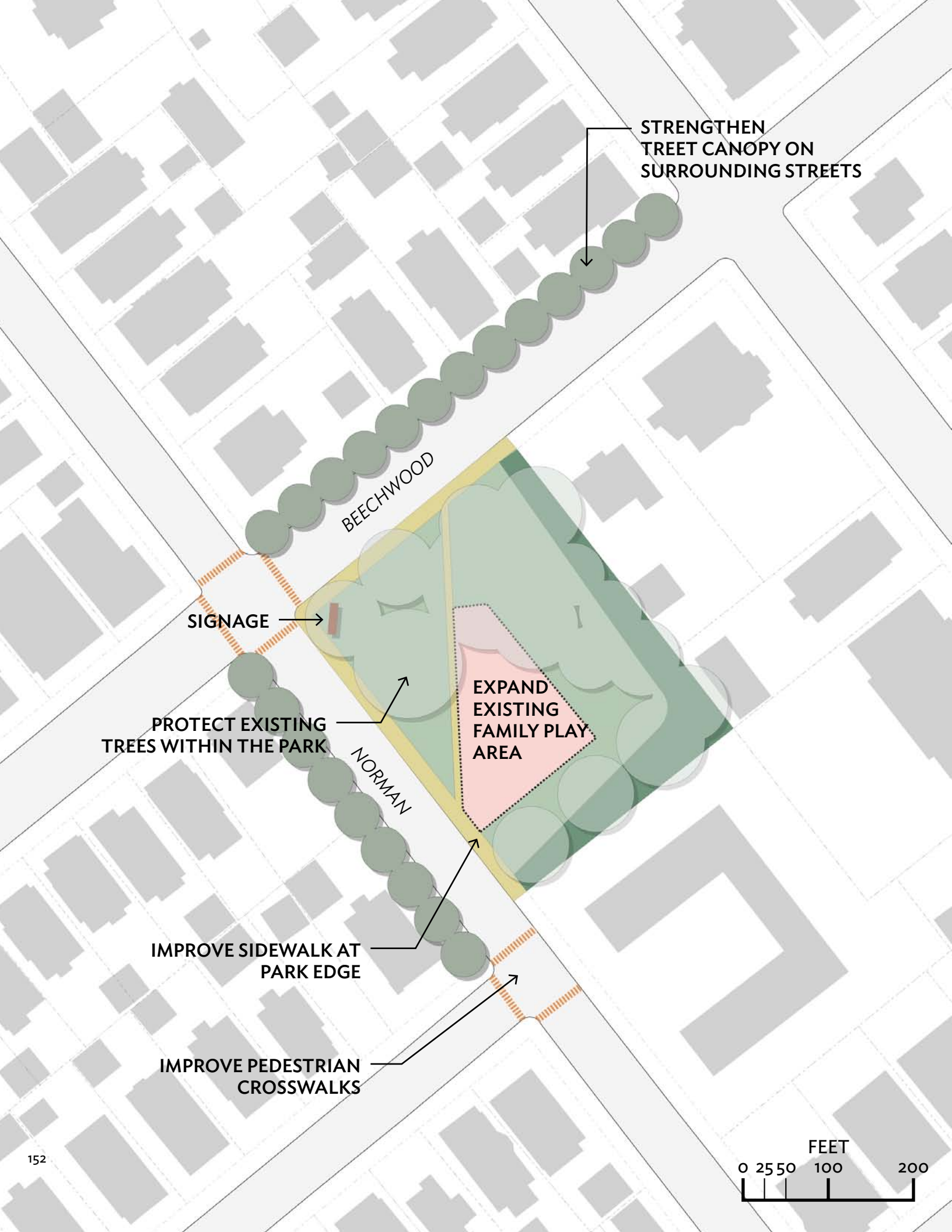
West Side II Park is associated closely with a Housing Authority property and bordered to the east by active industry.

With a large population concentration nearby, West Side II should become a hyper-park, with a focus on sports and physical fitness, and durable surfaces and materials. Currently the soccer field is very well-used and a good candidate for synthetic turf. Likewise, the introduction of six new tennis courts and a destination playground will make this park a destination for broader populations. A fitness circuit will round out the amenities to encourage physical training and link to the City's health initiatives.

Key Recommendations

- Introduce synthetic fields and a destination playground.
- Make West Side II a destination for tennis with six new courts.
- Introduce a training circuit throughout the park focused on improving physical activity with different stations for activities such as pull-ups, push ups, and others.
- Increase buffer planting along Wordin Ave and Norman Streets to buffer against industrial uses on Norman and give a sense of enclosure to the park.



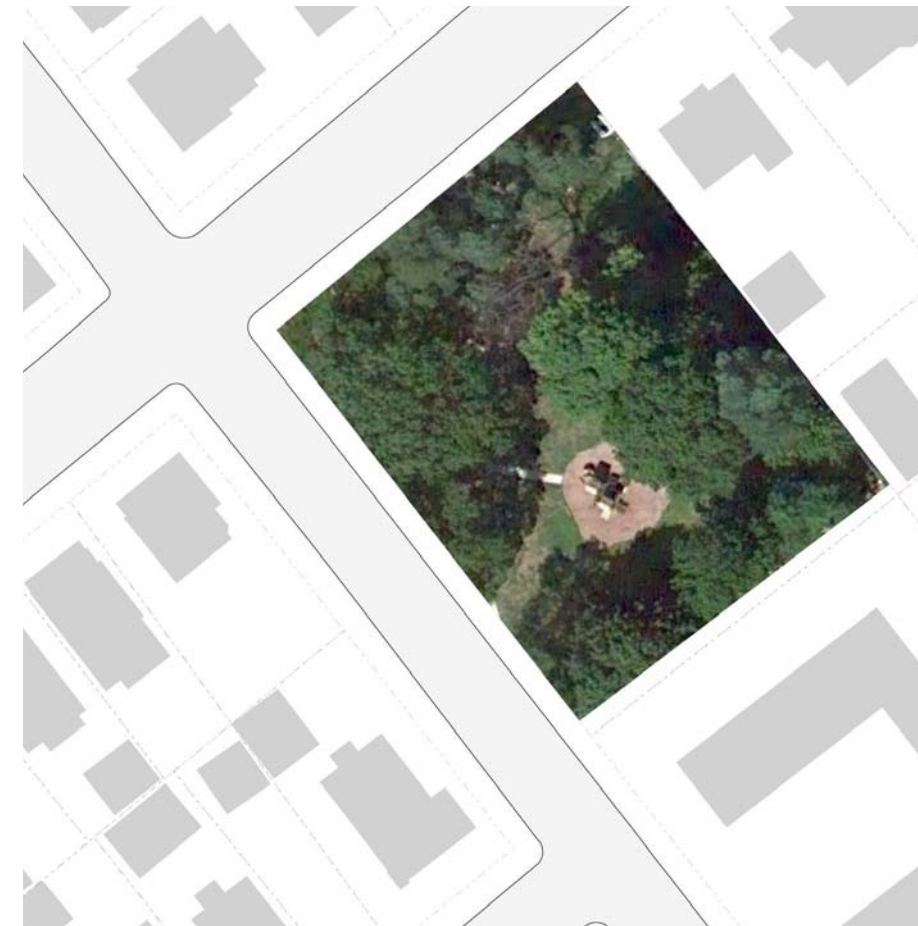


McGovern

Nestled within a residential neighborhood in the West Side, McGovern is a small, infill park that is often underused with only a small playground and paths, but contains large, canopied trees. Within the park, expansion of the playground should be a focus, while additional investments are made to the streetscape and city sidewalks or crosswalks that lend character to the park by creating its frame. Park signage can be provided at the Beechwood and Norman Streets.

Key Recommendations

- Additional playgrounds are needed within the high-need West Side, and an expanded Family Play Zone in McGovern will add population to the park and provide a quieter, alternate location to the two hyper-parks
- With a small park like McGovern, it is even more important to also focus on improvements to the surrounding city infrastructure, such as well-maintained sidewalks, a strong street tree canopy, and clearly marked pedestrian street crossings for access.



West End Park

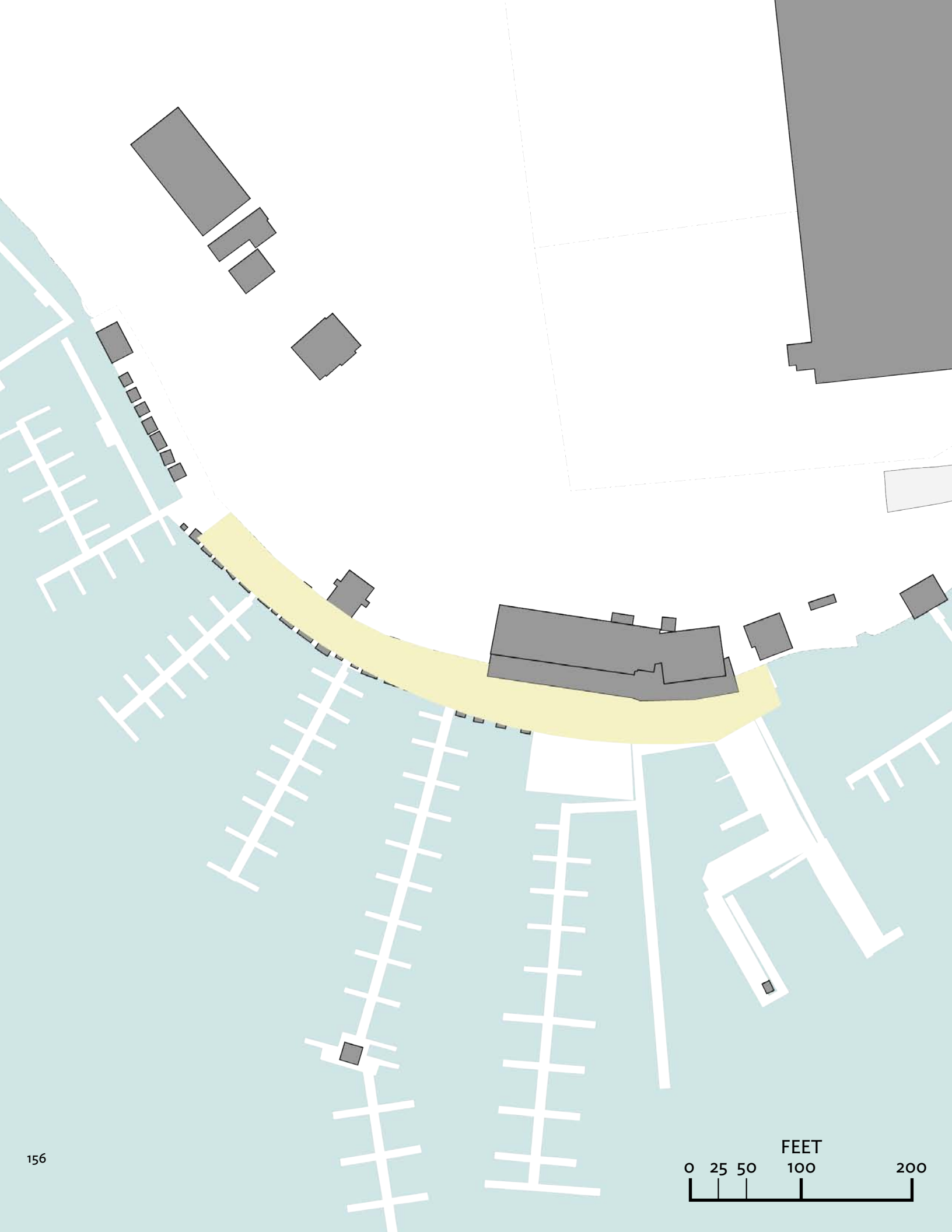
West End Park is located at the intersection of two major roads, posing a challenge to park access. Its site dimensions further restrict activities. Park, amenities, and maintenance investments in the West End would be better focused in larger, better functioning, more accessible parks that can benefit a larger population.

West End Park is a prime candidate to become a renaturalized landscape, with integration of potential space for a neighborhood garden at the southern tip.

Key Recommendations

- Renaturalize the majority of the maintained open space.
- Introduce space for a neighborhood group to take ownership of maintenance and vision for a neighborhood garden element at the southern tip.





Captain's Cove (Wordin Park)

Captain's Cove is an area with small retail and a marina in the West Side. It has significant waterfront location, but is challenging to locate. The park could benefit from improved access and visibility within the City. Connections should be improved to the West End community through streetscape improvements, and signage to the park.





WHISKEY HILL

- Population-9,181
- 91.7 acres of park land

Local Parks

- Glenwood Park
- Svirha Park
- Fairchild Memorial (future inter-district magnet school site)

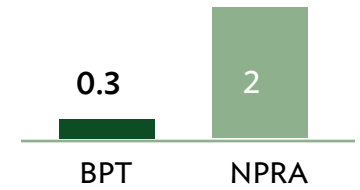
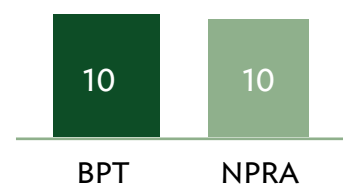
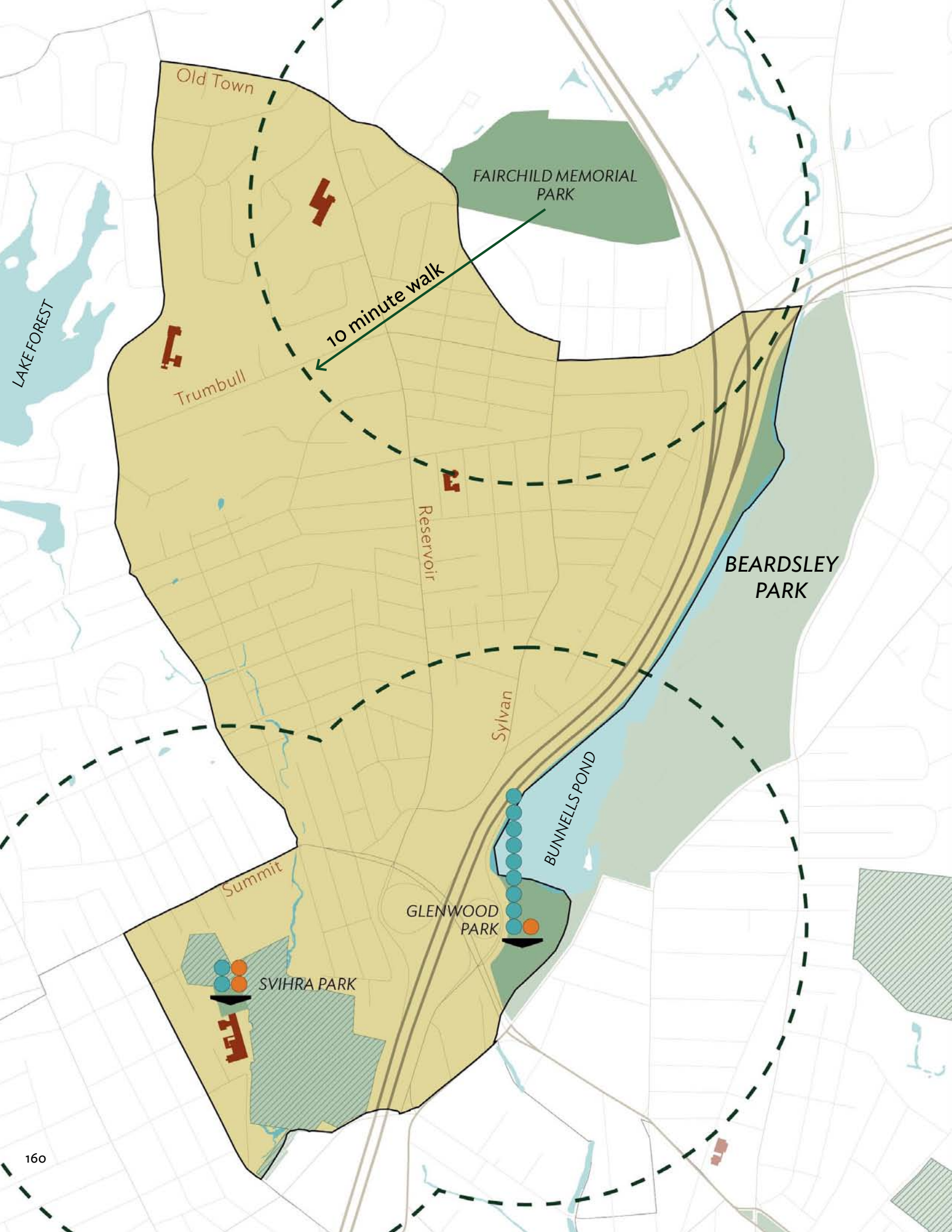
Whiskey Hill

Key Park Recommendations

- Renaturalize passive areas of Beardsley Park to gain maintenance efficiencies and introduce a new landscape type to the City.
- Introduce new stormwater management landscapes at Glenwood and capitalize on views to the dam and pond.
- Expand Svirha Park with trail connections to Island Brook Creek.

Additional Opportunities

- Housatonic Rail Trail through Beardsley and Glenwood, and connecting north into the City of Trumbull.



ALL PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
ACRES / 1,000
RESIDENTS



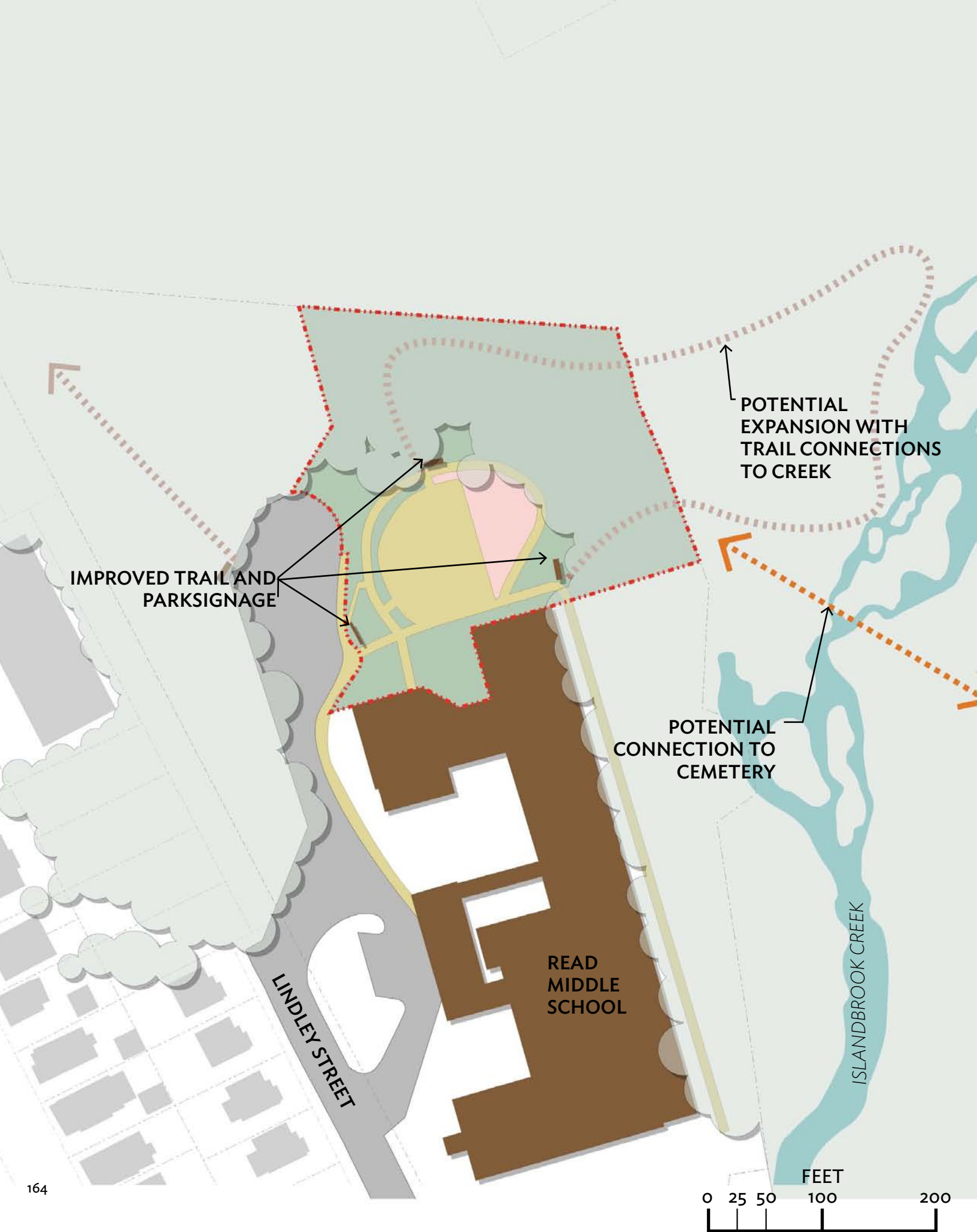
Glenwood Park

Glenwood is an active park that is well sited among both existing recreational and natural amenities. Its is co-located with the privately run Wonderland of Ice that provides recreation space at an indoor hockey rink. Bunnell's Pond provides unique visual interest that can be further capitalized on. Additionally, the future Housatonic Rail Trail will connect through the eastern edge of the park.

Key Recommendations

- Improve entry signage.
- Introduce a drainage swale to better manage stormwater on-site and minimize flooding and court damage
- Consider conversion of one set of tennis courts to two basketball courts. The neighborhood has adequate tennis, but a need for basketball.
- Introduce an overlook at the fish dam with educational signage to familiarize people with this park feature.





Svirha Park

Svirha's location adjacent to forested, undeveloped land offers a great deal of potential and lends unique character to the park. Planning for Svirha should consider expansion of the trail system to access the adjacent creek, if possible.

A challenge for the park and trails are its low visibility. Simple signage at the parking entrance, park entry, and trail headheads will improve access and clarify the trail system use.

Key Recommendations

- Improve visibility of both the park and the trail system with signage at the park entrance, parking entrance, and trailheads
- Plan for potential trail expansion to the east.

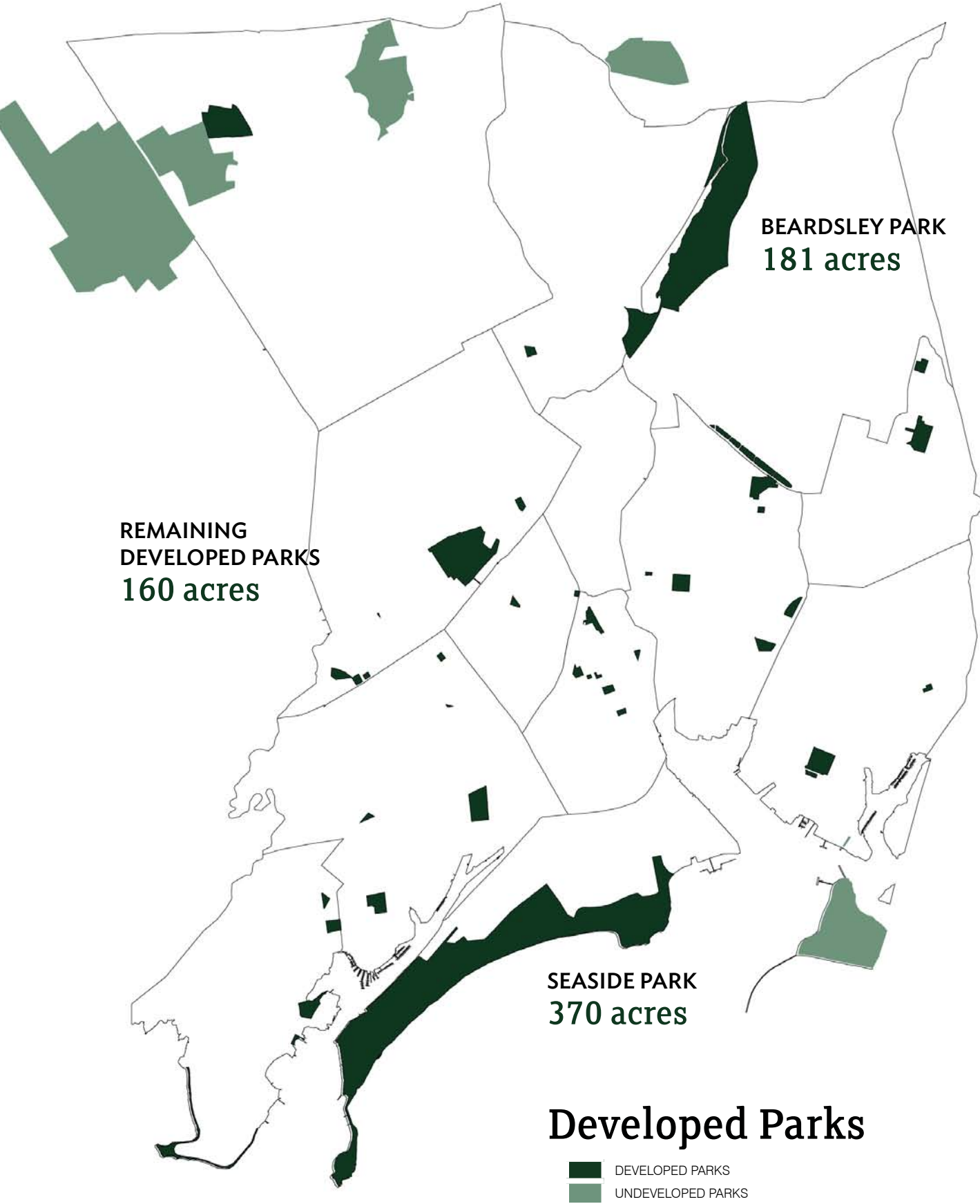


THE PARKS

Parks Standards

- » Naturalized Landscapes
- » Maintenance
- » Park Elements
- » Recreation Programs





Standards for Natural Areas

Undeveloped or Naturalized Areas

The Parks Master Plan recommends that Bridgeport officially adopts a change in maintenance practices toward a system with reduced mowing and intensive maintenance in designated natural and less active sports areas. This will produce cost savings, more efficiently use scarce human resources, and create long-term environmental benefits.

Existing Undeveloped Parks

- Elton Rogers Park
- Fairchild Memorial Park

- Pleasure Beach

Future Renaturalized Landscapes

- Manila Street Playground
- Majestic Park
- West End Park
- Ash Creek / St. Mary's By the Sea
- Edges of large parks such as Beardsley, Seaside, and the Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course



Best Management Practices

Like many cities and urban park systems, the Bridgeport Parks System is required to creatively accomplish a lot with minimal resources. As the City continuously re-assesses and improves its maintenance practices and system goals, the following best practices are offered to guide the City. Successful park systems aim to:

- Recognize the impact of parks and recreation within the community, creating healthy lifestyles, economic development, activities for youth, graceful aging of seniors, and overall quality of life.
- Have a balanced system between park assets and recreation program opportunities.
- Review services on a regular basis to determine the costs and benefits of contracting services.

- Develop and enact maintenance standards (mowing heights and frequency, as examples) for all parks to determine the level of maintenance required and the level of budget support needed to accomplish the standards.
- Utilize design standards in park amenities to develop consistency for elements such as benches, waste receptacles, lighting, water and fountains.
- Have a funded asset replacement schedule for park amenities, vehicles, equipment, and facilities.
- Develop an ongoing system of continuous improvement and identify ways to improve processes and cut expenses such as expanding no mow areas, native landscapes, and general process improvements.

- Practice sustainable approaches such as reviewing windshield time, no idle policy, use of organic chemicals, integrative pest management practices, use of alternative vehicles and fuel, monitoring energy use, measurement of carbon footprint, and planting of trees.
- Dedicate a significant amount of time toward preventive rather than demand maintenance, which is defined as restoring a system or component to its original condition.
- As part of a maintenance management system, have process documentation of maintenance tasks such as athletic field maintenance, tree pruning, mowing, playground inspections including description of tasks and estimated times of completion.
- Have a regular audit and inspection process for parks, facilities and playgrounds.
- Provide an effective employee orientation and training program for employees.
- Achieve a target standard of 15 acres of maintainable acres per maintenance employee. (Typically, this is closer to a standard of 18-22 employees per maintainable acres.)
- Spend 4-6% of the estimated value of their total assets (not including land values) maintaining what they already own as community residents expect agencies to maintain what they have before they will support funding new amenities.
- Have a customer satisfaction measurement process and response system in place for issues brought to the attention of staff.



ESTABLISH MAINTENANCE STANDARDS FOR NATURAL AREAS



SHARE AMENITIES AND MAINTENANCE WITH SCHOOL GROUNDS



VOLUNTEER CLEAN-UPS SUPPORT STAFF MAINTENANCE.
SAVE THE SOUND CORPORATE CLEAN UP, BEARDSLEY PARK



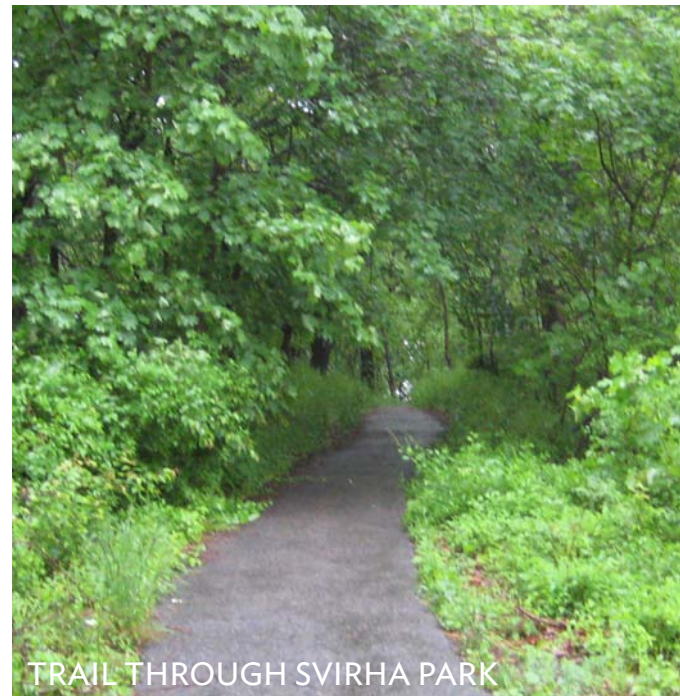
LOW MAINTENANCE MATERIALS

Renaturalized Landscapes

Bridgeport's Natural Landscapes Today

In addition to Bridgeport's many programmed and developed parks, a small number of undeveloped, more natural areas play an important part in rounding out a diverse system. Elton Rogers Park contributes 73 acres of dense woodlands that are traversed by a system of trails, adding unique value to the residential surroundings in North Bridgeport. Currently, slightly more than half of Svirha Park's 2.5 acre footprint represents an undeveloped, densely forested area with trails throughout. A potential expansion to connect the Park to natural areas along Island Brook Creek will expand these natural assets and trail connections.

These areas provide critical environmental and experiential diversity to Bridgeport's overall system, and should be protected and made more visible.. Additional signage and wayfinding will improve the user experience.



Renaturalized Landscapes

Maintenance Practices and Case Studies

Many communities nationwide have successfully integrated renaturalized landscapes into their sustainable maintenance policy structure. Two case studies are described below to detail how Minneapolis, Minnesota and Buffalo, New York have approached care of their natural areas and promote increased conversion of underutilized turf into low-maintenance natural zones.

When first implementing a sustainable maintenance strategy, the City should plan to conduct training and education about these new landscapes. New skillsets may be needed in restoration ecology techniques, overall awareness of new landscape types, and education among staff and community about their appearance, maintenance, and benefits.

Minneapolis has a three-tiered approach to maintenance of its parks, allowing continued high-intensity maintenance of active sports areas and less intense upkeep of more passive zones.

MINNEAPOLIS PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

Initiated in 1996, the current mowing program divides turf areas into three management standards: athletic field maintenance, general parkland maintenance and natural area maintenance.

Athletic Fields

Maintained on a daily to weekly basis, depending on usage. Grass height will be maintained at a height of 2.5 to 3 inches for designated athletic fields. Types of uses that are maintained on this

frequent basis include:

- Baseball, softball, football, soccer and cricket fields
- Basketball, horseshoe, shuffleboard, tennis and volleyball courts
- Archery ranges

General Park Turf Maintenance

Maintained on a less frequent basis than athletic turf. Grass height can exceed 5" at times but will be cut back to 3" on a regular basis as time and weather allows. This standard is applied to most of the park system, including:

- Neighborhood parks
- Boulevards
- Parkways
- Active use areas within regional parks

Reduced Mowing in Natural Areas

Park natural areas include parklands that are maintained on an infrequent basis. These areas are located primarily within the regional parks and include some lands within neighborhood parks. Goals for these reduced mow areas are to:

- Maintain park user safety and sight line visibility
- Reduce the spread of invasive and problem plant species
- Reduce mowing frequency in erosion prone areas,



Definition of a Natural area

Sites converted to prairie grasses, storm water ponds and shoreline buffers are managed through a variety of management strategies in collaboration with the Environmental Operations Section of the MPRB.

<http://www.minneapolisparcs.org/default.asp?PageID=167> . Contact: Park Maintenance at 612-230-6400

BUFFALO'S OLMSTED PARKS

<http://www.buffalorising.com/2011/05/maintained-meadow-areas-mmas.html>. Contact: (716) 838 - 1249

Like Bridgeport, Buffalo has a legacy of Olmsted parks. With the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, they have successfully transitioned many parks to more natural landscapes.

The park management group aims to convert at least 20 percent of each park to maintained meadow areas. These areas will contain native plants only, and be mowed once or twice per year.

Park Furnishing Standards

Objective

Furnishing standards create continuity and identity throughout the park system as well as streamline maintenance. The following list of furnishings includes current city standards as well as recommended additions (in italics). The list is intended to guide the selection of furnishings for most parks in order to ensure consistency throughout the system.

In addition to this baseline palette, the City will need to develop new furnishing standards for future initiatives such as redevelopment districts, waterfronts, signature parks and downtown districts. These supplementary palettes should incorporate elements that create a sense of identity (such as a *contemporary* redevelopment or a *historic* downtown) while following the guiding principles outlined below. This document includes supplementary palettes for two park typologies: large parks and natural areas.

Guiding Principles

When a listed product is unavailable, or when an alternative is needed, the following principles should guide the selection of an appropriate substitute.

Aesthetics

Furnishings should be attractive and appropriate to the context. In addition, furnishings within a park and/or district should share a similar aesthetic

Durability

Product materials and finishes should withstand intense use and infrequent maintenance

Maintenance

Furnishing should be simple, efficient and safe to operate and maintain

Cost

Product selection must balance quality and cost

Sustainability

Whenever possible, the City should use furnishings that use sustainable materials and reduce maintenance

User Friendly

Furnishings should be comfortable, easy to use and safe. In particular, lighting should be selected for good visibility and color rendering.

Base Palette

This suite of durable, affordable and traditional furnishings is appropriate for most of Bridgeport's parks, including its historic parks.

- Bench - DuMor - Bench 165 (6' or 8')
- Litter - DuMor - Receptacle 107 (32 gal)
- *Tables - DuMor - Table & Chairs 126 (Black)* - These furnishings can be fixed in place for security.
- *Bike Rack - DuMor - Bike Rack 188*
- Lighting - Spring City Electrical Mfg. Co. - The Washington post (12") and luminare (M6). Existing lights can be converted to LED using manufacturer's kit. Dark Sky compliant globes are also available from the manufacturer



- *Bollards - Spring City Electrical Mfg. Co. - Washington Series Bollard. The bollard below shows optional light fixture.*



Park Furnishing Standards

Large Parks and Athletics

Furnishings in large parks and athletic areas should promote streamlined maintenance. For example, automated litter receptacles located along roadways can be quickly emptied using specialized trucks. These parks typically include roadways, parking and large gathering areas requiring lighting. Site lighting should be LED and Dark Sky compliant. ADA accessible drinking fountains in parks should be provided to offer refreshment to all users. Community engagement in projects, such as the oil drum containers, is a good way to spread awareness about litter and the environment



- Litter - Toter - Litter Container (45 or 60 gal)
- Lighting - Cooper Industries - Ventus Site Light
- Tables - Custom - Wooden Picnic Table. This table should be phased out replaced with a more durable metal table (below)
- Tables - DuMor - Table 156
- Drinking Fountains - Haws 3377G



Natural Areas and Trails

Furnishings in natural and re-naturalized parks should accentuate the landscape, not the furnishings. Materials should evoke an organic feel by using wood and earth-tone colors. These parks will be maintained infrequently and therefore should feature high capacity trash receptacles, such as solar powered compacting containers. These parks will not require lighting, but where necessary - such as parking lots - fixtures should be LED and Dark Sky compliant.



- Bench - DuMor - Bench 105 (6'-8')
- Litter - Big Belly - Solar Compactor
- Lighting - Cooper Industries - Ventus Site Light
- Tables - Custom - Wooden Picnic Table. This table should be phased out replaced with a more durable metal table (below)
- Tables - DuMor - Table 156



Recreation Programs

The mission statement of Bridgeport Parks and Recreation includes reference to the provision of recreation services as follows: “to provide opportunities for active and passive recreation.” While most of the emphasis of the Master Plan addresses parks and open space, this section addresses the provision of recreation services for the Bridgeport community. Excellent park and recreation systems offer a balance between park services and recreation opportunities.

The goal for Bridgeport, long term, should be to grow recreation services, create better awareness, and contribute to the overall quality of life in Bridgeport by offering programs that support healthy lifestyles.

In the future, as part of the Master Plan implementation, staff should consider completing a statistically valid household survey for recreation programs. Currently, program

offerings are historically based without alignment with community need. The survey can address household need for programs, unmet needs, and how much residents would be willing to pay for more recreation opportunities. This will result in data for future program offerings. In addition, the Department should also develop recreation programs and inclusion services for special needs participants.

Recreation Program Offerings

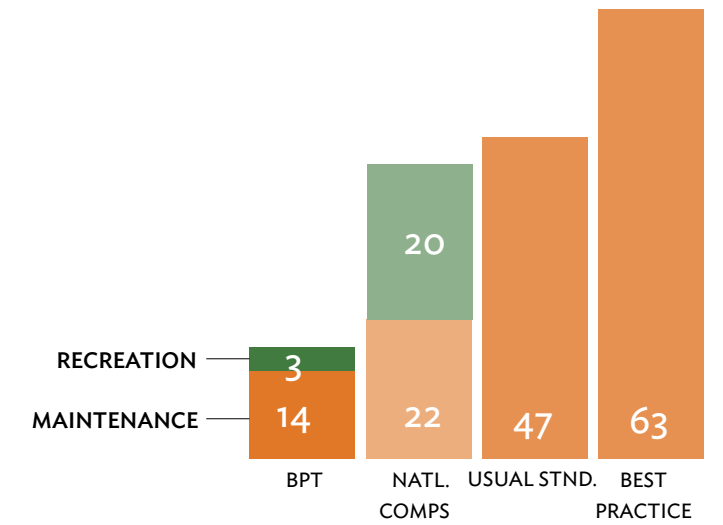
Currently, recreation program offerings include:

- Night recreation program at six schools
- Seaside Park summer day camp
- Tennis Camp
- Men’s Adult Softball league

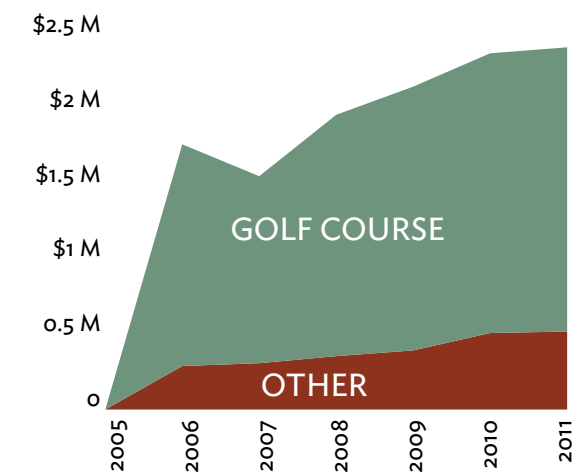
- Swim lessons and family swim nights offered at schools
- Senior services: The Department of Parks and Recreation sponsors leisure and casino trips and coordinates special events including luncheons, holiday dinners and picnics
- Swim Academy, which provides swim lesson programs that build endurance for lifeguard training
- Golf services and programs at Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course

Staffing

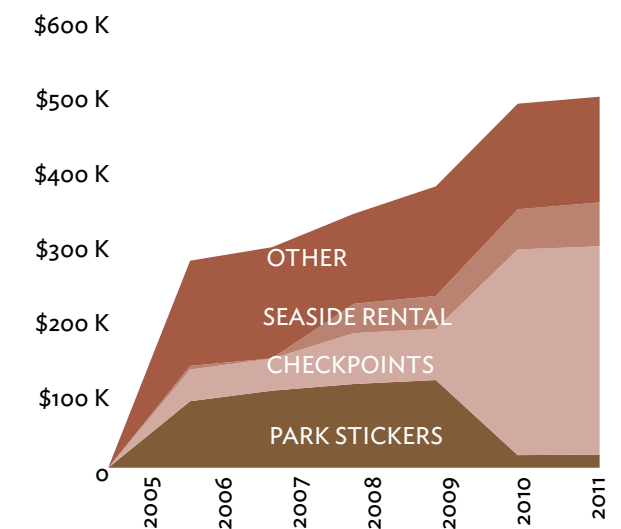
Recreation services are managed by three staff, a recreation superintendent and two full-time recreation coordinators. Typically, a city the size of Bridgeport has at least 18-20 full-time staff (professional and support staff) dedicated to recreation programs and services. This staffing deficit is primarily the result of a lack of indoor recreation facility space in Bridgeport. There are many other providers offering recreation services in the community, which fulfills some of the recreation needs in the community. In order to grow programs, recreation staffing will also need to grow.



NUMBER OF PARKS STAFF



TOTAL ANNUAL REVENUES



NON-GOLF ANNUAL REVENUES



Financial Review

The Department's operating budget includes most of the non-tax revenue for Parks and Recreation comes from the Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course. During the last three years of actual revenues, the golf course comprised between 81 and 84% of total revenues from sources other than taxes. Rounds of golf at Wheeler have increased from \$49,708 in FY07-08 to \$60,069 in FY 09-10, which is excellent performance, particularly compared to the downturn of rounds nationwide. Surplus revenues from the golf course have grown from \$393,961 in FY07-08 to \$537,498 in FY09-10. This revenue then goes to support the City's general fund.

Recreation revenue represents a very small percentage of Departmental revenues. This revenue consists of Seaside Park rentals and ball field rentals in the amount of \$69,270 in 2010. The Department, with an increase in program offerings could easily produce more revenues and reduce its reliance on tax subsidies.

Pricing of Services

It is the philosophy of the City to offer as many free programs as possible within the Department. During the last three years, 83-85% of programs have been offered at no cost to the participant. Therefore, the City heavily subsidizes recreation programs. Sometimes, in the minds of customers, users equate free programs with a lower value of the service. This argument means that participation levels may actually increase with additional fees as consumers may feel programs with a cost provide a higher quality. The fee schedule for selected programs and services include:

Fees for Programs

- Night recreation free of charge
- Free family swim nights
- Five week summer day camp for \$100 per camp for total camp hours of 245 hours, or a cost of \$2.45 per hour
- Five week tennis camp for \$75. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for 52.5 total camp

hours or \$.70/per hour

Annual Passes

- Annual Parking Sticker (Resident): \$5
- Annual Parking Sticker (Non-resident): \$75
- Connecticut Resident Season Pass: \$75

Day Passes

- Seaside Park, CT Registration: \$ 20
- Seaside Park, Out of State Registration: \$40
- Beardsley Park, CT Registration: \$20
- Beardsley Park, Out of State Registration: \$25

The day camp program costs participants \$2.45 for the program per hour and the tennis camp charges \$.70 per hour. Added to this are free programs such as family swim nights and night recreation. This results in heavily subsidized programs.

Fees for passes at Seaside and Beardsley increased significantly in FY 08/09 to FY 09/10. As a result, revenue increased from \$70,000 to \$281,427. Analysis should be completed to determine the percentage of non-resident and out of state resident pass sales. This will assist with decision making related to the day and annual pass fees for non-residents. The non-resident fees are significantly more expensive. If these fees deter non-resident use, lowering the fees may result in increased revenues. A suggestion is to increase the fees again and use this additional revenue as a maintenance endowment for Seaside and Beardsley as a sustainable revenue stream to help defray maintenance costs.

Throughout the last decade, almost all park and recreation agencies have initiated fees for recreation and programs. Most cities can no longer afford to offer programs that were once free. The City of Bridgeport Parks and Recreation establishes fees according to the

percentage of residents who cannot afford programs and not according to those individuals who can easily afford to pay. Typically agencies have scholarship programs for economically disadvantaged participants. Therefore, each program offered by the Department, aside from Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course receives substantial tax support.

According to the NRPA 2009 Operating Ratio Study, the average city nationwide recovers approximately 31% of operating costs through fees and charges. In Bridgeport, this percentage is much lower. In addition, successful golf course operations allow for excess revenues to be reinvested in the course to allow for greater sustainability and competitiveness, which could be something for Bridgeport to consider. Or, alternatively, consider using a percentage of the green fees to go into a maintenance fund for course improvements, such as \$1.00/round.

The Department should develop cost of services for major programs, such as the summer day camp program and swim lessons. Subsidy levels should be calculated and a pricing policy developed to assist in the establishment of fees. Philosophical discussions need to occur, outlining what subsidy levels should exist. For example, golf course revenues exceed expenses year to year. Conversely, recreation services produce \$69,270 in revenues and \$812,871 in expenses. Program pricing should vary according to the extent of subsidy level the Department believes should occur. For example, many communities subsidize youth and senior programs more than adult programs. Typically, adult programs are able to recover all of their operating costs.

Facility Needs

As mentioned previously in this report, there is a lack of indoor space owned and managed by the City.

According to the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) 2009 Operating Ratio



Study, cities of 100,000 population averaged 117,000 square feet of indoor space. Therefore, the indoor standard for cities of this size is 1.17 square feet per capita. Using this standard, Bridgeport's indoor space standard is approximately 170,000 square feet of indoor space. This standard excludes other providers of services, such as schools or non-profit agencies. Aside from the Lighthouse Program - a joint effort of the the City of Bridgeport, the Mayor, the School Department and the Department of Youth Services - most of the indoor recreation activities in Bridgeport are offered by other non-profit providers. Long term, the City should identify indoor recreation space needs and plan for developing these facilities in the future.

Awareness/Marketing

According to the Web based community survey results, as part of the Master Plan process, almost half of the Bridgeport residents have not participated in recreation programs during the last 12 months. The most significant barrier to resident participation in recreation programs is not knowing what is offered by the Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, only a low percentage of program participants were either satisfied or highly satisfied with Bridgeport's recreation programs. Similarly, an equal proportion of residents expressed dissatisfaction as those that expressed satisfaction. Furthermore, the survey results suggest a need to improve promotional efforts; availability of information about programs and facilities was one of the most significant areas in need of improvement that was reported.

The City currently publishes an Activity Guide geared toward youth programming in the community. The Guide includes a listing of programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Department, but also includes information about programs and services offered by other providers of recreation services in the community. This includes programs such as early childhood programs, golf clinics, Lighthouse after school

programs, music instruction and sports activities. This is a good first step in the development of better awareness of programs.

Technology should be used to promote programs. The Department should continue posting an online quarterly program guide on the Website, use social media, and evolve toward offering online registration and reservation opportunities. In addition, customers should be able to register for programs and reserve facilities online.

Mobile applications will become more and more important in the future. According to research by Guide by Cell, a mobile application company that partners with NRPA, more internet access will be done through mobile applications and devices than by a laptop or desktop computer within the next three years. Therefore, the future for Bridgeport should include the development of WAP (wireless application protocol) enabled Website which can be easily viewed by potential users on smart phones or tablets and also allow them to make online reservations. The Department should establish a text messaging system that sends event alerts, live question and answers about events, merchandise promotions, athletic field cancellations, and communication with other city staff. Park maintenance staff can also use mobile applications for park, playground and building inspections.



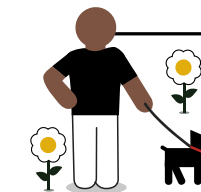
Connect with the Park City

Watch For More Indoor Programming

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Dogs In The Parks



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Olympic Athlete to Visit Seaside Camp

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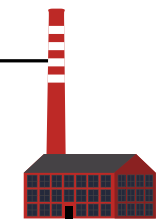
The Curtain Rises at Bijou Theater

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Amazing Art with the Bridgeport Arts + Cultural

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Improved Training For Volunteer Coaches

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A recreation program guide and "parks passport" will support increased program offerings