

Introduction

The following drawings and slides depict recommendations for the Mt. Lebanon Parks Master Plan project, which is designed to preserve and enhance Mt. Lebanon's municipal parks. These drawings and slides were presented by LaQuatra Bonci Associates at an October 7, 2003 meeting at the Recreation Center. The meeting was the third (and final) public forum for the project and was a chance for LaQuatra Bonci Associates to share their recommendations as to how the parks might be able to better serve the various needs of the public.

This meeting was an opportunity for the public to comment and help shape the plans for each of the parks. Presented at the meeting were updated drawings, cost estimates, and phasing strategies for each park.

LaQuatra Bonci is working closely on this project with a steering committee composed of all five Mt. Lebanon Commissioners, some Mt. Lebanon staff members and a representative of the Parks Advisory Board. We look forward to your comments about these drawings. We want to ensure that when final recommendations are made, everyone has had an opportunity to be heard.

Please respond to the website
(or contact LaQuatra Bonci Associates)
by November 15, 2003.



Here are some questions and comments that were made during the meeting, along with LaQuatra Bonci Associates responses:

1. What is the process from this point forward? Will the Parks Advisory Board determine the priority projects?

The next step is to post this presentation on the web site and solicit additional public comment. We will then prepare a final report which we hope to have done by the end of the year. The Parks Advisory Board may be involved, we need to meet with them again and share this presentation.

2. What is the bottom line total for the short term, mid-term, and long term?

There is a chart that depicts all the costs for each park, by phase but the bottom line numbers are about 2 million in the short term, 5 million in the mid term and 7 million in the long term.

3. Why would a pavilion be placed in Twin Hills Park?

Twin Hills Park is isolated so we felt that an improved entry, signs, a small parking area and a pavilion would create a sense of arrival and orientation for visitors. It could be very small, more like a kiosk or trail marker common in state or national parks.

4. Was there any thought for Twin Hills being a dog run?

We had made that suggestion previously, but there was concern among the Steering Committee that there would be great opposition to it from Scott Township and Carriage Park Apartments. Twin Hills is located within Scott Township and we need to seek approval from them.



Comments & Questions (continued)

5. How do you get a pilot project for a dog run started?

Those who feel a dog run is important should get organized

6. There are two distinct opinions of dog runs, that of the dog owner vs. the home owner. How do you just “try out” a dog run to see if it will work?

We recognize that this issue can be contentious. That is why we suggested that dog runs are implemented on a trial basis, with opportunity for public comment.

7. Are there other locations for dog runs that aren't adjacent to homes? What about Robb Hollow Park?

There are homes adjacent to Robb Hollow Park, similar to Iroquois Park.

8. Are the trails designed primarily as footpaths or can they be used for mountain biking as well? Mt. Lebanon does not have an abundance of bike paths in the community.

We did not consider mountain biking appropriate in the parks. They are not large enough, bikes create erosion and there are conflicts between bikers and walkers. It was not something we heard during the focus groups or previous meetings.



Comments & Questions (continued)

9. Is there a way to relocate or create a smaller scale skate park (even temporarily) that could happen in the near future?

The breakdown for short, mid and long-term projects is not cast in stone. We placed it in the mid-term category because a new concert site will need to be found before the skate park could be built.

10. How many concerts/activities occur at the current concert site during the year?

Between 5 and 10

11. Did you decide on a contractor for the skate park?

The design, layout and components within the skate park have not been selected. The master plan only identifies an appropriate area, puts a number to the cost and places it within a timeline. The design is something skateboarders could assist with.

12. What kind of sports would be permitted at the skate park facility, would it be strictly for skateboards or would BMX bikes be allowed?

During one of the focus groups, both skateboards and bikes were discussed. We have not suggested that only one should be allowed. If both are permitted that may impact the type of elements planned. Again, the design is something skateboarders could assist with.



Comments Voiced from Meeting Attendees

1. Glad to hear that Dog Parks are being proposed. Where there is money 'coming in' projects will get done. Dog owners should organize and make this dog park happen. With money raised it can move to its fruition, even volunteers could help.
2. It is important to organize priorities. We want a skate park in the short term and can't wait for the mid-term. There is lots of support for this project. Funding and support will move it forward.
3. Funding and volunteers would help create the skate park. Everyone in Mt. Lebanon uses McKinley Park because skateboarding is prohibited here.
4. There are negatives to dog runs. Dog runs should be spread throughout the community. Iroquois is not the place for a dog run as it is surrounded by residences.
5. There are a lot of kids here that are supporting the skate park. Don't put it on the "back burner." They can volunteer their time to help with construction and organize to find funding.



Comments Voiced from Meeting Attendees

6. We should create sign-up sheets so that dog run and skate park supporters can better organize themselves.

7. Twin Hills Park is isolated. Neighbors watch the type of cars that are parked there. Neighbors keep an eye on the cars especially when walking alone in the park. Safety needs to be considered.

8. You (the design team) have done precisely what you were asked to do. Don't lose site of the difference between a neighborhood park and a community park. There is tension when a neighborhood park is made to be a community park. For example, Twin Hills should be a neighborhood park. This difference between neighborhood vs. community park needs to be kept in mind.





Master Plan for

Mt. Lebanon's Parks



Master Planning Process

Public Meeting #1 (January 2003)

introduction to park system, no proposals yet, discussion

Focus Groups / Interviews (March and April 2003)

Public Meeting #2 (May 2003)

preliminary suggestions, discussion

All materials available on Mt. Lebanon's Web Site

Public Meeting #3 (October 2003)

Recommendations and cost estimates



Goals of the Master Plan

Create a unified park system with consistent, inter-connected elements

Enhance each parks special qualities

Utilize space efficiently to achieve balance

Accommodate current demands and provide flexibility for future

Protect, preserve and enhance natural resources

Develop short and long-term implementation strategies

Consider maintenance



Basis for Cost Estimates

Every element (even if it is remaining) is priced to be re-built

All elements placed into one of three categories:

Short-term, Medium-term or Long-term

any feature can move up or down on the priority list in the future

Some items in long-term category are options

Should be re-evaluated in the future

Not all elements are new – many are items that need to be maintained

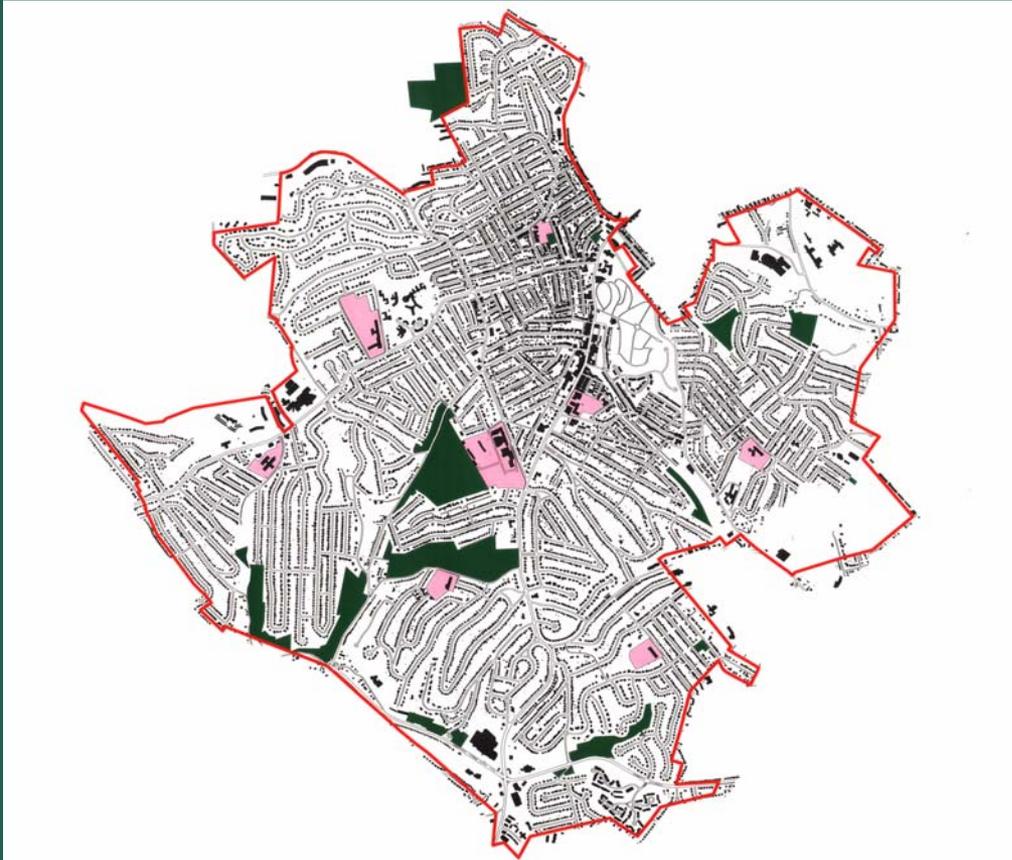
Cost/benefit: options for select materials = range of costs

Cost figures were determined as if all work was bid in today's dollars

no consideration yet for volunteers, donations, grants...or inflation



Mt. Lebanon's Parks



Williamsburg Park

Rockwood Park

Church Place Park

Country Club Park

Highland Terrace Park

Iroquois Park

Meadowcroft Park

Sunset Hills Park (Brafferton)

Robb Hollow Park

Twin Hills Park

Hoodridge Park

Bird Park

Mt. Lebanon Park



Williamsburg Park



Quiet neighborhood park

Play equipment is dated

Sledding in winter

Courts in good shape

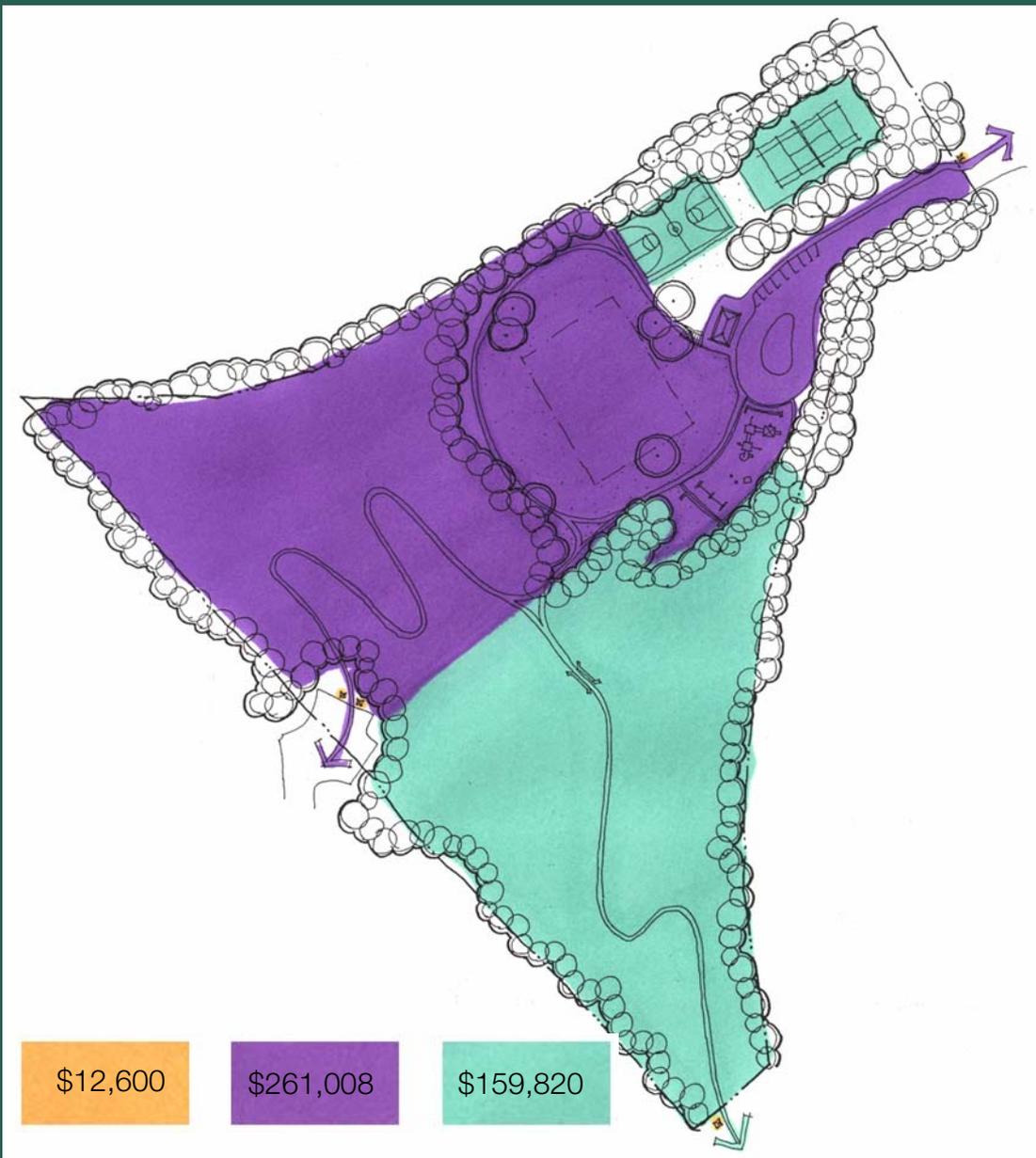
Invisible from street

Great for picnics and parties

Lacks level lawn area







\$12,600

\$261,008

\$159,820



Country Club Park



Heavily used by neighborhood kids

Swings and play equipment

Woodlot is used informally

Need a place for parents to sit

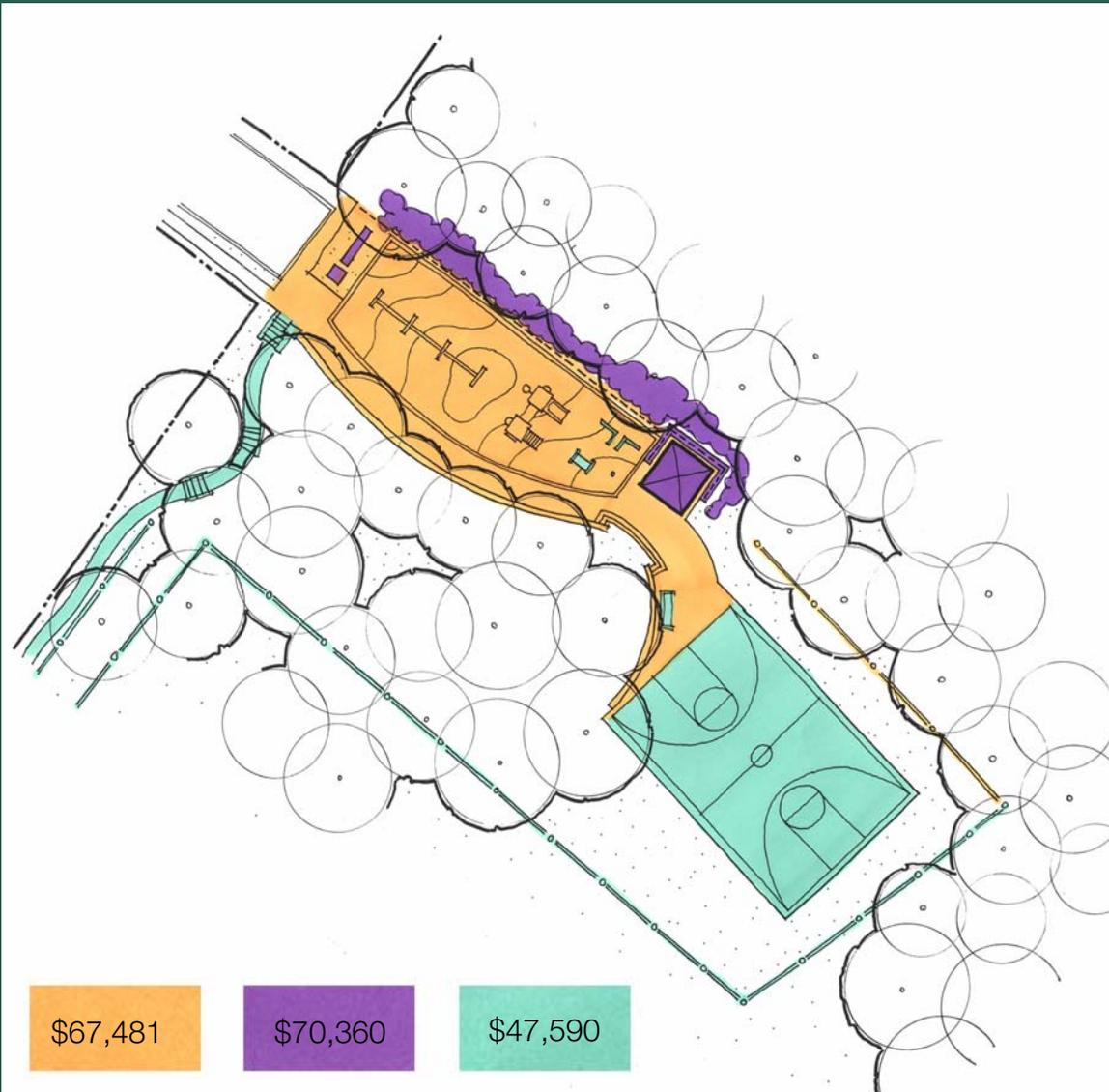
Court only has one basketball hoop

Toys roll down slope

Sandbox is nice but attracts animals







Brafferton – Sunset Hills Park



Baseball field is in poor shape (slope)

Surrounded by wooded, steep slopes

Parking is an issue during games

Lack of good entry or sign

Few amenities to serve neighborhood

Steep entry path

Nice secluded setting





Convert 1/2 of Basketball Court to
Playground to Serve Neighborhood

Rebuild Entry Path to Lessen Slope

Define Entry with Extended
Sidewalks, Pier and Sign

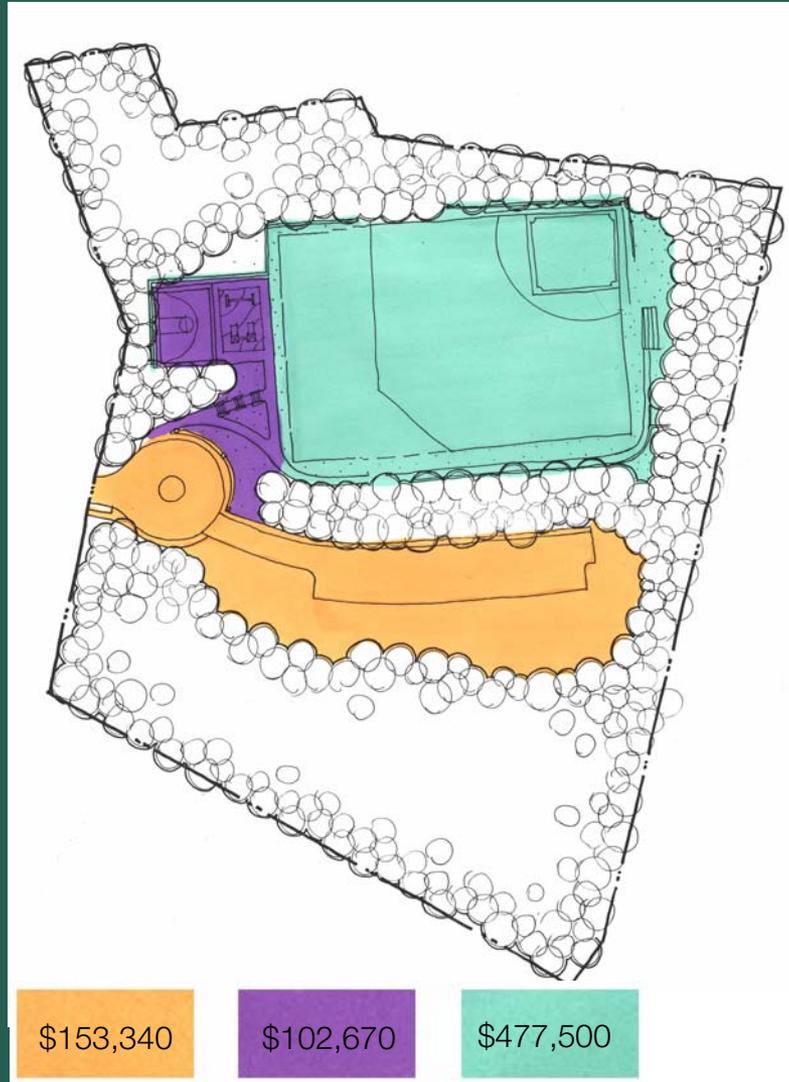
Fix Existing Field

Maintain Portion of Wooded Slope
Between Fields and Parking Lot

Path at Base of Slope

Create Parking Lot to Take
Pressure off Neighborhood Streets
(Clearing and Grading are Required
but Would Still Appear Wooded)





Natural Areas Study

In-depth scientific analysis of existing conditions
(Flora, Fauna, Soils, Geology and Hydrology)

Develop projects to renew natural areas (not just woodlands)

Develop sustainable maintenance practices

State-of-the-art restoration techniques and invasive removal strategies and guidelines for planting
(use of natives vs. exotic plants)

Training and Education of Volunteers and Public Works staff



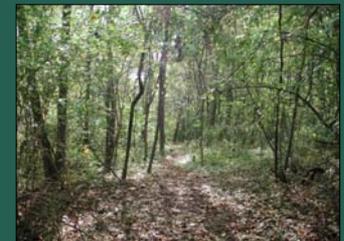
Twin Hills Park



Bird Park



Robb Hollow Park



Hoodridge Park



Natural Areas Study

Set a framework for the preservation and enhancement of natural systems

In-depth scientific analysis of existing conditions

Flora and Fauna

Soils and Geology

Hydrology

Develop projects to renew natural areas (not just woodlands)

Develop sustainable maintenance practices

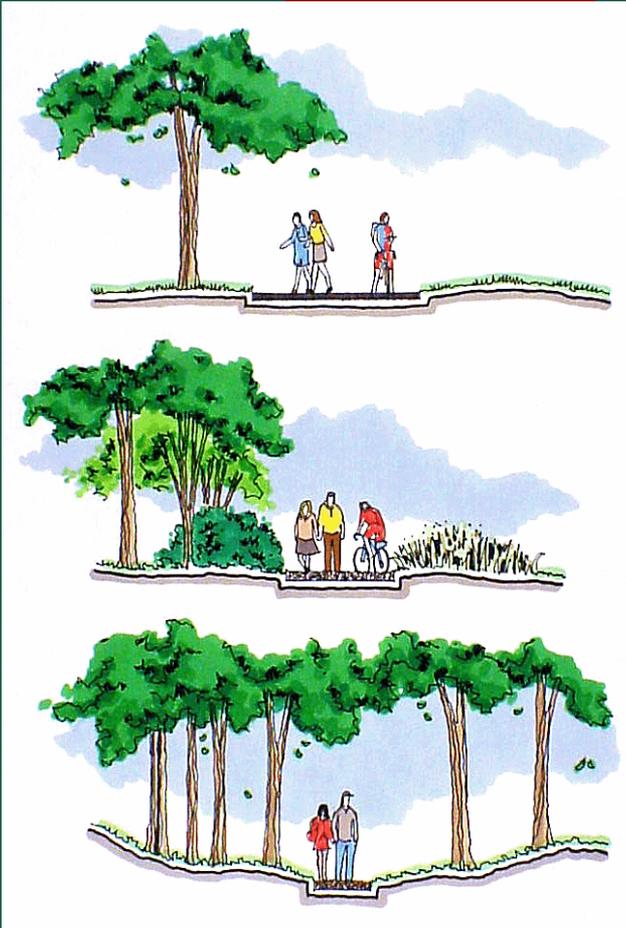
State-of-the-art restoration techniques and invasive removal strategies

Establish guidelines for planting (use of natives vs. exotic plants)

Training and Education of Volunteers and Public Works staff



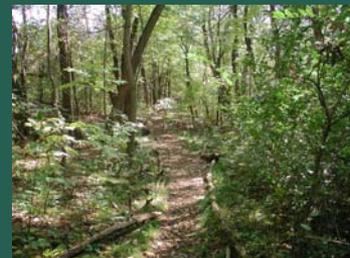
Trails within the Parks



Sidewalk



Pathway



Woodland Trail

Trails should connect and create loops or circuits.

Trails should respect the lay-of-the-land (topography)

Public trails should not dead-end, lead to private property or be placed near dangerous features

In areas that are very steep, wet or environmentally sensitive – existing trails should be removed and/or relocated to more appropriate locations.

Trails should have periodic benches, signs or mile markers to indicate distance.





Bird Park

Steep, Wooded natural place

Used for walking and jogging

Don't touch it!

“Escape” from dense neighborhoods

Loved to death

Soccer field is heavily used

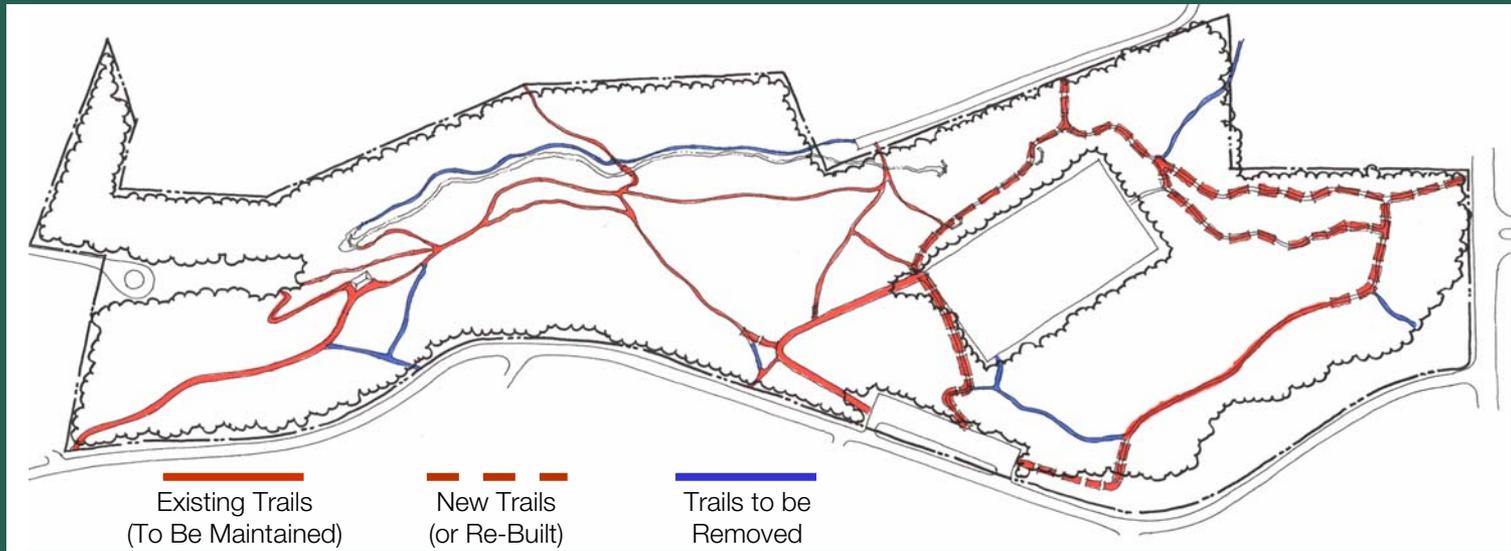
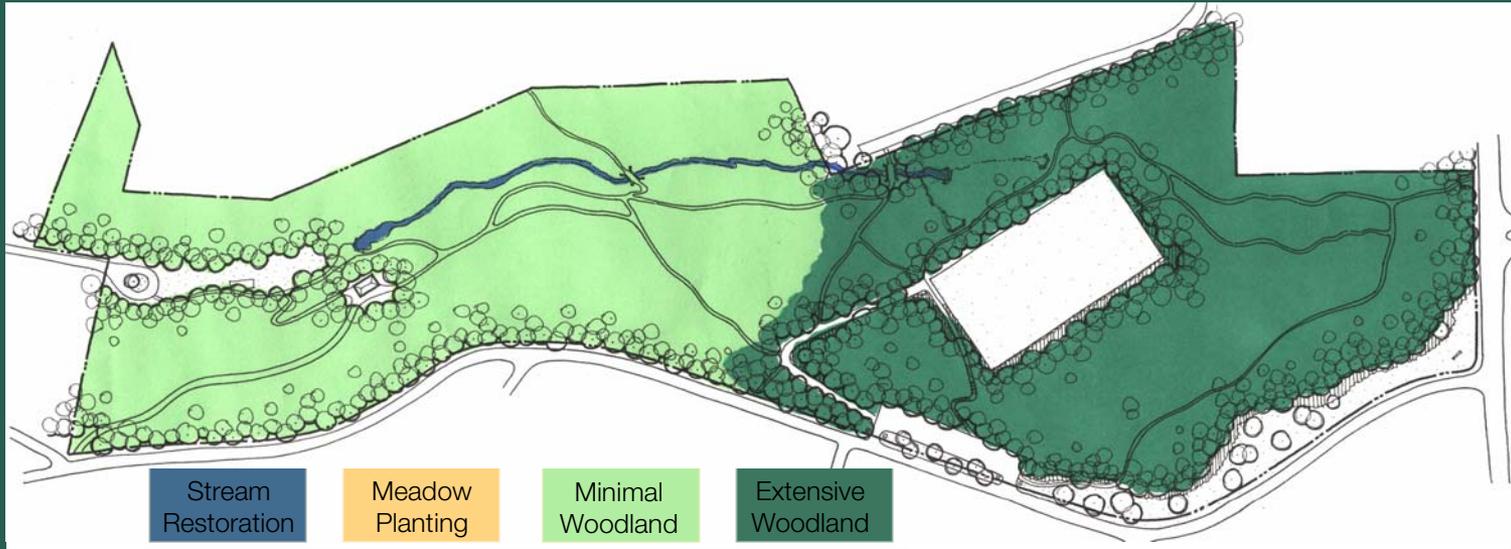
Issues with erosion & trail use

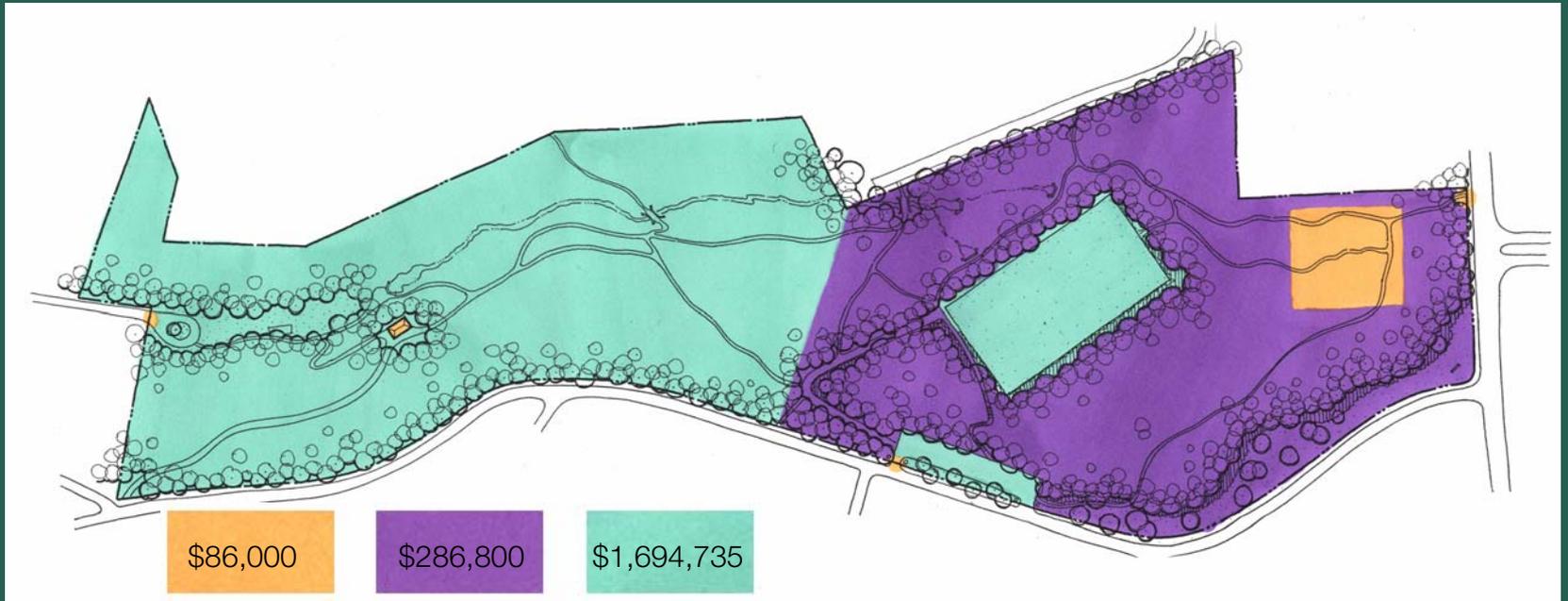
Used by Schools, Boy Scouts

Educational Mission











Twin Hills Park

Beautiful and wooded

Unspoiled by development

Steep

Only one public access point

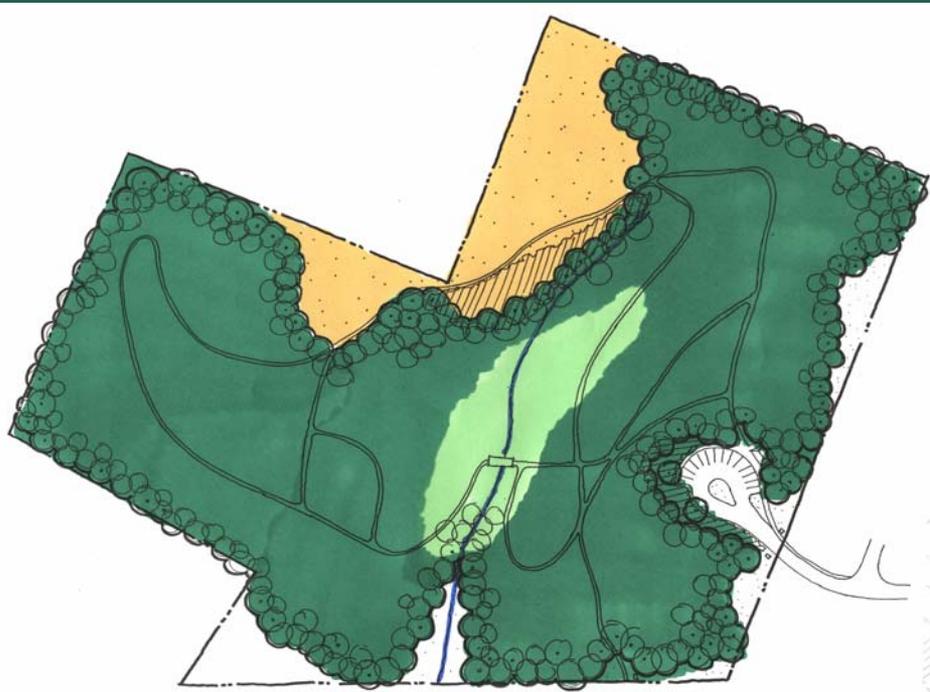
Surrounded by private property

Located in Scott Township

Erosion and invasive species

Great place to get away



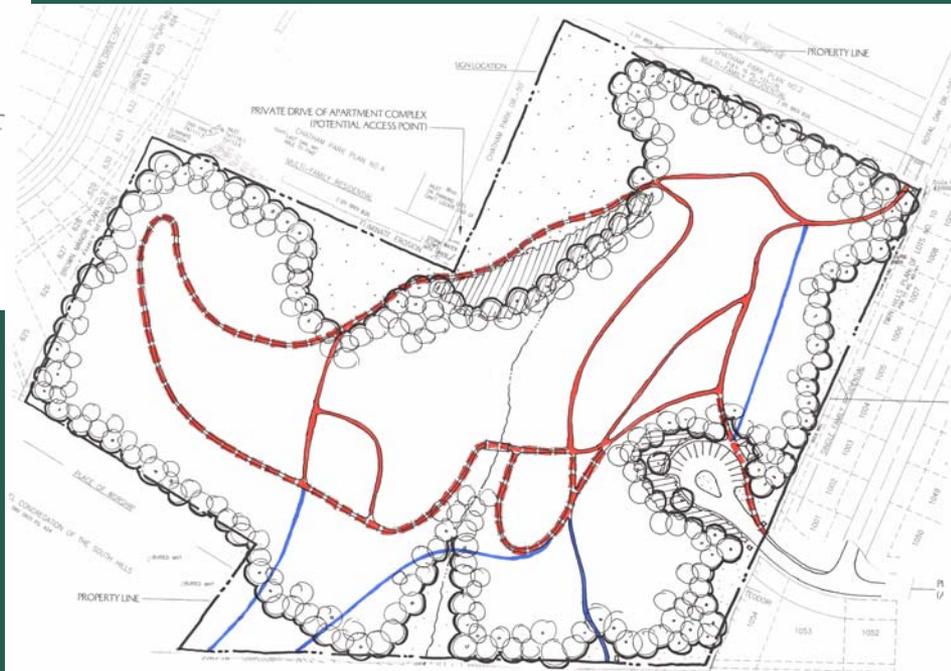


Stream Restoration

Meadow Planting

Minimal Woodland

Extensive Woodland

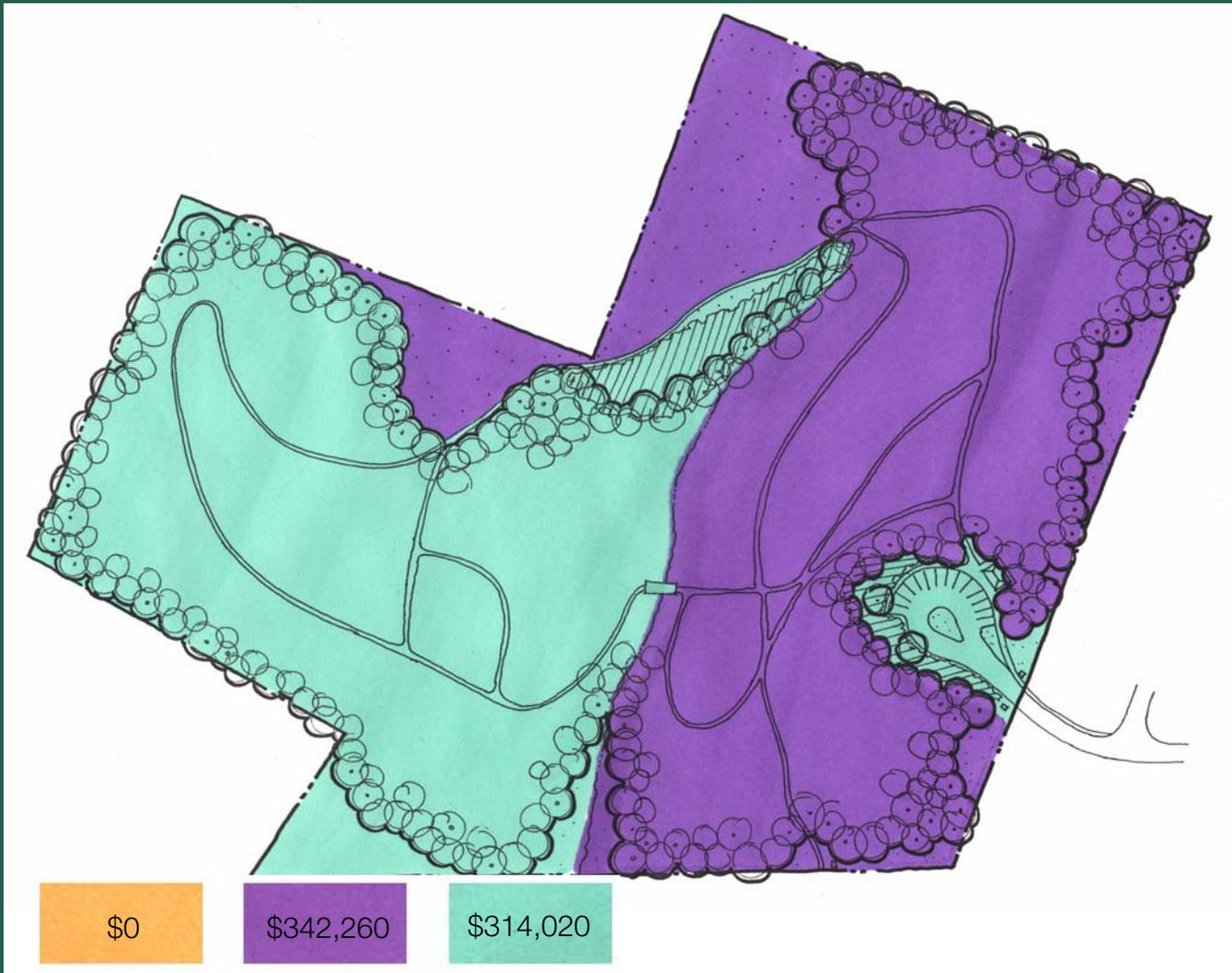


Existing Trails
(To Be Maintained)

New Trails
(or Re-Built)

Trails to be
Removed





Robb Hollow Park



Steep and wooded

Public Works facility

Limited public access

County road widening project

Stream valley being filled-in

Rental property in current use

Topography limits use

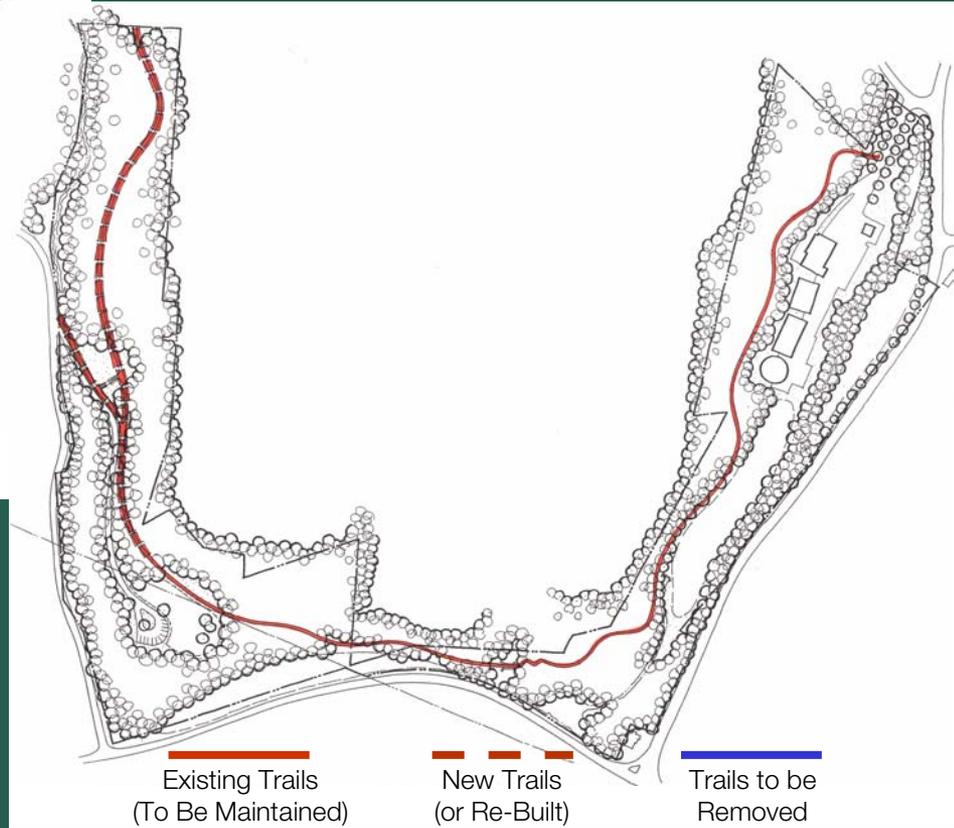
What can be done with it?







- Stream
Restoration
- Meadow
Planting
- Minimal
Woodland
- Extensive
Woodland



- Existing Trails
(To Be Maintained)
- - -
New Trails
(or Re-Built)
- Trails to be
Removed





Hoodridge Park



Unknown to residents

Steep wooded valley

Public access is limited to walkway

Utility lines throughout site

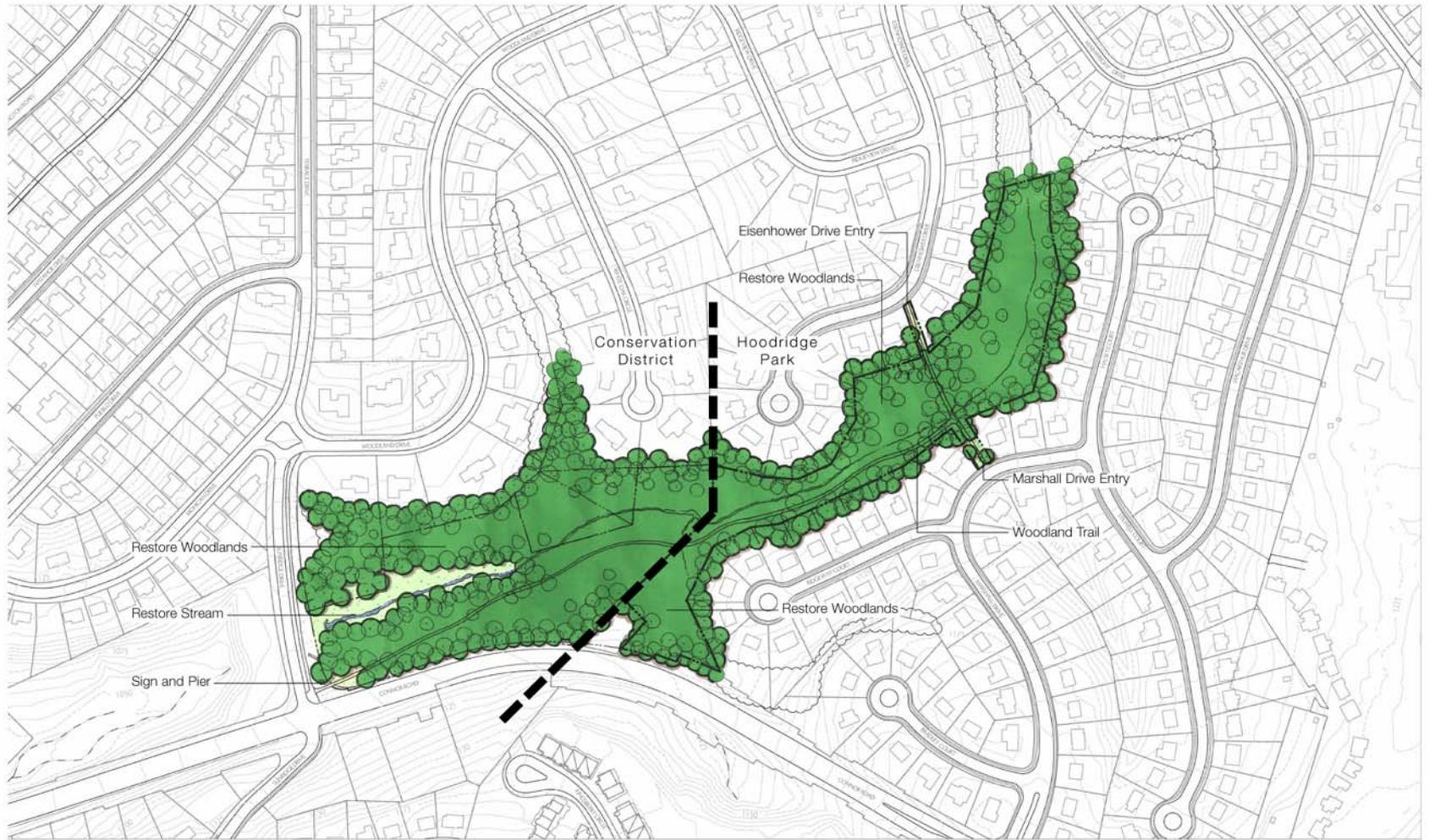
Land-locked by private property

What can be done with it?

Conservation District is not part of park

Healthy woodlands in select locations



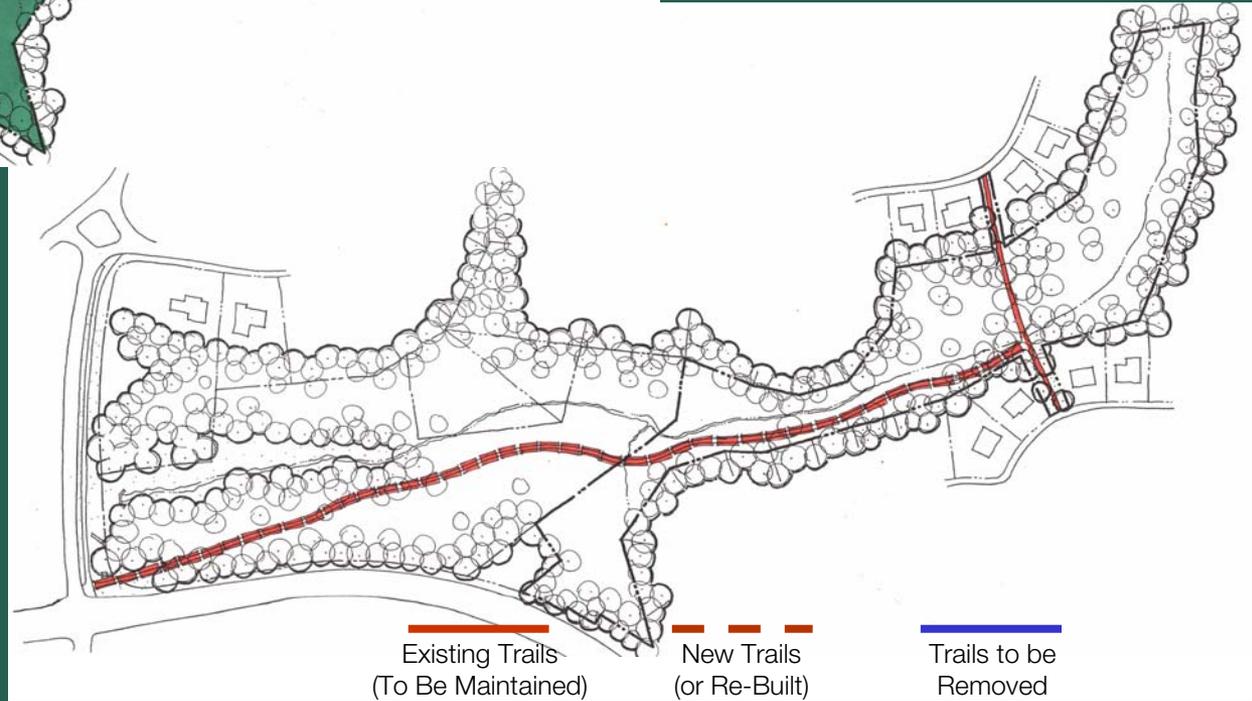
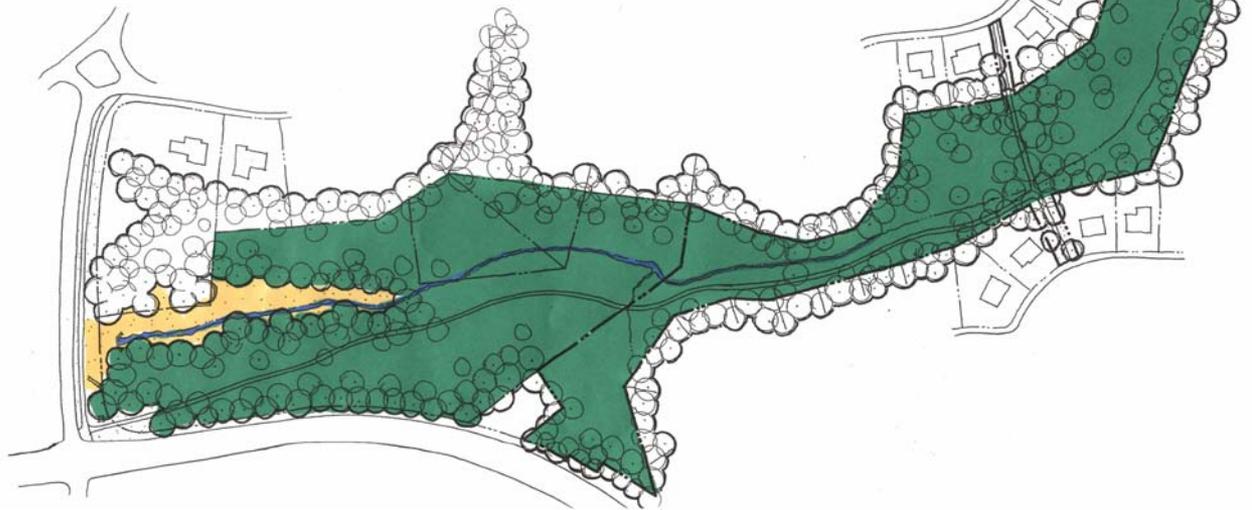


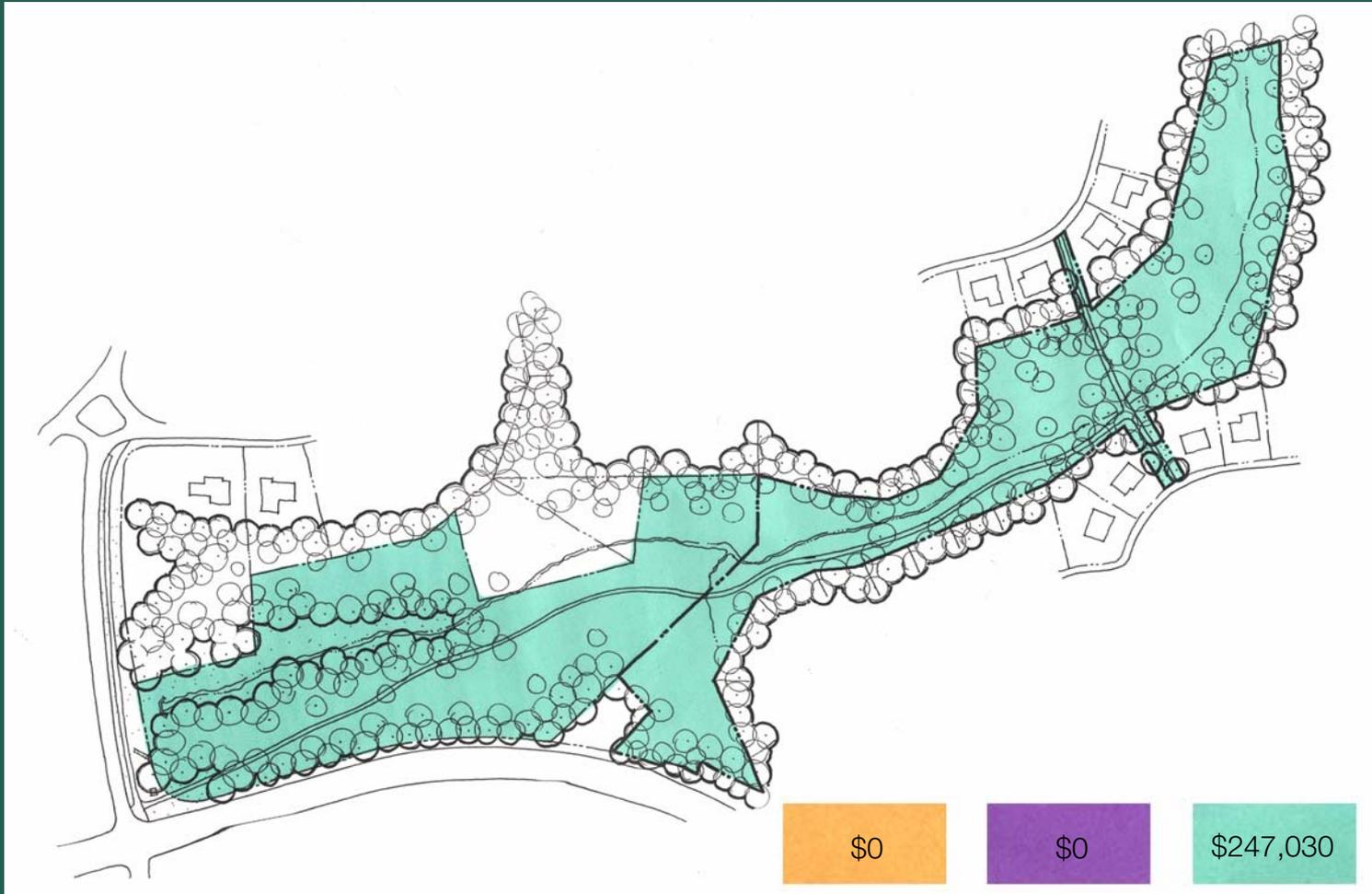
Stream
Restoration

Meadow
Planting

Minimal
Woodland

Extensive
Woodland







Church Place Park

Heavily used by neighborhood kids

Lawn is as important as equipment

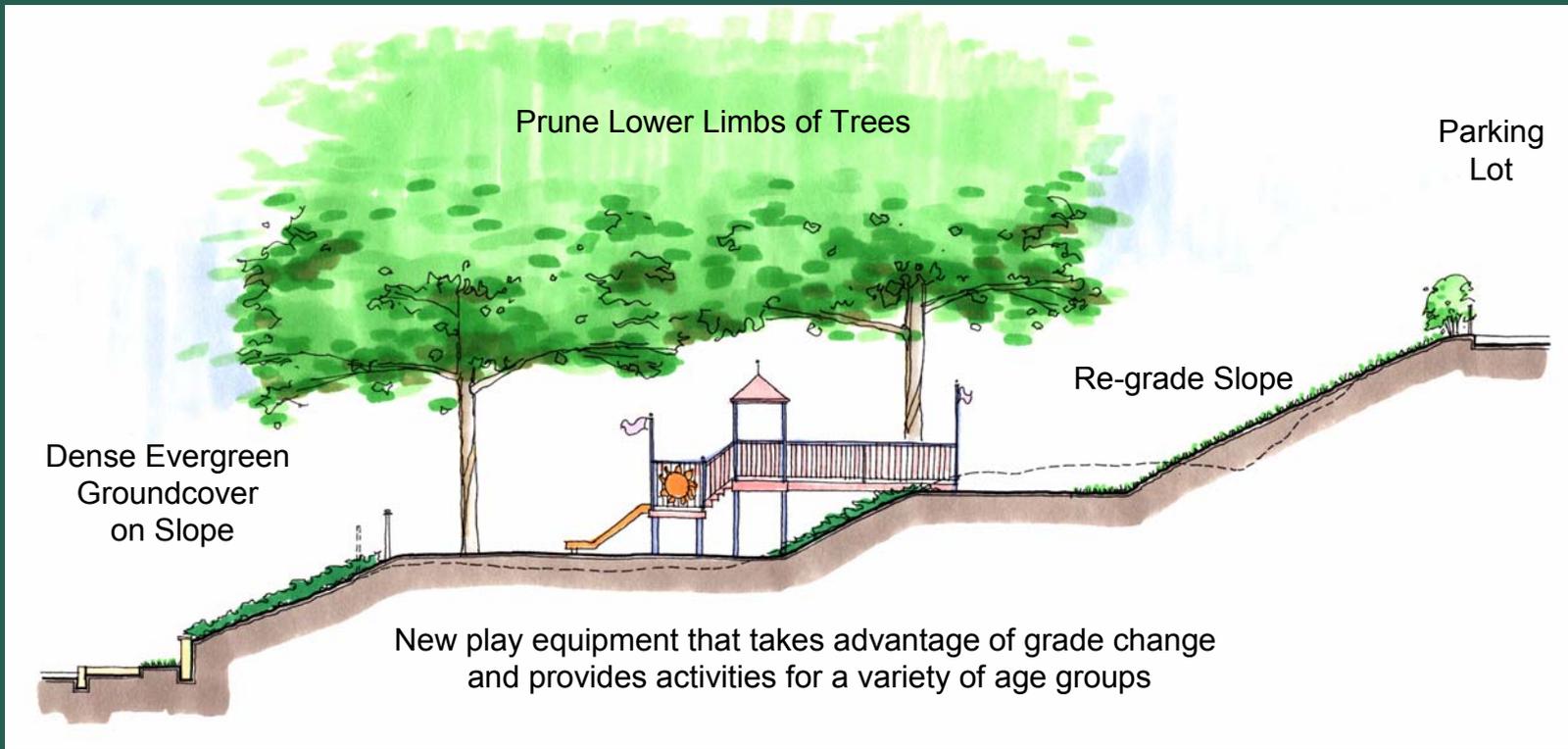
Equipment in deep shade – damp

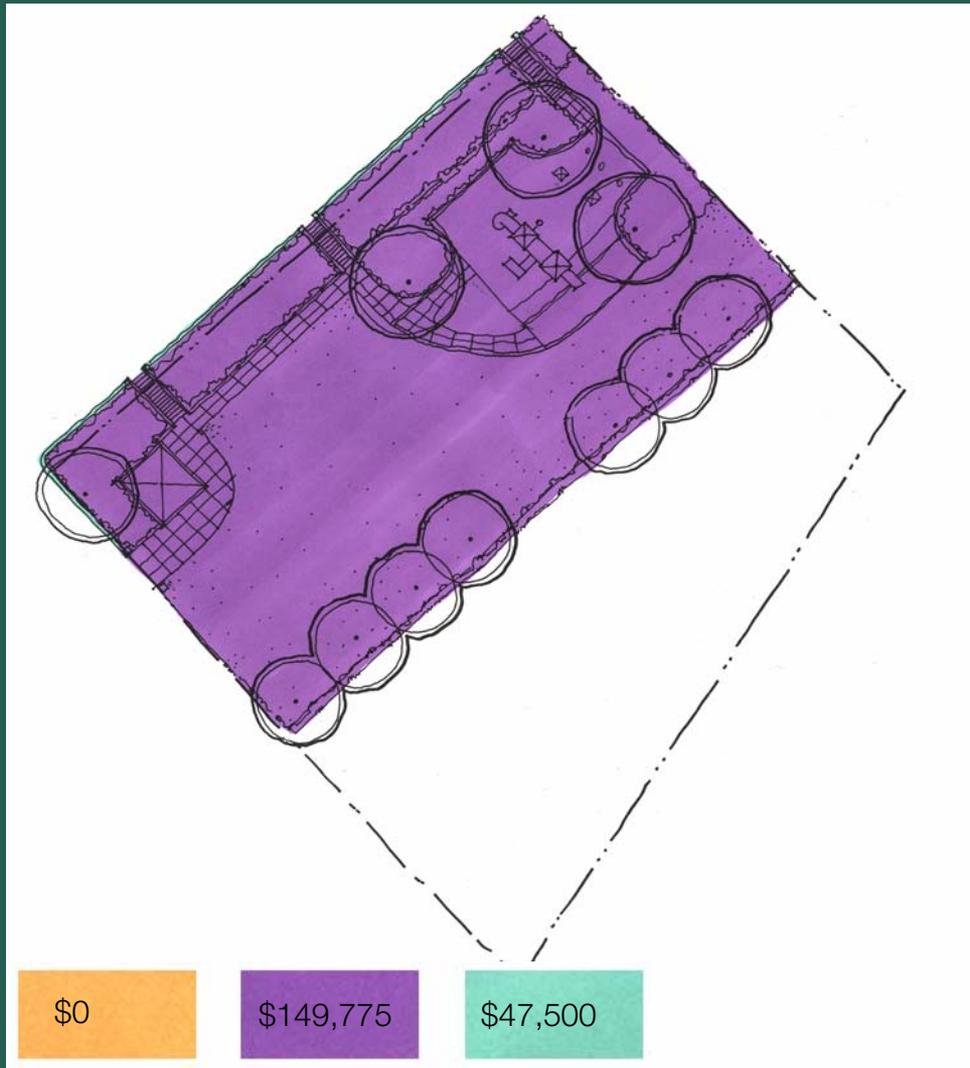
Difficult to maintain

Steep slopes on both sides











Rockwood Park

Nice neighborhood park

Steeply sloping terrain

Who uses the two parking lots?

The basketball court is unsafe

Play equipment is dated

Pavilion is small

Lacks level area for neighborhood use







Highland Terrace Park



Very steep topography

Play equipment and court on opposite sides of the road

Invisible when driving by

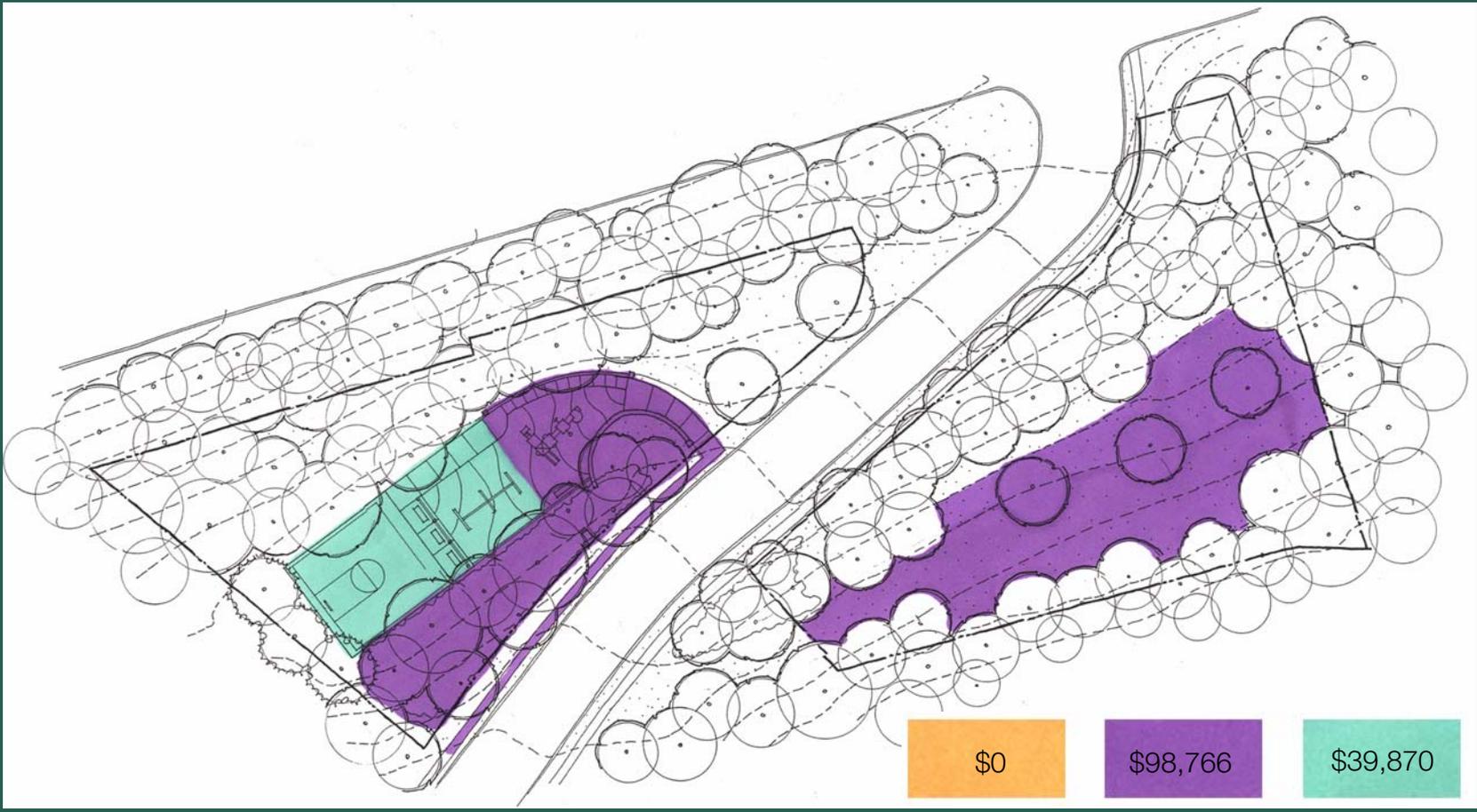
Equipment is not kid-friendly

Difficult to maintain

Access through neighbors property







Meadowcroft Park

Lighted courts are heavily used

Deteriorating fences and paving

Lacks handicap accessibility

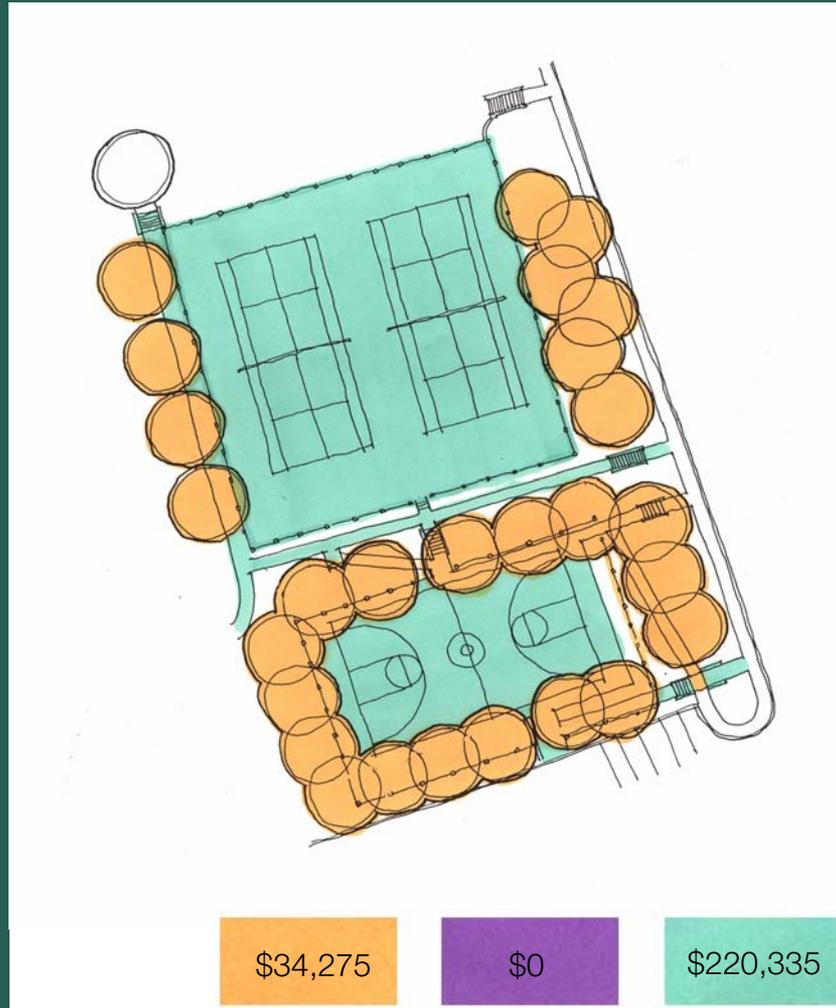
Baseball field is school property

Parking lot must remain for residents

Trees are nice and hide the courts well







Iroquois Park



Nice neighborhood park

Unknown to those outside neighborhood

Scattered, dated play equipment

Lack of level areas for neighborhood use

Walkway to Galleria

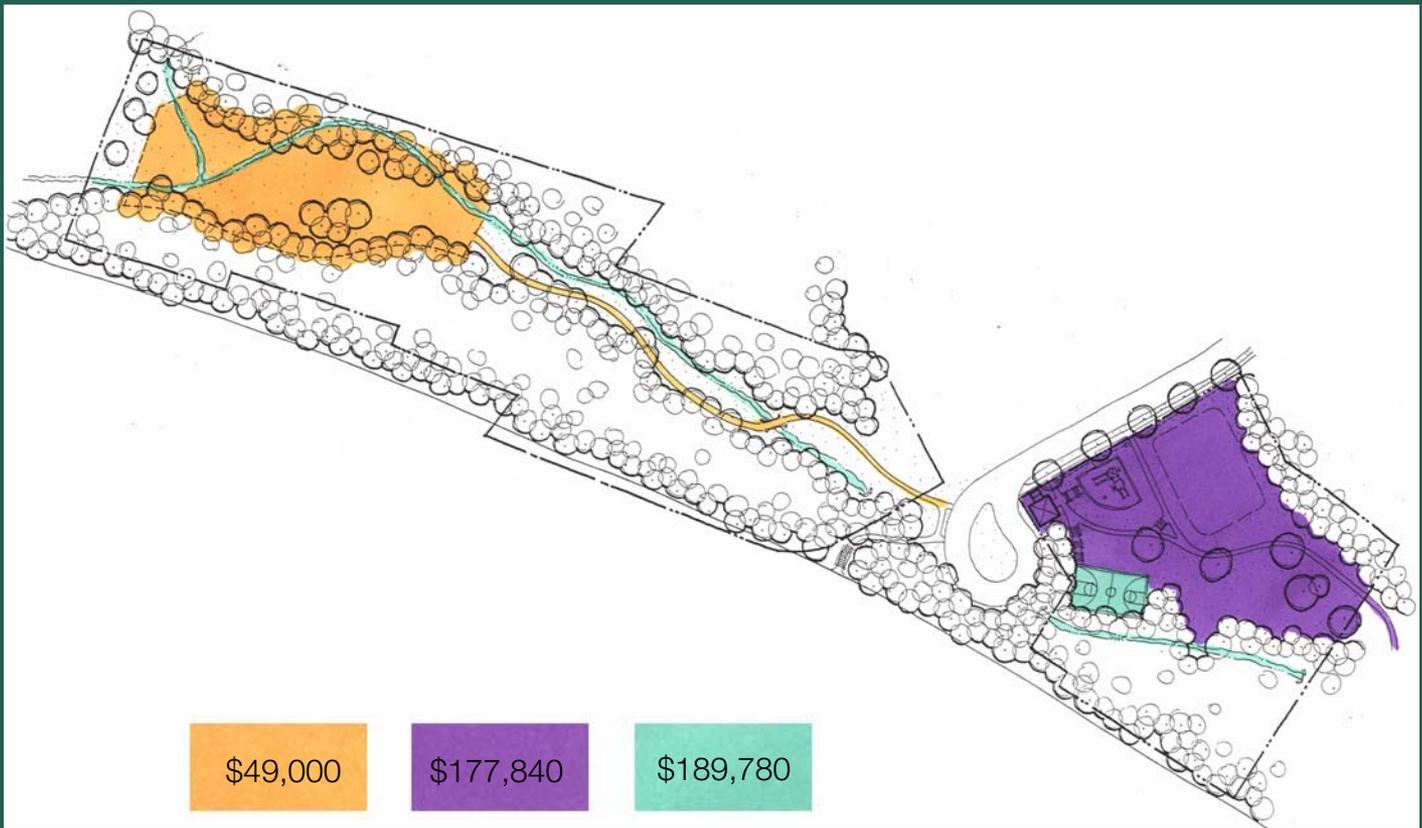
Stream valley is under-utilized

Basketball court is well hidden

Many large mature trees









Mt. Lebanon Park

Place where everything occurs

Everyone uses it & everybody drives

Pavilions need electric/water service

Access to pavilions limits use

Parking difficult during multiple events

Some play equipment in poor shape

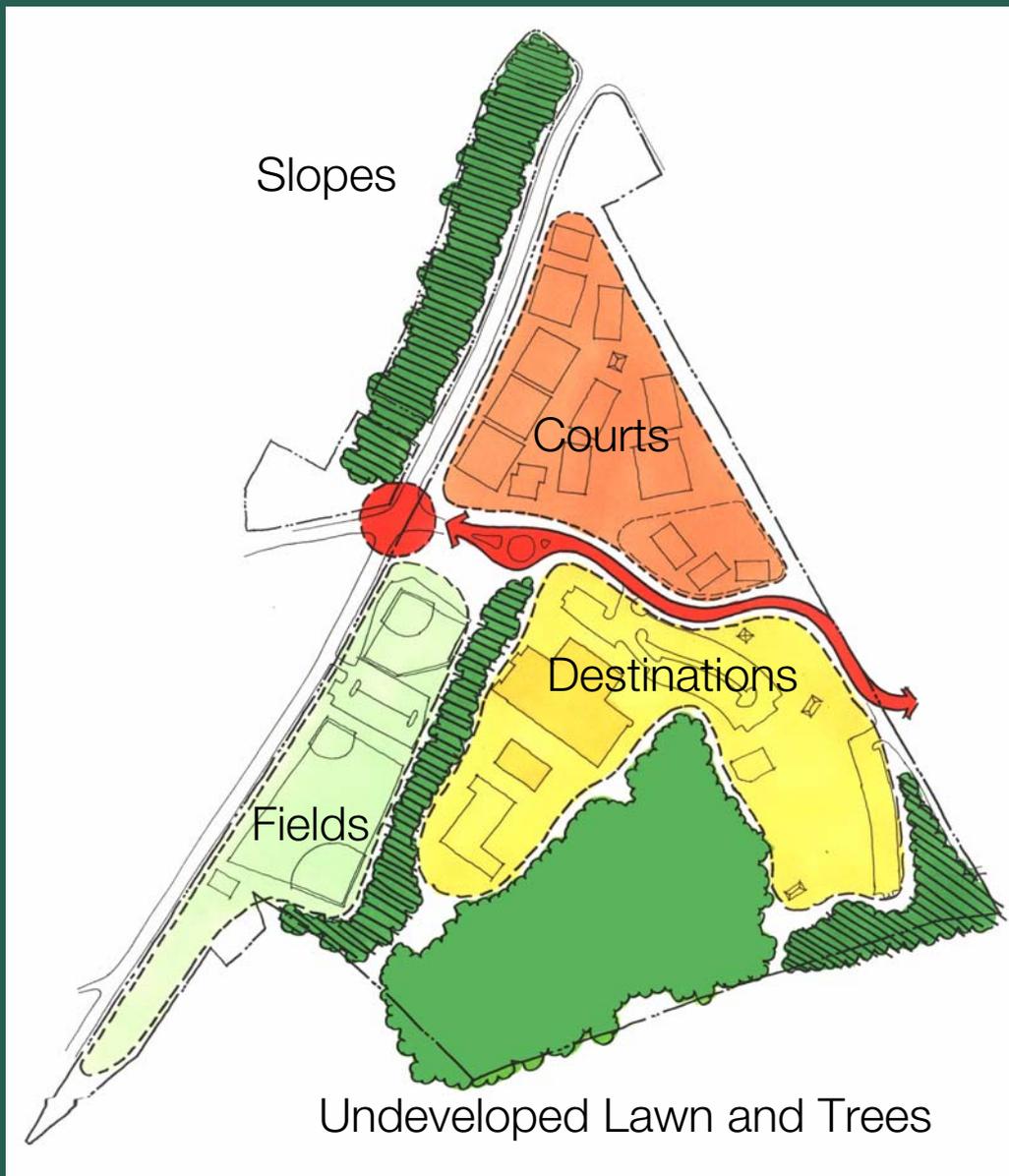
Lacking trails and pathways

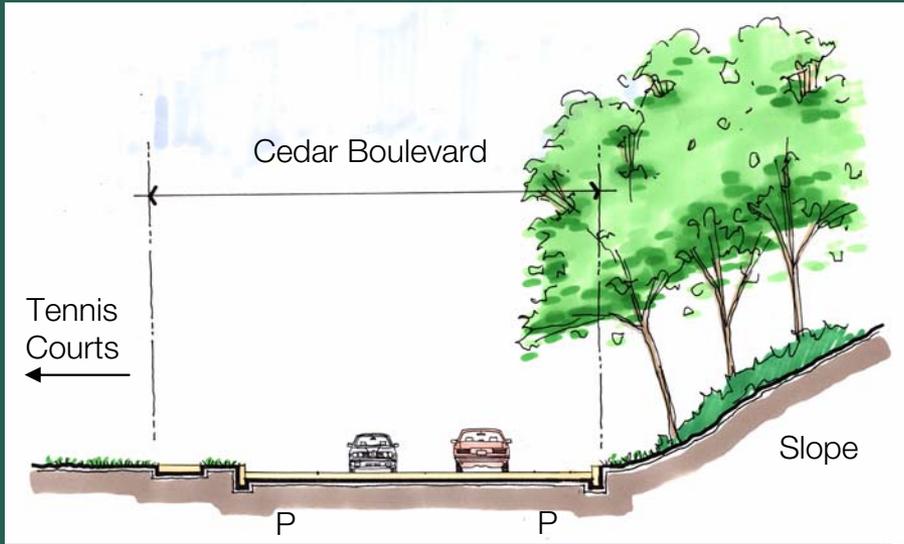
Entry sign is almost invisible

Provide variety for all residents











Improvements to surface, entry and fences

Drop-off, steps and walks are repaired

Concert site remains as-is





Create upper-level skateboard facility
(still visible, separated from basketball)

New site must be found for concerts and movies





- Consolidate equipment into destination playground
- Pavilion (near parking) at entry
- Levels that step up, each with different equipment
- Retain trees and stone walls



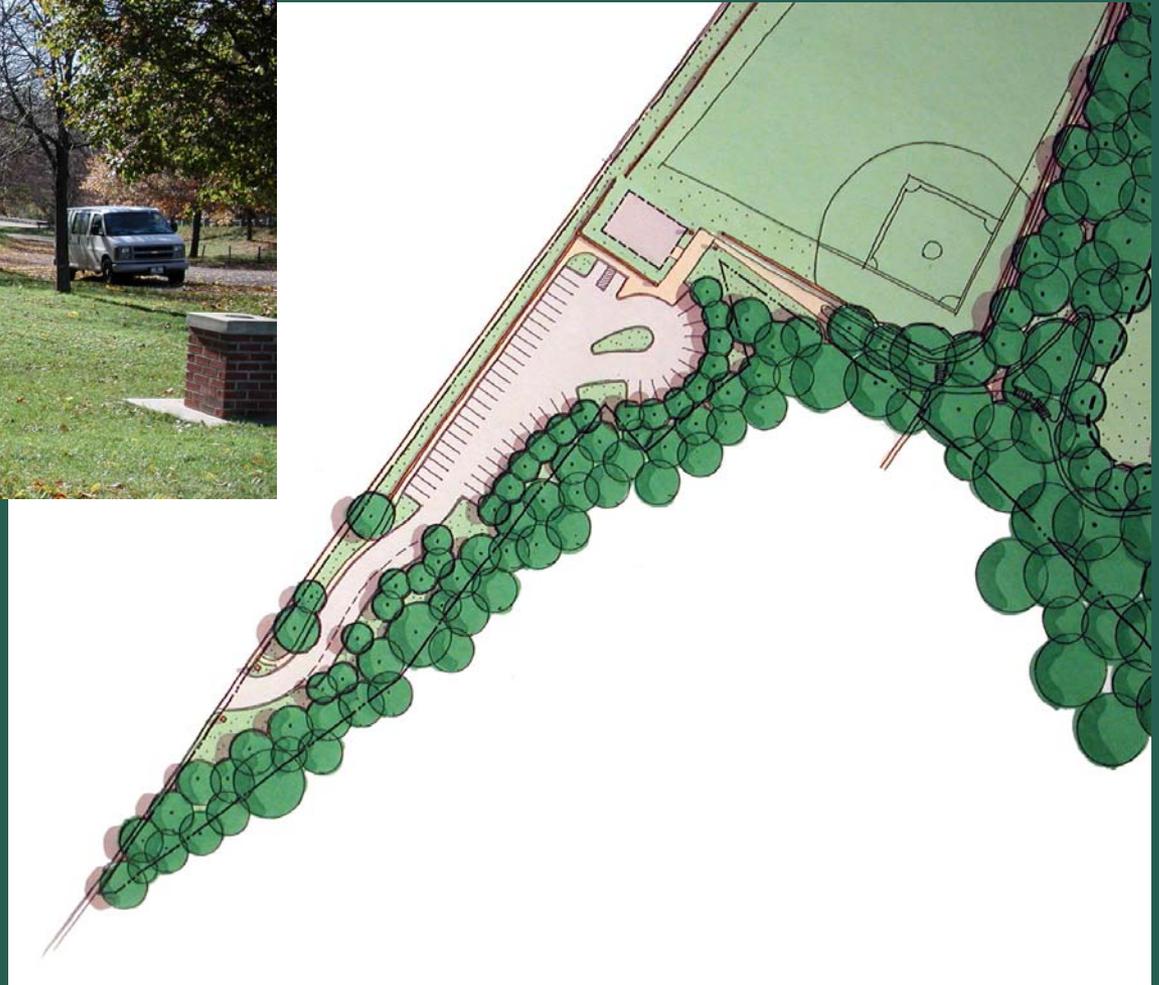


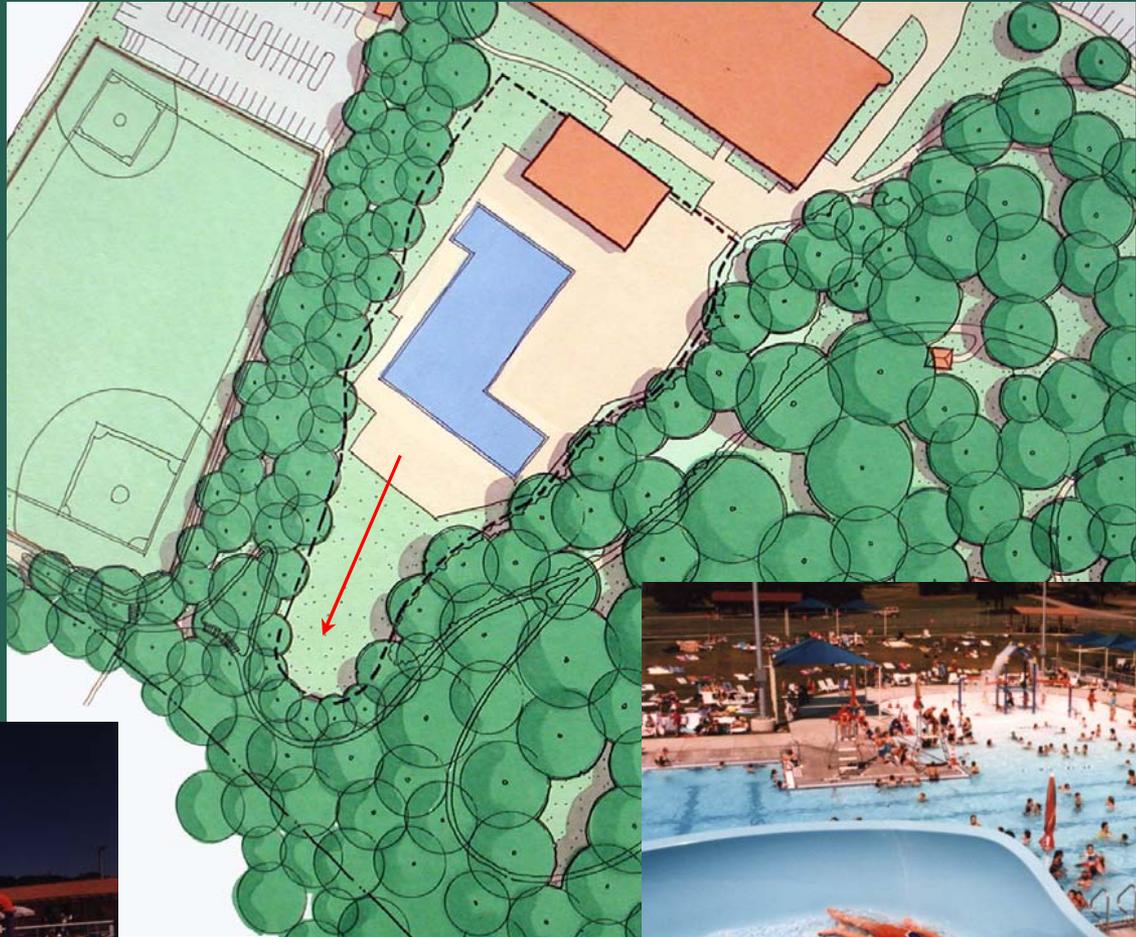
Create amphitheater along western slope
(retain trees, utilize topography, use
stone to match walls)

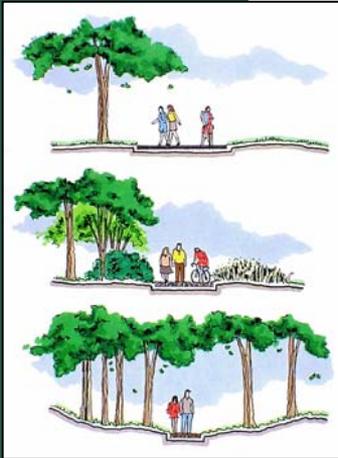


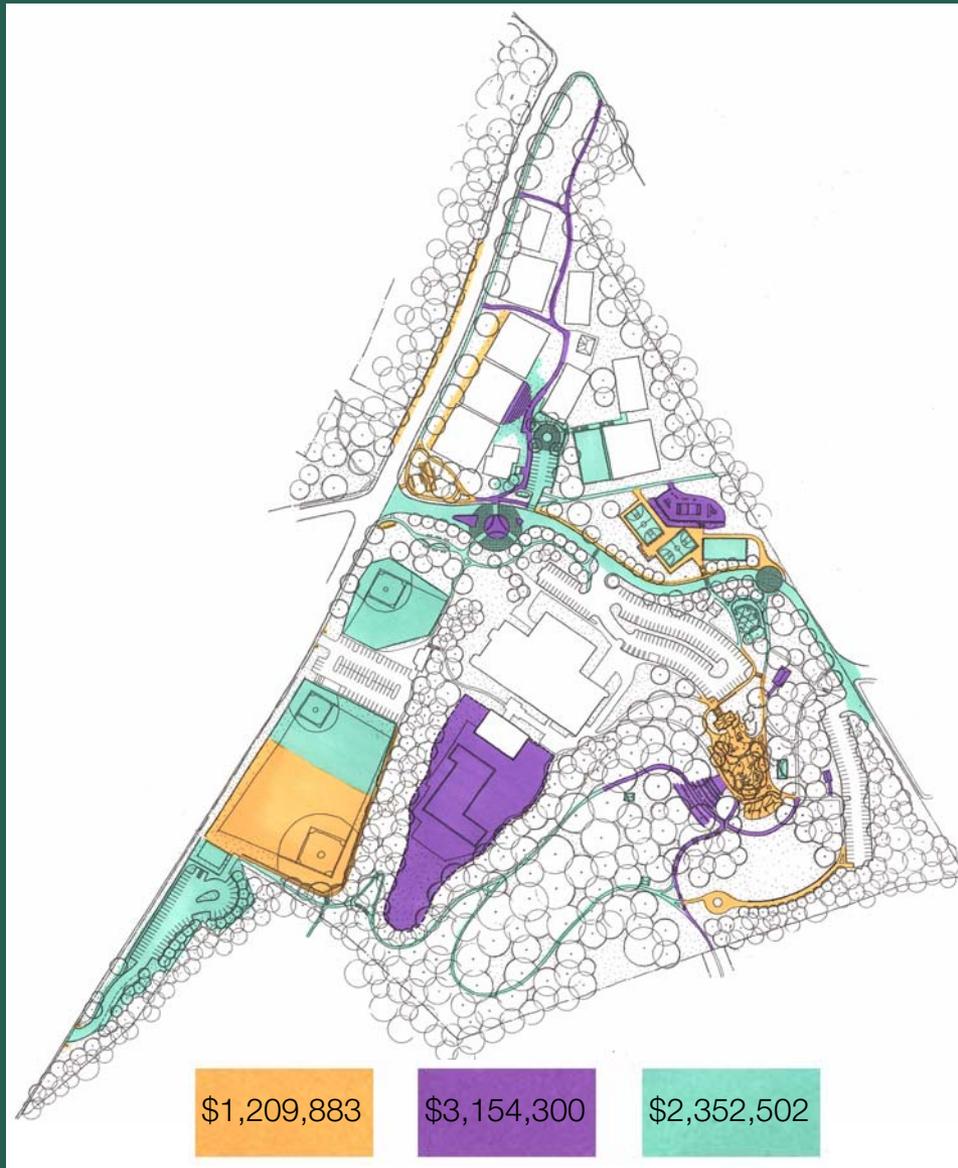
If having only full-size courts is problematic –
develop a multi-purpose court geared primarily
for younger children, in close proximity to
playground and pavilions











Dogs in the Parks

Needs to be isolated from houses

Must be accessible for maintenance

Must not displace any current activity

Must have available parking

Fenced on all sides (benches, trash can)

Installed on a trial basis



Ecology of the Parks

Enhance and create healthy woodlands



Create non-existent habitats such as meadows



Stream bank restoration

Natural Areas Study

Should provide valuable knowledge and thus influence projects throughout the system



Woodland edges

