Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation | University at Buffalo Regional Institute

17 January 2019

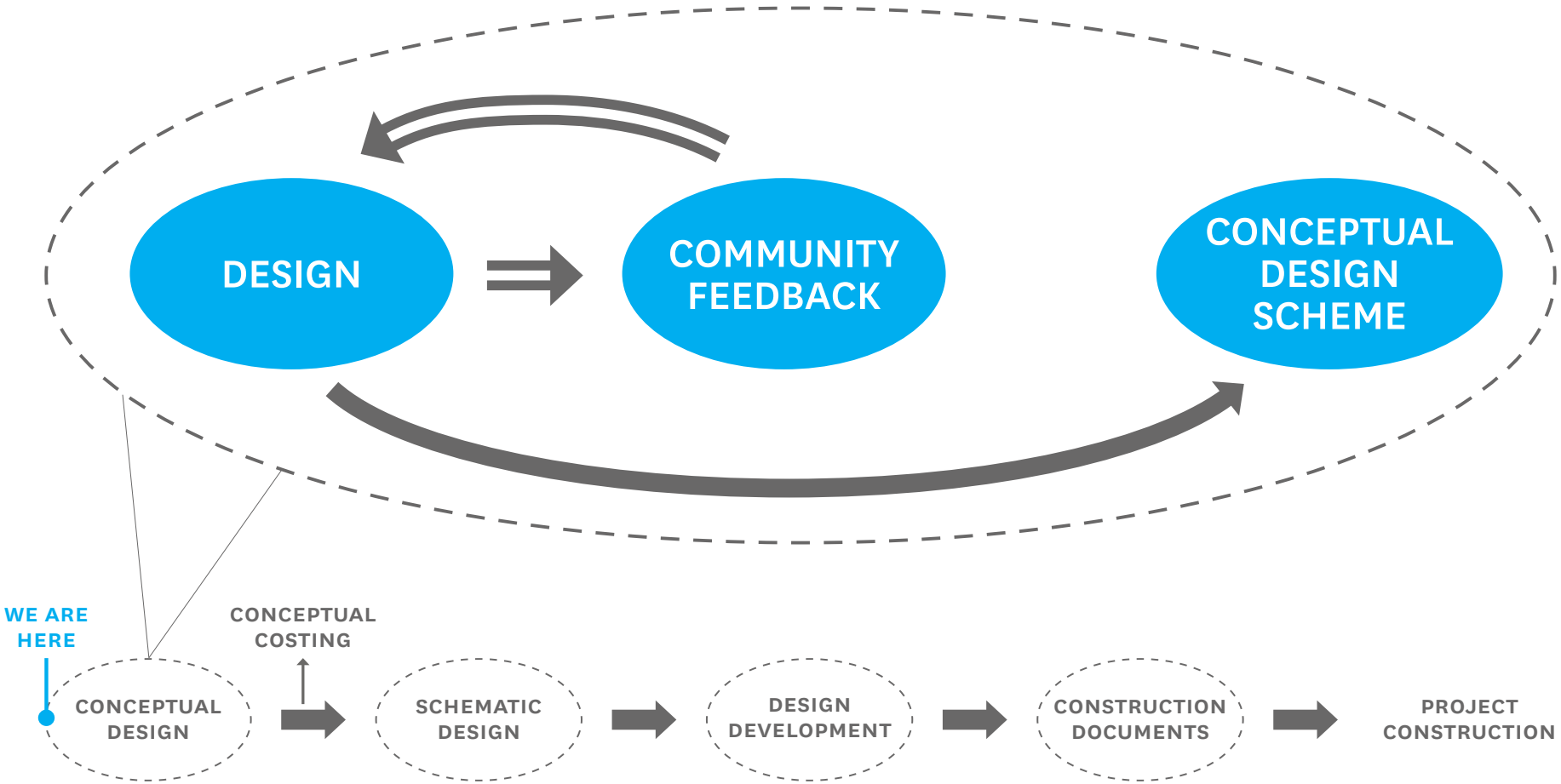
Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates Inc.

Who is MVVA?

Brooklyn Bridge Park, Brooklyn, NY

How do we work?

Design Process: Internal Design Development + Community Workshops

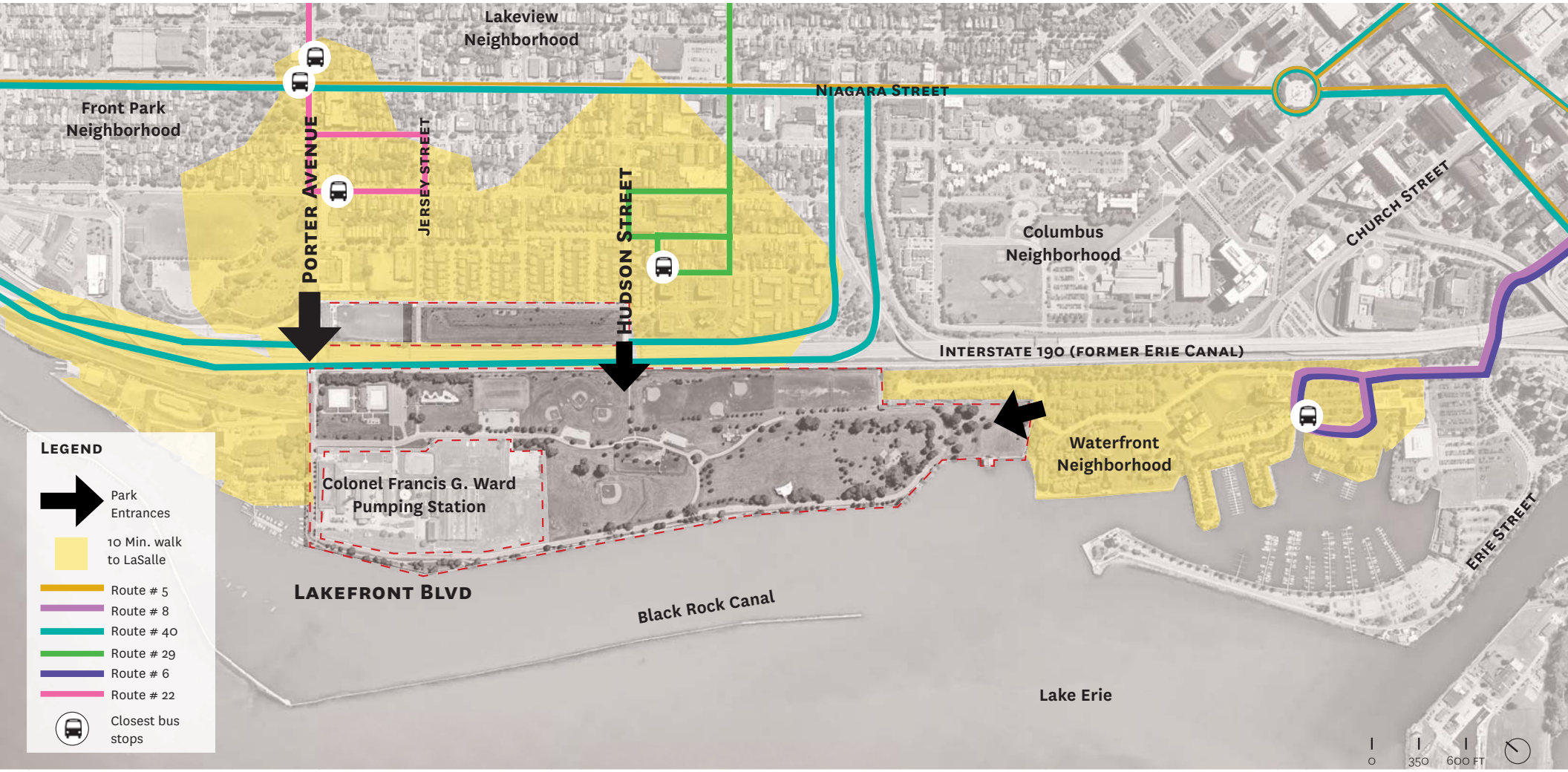


Concept Development Phase Workflow

Existing Conditions Analysis

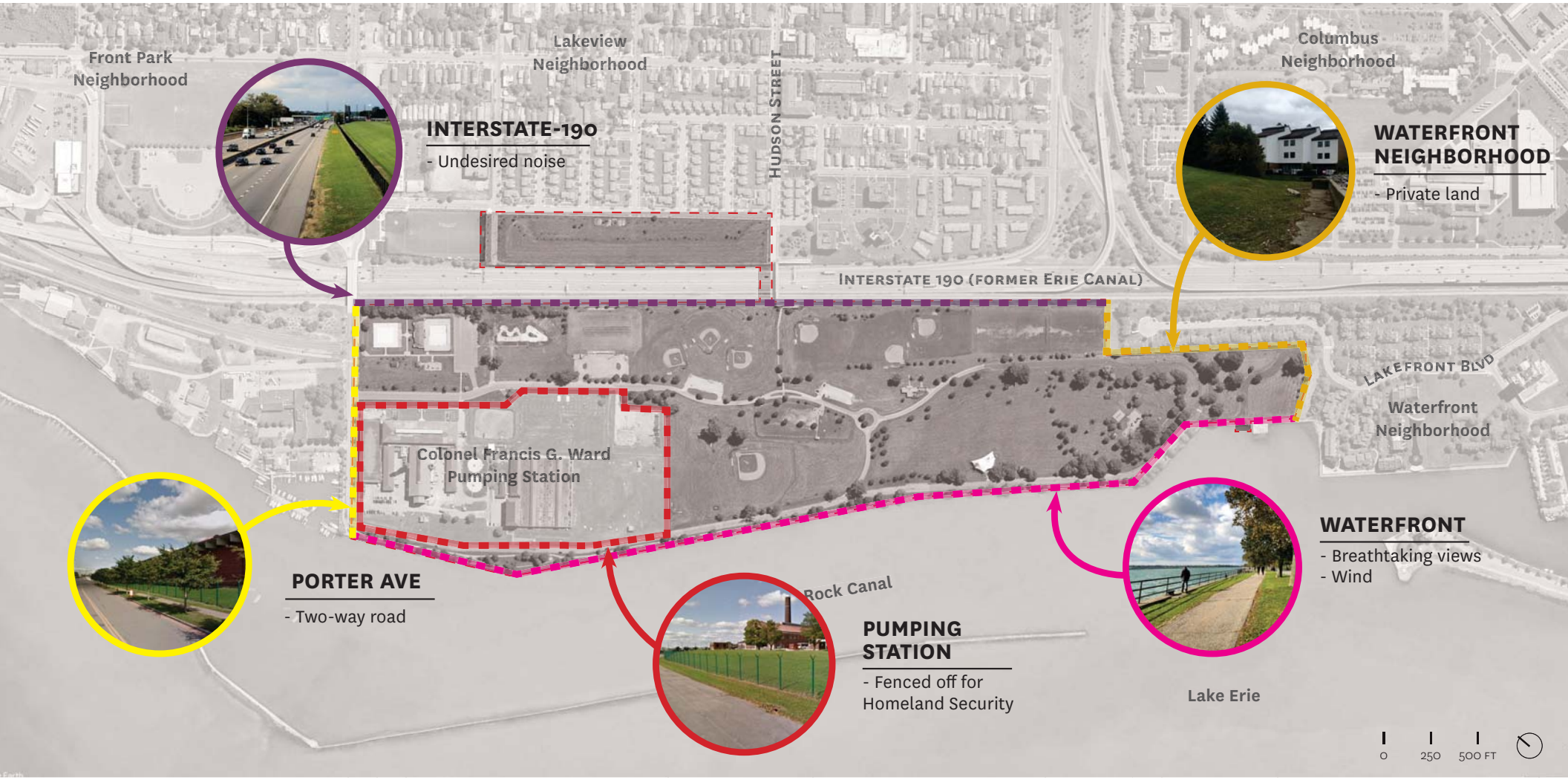
Project Site in Context

Project Site



Existing Park Access + Urban Connections

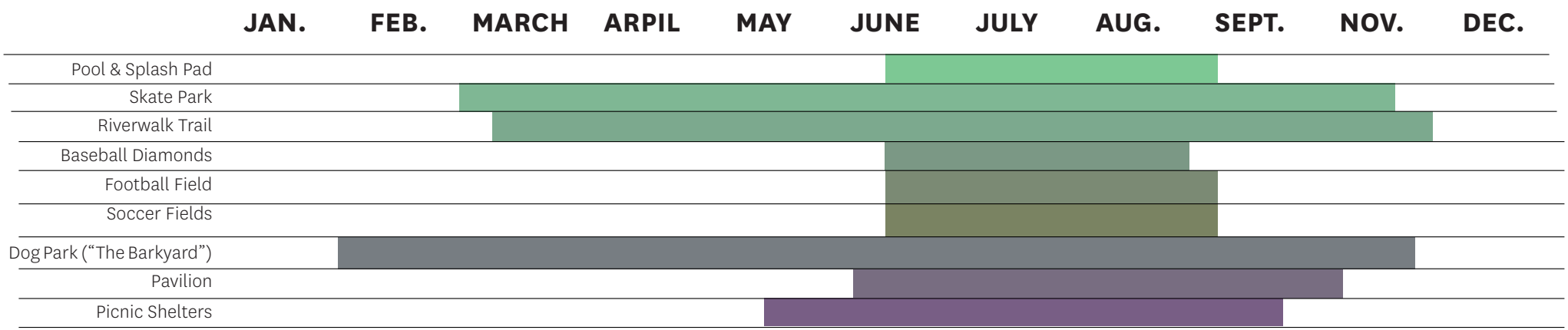
Existing Park Circulation



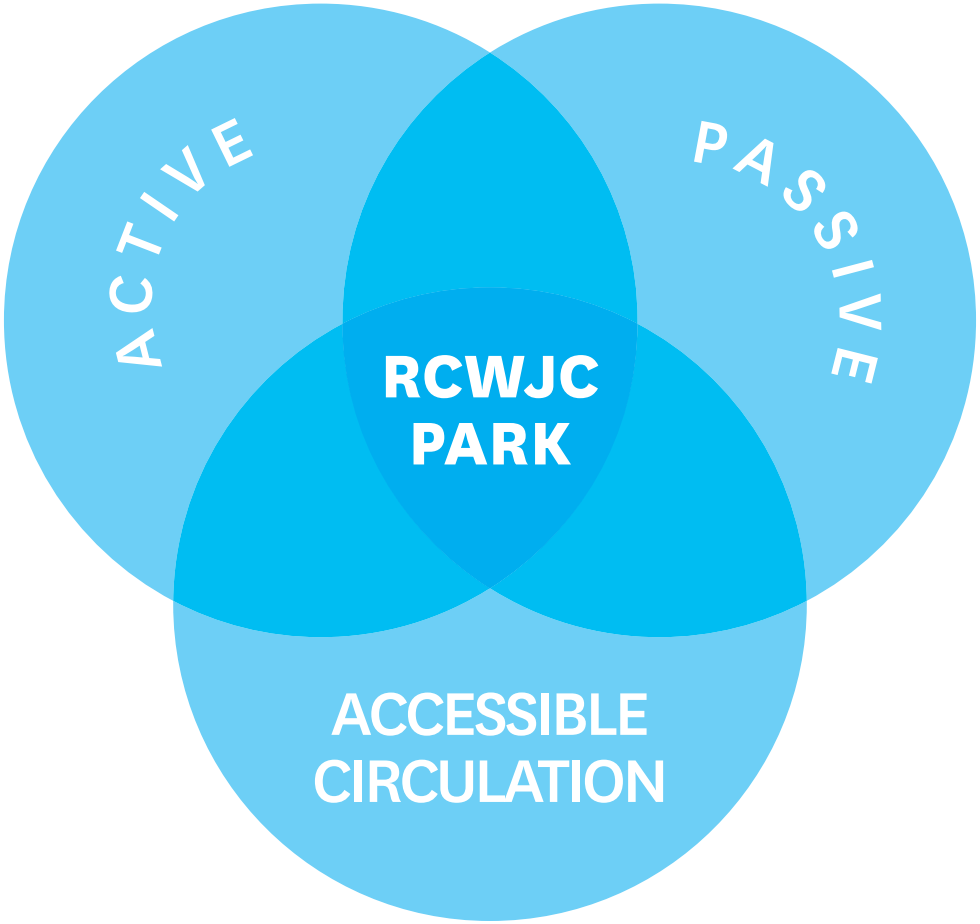
The Edges of the Park

Existing Programming

Seasonal Park Use



Existing Planting



Correct Mix of Uses

Initial Design Observations

1. Build on the Strengths of LaSalle Park while Transforming it into Ralph C. Wilson Jr., Centennial Park.

Develop LaSalle into a world class park through strategic interventions and overall enhancements that build on what the community already values about it and the site's unique assets.

LaSalle Park is a Welcoming Place for All

It Supports Activities for Different Interests and Age Groups

Flexible Spaces Accommodate Large Gatherings and Events

Various Athletic Facilities Serve the Surrounding Diverse Community

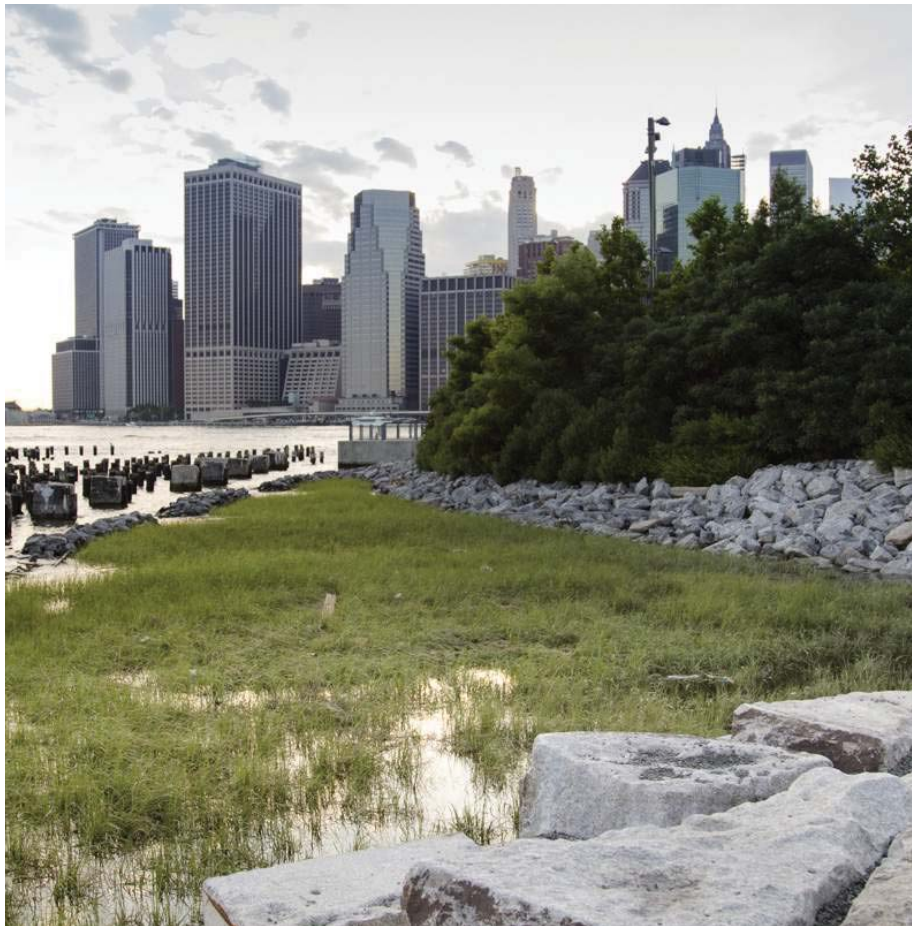
The Site is Powerful and Boundless

Waterfront Views are Exceptional

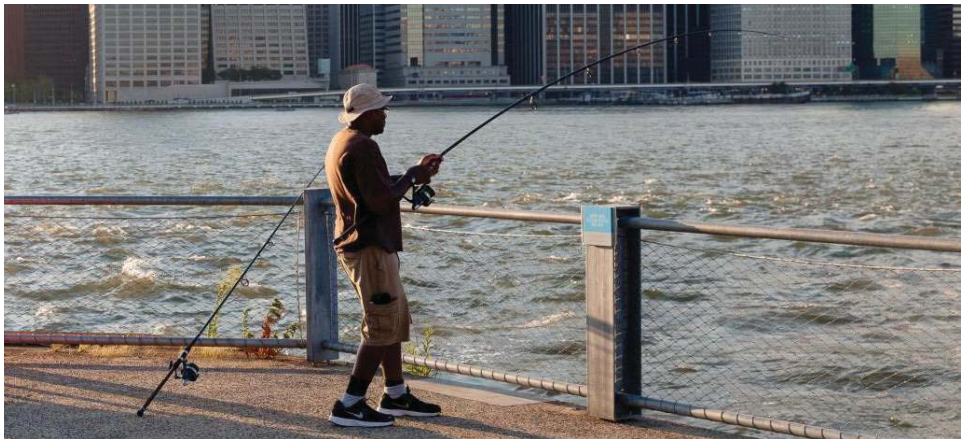
2. Re-imagine the Waterfront and Engage the Rest of the Park.

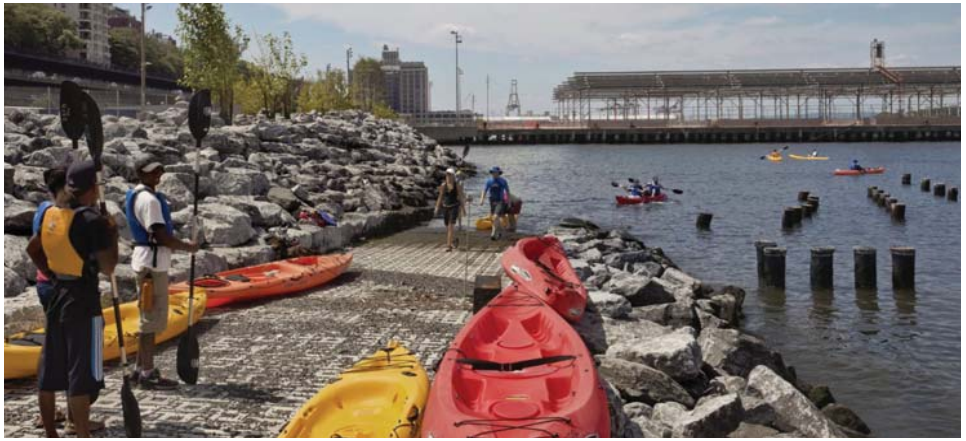
Integrate a mix of hard and soft edges along the waterfront that reveal daily and seasonal water level changes and provide opportunities for the community to interact with the water in diverse ways.

Distinct Shoreline Treatments Add Experiential Complexity along the Waterfront



Embrace the Water’s Edge





Engage the Water

3. Enrich the Park Experience with Topography and Planting.

Introduce topography and planting to articulate spaces, hide and reveal views, block undesired sounds and sights, add rhythm and complexity to circulation network, display seasonality, and provide protection from elements.

Planting and Topography Articulate Spaces and Create Flow Between Them

Subtle Elevation Changes Enhance Movement through the Park

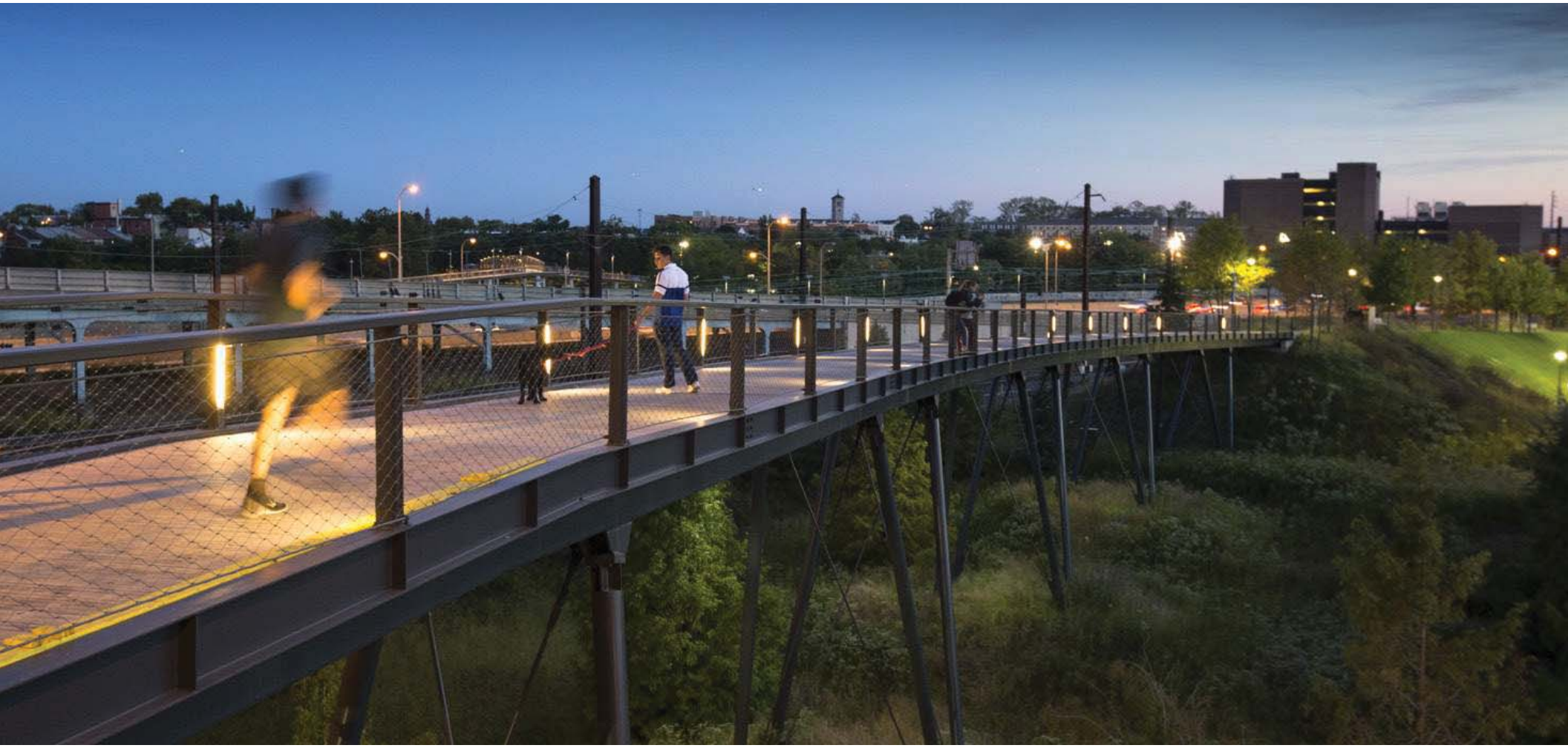
Landforms Block Undesired Noise and Sights

Plants and Seasonal Interest

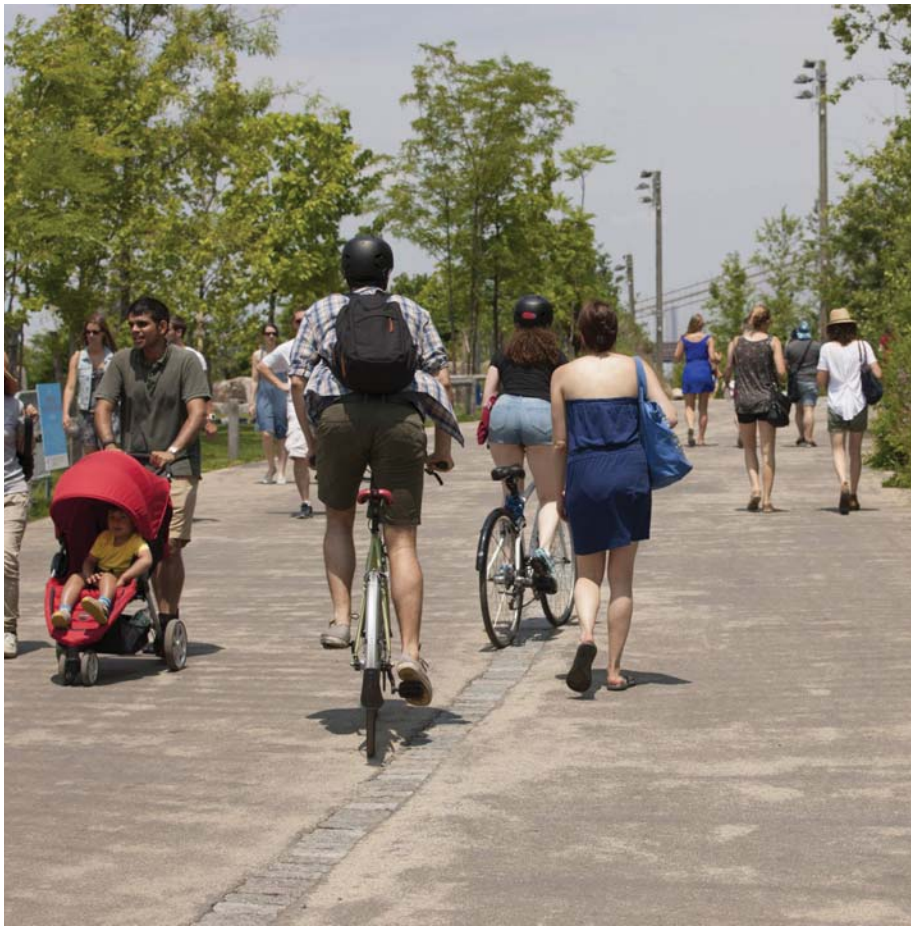
Support Wildlife

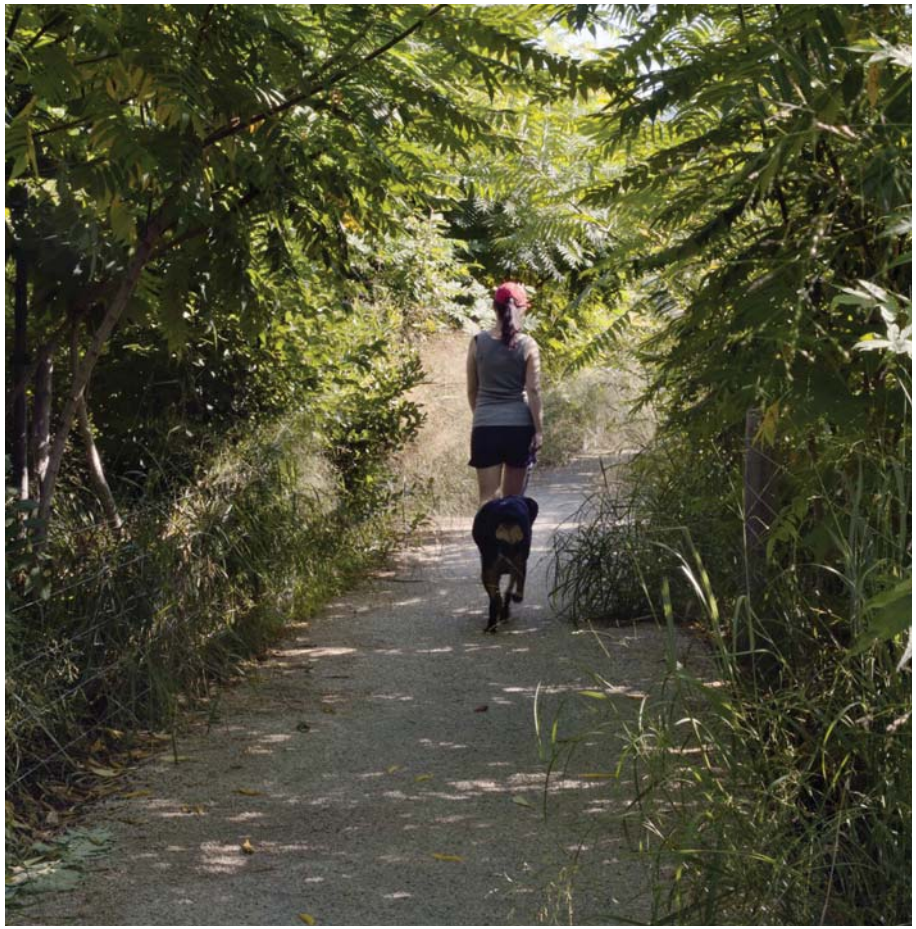
4. Strengthen Neighborhood Connections and Improve Park Circulation.

Provide safe, welcoming, and accessible entrances to the park to facilitate arrival from surrounding neighborhoods. Establish a hierarchical circulation network that allows visitors to move and experience the park in unique ways.

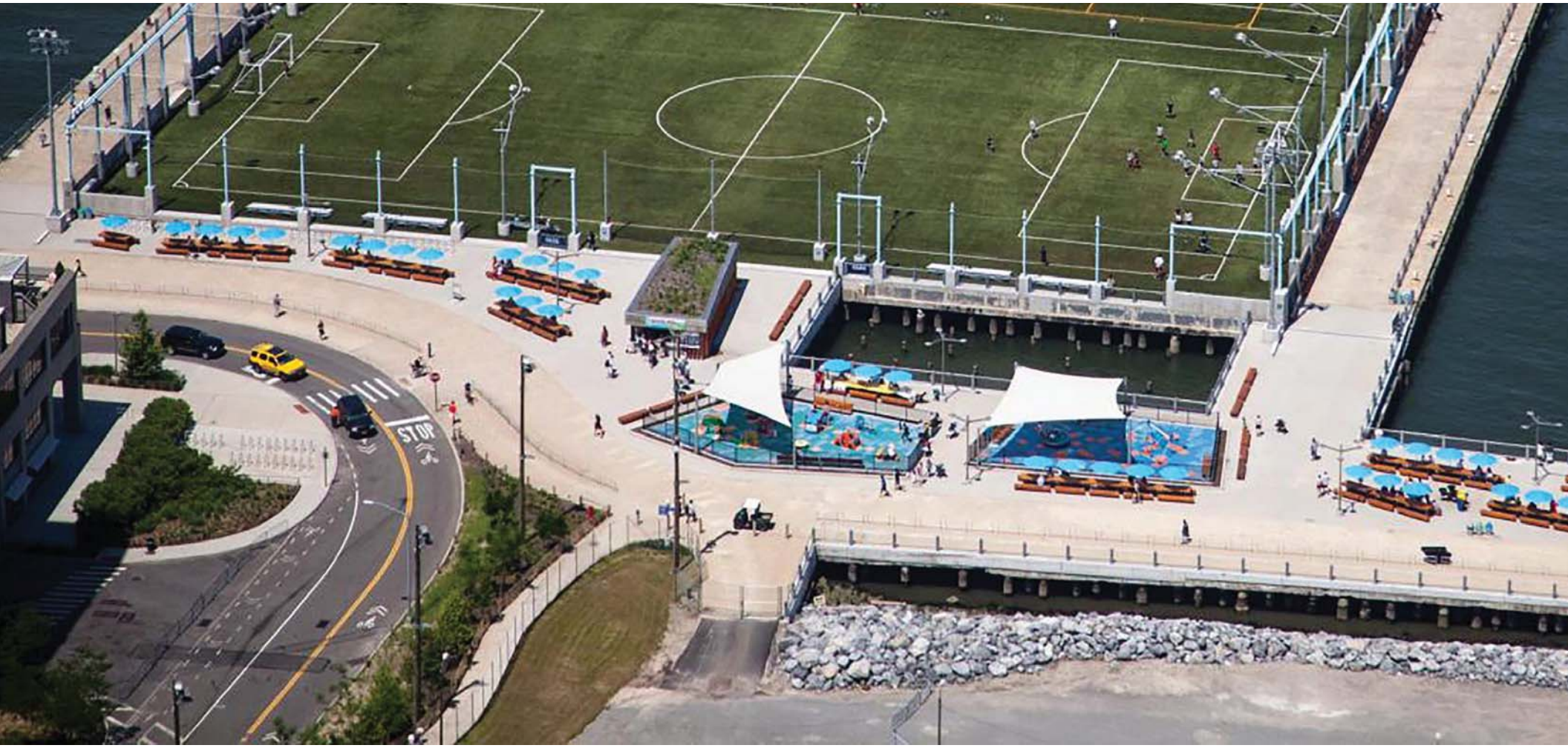


Integrate a Safe & Accessible Pedestrian and Bike Bridge into the Park





Establish a Hierarchy of Pedestrian Paths

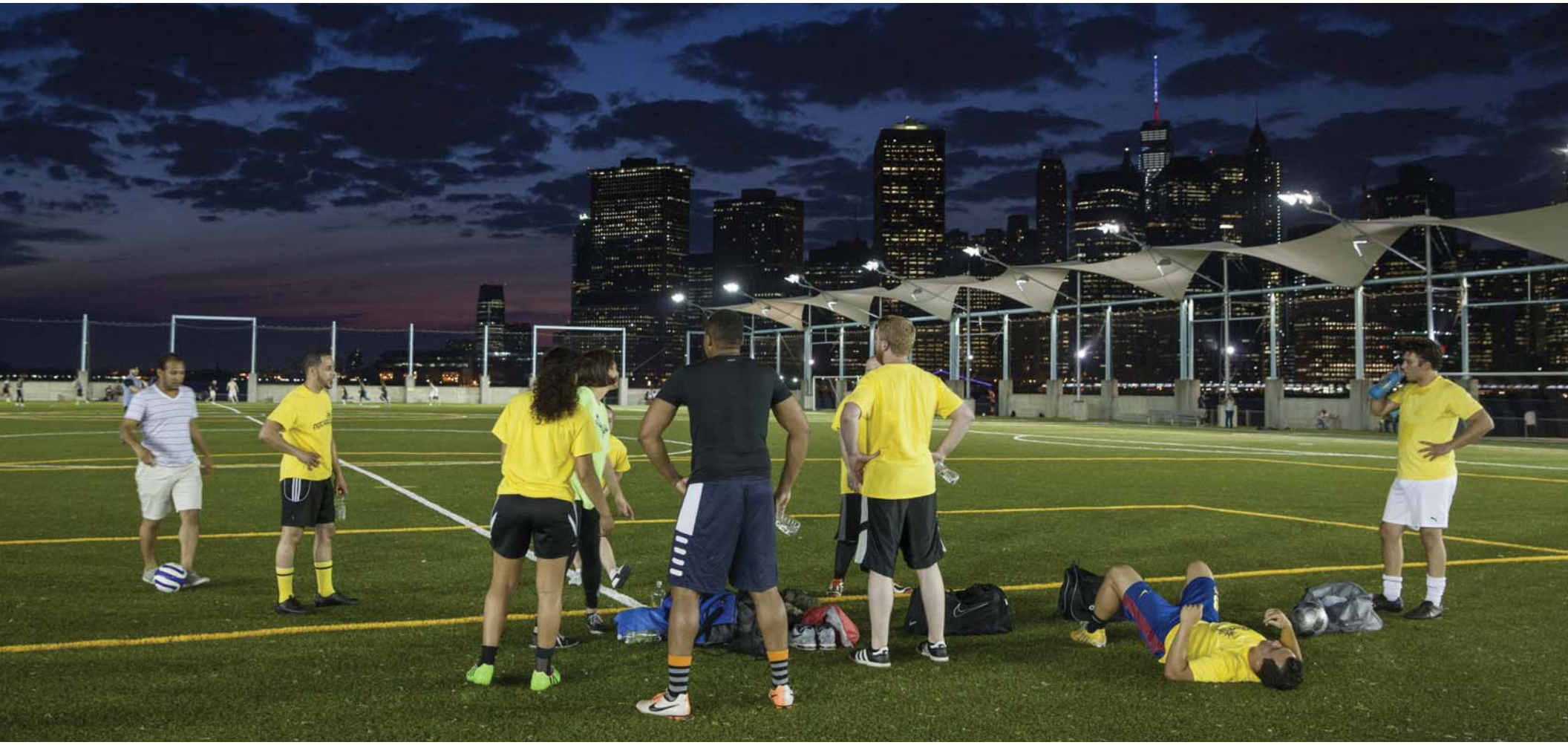


Extend Vehicular, Bike, and Pedestrian Circulation to Reach Selective Programming

Integrate Parking into the Park

5. Make The Park a Welcoming and Diverse Place for Everyone to Enjoy Year-round.

Orchestrate an ensemble of diverse and flexible spaces that provide opportunities for active recreation, passive uses, and temporary occupation throughout the year for Buffalonians of all backgrounds and age ranges.



Places for Organized Sports

Places for Unstructured Recreation

Places for Year-round Use

Places to Take In Views

Places to Engage with Water

Places for Exploration

Places for Play

Places for Families

Places for Groups and Individuals

Places for Dogs

Flexible Places that can be Temporarily Owned

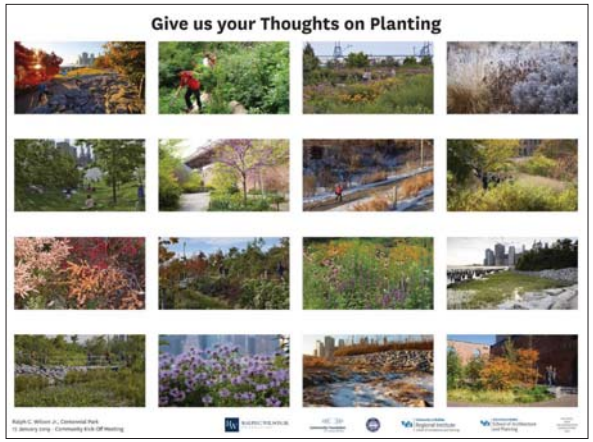
Places for Delight

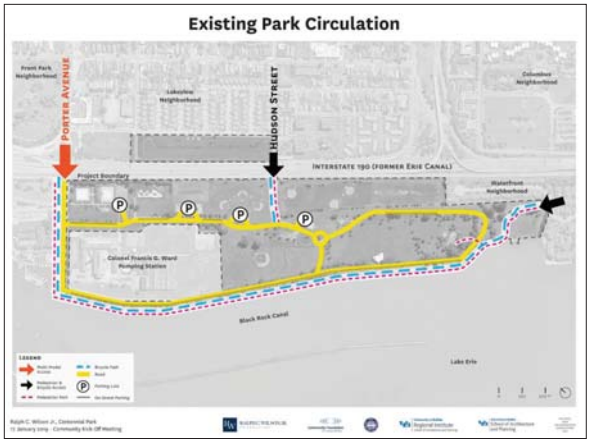
Places for Temporary Art Pieces

Places for Respite

Places for Assembly

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park will continue to be a Place for All!

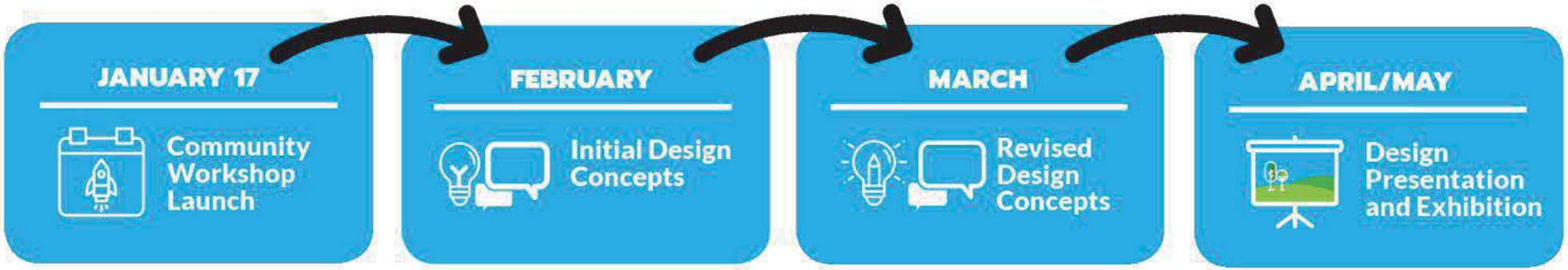




Worksession - Feedback Stations

Exploring Design Concepts Together

Community Workshops to transform LaSalle Park into Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park



A community-driven process that builds off community feedback every step of the way.