Moving through the Park

Pedestrian



The improved park will increase experiential complexity for pedestrians by quadrupling the extent of paths and introducing topographic variety. Primary and secondary paths will be aligned to take advantage of views in multiple directions and will provide convenient access



to park programs. A graceful new pedestrian and bike bridge over I-190, which connects Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park to the Lakeview neighborhood, will be integrated with the park landscape to create a strong sense of welcome on arrival.



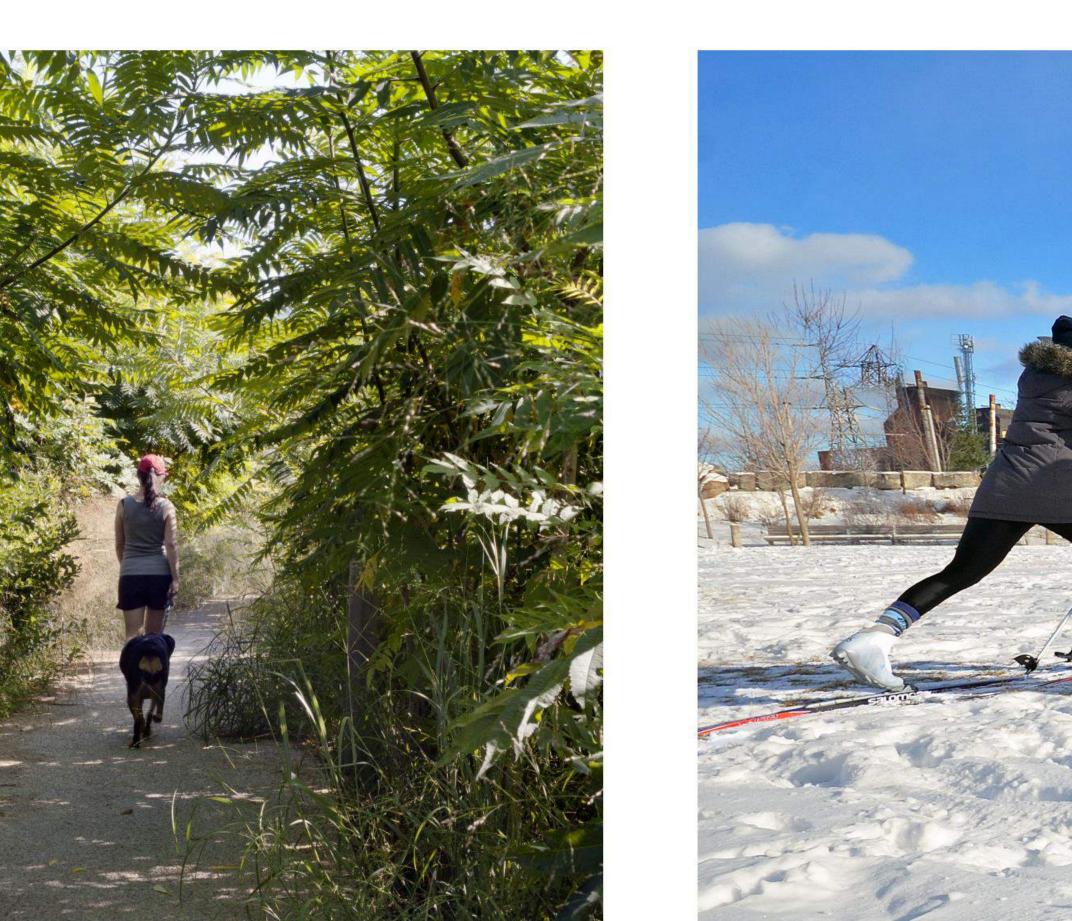
Improved access to the park will facilitate travel by bike, bus, car, or on foot. Upon arrival, the new circulation system will make exploring the park convenient and fun for all types of park users. Roads, pathways, boardwalks, and a pedestrian bridge

Athletic Loop (3.1 miles/5K)



Park circulation can provide a fun framework for a regular workout. The athletic loop will highlight a designated route for runners and walkers, establishing a benchmark distance that covers a range of terrain.





will be well-lit and closely integrated with new topography and plantings to make it easy to navigate the space. A new bus stop for Route #22 at the Porter Avenue entrance will make it easier to arrive by transit.

Cycling



The design greatly expands bike circulation in the park, adding more than two-and-a-half miles of bike paths. The major commuter cycle paths through the park will follow routes where there is enough path width to safely accommodate two directions of bike travel as well as pedestrians. The improved park will

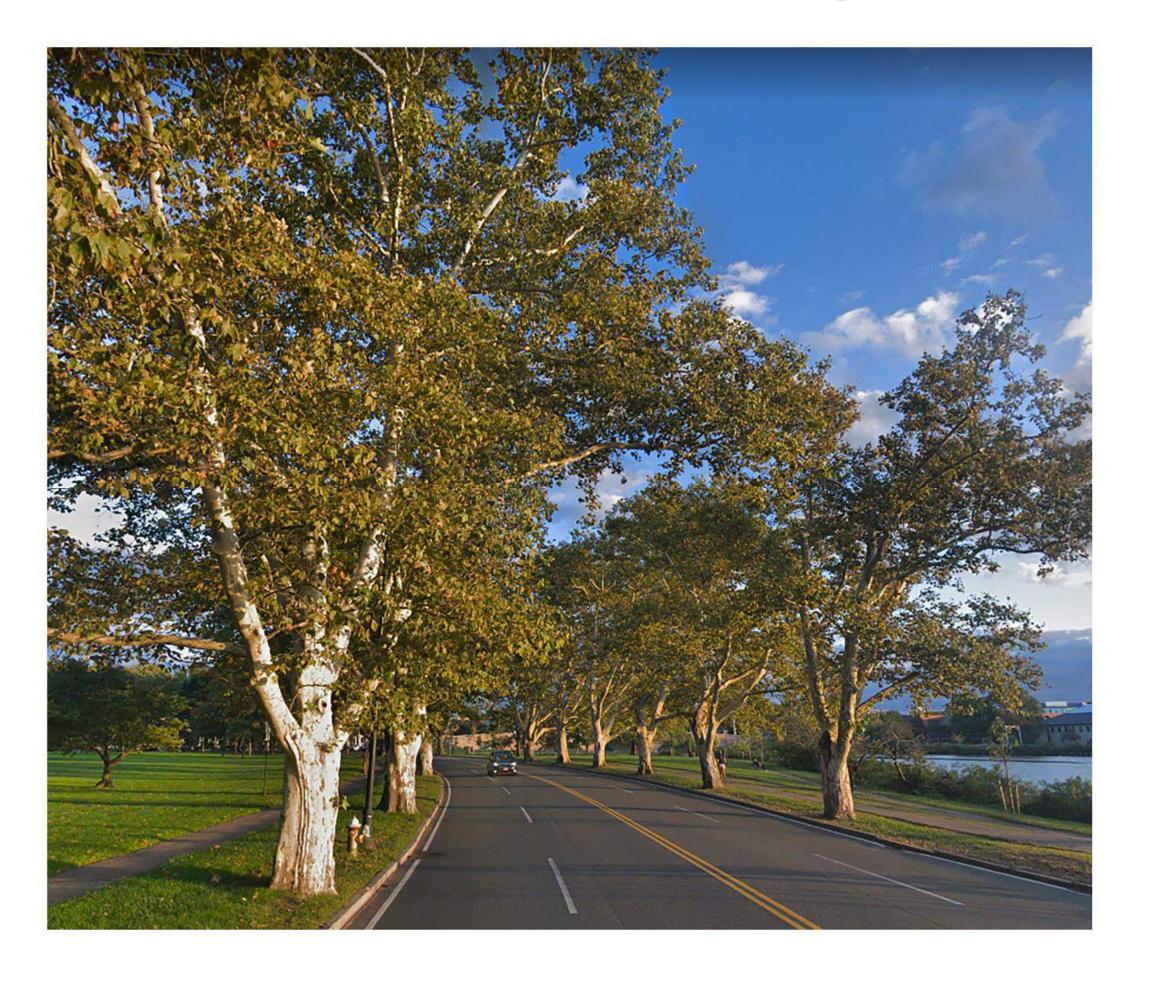
provide an exciting regional destination along the 21.7-mile Shoreline Trail, which is the western terminus of both the Erie Canalway Trail (360 miles long when complete) and the Empire State Trail (750 miles long when complete).



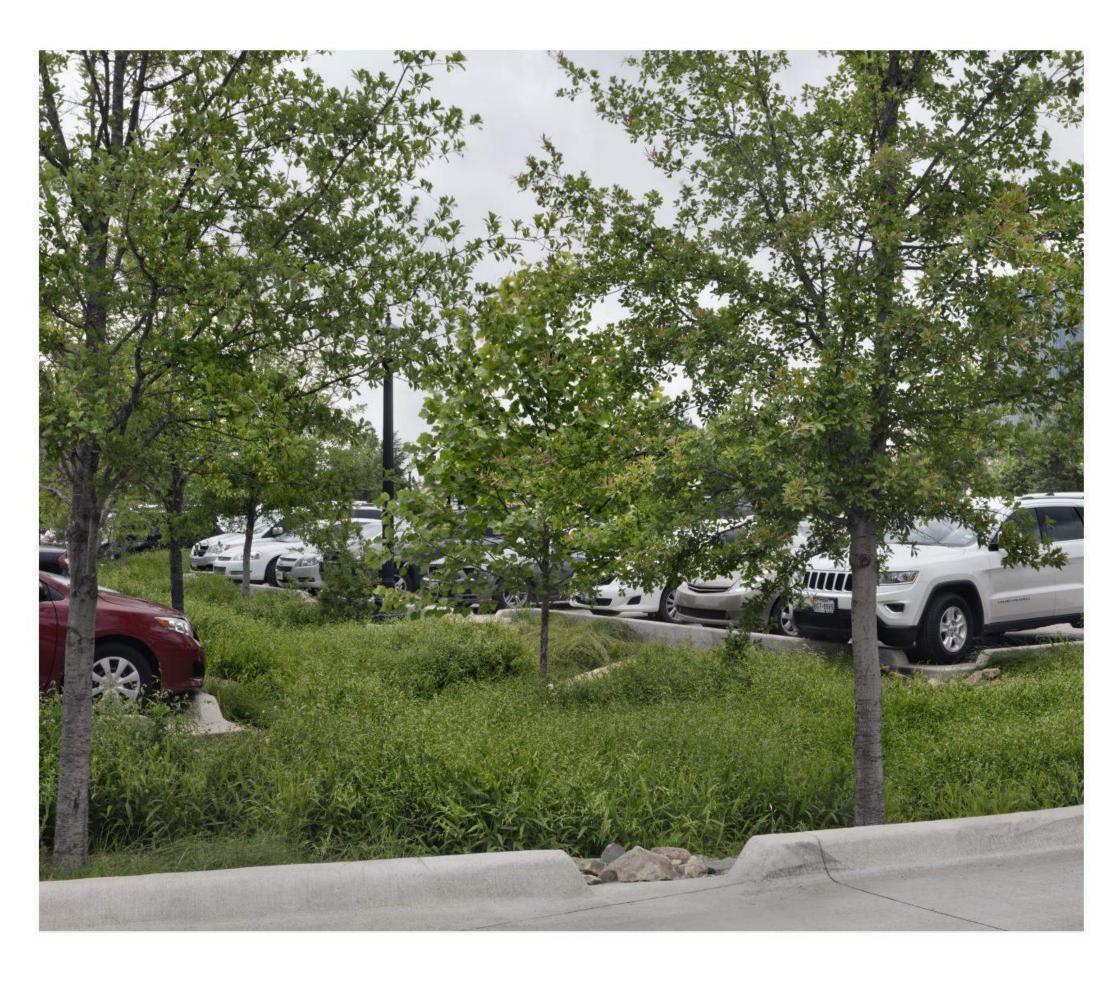
Vehicular



Vehicles enter the park from Porter Avenue onto D.A.R. Drive, which will be redesigned as a welcoming park boulevard lined with trees. This boulevard will provide convenient access to park program and scenery, connecting to the waterfront in key locations while moving inland in others and terminating in a turn-around. Cars can also enter the park along Amvets Drive, which is a one-lane road running between the athletic waterfront and the grounds of



the Pumping Station, eventually feeding into D.A.R. Drive. Although the number of parking spaces will remain constant in the new design, the existing large concentrated parking lots will be replaced by smaller dispersed parking areas that allow visitors greater flexibility to park near the activity they are visiting. Maintenance vehicles will use both roadways and park pathways to service the park as needed.















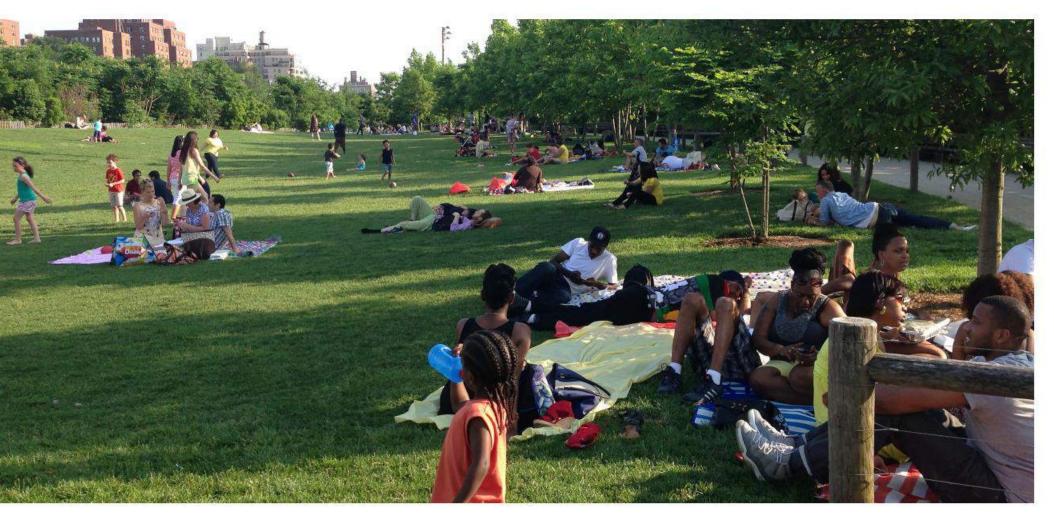






Activating the Park

The Great Lawn









Recreation

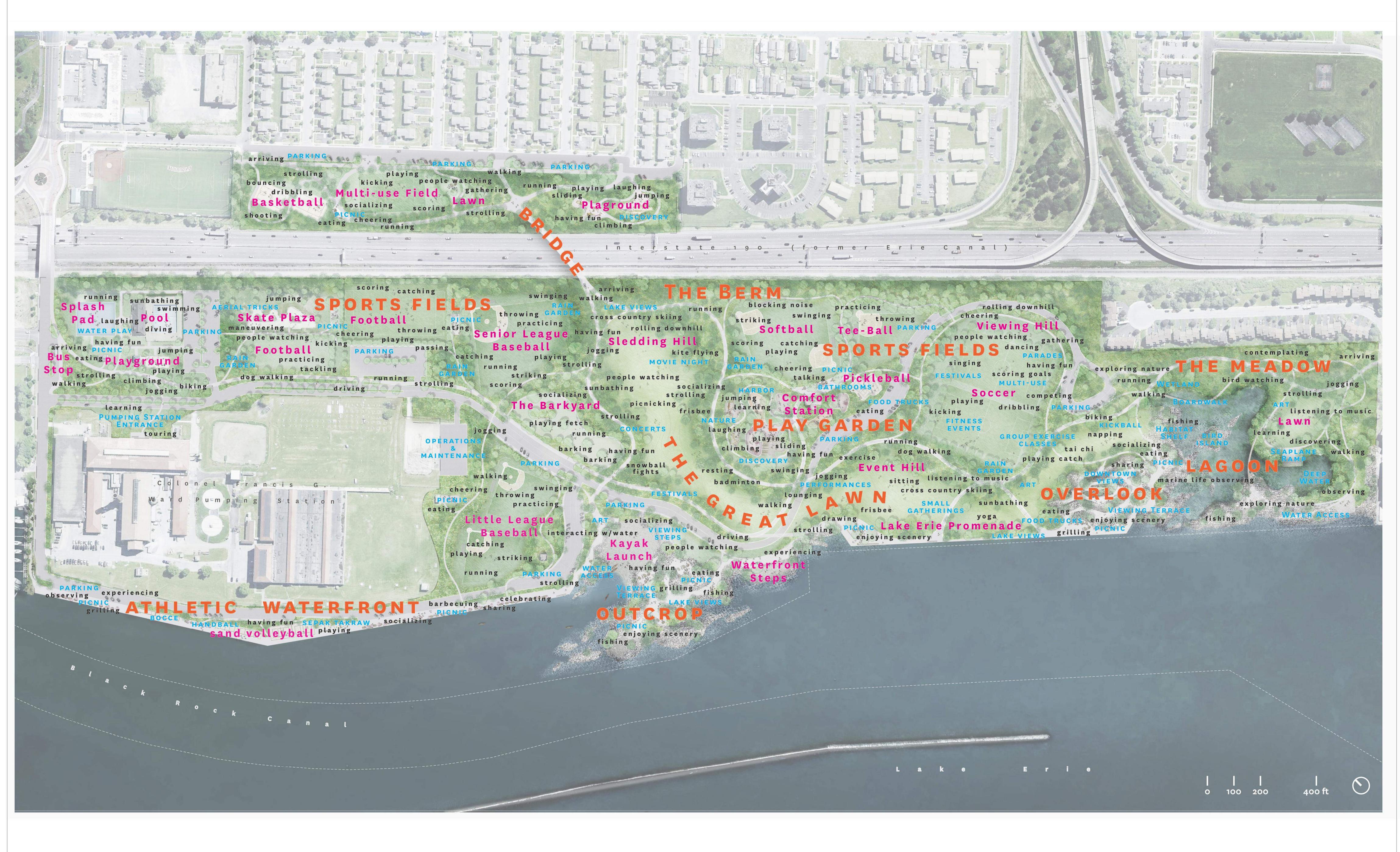












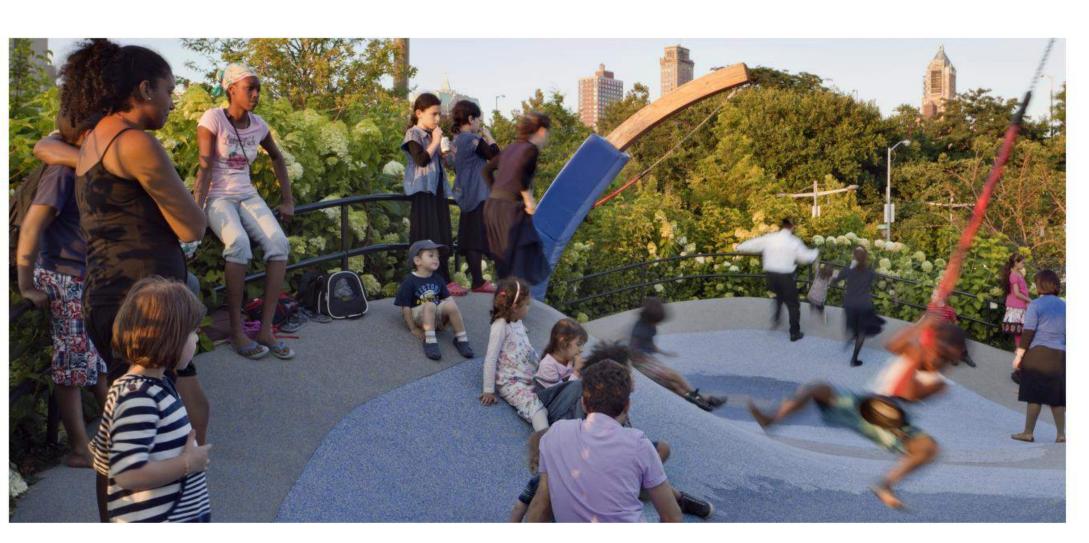
The new civic framework of the park will include an improved circulation system with stronger neighborhood connections, new topography and plantings, and a much more engaging relationship with the water's edge. There are four major elements that will help redefine the character of the park. The first of these is the Great Lawn, which is a major new open green space, framed by trees, running through the center of the park. The Great Lawn will provide a place for everyday enjoyment of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park, as well as a place to host seasonal events such as outdoor movie nights, or even bigger annual events and performances.

A second major new feature of the park is the recreational program, which will be thoroughly upgraded, including reorienting fields to provide optimal solar orientation, improving drainage and turf systems, and replacing outdated facilities such as comfort stations.

Another major new element is a destination Play Garden that will expand the child-focused program in Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park by encouraging active and imaginative play, as well as promoting a strong sense of connection with Buffalo and its dynamic natural environment.

The fourth major improvement is a restructured water's edge that will add experiential complexity, ecological value, and water access to the park. These elements work together to expand the opportunities to gather, to play, and to feel connected with the city and its natural environment. Combined with improvements to park circulation systems and exciting new programming, these new features will ensure that the park has something special to offer everyone.

Play Garden



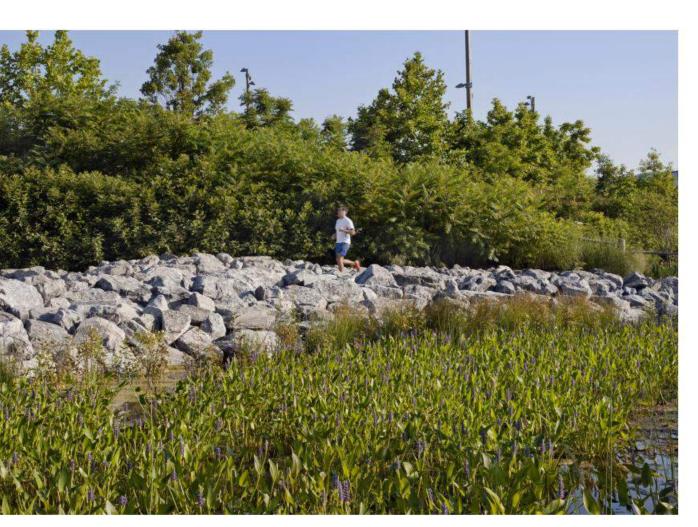




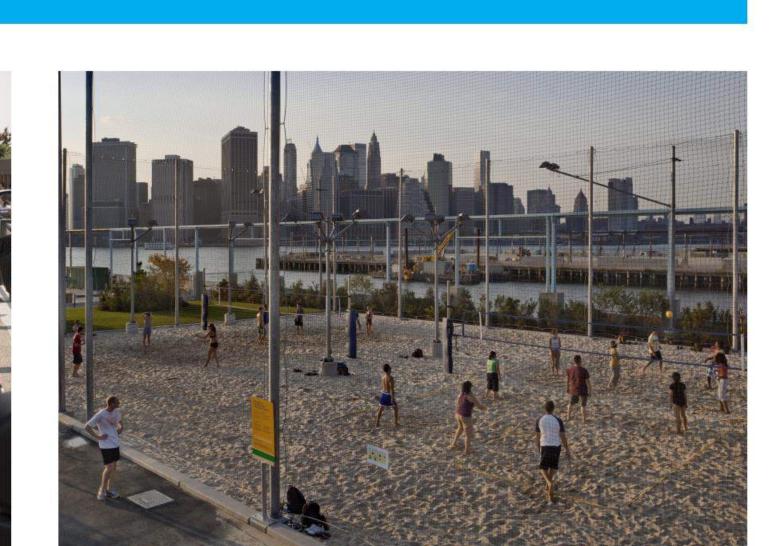




Water's Edge





























Strolling Along the Water's Edge



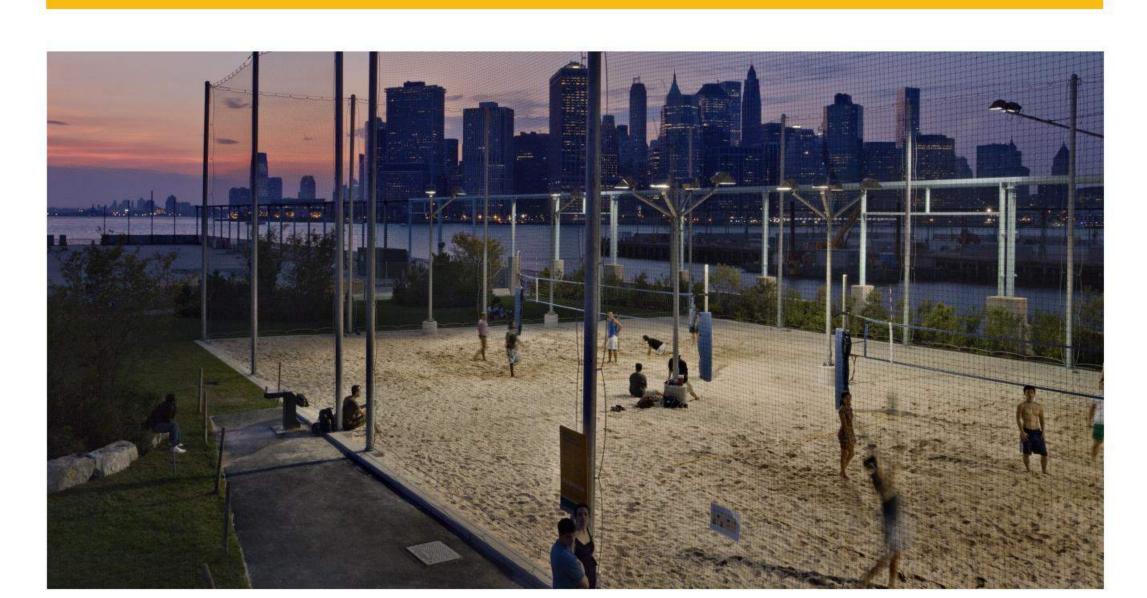


The design team has worked closely with the Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper organization to ensure that the water's edge provides the greatest possible environmental and experiential value. The transition from park to lake will be varied and active, forming a stronger connection between city and waterfront and improving the site's ecology. This new wetland edge will also reduce the risk of damage caused by extreme lake events such as ice shoves and seiches.

The complex interplay between land and water is explored in different ways along the new edge. The Outcrop is a landscape feature that will extend beyond the bulkhead line, effectively bringing the park out into the water and creating a new opportunity to safely launch kayaks directly into the water. The Lagoon is a naturalistic environment that will feature wetland plants and attract migratory birds, bringing the richness of Great Lakes ecology into the park.

Park circulation will engage the new water's edge, supporting visitors who want to travel through on a bicycle, launch a kayak, or simply sit and enjoy the view. New social programming along the water's edge such as picnic areas, the Lake Erie Promenade, and Waterfront Steps will invite Buffalonians to connect with each other and to their waterfront. Along Amvets Drive, new activities including sand volleyball, bocce, handball, pickleball, and sepak takraw will add fun and excitement and attract visitors.

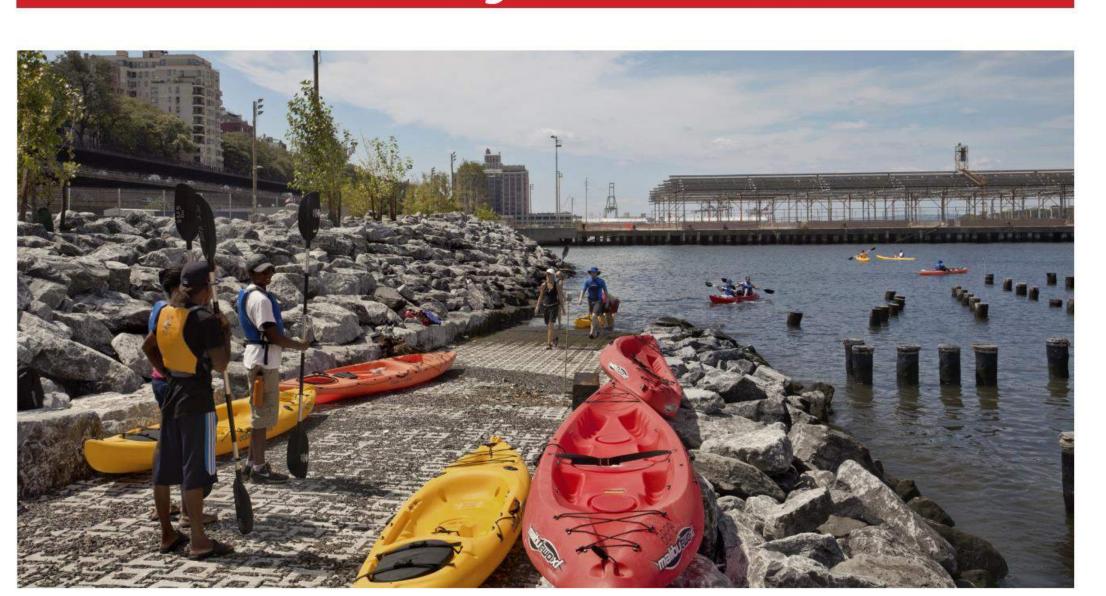
Athletic Waterfront



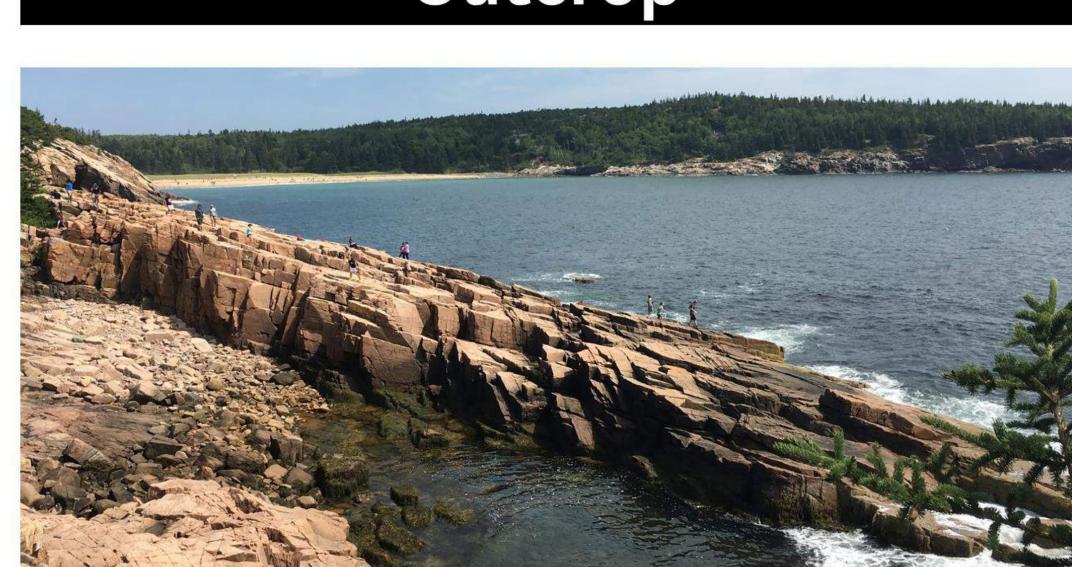
Picnic



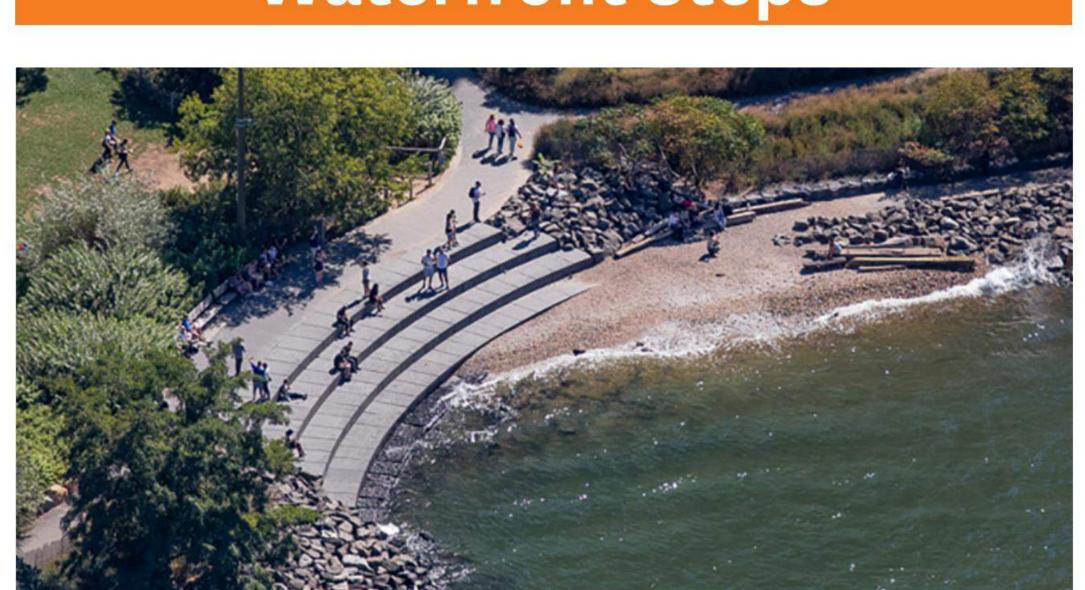
Safe Kayak Access



Outcrop



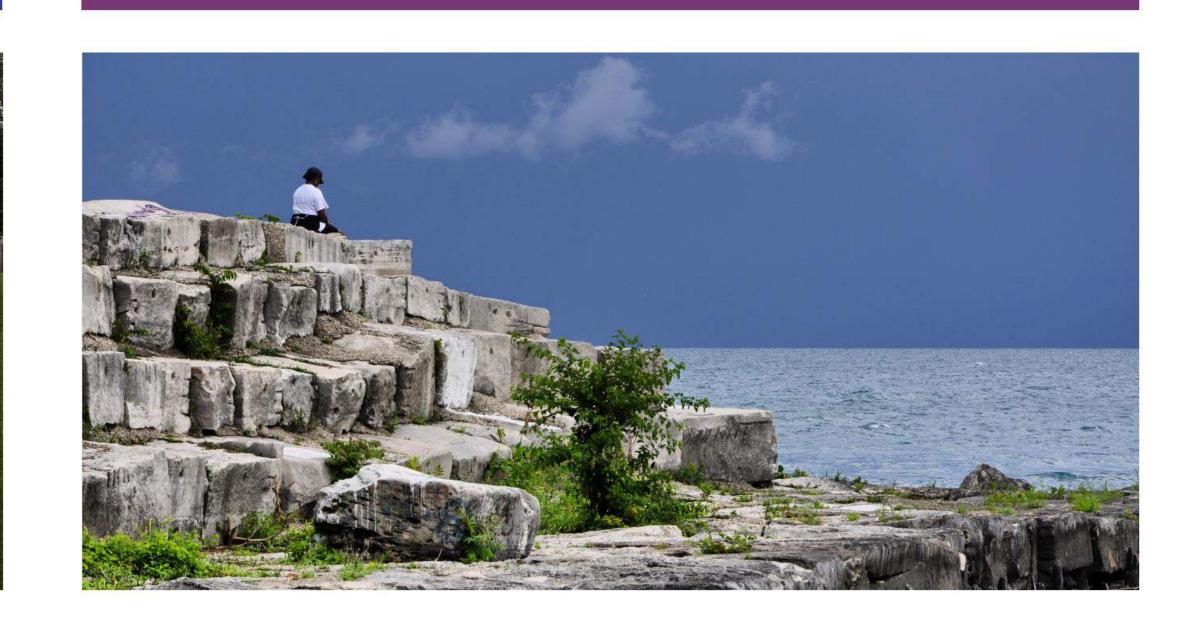
Waterfront Steps



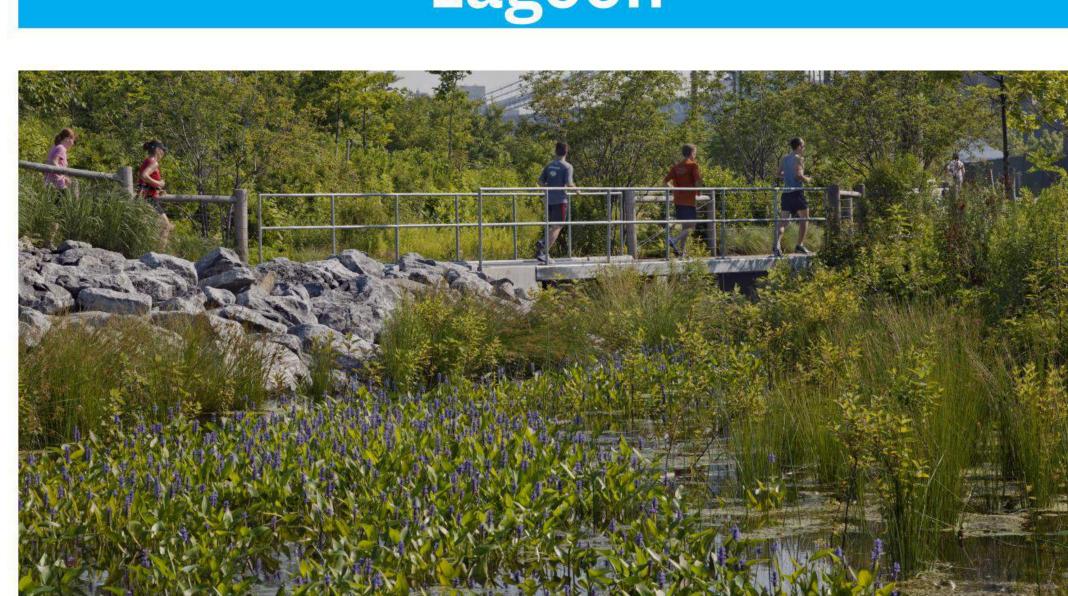
Lake Erie Promenade



Overlook



Lagoon





















Accommodating a Variety of Events





The park will continue to host beloved community events and performances. The spatial layout of the Great Lawn has been tailored to support a broad range of events, gatherings and performances of different size and duration, such as the Rick James Funk Festival and the performances that follow the Puerto Rican and Hispanic Day Parade of WNY. Many factors are being considered to meet community needs as this process unfolds. Primary options are a review of future capital maintenance and/or replacement of the current structure, a new pavilion structure, or a dedicated space for temporary event staging that could be easily deployed for the event organizers. All partners seek a design that uses topography and views to the water in a way that creates amazing experiences for all visitors, year-round, regardless of why they are there.

Fitness Events





Concerts



Festivals





Parades

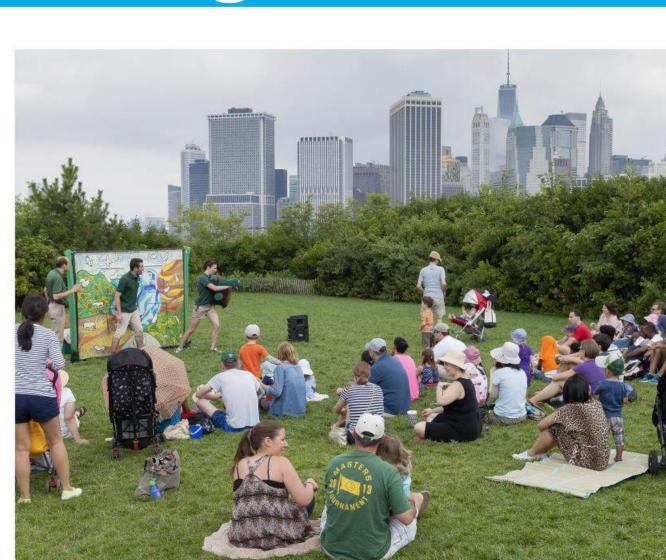


Performances



Small Gatherings











Group Exercise Classes























Improving & Broadening Recreation





The recreational uses of the park will be greatly expanded. Some popular uses that already exist, such as Centennial Pool and the splash pad and skate park, will be preserved in the same location while others, such as the off-leash dog playground known as the Barkyard, will be relocated and improved. The popular program of sports fields and courts within the park will be expanded, reconfigured, resurfaced and upgraded to increase both safety and fun. Bike trails and pedestrian paths will be lengthened and made more interesting, creating more ways to explore and enjoy the park.

Flexible-use landscape elements, such as the Great Lawn, can support many types of year-round park activities, depending on the season and weather. More picnic facilities will be added throughout the park, in close proximity to the play garden and game courts, such as bocce and sand volleyball.

The park will also include one-of-a-kind features that will highlight the uniqueness of Buffalo. These will include the Play Garden, which will celebrate the natural and cultural history of the city, as well as the Lagoon and the Outcrop, which will both emphasize the city's relationship with Lake Erie. Park users will now also be able to explore the interior of the Colonel Ward Pump Station, to marvel at its monumental architecture and engineering in addition to enjoying its exterior as a dramatic backdrop to park activities.













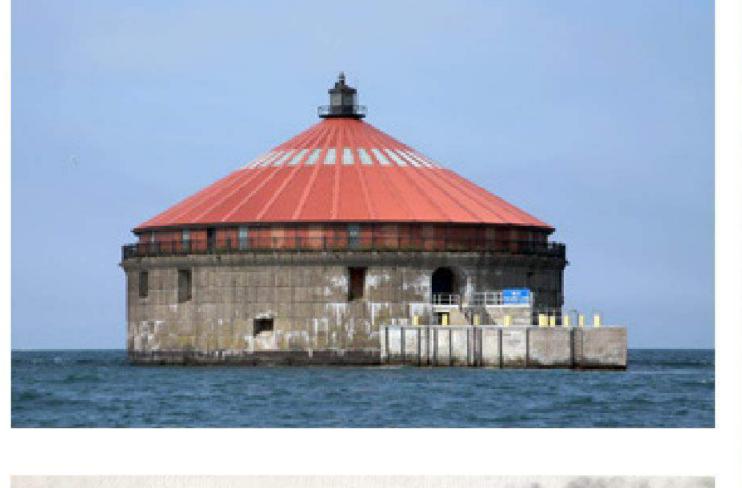




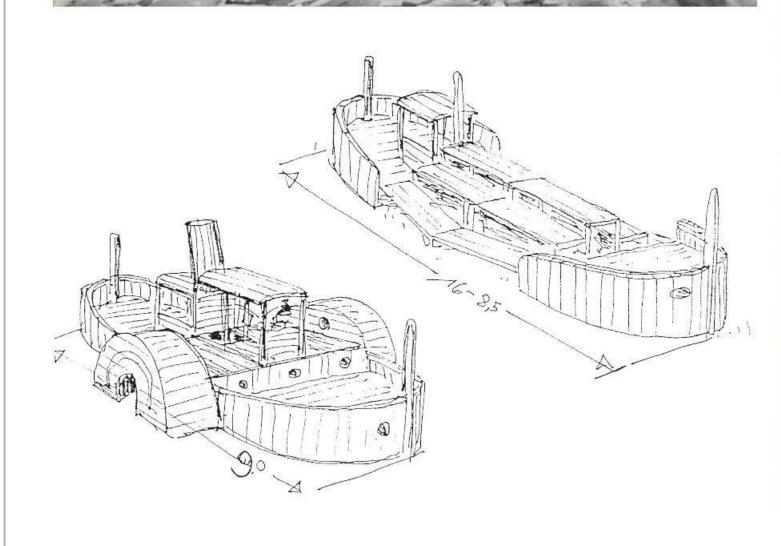


Exploring the Play Garden

Harbor









Industry









Running, jumping, dreaming, climbing, learning, sliding, pretending, swinging, talking, singing and having fun will all be encouraged in the Play Garden. This extensive new play space will draw inspiration from Buffalo's nature and diverse culture as a Great Lakes city. Some new play structures will reference the industrial history of the city—including shipping, storage silos, factories, and seaplanes—while others will celebrate the rich ecology of the Great Lakes. In

the spirit of play, these narrative elements will appear sometimes in child-sized versions and other times as larger-than-life landmarks. A framework of trees and plants will contribute to the sense of enchantment and help define smaller spaces within the play garden, geared toward different age groups and abilities. The Play Garden will be designed for children's enjoyment and caregivers' comfort, but it will include elements that will delight visitors of all ages.

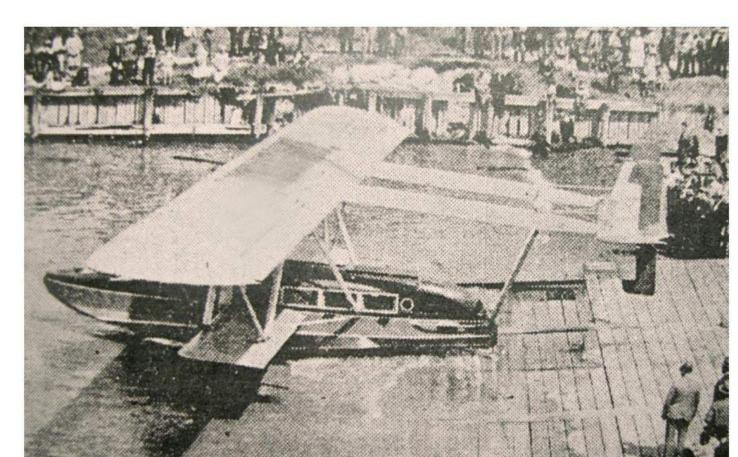
Nature



















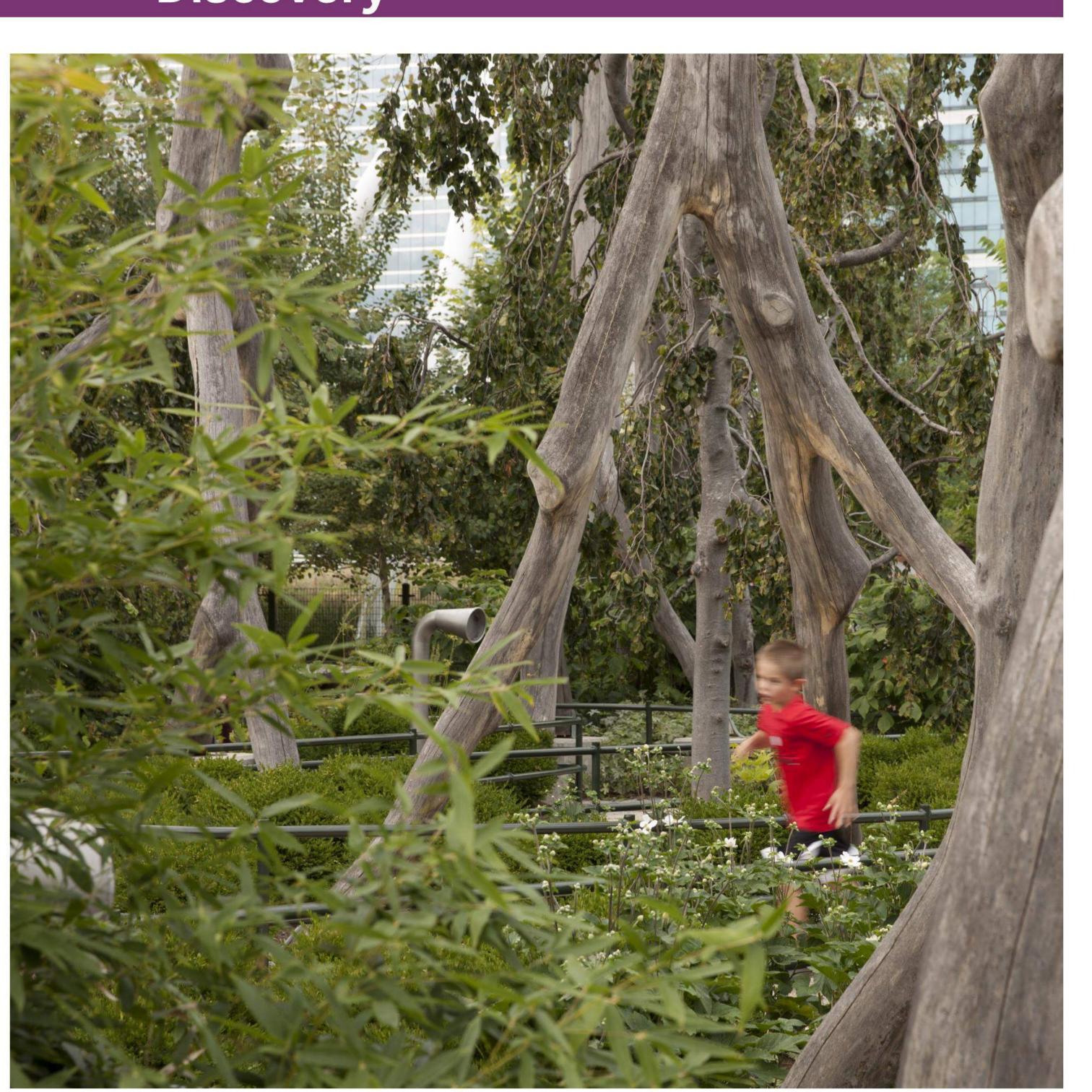


Discovery





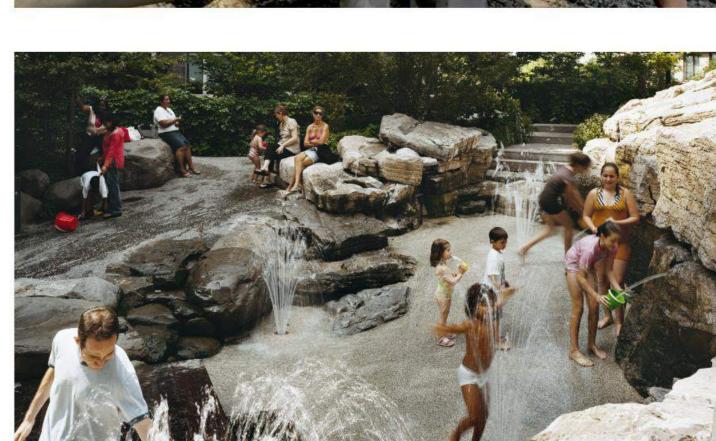




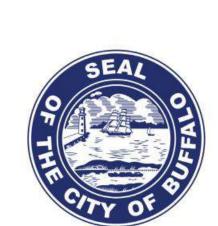
Water

























Celebrating Seasonality in Planting





Different communities of trees, shrubs, and ground covers support a variety of uses and experiences across the park. In some areas, such as D.A.R. Drive off Porter Avenue, a formal planting arrangement will enhance the sense of welcome and help communicate the park's civic importance. In the center of the park, the sunny openness of the Great Lawn is defined by a wooded edge that features a striking plant palette and will provide shade and wind protection as well as seasonal interest. This edge will frame epic views to Lake Erie.

At the southern tip of the park, in the Lagoon area, the plantings will mimic local habitats and restore ecological function. The native wetland species will attract migrating birds and will provide moments where visitors can feel connected to the lakefront. Throughout Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park, trees and plantings will be selected for characteristics that can heighten the enjoyment of each season, such as leaf color and size, flowers, bark color and texture, and winter form.

The Great Lawn



Space-forming, shade, rich conifer presence, splashes of pink and white



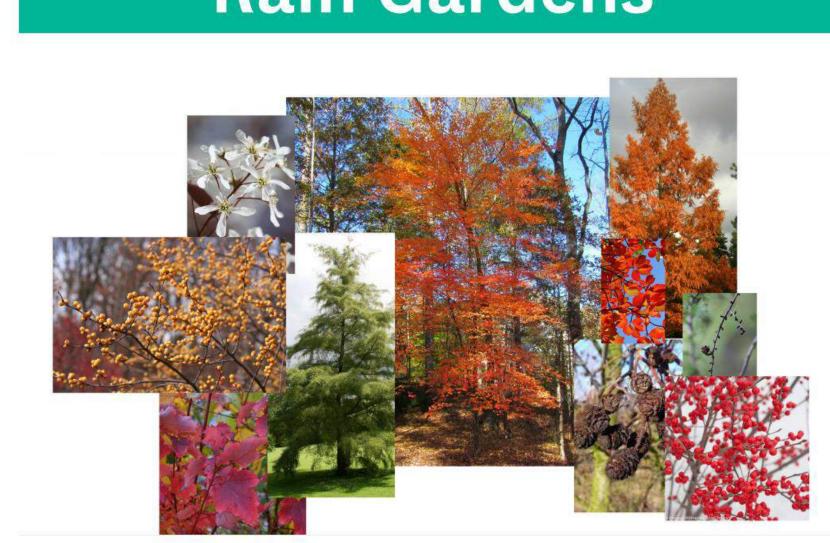
Dense, sound buffer, evergreen, winter and fall interest, flashes of flowering trees

Sports Fields



Dappled light, verticality, order, shade provision

Rain Gardens



Water-loving, resilient, fall color, attract birds

Pine Bluffs



View preservation, wind-swept, resilient, buffer, evergreen, low midstory

Flowering Orchard



Delicate flowers, fall color, complement Pumping Station façade

Lagoon



View preservation, fall color, verticality, fine texture, resilient

North Entry Allée



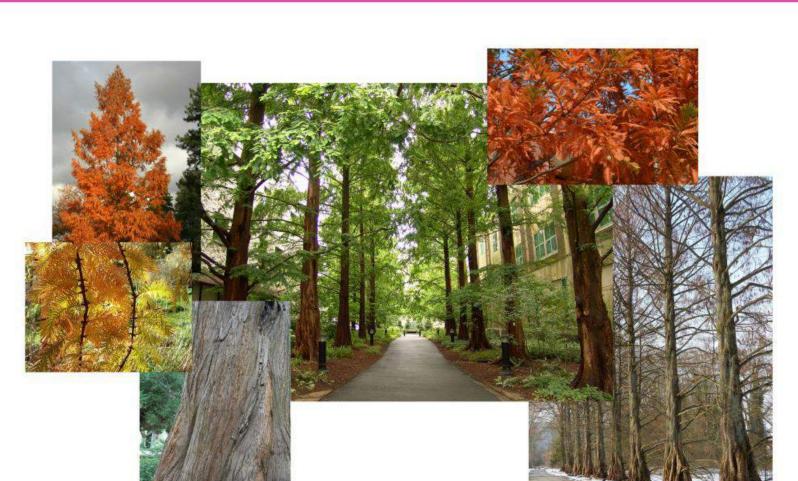
Formal entry, continuation of valley, green spine

Play Garden/Barkyard



Colorful, shade provision, fragrant, rich, texture, views into play garden, bright, year-round interest

East Entry Allée



View preservation, dappled light, fall color, winter interest, verticality, fine texture

















