

Memorandum



To: Katherine Liss, City Planner Supervisor
From: Priyanka Malik, Architectural Project Coordinator, CPO
Date: September 30th 2025
Re: Request for Art Commission Review

We respectfully request to be included on the Art Commission agenda for October 8, 2025, for Conceptual Approval of the Lemon Hill Playground project, located at 39 State Rte 3007, Philadelphia, PA 19130.

A brief description of the project is provided below:

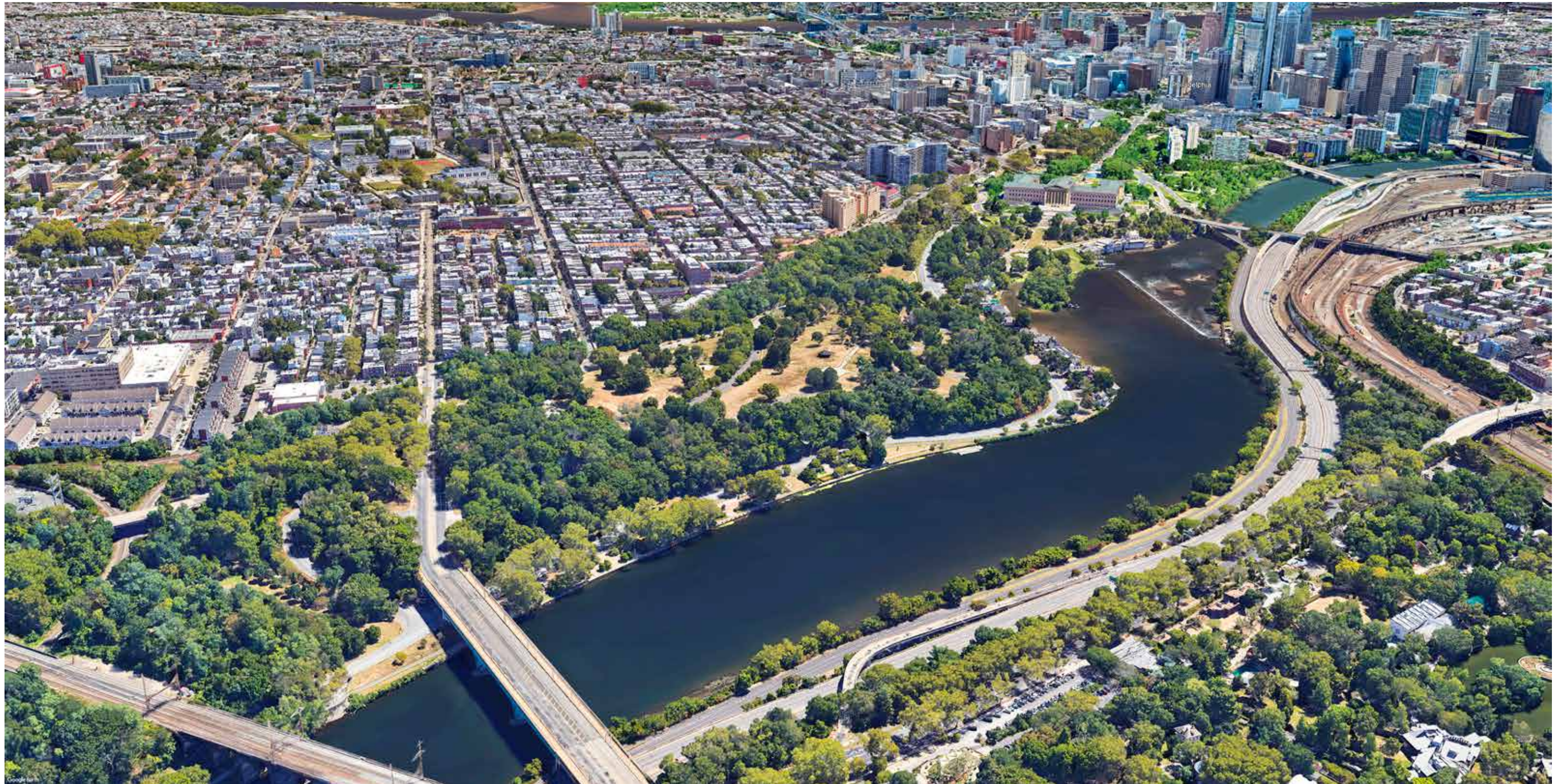
The project proposes replacing the existing playground with an accessible play space that integrates the site's natural slope to create a tiered play environment. Each elevation will be connected by a traversing, ADA-accessible switchback path. Along the path, nodes will be organized by target age groups, creating a safer, more approachable public space for children and caregivers. Play zones will include dedicated areas for ages 0–2, 2–5, and 5–12, as well as a shared space to encourage interaction across age groups.

Additionally, the design incorporates multiple seating and gathering zones, providing opportunities for caregivers and families to socialize and relax within a safe distance from children at play.

The estimated project budget is \$2,500,000.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. Please let me know if any additional information is required.

cc: Aparna Palantino, Director, CPO
Francesco Cerrai, Project Director, CPO
Tyler Silverstro ., Partner, MARVEL, tsilverstro@marveldesigns.com
Tonghuan Wu, Landscape Architect, MARVEL, twu@marveldesigns.com
File: Project # 16-25-7259-01, Section 2.13



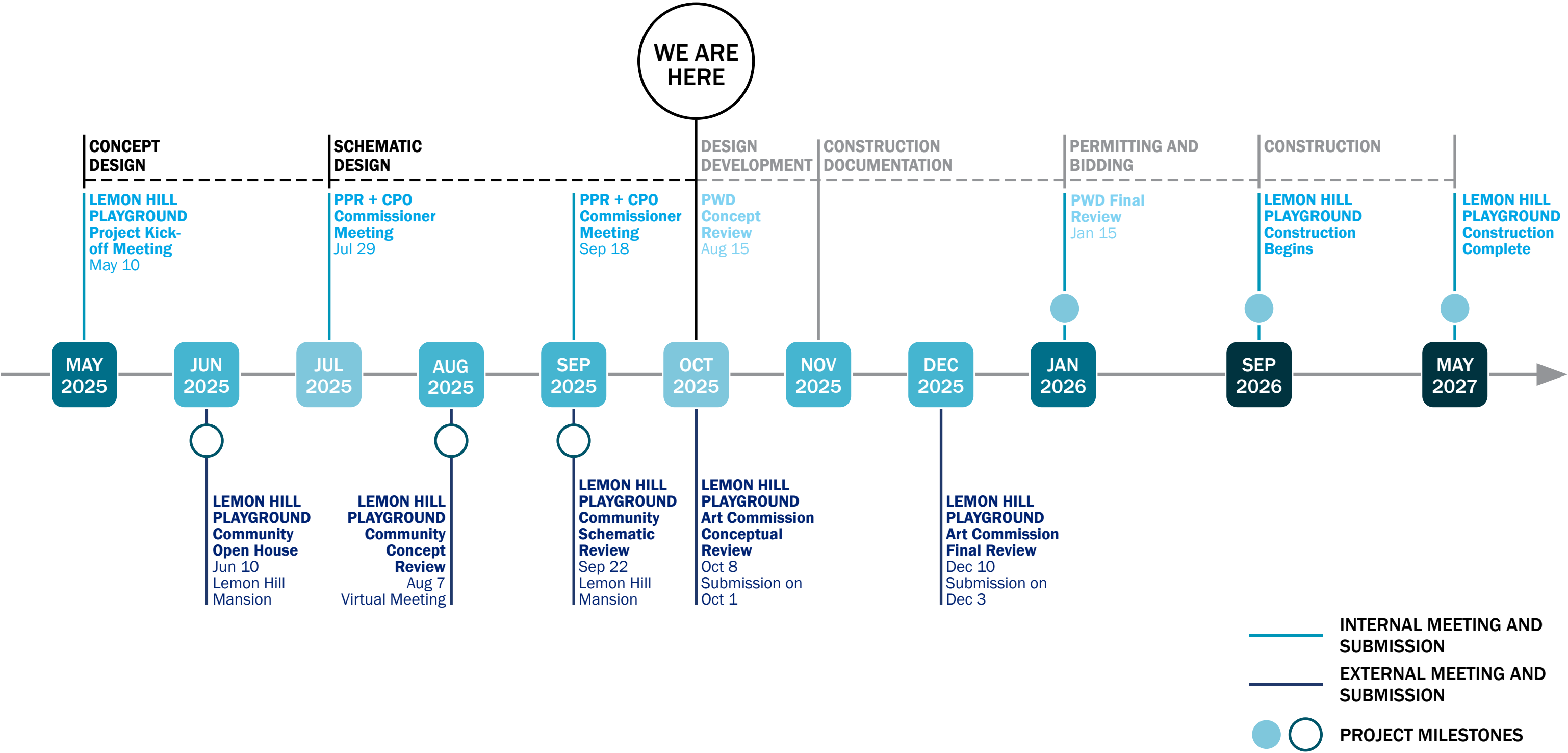
LEMON HILL PLAYGROUND

ART COMMISSION MEETING - CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OCT 8, 2025



MARVEL

PROJECT TIMELINE | MILESTONES



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | HYBRID FEEDBACK



- **3 COMMUNITY SESSIONS**

2 EVENTS IN THE PARK (JUNE 10 & SEPTEMBER 22) AND ONE VIRTUAL MEETING (AUGUST 7) LED TO ROBUST FEEDBACK AND INPUT

- **100+ PARTICIPANTS**

INCLUDING COMMUNITY MEMBERS, CITY REPRESENTATIVES, PHILADELPHIA PARKS AND RECREATION STAFF

- **150+ COMMENTS**

INCLUDING FEEDBACK RELATED TO THE PLAYGROUND LAYOUT AND PLAY EQUIPMENT SELECTION

- **COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

INPUT FROM COUNCILMEMBERS, NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES, AND LOCAL RESIDENTS AND PLAYGROUND USERS SUPPORT THE DESIRE FOR AN ACCESSIBLE, DESTINATION PLAY SPACE FOR THE COMMUNITY IN LEMON HILL PARK

LEMON HILL PLAYGROUND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK | SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT

1. CLIMBING & SLIDING OPTIONS

UTILIZE DIVERSE CLIMBING OPTIONS (WOODEN ELEMENTS ON HILL, LARGE 5-12 Y/O CLIMBER, & NET CLIMBER)

2. CREATE SAFE / AGE APPROPRIATE PLAY ENVIRONS

ALLOW CLEAR SIGHTLINES THROUGHOUT PLAYGROUND TO ENSURE PUBLIC SAFETY AND PROVIDE AMPLE SEATING IN YOUNGER ZONES FOR CAREGIVERS

3. UTILIZE THE HILLSIDE

HILLSIDE ALLOWS MORE ACTIVE USE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTEGRATED PLAY

4. 0-2 Y/O PLAY FEATURES

ADD MORE PLAY FEATURES & OPTIONS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

5. SEATING, GATHERING, AND ACCESSIBILITY

ENSURE INCLUSIVITY AND A FULL RANGE OF ACCESSIBILITY AND SEATING FOR ALL CARETAKERS AND CHILDREN ALIKE

6. MAINTENANCE AND DURABILITY

ENSURE IF EQUIPMENT BREAKS, IT CAN BE REPLACED WITHIN A REASONABLE TIMEFRAME

7. MORE NATURAL PLAY

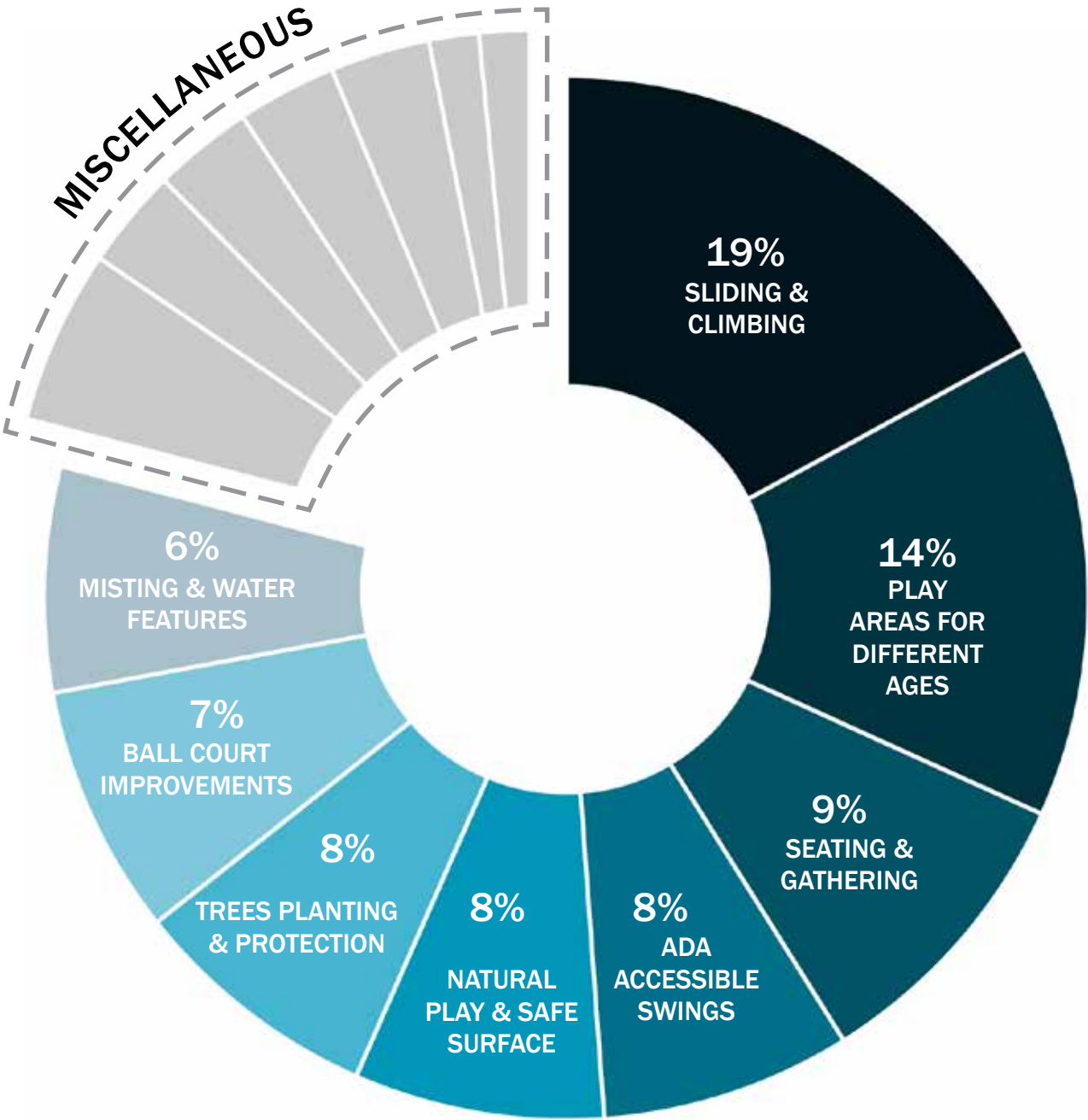
ADD MORE NATURAL WOODEN PLAY ELEMENTS LIKE STEPPING LOGS, NATURAL STONE & STUMPS

8. BALL COURT

KEEP THE EXISTING BALL COURT OPEN DURING CONSTRUCTION & ADD A FULL COURT AT A LATER DATE

9. MORE UTILITARIAN FEATURES

INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF TRASH BINS, BENCHES WITH BACKS, AND ADD COMMUNICATION BOARDS



The above graphic reflects the overall percentage of mentions, requests, and comments shared and recorded throughout the three engagement sessions and is synthesized from over 150 comments received.

DESIGN IDEAS SUGGESTED BY THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

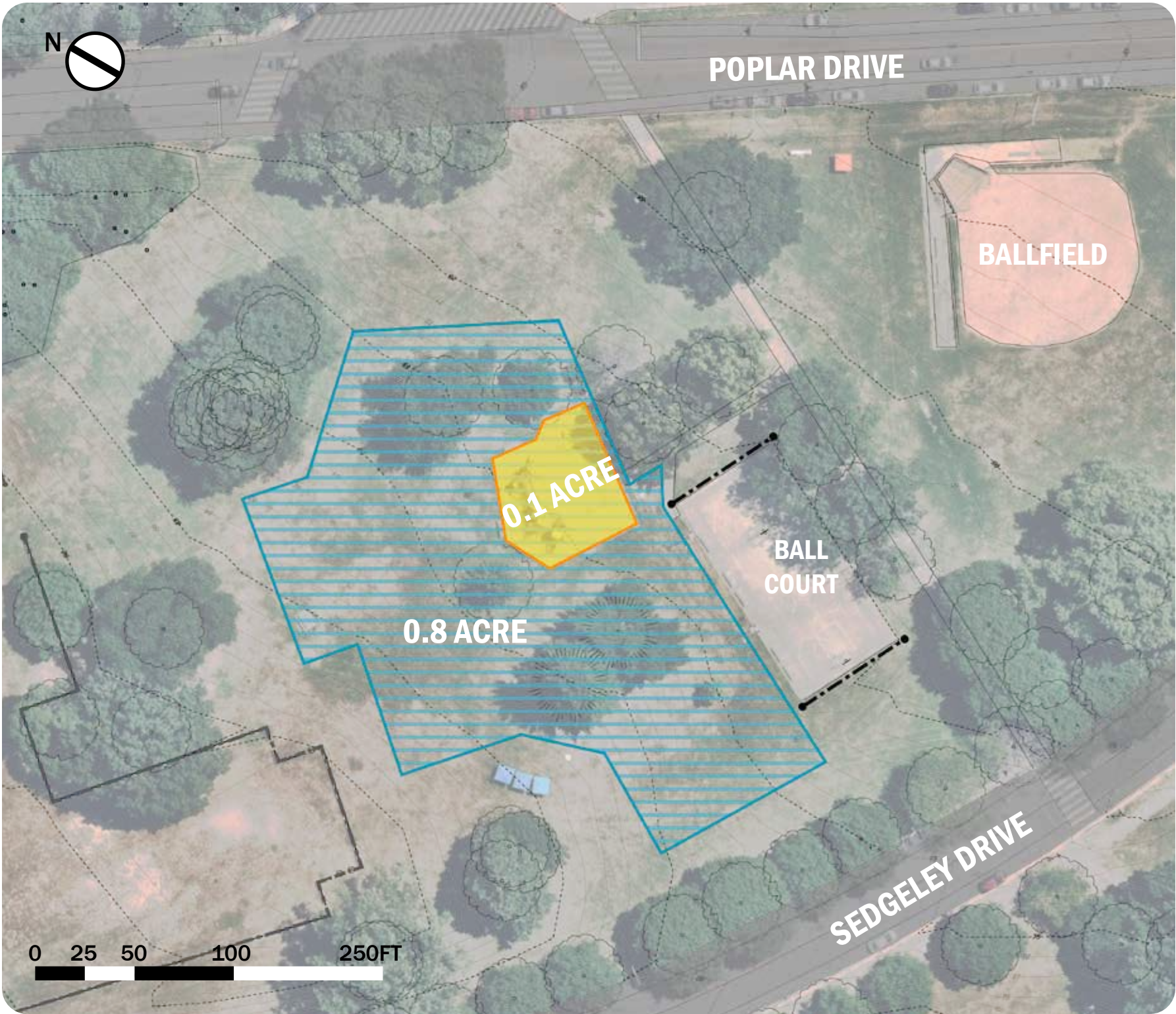
DESIGN CONCERNS CRITICAL TO OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

PRESENTED DESIGN IDEAS LOVED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

MISCELLANEOUS

Shade structures - 5% | Security lighting - 3% | Signage - 3% | Bathroom - 3% | Bike lane & traffic calming - 3% | Dog park - 1.5% | Inclusive play - 1.5%

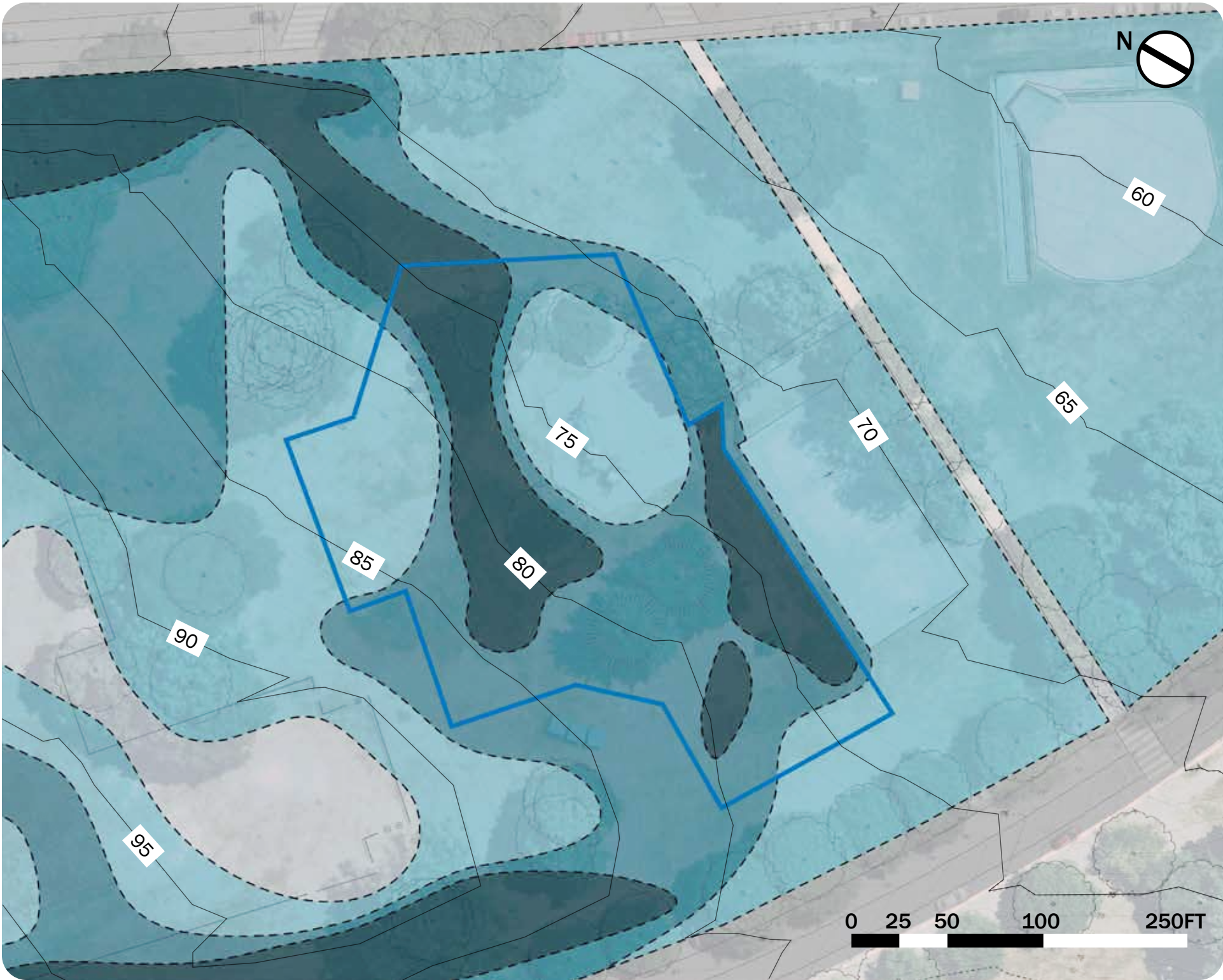
PLAYGROUND SITE ANALYSIS | EXISTING CONDITIONS








LEMON HILL PARK

- 6' HIGH CHAIN LINK FENCE
- 3' HIGH WOOD FENCE
- EXISTING PLAYGROUND
- AREA OF PROPOSED PLAYGROUND
APPROXIMATE TOTAL AREA OF PLAYGROUND
AND SITE, DISTURBANCE TO REMAIN
BELOW 1 ACRE

PLAYGROUND SITE ANALYSIS | SLOPE ANALYSIS



-  **AREA OF PROPOSED PLAYGROUND**
-  **FLAT AREA**
AREA WHERE SLOPE IS SMALLER THAN 3%, SUITABLE FOR ANY TYPE OF OPEN SPACE, NO SITE WORK IS NEEDED
-  **ADA ACCESSIBLE AREA**
AREA WITH A SLOPE RANGING FROM 3% TO 6.5%, SUITABLE FOR ADA ACCESSIBILITY WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT SITE WORK
-  **MODERATE SLOPING AREA**
AREA WITH A SLOPE RANGING FROM 6.5% TO 10%, WOULD REQUIRE SITE WORK INCLUDING REGRADING AND SOIL STABILIZATION TO MAKE IT ADA ACCESSIBLE
-  **STEEP SLOPING AREA**
AREA WHERE SLOPE IS LARGER THAN 10%, NOT SUITABLE FOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE. NEEDS SWITCHBACKS FOR THE ADA ACCESSIBLE PATH

PLAYGROUND SITE ANALYSIS | EXISTING CONDITIONS



EXISTING LEMON HILL PLAYGROUND



APPROACH FROM POPLAR DRIVE



APPROACH FROM SEDGELEY DRIVE

PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | A PARK DEFINED BY HILLS

LEMON HILL PLAN FREDERICK GRAFF, 1851

Frederick Graff introduced a series of meandering, weaving paths that thoughtfully responded to the natural contours of the land. These early trails minimized construction impact while enhancing the park's immersive and elevated experience.



LEMON HILL MAY 17TH JAMES FULLER QUEEN, 1855

Lemon Hill features a dramatic elevation change from the Schuylkill River, making it an ideal viewpoint. This natural topography attracted visitors, offering scenic views and a popular route for recreational hiking along the ridgeline.



ENTRANCE TO LEMON HILL JOHN C. SINCLAIR, 1870

The fish pond area was opened to the public and served as the main entrance to the park after 1844. Mature trees, along with meandering ramps and pathways following the natural topography, offer a relaxed and enjoyable walking experience.

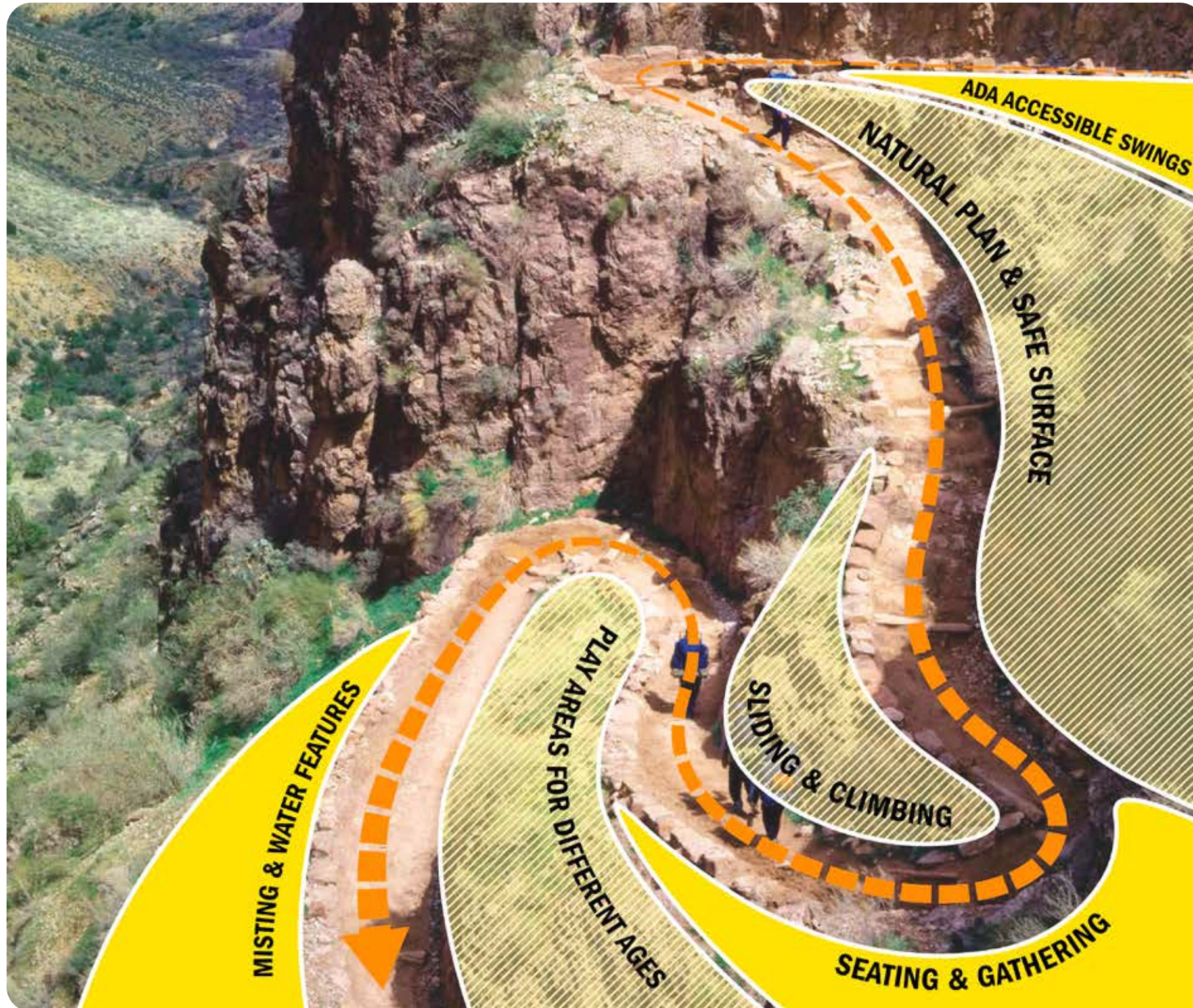


LEMON HILL TRAIL BRIAN SCHWARZ, 2014

Today, the Lemon Hill Rim Trail is still a popular hiking destination. The meandering dirt path ascends the hillside, offering occasional scenic overlooks with views of the waterfront and city skyline, inviting visitors to explore and enjoy the landscape.



PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | A PARK DEFINED BY HILLS



CONCEPTUAL DESIGN NARRATIVE SWITCHBACKS

ADVENTURES TRAIL: RUNNING, CLIMBING, AND DISCOVERING NATURE'S PLAYSPACE

- The Switchbacks draws inspiration from Frederick Graff's 1851 zigzag trail design and Lemon Hill's history as a beloved destination for recreation and scenic views of the Schuylkill River.
- An ADA-accessible switchback trail forms the backbone of the play experience, embracing the site's existing topography to create a play environment where terrain and activity are seamlessly integrated.
- The trail is not only functional but immersive—along the trail, children encounter climbing structures, slides, swings, and natural play features that encouraging exploration, discovery, and interaction with nature.
- Switchbacks offers a bold, inclusive, and imaginative playspace—connecting past to present and landscape to play.

PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | SWITCHBACKS



- ① SEATING AREA
- ② ADULT FITNESS
- ③ 5 - 12 Y/O PLAY AREA
- ④ 2 - 5 Y/O PLAY AREA
- ⑤ 2 - 12 Y/O SHARED PLAY AREA
- ⑥ NATURAL PLAY - DISCOVERY GARDEN
- ⑦ NATURAL PLAY - SLIDE AND CLIMBING

NOTE: All the images are references for concept only and do not represent the final products or materials to be used in this project.

PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | SITE LAYOUT



- MAIN ENTRANCE
- ADA ACCESSIBLE PATH
- - - HIKING PATH
- - - EXISTING BASKETBALL COURT
- +XX PROPOSED SPOT ELEVATIONS
- ▨ NATURAL PLAY
- GATHERING SPACE
- PLAY SPACE

PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | ACTIVITIES PROGRAMMING



- 1 2-5 Y/O PLAY AREA**
 - 2-12 Y/O Multi-climber
 - 2-5 Y/O Hangouts
 - 2-5 Y/O Sensory Wall
 - 2-12 Y/O Seesaw
 - 2-12 Y/O Stepping Log
- 2 NATURAL PLAY AREA**
 - 5-12 Y/O Wood Climbing Net
 - 5-12 Y/O Wood Stilts
 - 5-12 Y/O Wood Wobble Bridge
 - 2-12 Y/O Wood Balance Post
 - 2-12 Y/O 3'H 5'W Stainless Steel Slide
 - 2-12 Y/O 5'H 3'W Stainless Steel Slide
- 3 2-12 Y/O SHARED PLAY AREA**
 - 5-12 Y/O PlayBooster Tower
 - 2-12 Y/O Balance Climber
 - 2-12 Y/O Balance Beam
 - 2-12 Y/O Wobble Bouncer
 - 2-12 Y/O Footprint Stepper
 - 2-12 Y/O Saddle Spinner
- 4 ADULT FITNESS AREA**
 - Adult Fitness Push-up Bars
 - Adult Fitness Pull-up Bars
 - Adult Fitness Leg Lift Bars
 - Bike Racks
- 5 SWING AREA**
 - 2-5 Y/O Bucket Seat Swing
 - 2-12 Y/O Belt Seat Swing
- 6 5-12 Y/O PLAY AREA**
 - 5-12 Y/O Disc Net Climber
 - 5-12 Y/O Stone Steppers
 - 5-12 Y/O Monkey Ladder
 - 5-12 Y/O Sensory Spinner
 - 5-12 Y/O Swiggle Bridge
 - 2-12 Y/O Balance Beam
 - 2-12 Y/O Footprint Stepper

PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | MATERIAL PALETTE



C.I.P CONCRETE PATH



CONCRETE AGGREGATE



SAFETY SURFACE



RUBBER MOUNDS



CONCRETE STEPS

PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | FURNITURE PALETTE



BENCHES



SEATING BOULDERS



ADA PICNIC TABLE SETS



SEATING STONES

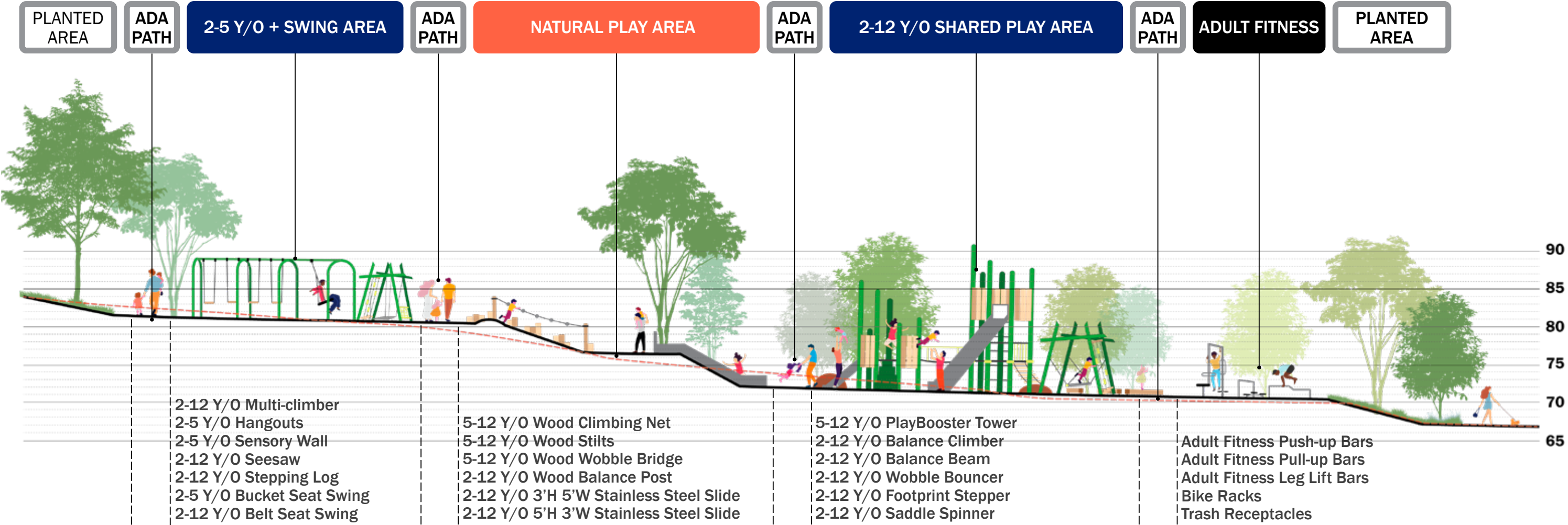


TRASH RECEPTACLES



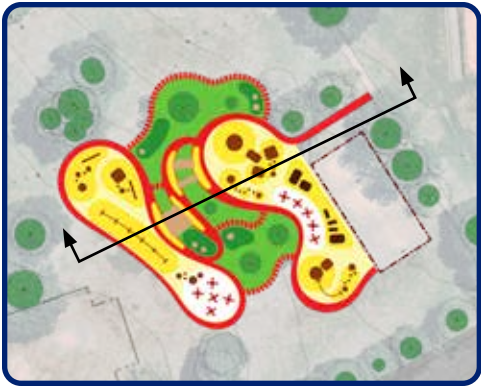
BIKE RACKS

PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | LANDSCAPE SECTION

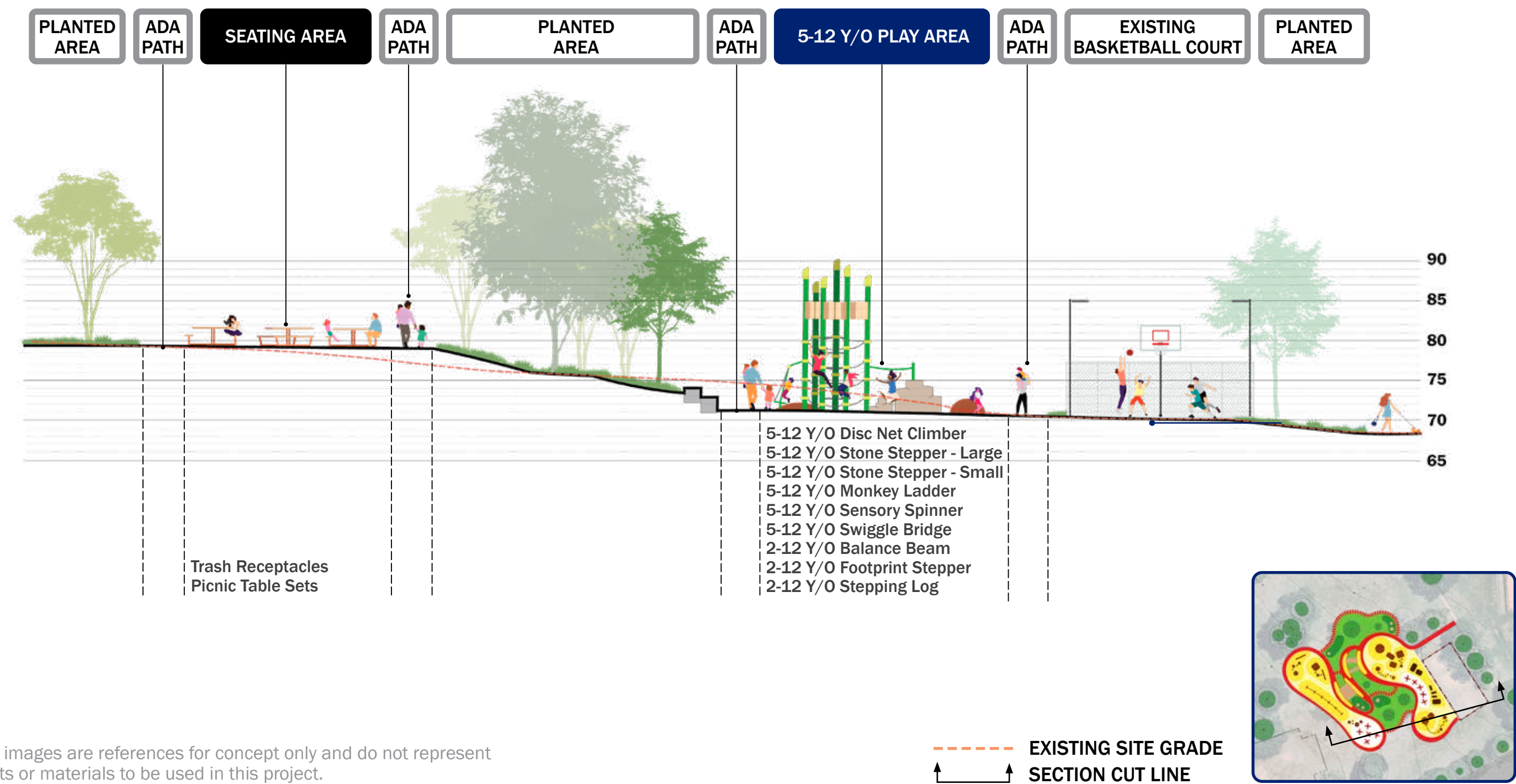


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--- EXISTING SITE GRADE
↑ SECTION CUT LINE



PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | LANDSCAPE SECTION



PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | PLAY EQUIPMENT SELECTION - COLORFUL

5 - 12 Y/O PLAY



DISC NET CLIMBER



PLAYBOOSTER TOWER



STEPPER NATURAL STONE - SMALL



SWIGGLE BRIDGE



SENSORY SPINNER



STEPPER NATURAL STONE - LARGE



MONKEY LADDER

2 - 12 Y/O PLAY



FOOTPRINT STEPPER



SEESAW - INCLUSIVE



MULTI-CLIMBER - INCLUSIVE



BALANCE CLIMBER



WOBBLE BOUNCER



STEPPING LOG



BALANCE BEAM



SADDLE SPINNER



BELT SEAT SWING

ADULT FITNESS



HANGOUTS - INCLUSIVE



HANGOUTS - INCLUSIVE



HANGOUTS - INCLUSIVE

5 - 12 Y/O PLAY



HANGOUTS - INCLUSIVE



SENSORY WALL - INCLUSIVE



BUCKET SEAT SWING - INCLUSIVE

PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | PLAY EQUIPMENT SELECTION - NATURAL

5 - 12 Y/O NATURAL PLAY



WOOD WOBBLE BRIDGE



WOOD STILTS



WOOD CLIMBING NET

2 - 12 Y/O NATURAL PLAY



3'H 5'W STAINLESS STEEL SLIDE



5'H 3'W STAINLESS STEEL SLIDE



WOOD BALANCE POST

PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | COLOR PALETTE



VIEW FROM LEMON HILL RIM TRIAL TO THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER WATERFRONT

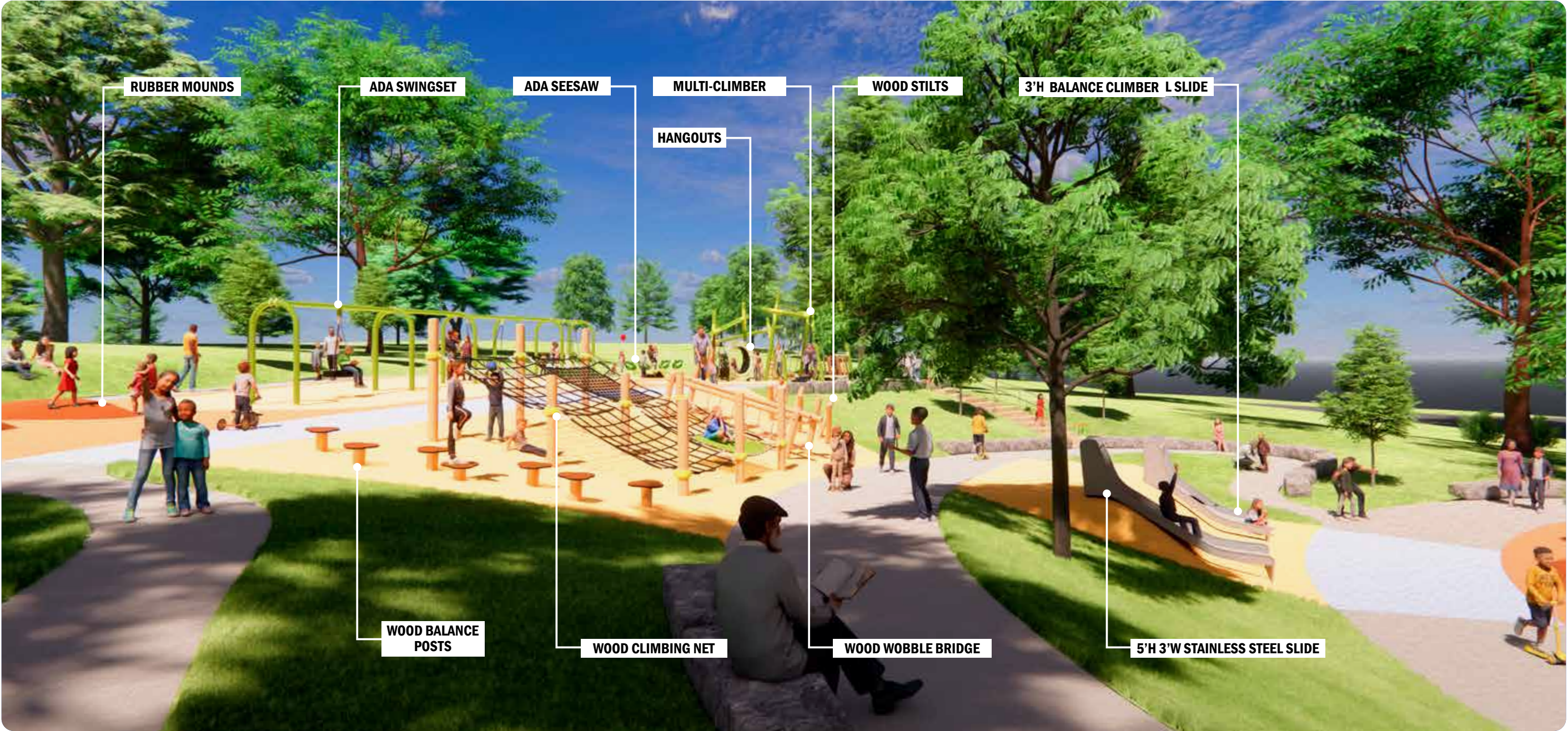


VIEW FROM LEMON HILL MANSION TOWARD THE PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART AND DOWNTOWN



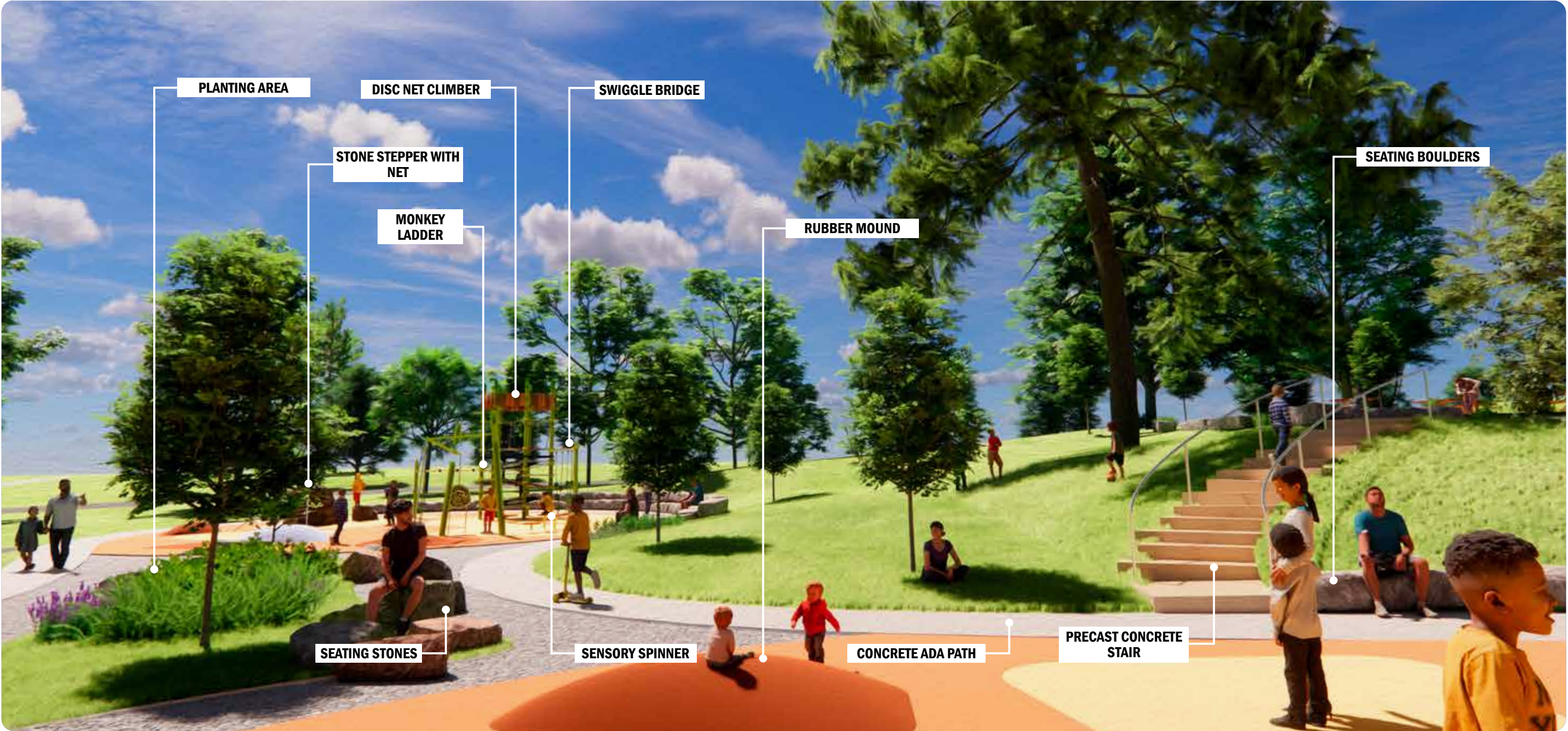
THIS COLOR PALETTE WILL BE USED FOR:
PLAY EQUIPMENT COATING
GRAPHIC ON THE GROUND
SAFETY SURFACE MIXTURE

PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | ACTIVE HILLSIDE & UPPER PLAY SPACE



NATURAL PLAY AREA

PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | LOWER ENTRANCE



5-12 Y/O PLAY + SEATING AREA

PLAYGROUND CONCEPT DESIGN | LOWER PLAY SPACE



2-12 Y/O SHARED PLAY AREA