

DRAFT

# BROWNIE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK MASTERPLAN

November 16, 2018

**City of Austin Department of Parks + Recreation**  
**North Lamar/ Georgian Acres Neighborhood Team**  
**SSAU** Stiphany Sowell Architecture + Urbanism, LLC

**City of Austin**  
**Parks and Recreation Department (PARC)**

**North Lamar/Georgian Acres Neighborhood Team**

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DRAFT

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# SITE CONTEXT

- LEGEND
- 1 Existing Playground
  - 2 Undeveloped Parcel A
  - 3 Undeveloped Parcel B
  - 4 Undeveloped Parcel C
  - 5 Dr. Guerrero-Thompson Elementary School
  - 6 IDEA Rundberg School
  - 7 Drainage Swale



SITE PHOTOS



Existing Brownie Playground looking north from Brownie Drive (image: Google Street View)



View of Parcel A from existing playground



SITE PHOTOS



View of Parcel A looking west



View south on Access Road toward IDEA School; drainage swale at east of road



SITE PHOTOS



View of Parcel C looking east



View north toward Brownie Drive and Parcel B from Parcel C





## PLANNING PROCESS + DESIGN PRIORITIES



## PRIORITIES + OBJECTIVES

Design priorities emerged from this project's participatory process and informed a set of objectives for guiding the proposed park's spaces, experiences, and relationships.

The priorities encompass the concerns and ambitions of community members, city personnel, and designers, who, through a series of public meetings, discussed a range of challenges and opportunities that the design must address. From those discussions, the following priorities were outlined:

1. **Identity** Establish an exemplary neighborhood park that supports the Rundberg area;
2. **Access** Manage park access and wayfinding to promote safety, social welfare, and connect public resources, especially the neighboring IDEA Rundberg Charter School and the Gus Garcia Recreational center;
3. **Diversity** Enhance the diversity of park spaces and experiences for multiple generations of users;
4. **Inclusivity** Expand inclusive recreational activities that promote family activities;
5. **Resilience** Revitalize the creek tributary, enhance habitat, and manage water systems.

These priorities are a foundation for the masterplan, and have been distilled into the following set of objectives that unite the park's aesthetics with its social and ecological performance.

### Objective 1: Create One Park

Currently, the proposed park is composed of three parcels separated by streets or a creek tributary prone to flooding. To connect these parcels into a cohesive landscape, the design:

- Utilizes consistent materials, lines of trees, and a common plant palette to define the park's edges, bridge surfaces, and establish a coherent design language.
- Enlarges crosswalks to visually and physically connect between the parcels.
- Distributes programs between the parcels to activate each and encourage movement between them.
- Establishes a Geo-fence to alert passersby of the park as one entity.

### Objective 2: Foster Multi-generational Play

The success of Brownie Neighborhood Park is contingent on supporting a range of recreational programs for different ages, interests, and community needs. To achieve this the design:

- Creates spaces tailored to age appropriate play, from toddler to adult;
- Provides a range of children's play spaces that foster mental, physical, and social development.
- Utilizes natural elements within play spaces that provide challenge, encourage curiosity, stimulate imagination, create excitement, and enable dynamic, rather than prescribed, interaction.
- Provides spaces for sports, such as soccer, football, and basketball.

- Provides a Loop path, play equipment, and adjacent spaces that support walking, running, biking, tricycles, climbing, stretching, and other forms of aerobic activity.

### Objective 3: Amplify Resources

The park is uniquely located near a number of amenities and programs that would expand its function as one of the community's central social spaces. To facilitate this role, the design:

- Includes spaces for neighborhood and local school community gardens.
- Bridges to the IDEA Rundberg School.
- Provides meeting space or event space for community groups, programs, or activities.
- Utilizes the creek tributary as an enhanced, unstructured nature play space.
- Preserves significant existing trees for shade and beauty.

### Objective 4: Ensure Safety

People use parks that feel comfortable and safe. To meet this, the design:

- Provides open sight lines across the park to ensure visibility.
- Provides lighting to support night-time activity, illuminate the park, and discourage illicit uses.

### Objective 5: Enhance Ecology

The park's parcels are adjacent to, or separated by, a creek tributary and contain a number of significant trees.

Building on these amenities, the park's proposed plant palette, surfaces, and programs:

- Utilize native canopy, understory, and herbaceous species that are adapted to the region, accommodate drought, and require less maintenance.
- Establish areas for storm water infiltration to reduce runoff and flooding.
- Create habitat for pollinators, birds, and other fauna.
- Intercept and filter particulates and sediments before they enter the creek tributary.

## Objective 6: Facilitate Management

Longterm management of any public park is challenged by the everyday use and maintenance that its surfaces, equipment, and plantings undergo. To ensure the park's cleanliness and appearance, as well as its ecological performance, the park:

- Utilizes robust materials appropriate for their function.
- Incorporates a network of waste collection bins distributed at appropriate locations and intervals to accommodate disposal of waste, recycling, and dog feces.
- Selects native plant species that require less mowing and trimming long term.
- Promotes plant maintenance regimes that reduce invasives, encourages reclamation of clippings and biomass, and facilitates plant community health.



Map of challenges, opportunities, and desired activities from November 18th Workshop.



Community feedback was gathered through (1) an electronic survey; (2) a survey of elementary school students; and (3) **three community design workshops** on November 18, 2017; January 15, 2018; and March 3, 2018.

1. Online survey

7 respondents  
This survey consisted of 17 questions designed to understand which Austin parks residents currently use, how they use Austin parks, and desires for a park in the Rundberg neighborhood. This survey was made available on the City of Austin website.

Direct quotations from respondents:

- “Busy Gameplay on 4 courts with parking, lights and restrooms. Great social interaction and community networking.”
- “Connected to bicycle network, bike parking, tennis courts, open green space.”
- “Well lit, nice facilities, community-centric.”
- “Bigger playground where children, parents, pets can play together.”
- “Hiking trails, community garden, picnic tables and bbq pits, soccer field or baseball field, walls or a wall with murals created by Austin artists, splash pad.”
- “lots of kids playing everyday, beautiful trails, tons of shade, community events taking place at the park.”
- “A clean and safe space for all members of the community.”

2. Survey of students at the Walnut Creek Elementary  
34 respondents  
This survey was undertaken by the young resident, photographed on page 21.

Average # people in household	5
Average # of children	3
How often do you go to a park?	
Often	26%
Occasional	32%
Rarely	41%
What do you do when visiting a park now?	
Picnic	38%
Walk	44%
Soccer	44%
Hang Out	59%
Play with kids	47%
Basketball	32%
Swim	26%
Other (Pokemon)	6%
What do you want to see in Brownie Park?	
Walking trails	53%
Playground	74%
Duck pond	32%
Nature	50%
Covered Picnic Areas	35%
Basket ball courts	18%
Exercise Equipment	38%
Soccer Field	50%

What should be the most important feature of Brownie Park?

Safety	82%
Open Space	44%
Community	41%

3. Community Design Workshops

Community Design Workshops permitted an understanding of what residents desired for their future park, and where activities should happen. Three workshops were held, two at the Gus Garcia YMCA, and one at the Brownie Park

The **first workshop** (11/18/17), held at YMCA North Austin Community Recreation Center, involved the use of large aerial maps, and icons of activities and challenges identified through the survey. Participants were asked to locate their house, and their observations of challenges, opportunities, and potential activities for Brownie Park. Blank tags were available for participants to create their own activities and/or challenges.

The **second workshop** (1/15/18) was held in Brownie Park, and involved the presentation of a general framework for Brownie Park, based on the findings of the surveys and the first meeting. The second meeting involved feedback from younger neighborhood residents. Three plans were presented and discussed among participants.

The **third workshop** (3/3/18) was held at the Brownie Park, and involved the presentation of a plan that met the majority of social, spatial, and environmental management needs.



Workshop at Gus Garcia YMCA: PARD, SSAU, and Neighborhood Residents

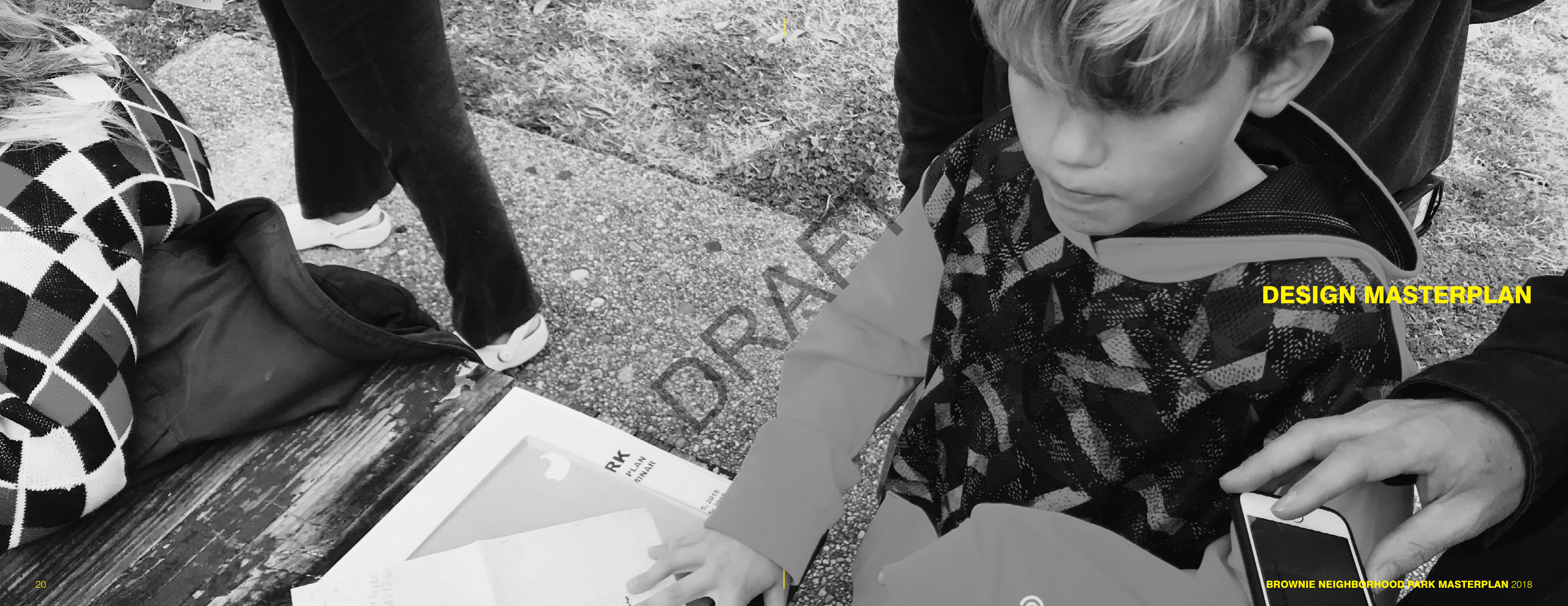




Workshop in Brownie Park: PARD, SSAU, and Neighborhood Residents, and a request for “a lot of slides.”



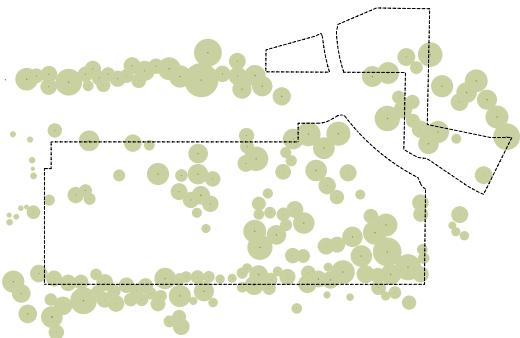




**DESIGN MASTERPLAN**



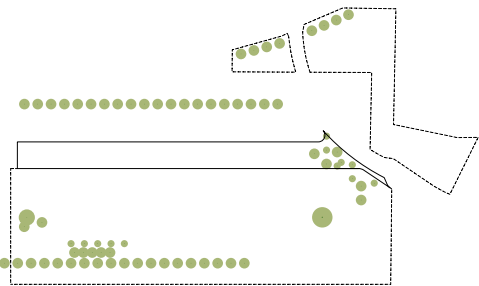
PARK DIAGRAMS



PRESERVE THE TREES

Currently, the site supports a number of mature trees that provide needed shade, habitat, and other ecosystem services. These trees should be surveyed and assessed for their health and potential value in accord with the City's protected and heritage tree ordinances (refer to Austin Municode Chapter 25-8, Subchapter B, Article 1, Divisions 1-3).

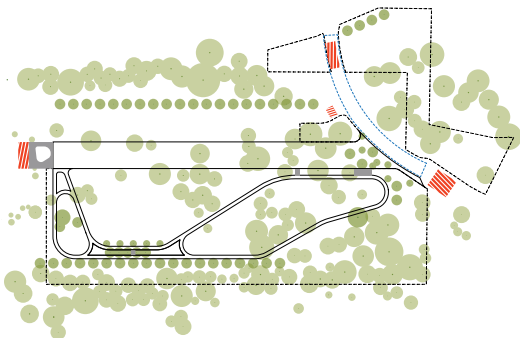
As a significant layer of ready-made, **instant overstory and understory canopy layers**, the trees structure the park's recreational programs, enhance its ecological performance, and contribute to the park's spatial character.



DEFINE EDGES: PLANT NEW TREES

Planting new trees strengthens the park's edges and provides a clear identity for the park's boundaries, especially adjacent to the access road, the Entry Grove, and The Loop.

Additional trees are planted to ensure benches have shade.

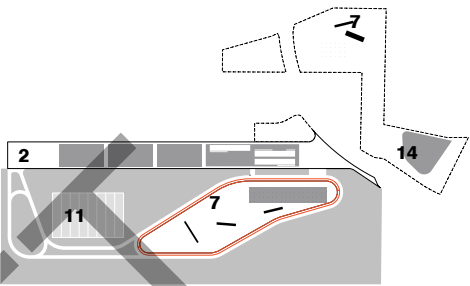


WEAVE THE LOOP + CONNECT PARCELS

The Loop—which supports walking, running, biking, and tricycles—is inset between existing trees to preserve shade and maintain the park's character.

The park is connected to adjacent parcels—which house a community garden, nature play, and unstructured play areas—and the **IDEA Rundberg Charter School** via The Bridge and designated crosswalks.

A **Geofence**, set up along Brownie Drive and the park's entry, triggers an SMS text message alert on smart phones that enter the zone. As a virtual geographic boundary, the geofence will communicate park amenities and events to park users, the community, and passersby.

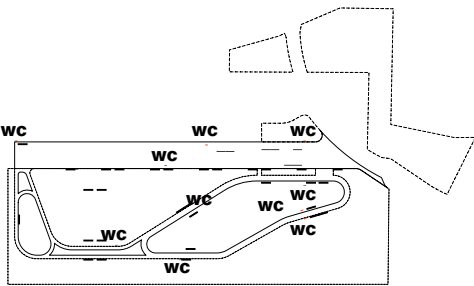


INSERT PROGRAM

Sports courts, a covered picnic area, and sandboxes, are organized in **The Strip (2)**. The linear space concentrates program and paved surfaces along the park's western edge. If appropriate, programs can be phased or constructed into the space over time.

The Loop's undulation among the trees creates a space for **The Field (11)**, a 30 yard x 50 yard area that supports soccer or tag football games. Within the Loop's northern interior, **nature play (7)** areas and climbing walls accommodate a range of inter-generational activities for children and adults.

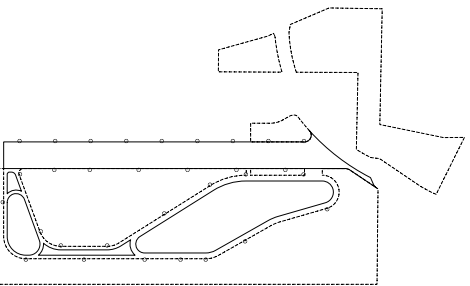
Parcels to the north and west of the main park support a community garden (14) and additional play areas (7).



PROVIDE SEATING + WASTE COLLECTION

Benches are distributed throughout the park to provide places for rest, people-watching, or supervision of play areas.

Waste collection bins have also been provided at strategic locations to facilitate the disposal of trash, recycling, and dog waste and maintain park cleanliness and order.

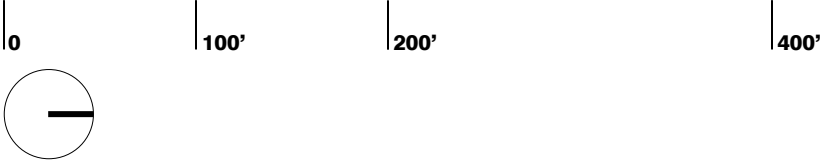


LIGHT THE PARK

Lighting is located along The Strip and The Loop to improve visibility of park spaces and increase a sense of safety for all park visitors.

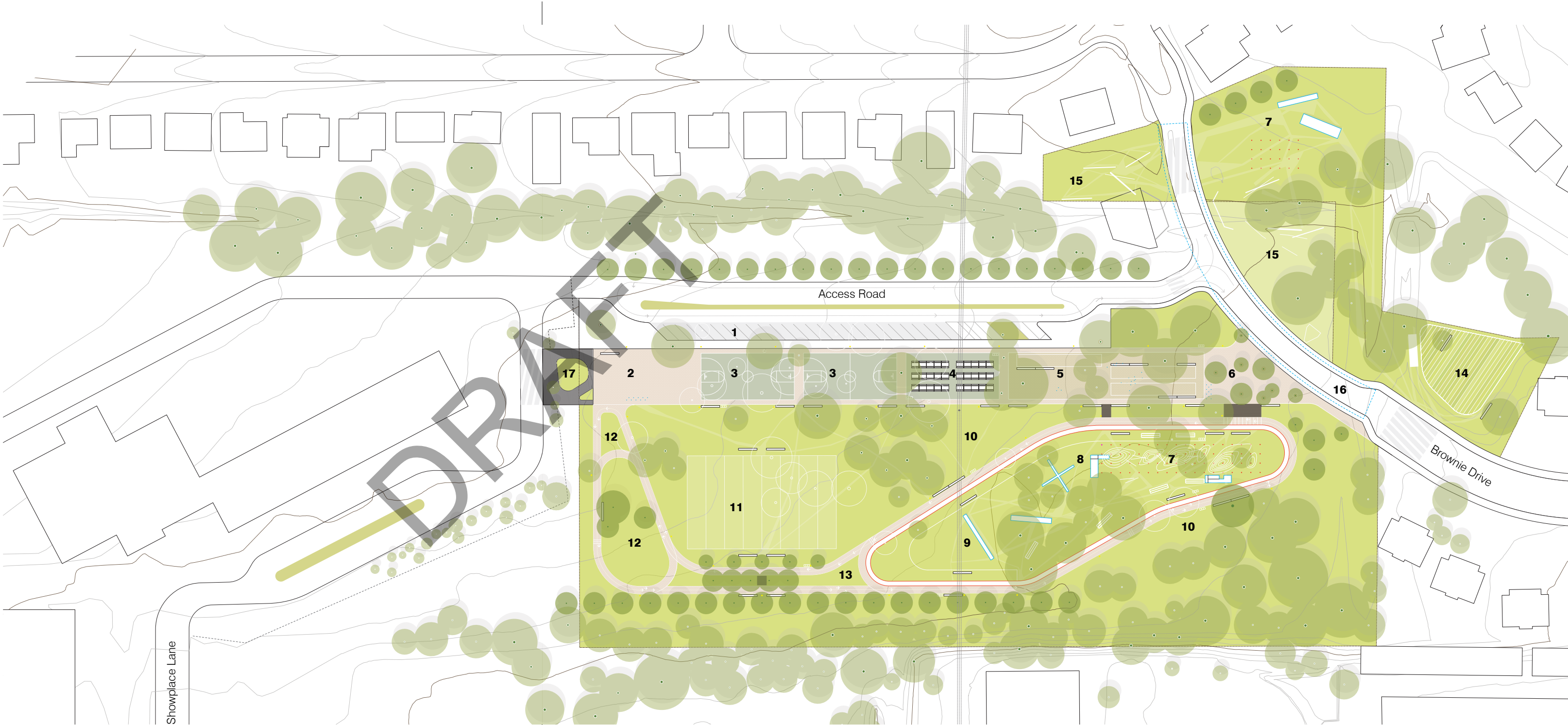


SITE PLAN



LEGEND

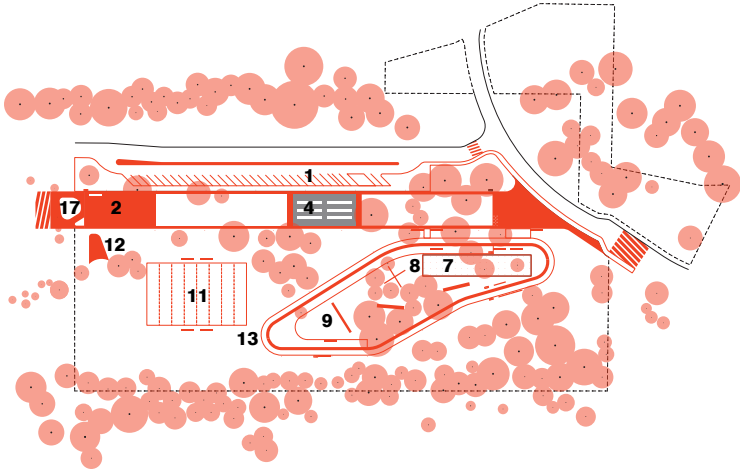
- 1 Parking
  - 2 Activity Strip
  - 3 Sports Courts
  - 4 Covered Picnic/ Party Area
  - 5 Game Courts + Sandbox
  - 6 Entry Grove
  - 7 Nature Play
  - 8 Traditional Play Equipment
  - 9 Climbing Wall
  - 10 Pollinator Meadow
  - 11 Soccer Field (30yd x 50 yd)
  - 12 Future Teaching Garden
  - 13 Loop: Running, Walking, Biking
  - 14 Community Garden
  - 15 Unstructured Play
  - 16 Geofence Zone
  - 17 Bridge to School
- 
- Existing Tree
  - Proposed Tree





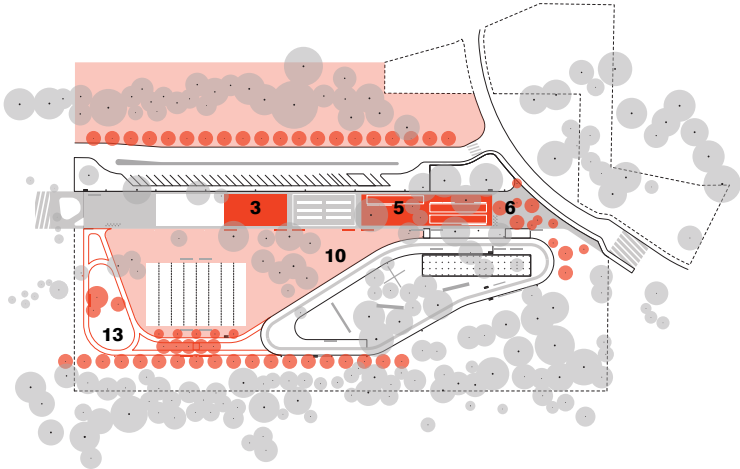
PHASING + IMPLEMENTATION DIAGRAMS

Note: Program numbers refer to Site Plan legend



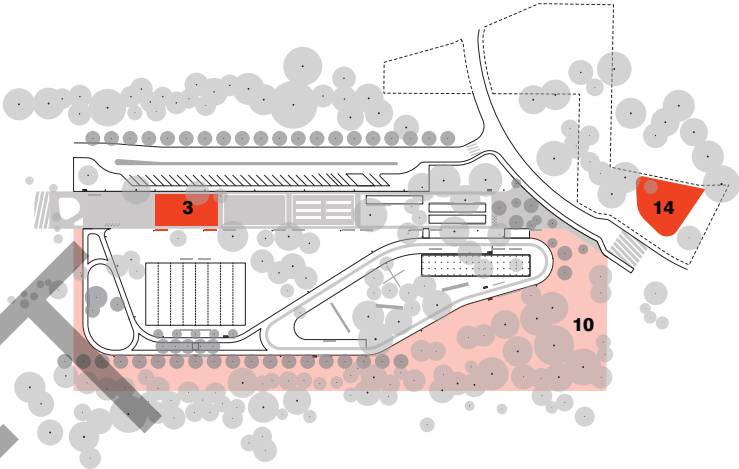
PHASE 1: 50%

- 1 Parking
- 2 Activity Strip
- 4 Covered Picnic/ Party Area
- 7 Nature Play
- 8 Traditional Play Equipment
- 10 Climbing Wall
- 11 Soccer Field
- 12 Teaching Garden
- 13 Main Loop + Tricycle Loop
- 17 Bridge to IDEA School
  - Signage + Wayfinding
  - Stormwater Infrastructure
  - Lighting + Electrical Infrastructure
  - Irrigation System
  - Benches
  - Waste Receptacles



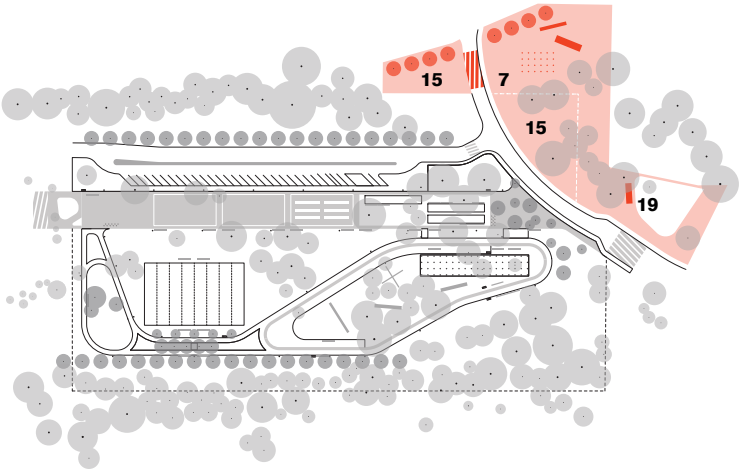
PHASE 2: 25% (75% COMPLETED)

- 3 Basketball Court
- 5 Game Courts + Sandboxes
- 6 Entry Grove
- 10 Pollinator Meadow
- 13 Loop Extension
  - Signage + Wayfinding
  - Lighting
  - Benches
  - Waste Receptacles



PHASE 3: 10% (85% COMPLETED)

- 3 Basketball Court
- 10 Pollinator Meadow
  - Signage + Wayfinding
  - Irrigation System
- 14 Community Garden
  - Benches
  - Waste Receptacles

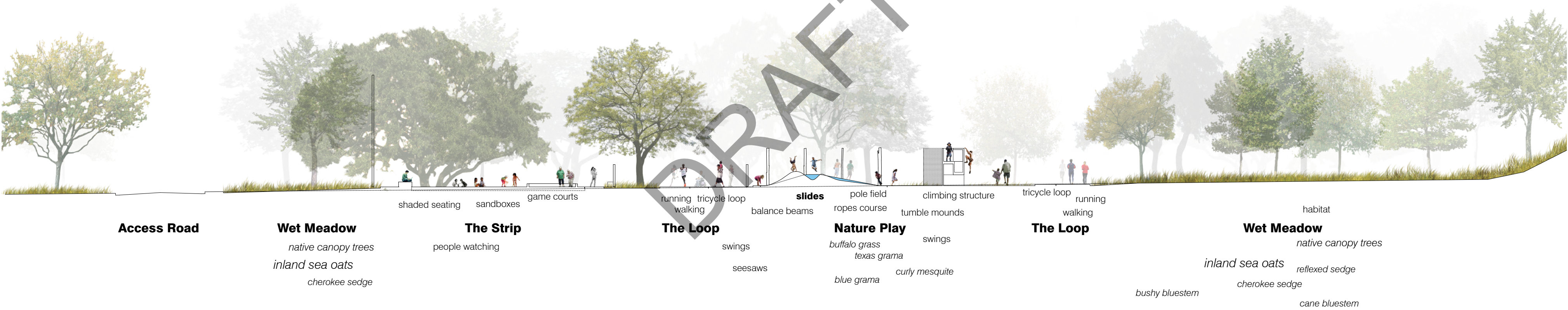
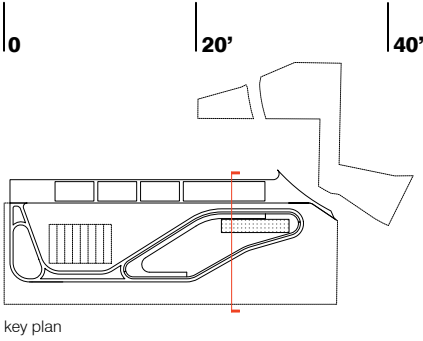


PHASE 4: 15% (100% COMPLETED)

- 7 Nature Play
- 15 Unstructured Play
  - Signage + Wayfinding
  - Plant Trees
- 19 Community Garden Shelter
  - Benches
  - Waste Receptacles

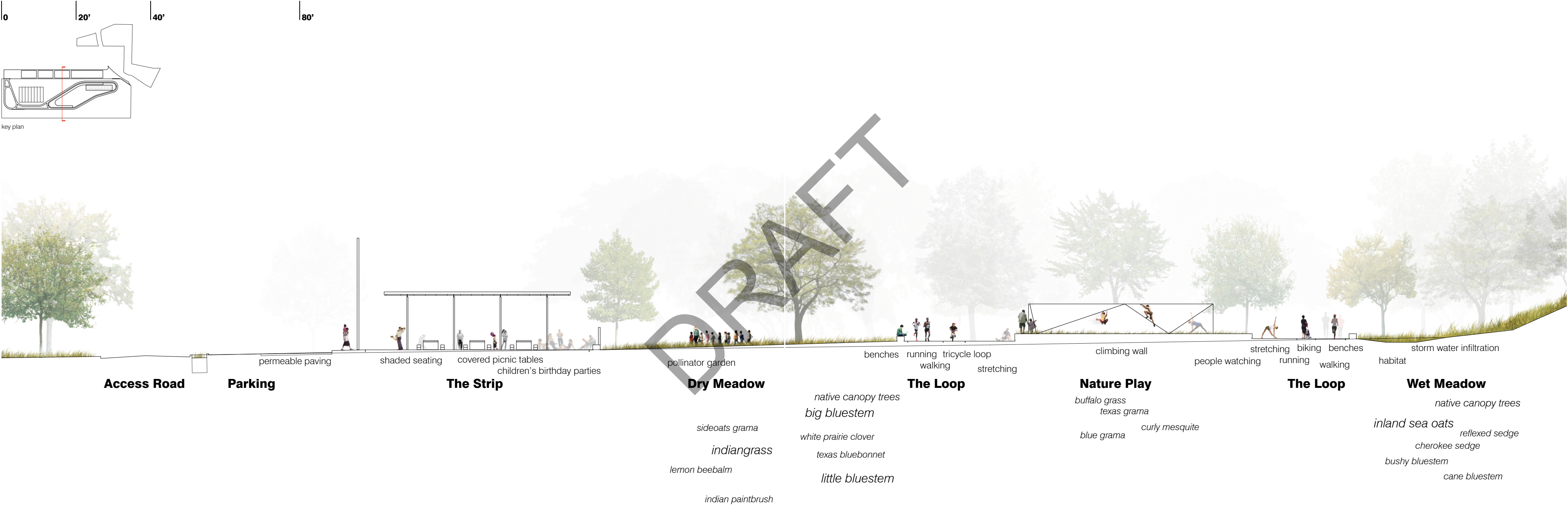


SECTION 1: EAST-WEST THRU THE LOOP + NATURE PLAY





SECTION 2: EAST-WEST THRU THE STRIP, THE LOOP. + NATURE PLAY





SECTION 3: EAST-WEST THRU THE STRIP, THE FIELD, + THE LOOP











**ENTRY PERSPECTIVE**



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