



## NORTHFIELD RIVERSIDE LIONS PARK – THE DISCOVERY ZONE

PARK and RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING . . . July 21<sup>st</sup> 2025



# NORTHFIELD'S CANNON RIVER REGIONAL PARK EXPERIENCE



Northfield  
MINNESOTA

## ESTABLISH

### ESTABLISH NORTHFIELD'S CANNON RIVER REGIONAL PARK

Northfield is on the cusp of making a tremendous opportunity to build on the four connected riverfront parks designed in the 1960s for a unified Regional Park. This will build an environmental experience, recreation and connectivity to the Parkway for a local and regional park destination. With potential partners including the City, State and County, and the Cannon River Regional Partnership, Northfield is well positioned to apply for federal designation as a Regional Park in 2025.

**Immediate Action:**

- Begin the application process with the goal of submitting by the end of 2024, 2025 deadline.

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### ENHANCE + ACTIVATE YOUR RIVERFRONT PARKS

Key to a successful application is an existing, vibrant, regional park on the riverfront. The four city parks in Northfield have strong potential, based on history, culture, and regional park goals. With a common focus on the Cannon River, Northfield is well positioned to develop a new, connected and ecologically restored system.

**Immediate Action:**

- Develop all elements of Ames Park as a first priority.
- Start planning for multi-use building at Babcock Park.
- Recreate restoration of river and dog park from Babcock Park.
- Recreate canoe/kayak launch area.

## ENHANCE



## COMPLETE

### COMPLETE YOUR LOCAL + REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM

As important as the distinct quality of the riverfront, the four city parks are the connection between them and to the regional trail system. It is important that the system of trails in the Cannon River and beyond be completed. The trail system, design, and extension is the key to the riverfront. The trail system should be completed. Safe, local connections to surrounding neighborhoods and the riverfront should be developed for local and regional use.

**Immediate Action:**

- Develop a comprehensive trail system.
- Connect Ames Park to Sechler Park.
- Complete the 100 River Mile Trail.
- Add bike lanes to downtown bridge.
- Place temporary trail on City land along west side of river.

4

### EXPLORE AMES MILL DAM RECONSTRUCTION OPTIONS

There is movement building around the possibility that the Ames Mill Dam might offer an important role in restoring the health, aesthetics and safety of the Cannon River. The dam is designated as a wild and scenic river. The Ames Mill Dam is a historic structure and a key element of the riverfront. A reconstruction for the existing dam that the potential to be both a restorative design and significant recreational regional attraction.

**Immediate Action:**

- Conduct the dam study recommended by DNR staff.
- Research options for the future of the dam.
- Apply for grant funding design + construction.



## PROMOTE

### PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT + TOURIST DESTINATION

Northfield is a beautiful and historic community, providing a unique and scenic experience. The riverfront is a key element of the community's identity and a major attraction. The riverfront is a key element of the community's identity and a major attraction. The riverfront is a key element of the community's identity and a major attraction.

**Immediate Action:**

- Explore incentives to encourage local businesses to open up.
- Work with local business community to plan projects.
- Apply for grant funding.

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## IT BEGAN WITH THE RIVERFRONT ENHANCEMENT ACTION PLAN

Adopted by Mayor and City Council in November 2020



1. February 27<sup>th</sup> 2023 Kick-Off Meeting with Northfield Lions Club
2. June 14<sup>th</sup> 2023 Meeting with Village on the Cannon Residents
3. May 1<sup>st</sup> 2023 Meeting with DJJD Work Group + Carnival Vendor
4. May 31<sup>st</sup> 2023 Meeting with Northfield Area Veterans Memorial Reps
5. September 20<sup>th</sup> 2023 Park Work Group Workshop #1
6. October 11<sup>th</sup> 2023 Meeting with Northfield Garden Club Reps
7. November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023 Park Work Group Workshop #2
8. November 29<sup>th</sup> 2023 Park Work Group Workshop #3
9. January 17<sup>th</sup> Park Work Group Workshop #4 – discuss + refine draft Master Plan
10. January 25<sup>th</sup> Neighborhood Open House – present draft Master Plan
11. February 5<sup>th</sup> Park and Recreation Advisory Board – review draft Master Plan
12. February 13<sup>th</sup> Council Work Session – review draft Master Plan
13. February 28<sup>th</sup> Park Work Group Workshop #5 – agree on final Master Plan
14. March 4<sup>th</sup> Park and Recreation Advisory Board – approve final Master Plan
15. April 2<sup>nd</sup> – Council Meeting – approve final Master Plan



## RIVERSIDE LIONS PARK – Long-Range Park Master Plan

approved by Mayor and City Council April 2024





## RIVERSIDE LIONS PARK – Long-Range Park Master Plan recommended project priority areas



Cannon River

Highway 3

1a

THE DISCOVERY ZONE  
nature-based play space

1b

RIVERSIDE LIONS PARK PAVILION  
existing structure + playground



Cannon River

Highway 3

1a

THE DISCOVERY ZONE  
nature-based play space





existing playground @ 7<sup>th</sup> Street



Proposed enhancements – focus on nature-based play elements with series of ‘Discovery Zone’ rooms.



**RIVERSIDE LIONS PARK – nature-based playground @ 7<sup>th</sup> St.**

[concept presented at Park and Recreation Advisory Board meeting – March 2024]



# refined concept northern play zone



Meandering trail featuring distinct nature play features on the interior

1 CANNON RIVER THEMED PLAY



2 PASSIVE PLAY RETREAT



3 PARENT PATIO



4 ROCK CLIMB



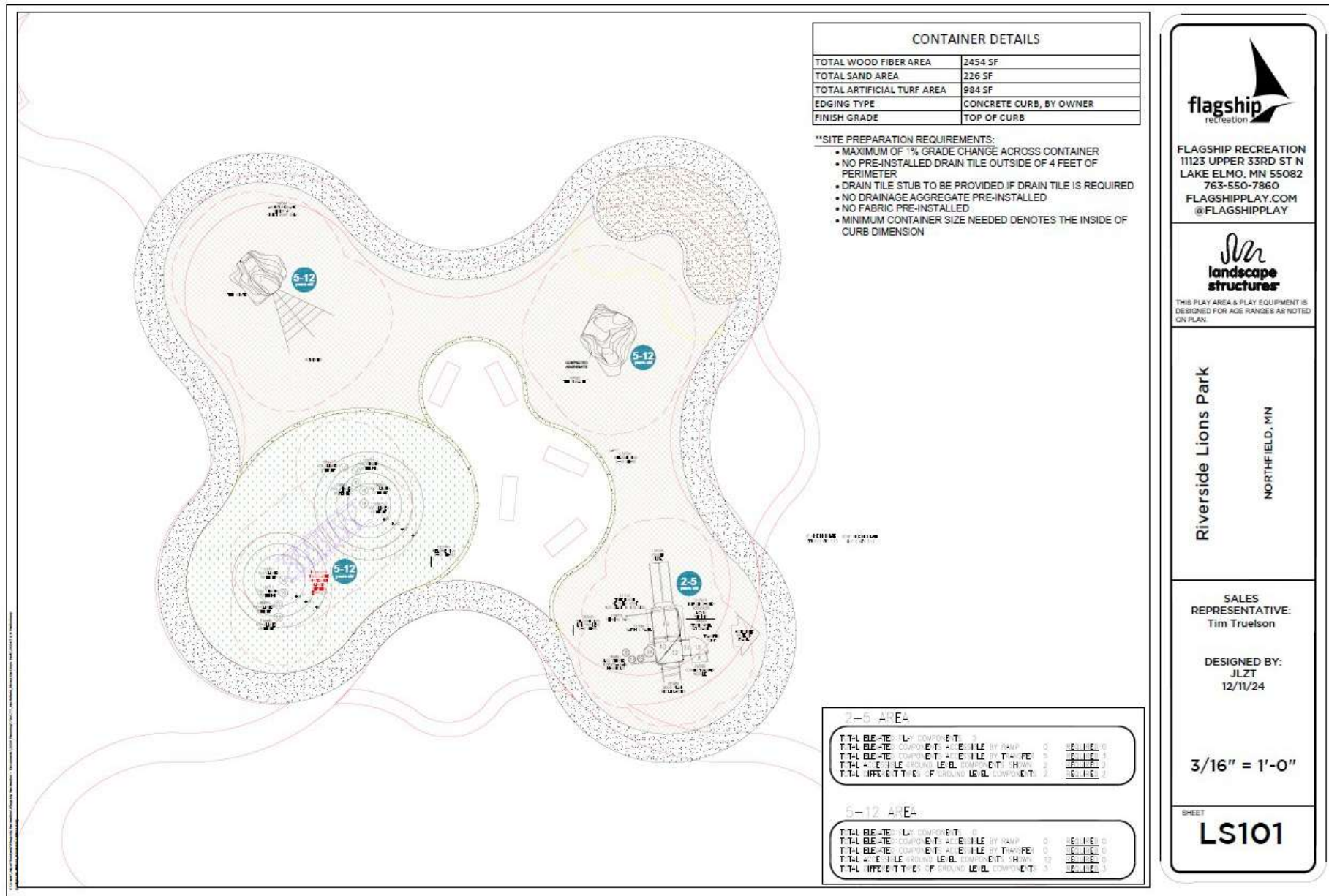
5 BLUFF REGION



CONCEPT MEETING/ 2024







# RIVERSIDE LIONS PARK – nature-based playground @ 7<sup>th</sup> St.

[concept presented at Park and Recreation Advisory Board meeting – January 2025]





## RIVERSIDE LIONS PARK – nature-based playground @ 7<sup>th</sup> St.

[concept presented at Park and Recreation Advisory Board meeting – January 2025]

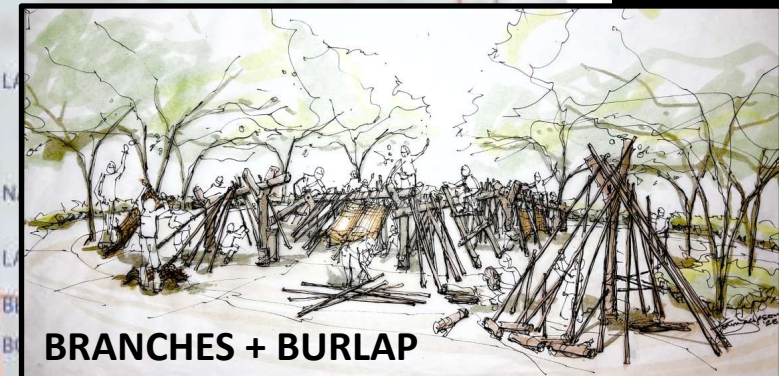
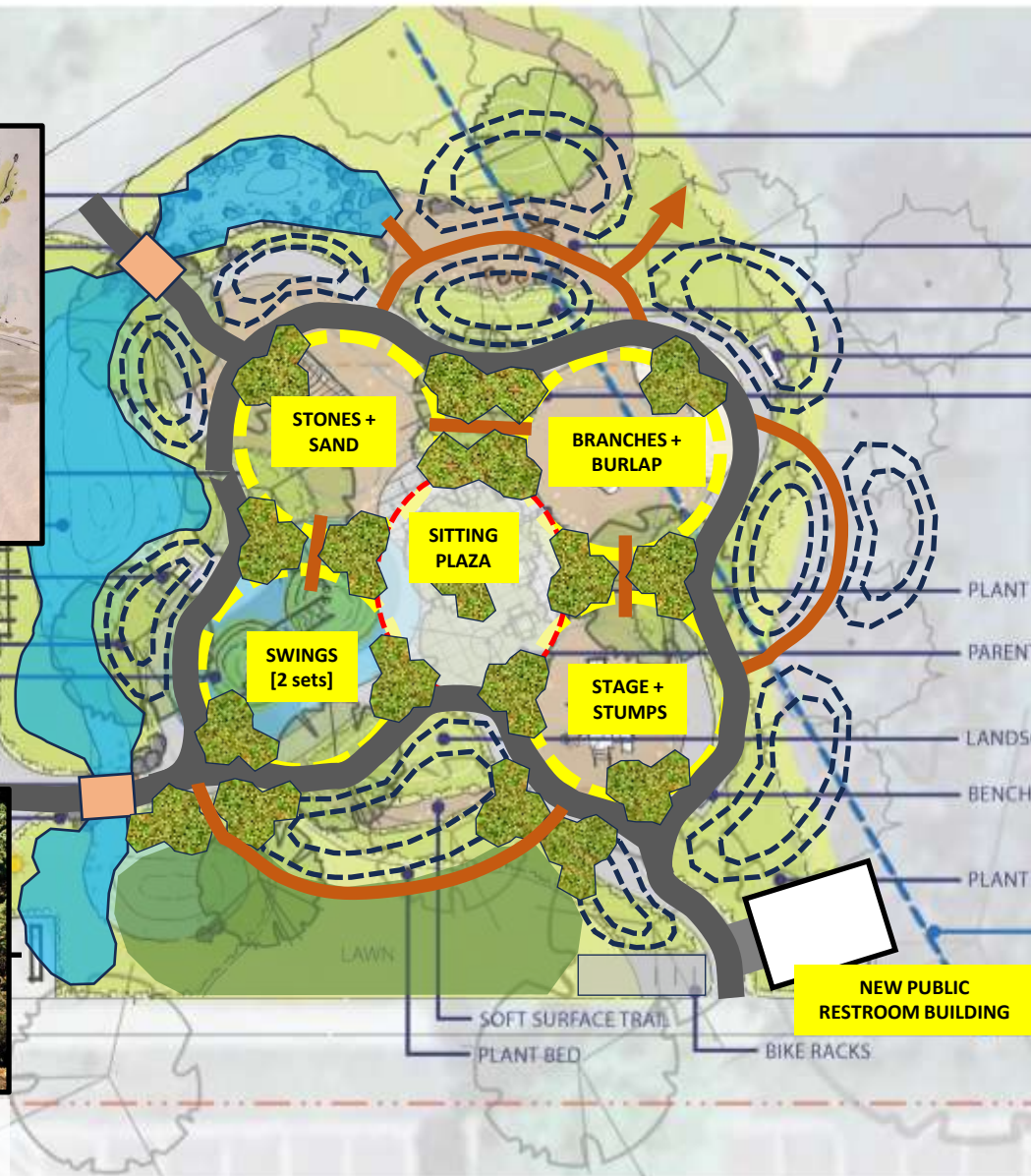




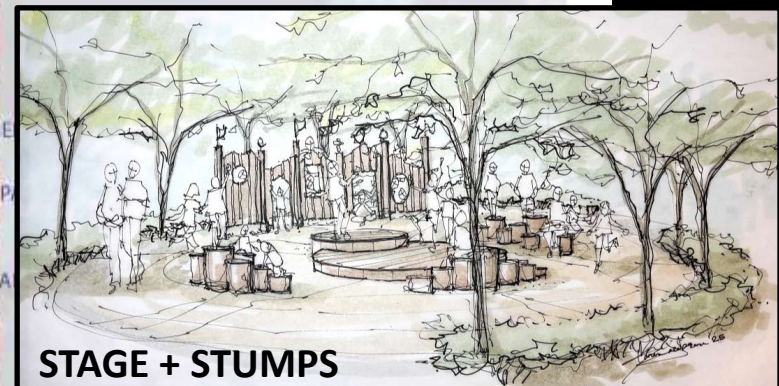
**STONES + SAND**



**SWINGS**  
[toddlers and older kids]

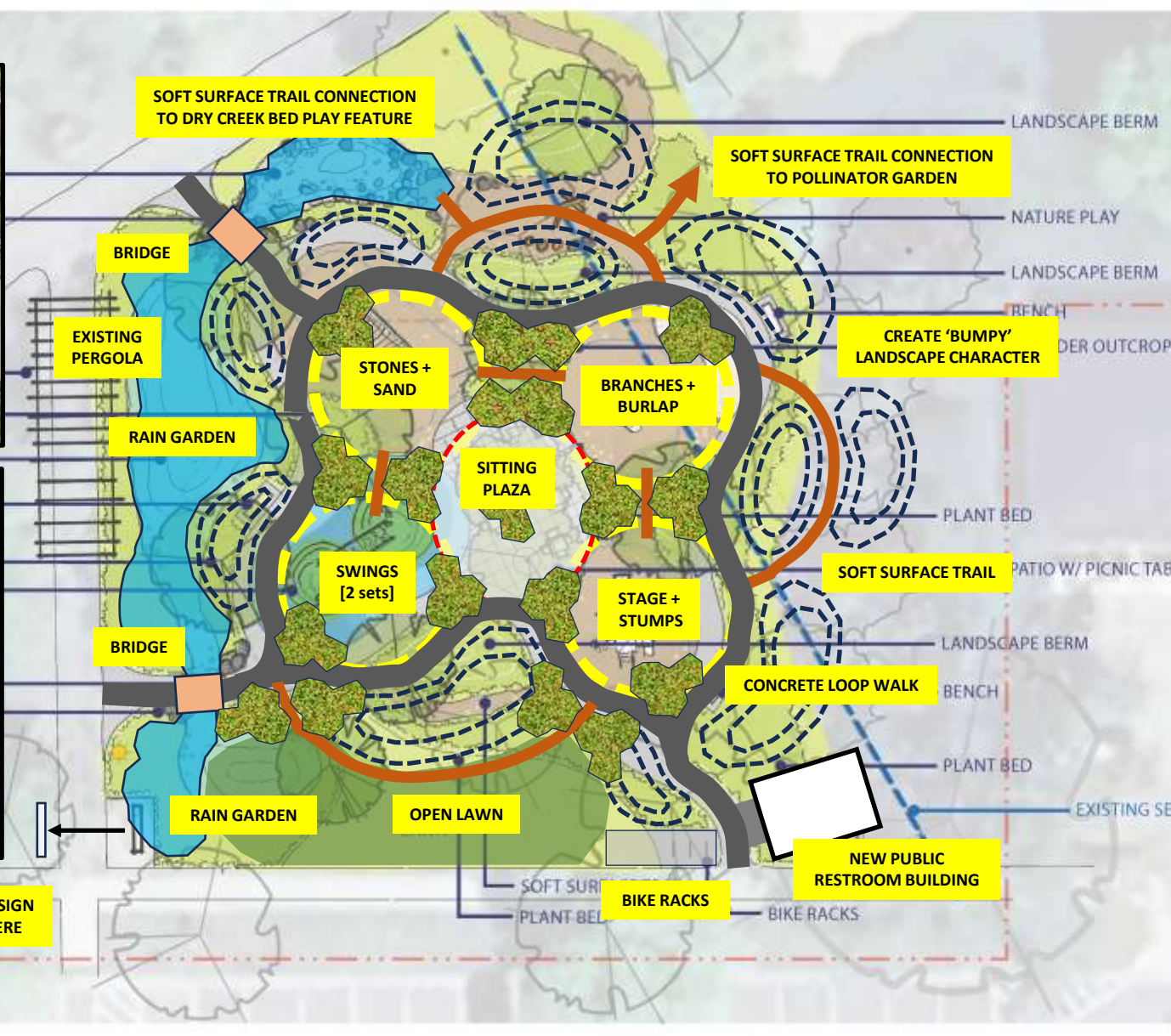


**BRANCHES + BURLAP**



**STAGE + STUMPS**

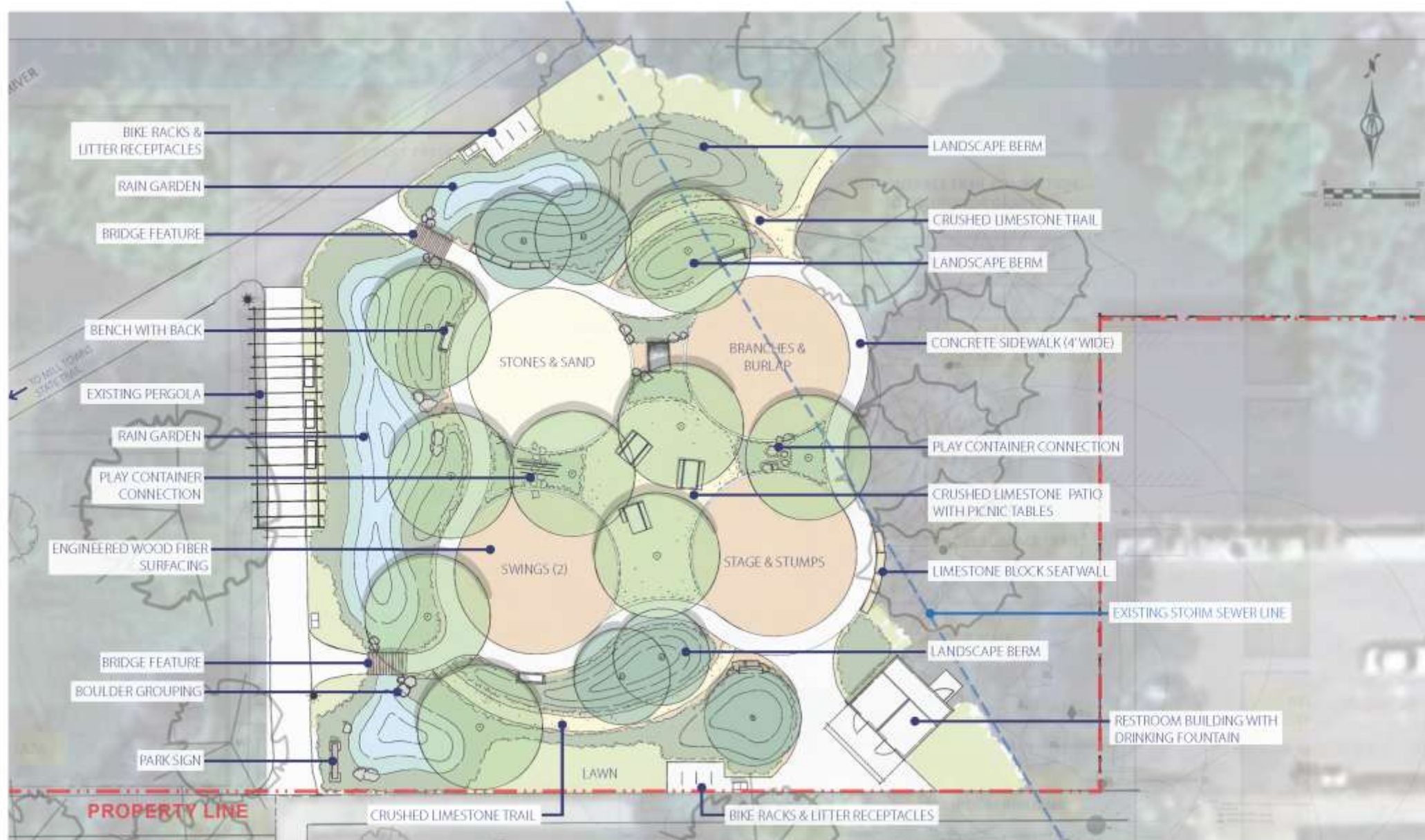




## 1a – THE DISCOVERY ZONE

additional site features + amenities





## 1a – THE DISCOVERY ZONE

current refined concept design . . . for review + comment + approval

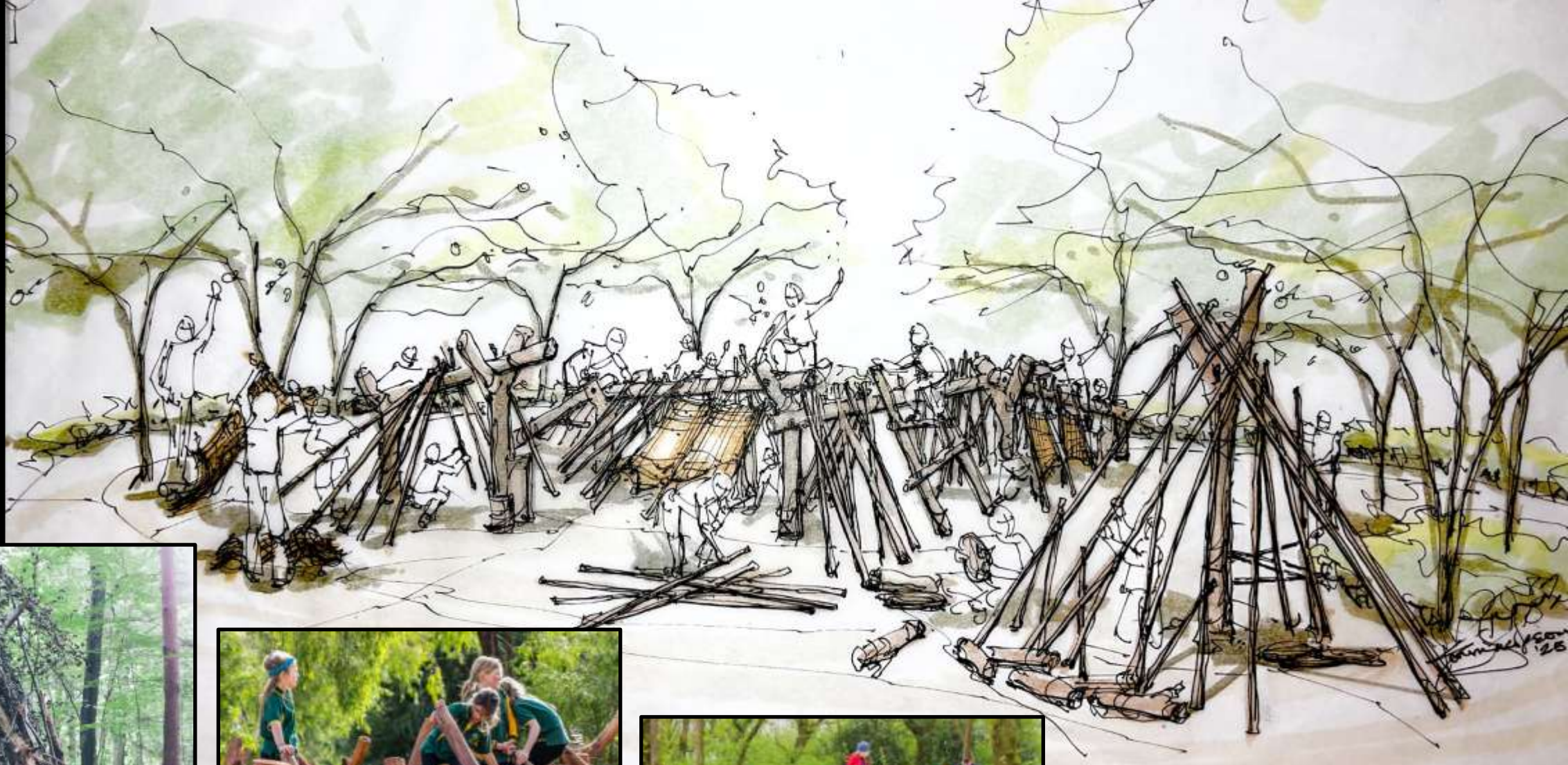




**STONES + SAND**  
climbing and digging

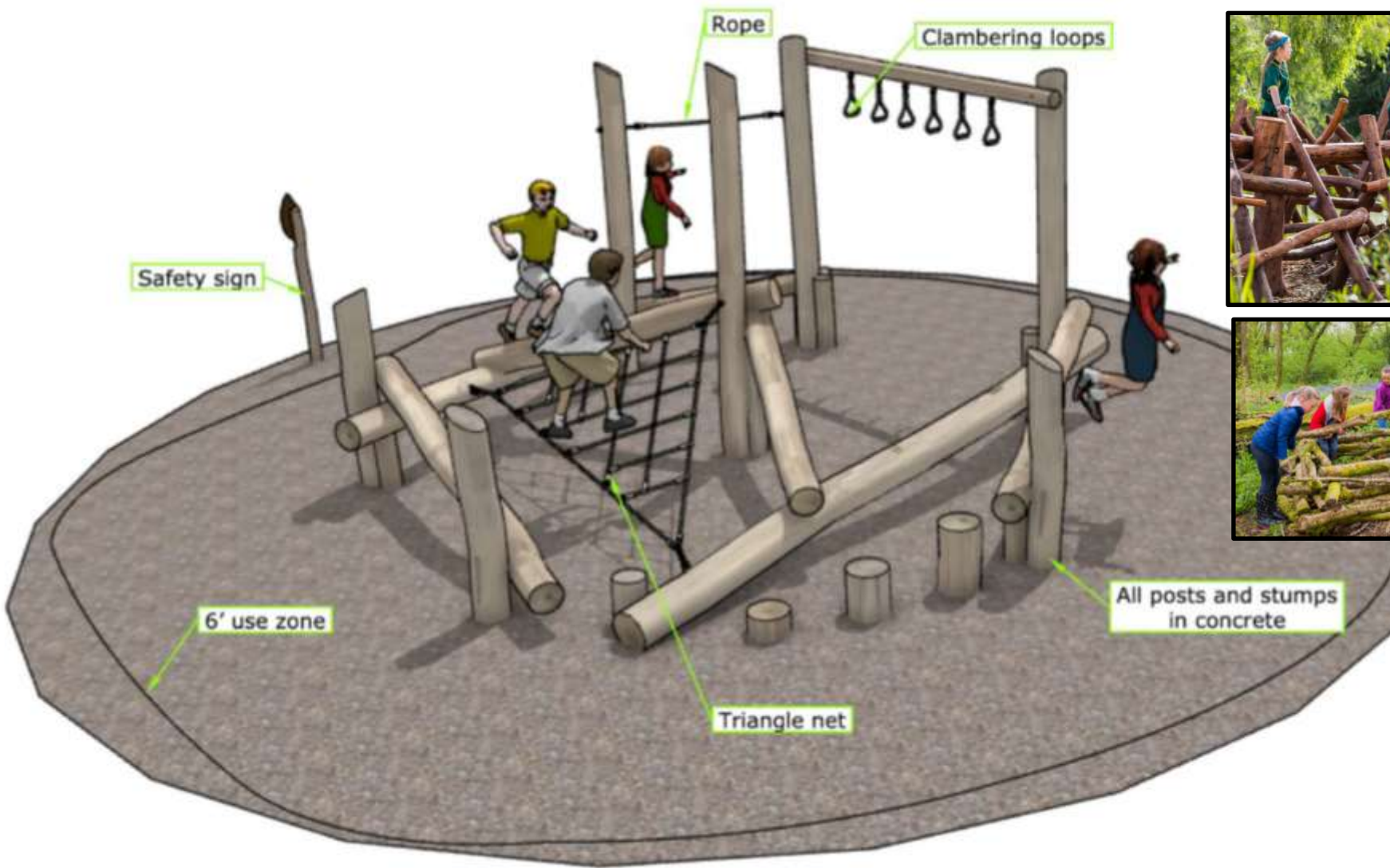






**BRANCHES + BURLAP**  
building and hiding





**FINAL LAYOUT + DESIGN WOULD STILL  
INCLUDE MOVEABLE CREATIVE PLAY  
ELEMENTS SIMILAR TO THESE EXAMPLES**



# STAGE + STUMPS

performing and pretending

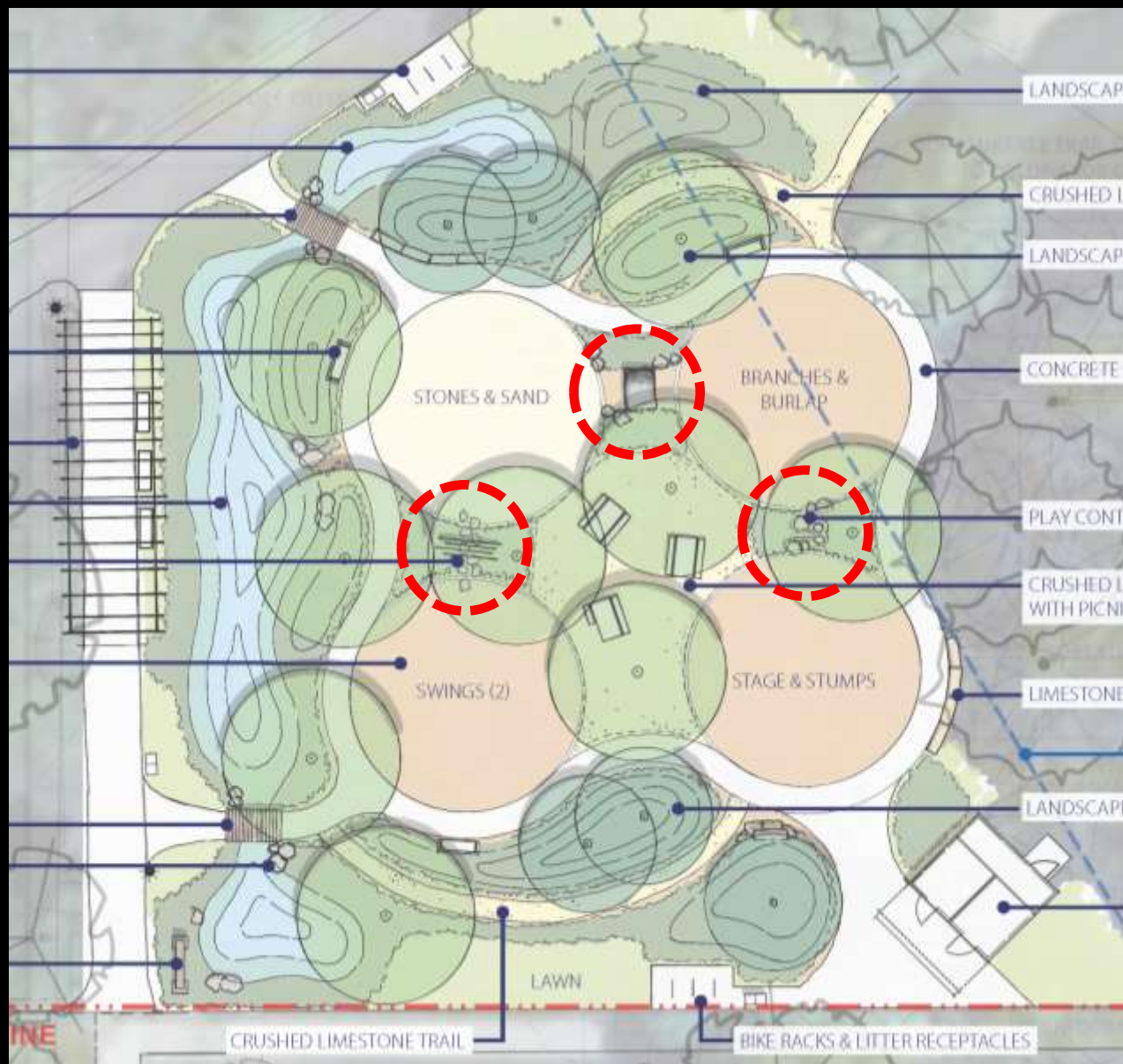






**1a – THE DISCOVERY ZONE**  
swings for different age groups













**Add surface stormwater management system features, integrated with other play elements and park features.**

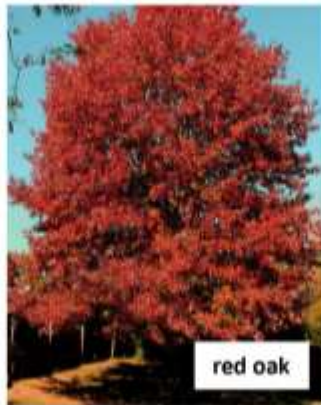
## GRANT APPLICATION FOCUS STORMWATER MANAGEMENT



## 1a – THE DISCOVERY ZONE

Climate Action Plan response – natural systems demonstration project





## 1a – THE DISCOVERY ZONE

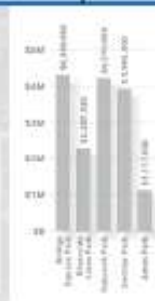
Immersion Landscape Concept – native plants + habitat creation



**Riverside Lions Park (The Discovery Zone 1a)  
budget revised in 2024 to \$450,000**

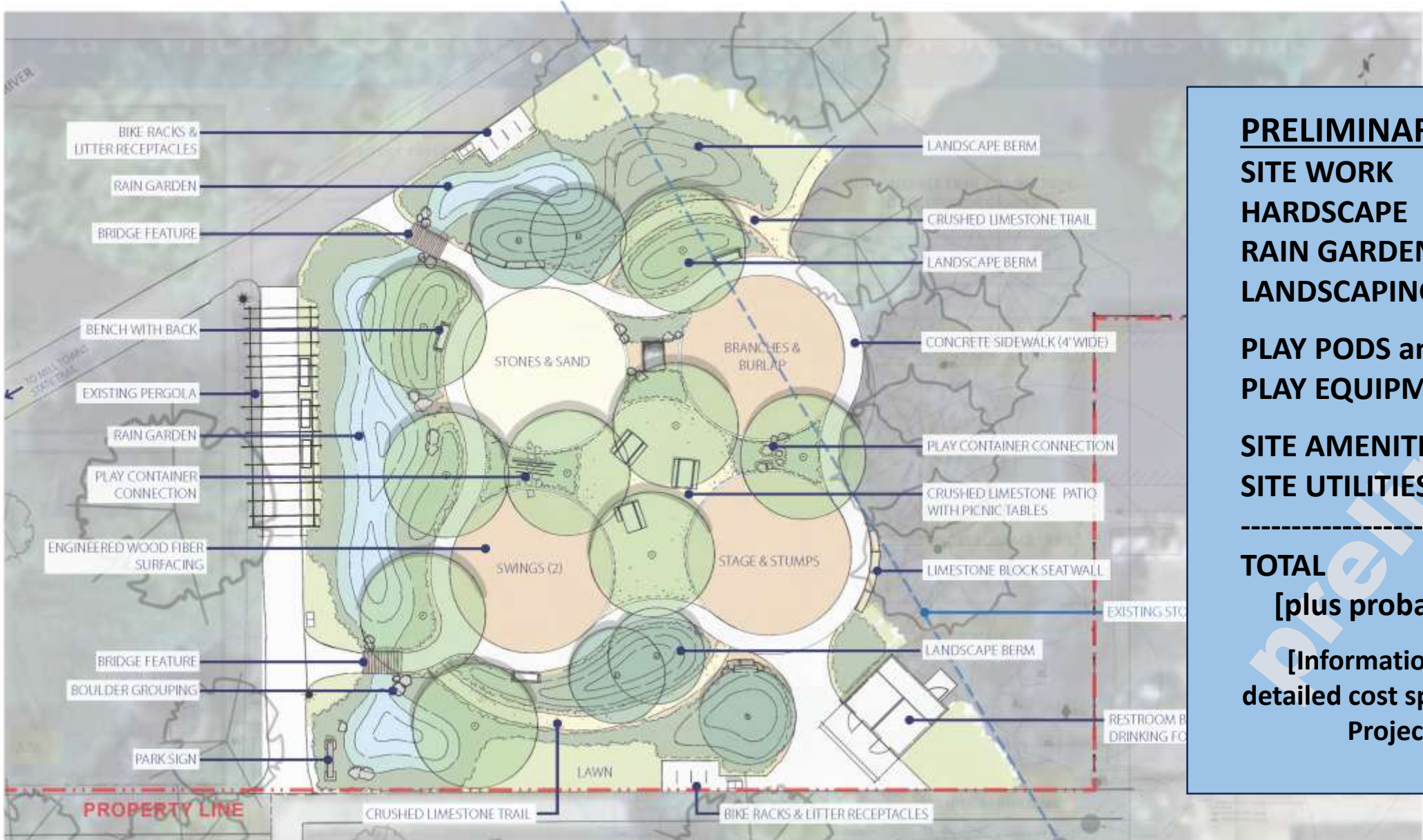
[illegible]

City of Northfield Capital Improvement Plan for Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Facilities											
PRIORITY INITIATIVES											
Location or Area	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	10-yr total
<b>RIVERFRONT PARK MAINTENANCE</b>											
Replacement of dated playground equipment	\$450,000										
Riverside Lions (playground 1)	\$ 300,000										
Riverside Lions (playground 2)					\$ 200,000						
<b>Replacement/rehabilitation of dated park structures (gazebos, pavilions or warming houses)</b>											
Sechler (shelter, toilet expans., ADA)				\$ 1,000,000							
Sechler (pavilion replacement)				\$ 120,000							



**the PARKS CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN**  
**establishing city-funded portion of park enhancement costs [March 2025]**





## PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE

SITE WORK	\$ 60,000
HARDSCAPE	\$ 50,000
RAIN GARDENS	\$ 40,000
LANDSCAPING	\$ 40,000
PLAY PODS and PLAY EQUIPMENT	\$ 175,000
SITE AMENITIES	\$ 20,000
SITE UTILITIES	\$ 20,000

**TOTAL \$ 405,000**  
[plus probable contingencies]

[Information summarized from  
detailed cost spreadsheet prepared by  
Project Design Team]



## NEXT STEPS TOWARD PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

**MASTER PLAN  
REVIEW +  
APPROVAL**

**[PRAB + MAYOR /  
CITY COUNCIL]**

**APPROVED  
APRIL 2024**

**REFINED CONCEPT  
DESIGN +  
RESTROOM  
OPTIONS  
[design + costs]**

**WORK-IN-  
PROGRESS**

**WORKING GROUP  
MEETING  
  
REVIEW +  
COMMENT**

**CONVENED  
JUNE 2025**

**PARK and  
RECREATION  
ADVISORY BOARD  
  
REVIEW +  
APPROVAL**

**JULY 2025**

**MAYOR and  
CITY COUNCIL  
  
REVIEW +  
APPROVAL**

**AUGUST 2025**

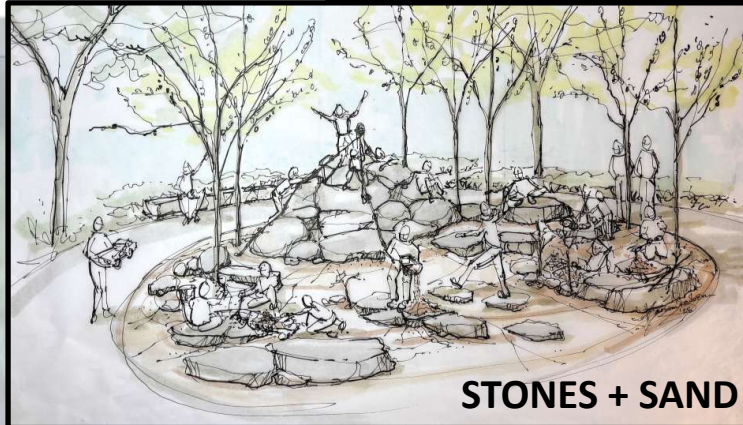
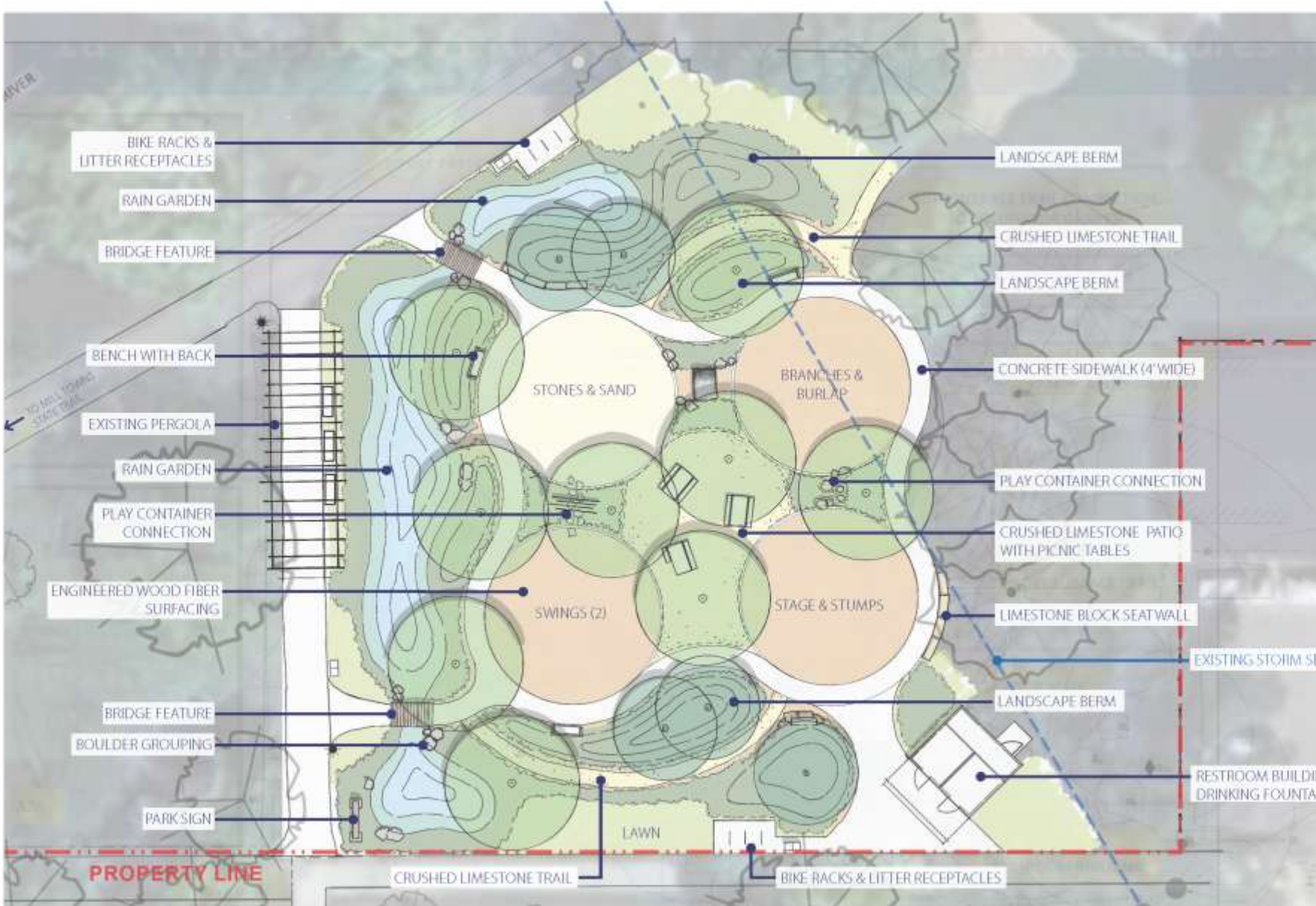
**COMPLETE  
DETAILED DESIGN  
+ CONFIRM  
PROJECT BUDGET  
and FUNDING**

**FALL/WINTER  
2025**

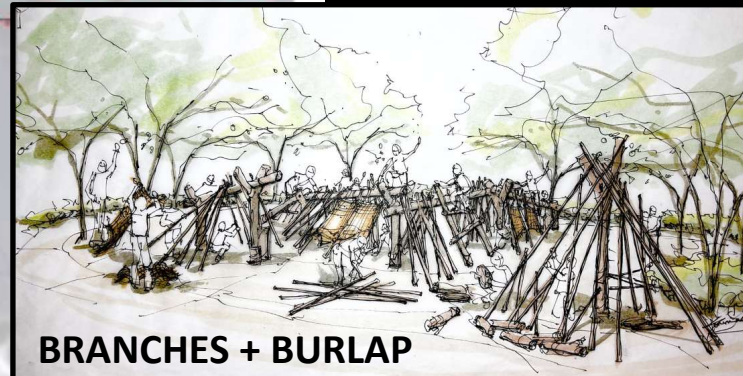
**BIDDING +  
CONTRACTS +  
  
DISCOVERY ZONE  
CONSTRUCTION**

**BEGINS  
SPRING 2026**

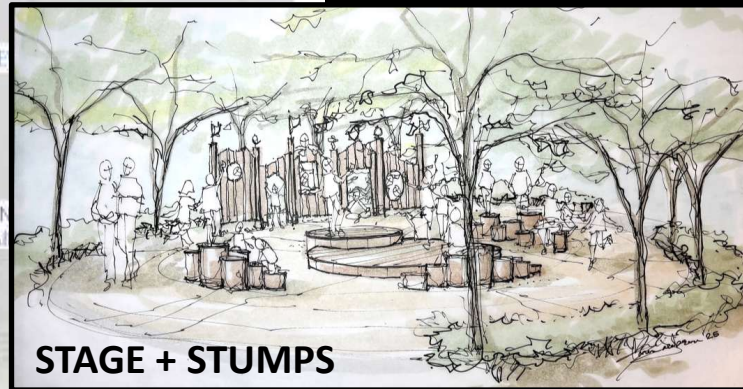




**STONES + SAND**



**BRANCHES + BURLAP**



**STAGE + STUMPS**