



# MELLON PARK ACTION PLAN

Summer 2022



**Pittsburgh  
Parks  
Conservancy**



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Summer 2022



# CONTENTS

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to the Richard King Mellon Foundation for making this Action Plan possible.

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<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction and Context</b>	<b>4</b>
A Brief History of Mellon Park	
Planning Context (Why Mellon Park?)	
A Community-Driven Action Plan	
Community Engagement Process	
<b>Site Analysis</b>	<b>24</b>
Existing Uses & Assets	
Traffic, Edges, Entrances, Circulation & Parking	
Trees, Ecology & Stormwater	
Lighting, Amenities & Art	
Regulatory Issues	
User Experience & Priorities	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>50</b>
Guiding Concept	
Park Wide Improvements	
Mellon Park North	
Mellon Park South	
<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>102</b>
Project Prioritization	
Design Principles & Designer Qualifications	
Tier 1 Priority Projects	
Tier 2 Priority Projects	
Tier 3 Priority Projects	
Tier 4 Priority Projects	
Project Funding	
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>166</b>







MELLON PARK



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# Mellon Park



Considered a signature community park, Mellon Park is home to recreational facilities, historic landscape design features, cultural events and festivals, and is a designated arboretum. These unique assets not only serve residents from the seven neighborhoods immediately surrounding the park, but draw users from all over the City of Pittsburgh and beyond. The park is well-used, and well-loved.

Despite its importance as a cherished public open space, Mellon Park suffers from years of disinvestment and deferred maintenance. The park is physically divided in two by Fifth Avenue, a major vehicular corridor. A comprehensive master plan has not been performed in nearly 70 years, leading to asymmetric investment and alterations that further separate the two sides of the park from one another. The result is a park that feels like two separate spaces, which often serve disparate user groups.

The Mellon Park Action Plan is the result of an extensive, community-driven planning process focused on developing a unified vision for this vibrant public asset. The Action Plan identifies the goals of the community and the overall design recommendations to achieve those goals. The Action Plan also maps out a strategy for implementation and establishes a framework for future design work. This document will serve to guide future investment in Mellon Park, ensuring its place as a cherished public open space for generations to come.

The **Introduction and Context** chapter provides a brief history of Mellon Park, the planning context for the park as well as a summary of the community engagement process and community feedback.

The **Site Analysis** chapter summarizes the findings of the project team based on analysis of site conditions, the engineering studies conducted for traffic and stormwater, and the input provided by park users on their experiences in the park and their priorities for park improvements.

The **Recommendations** chapter goes into detail on the design recommendations for the park, looking at overall park improvements, traffic calming around the park, and specific improvements to the North and South sides of the park.

The **Implementation Strategy** then prioritizes the design recommendations based on community priority, construction sequencing, stormwater benefit, and cost. It organizes the projects discussed in the recommendations section into 4 tiers. For each project in each tier, the implementation strategy then lays out guiding concepts for the project, a detailed scope and a recommended consultant team.







# INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT



A BRIEF HISTORY OF MELLON PARK

Mellon Park did not come into existence by accident. A number of individuals and organizations have had a hand in guiding the development of this popular space to become what it is today. The park has a rich history, some of which is still visible, some of which has disappeared, and some of which has been forgotten.

Below is a summarized history of the park and the estate grounds that preceded it. A more detailed narrative of the history of Mellon Park can be found in the appendix.

Before the Mellons

In the city’s early days, a country lane (Fifth Avenue) crossed the Greensburg Turnpike (now Penn Avenue but originally a Native American trail), creating an ideal place for a tavern in the early 1800s. The Point Breeze Hotel served travelers, but it was daytrippers from Pittsburgh who made it a popular destination on the outskirts of the young city.

Prominent families were drawn to the fresh air of Point Breeze, five miles from the heart of industrial Pittsburgh, including Biddle, Wilkins, Carnegie, Frick, Westinghouse, and Heinz. The fashionable area was studded with fine houses by 1904, when Richard Beatty Mellon and his wife Jennie King Mellon were living at 6544 Fifth Avenue. In 1908, they began building the new home in location now known as Mellon Park.

Creating a Private Paradise

The Mellon Estate was the largest house in Pittsburgh when completed in 1912, set in a commanding position above Fifth Avenue and Beechwood Boulevard. The main approach drive entered from Fifth Avenue, while the service drive, conservatory, and garage were placed along the southern boundary and accessed from the Beechwood Boulevard.

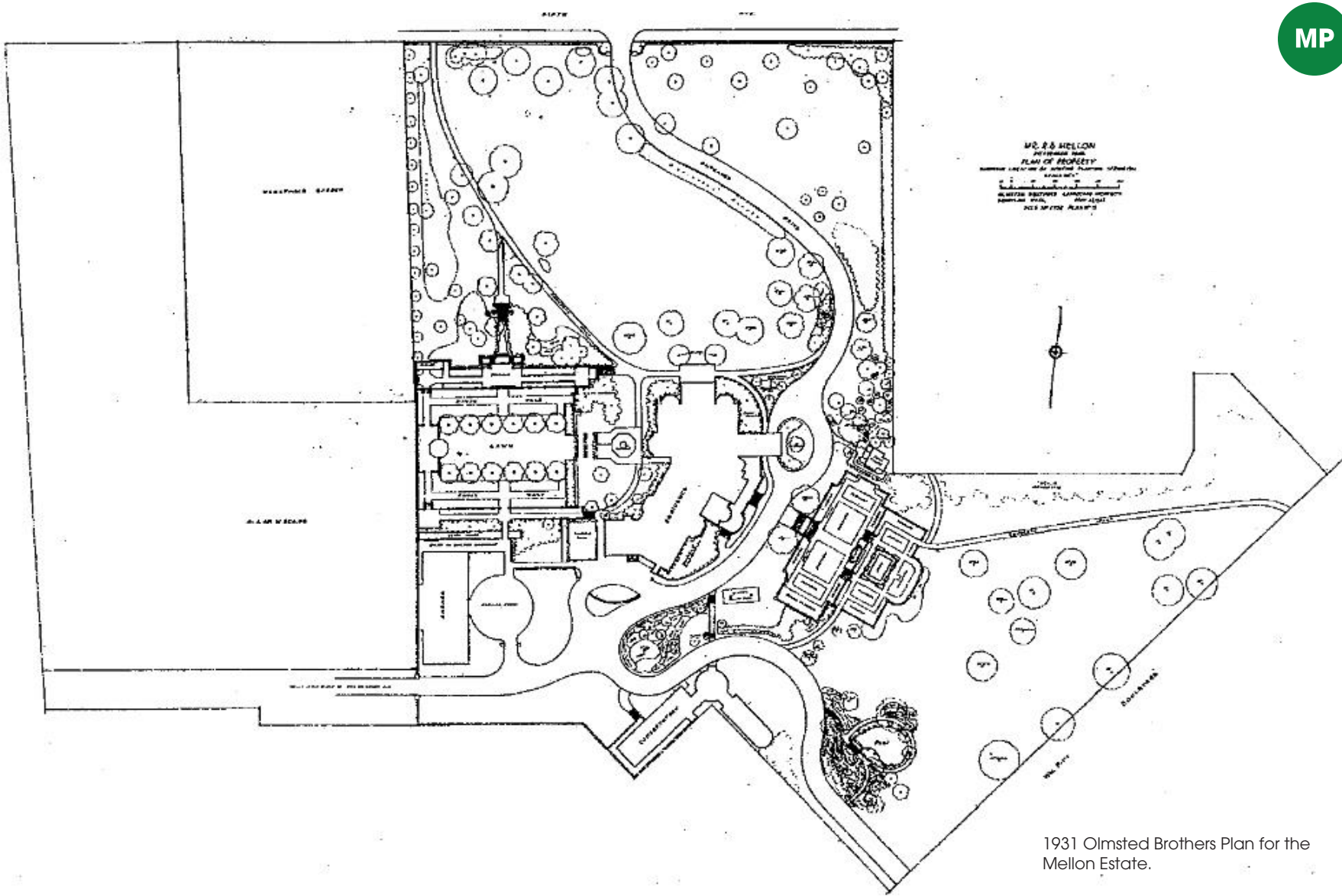
Over the next three decades, the estate grounds were planned, designed, and revised by a succession of notable landscape architects, including Vitale and Geiffert, Gilmore D. Clarke, and the Olmsted Brothers. Renowned artists Edmond Amateis and Samuel Yellin contributed sculptures and intricate wrought iron fencing to the estate grounds.

Many landscape elements from the original estate have survived, including the Walled Garden, Terrace Garden, many of the historic walls and fences, pathways, and a significant number of trees. Other elements of the estate grounds have disappeared over time, including the working gardens and Olmsted pond.

From Private Paradise to Public Park

R. B. Mellon died in 1933 and Mrs. Mellon in 1938, after which the estate passed to son Richard King Mellon. By that time, his family was living in Ligonier and had no use for the property. The house was eventually razed, and in 1942, Richard King Mellon and his sister Sarah Mellon Scaife gave the 11-acre property south of Fifth Avenue to the City for use as a park. The gift was conditioned on the city prohibiting through roads and maintaining the grounds.

Just days after the park opened in 1944, Charles D. and Dora Marshall gave their estate to the City and it was added to the park. Further expansion came in 1946 when Sarah Mellon Scaife gave her adjoining home and, with her brother, donated the triangular property north of Fifth Avenue to the city for development as a recreation area, complete with a site plan led by Ralph Griswold and Gilmore D. Clarke. This plan provided recreational facilities, including ball fields, playgrounds, tennis courts, and picnic areas, and was the



1931 Olmsted Brothers Plan for the Mellon Estate.



The original Walled Garden



A postcard depicting the Mellon Mansion and Terrace Garden.



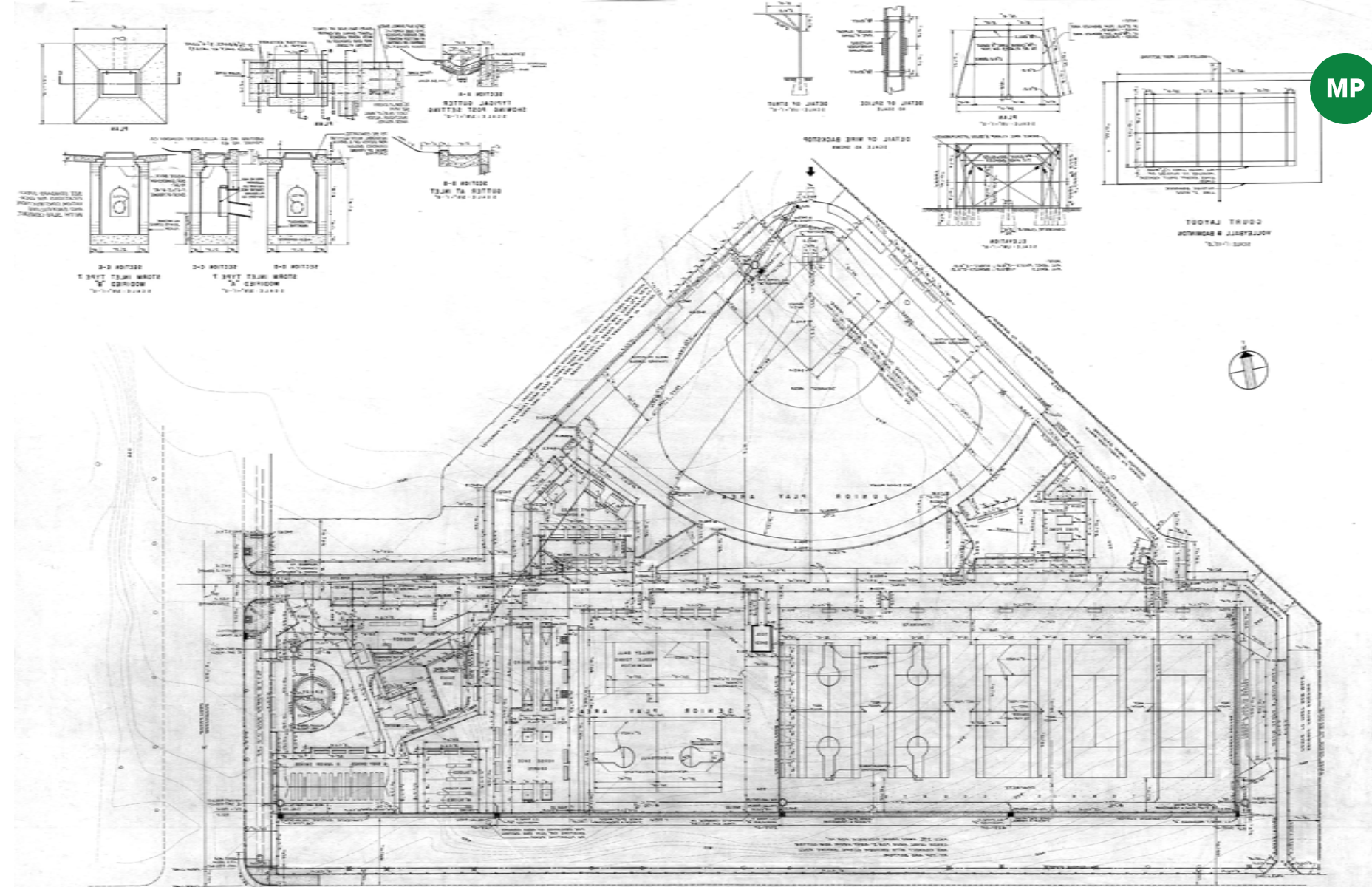
basis for the design and layout of the park as is seen today. While individual facilities have been upgraded over time, the only major change to the north side of the park has been the 2012 addition of abstract sculptures from the city’s collection.

In 1952, a circulation plan was produced by Simonds and Simonds for the south side of the park and partially implemented. It defined the main pedestrian entrance (following the entry drive alignment) and added paths to connect the estate grounds with adjacent properties that had been acquired by the city. While the Frew and Darsie houses had been demolished,the Marshall Building at the corner of Fifth and Shady Avenues was put to use as a nonprofit arts center, and the Scaife property was programmed by the city’s Department of Parks and Recreation. The Mellon Carriage House was leased to the Pittsburgh Garden Center in 1945, with several additions and alterations taking place over the years. The produce garden’s building, known informally as the ‘chicken coop’ was adapted as an activity center for the Pittsburgh Council of American Youth Hostels and used until 2003.

Recent Interventions

Over the years, dwindling resources and deferred maintenance lead to a slow and steady deterioration of park spaces. Recognizing the need, in 2000 the Richard King Mellon Foundation and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy commissioned a preservation and management plan for the estate landscape on the south side of the park, leading to the Foundation’s restoration of the ornate Fifth Avenue fence and the stone paving in the Walled Garden. In 2009, the nonprofit Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and Seamans family rehabilitated the Walled Garden (LaQuatra Bonci Associates) and incorporated a work of public art by Janet Zweig. The installation consists of fiber-optic lighting installed in the lawn, patterned after the stars and planets of the night sky on the birth date of Ann Katherine Seamans. In 2020, the Parks Conservancy completed restoration of the original fountain designed by Edmund Amateis.

The maintenance needs of these improvements are met by the Parks Conservancy through a partnership agreement with the City of Pittsburgh. In addition, the Shakespeare garden, located on the lower terrace of the Terrace Garden, is planted and maintained by the Herb Garden Society.



1949 plan for the ‘Mellon Recreation Area’ on the north side of the park.



Credit: James McLain (Historic Pittsburgh: Allegheny Conference on Community Development)  
The original Mellon Park tennis courts, before the Tennis Bubble.



The recently restored Walled Garden.



PLANNING CONTEXT (WHY MELLON PARK?)

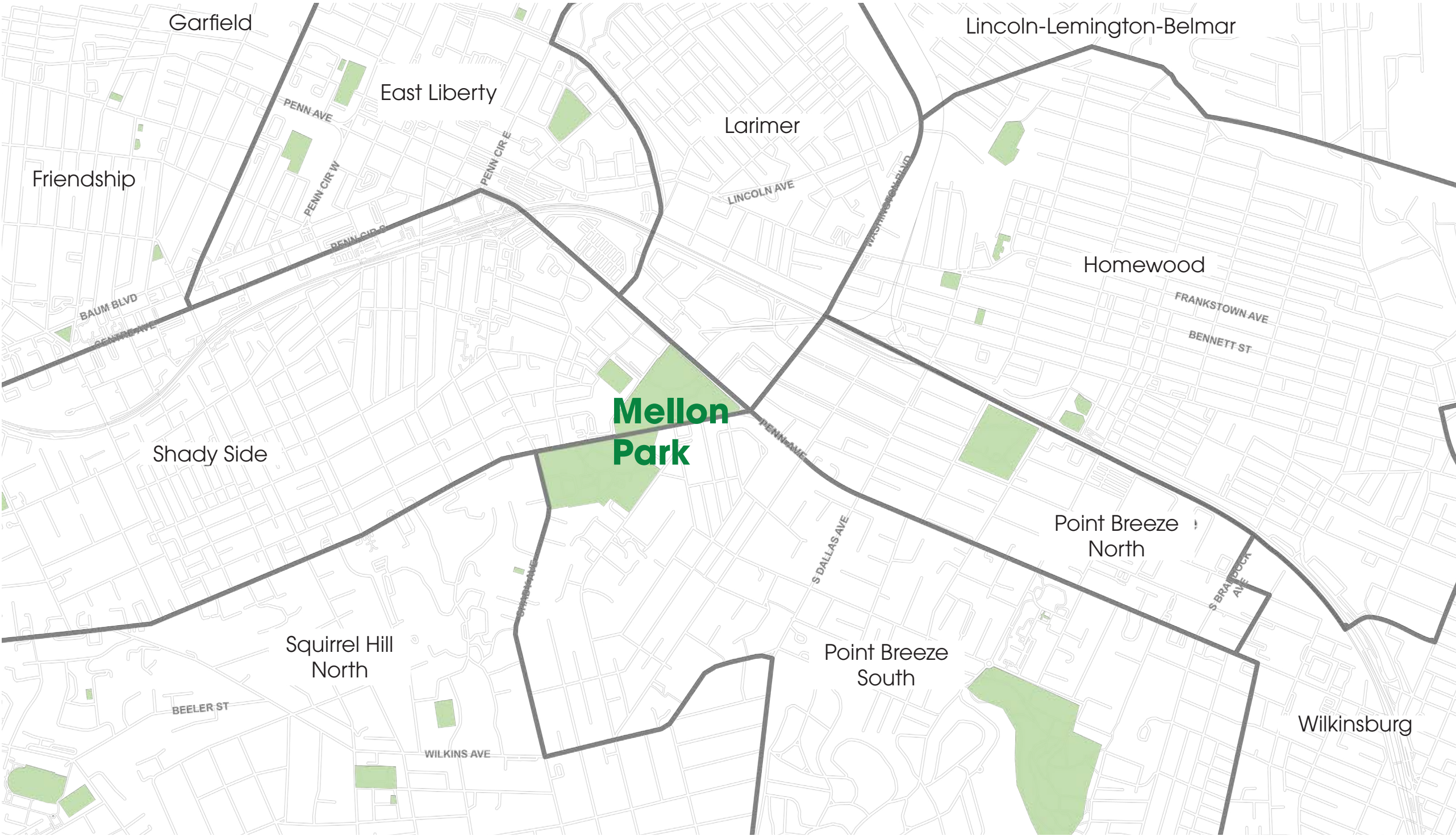
Mellon Park’s Role in the Community

Mellon Park is a considered a signature community park and is an important part of the city’s open space network. A 2018 study, led by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, ranked each of the city’s parks for capital investment based on community need and priority. While Mellon Park was ranked 104 out of 142 city parks, the park’s significance cannot be understated.

Mellon Park sits at the intersection of five Pittsburgh neighborhoods: Point Breeze, Point Breeze North, Squirrel Hill, Shadyside and Larimer. While not directly adjacent, East Liberty and Homewood are within a 15-minute walk of the park. These seven neighborhoods represent a socio-economically and culturally diverse cross section of city residents, many of whom use Mellon Park frequently.

The park also has a number of assets and amenities that are unique in the city’s park system and create a regional draw to the park. The tennis bubble and full-sized baseball field on the north side of the park, as well the historic gardens and buildings on the south side, are prime examples of amenities that attract users from across the city and beyond.

While Mellon Park is not physically located within the boundaries of an historically disinvested and underserved community, a significant portion of the park’s users reside in those neighborhoods.





## Mellon Park's Evolving Cultural Status

In addition to its role as a vibrant public open space, Mellon Park provides significant cultural and ecological contributions to the community and city as a whole.

In 2021, spearheaded by the Friends of Mellon Park, in partnership with Preservation Pittsburgh, Mellon Park received Historic Landmark status by the City of Pittsburgh. The designation recognizes and protects the historic architectural and landscape design elements that give the park its unique character.

Also in 2021, through a collaboration between the Friends of Mellon Park and the City of Pittsburgh, Mellon Park received designation as a level 1 arboretum, becoming the city's first and only public arboretum. With over 550 trees and more than 100 species, the park is a critical asset in maintaining the city's tree canopy, and the associated health, ecological, and economical benefits that mature trees provide.

Mellon Park also plays a role as a hub for events, art-based programming, and education. Both sides of the park are used to stage performances and celebrations, including Bach, Beethoven and Brunch and Juneteenth. The Phipps Garden Center, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts and Media, and CitiParks have utilized the existing buildings in the park to offer classes and workspaces in art, gardening, music, and other programs. Art installations have also found a home on both the north and south sides of the park.



Restored fountain in the Walled Garden.



One of Mellon Park's arboretum specimen trees.



A Fair in the Park, on Mellon Lawn.



Juneteenth celebration and youth flag football tournament in Mellon Park.



### The Need for an Action Plan

Despite being a much-loved and much-used public space, Mellon Park still faces a number of challenges. The park is bounded by major arterial roads, including Fifth Avenue, Penn Avenue, and Shady Avenue. These busy vehicular corridors present a barrier to entry for pedestrians and cyclists. Park edges and entrances, especially on the south side, are ambiguous or not clearly defined. This leads to some park users assuming the south side of the park is private property, or an entirely different park altogether. Ongoing issues with permitting for event space and field use contribute to user conflicts and inequitable access.

The park also suffers from years of deferred maintenance. Many pathways are in a state of disrepair and provide challenges for accessibility. Park lighting is insufficient and unreliable. Some park assets, such as the Terrace Garden, are in a state of advanced degradation and present potential hazards to public safety.

Moreover, there has not been a comprehensive master planning effort for Mellon Park since it first became a park in the late 1940’s. With a few exceptions, the design of the park has largely remained as the designers envisioned it over 70 years ago. In that time frame, Pittsburgh has undergone dramatic shifts in population, demographics, and available resources. Consequently, the needs and priorities of the communities around Mellon park have shifted as well.



Inaccessible pathways in need of maintenance and repair



Deterioration of historic walls at the Terrace Garden



The busy Fifth Avenue corridor dividing the park in two.



Historic Fence along Fifth Avenue creates both a physical barrier to park access and a perceived barrier, giving the impression that this is a private estate and not a public park.



### What is an Action Plan?

The Action Plan is both a master plan for Mellon Park, as well as a road map for its implementation. The plan identifies community goals and a consensus-based vision for the park, and provides a recommended approach to guide future investment in Mellon Park.

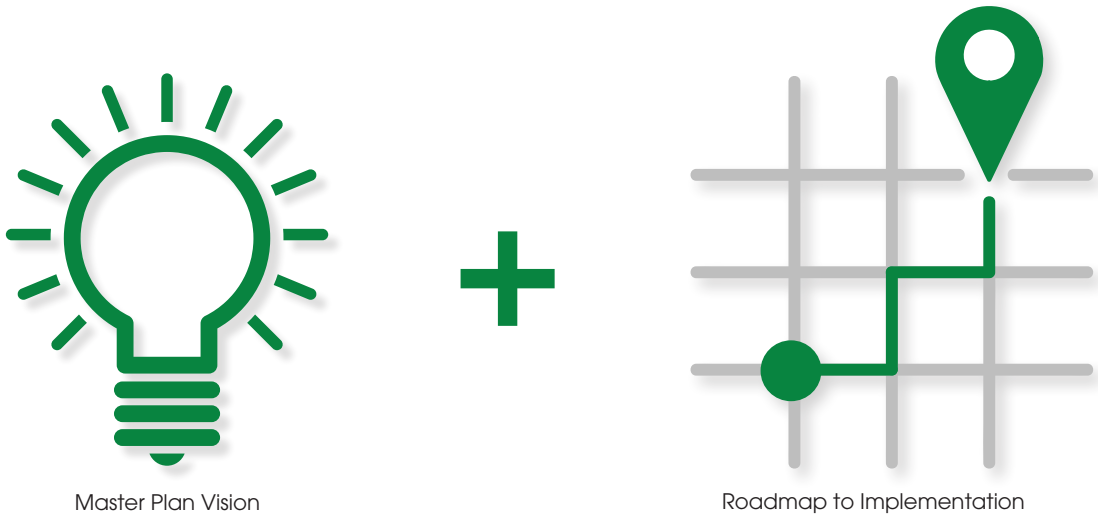
At the outset, a number of project goals were identified that would serve as touchstones throughout the Action Plan process. These main tenets guided the design, planning, community processes, and overall vision for the Park, ensuring the Action Plan would be responsive to community needs, forward-thinking, and achievable.

In addition to establishing an overall vision for Mellon Park, the Action Plan lays out steps for its implementation. The Action Plan identifies individual projects, scope, priorities, suggested sequencing, and potential funding sources.

The Action Plan is intended to be a living document. The design ideas and recommendations outlined in the Action Plan provide a framework for project implementation. However, it

is important to recognize that these recommendations can and should be subject to change. Community needs and city resources are not static and can change slowly or suddenly over the course of time. It is imperative that the Action Plan be adaptable to respond to these changes.

The recommendations in this plan set the guidelines for the city, their partners, and future design consultants to follow. The types of proposed park uses, their relative size, and relationship to each other should be respected. But the final layout, materials, colors, and other design elements will be subject to change based on available budget, more detailed study of site constraints, and further input and engagement from the community.



Graphic sourced from Vectezzy.com

### GOALS OF THE ACTION PLAN

- Create a unifying vision for the park
- Prioritize future improvements and investment
- Leverage other projects or partners that could bring benefit to Mellon Park
- Focus on inclusion and equity
- Ensure a community-driven design process



Perhaps the most important goal of the Action Plan was to establish a community-driven design process. Parks are community spaces. The vision, goals, and future aspirations of any park planning process should be set by the community that the park serves. In that respect, the project team sought to engage the community not just as stakeholders, but as partners in developing the Action Plan.





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

### Engagement Strategies

Mellon Park serves a diverse population of community members who live both in the surrounding community and beyond. It was imperative that an inclusive, equitable, and comprehensive engagement strategy be developed and implemented to ensure all community members, stakeholders, and park users had an opportunity to participate and have their voices heard.

### Outreach Strategies

A number of outreach methods were employed throughout the project to generate interest and participation in the engagement process. The project team used a variety of formats to reach the broadest audience possible. These included:

- EngagePGH updates
- Email campaigns through the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and other community partners.
- Social media posts through the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and other community partner channels
- Press releases and media coverage
- Engagement through local schools and places of worship
- Physical notifications including banners in the park, door hangers, and flyers posted in local business and gathering places.

### Meeting Format

Public meetings were held in both online and in-person formats. However, given the constantly shifting circumstances around the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of public meetings were held via Zoom.

For each round of engagement, at least three public meetings were held at varying times, presenting the same content. Meetings were held during the work day, on week nights, and on weekends in order to provide options for community members to attend when it was most convenient. Meeting recordings and PDF versions of presentation materials were also posted to the EngagePGH website.

### Reception of Feedback

The project team deployed a number of methods to solicit and receive public comment and feedback. In addition to direct feedback received in public meetings, online and hardcopy surveys were widely distributed. The project team, in partnership with the Friends of Mellon Park, attended park events and community gathering spaces to hand out surveys or directly engage with park users.

Members of the design team also encouraged, received, and responded to direct email correspondence from community members engaged in the planning process.



Screenshot from a zoom public meeting.



March 2021 in-person presentation at the Marshall Building.



One of four project banners hung in Mellon Park.

**SECTION 2- Tell us what you think about Mellon Park**

1. What is your FAVORITE thing about Mellon Park? (for example: playground, gathering space, activity proximity to home, etc.)

2. How would you rate the overall quality or condition of the park? (circle one)

3. Do you feel your home has direct access to the park's amenities (tennis, basketball courts, etc.)?

4. If you are a parent of a child, do you feel comfortable in the park's environment?

5. What other thoughts or concerns do you have about Mellon Park that you would like us to know?

**SECTION 3- Tell us YOUR ideas for Mellon Park**

1. Please write down any thing you would like to see in Mellon Park.

2. What events, festivals, or programs would you like to see happen in Mellon Park? (Check all that apply)

3. How could these features or programs be implemented? (Check all that apply)

4. What is the approximate total yearly income of everyone in your household?

5. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

Thank you for participating!



## Engagement Process

The engagement process was organized into three distinct phases which closely aligned to the design process. It was essential that the project team take the time to understand community needs and priorities, maintain an open dialogue, and consider and respond to every piece of community feedback and input. This approach was critical in developing consensus and support for the Action Plan.

## Listening Sessions

The project team engaged in a series of ‘listening sessions’ to introduce the project and understand how the community uses Mellon Park. In addition to these meetings, a comprehensive survey was developed in both online and print formats. The listening sessions and survey forms focused on developing an understanding of who uses Mellon Park, why they use it, how often, what challenges they encounter, and what big ideas or improvements they envision for the park.

After reviewing and analyzing the initial feedback, the project team organized and developed 7 focus group sessions based on specific topics of community concern. The focus groups sessions discussed sports and recreation, stormwater and ecology, events and programming, safety and access, history and art, and off-leash dogs.

The feedback received during these various public engagement sessions served as the foundation for conceptual design.

## Concept Presentations

The project team held three public meetings to present design concepts that responded directly to the public feedback gathered during the listening sessions. These presentations reported out the main issues and themes from the listening sessions, introduced the design vision, explored design options, and presented precedent imagery to help contextualize proposed solutions.

In addition to the public meetings, the concept designs were posted online with an accompanying survey. Community members could selectively comment on the proposes solutions for the overall park, north side-specific design options, south-side specific design options, or a combination of the three.

## Preferred Plan Presentations

The project team developed a singular ‘preferred plan’ based on the feedback received during the concept presentations. Design options for different sections of the park were either selected outright or thoughtfully combined based on the preferences expressed by the community.

The project team again held three public meetings, presenting the preferred plan and soliciting feedback and input. These meetings presented the outcomes and feedback from the concept presentations and walked through the proposed design in more detail. The preferred plan was also posted online with an accompanying survey. The feedback received during these engagement sessions was folded into the Action Plan report.



## What is your FAVORITE thing about Mellon Park?

Screenshot of breakout room discussion during one of the Listening Session presentations

### Design Options Feedback

Community Space and Fields



Play Area



'Chicken Coop'



A slide from the Preferred Plan presentation reporting out community preferences for design options.





**SITE  
ANALYSIS**





## EXISTING USES & ASSETS

The north and south sides of the park have different characteristics and uses, but both are well-used and well-loved. Most of the park's historic features are located on the south side of the park. The north side of the park has numerous spaces for organized sports.

### FIELD 1

This is the only full-size baseball field in the East End and the only field in the park that is lit. The large outfield is also desirable for other sports such as soccer and football. It is heavily sought after by sports groups.

### TENNIS BUBBLE

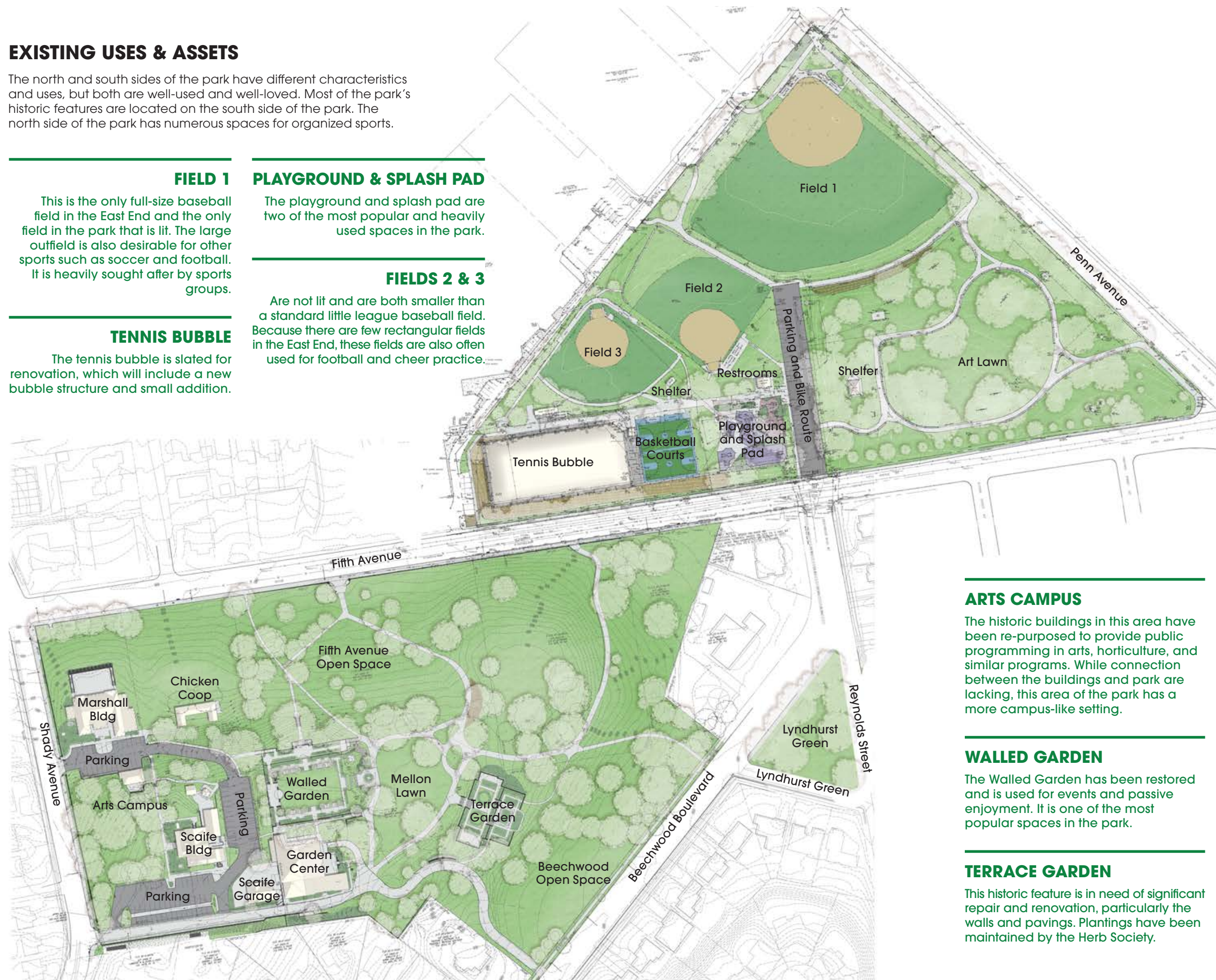
The tennis bubble is slated for renovation, which will include a new bubble structure and small addition.

### PLAYGROUND & SPLASH PAD

The playground and splash pad are two of the most popular and heavily used spaces in the park.

### FIELDS 2 & 3

Are not lit and are both smaller than a standard little league baseball field. Because there are few rectangular fields in the East End, these fields are also often used for football and cheer practice.



### RESTROOMS

The restroom building is only open when the splash pad is staffed by Citiparks. Portable toilets are available at all other times. There are no public restrooms available in the south half of the park.

### ART LAWN

This space contains monumental sculptures, mature trees, and open lawn. It is the only informal open space on the north side, but it is not well-used.

### SHELTERS

There is one large shelter and one small shelter on the north side of the park. The large shelter is a popular location for parties and gatherings, but it is not accessible. There are no shelters on the south side of the park.

### BEECHWOOD OPEN SPACE

The level lawn area adjacent to Beechwood Blvd is often used as an informal off leash dog area, picnicking, and informal sports use.

### ARTS CAMPUS

The historic buildings in this area have been re-purposed to provide public programming in arts, horticulture, and similar programs. While connection between the buildings and park are lacking, this area of the park has a more campus-like setting.

### WALLED GARDEN

The Walled Garden has been restored and is used for events and passive enjoyment. It is one of the most popular spaces in the park.

### TERRACE GARDEN

This historic feature is in need of significant repair and renovation, particularly the walls and pavings. Plantings have been maintained by the Herb Society.

### FIFTH AVE OPEN SPACE

The Fifth Avenue open space is characterized by a large sloping lawn with trees. It primarily serves as a buffer space between Fifth Avenue traffic and the rest of the park. Portions of the hillside are popular for sledding in the winter.

### CHICKEN COOP

This building was part of the original agricultural gardens of the Mellon Estate and has stood empty for years.

### MELLON LAWN

This is the location of the original Mellon house and is often used for events, such as A Fair in the Park and Bach, Beethoven and Brunch.



TRAFFIC

Mellon Park is bounded and bifurcated by major arterial roads, which present significant safety challenges and can serve as barriers to entry for pedestrians and cyclists.

The park is divided by Fifth Avenue, a major artery connecting job centers in Oakland and Downtown with East End neighborhoods and communities. This four lane road has a posted speed limit of 35 mph, although traffic frequently moves faster. Narrow travel lanes and sidewalks provide little buffer between pedestrians and fast moving vehicles, creating an unfriendly and uncomfortable pedestrian experience.

The eastern edge of the park is bordered by Penn Avenue, another busy arterial road with 4 lanes of traffic and a 35-MPH speed limit. It is a state road and major commuter corridor between Downtown, East Liberty and the city’s East End. The western edge of the park is bordered by Shady Avenue. While traffic volumes on Shady Avenue are not as heavy as Penn or Fifth Avenues, this street is an important north-south travel way, connecting the Squirrel Hill neighborhood to Bakery Square and East Liberty.

None of the four signalized intersections that serve the park provide a pedestrian only crossing phase. Pedestrians must contend with turning vehicles while crossing the street. This safety conflict is exacerbated during peak traffic times, when drivers may be more prone to running red lights or driving at higher rates of speed to avoid getting caught in another traffic cycle.

Beechwood Boulevard is more residential in nature and generally experiences less traffic volume. The availability of free on-street parking makes Beechwood a preferred parking location for users of both sides of the

park. The presence of dedicated bike lanes also make Beechwood a preferred route for cyclists visiting the park, or connecting to other parts of the city.

While generally more pedestrian and bicycle friendly, Beechwood presents some safety challenges. The intersection of Beechwood Boulevard and Reynolds Street is at an awkward angle, creating sight line problems for drivers entering Beechwood to see oncoming cars or cyclists. The exit from parking lot on the north side of the park is aligned with oncoming traffic on Beechwood, creating confusion and potential conflicts between vehicles, as well as pedestrians.



**MODE CONFLICT**  
overlapping routes and paths at intersections are a hazard

- pedestrian route
- bicycle route
- vehicle traffic
- conflict point



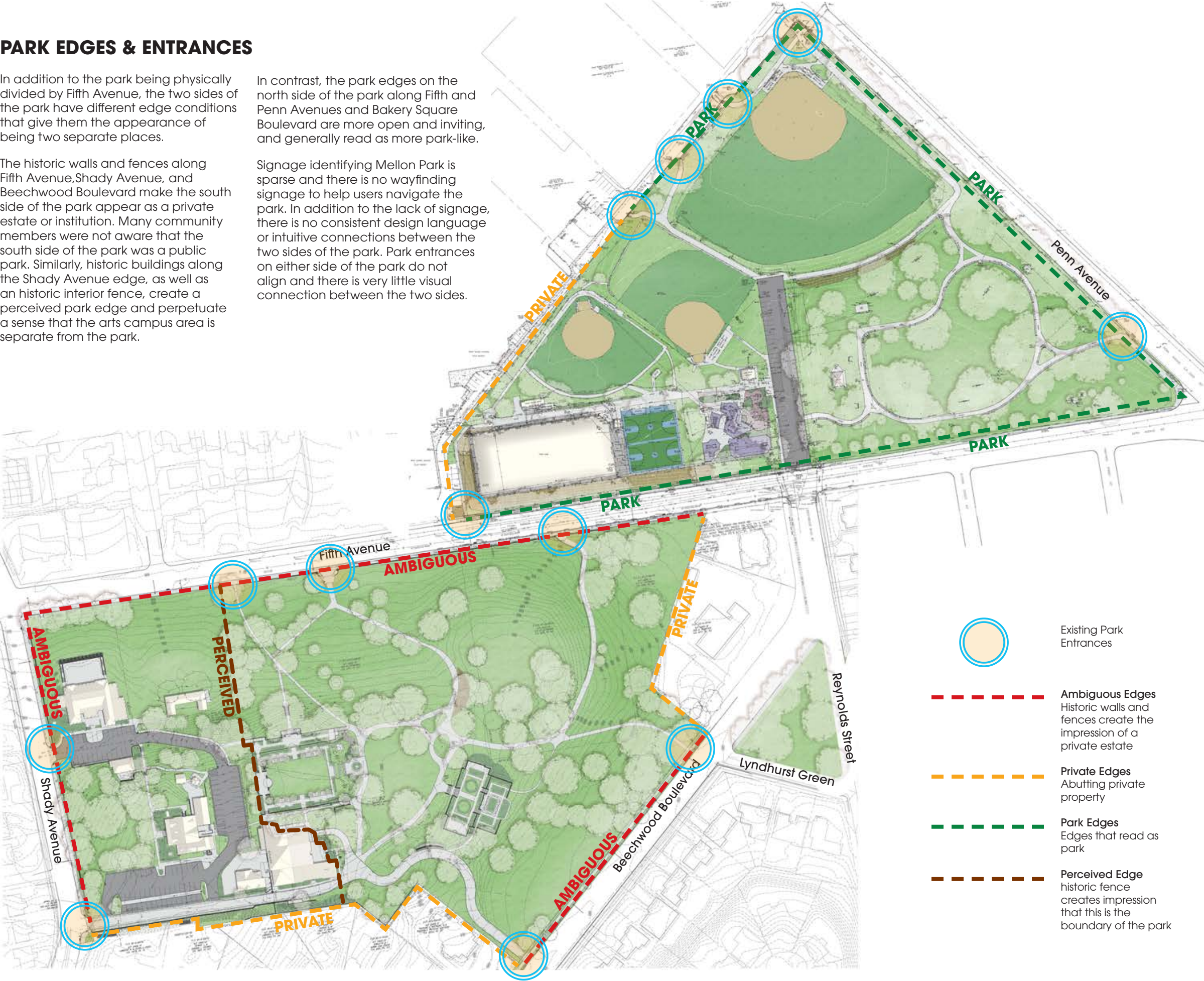
## PARK EDGES & ENTRANCES

In addition to the park being physically divided by Fifth Avenue, the two sides of the park have different edge conditions that give them the appearance of being two separate places.

The historic walls and fences along Fifth Avenue, Shady Avenue, and Beechwood Boulevard make the south side of the park appear as a private estate or institution. Many community members were not aware that the south side of the park was a public park. Similarly, historic buildings along the Shady Avenue edge, as well as an historic interior fence, create a perceived park edge and perpetuate a sense that the arts campus area is separate from the park.

In contrast, the park edges on the north side of the park along Fifth and Penn Avenues and Bakery Square Boulevard are more open and inviting, and generally read as more park-like.

Signage identifying Mellon Park is sparse and there is no wayfinding signage to help users navigate the park. In addition to the lack of signage, there is no consistent design language or intuitive connections between the two sides of the park. Park entrances on either side of the park do not align and there is very little visual connection between the two sides.



Perceived Edge



Ambiguous Edge



Park Edge



Park Edge



# PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

Safe access to the park and internal pathway circulation can present challenges to park users, and was identified as one of the highest priorities of the community. Despite having 13 park entrances, only 5 are directly accessible from a pedestrian crosswalk. Only two of those entrances align with signalized crossings. Depending on the direction of travel, pedestrians may be required to walk along busy, vehicular corridors for a considerable distance before being able to enter the park.

Once in the confines of the park, pedestrian circulation and accessibility is not always straightforward. On the south side of the park, pathway systems from the former estates provide strong connections between the existing garden spaces. However, connections

to the arts campus are ambiguous and lacking. On the north side, the parking lot location serves to bifurcate the park's internal circulation pattern. Pedestrians moving in an east-west direction must often cross a busy parking lot to traverse the park. In general, pathways on both sides of the park are not ADA-compliant.

Moving from one side of the park to the other is also not intuitive. Park entrances do not align, a lack of signage and other way finding makes it unclear to pedestrians how to access other park features.

Mellon Park also serves as a critical point of connection for the city's bike route network. Cyclists use the interior park paths and parking lot on the north side of the park to connect to the dedicated bike lanes on Beechwood Boulevard. This cut-through serves to connect cyclists from Shadyside and East Liberty to Point Breeze, Squirrel Hill and neighborhoods beyond. Despite being a vital connection, cyclists are forced to navigate a chaotic parking lot during peak hours.





PARKING

Lack of parking was also cited as a priority concern by community members. Off-street parking on both sides of the park is inadequate to meet demand during peak use. The regional draw of some of the park’s features, coupled with easy access from major arterial roads, results in a high number of park visitors arriving by car.

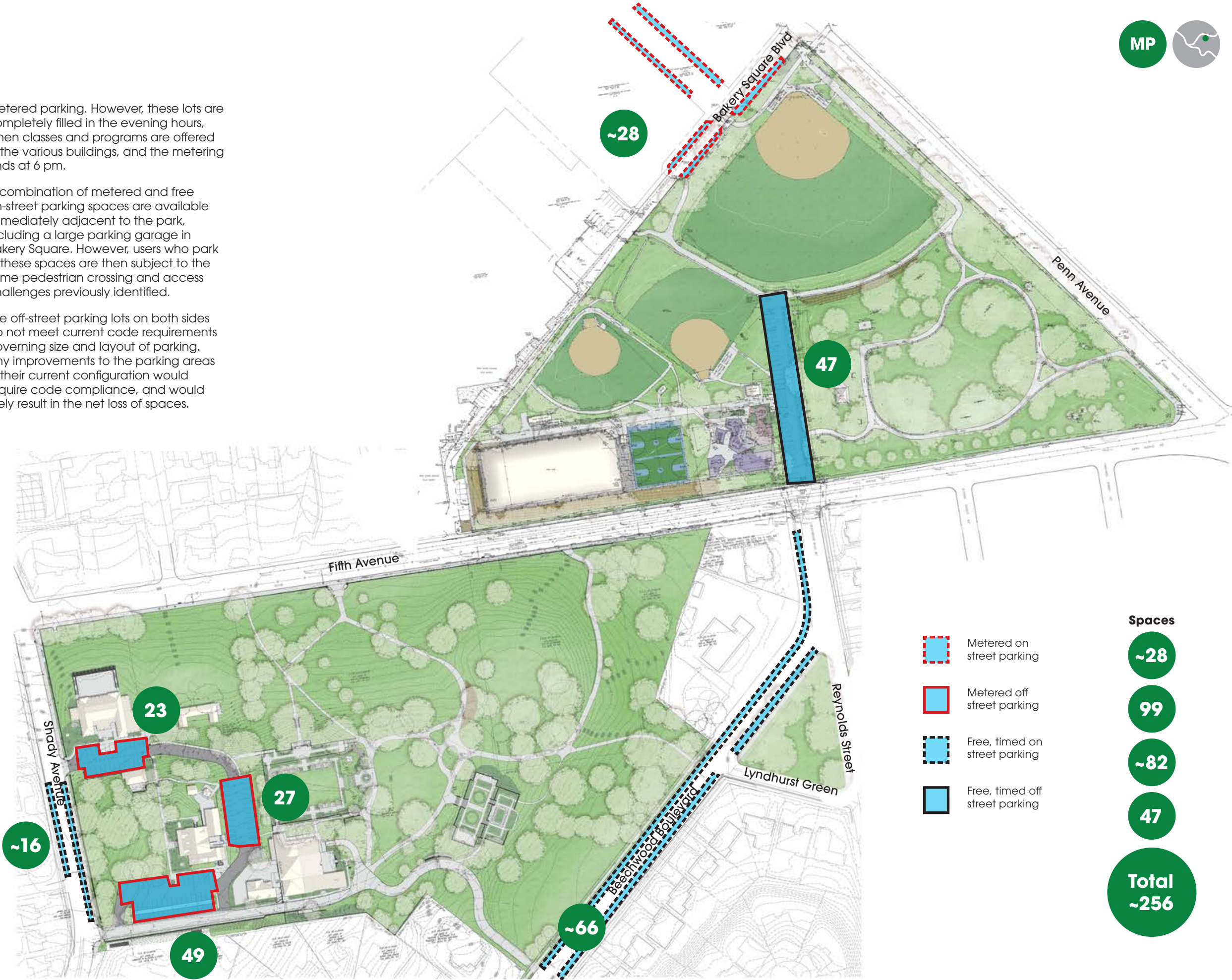
On the north side of the park, the parking lot is frequently full in the later afternoon and evening hours. This is especially true during the summer months when visitors come to the park to use the tennis bubble, splash pad and playground, basketball courts, and ballfields. While parking is free, there is a four-hour time limit which is difficult to enforce. During peak hours, cars will frequently be double or triple parked, or parked on park pathways.

Conversely, the parking lots in the south side of the park are largely empty during the day, due to the enforcement of

metered parking. However, these lots are completely filled in the evening hours, when classes and programs are offered in the various buildings, and the metering ends at 6 pm.

A combination of metered and free on-street parking spaces are available immediately adjacent to the park, including a large parking garage in Bakery Square. However, users who park in these spaces are then subject to the same pedestrian crossing and access challenges previously identified.

The off-street parking lots on both sides do not meet current code requirements governing size and layout of parking. Any improvements to the parking areas in their current configuration would require code compliance, and would likely result in the net loss of spaces.



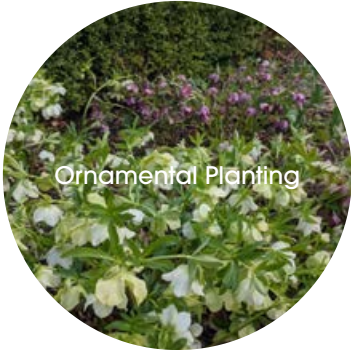


## TREES AND ECOLOGY

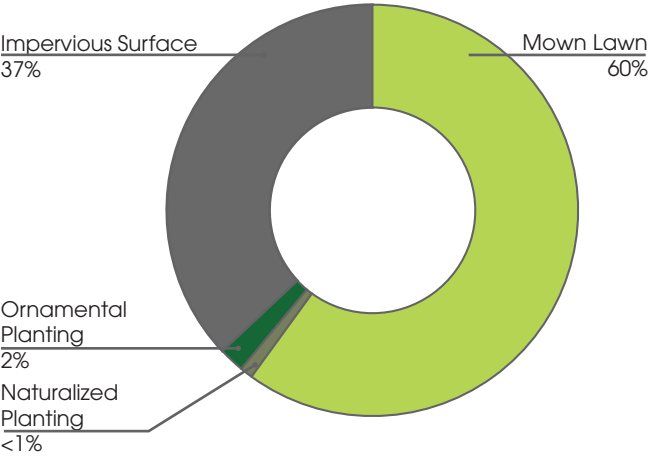
Mellon Park is a Level 1 arboretum with over 550 trees, representing over 100 species. Many of these trees are mature canopy species and provide enormous benefits in stormwater mitigation, habitat, shade, and comfort for park users. However, many of these trees are older. Some are starting to show signs of decline and will eventually require replacement to ensure there is no significant canopy loss and to maintain this remarkable city asset.

Lawn is the dominant groundcover in Mellon Park. While lawn can be useful for recreation spaces, it provides little in the way of habitat value or stormwater runoff mitigation. It also requires mowing and maintenance, contributing to noise pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and taxing city resources.

Currently, roughly 60% of the park’s 33-acre area is planted in lawn. Ornamental or curated planting occupies about 2% and naturalized landscapes are less than 1% of the surface area of the park. Almost 37% of the park is covered by impervious surfaces, including building roofs, parking lots, paths, and courts. The current ratio of vegetative cover types offers little in terms of habitat, biodiversity, and stormwater mitigation benefits.

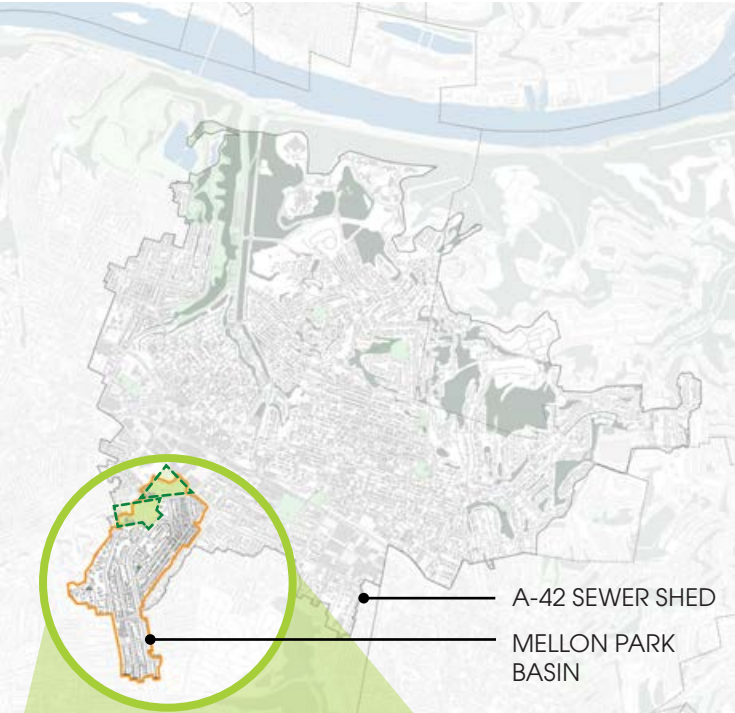


Existing Land Cover





STORMWATER



Mellon Park is located in the upper portion of the A-42 Sewershed, also known as the Negley Run Watershed. The A-42 Sewershed is served by a combined sewer system and contributes the largest volume of untreated combined sewage into local waterways in the form of combined sewage overflows (CSOs). CSOs occur when the volume of stormwater and sanitary sewage in the combined sewer system overwhelms the sewer pipes and overflows, untreated, into the river. In addition to CSOs, surface flooding is also a significant issue in the A-42 sewershed.

The project team assessed the potential of Mellon Park to reduce CSOs and surface flooding in the sewershed. The team identified green infrastructure strategies that could be implemented in concert with proposed park improvements, and would respect community needs, the historic, cultural and ecological significance of the park, and its status as an arboretum.

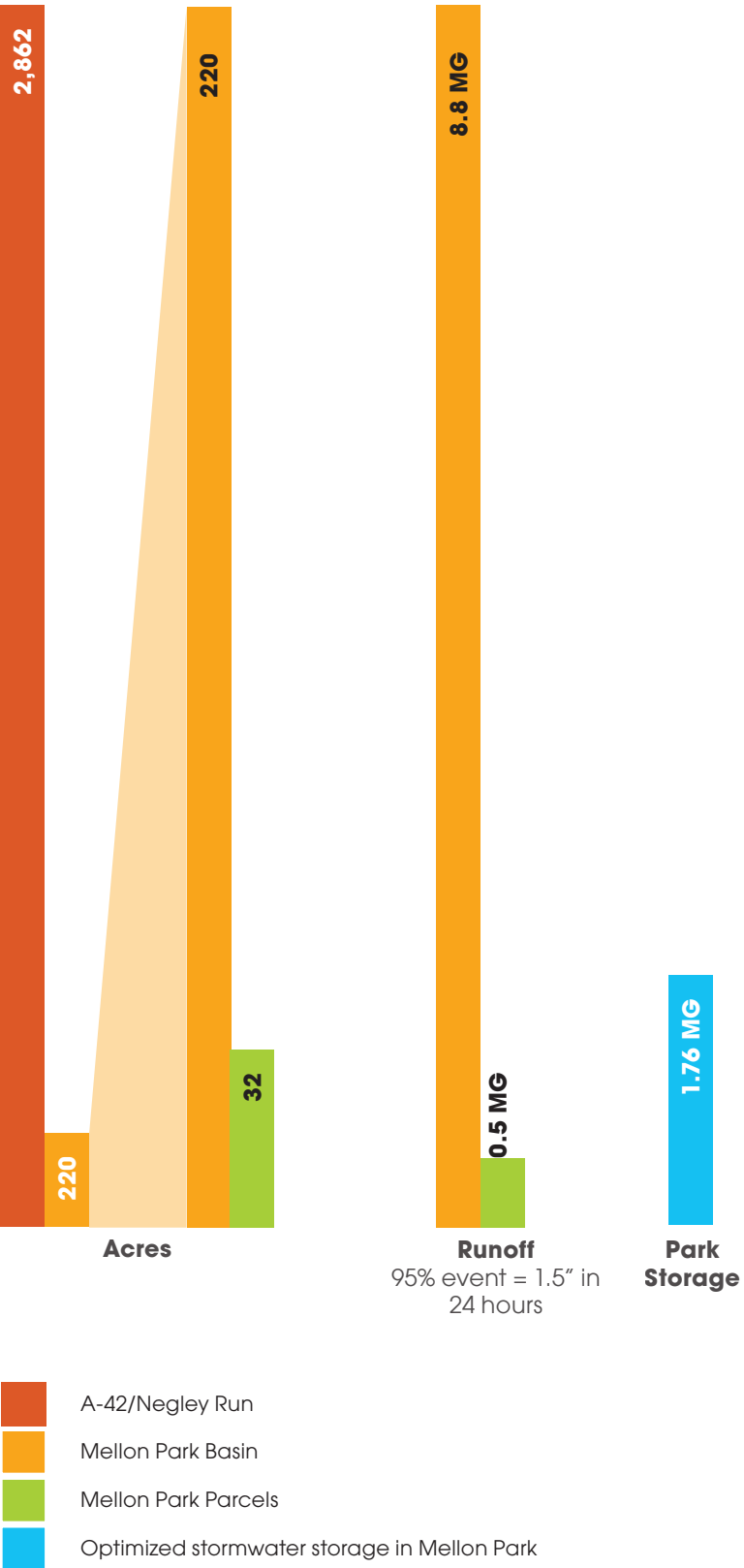
Under current stormwater regulations the park will have to address the 95th percentile storm event, which is 1.5 inches in 24 hours. For the park parcels themselves this runoff volume is just over 500,000 gallons of stormwater. The team analyzed how much additional stormwater benefit the park could provide to the larger A-42 sewershed in terms of reducing CSOs and downstream flooding that would be compatible with the park plan and goals, and provide an optimum benefit. The hope was also that by providing additional benefit, PWSA and ALCOSAN might be willing to provide additional funding for stormwater management in excess of the regulatory requirements.

To determine the optimum level of storage, an analysis was conducted of the Mellon Park Basin—the 220 acre area of the A-42 sewershed upstream of Mellon Park. The Mellon Park Basin is roughly 7% of the A-42 Sewershed. To evaluate the amount of stormwater that is contributed, the team looked at the 95th percentile storm event for the entire Mellon Park Basin. Using computer modeling and data from ALCOSAN and PWSA, the team sought to identify the likely impacts of various stormwater management scenarios in the park on

the larger watershed. This computer model looked at the downstream impacts of various storage volume scenarios. Using the runoff generated by the entire Mellon Park Basin, the model was used to evaluate the downstream impact of storing a portion of the runoff, from 0% to 100%.

The goal of this analysis was to find the optimum balance between reducing downstream impacts, and the costs and impacts to the park of creating very large storage areas. The downstream impacts that were evaluated were the reduction of surface flooding and the reduction of the annual CSO volume. This analysis identified a volume equal to 20% of the runoff from the Mellon Park Basin as the optimum storage number, because it provided the greatest reduction of downstream flooding. This amount was 1,765,000 gallons of storage.

A smaller managed subcatchment area was identified, which is the area of the larger Mellon Park Basin that could reasonably be brought to and managed in the park. A detailed technical memo on the stormwater analysis and recommendations can be found in the appendix.





## LIGHTING & AMENITIES

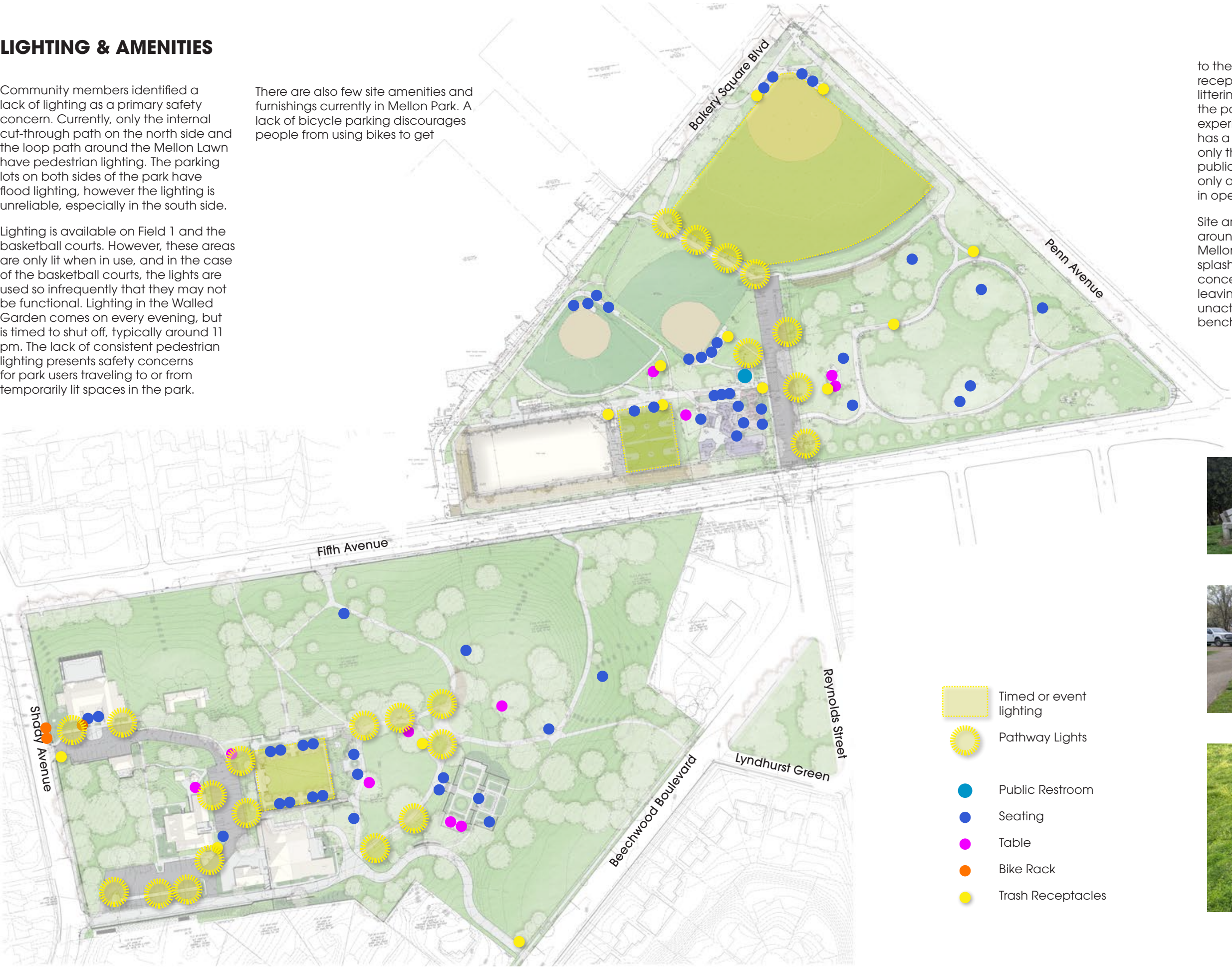
Community members identified a lack of lighting as a primary safety concern. Currently, only the internal cut-through path on the north side and the loop path around the Mellon Lawn have pedestrian lighting. The parking lots on both sides of the park have flood lighting, however the lighting is unreliable, especially in the south side.

Lighting is available on Field 1 and the basketball courts. However, these areas are only lit when in use, and in the case of the basketball courts, the lights are used so infrequently that they may not be functional. Lighting in the Walled Garden comes on every evening, but is timed to shut off, typically around 11 pm. The lack of consistent pedestrian lighting presents safety concerns for park users traveling to or from temporarily lit spaces in the park.

There are also few site amenities and furnishings currently in Mellon Park. A lack of bicycle parking discourages people from using bikes to get

to the park. The relatively few trash receptacles may lead to increased littering. A lack of places to sit and enjoy the park also detracts from the user experience, and neither side of the park has a working drinking fountain. Finally, only the north side of the park has public restrooms. However, these are only accessible when the splash pad is in operation.

Site amenities tend to be clustered around certain spaces, namely the Mellon Lawn and playground and splash pad areas. This contributes to a concentration of users in these areas, leaving other portions of the park unactivated. Most amenities, especially benches, are not ADA-accessible.



Existing benches



Existing tables



Existing trash receptacles



## ART

Art is a consistent element in Mellon Park. Public art installations can be found on both sides of Mellon Park. The historic buildings and landscape provide examples of well crafted architectural and landscape design.

In addition to physical art, concerts and performances are popular events on both sides of the park.

The art campus facilities provide public classes and programs, focused on providing educational enrichment in the arts and horticulture.

While there is an art presence in Mellon Park, there is little connectivity or coordination between the two sides. There is no signage acknowledging the presence of art on either side, and art opportunities in the park feel isolated from one another.



### BREATH

Joseph Mannino

### FIVE FACTORS

Peter Calaboyias

### ELLIOT\_SMITH B

Will Gionatti



### STEELCITYSCAPE

Aaronel DeRoy Gruber



### FORBES ROAD MONUMENT



### UNTITLED (JANUARY SPRINT)

Thomas Morandi

### 7:11 AM 11.20.1979 79.55'W 40.27'N

Janet Zweig



### MELLON PARK FOUNTAIN

Edmund Amateis

MP





## REGULATORY ISSUES

Regulatory and administrative issues create another set of challenges that affect Mellon Park. While these issues cannot be easily resolved through redesign or physical improvements, they are no less important to improving the quality of user experience in the park and require thoughtful solutions.

### PERMIT RESERVATIONS

Available permit data indicates the three fields in Mellon Park are heavily used, with each permitted for nearly 1,000 hours of use or more per year. However, on-site observation reveals that the fields are not used anywhere near that amount. This disconnect is directly attributable to the current permitting system.

As field space in the city is highly sought after, sports groups and organizations will often permit as much field time as they can acquire. However, there is currently no mechanism to ensure the field reservations are used, nor are there any repercussions for reserving field time and not using it. The result is that certain groups, namely youth football and adult leagues, have difficulty securing access to the fields in Mellon Park

Similarly, the permitting of the shelter and other rentable spaces in Mellon Park is confusing. This results in non-permitted usage or can serve as a barrier to park users seeking a permit who are unfamiliar with the system.

It should be noted that during the Action Plan process, the city was actively reviewing and revamping the permit system to address the current issues and inequities.

### EVENT MANAGEMENT

While events in Mellon Park are popular and well-loved, they present a number of logistical challenges as well. There are no rules and regulations governing the size and types of events that can occur in the park, nor are there restrictions on where events can occur or how they must be set up. Furthermore, the city does not currently have the resources in place to effectively regulate and manage events in the park.

In addition to management issues, the spaces where events are typically held were never designed with events in mind. There is no convenient water and electrical access or designated staging areas. While some annual events are well-run and popular with the community, other events have caused disruption and damage to the park.

### RULES ENFORCEMENT

Adequate and consistent enforcement of rules and regulations is another challenge in Mellon Park. The city lacks the resources to constantly monitor and enforce park rules. Inadequate park signage displaying rules and regulations makes enforcement more challenging.

In addition, public safety officers are often hesitant to enforce certain rules. Parking enforcement in the north side of the park often results in legitimate park users being ticketed while trying to spend a day in the park. Being cited for having a dog off-leash may result in a court appearance, up to a \$350 fine, and potential jail time. These are harsh penalties for otherwise law-abiding, well-intentioned park users.



Mellon Park lacks designated staging and set-up areas for events, risking damage to lawn areas, trees and other amenities.



Park users letting their dogs off -leash was cited by community members as a frequent point of contention in the park.



## USER EXPERIENCE

### What We Heard

A substantial amount of community feedback and data was collected through public meetings, focus group sessions, and survey responses. User feedback focused on various topics including what aspects of the park users value and enjoy, what challenges they encounter when using the park, and what big ideas, dreams, or visions do they have for Mellon Park’s future. This information was then analyzed, organized, and summarized to develop a comprehensive list of community priorities and needs.

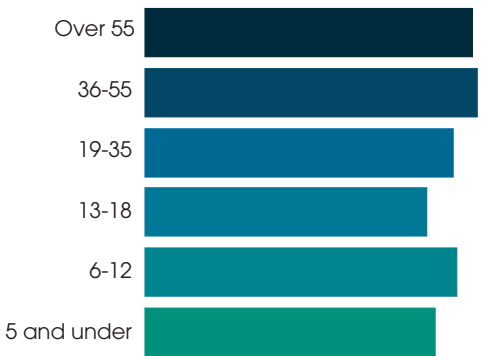
In general, user responses confirmed that Mellon Park is a well-loved and well-used public space. The majority of input pertained to improving or enhancing existing park assets and amenities, versus a total reconfiguration of the park and its elements.

### Equity and Inclusion

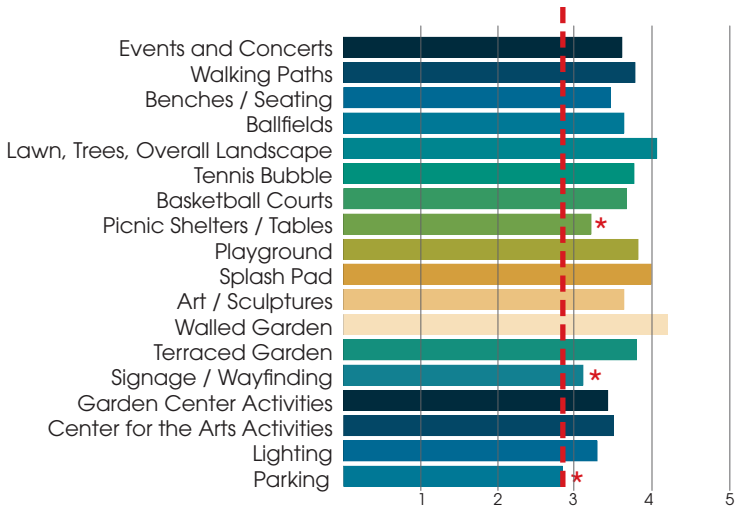
In addition to being physically separated, the north and south sides of Mellon Park are often divided along racial, socio-economic, and in some instances, neighborhood lines. While a lack of park signage, the presence of Fifth Avenue, and available park amenities play a role in demographic separation, it is important to highlight that several user responses indicated feeling unwelcome or unsafe in other parts of the park.

While parks are technically ‘public spaces’, societal attitudes towards, race, economic status, gender or sexual orientation have an impact on how park users from different backgrounds interact with public space. Public space that feels free and welcoming to one user may feel hostile, either overtly or subtly, to another. Mellon Park is no exception.

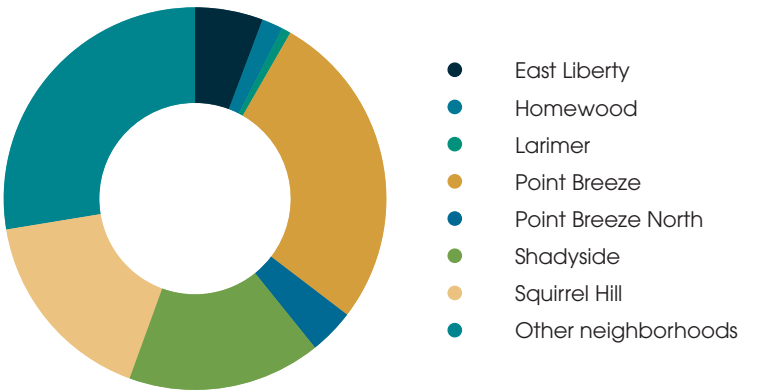
Community responses identified a number of suggestions to bridge the demographic divide in the park. In addition to physical improvements, such as safer access and clear signage, the majority of responses identified adding diversity to park programming as a means of unifying the park. Providing concerts, plays, food festivals, and other events that celebrate diverse cultures and heritage would provide a more inclusive park experience. In addition, athletic events at the youth and adult levels may also promote inclusion among park users. Finally, providing for more equitable access to park resources and even-handed enforcement of park rules, as discussed in the previous section, can also promote a sense of inclusivity in the park.



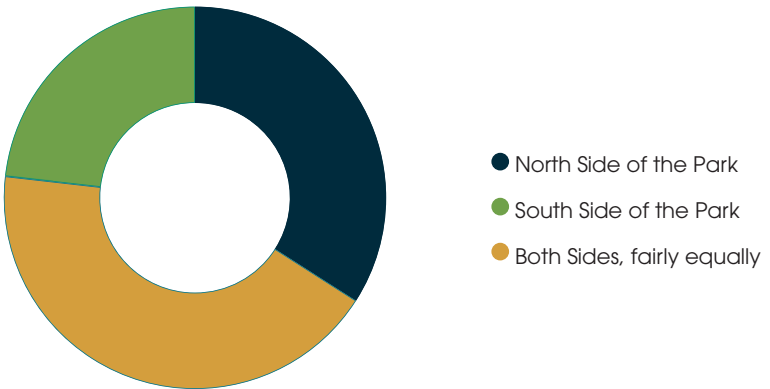
Survey participants represented a broad cross section in terms of age.



Community members were asked to rate park amenities on a scale from 1-5. Park users generally viewed Mellon Park’s amenities favorably, however closer analysis reveals that parking, site furnishings, and signage were seen as needing the most improvement.



Survey participants came from a variety of neighborhoods, with Point Breeze, Shady side, Squirrel Hill, and neighborhoods not bordering the park being the 4 largest groups.



Survey participants were asked whether they used primarily the north or south sides of the park or if they used both sides equally. The survey responses represented a fairly even split among north side and south side park users.









**RECOMMENDATIONS**



## THE GUIDING CONCEPT

The community process identified a number goals and priorities, both park-wide and site specific. Before developing design solutions, the project team created a guiding concept to better understand and organize the various community priorities. This guiding concept served as the foundation for design concepts and iterations, ultimately culminating in a preferred plan for the park.

### Enhance

The Mellon Lawn, and the extant garden spaces that flank where the house once stood, serve as the heart of the park on the south side. As a testament to the historic landscape design, park users are intuitively drawn to this space when they enter the park, despite the fact that there is no house, or actual destination there. It is a strong and effective organizing element for the park.

The Action Plan proposes to preserve and enhance this important community space. The proposed recommendations will increase access and connectivity to the heart of the park, while keeping the space itself intact.

### Create

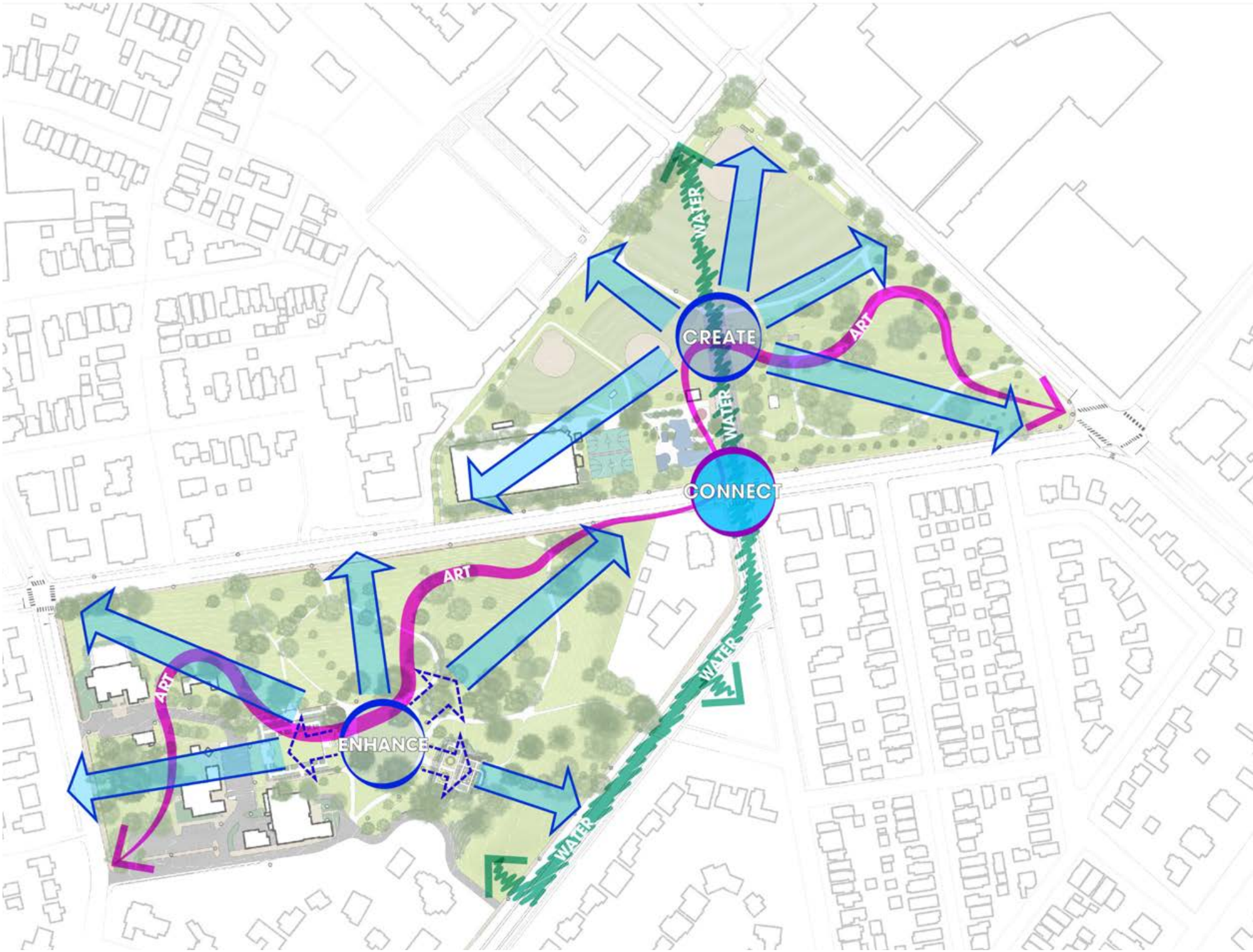
Conversely, the north side of the park does not have a true community gathering space. The ‘heart’ of the park is a busy and chaotic parking lot. This vehicle dominated space effectively cuts the park in two, creating an over-concentration of users in the vicinity of the playground and splash pad, while leaving other portions of the park, such as the art lawn, relatively devoid of use.

Improvements on this side of the park will focus on creating an open, welcoming community gathering space that all other amenities will be connected to and organized around.

### Connect

Perhaps the most significant challenge facing Mellon Park is the physical separation caused by Fifth Avenue. The imposition of this busy thoroughfare acts as a barrier between the two sides of the park.

A key tenet of the Action Plan recommendations will be to connect the two sides of the park, both physically, hydrologically, and culturally. Safer pedestrian connections and crossings, the integration of stormwater management infrastructure, and the cultivation of public art will both connect and provide continuity across both sides of the park.





# Mellon Park

The recommendations of the Mellon Park Action Plan focus on creating unity across the park, connecting the two sides of the park, celebrating the park's status as an arboretum, stewarding the park's historic assets, and accommodating the many needs and uses identified through the community process. This will be addressed through park-wide improvements, improvements to the streets that border the park, and specific projects within the park to better steward its resources and serve the community.

More detailed information regarding the scope and detail of park improvements can be found in the 'Implementation Strategy' section of the Action Plan.



## PARK WIDE IMPROVEMENTS

- Pedestrian & Cyclist Safety
- Traffic Calming
- Planting & Ecology
- Improved Connectivity & Accessibility
- Pathway Lighting
- Amenities
- Off-Leash Dogs
- Art
- Stormwater Management



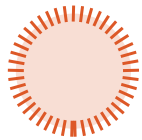
PEDESTRIAN & CYCLIST SAFETY

By far, the biggest community priority was to establish safe pedestrian and cyclist connections and access to the park. Given both the parks proximity to residential areas and limited parking capacity, it is essential to provide safe alternatives to car use.

At a minimum, the Action Plan recommends upgrading pedestrian signal equipment to provide an exclusive pedestrian phase at all four of the signalized crosswalks. These cycles should be pedestrian activated to avoid unnecessary impacts on vehicular traffic, however, pedestrians must be provided an opportunity to cross without competing with turning vehicles.

The plan also envisions traffic calming changes to both Fifth Avenue and Beechwood Boulevard. The primary aim is to make Beechwood Boulevard a more park-like, pedestrian-friendly street which will serve as the primary connection between the two sides of the park.

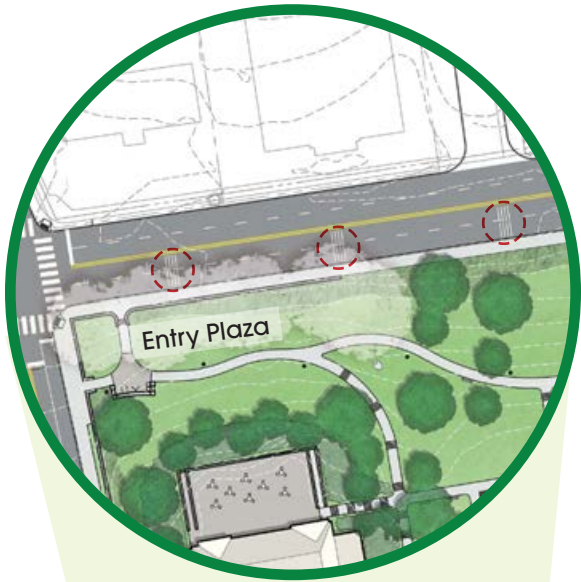
These traffic calming improvements outside the park will complement projects inside the park by creating a better integrated, safer, and more welcoming experience for park users arriving at Mellon Park.



Signalized pedestrian crossing to be upgraded with exclusive pedestrian phase



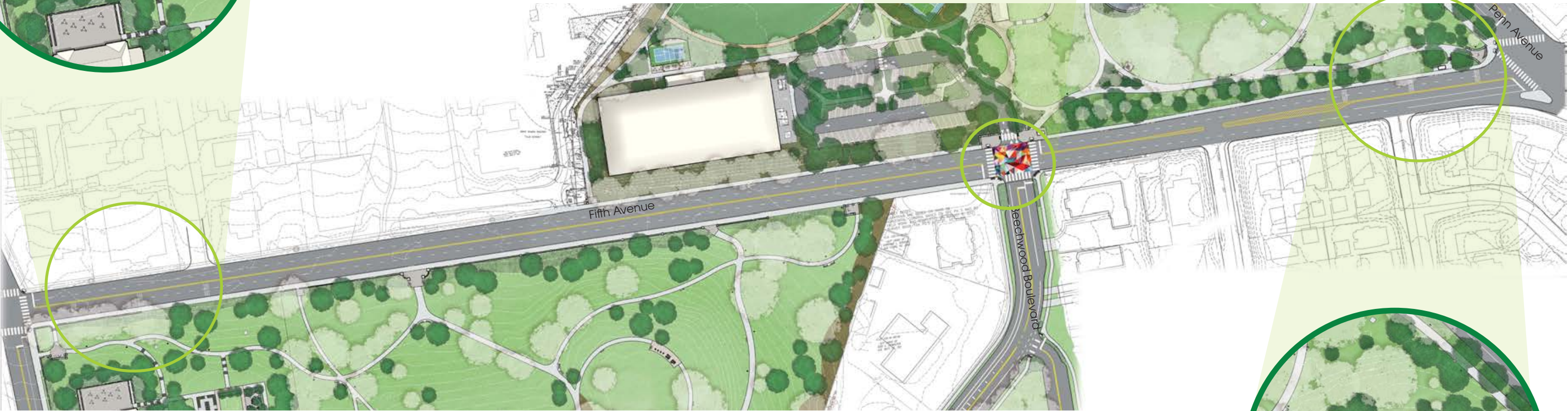
TRAFFIC CALMING — FIFTH AVENUE



**REDUCED SPEED LIMIT**  
Beaded transverse marking will alert drivers to the reduced speed limit of 25 MPH in the park zone.



**SAFER PARK INTERSECTION**  
A painted intersection at Fifth and Beechwood will signal to drivers that this is a park entrance. The traffic signals will be modified to provide a pedestrian only crossing phase when vehicle traffic in all directions must stop. Bulb outs on the Beechwood side will provide for shorter crossing distances for pedestrians. The entrance to the parking will be realigned to improve intersection safety.



**REDUCED SPEED LIMIT**  
Beaded transverse marking will alert drivers to the reduced speed limit of 25 MPH in the park zone.





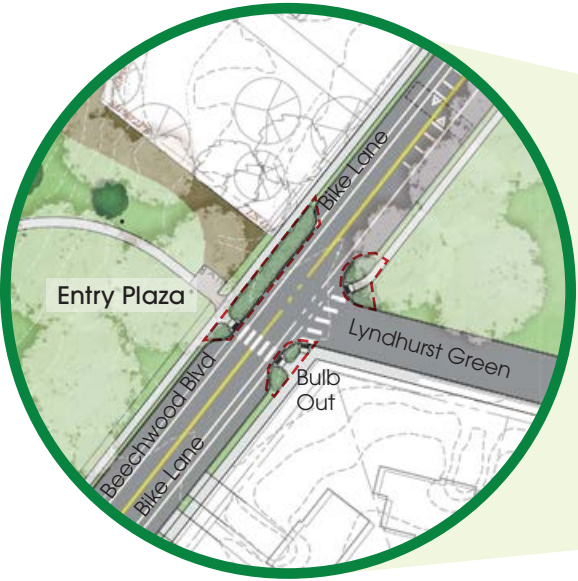
REALIGNED INTERSECTION

Reconfiguring the intersection of Reynolds Street and Beechwood Boulevard to improve safety for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists. The streets will meet at a right angle improving sight lines. The amount of paving will be reduced which will help to calm traffic and shorten crossing distances for pedestrians. The bike lane will be extended farther down Beechwood.



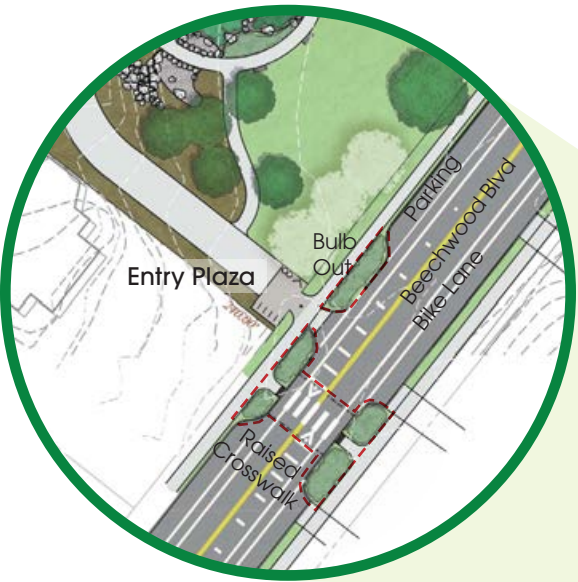
CURB BULB-OUTS

Curb bulb-outs shorten crossing distances for pedestrians. They also provide more space for planting and stormwater management. Use of curb bulb-outs along Beechwood Blvd will help to calm traffic by narrowing the street. The bike lanes along both sides of Beechwood will remain.



RAISED CROSSWALK

Allow pedestrians to cross at the level of the sidewalk. By raising pedestrian more visible. They also act similar to speed humps, causing drivers to slow down.



SPEED HUMP

Require drivers to slow down. They help to slow traffic as it approaches pedestrian cross walks.





PLANTING & ECOLOGY



Mellon Park’s status as an arboretum was a critical consideration in the planning process. Care was taken to minimize impacts to existing tree canopy, avoid any impacts to the arboretum specimen trees, and to plant additional trees to increase tree canopy cover.

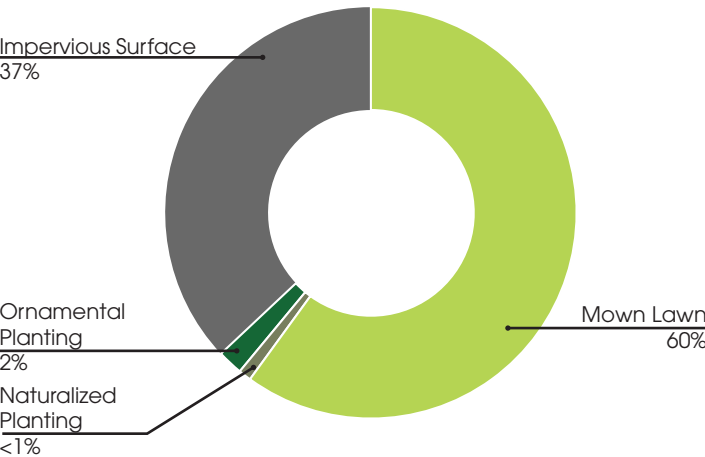
No trees are proposed to be removed on the south side of the park. Approximately 15 trees may need to be removed to accommodate proposed improvements. However, these trees are generally smaller in caliper or in poor health. Over 400 trees will be planted incrementally to offset tree removals and protect tree canopy.

Careful consideration was given to vegetation cover. Although mown lawn remains the dominant ground cover in the park, the plan strategically reduces it.

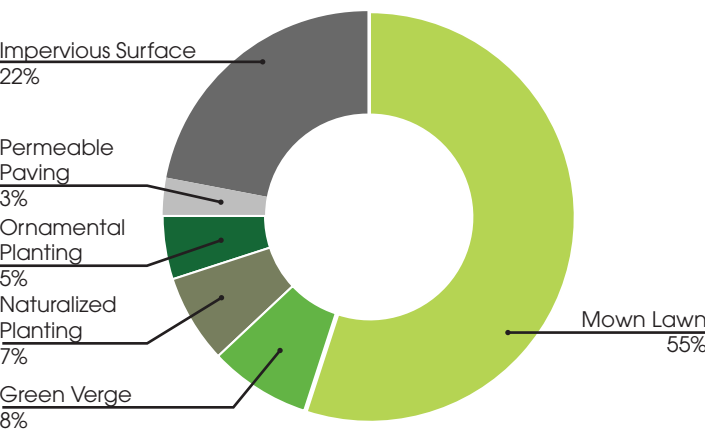
Along park edges, where slopes are steeper or active recreational use is undesirable due to proximity to traffic, a “green verge” of no mow fescue is proposed. This retains visual openness and park-like character while reducing mowing. Along certain steep slopes, or in areas where screening adjacent residential uses is desired, higher, naturalized planting is proposed. The plan also proposes expanding ornamental garden spaces on both sides of the park.

Overall, the proposed plan reduces impervious surfaces by 15% and reduces the area of mown lawn by 5%. This change in park surfacing requires less mowing and associated greenhouse gas emissions, generates less stormwater runoff, and provides greater biodiversity and habitat value.

Existing Land Cover



Proposed Land Cover



412

ADDITIONAL TREES

15%

IMPERVIOUS SURFACE REDUCTION

5%

MOWN LAWN REDUCTION



# IMPROVED CONNECTIVITY & ACCESSIBILITY

## Connectivity

- New Paths/  
Circulation  
Routes

Existing Paths/  
Circulation  
Routes

New Park Entrances

Enhanced Park  
Entrances



While traffic calming allows people to get to the park more safely, the Action Plan also recommends adding pathways and entrances to better connect the park features and ensure that park users of all abilities are able to enjoy the varied experiences the park provides.

A new entrance on the south side of the park near Shady Avenue will signal that the park begins at Shady Avenue. A new entrance along Fifth Avenue at the point closest to the intersection of Beechwood Boulevard and Fifth Avenue will allow for better connections between the two sides of the park. This entrance also aligns with the former entrance to the Darsie estate.

A new entrance at the corner of Fifth and Penn Avenues combined with new paths into the park parallel to Fifth and Penn will welcome visitors into the park



An example of what a park entrances could look like, with park signage and a common design language drawing in the existing design language of the park

## Accessibility

- Accessible Routes

Non-Accessible, but less than 8%

Non-Accessible Routes

Shared-Use Path

Existing Bike Routes



from Point Breeze North, Homewood, and Larimer. The path parallel to Penn will provide a desired route. Both new pathways will allow pedestrians and cyclists to move parallel to busy streets, but further from traffic.

Enhancing all the entrances and using a common design language, including park signage, will help to unify the park and signal to all users that both sides are part of the same public park.

Creating new accessible routes into and around the park will enhance the usability of the park and provide a more inclusive experience for all park users.



An example of a shared use path, which would be wider than a typical sidewalk and would be clearly signed as a shared path



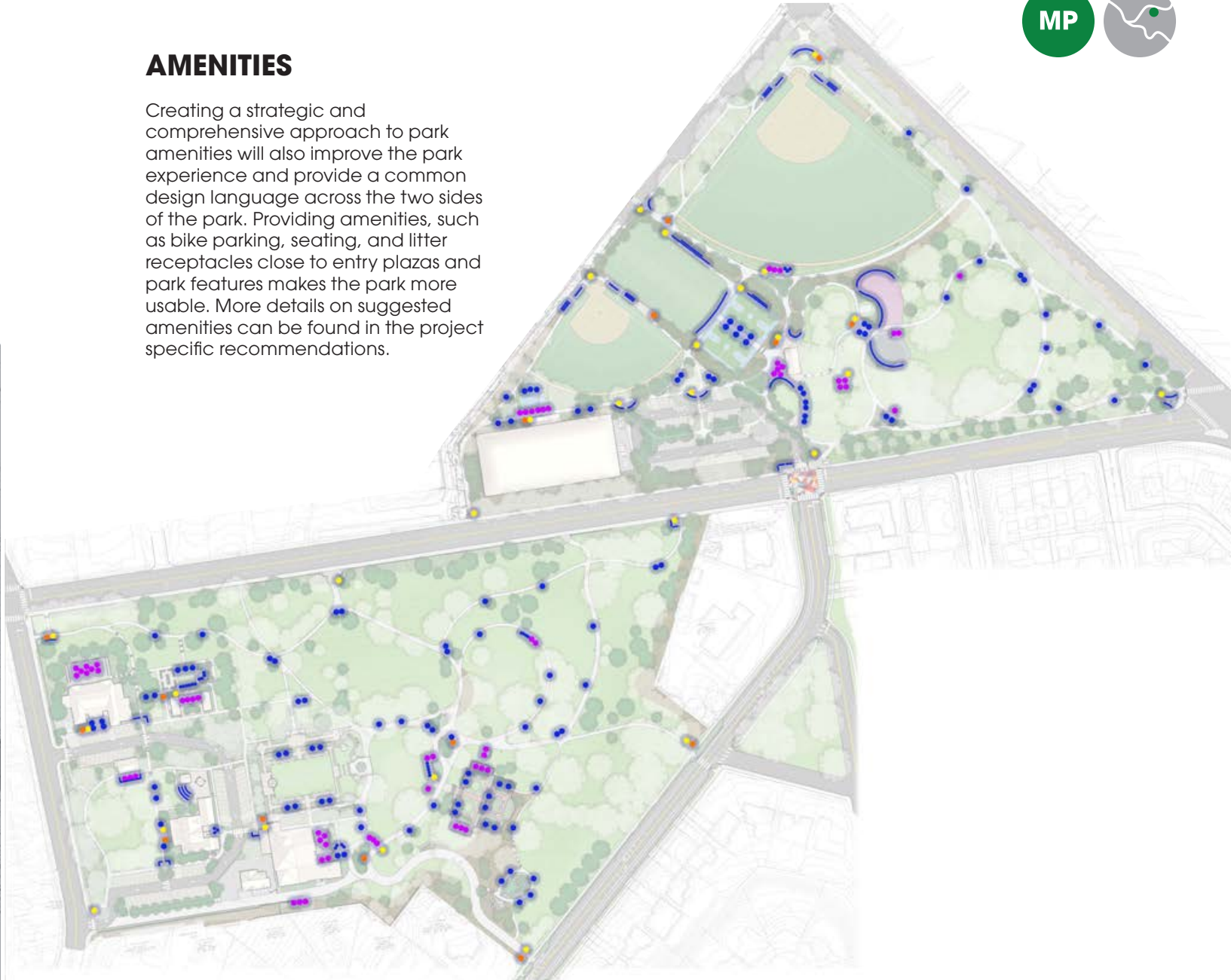
## PATHWAY LIGHTING

Pathway safety lighting will be added to provide safe passage through the park, including on the shared use paths and pathways on the south side. All park lighting should be energy efficient, Dark Sky compliant fixtures that reduce light pollution.



## AMENITIES

Creating a strategic and comprehensive approach to park amenities will also improve the park experience and provide a common design language across the two sides of the park. Providing amenities, such as bike parking, seating, and litter receptacles close to entry plazas and park features makes the park more usable. More details on suggested amenities can be found in the project specific recommendations.



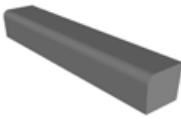
### Seating



Benches



Lounge Seating



Seat Walls

### Trash Receptacles



### Tables



Picnic Tables



Cafe Tables

### Bike Racks





# ART

Art has a significant footprint in Mellon Park. It has a physical presence in the form of sculpture and architecture on both sides of the park. It is also practiced and created in the park through performances, classes, and studio spaces. Art has a profound opportunity to be a unifying element that can be thoughtfully integrated and woven into Mellon Park, creating a truly unique park experience in the city.

In an effort to explore ideas and generate creative thinking around art, the project team held a ‘brainstorming’ session with a number of local artists. The conversation helped clarify the role of art in Mellon Park, developed concepts and ideas in which art can be incorporated, and also identified challenges that art in park spaces frequently encounters.

## THE ROLE OF ART

Art can be used as a mechanism for unifying the two sides of the park. ‘Unification’ could be physical, such as using art to connect both sides visually or physically. Or it could be social, such as bringing park users from different backgrounds together in a shared space. It can be used to reinforce connections or to ‘deconstruct’ physical or perceived barriers to entry.

Whatever form future art may take, either permanent, temporary, performance-based, or other mediums, the underlying principle of any art intervention should be to advance the goal of unifying Mellon Park.

## IDEAS FOR ART

The artist brainstorm session identified a number of concepts and ideas that could be considered for implementation in Mellon Park. These ideas are meant as inspiration. Any artist who is engaged to do work in Mellon Park should be given the freedom and latitude to express their individual creativity.

## Creating Physical Connections

- Park ‘branding’. Identify color schemes, materials, site amenities, symbols, etc. that are unique to Mellon Park and be incorporated on both sides.
- Art as wayfinding. Using art interventions that guide park users through the park, highlight points of access or entry.
- Temporary or portable art pieces that can move from one side to the other, and encourage exploration of both sides.

## Creating Social Connections

- Culturally diverse performance art. Concerts, plays, poetry, or other events that expose park users to cultures and backgrounds different than their own.
- Storytelling. Provide spaces or venues for community members to share experiences and history.

## Interaction and Engagement

- Use QR codes, augmented reality, or other technologies that allow users to interact with art interventions and provide an ever-changing experience.
- Provide spaces and resources where park users can create and share their own art or stories
- Interactive art interventions that directly engage with users. For example, by asking users questions or asking them to contribute a line to a story or lyrics to a song.
- Art pieces that are meant to be interacted with recreationally, such as play elements or artistic forms and shapes that can be skateboarded on.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ART

Art interventions do not need to be tied to capital improvements. Performance

art, temporary art, and other interventions can be implemented today and begin advancing the goal of unifying the two sides of the park. In order to be effective, art needs to be thoughtfully considered and given space in the park.

It is recommended that a working group of artists and community members be assembled to begin advancing art themes and concepts. This ‘task force’ should be comprised of artists and community members from diverse backgrounds and experiences, working in partnership with the city. The group should focus on clarifying and defining the concept of unity and identifying and prioritizing ways to advance community goals through art. If possible, stipends should be considered to pay people for their time.

In regards to capital project investments, art is a key component in the design process. Art should be integrated into physical improvements in a proactive way and not as an afterthought or to fill unused space. Budgeting for art installations and artists should exceed the city’s minimum Percent for Art requirements.

Providing infrastructure and resources to support artists as they create art is also important. Providing access to water, power, shelter, and bathrooms for the creation or installation should be reflected in project budgets.



Credit: Jen Lewin Studio  
An example of a temporary, interactive art installation



Credit: City of Pittsburgh  
An example of small-scale performances



Credit: New World Symphony  
An example of an interactive art installation that park users can add and contribute to



# STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

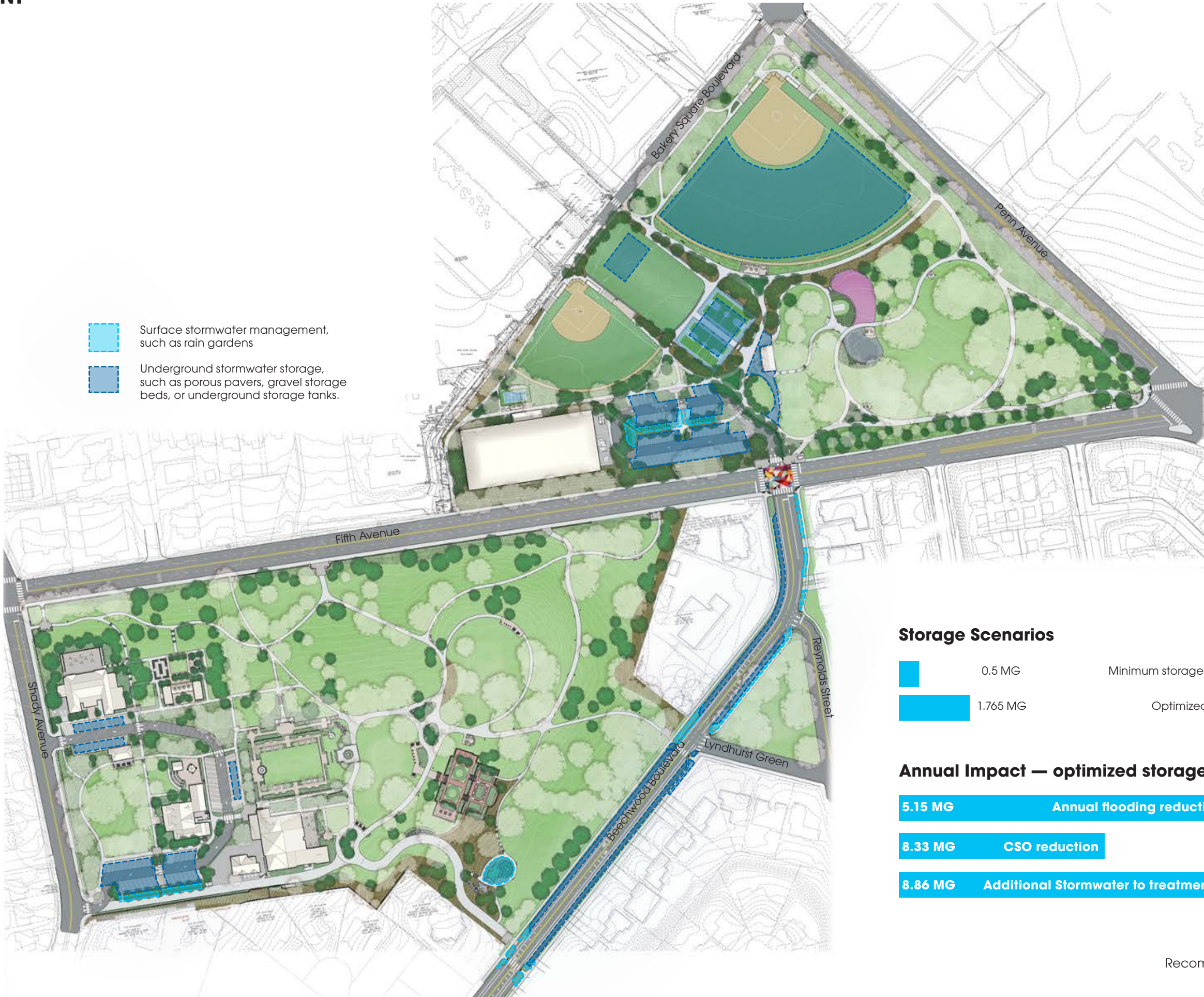
The analysis process identified a minimum requirement of 500,000 gallons of stormwater runoff to manage in order to meet code, and a storage amount of 1,765,000 gallons to maximize downstream benefits.

Based on this analysis, various potential storage locations were selected to coordinate with proposed park improvements and to provide capture at points where the surrounding areas could drain into the park.

A combination of surface storage (rain gardens) and underground storage (permeable paving, gravel storage beds and storage tanks) were distributed throughout the park in nine nodes, providing the total storage volume

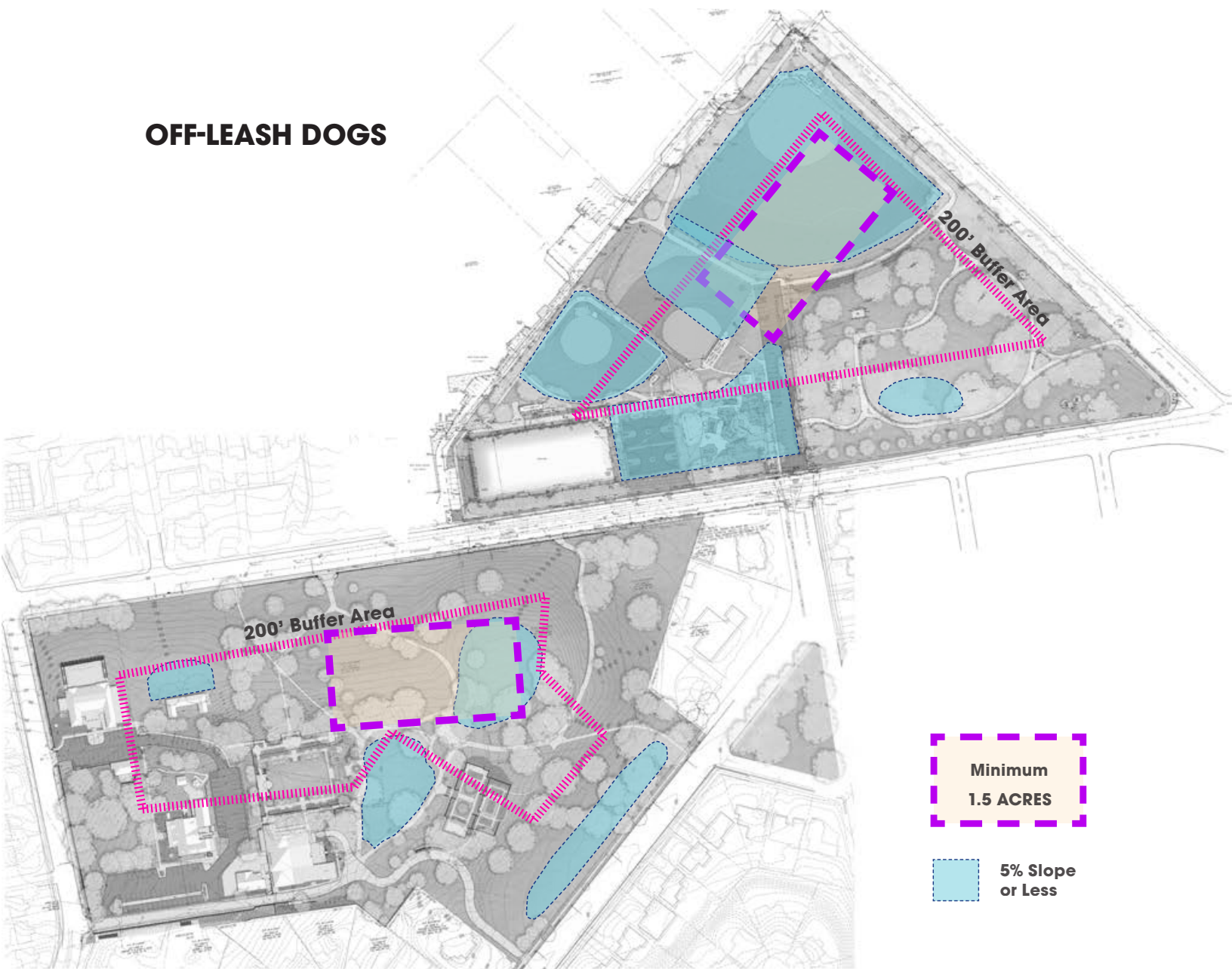
The estimated impact of this storage on downstream flooding was estimated to be a 8.33 million gallon reduction in CSOs, an annual flooding reduction downstream of 5.15 million gallons, and an increase in the volume of waste water diverted to the waste water treatment plant of 8.86 million gallons annually. This is based on a conservative assumption that these storage nodes will manage, but not permanently remove stormwater from the system. If in fact the system achieves some removal from evapotranspiration or infiltrations, the benefits could be greater.

The potential storage nodes are all independent and can be implemented in phases in coordination with park projects. Although the overall park project will reduce impervious cover, there may be phases that temporarily add impervious surfaces. Overall the project will aim to maintain a net positive in terms of stormwater management, seeking to put some projects with significant stormwater potential in the ground early in the process, to provide the required stormwater storage for projects that may come later.





OFF-LEASH DOGS



Mellon park is often used informally as a dog park. During the community engagement process, there were multiple conversations concerning off-leash dogs, both for and against the provision of an off-leash dog area. Dogs, and particularly off-leash dog parks, present a number of challenges when situated in a larger park. In most instances, off-leash dog areas are not compatible with other uses, such as ballfields or playgrounds, due to pet waste. Surface materials, especially lawn, are subject to significant wear and tear. This is especially true in fenced in dog parks.

Several options were considered, including creating designated off-leash hours at the park and creating a small, dedicated dog park area where space allows. The project team concluded that any new construction of a dog park should meet current City of Pittsburgh standards for dog parks. Those requirements have been developed by the city based on their experience with the maintenance and management issues of existing dog parks. Those standards include:

- A minimum size of 1.5 acres
- Located 200’ from adjacent residences or businesses
- A maximum slope of 5%, well drained
- Avoid interference with other established uses.
- Avoid sensitive environmental habitats; protect specimen trees with fencing.

Many of the existing dog parks in the city do not meet these standards, leading to continuing challenges with their maintenance and management.

The project team laid the design criteria over the existing Mellon Park plan. This analysis reveals that there is no appropriate space for a dedicated dog park in Mellon Park that could feasibly meet city standards without sacrificing much-needed athletic field space. The presence of mature canopy trees, Mellon Park’s status as an arboretum, and status as an historic landmark, further complicates the integration of a dog park in this space.

The community process has unquestionably identified a public need for a dedicated, off-leash dog park in the East End. However, the issue needs to be studied and addressed more comprehensively at a city-wide level. The Action Plan recommends a city-led task force be assembled to study opportunities to create dedicated dog parks, not just in the vicinity of Mellon Park, but in each council district. Consideration should also be given to adopting ‘off-leash hours’, similar to what is practiced in New York City’s Central Park.

In addition, the Action Plan recommends reviewing and updating existing regulations regarding off-leash dogs and pet waste pick up. As previously noted, steep penalties for violating leash laws often discourage public safety officers from issuing citations. Updated regulations that reduce fine amounts or court appearances, more consistent with a parking ticket, may encourage more enforcement of off-leash dog regulations and reduce park-user conflicts.



Dog walkers in Mellon Park north using Field 2 as an off leash dog area



## REGULATORY RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the regulatory recommendations for off-leash dog use, the Action Plan outlines a number of considerations for other regulatory and administrative issues that affect use of the park. These are recommendations only and any changes to rules, regulations, or other policies need to be analyzed, vetted, and codified by the proper city departments and the administration.

### PERMIT RESERVATIONS

In addition to updating the city’s permitting system, which is already underway, additional consideration needs to be given to the quantity and type of reservable spaces in Mellon Park. Mellon Park is already a popular place, and it is imperative that it maintain a balance between passive uses and activities and events.

On the north side of the park, changes in field type should also correspond with changes in permitted use. The little league and full-sized baseball fields should be reserved primarily for baseball and softball use, while the rectangular field should be reserved for football, cheer, soccer, and other sports. While additional shelter spaces are being considered, it is recommended that only one or two of these shelters be rentable spaces, allowing for informal access to sheltered space on a first-come, first- served basis. While the rectangular field should be designed to accommodate occasional community events, these events should be carefully permitted to ensure they are not taking away valuable field time from youth sports leagues.

On the south side of the park, events should be confined to the existing spaces where events are currently permitted and held. This includes the Walled Garden, the Terrace Garden, and the Mellon Lawn and Frew Knoll areas. Given the proximity of these spaces to one another, consideration should be given to capping the number of events that can occur yearly in each space to avoid over-programming and maintain opportunities for informal use.

On both sides of the park, it is recommended that only free, public events be permitted at the informal rectangular field, Mellon Lawn and Frew Knoll areas. These spaces represent the heart of each side of the park, and maintaining open, free access to these spaces is vital to the park experience.

### EVENT MANAGEMENT

Management of permitted events is a critical component to providing an enriching park experience while also protecting existing park assets. The Action Plan recommends developing city-wide guidelines for what types of events are appropriate based on the size and type of park. A large scale, multi-day event may be appropriate for a regional park, but could be out of scale and disruptive to a community or neighborhood park. These discussions should be led by the appropriate city departments with input from the general public.

Furthermore, the Action Plan recommends consulting with event planners and specialists to develop specific rules and guidelines for each rentable space in the park. Planners should consider maximum capacity, designated points of access, staging areas, allowable options for event layout, and other related considerations that facilitate event management and protect park assets. These rules should be included with event permits and provided to park rangers and public safety officers tasked to enforce event rules. It is recommended that enforcement of event rules occur not just during the event itself, but also during set up and break down.

### RULES ENFORCEMENT

The Action Plan recommends reviewing and revising the existing park rules in Mellon Park to ensure they are up to date with contemporary uses and challenges in the park. Park rules and regulations need to be consistent across both sides of the park to avoid confusion, and special rules or exceptions for specific park spaces should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Park rules should be clearly posted in conspicuous locations using the city’s signage standards. It is imperative that rules signage be consistent from location to location, with concise and unambiguous wording that park users can easily understand.

Park rangers and safety officers need to maintain a presence on both sides of the park to ensure rules are properly enforced. However, it should be stressed that their primary role should be as ambassadors for the park, educating the public on the park rules as well as its available amenities. Rangers and safety officers should be seen as resources and not a policing force.

### PARKING

While the Action Plan proposes to relocate and expand parking, it is important to note that parking will still be inadequate to meet the high demand in Mellon Park. The Action Plan recommends further parking studies be performed to better understand parking trends and demands, and identify creative solutions to meet demand without sacrificing park space.

The parking study should consider the effectiveness of metered parking, the viability of shutting down travel lanes for parking during weekend hours, or potential agreements with adjacent organizations for shared use of parking lots. The objective of the study should be to provide adequate, accessible parking spaces for park users while limiting abuse by commuters or others not actively using Mellon Park.



An example of current park rules signage.



# North



**Overview**

**Community Green & Plaza Space**

**Play Area & Splash Pad**

**Athletic Fields & Courts**

**Parking Reconfiguration**





OVERVIEW

The North side of the park is heavily used with many competing and conflicting uses. The primary goal of the Action Plan was to rearrange some of the major elements of the park to provide greater functionality, safety, and enjoyment for all users. This included moving the parking out of the heart of the park, reconfiguring the shared use paths to provide greater safety, providing more gathering spaces, and reconfiguring and upgrading facilities to better meet user needs.



Improved Access

- 1 Entry plazas with park signage, trash receptacles, and other amenities.
- 2 Reconfigured parking area with 59 standard parking spaces and 6 ADA spaces. One-way circulation and raised crosswalks enhance pedestrian safety.
- 3 Painted intersection with pedestrian-only crossing phase.
- 4 Shared use pathway connections for cyclists and pedestrians.

New Community Space

- 5 Community Green and plaza space with picnic tables, movable cafe seating, and other amenities.
- 6 New park building with shared concession area, restrooms, and storage space.

Relocated Play Space

- 7 Play area integrated into existing trees with accessible play equipment, age appropriate play areas, and seating.
- 8 Splash pad with ground sprays, overhead water play elements, recirculation system, and seating.

Court Upgrades

- 9 Relocated basketball courts with terraced spectator seating and lighting.
- 10 Pickleball courts with picnic tables, movable cafe seating, and pavilion.

Field Upgrades

- 11 Reconstructed little league baseball field with 60' diamond and 200' outfield. New dugouts, bleachers, backstop, drainage, and field lighting.
- 12 Upgraded full-sized baseball field with 90' diamond and 350' outfield. New outfield fence, underdrainage and rootzone soil.
- 13 New 18' x 70' batting cage/bullpen.
- 14 Informal rectangular practice field space with terraced spectator seating.

More Shelter Space

- 15 Overlook seating area with picnic tables, movable cafe seating, lounge seating, and pavilion. See enlargement plan.
- 16 New ADA-accessible picnic shelters with tables and seating.



# North

## COMMUNITY GREEN & PLAZA SPACE



----- Shared-Use Path

The north side of the park lacks a central gathering space. The Action Plan proposes creating a community core and gathering space at the heart of the park. By moving the parking out of the center of the park and routing bicycle traffic around the plaza, conflicts between pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists are minimized.

The community core includes a community green, a community plaza with movable cafe seating, and a new building with concessions and restrooms. The plaza utilizes porous pavers with underground storage to incorporate stormwater benefits.

This community core is centrally located between the play area, basketball courts, new informal practice field and ball fields. The basketball courts and the plaza will have timed lighting, turning on at dusk and automatically turning off at a predetermined time.

New naturalized planting areas, green verge planting areas, and additional tree planting will increase the shade and tree canopy on the north side of the park, increase pervious cover in the park, and provide greater habitat value.

At the north end of this community core will be a new, large shelter space overlooking the full-sized baseball field.

The shared-use path will maintain an important and well-used bike route connection through the heart of the park. The shared-use path will include signage, pavement markings, and material changes to alert users that both cyclists and pedestrians have equal access to the path and need to exercise caution and courtesy.



Credit: STIMSON

Precedent for community cafe and gathering space



Credit: WarnerLarson, Inc.

Precedent for overlook terrace/ event stage



Credit: Klopfer Martin Design Group

Precedent for the informal practice field.



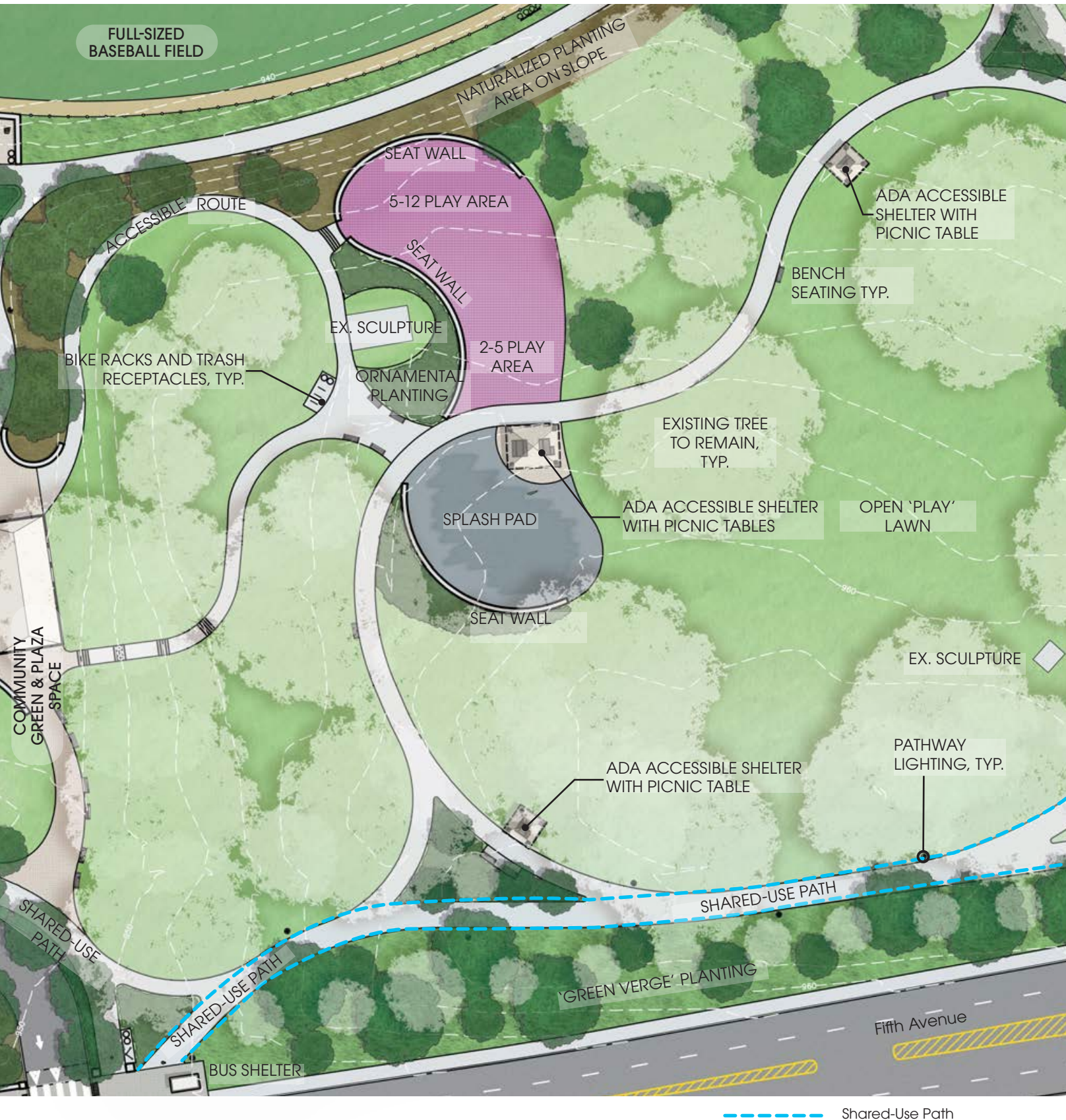
Credit: AECOM

Precedent for terraced seating



# North

## PLAY AREA & SPLASH PAD



The playground and splash pad will be relocated to the top of the hill adjacent to the art walk area. Nestled in the existing tree canopy, the new play area will act as a 'children's grove', providing a safe distance from cars and more active areas, and encouraging the use of the open lawn area. Play and splash pad equipment will be nature themed, making a direction connection to the park's arboretum status.

New, smaller accessible shelters will be added around the lawn. Seat walls adjacent to the play area and splash pad will provide ample seating for parents and other park visitors. The play area will be connected to the Community Green and Plaza by an accessible pathway.

Routing the shared-use paths around the lawn provides separation between

plays areas and cyclists. New dark skies pathway lighting along the shared-use path will provide greater safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Additional tree planting will also occur in this area. Green verge planting adjacent to the street reduces areas of mown lawn and maintenance and acts as a buffer from Fifth Avenue. Naturalized planting will be used on the steeper slopes. These planting changes will create greater habitat and stormwater porosity, in lieu of stormwater infrastructure that could damage existing trees rootzones.

All existing sculptures will remain in place. However, the positioning of the sculptures and their relationship to the new park features should be considered, and changes made if appropriate.



Vertical play structure with nature theme



Nature themed splash pad



Nature themed climbing elements



Nature themed spray features



# North

## ATHLETIC FIELDS & COURTS



A new informal rectangular practice field (formerly Field #2) will be created between the full-sized baseball field (Field #1) and the upgraded little league field (Field #3). This is in response to a clear community need for a rectangular practice field space for football, soccer, cheer, and other sports.

The full-sized baseball field will be upgraded with a new outfield fence, underdrainage, and batting cage/ bull pen. A new overlook shelter will be provided near center field to provide spectator seating, or a potential stage location for events.

The current Field #3 will be upgraded to a full-sized little league field. Improvements will include new dugouts, bleachers, backstop, drainage, and field lighting.

The two existing basketball courts will be relocated to the center of the park, near the community plaza. A new pickleball court will be added near the existing tennis bubble.

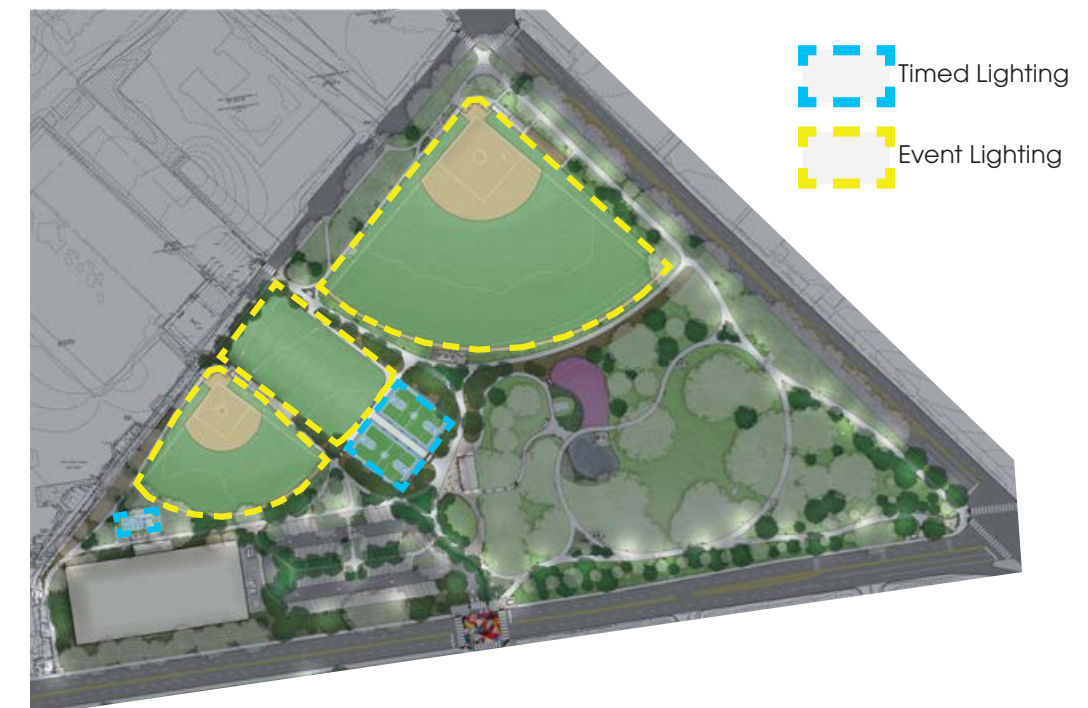
Currently only the full-sized baseball field has lights. The plan anticipates lighting for both baseball fields and the informal practice field. Field lighting would only

be turned on when there is a game or event planned for those spaces. Adding lighting to the remaining two fields will increase usability and reduce demand on the full-sized baseball field.

The courts would receive timed lighting. The lights would turn on at dusk and would automatically turn off at a predetermined time.

The north side of the park is the natural low area in the Mellon Park Basin, and has the greatest capacity for stormwater storage. Similarly, the openness of the fields and courts provides opportunities for stormwater infrastructure that will not impact existing trees. The full-sized baseball field is the low point of the park and has the greatest opportunity to provide significant stormwater storage. There will also be underground stormwater storage under the practice field, basketball courts, and community plaza space.

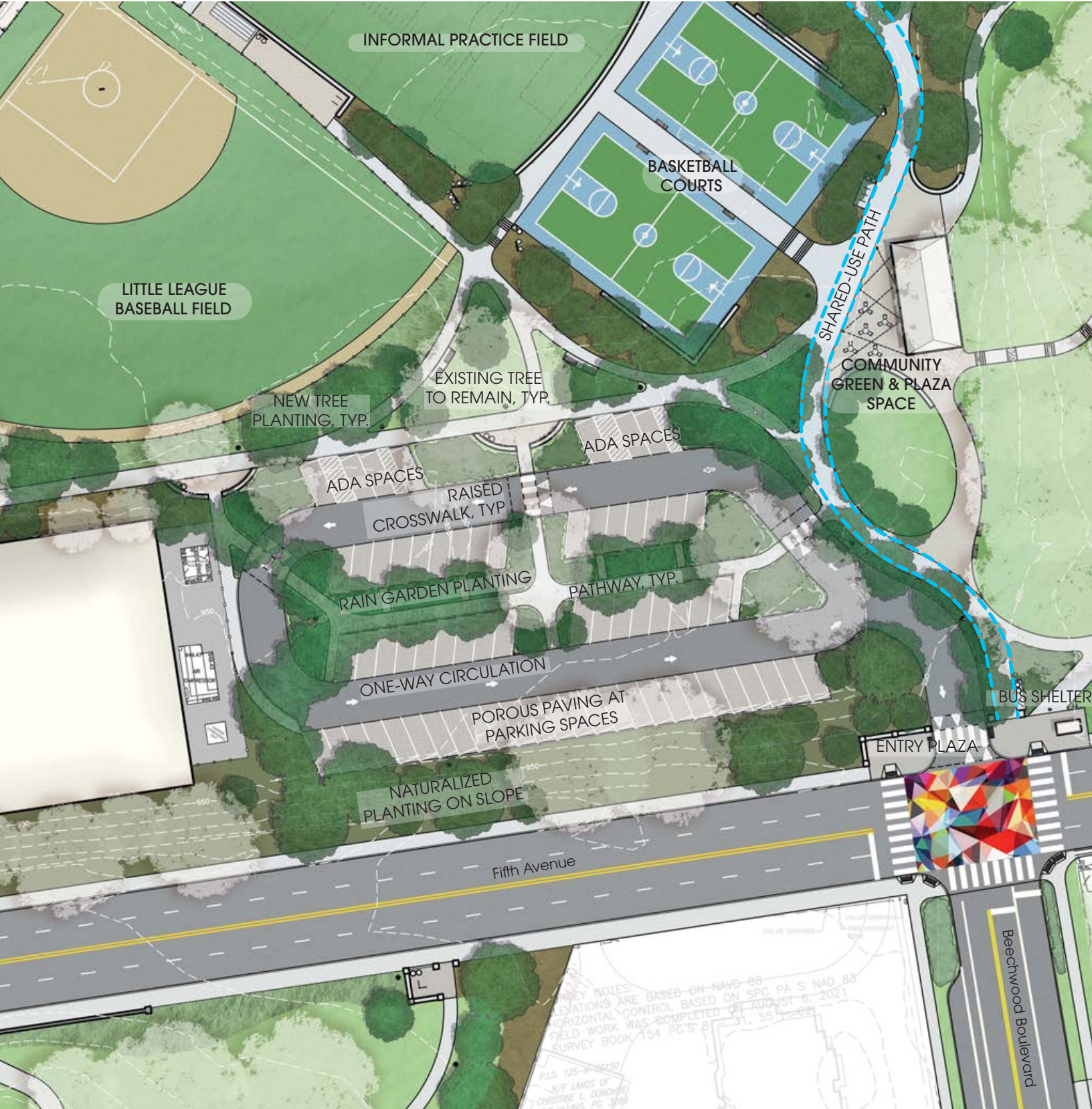
The Action Plan recommends that the baseball fields only be reserved for athletic events. The informal practice field could be reserved for both athletic events, or other community events, such as Juneteenth.





# North

## PARKING RECONFIGURATION



----- Shared-Use Path

Currently, the existing parking area dominates the center of the park and effectively divides it in two. Current parking does not conform to city code in terms of dimension, is inadequate for demand, and is unsafe. The drive lane is also the shared bike lane and conflicts between drivers, cyclists and pedestrians are inevitable. The existing parking entry is not well aligned with the existing traffic pattern on Beechwood Blvd, and there is no clear pedestrian entry into the park.

The reconfigured parking area would be moved out of the heart of the park and placed adjacent to Fifth Avenue. The parking area would be expanded to provide 20 additional spaces, but minimize the loss of usable park space. The driveway entrance would be realigned to lined up with circulation on Beechwood Boulevard, allowing for an enhanced entry plaza that will clearly separate vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic.

Vehicle circulation in the parking lot would be one-way with 75-degree angled parking, which will enhance pedestrian safety. Dedicated pedestrian pathways through the parking area and raised crosswalks will provide for safer pedestrian movement from the parking lot into the park.

The parking lot would also include significant stormwater green infrastructure. Parking stalls would be porous paving with underground storage and parking lot planting areas would accommodate rain gardens.

New trees will be planted in and around the parking lot and the slope along Fifth Avenue will be converted to a naturalized planting area. These plantings will add much needed tree canopy to the north side of the park, reduce urban heat island effect by shading the parking, and help to filter noise and pollution from Fifth Avenue from the active uses of the park.



Ornamental/green infrastructure planting



Pedestrian friendly parking lot



# South



- Overview
- Terrace Garden
- Olmsted Rain Garden
- Mellon Lawn & Frew Knoll
- Community Garden & Children's Garden
- Arts Campus & Building Integration
- Parking Reconfiguration



## OVERVIEW

Recommendations for the south side of park focus on making the park more welcoming and inviting, restoring and rehabilitating historic assets that have fallen into disrepair, and providing better integration between the buildings along Shady Avenue and the rest of the park.



### Improved Access

- ① Entry plazas with park signage, trash receptacles, and other amenities at all entrances.

### Improved Connections

- ② Beechwood Boulevard traffic calming improvements including bulb-outs, raised crosswalks, and speed humps. Reconfigured intersection at Reynolds Street.

### Improved Parking

- ③ Reconfigured parking areas with 71 standard parking spaces and 8 ADA spaces between the three lots. One-way circulation and raised crosswalks enhance pedestrian safety.

### Enhance Existing Spaces

- ④ Refurbished 'Mellon Lawn' open space. New seating area reinterpreting the original front porch of the house. Additional seating area that can also be used as event stage location.
- ⑤ Refurbished 'Frew Knoll' open space. New pathways and seating area overlooking Mellon Park North, which can also be used as event stage location.

### Campus Integration

- ⑥ Renovated Scaife Carriage House (currently DPW Garage and Maintenance Yard). Restored exterior of building and relocated maintenance yard entry and dumpsters to the cobble drive and establish as a service road.
- ⑦ Renovated Phipps Garden Center building. New building entrance facing the parking area, relocated loading access to the shared service drive, and expanded porch facing the park.
- ⑧ Repaired/renovated Scaife Building (currently Center for the Arts and Media). Improved entrances and connections to other buildings. Amphitheater space for classroom and public use.
- ⑨ Repaired/renovated Marshall Building (currently CitiParks). Improved entrances and connections to parking and other buildings. Rehabilitated terrace area with cafe seating for public use.
- ⑩ Provide additional path connections and breaks in the fence to connect the campus area more directly into the rest of the park.

### Restore and Rehabilitate Historic Assets

- ⑪ Reconstructed and restored historic Terrace Garden.
- ⑫ Reconstructed Olmsted Pond, repurposed as rain garden.
- ⑬ Reconstructed 'Chicken Coop' building, restored as community garden area with agricultural garden plots and children's sensory garden.





# South

## TERRACE GARDEN



The Terrace Garden is part of the original Mellon Estate. The historic walls, stairs, and paving have fallen into disrepair and are in desperate need of restoration and possibly replacement. Restoration of the Terrace Garden was identified as the top priority for the south side of the park during the public engagement process. Restoring and reconstructing the brick walls and historic brick paving needs to be done both to preserve this historic asset and to ensure the safety of park visitors.

The Shakespeare garden, on the lower terrace, currently maintained by the Herb Society, will be protected and preserved. The upper terrace gardens would be restored by reinterpreting the historic garden design using native plant material.

The addition of seating and picnic tables will help to make the terrace garden more usable by park users. The addition of water and power sources will facilitate garden maintenance and small-scale events.

A new shelter space will be created in the area where the Mellon children's playhouse once stood. The shelter would be designed to mimic the architectural detail of the playhouse and provide much needed sheltered seating space.



Existing condition of the Terrace Garden



Historic image of Terrace Garden

Credit: Allegheny County Archive



Formal gardens using native plants

Credit: Mt. Cuba Center



# South

OLMSTED RAIN GARDEN

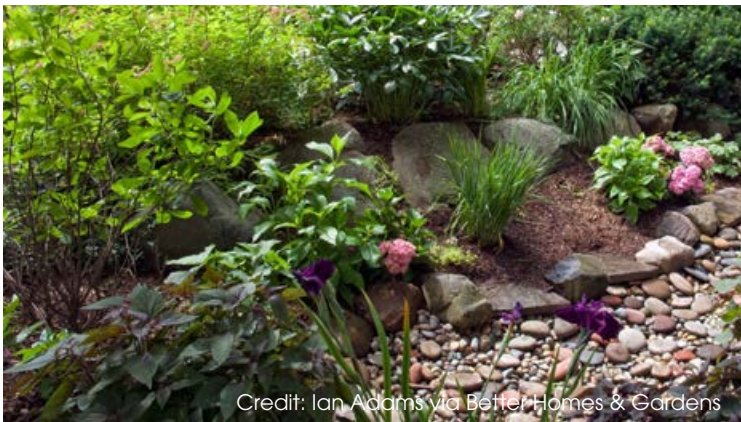


The Olmsted Rain Garden would be a reinterpretation of the historic pond designed by the Olmsted Brothers. During the public engagement process, community members voiced support for the garden space, but expressed concern about having open water in the park. The Action Plan proposes using the original plans of the pond to inspire its reinterpretation as a rain garden and to make this part of the overall stormwater strategy. This area of the park is frequently wet and is a natural stormwater runoff collection point.

New pathways would connect the rain garden to the Terrace Garden and the historic cobblestone driveway. The steep slopes above the rain garden would be planted with naturalized planting to provide additional stormwater mitigation and greater habitat.



Existing condition



Credit: Ian Adams via Better Homes & Gardens  
Ornamental rain garden



Credit: Personal collection  
Historic image of 'Olmstead Brothers' pond



# South

## MELLON LAWN AND FREW KNOLL



The Mellon Lawn serves as the heart of the park on the south side. Park users naturally gravitate towards this high point, which was the site of the former Mellon house. The Action Plan proposes to enhance this important gathering space. Additions to the Mellon Lawn are minimal and include a new seating area with site furnishings that would be a reinterpretation of the front porch of the Mellon House. There is also a small seating area proposed at the south end of the lawn.

The Frew Knoll is the site of the former Frew house and has some of the best views in the park, including a direct visual connection between the north and south sides of the park. The Action Plan proposes the addition of a new pathway around the edge of the Frew Knoll and a new overlook seating area. The pathway and overlook area would be ADA-accessible, providing a more inclusive park experience.

Both the Mellon Lawn and Frew Knoll are currently used for events, such as Fair in the Park and Bach, Beethoven, and Brunch. The proposed pathway at the Frew Knoll and the new seating areas at Mellon Lawn and Frew Knoll would help to clearly define the area for events, and provide designated and durable areas for stages and event set up.



View from Frew Knoll toward Shadyside






View from Frew Knoll toward north side of the Park



Credit: The Craftsmen's Guild of Pittsburgh  
Fair in the Park (Mellon Park South)

### Event Space Management

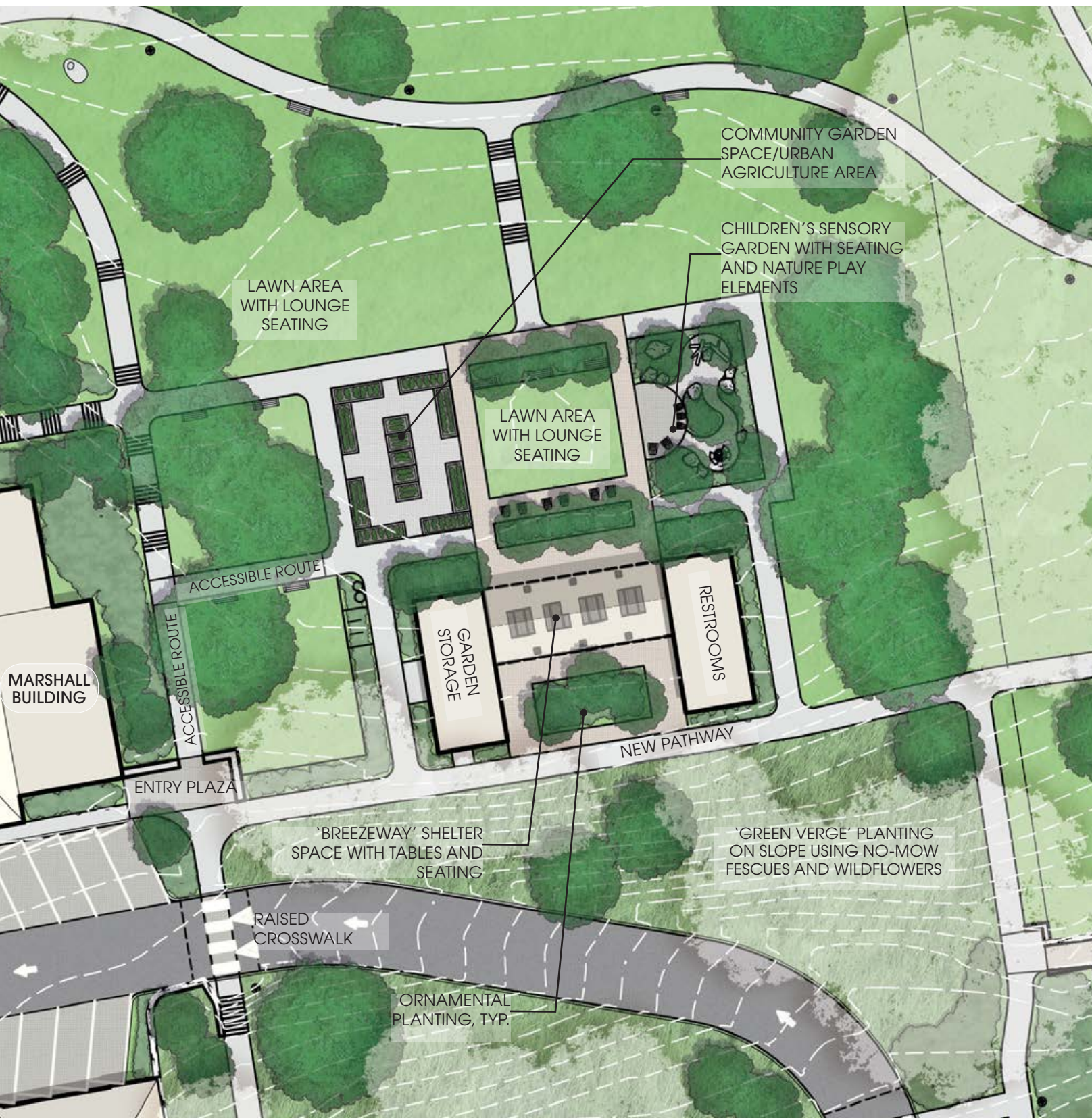
-  Public Events Only (Fairs, festivals, etc.)
-  Private or Small Public Events (Weddings, birthday parties, etc.)
-  Vehicular Access for Event Set up





# South

## COMMUNITY GARDEN AND CHILDREN'S GARDEN



The community garden and children's garden spaces will repurpose the site of the Mellon Estate's former kitchen gardens and 'chicken coop' building. The Action Plan recommends restoring this area to an agricultural use with a community garden space, lawn areas, and children's sensory garden with natural play elements.

The chicken coop building itself would be re-purposed for garden storage, public restrooms, and seating. The central portion of the building would have the walls removed to create a 'breezeway' with covered seating, while preserving the roof of the building. A further structural analysis of the building will be required to determine if the building could be renovated, or if it would need to be reconstructed.

The community garden space would serve as a teaching space for urban agriculture and gardening techniques. The garden space would be operated and maintained by one or several non-profit organizations, in partnership with the city, which specialize in public programming and education specifically targeting food insecure communities.



Existing 'chicken coop' building



Credit: The Arboretum at Penn State  
Working vegetable garden



Credit: Andrew Hawkins  
Restroom building with covered 'breezeway' seating area



Credit: site design group, ltd.  
Children's Garden and informal nature play space





A key goal of the Action Plan is stitching the Shady Avenue edge and arts campus area back into the overall fabric of the park. The plan creates a new park entry plaza with park signage and amenities at the corner of Fifth and Shady Avenues. New pathways will make direct connections through the existing historic fence to the interior of the park. Additional pathways and pedestrian lighting between buildings will create stronger connections between the various organizations that operate there. In addition, new entry plazas near the Marshall Building, Scaife Building, and Garden Center will provide clear points of entry and access to the park.

Repairs and renovations to the existing building will include improved entrances and connections to parking and other buildings. At the Marshall building, the terrace area will be rehabilitated with cafe seating for public use. A new amphitheater space adjacent to the Scaife building could be used as an outdoor classroom and by the public.

Improvements to the Garden Center and Scaife Carriage House (currently housing DPW maintenance staff) include reorganizing the main entrances for more intuitive pedestrian access, and relocating service and maintenance related entrances to the existing cobble drive. This reconfiguration allows for a potential expansion of the Garden Center porch area.

The parking areas have been reconfigured to angled parking with one way circulation. This reconfiguration enhances pedestrian safety while also providing a code-compliant parking layout that fits within the existing site constraints. Raised crosswalks will further improve pedestrian safety and access from Fifth Avenue into the interior of the park. The reconfigured parking area will have 71 standard parking spaces and 8 ADA spaces between the three lots.

The historic cobblestone driveway will be converted to a limited access driveway for service and delivery, separating these uses from park visitors. Parking stalls will be porous paving with underground storage, and planted islands and bump outs will reduce heat island effect while providing a more park-like character.

-  New Park Entrances
-  New Building Entry Plazas
-  Enhanced Park Entrances
-  New Paths