



ROUGE PARK

MASTER PLAN 2026

March 2026

**Please take a
seat at a chair
by the screen**

**WELCOME
AND THANK
YOU FOR
COMING
TONIGHT!**



ROUGE PARK

City Master Planning Team



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ROUGE PARK

MASTER PLAN 2026

TONIGHT'S DISCUSSION

1 40 minute
presentation

2 move to tables
closer look at maps
feedback & questions



**Brief overview of Rouge Park
Master Plan project and schedule**



**Share what we've heard and learned
about Rouge Park over last few
months**



**Share some initial ideas for Rouge
Park and then move to tables to get
your feedback on them**



Updates and What's Next

Rouge Park is 1 of 13 Regional Parks



ROUGE PARK

MASTER PLAN 2026

PROJECT GOALS

**Planning
process
completed by
late Summer**



Alongside the community, develop a long-term vision for Rouge Park that acknowledges past efforts and reflects existing commitments and sentiment



Develop a strategy for moving the vision forward with a phased implementation plan over the next 1-15 years



Look for opportunities to continue to coordinate with partners and the community



A PARK MASTER PLAN **DOESN'T**...



...mean we'll have funding to do everything. The Plan will allow us to begin to secure funding and make progress over time.



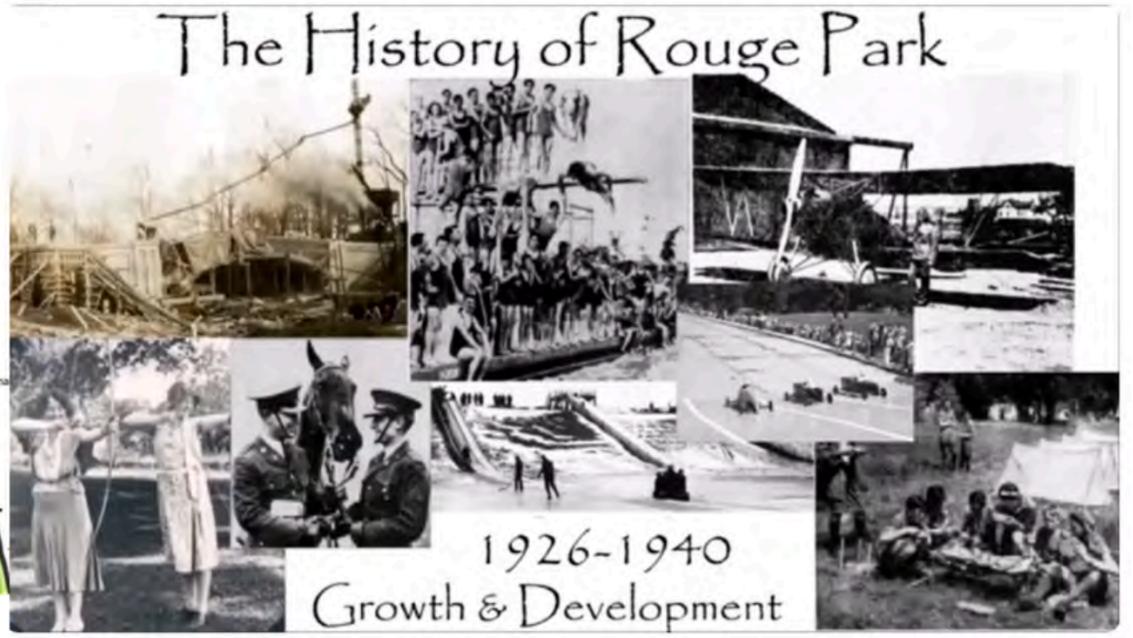
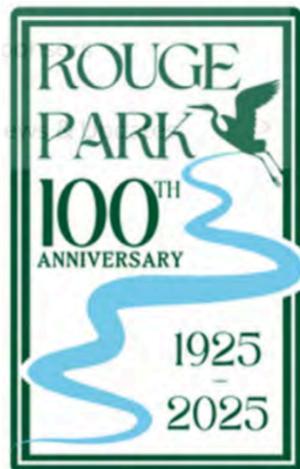
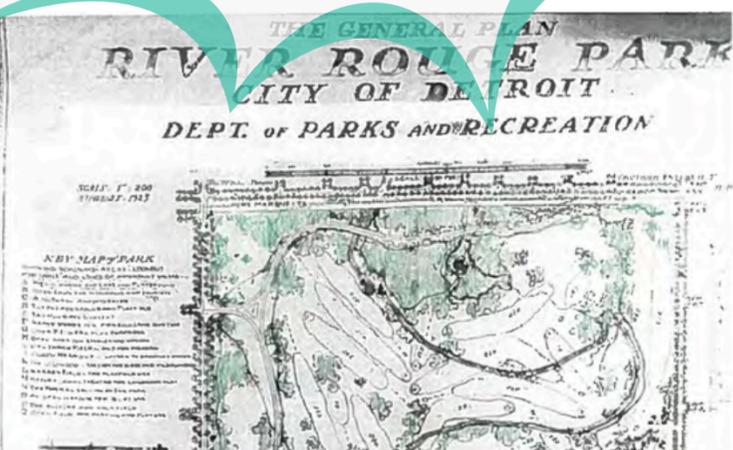
...get into details such as picking out an exact pavilion, or specific trees to plant. The Plan will document the desire to have these elements and approximate locations. More details will come when construction documents are developed and funding is secured.



...mean things can't change. It will be a guide but not meant to be rigid. If needed, it can be updated to reflect changing wants and priorities.

We've learned a lot about the park over the past several months

Continue to build upon and learn from work that's been done



We've learned a lot about the park over the past several months

Continue to build upon and learn from work that's been done

HISTORY OF THE PLAN

The Rouge Park Master Plan was driven by the vision and values expressed by members of the Rouge Park community including residents, neighborhood organizations, park user groups, and other stakeholders.

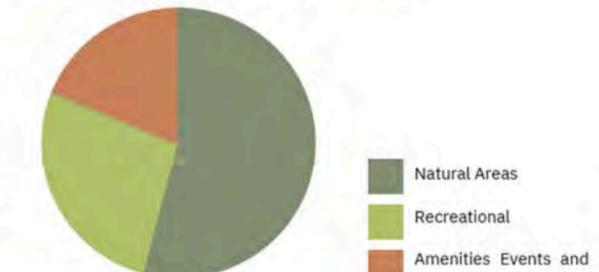
The Friends of Rouge Park provided opportunities for input into the plan beginning with a Community Visioning Session held in May 2011 followed by many community meetings and formal planning assistance from Lawrence Technological University's School of Design.



THE ROUGE PARK MASTER PLAN WAS DRIVEN BY THE VISION AND VALUES EXPRESSED BY MEMBERS OF THE ROUGE PARK COMMUNITY.

The community came to a consensus that preservation of, and access to, natural areas was the most important priority for the park, followed by the need for more recreational amenities, and more events and activities for all age groups. Improved regular maintenance of the park was stressed for all three areas.

TOP PRIORITIES OF THE COMMUNITY



600 JOIN HIKE IN ROUGE PARK
West Side Boys Go on Tramp Sponsored by Department of Recreation.



800 Boys Will Go On 1st Spring Hike
Approximately 800 boys are expected to take part Wednesday in the first spring hike of the Hiking club of the department of recreation at River Rouge park.



2 MODEL AIRPLANE FIELDS	4.7 MILES OF THE ROUGE RIVER
18 HOLE GOLF COURSE + DRIVING RANGE	ONE BASEBALL DIAMOND
ARCHERY RANGE	ONE BANQUET HALL
6 PLAY GROUNDS	3.5 MILES OF NATURE TRAILS
5 PICNIC SHELTERS	6.5 MILES OF PAVED TRAILS
1,184 ACRES (DETROIT'S LARGEST PARK)	
2 TENNIS COURTS	
2 BASKETBALL COURTS	
2 BRENNAN POOLS & SPLASH PAD	
2 HORSE SHOES	
2 SOCCER FIELDS	
3 MILES OF MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS	
PONY RIDES	
CAMP GROUND	

JOY & LAHSER RECREATION AREA

Currently in this area there is the Buffalo Soldiers Heritage Association barn and horse yards, an archery range, a control-line model airfield, the city maintenance building and four unused park buildings.

In the 1990's, construction was started on a 100 ft. ski hill west of Lahser with views of downtown Detroit and another large hill on the site of the former toboggan slides as part of a project to rebuild the winter sports area and create a 10 acre amphitheater. These two projects were never completed.

The proposed new amenities include:

- The completion of the existing amphitheater with the construction of a bandshell
- Development of a winter sports area including snow-making capability, a tow rope for tubing, an ice skating rink, and a comfort station building with skate and tube rentals
- 100 ft. observation tower on the unfinished ski hill
- Dog park
- Skate park (or at Brennan)
- Pump track (or at Brennan)
- Disc golf course
- Rock/ice climbing wall
- Picnic shelter
- Picnic tables

The parking lots along the service road will be enlarged and landscaped, and the Lahser Bridge will be rebuilt as a narrow pedestrian-only bridge. The older small buildings will be renovated for storage, office and activity space. Finally, a new name will be proposed for this recreation area.



EXISTING:	PROPOSED:
Sledding Hill	Amphitheater
Archery	Ice Rink
Horse Stables	Observation Tower
Model Airplane Field	Dog Park
	Skate Park
	Rock/Ice Climbing
	Disc Golf
	Marsh Viewing Deck
	Comfort Station
	Picnic Shelter
	Picnic Tables





We've learned a lot about the park over the past several months

We've heard from a number of folks

- Block Club Representatives
- Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance
- Friends of Rouge Park
- Dept of Neighborhoods
- Council Persons Office
- GSD Public Safety/Security
- Various Internal Departments
- Wayne County Roads/Parks
- Detroit Greenways Team
- Buffalo Soldiers
- Elite Archery
- Black to the Land Coalition
- Camp Casey
- Motor City Mountain Biking Association
- Detroit Outdoors
- Detroit PAL

AMONG OTHERS....

PARK OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

Issues

- Park spaces feel disconnected
- Unpermitted vending
- Extended partying
- Trash pick up and dumping
- Weekend trash & shelter cleaning
- Police shooting range in park
- Overgrown vegetation
- Dogs (off-leash and/or loose)
- Flooding
- Speeding
- Condition of roads and trails
- Parking in bike lanes
- Negative media stories
- Gravel drive in poor condition
-

Wants

- Improved/simplified permitting process
- Access management/road closures
- Office space (for maintenance and for nonprofits)
- Non-profit storage space
- Rebrand of “GSD Security” to “Park Security”?
- Additional public safety/security presence in the park
- Interpretation of history and natural features
- Cohesive branding, signs, messaging, education, communication, etc
- ...



SOME of the
things we're
hearing...



PUBLIC SURVEY December & January

Thank you for spreading the word and filling it out!



321 SURVEYS COMPLETED



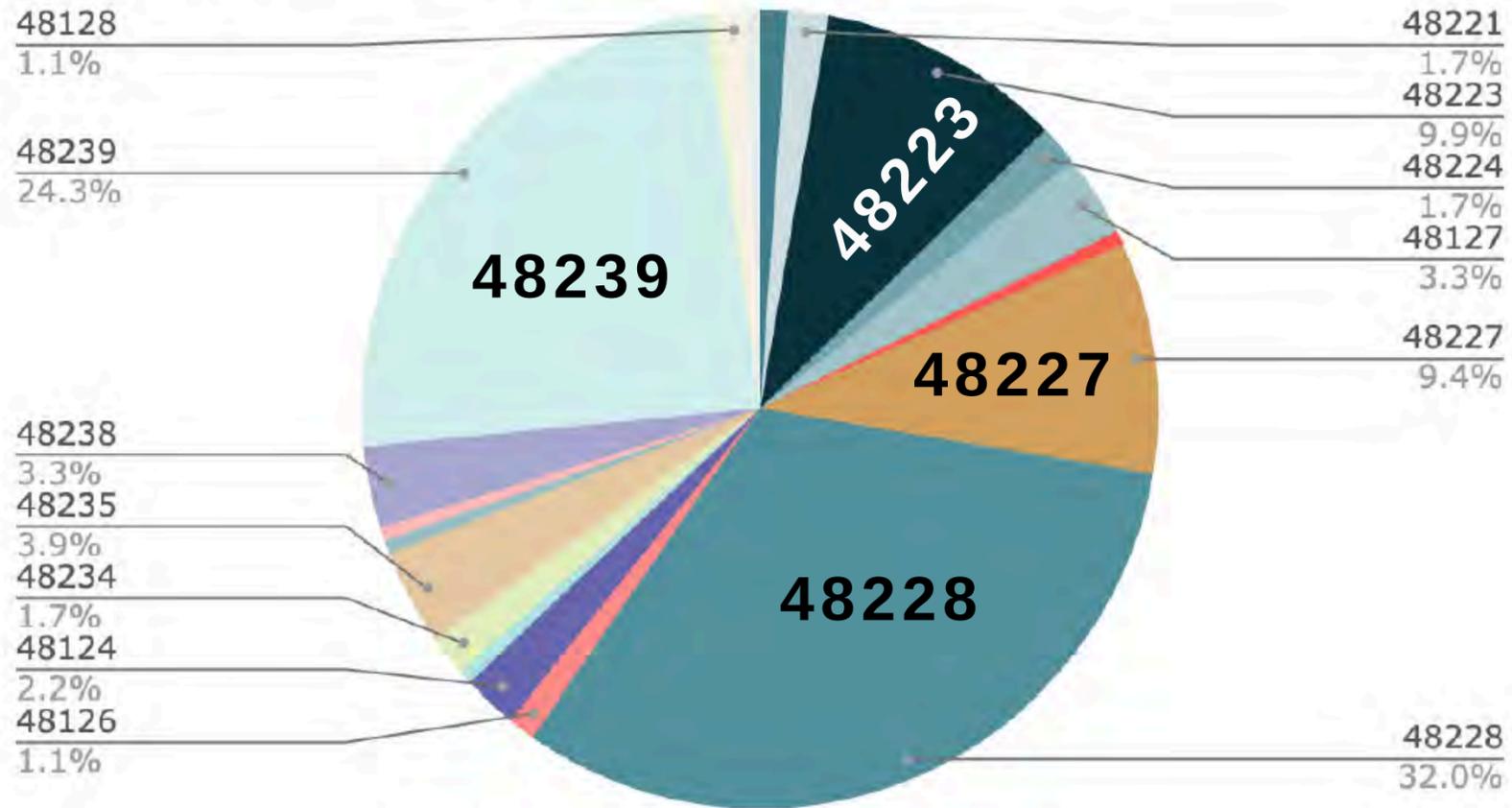
Rouge Park Master Plan

Rouge Park - Background
Rouge Park is Michigan's largest city park and just celebrated its one hundredth birthday in 2025. It hosts six miles of paved walking paths, two pools, a golf course and driving range, sports courts and fields, model airplane flying fields, picnic areas, a horse barn and more. With 4.6 miles of the Rouge River as its centerpiece, its natural areas offer many miles of hiking and mountain biking trails winding through over 400 acres of forest, 60 acres of native prairie and a 5 acre marsh.

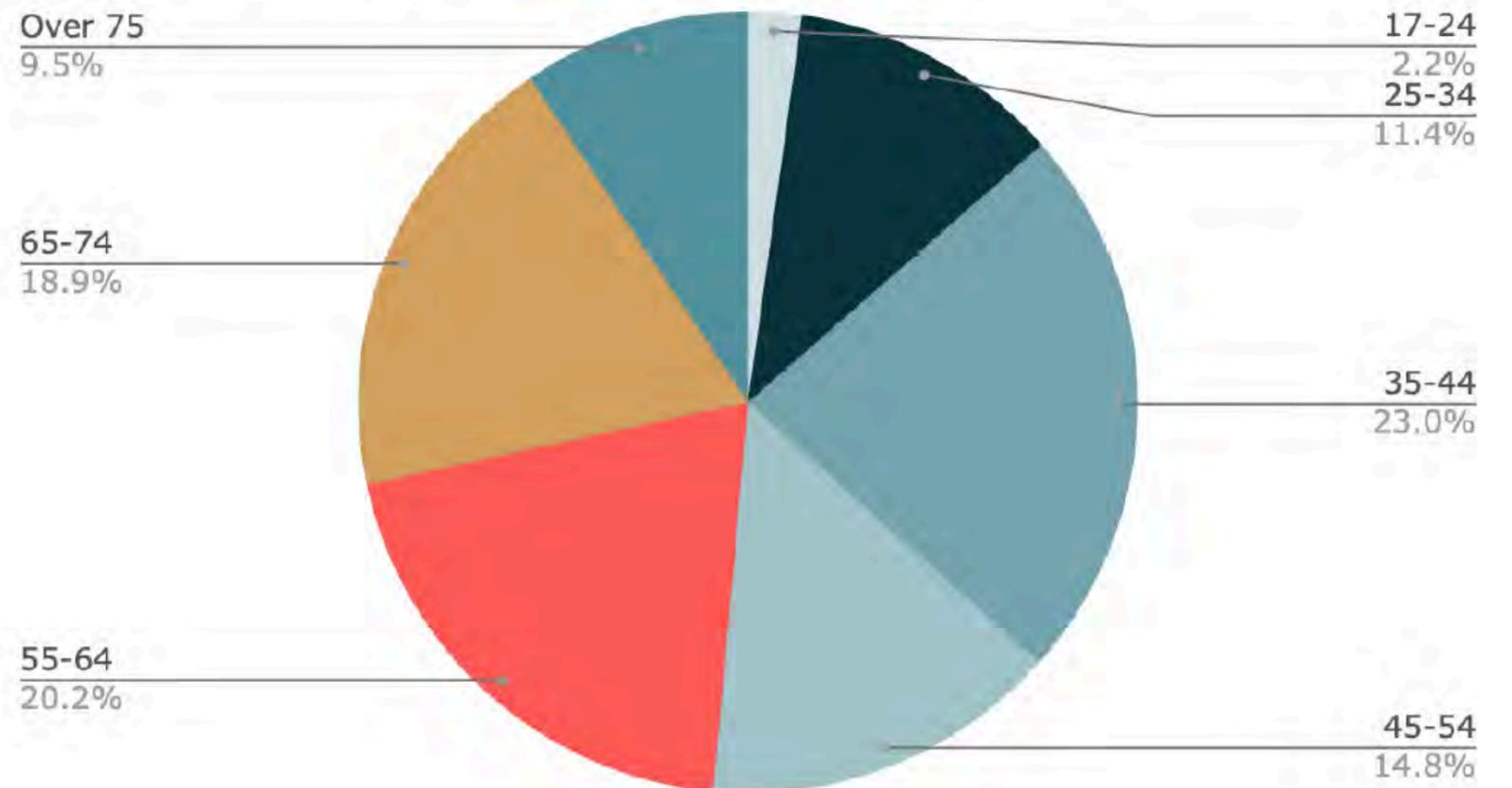
Rouge Park Master Plan
The City of Detroit General Services Department is embarking on a nearly year-long process to work with the community to create a Master Plan for Rouge Park. A Master Plan is a process of creating a long-term vision for future development, management and improvements that can then be used to prioritize projects for funding. It is critical that this process includes the community which is where you come in. We need your input in this year-long process to create a long term vision for Rouge Park to be implemented over the next 10-15 years.

ROUGE PARK PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

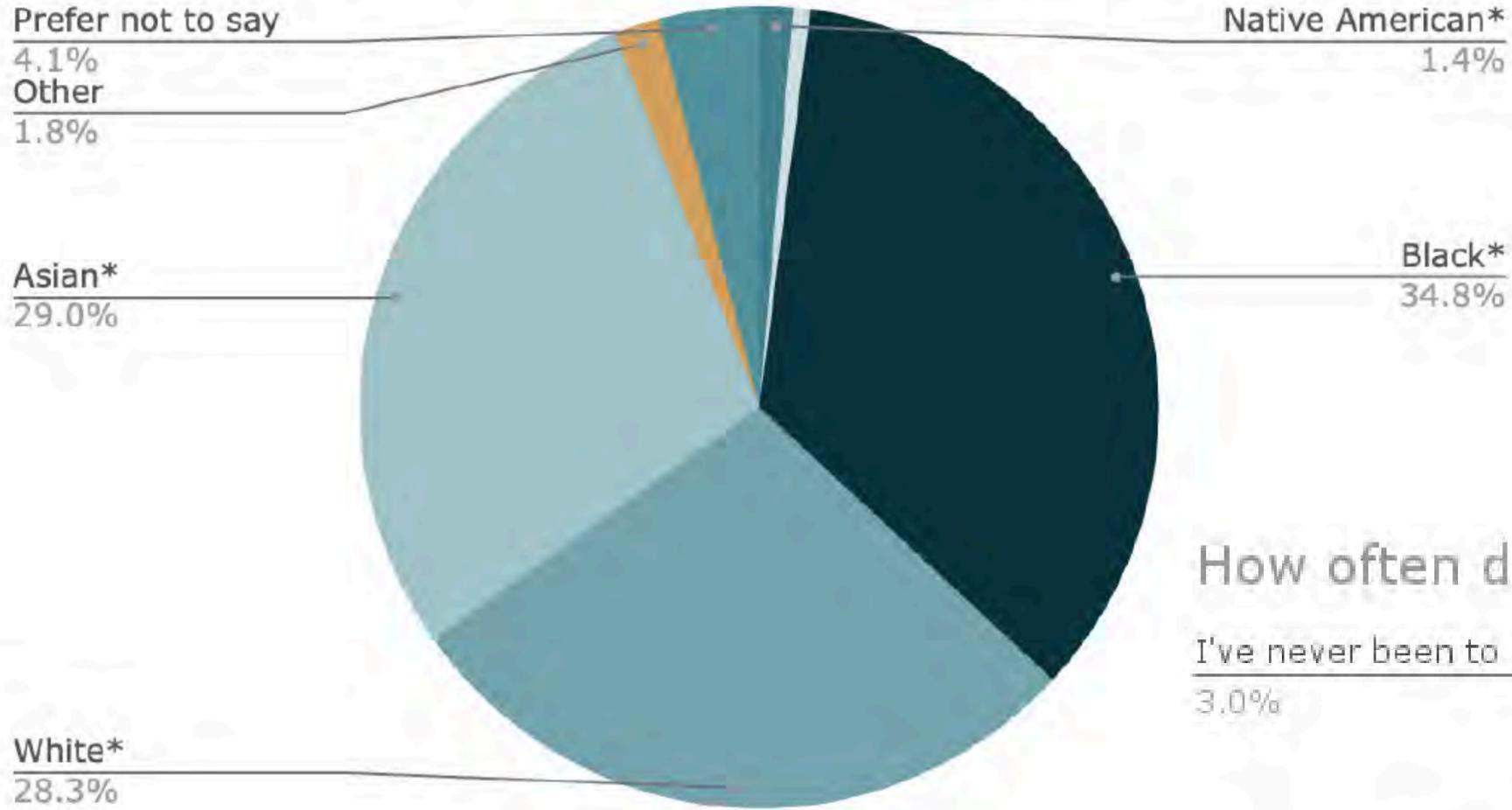
What is your zip code?



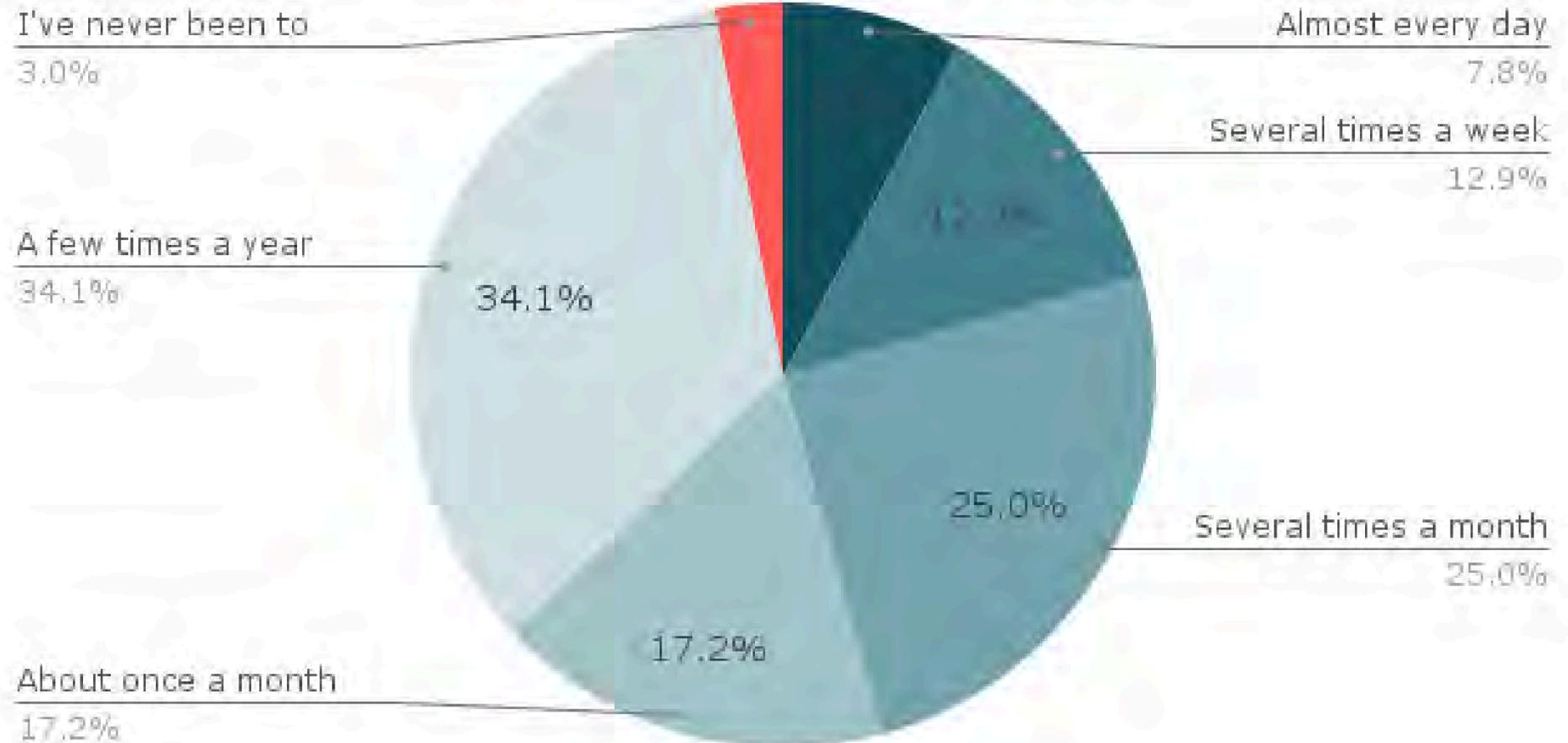
What is your age?



Which of the following best described your race?

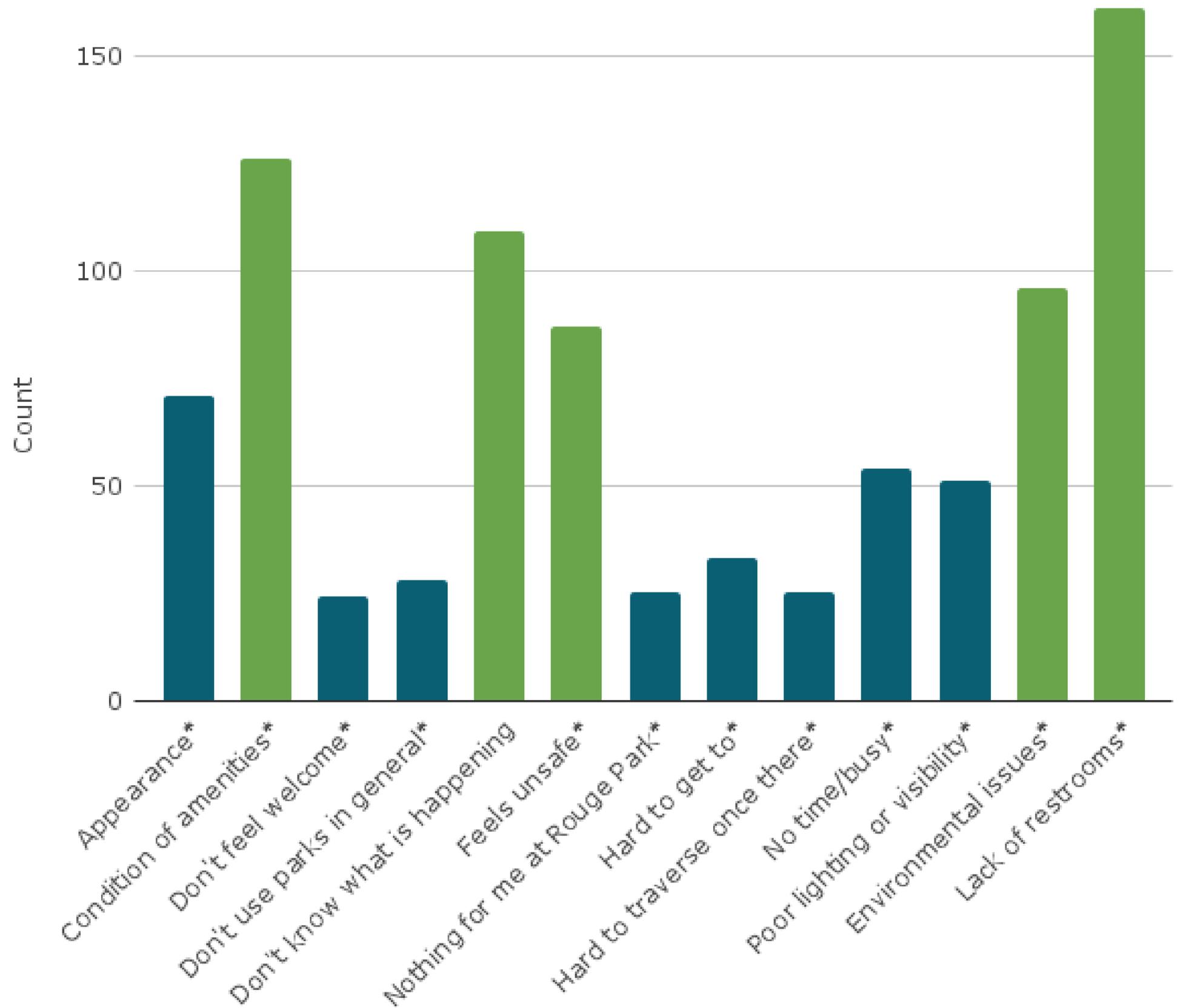


How often do you/your family visit Rouge Park?



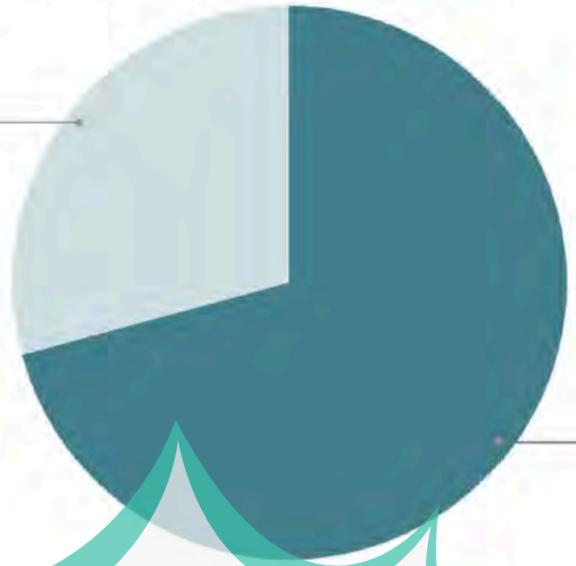
What are the biggest barriers to using Rouge Park?

- Restrooms
- Condition
- Unaware of happenings
- Environmental issues
- Feels unsafe



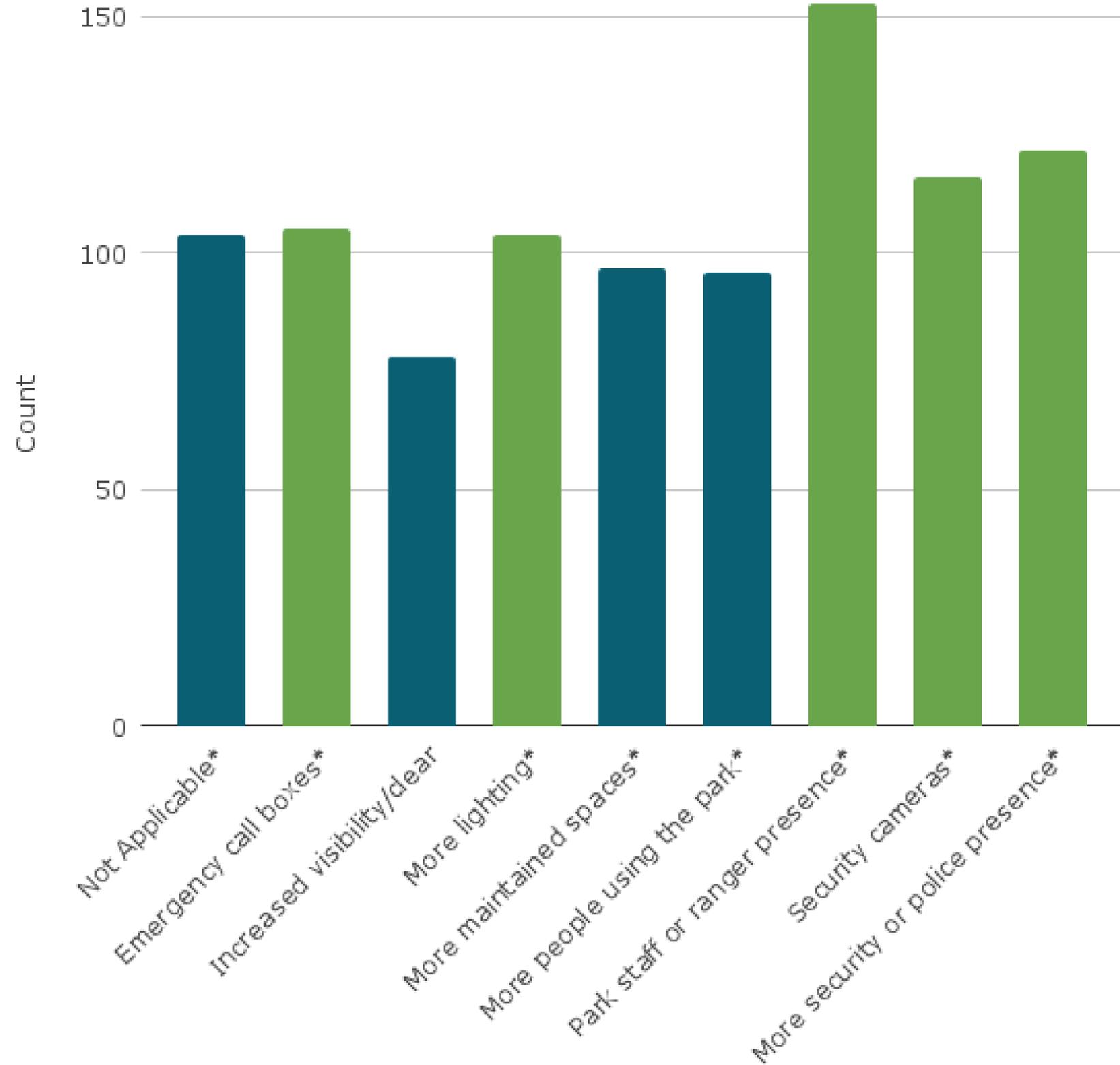
Do you feel safe visiting Rouge Park?

No
29.2%



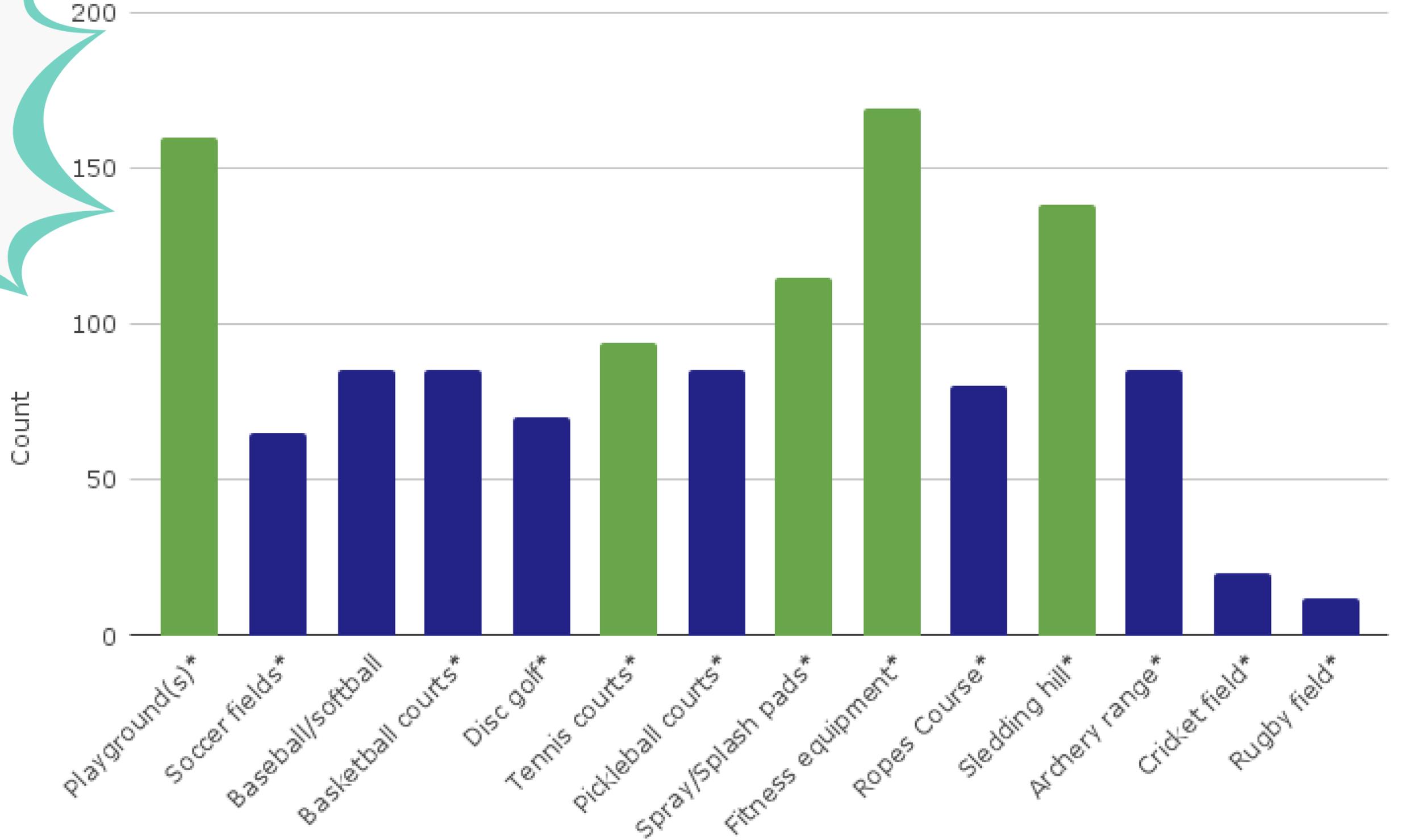
- Staff/Ranger
- Security or police
- Cameras
- Call boxes
- Lighting

What would help improve your sense of safety?



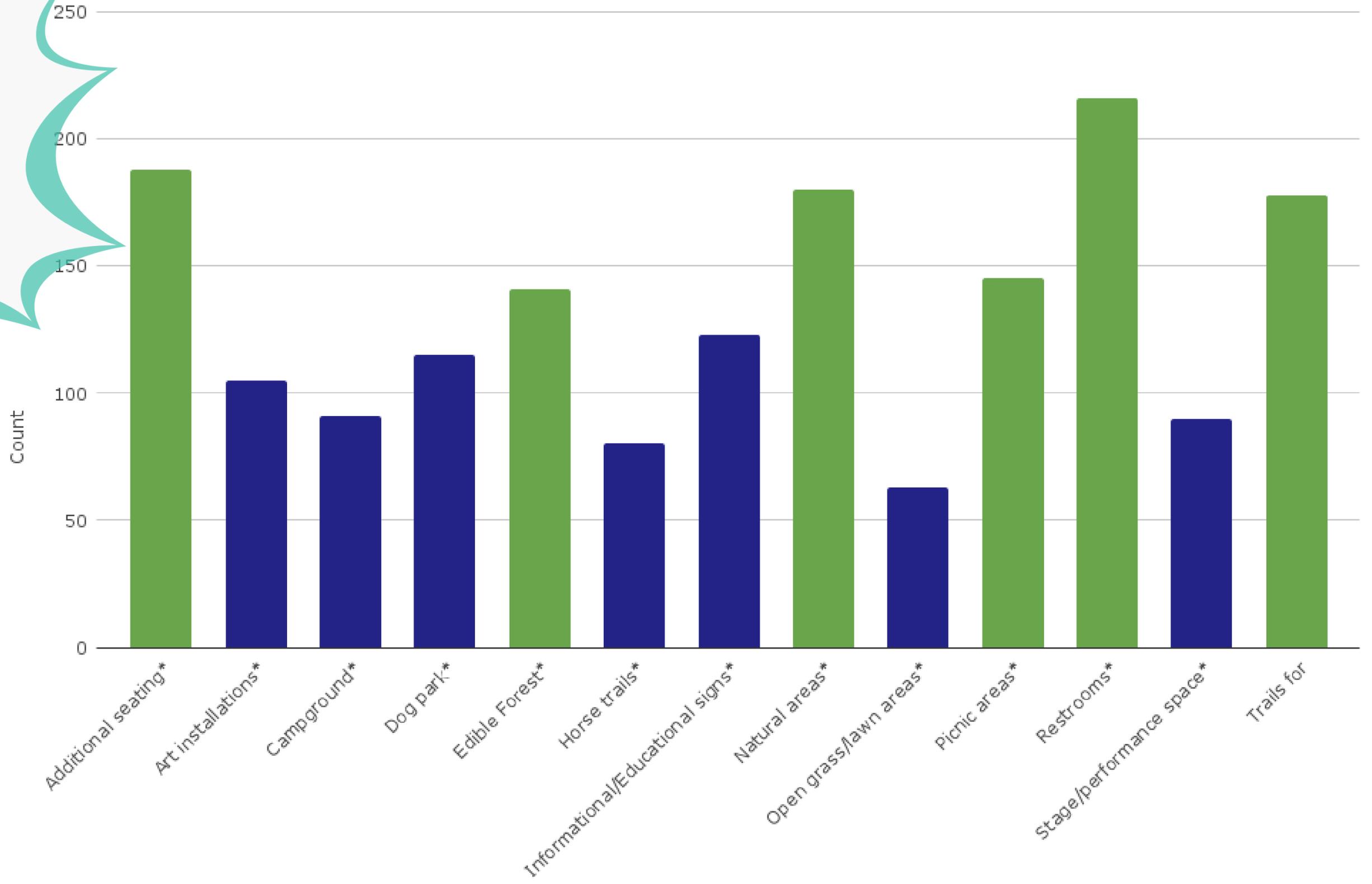
What are the top 5 recreation / sports amenities you'd like to see or see improved at Rouge Park?

- Fitness Equip
- Playgrounds
- Sledding Hill
- Splash Pad
- Tennis Courts



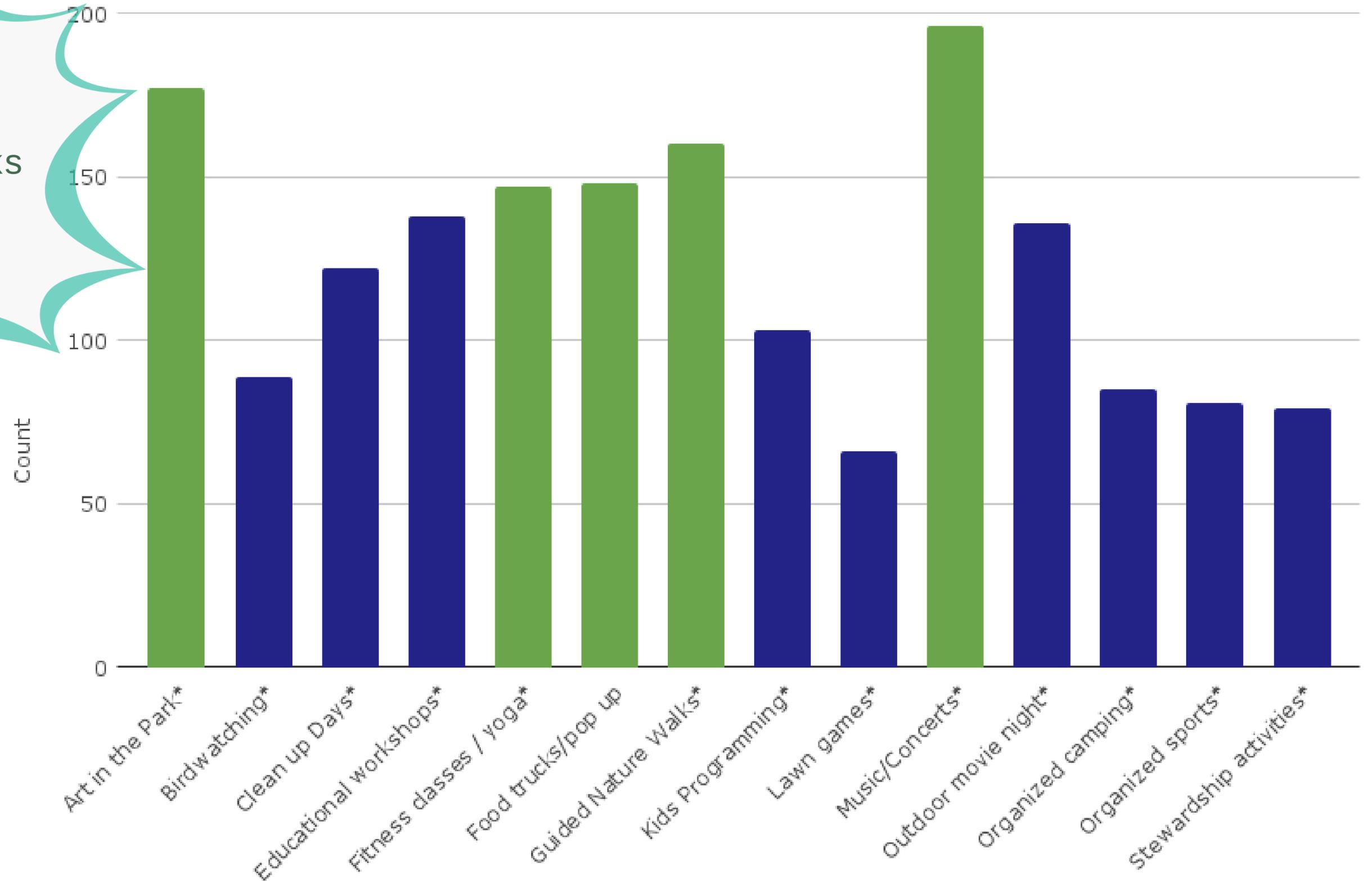
What are the top 5 leisure / passive amenities you'd like to see or see improved at Rouge Park?

- Restrooms
- Seating
- Trails
- Natural Areas
- Edible Forest



What types of programs/events would you most likely attend at Rouge Park?

- Music/Concerts
- Art in the Park
- Guided Nature Walks
- Food Trucks
- Fitness/Yoga



Is there anything else you would like us to know about Rouge Park?

Response summary:	Count:
Love the park! / It is beautiful / great!	25
Cleanliness is an issue	10
Prioritize habitat restoration / protection	9
More / improved / ADA trails	7
Rouge greenway to connect to other parks/Hines Drive	7
Concern with shooting range in the park	7
More security / cameras	6
New facilities: Ice skating rink, nature center, butterfly house	4
More bathrooms	4
Better bike lanes (parked cars an issue) within the park	3
Nature education / programming	3
Overgrowth on paths/roads	3
Better connection / access to the water	3
Looks run down	3
Too many roads / not enough emphasis on pedestrians	3
Dog dumping / off-leash dogs are an issue	3
Issue at Plymouth parking lot / splash pad - weed, alcohol	3
Indoor pool / improvements to Brennan	2
More sports / recreation programming	2

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO COVER NEXT

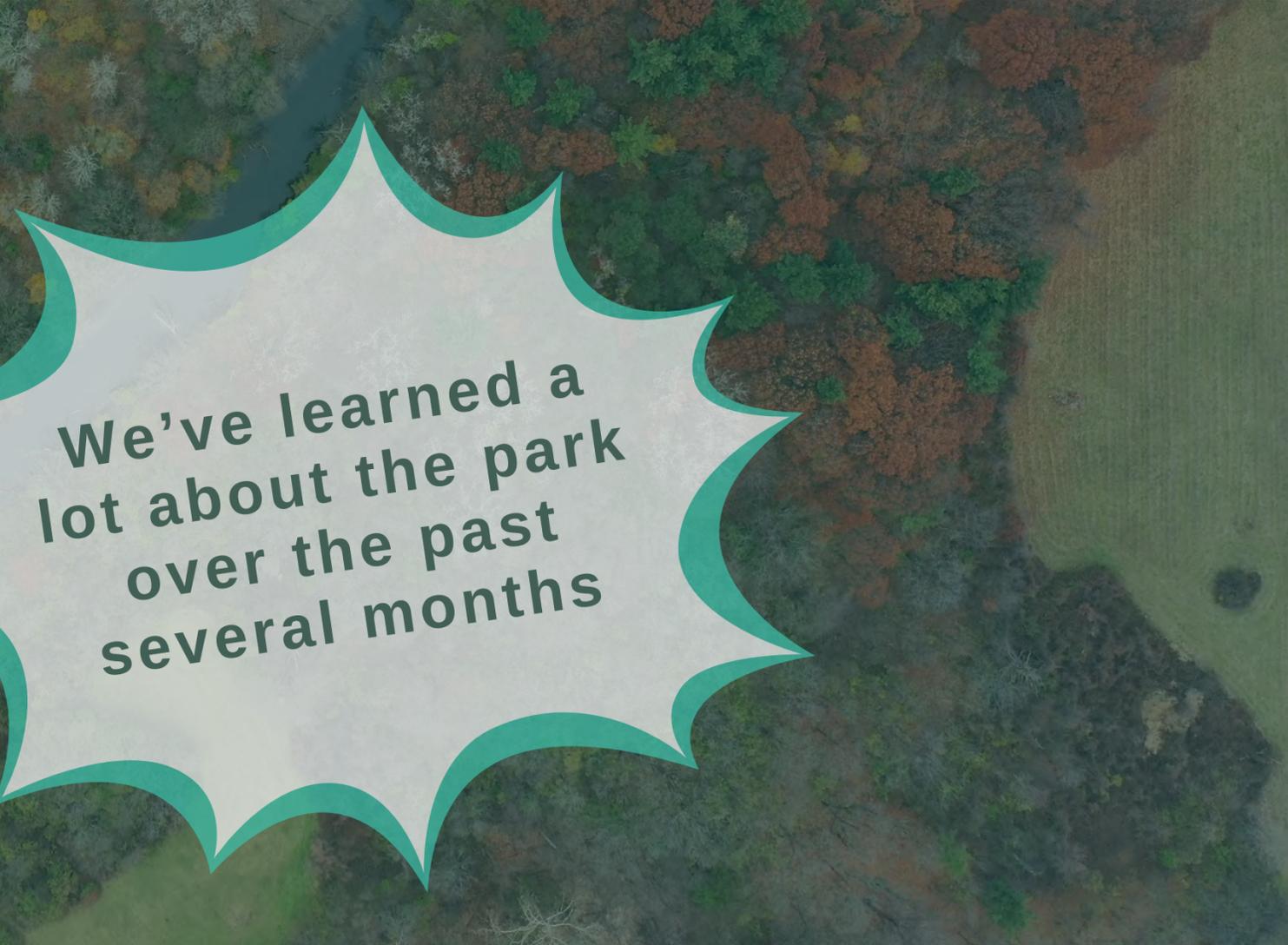
- **A high-level look at a few existing conditions**
- **Review preliminary ideas**
- **Move to the tables and get your feedback**



Any questions about the process or what you've heard so far?



BACKGROUND & EXISTING CONDITIONS



We've learned a lot about the park over the past several months



Historic Plans, Aerials and Images



Floodplain & Wet Areas



Topography



High Quality Natural Areas & Restored/Recovering Areas

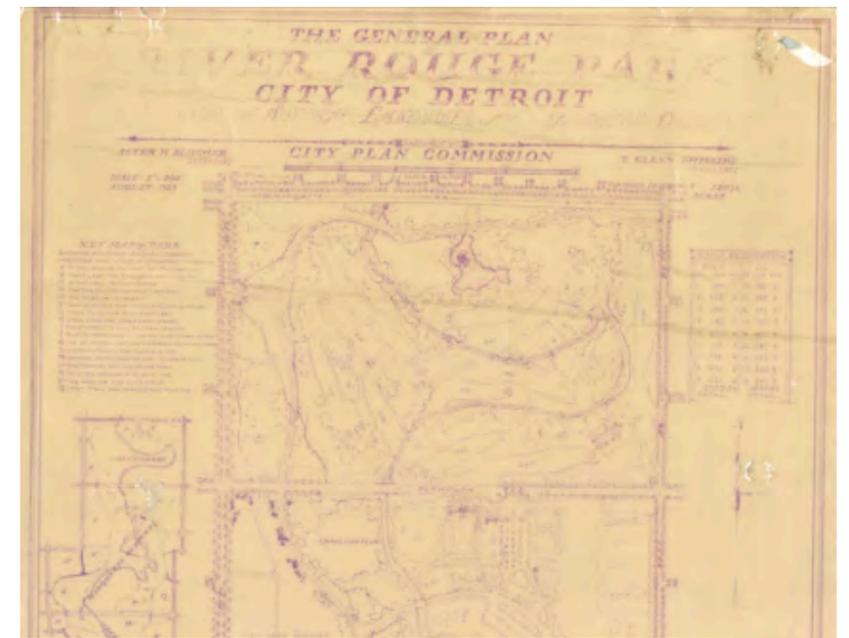


Strava Walking, Running, Biking Routes



Traffic Data & Analysis

1925 Rouge Park Master Plan



NOTE— This tract of land in its general character presents a very pleasing effect of Pastoral Landscape.

The atmosphere of quiet and peacefulness that gives this character has been represented in pictures by many great artists— some examples are: THE GREENWOOD, SUMMER SILENCE, AUTUMN OAKS, and PEACEFUL VALE by GEORGE INNESS.

The design represented by this GENERAL PLAN is the result obtained from a careful study to protect this pastoral landscape and to invite the motorists along driveways that will give sights of long sweeping views across broad acres of meadows with soft boundaries and distant forest trees.

The purpose of the design has been to preserve a natural environment— free from the rush and the city man's dominating influence. Here is to be preserved a landscape.

The design also expresses the compromise between the Park as a unit in itself and the main Thoroughfare which demand definite expression for direct lines of developed the pleasure drives within the park, a complete and the main thoroughfares of the city are given a right through with no particular relation to the park drive.

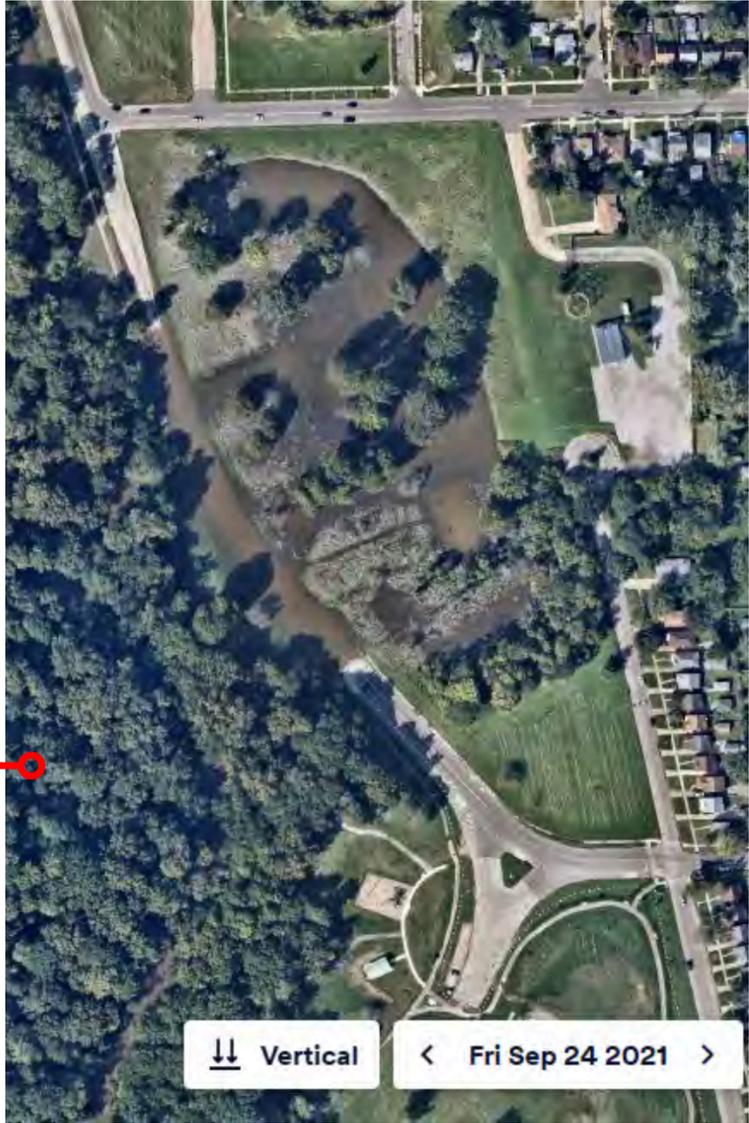
In addition to the greater Landscape character for valleys there is provided in some of the boundary sections relation with the quieter spaces, areas of more human which serve recreational need also, but do not detract of the larger units. In these outer sections are playfields, buildings, and formal treatments as the use demands.

The lasting good to come of the use of this great tract is wise use as such and in preserving the various sections functions in the whole and for nothing more. For in meadows and long valleys is for the mental pleasure of seeing them and contemplating upon the powers of the. The purpose of the playfields is to provide active bodily made to display the arts of man. And if each purpose protected the lasting beauty of the whole park is

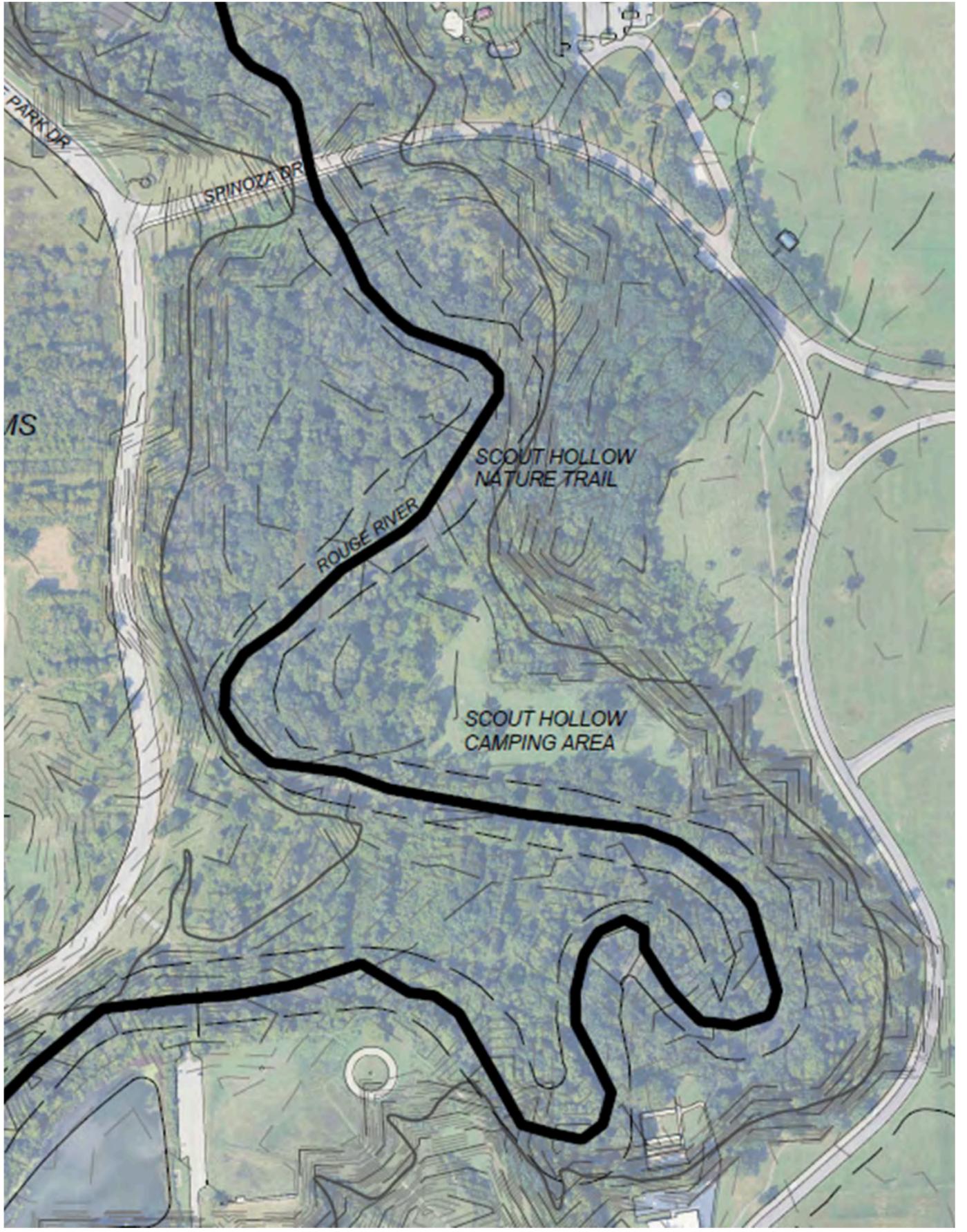
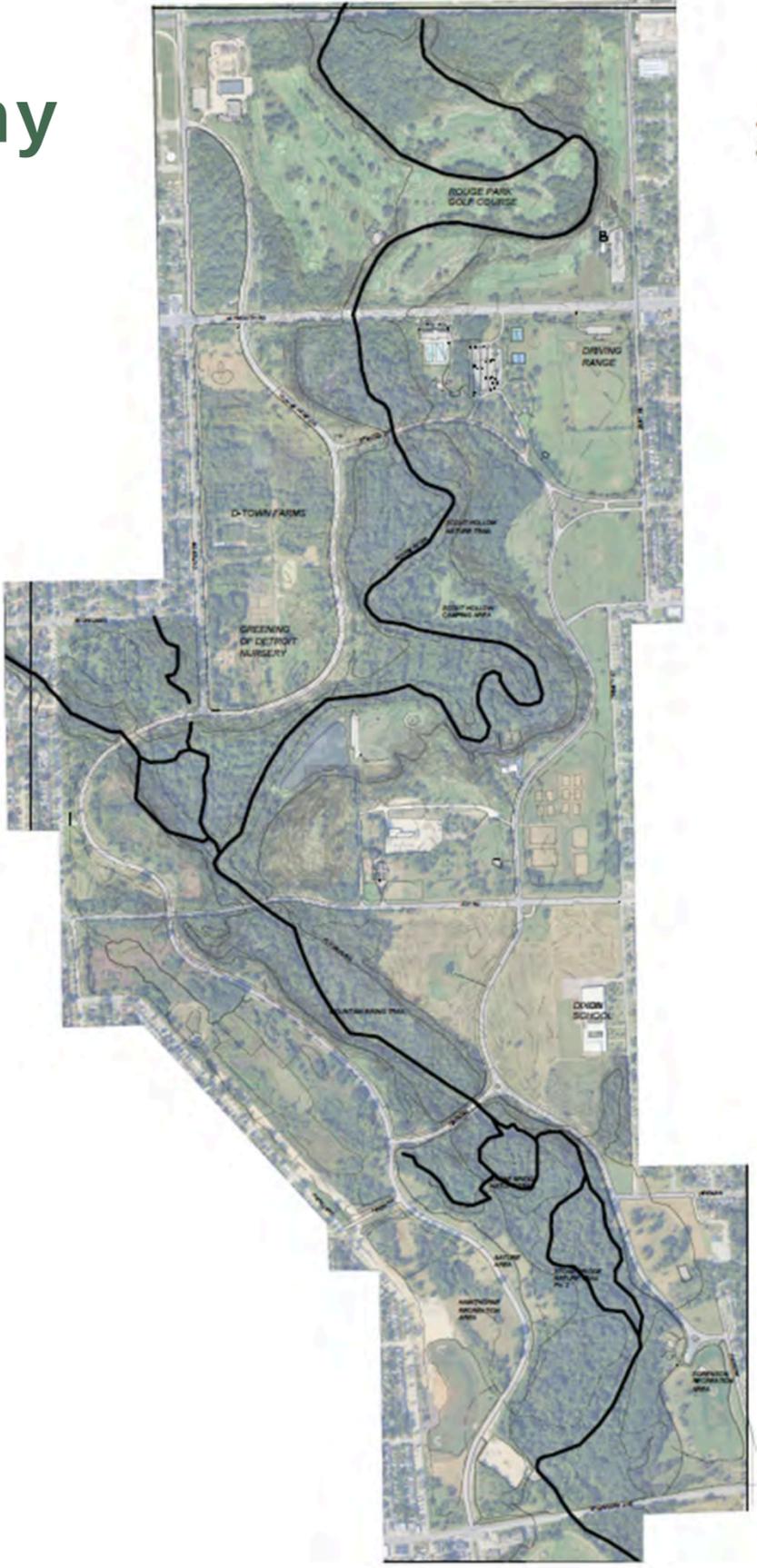


**Peace and Plenty - 1865
George Inness**

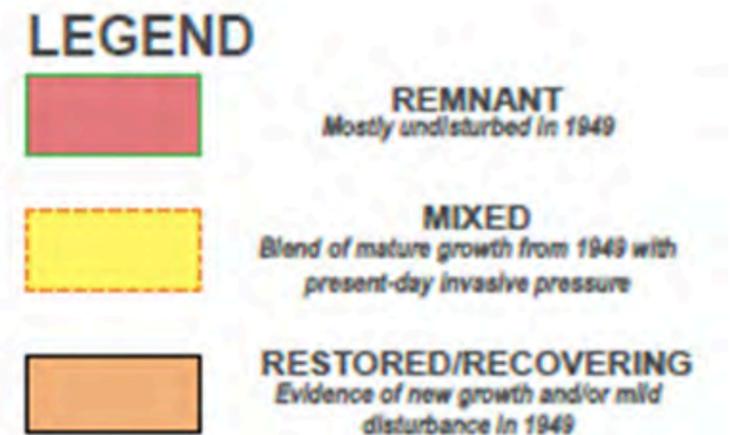
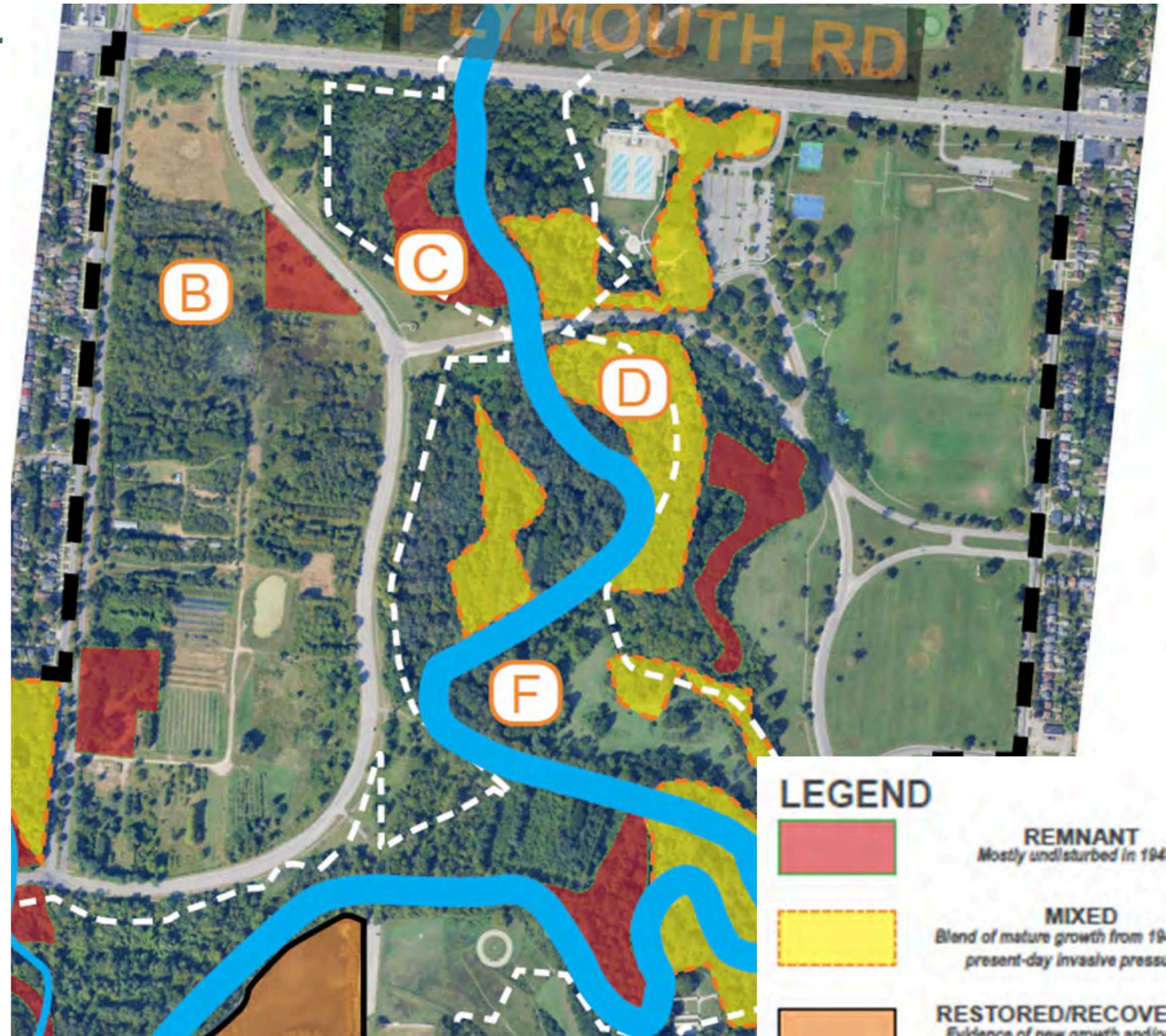
Floodplain & Wet Areas



Topography

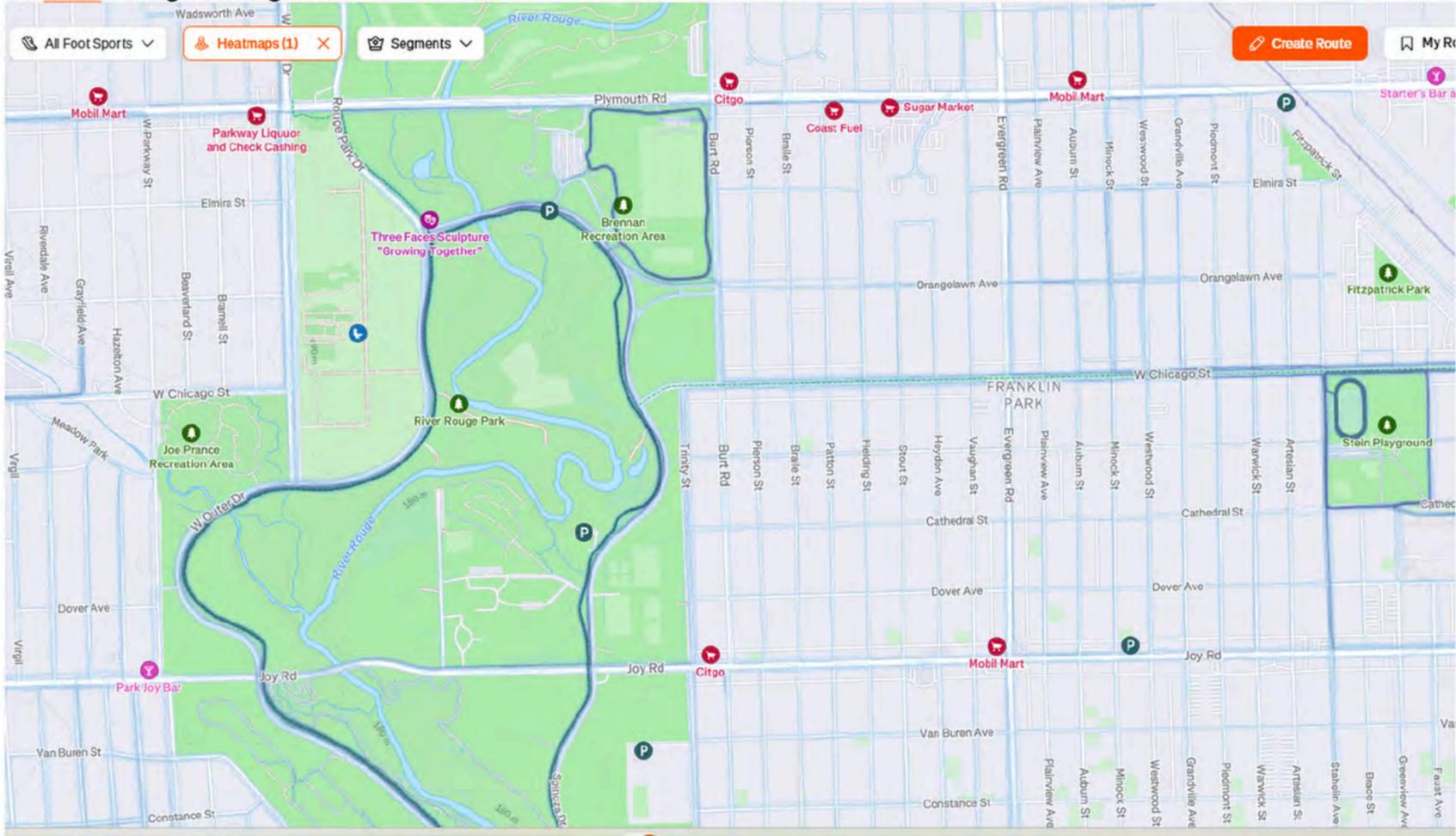


High Quality Natural Areas & Restored/Recovering Areas

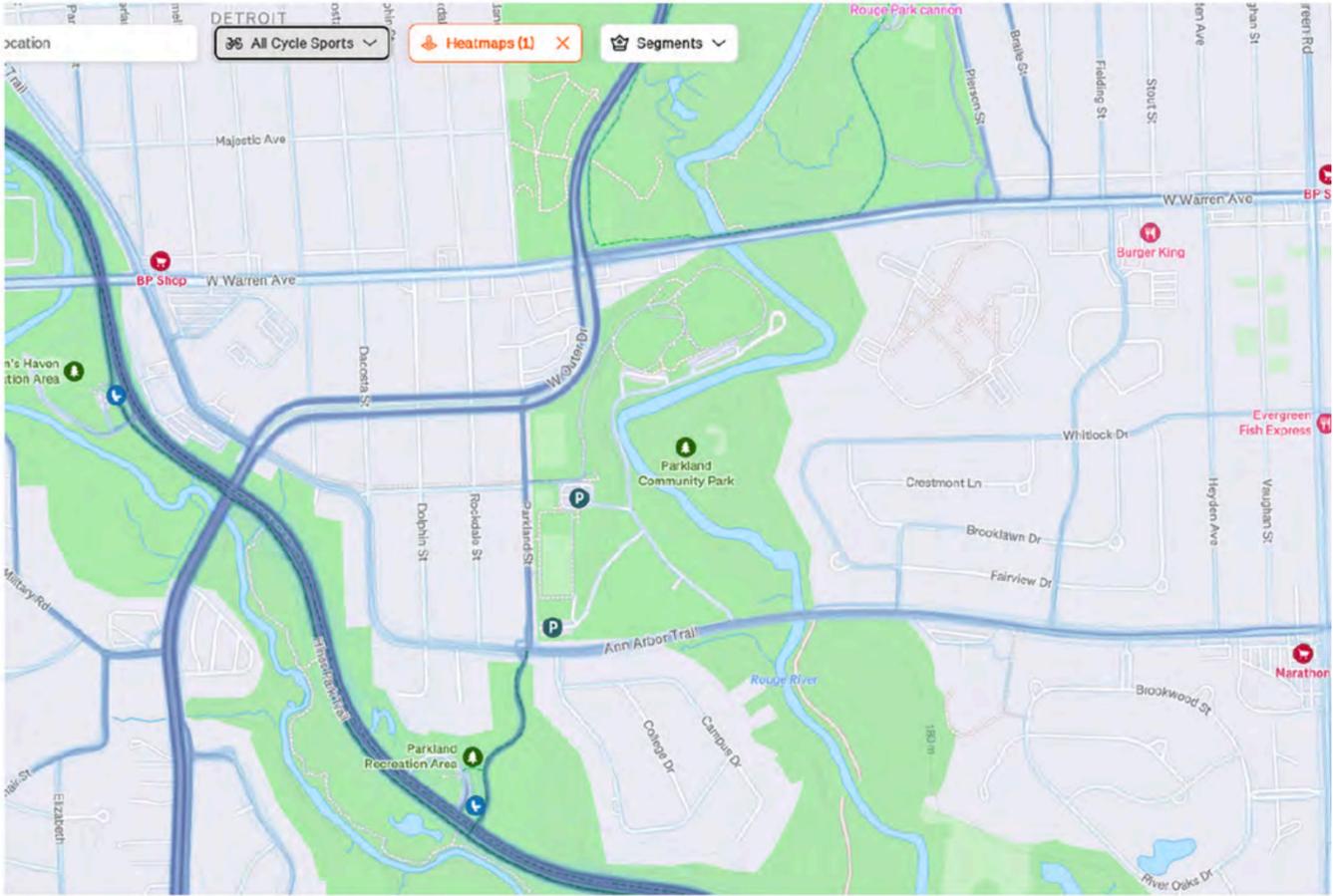


Strava Walking, Running & Biking Routes

Strava walking/running routes

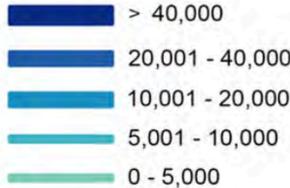


Strava biking routes



Traffic Data & Analysis

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)

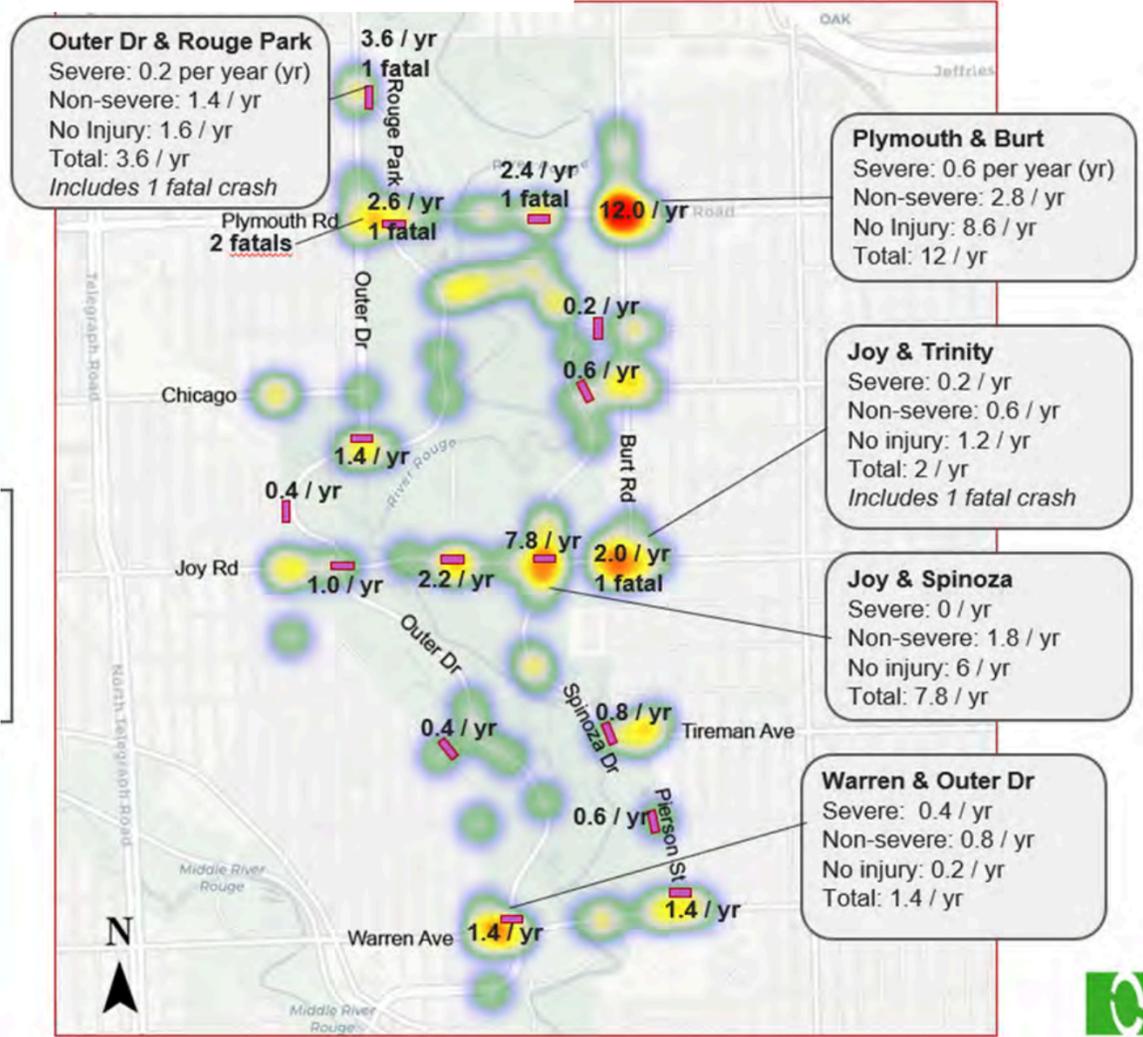


Source: SEMCOG



Crash Heat Map

Crash data is from a five-year period between 2020 and 2024.



Pedestrian Crashes



ROUGE PARK

MASTER PLAN 2026

SOME KEY ELEMENTS DRIVING THE PLAN

In no particular order



Community Priorities



Rouge Greenway



Traffic/Roads Safety



Connectivity



Park Safety



Natural Features and Resources

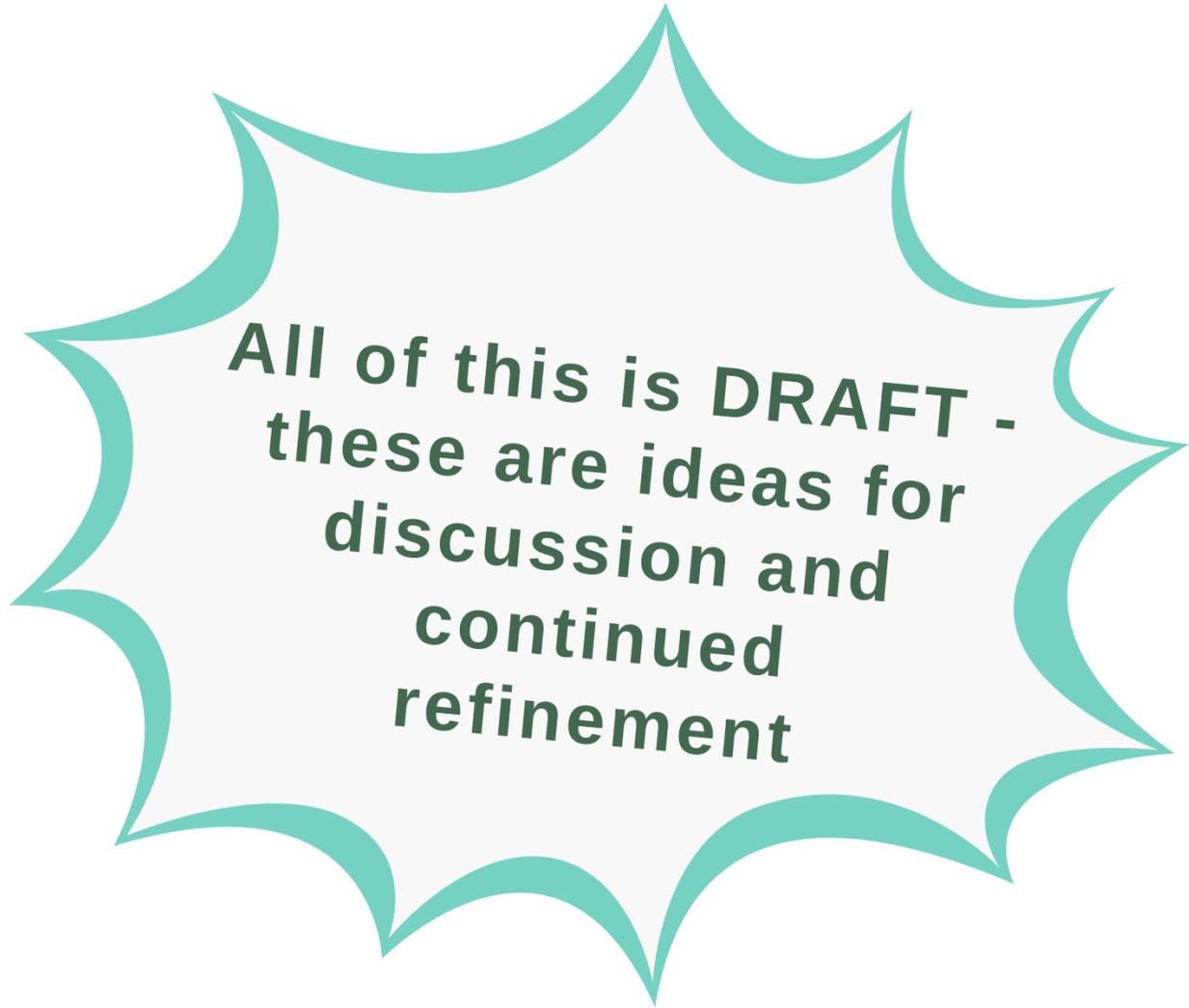


Past Planning Efforts

INITIAL IDEAS FOR FEEDBACK AND CONTINUED REFINEMENT

15 YEAR VISION

- We have a lot we'd like to share with you and want to have enough time to hear your feedback and thoughts
- We'll walk through a number of slides and maps
- Then we'll move to tables to discuss likes/dislikes/feedback
- Share back to the large group



*All of this is DRAFT -
these are ideas for
discussion and
continued
refinement*

INITIAL IDEAS FOR FEEDBACK AND CONTINUED REFINEMENT 15 YEAR VISION

- We have a lot we'd like to share with you and want to have enough time to hear your feedback and thoughts
- We'll walk through a number of slides and maps
- Then we'll move to tables to discuss likes/dislikes/feedback
- Share back to the large group

While we don't currently have funding for all of these ideas...

Planning for how these improvements can be funded and phased in over time is key.



INITIAL IDEAS FOR FEEDBACK



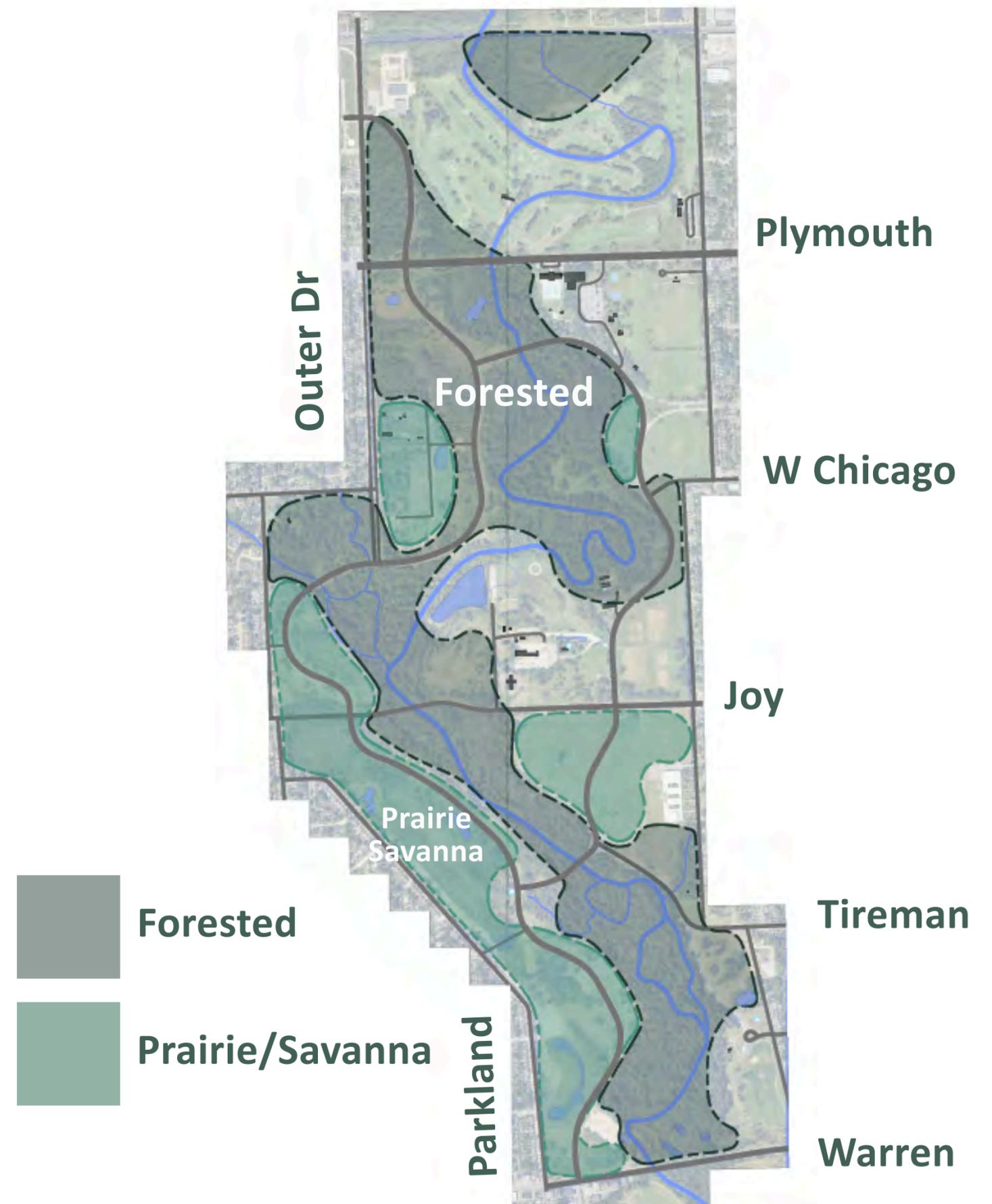
BIG PICTURE IDEAS

- ✓ Conservation & Restoration
- ✓ Rouge Park Dr / Outer Drive
- ✓ Rouge Greenway & Connectivity
- ✓ Active Recreation Areas

An overall map
is on the tables so
you can take a
closer look in
a few minutes

CONSERVATION, RESTORATION & PROTECTION

- Continues to be a **PRIMARY GOAL** for the park
- Protect, restore, and manage invasives in forested and prairie/savanna areas (and maintain them)
- Passive use:
 - Trails and pathways
 - Sitting, observing, learning, enjoying
- **75-80+% of the park for conservation, restoration and passive uses**



CREATE A NETWORK OF TRAILS, PATHS & CONNECTIONS

- **Rouge Greenway Trail (Hines to Rouge to Eliza Howell to Rogell)**
- On-Street Bike Lanes
- Park Trails, Paths, Sidewalks (Accessible)
- Nature Trails & Seasonal Footpaths
- Equestrian Trails

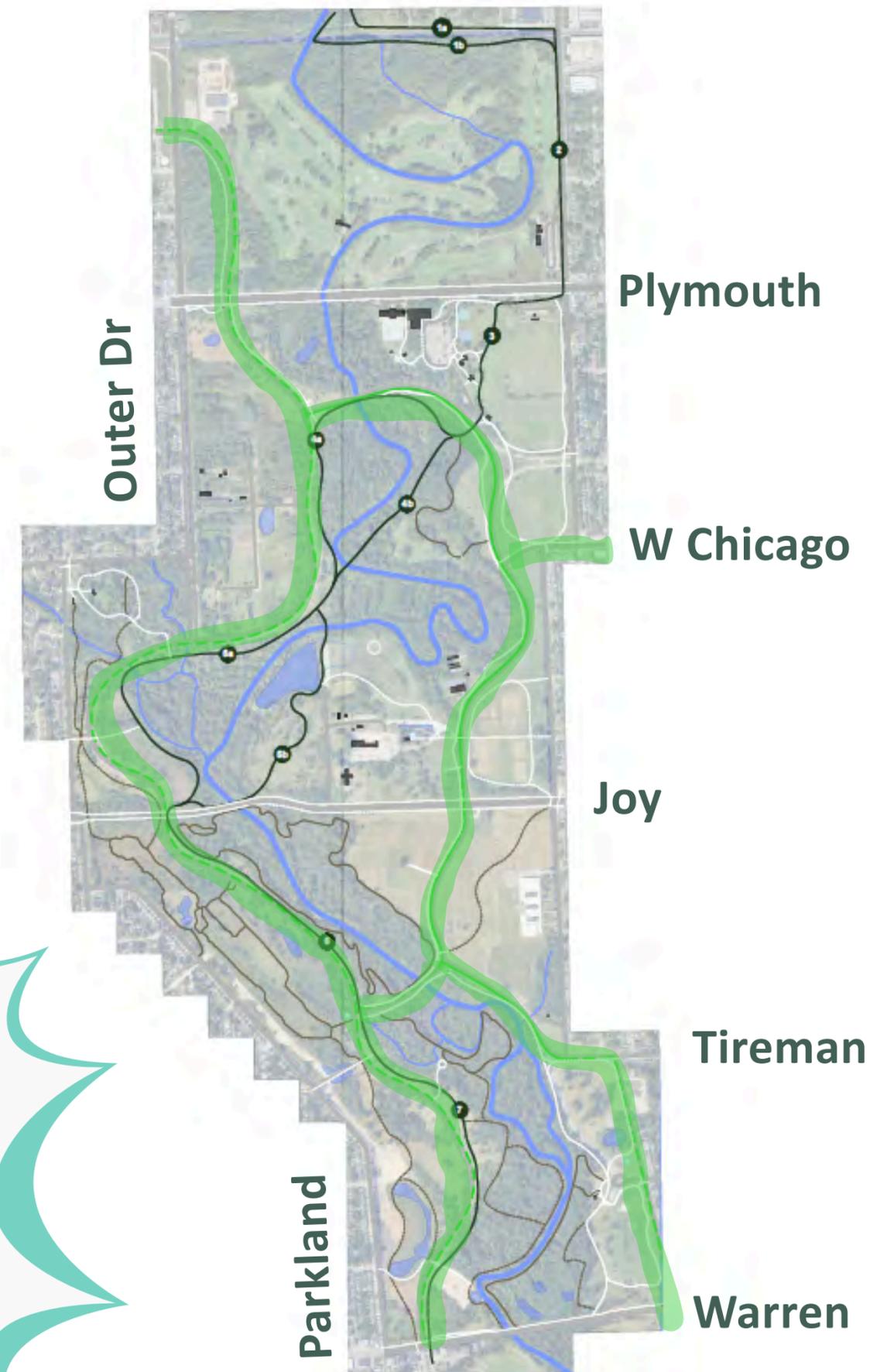
Connect the different areas of the park together and improve access to/from the neighborhoods



CREATE A NETWORK OF TRAILS, PATHS & CONNECTIONS

- Rouge Greenway Trail (Hines to Rouge to Eliza Howell to Rogell)
- **On-Street Bike Lanes**
- Park Trails, Paths, Sidewalks (Accessible)
- Nature Trails & Seasonal Footpaths
- Equestrian Trails
- Mountain Bike Trails

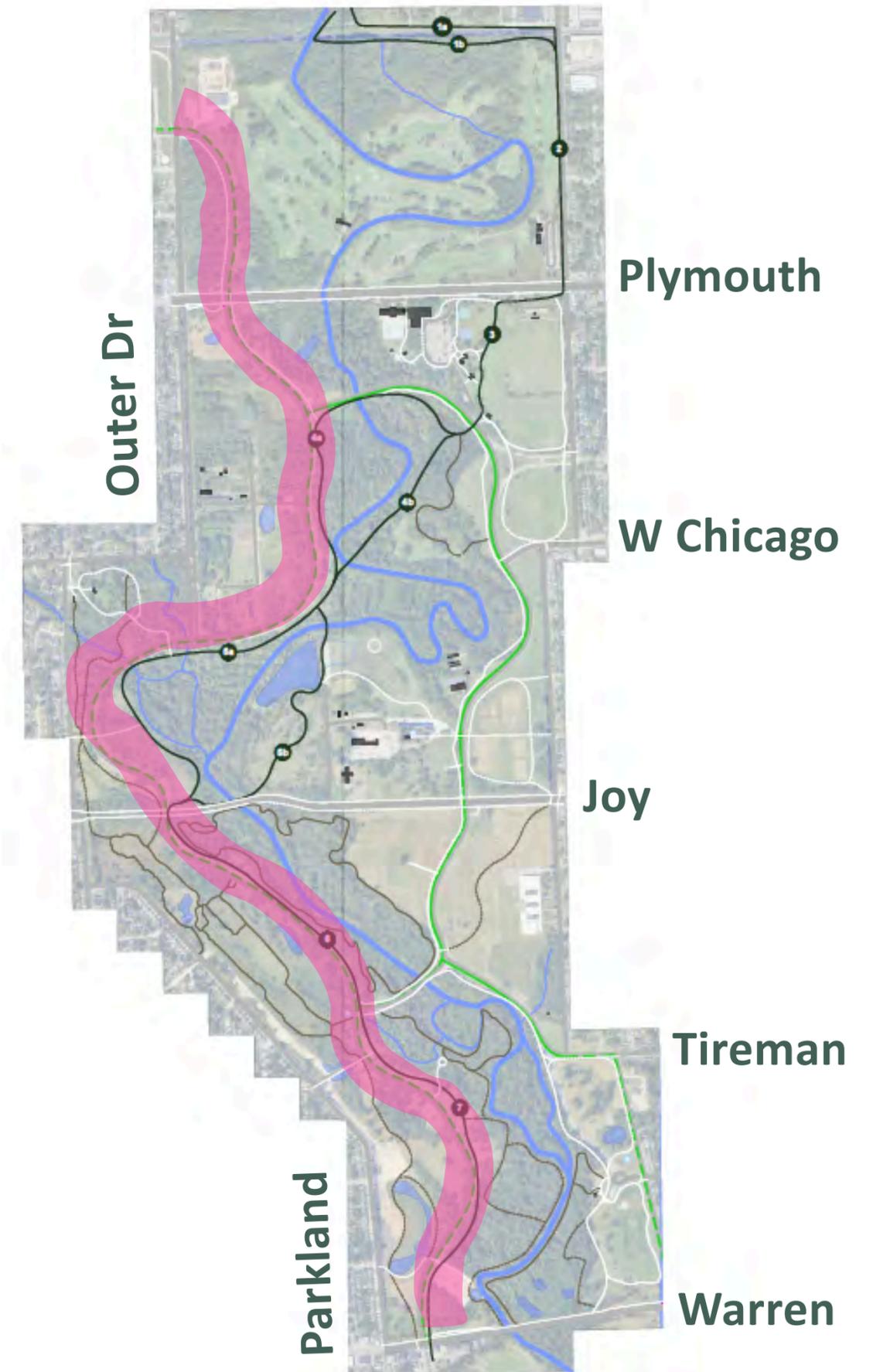
Connect the different areas of the park together and improve access to/from the neighborhoods



ROUGE PARK DRIVE OUTER DRIVE

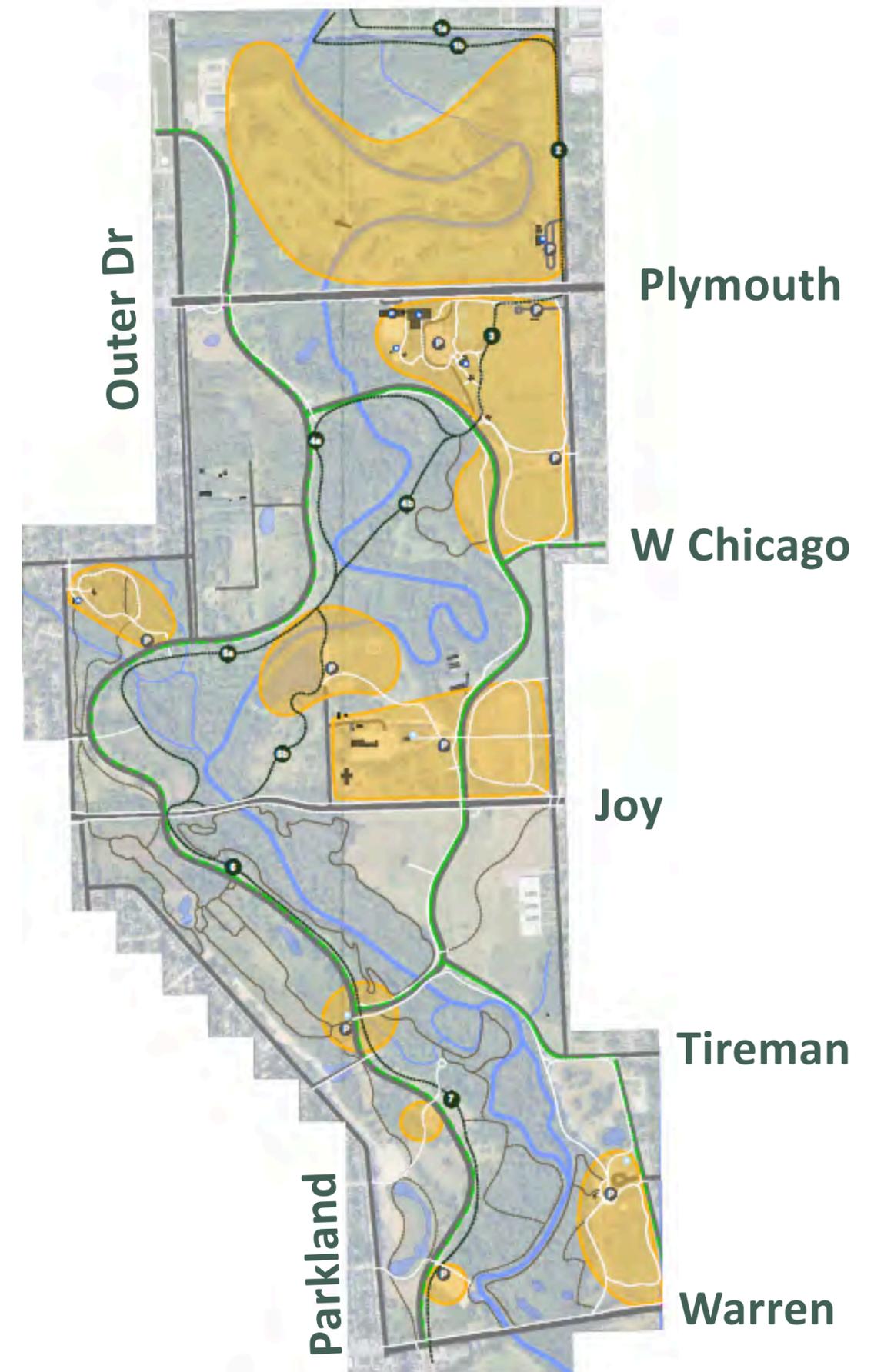
Similar design
as Spinoza

- reduce speeds & width
- 2 vehicle lanes
- two-way on-street bike lanes
- better defined parking



ACTIVE AREAS

- Places to meet, spend time, be active
- Connected by trails and pathways
- Encourage exploration and use
- Access to parking and restrooms

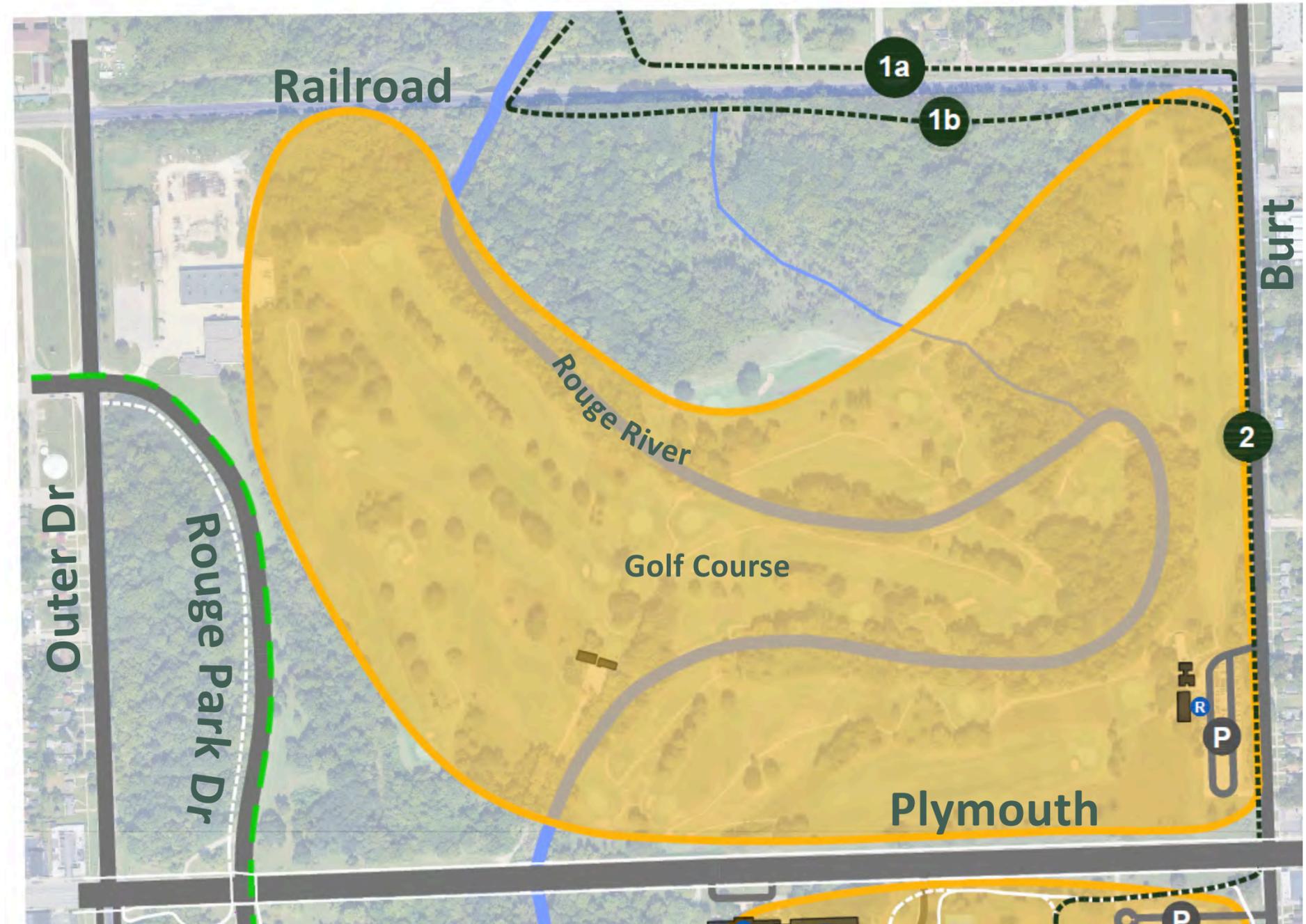


IDEAS FOR FEEDBACK

- Forest and floodplain protection
- Naturalize riverbanks
- Restore historic clubhouse
- Cart path bridge repairs/replacements
- Improve parking and entrance

- Rouge Greenway
- — — On-street bike lanes
- ▣▣▣▣▣ Paths, trails, sidewalks

Golf Course



Brennan Area

IDEAS FOR FEEDBACK

- Recreation Center Expansion ('26-'27)
- Parking lot improvements
- Expanded picnicking
- Connectivity btwn splash pad and pool
- Additional pavilions and gathering
- Safety improvements
- Outdoor art/music/performances
- Food trucks
- Sport field improvements/additions (football, turf?, cricket? etc)
- Archery adjacent to wooded area
- Burt Rd vehicle access to driving range
- Remove Orangelawn vehicle entry - bus turn around and parking only

..... Rouge Greenway

— — — — — On-street bike lanes

▬ ▬ ▬ ▬ ▬ Paths, trails, sidewalks

— - - - - Nature Trails



Joe Prance Area

IDEAS FOR FEEDBACK

- Retain farming and nursery operations
- Adjust primary access to Rouge Park Dr
- Invasives management
- Additional small picnic pavilions
- Update/replace play equipment
- Small parking and access on Outer Dr to take pressure off neighborhood
- Improved accessible loop trail
- Additional pathway to Outer Drive and future trail/Rouge Greenway
- Dover?

..... Rouge Greenway

— — — — — On-street bike lanes

▬ ▬ ▬ ▬ ▬ Paths, trails, sidewalks

— — — — — Nature Trails



Lahser Marsh Area

IDEAS FOR FEEDBACK



- Connectivity and views to river
- Invasives management
- Wetland/marsh restoration
- Boardwalk and overlook/bird viewing
- Relocated parking
- Long-term relocate archery (dry)
- Winter sports area
- Small picnic area
- Restore old nursery structure for storage, equip rentals
- Nature Center?

- - - - - Rouge Greenway
- - - - - On-street bike lanes
- - - - - Paths, trails, sidewalks



IDEAS FOR FEEDBACK

- Access management for maintenance area
- Non-profit office space
- Camp Casey expansion
- Public restrooms
- Expanded pastures and equestrian trails
- Additional picnic pavillions
- Additional parking

  On-street bike lanes
  Paths, trails, sidewalks

Buffalo Soldiers & Cozy Corners



IDEAS FOR FEEDBACK

- Parking management
- Restroom
- Pavilion/meeting location
- Improved signage
- Small natural play elements
- Prairie restoration/protection

- Mountain Bike Trail expansion?
- Pump Track?
- Bike Skills Course?

..... Rouge Greenway

— — — — — On-street bike lanes

▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ Paths, trails, sidewalks

— — — — — Nature Trails

Trailheads Area



Sorenson Area IDEAS FOR FEEDBACK

- Reconfigure road to address flooding
- Forest and floodplain restoration and protection
- Additional picnicking and small pavilions
- Restrooms
- Field restoration
- Basketball? Tennis? Multi-use?
- Fitness equipment?
- Sledding at Pierson Hill

- Nature Center?

- — — — — On-street bike lanes
- ▬ ▬ ▬ ▬ ▬ Paths, trails, sidewalks
- — — — — Nature Trails



Southwest Area IDEAS FOR FEEDBACK

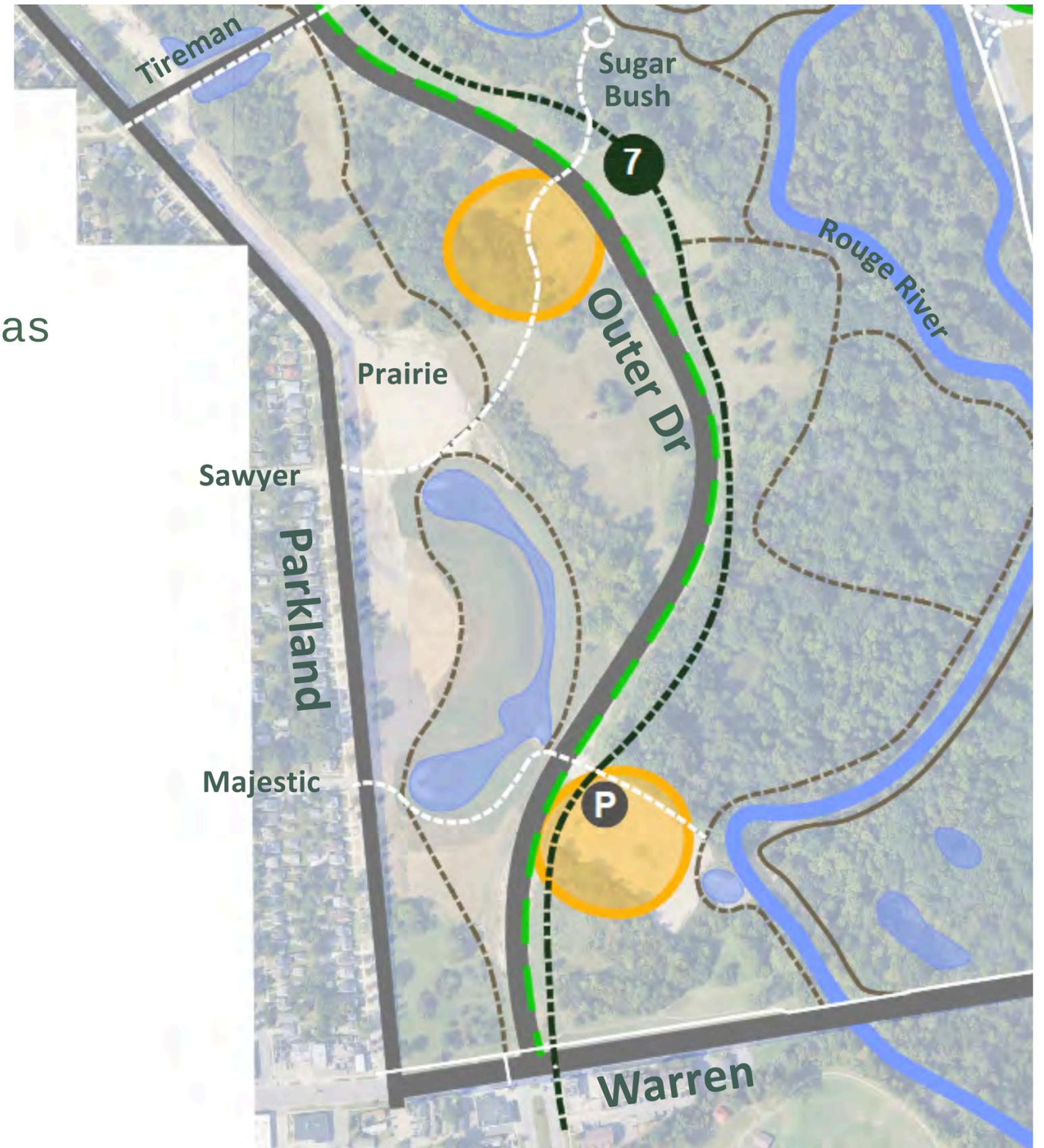
- Continue restoration of DWSD areas
- Picnic/pavilion
- Playground
- Trailhead with small parking
- Neighborhood connections

..... Rouge Greenway

— — — — — On-street bike lanes

▬ ▬ ▬ ▬ ▬ Paths, trails, sidewalks

— — — — — Nature Trails





ROUGE PARK
IDEAS FOR FEEDBACK



Discuss the initial ideas at your table and then we'll share with the whole group

What do you like?
What don't you like?
What's missing?

Write/Draw your comments on the map

TAKE ABOUT 30-40 MINUTES TO DISCUSS FEEDBACK ON WHOLE PARK

AT EACH TABLE:

- comment sheets
- large map of entire park
- zoom in maps of “Active Areas”

Please choose a
table based on the
area of the park
that you're **MOST**
interested in!

JOE PRANCE

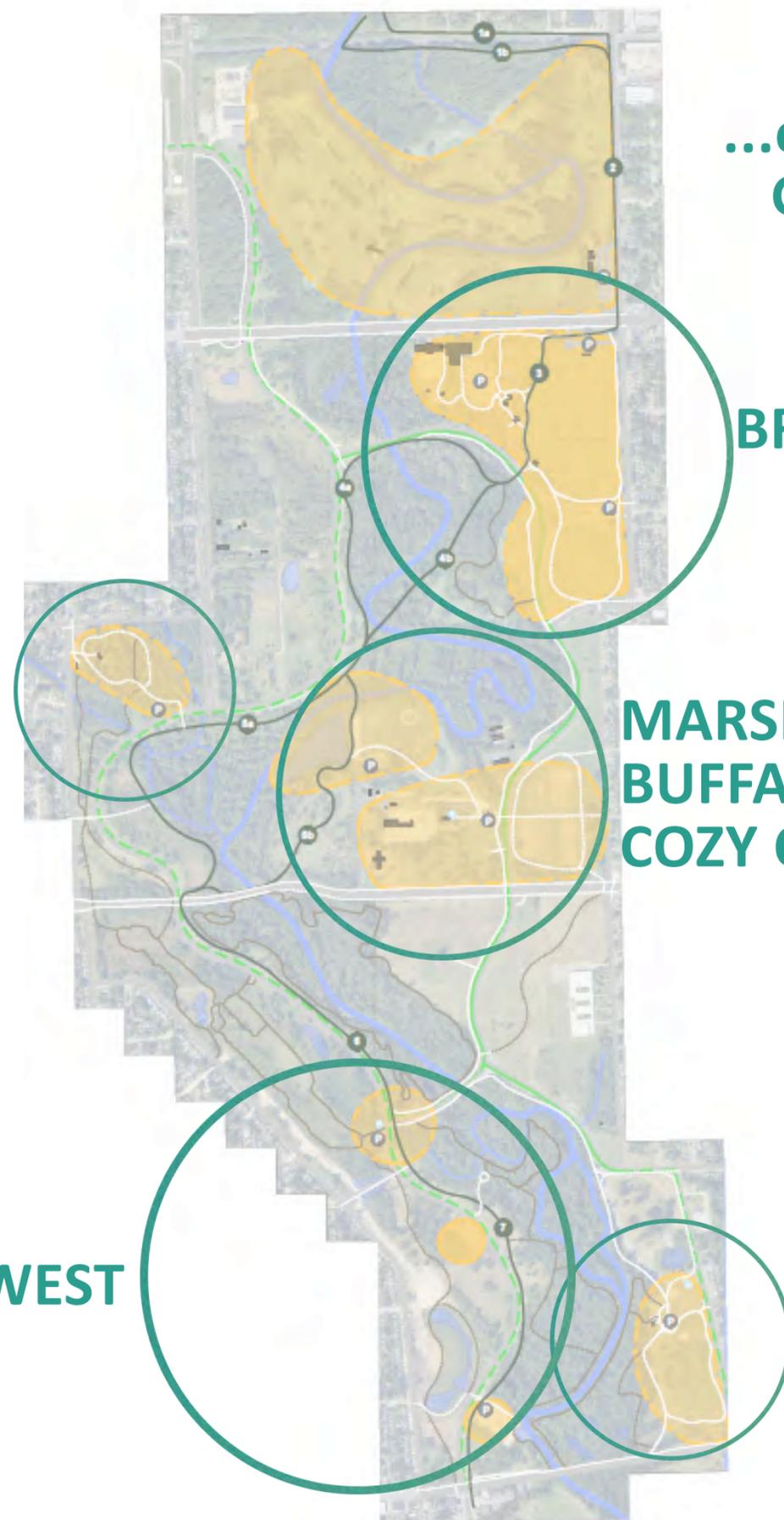
SOUTHWEST

...or the ROUGE
GREENWAY!

BRENNAN

MARSH
BUFFALO SOLDIERS
COZY CORNERS

SORENSEN



An aerial photograph of a lush green forest. A paved road with a yellow center line curves through the trees. A small stream or creek flows through the forest on the left side. The overall scene is vibrant and natural.

UPDATES & WHAT'S NEXT

Refine the **long-term vision** based on what we've heard tonight and start getting into details

Schedule **follow up conversations** with Block Clubs, Friends Group, organizations that use the park, young people, etc

Plan to hold another **Community Meeting** in early Summer

UPDATE



**Brennan Recreation Center Expansion
& Parking Lot Access This Summer**

Lighting and Cameras at Brennan Lot

Comfort Station Repairs (near Brennan)

**Comfort Station Removal
(north of Sorenson)**

Tree Plantings (along Joy Rd)

UPDATE

**UPDATES FROM
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
TO SHARE**



Stay up to date on the planning project

detroitmi.gov/Rouge



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BEFORE YOU
LEAVE TONIGHT



Please take a few minutes
to place stickers next to
the example images you
like the best

THANK YOU!