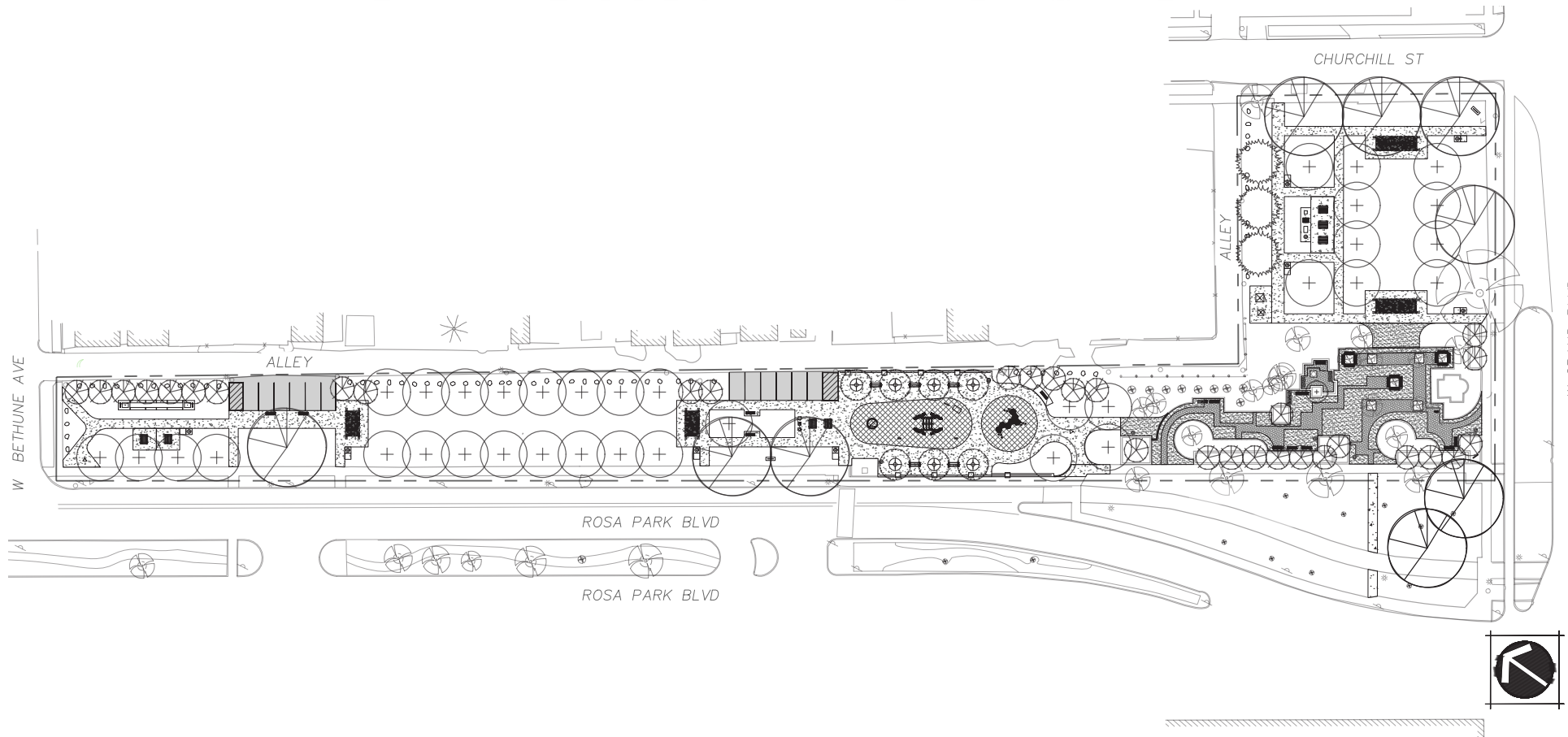


MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL PARK (2589 W GRAND BLVD) SPRING 2026 IMPROVEMENTS



HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
December 10, 2025



GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
**Parks & Recreation
Division**

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Memorial Plaza was a small project within the larger Virginia Park Urban Rehabilitation Project A-4-2. This federal project was planned and executed to impact the entire Virginia Park neighborhood.

This project began in the 1970s - 1982 with oversight by the Detroit Housing Commission and the now defunct Community Economic Development Department (CEDD).

Parcels for the plaza site were acquired by the City in the summer of 1975 and assigned to the Detroit Housing Commission. A plaza dedication ceremony occurred on November 8, 1980 and the Martin Luther King Jr. Bust was created by Detroit artist Oscar Graves in 1982.

The proposed improvements to Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial (MLK) Park are intended to enhance the existing use of the park by providing social interaction and enjoyment. Additionally, several vacant lots have been acquired for more opportunities for enjoyment and play. These improvements include replacing the old deteriorated walks, removal of invasive trees and plant additional trees, install benches and picnic tables that currently don't exist, and add some play elements that are inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. speech delivered here in Detroit in 1963.

The redesign of MLK Park involved extensive community engagement. Stakeholders and residents expressed what they would like to see in the park and the proposed design reflects that input.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY OUTREACH SCHEDULE

- Community Meeting #1 w/ Internal Stakeholders and Community Members - March 21, 2024
- Community Meeting #2 - June 18, 2024
- Community Survey - Spring/Summer 2024
- Park Timeline Updates with Stakeholders - Winter 2024
- Community Meeting #3 - Fall 2025

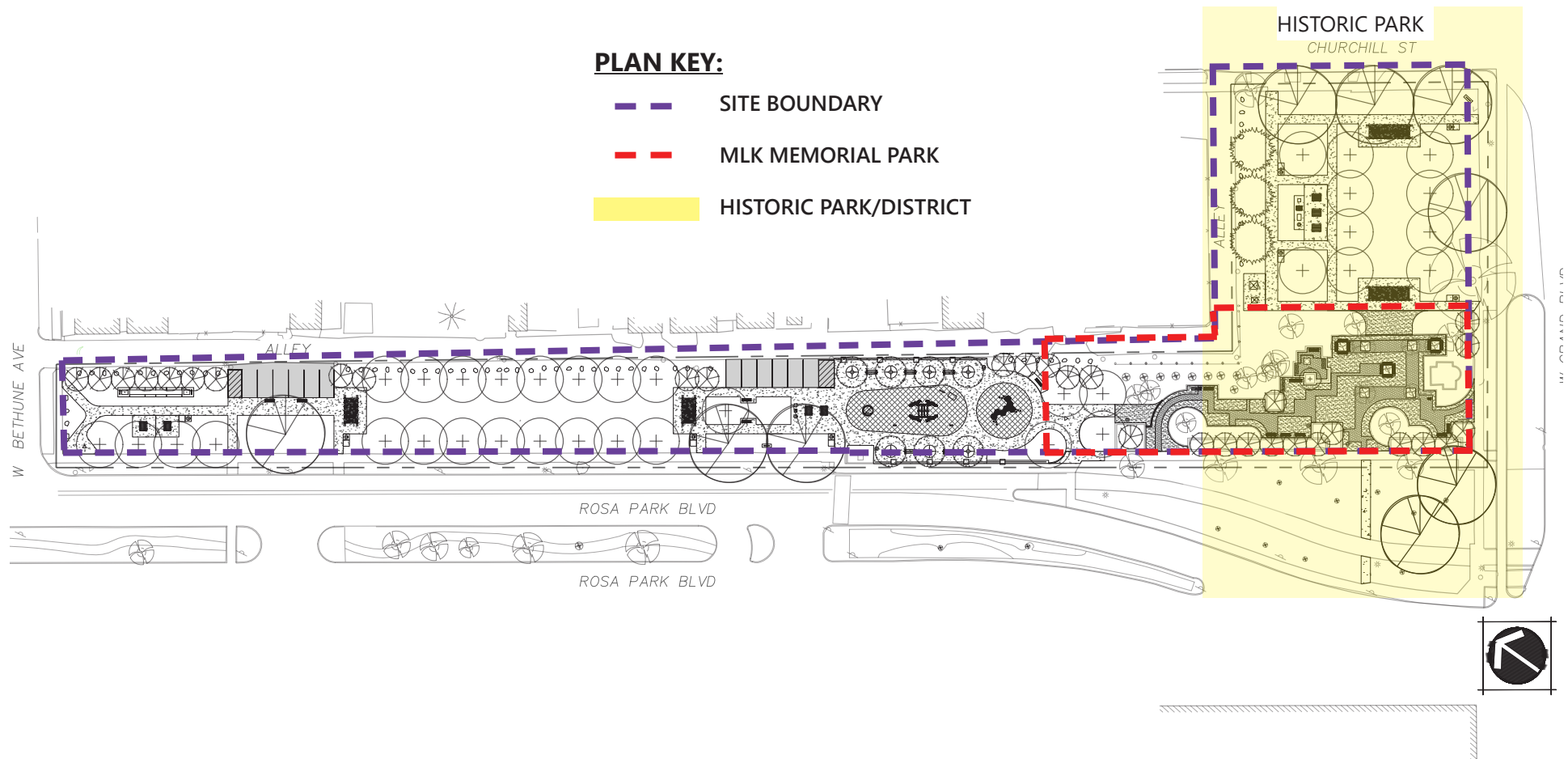
ENGAGED STAKEHOLDERS

- Churchill Block Club
- LaSalle Garden Block Club
- West Grand Blvd. Collaborative
- National Action Network
- Residents that live near the park

MLK MEMORIAL PARK MASTER PLAN

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Rehabilitate and reconstruct MLK Memorial Park
- Construct a new and connected park space East of MLK Memorial Park and within the MLK Historic District
- Construct a new and connected park space to the North of MLK Memorial Park and outside the MLK Historic Park District
- The total park site including the expansion will be 2.1 acres

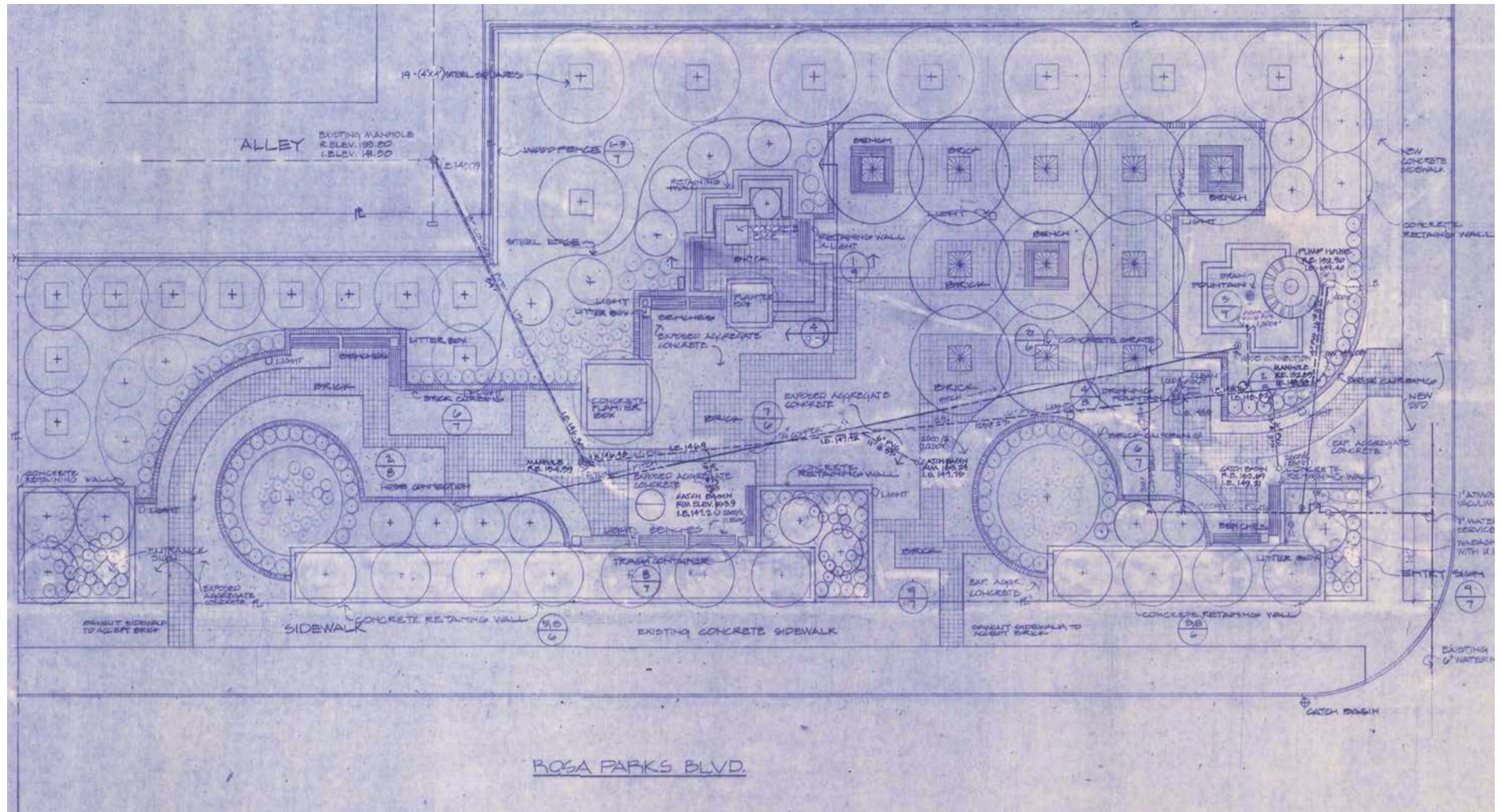


MLK MEMORIAL PARK 1977 HISTORICAL PLAN

HISTORIC DESIGNATION FOR THE PARK WAS IN 2018

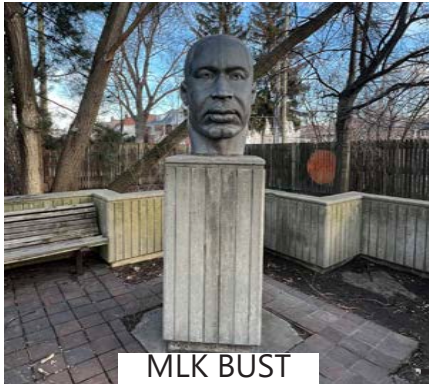
CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

- MLK Bust
- Fountain
- Exposed Aggregate Pavers
- Brick Pavers
- Brick Curbing
- Concrete Raised Planters



PARK CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

- All character defining features are intended to remain, be rebuilt, or slightly reconstructed
- The methodology behind our approach addresses:
 - Upgrades for community benefits
 - Modifications to address current hazards
 - Modifications to relieve financial burden in the reconstruction process



MLK BUST



WATER FOUNTAIN



CONCRETE RASIED PLANTERS



BRICK PAVERS



EXPOSED CONCRETE
AGGREGATE



BRICK CURBING

PARK LANDSCAPING -EXCLUDING TREES

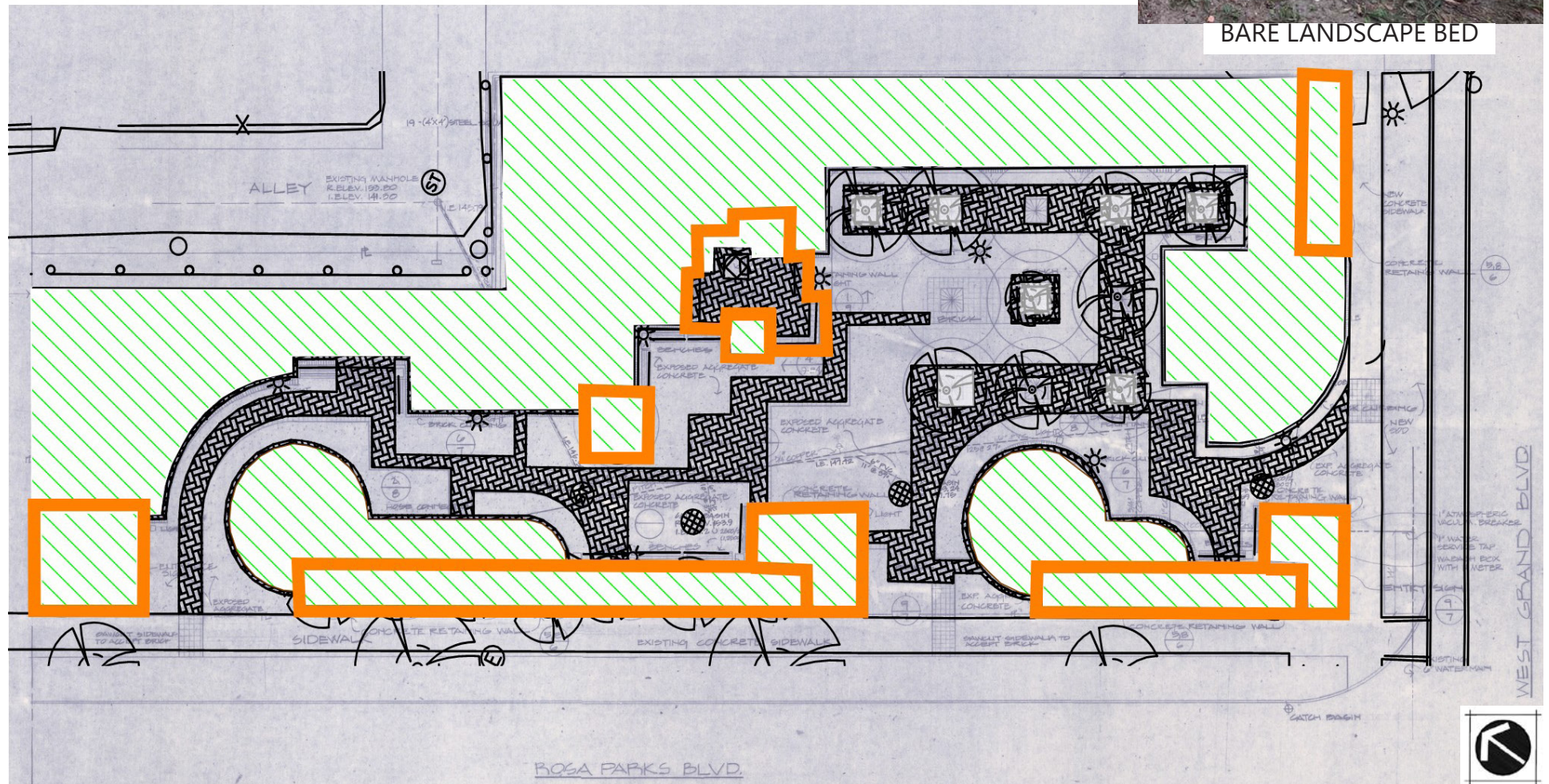
- All concrete raised planters to remain
- All landscape beds to be mulched, current landscape beds are bare dirt
- Shrubs and perennials in historic plan no longer remain and were not present in 2018
- Park consists of only trees

MULCH 

RAISED PLANTERS 



BARE LANDSCAPE BED



CURRENT PARK TREES + PROPOSED REMOVALS

- Park trees are either invasive, in poor condition, or need pruning
- Tree removals include Bradford trees which are invasive, they are along the perimeter edges of the park and will be replaced with healthier spacing and native-non-invasive varieties

EXISTING TREE TO REMAIN



EXISTING TREE REMOVAL



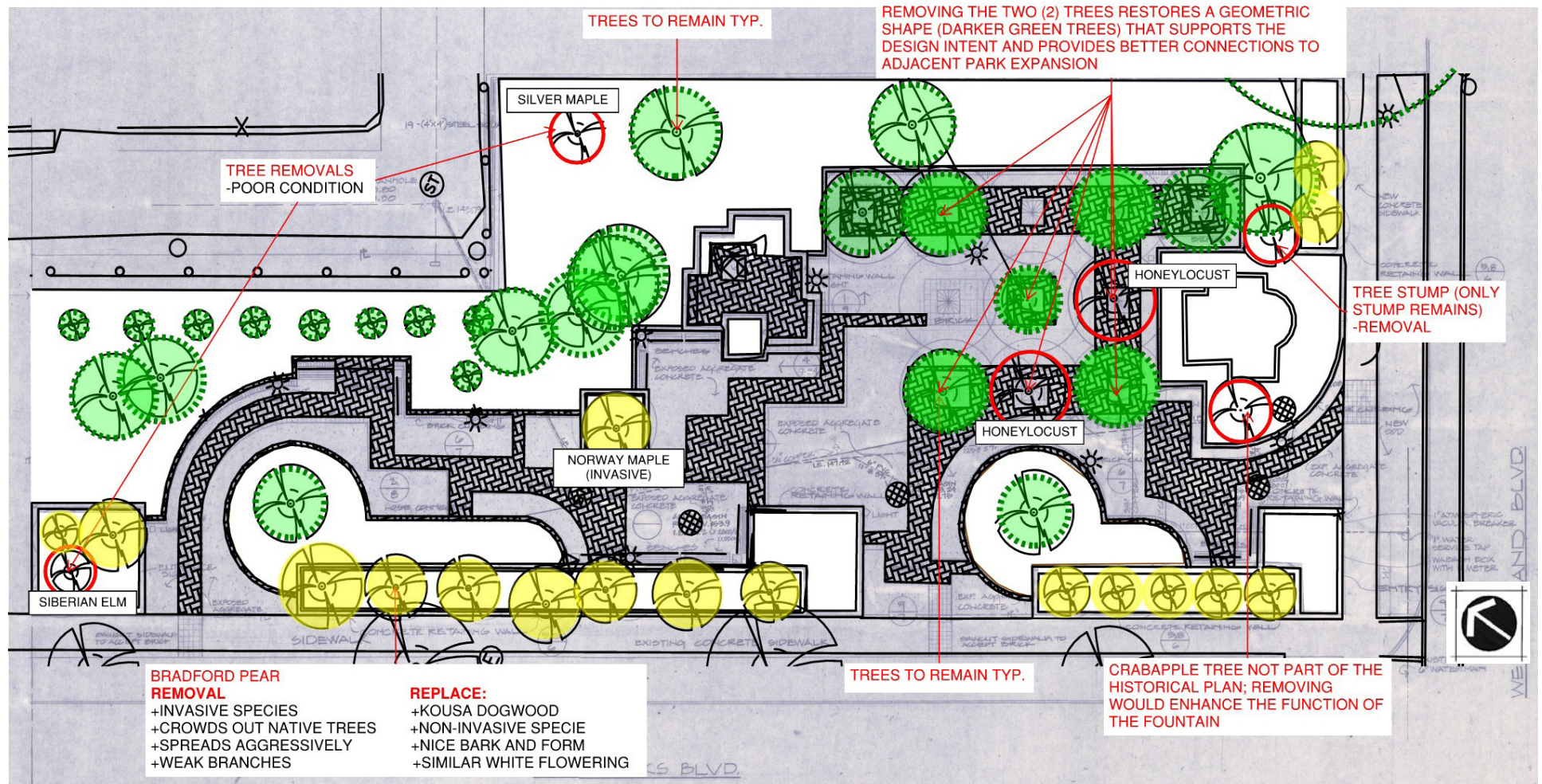
INVASIVE TREE REMOVAL



Remaining trees from
historical plan

No replacement

All to be replaced



PROPOSED TREE REPLACEMENTS

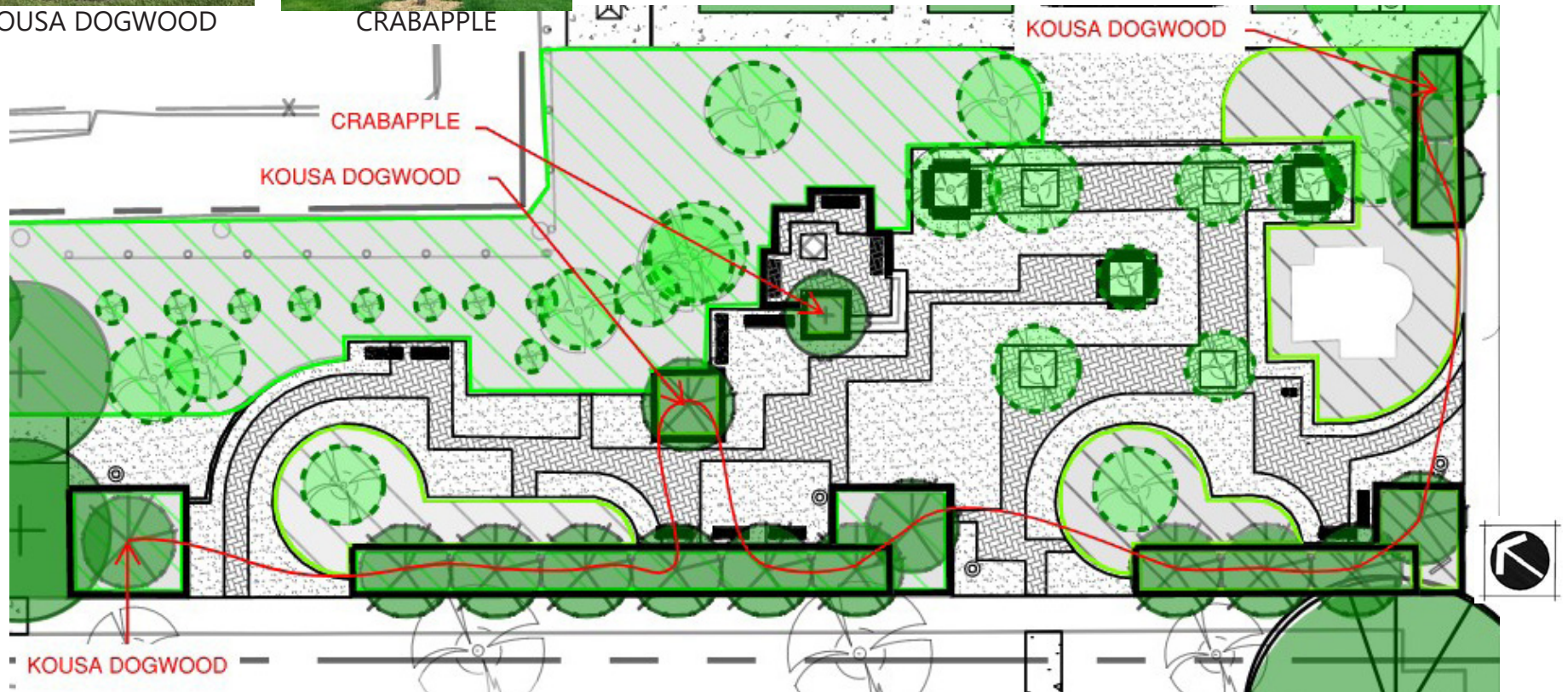
- Park trees are either invasive, in poor condition, or need pruning
- Tree removals include Bradford trees which are invasive, they are along the perimeter edges of the park and will be replaced with healthier spacing and native-non-invasive varieties



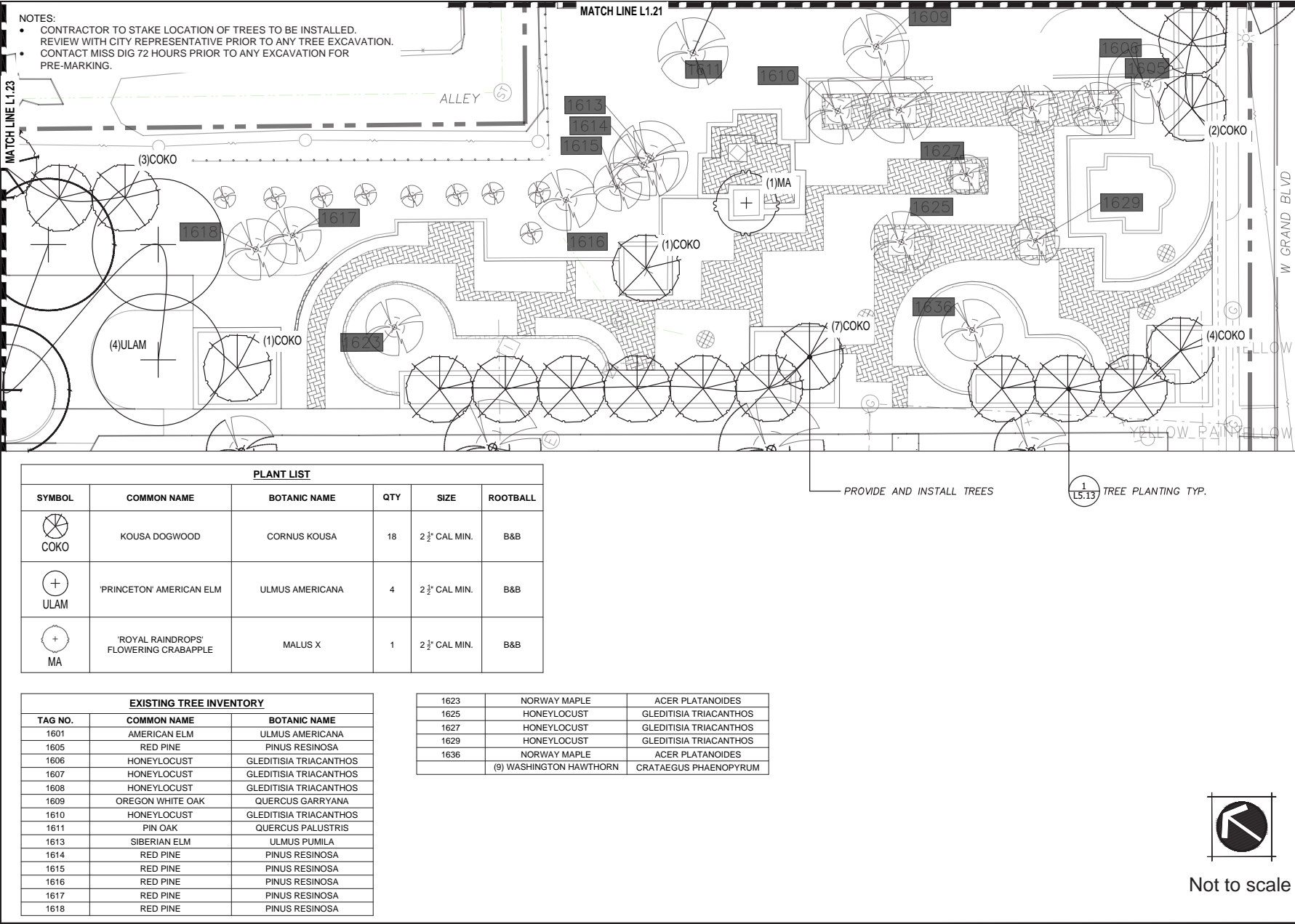
KOUSA DOGWOOD



CRABAPPLE



CURRENT PARK TREES + PROPOSED TREES



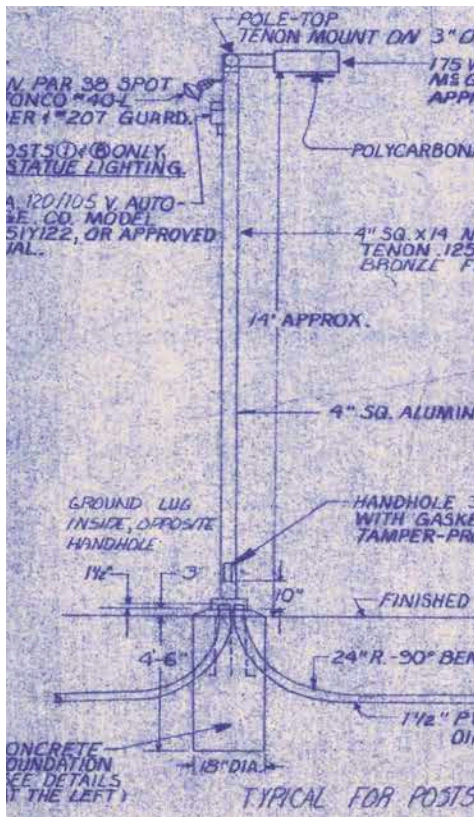
PARK LIGHTING

CURRENT SYSTEM

- Degraded and damaged
- Historic light poles non-existent, were not existing in 2018
- All light infrastructure to be replaced per Public Lighting Authority (PLA)

PROPOSED SYSTEM

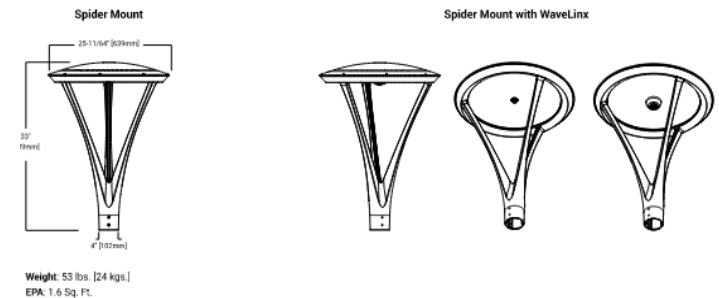
- Complete system reconstruction required exposed aggregate and paver removal throughout plaza
- PLA recommends the following lighting based on:
 - Performance (quality of light)
 - Ease of replacement
 - "Modern" look and aggregate finish matches the plaza surface



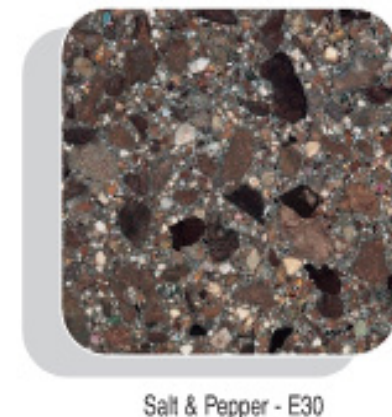
Historic "Modern" Light Pole



Proposed Concrete Light Pole



Proposed Light Fixture



Proposed Light Pole Color

- Park benches are integrated with exposed aggregate surfacing and/or brick paving surfacing replacement of park benches do significant damage to both the pavers and exposed aggregate surface when removing
- Replacement benches will look the same and be surface mounted to new pavement
- New wood benches will discolor "weather" overtime to match current

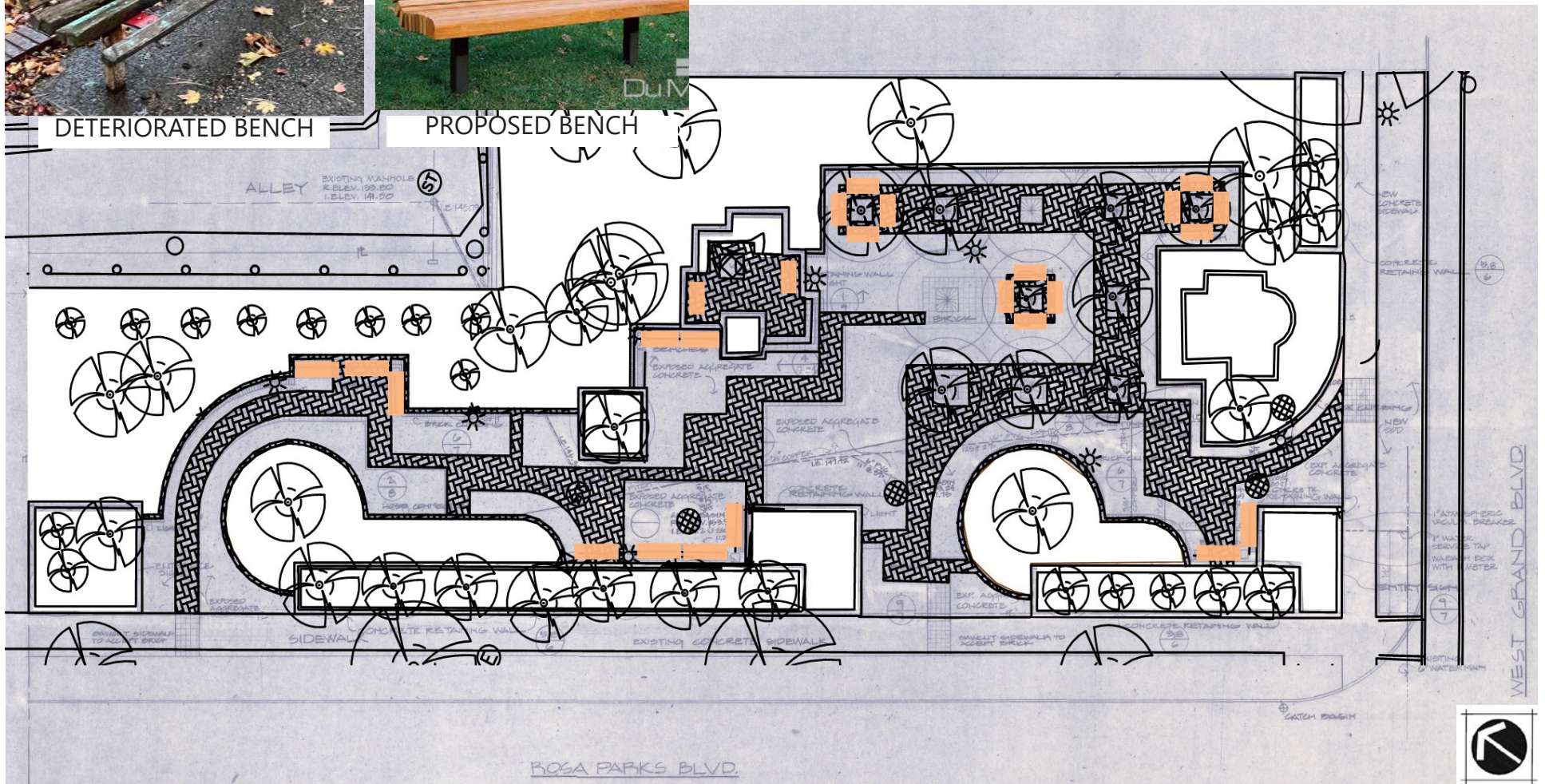
BENCH



DETERIORATED BENCH

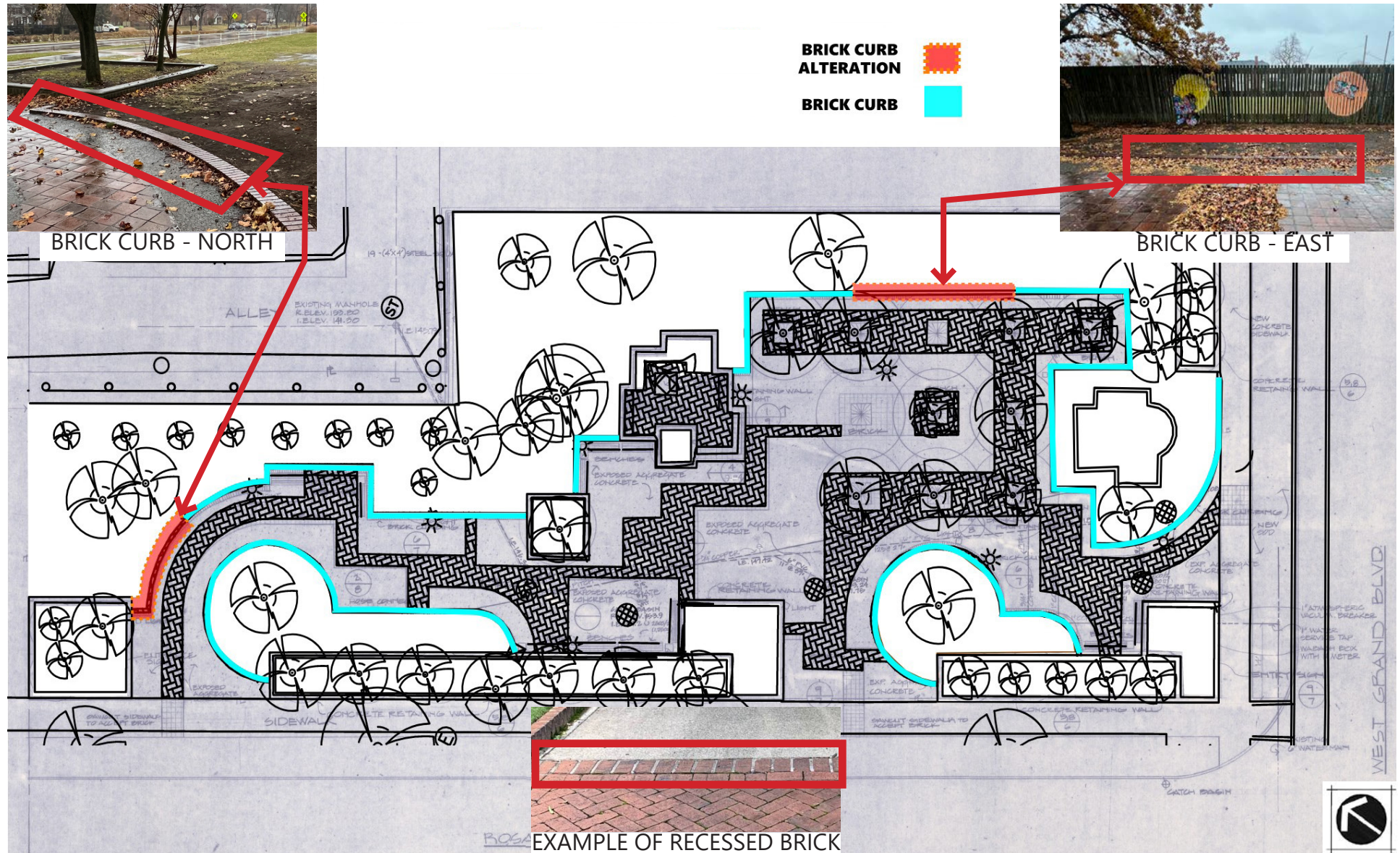


PROPOSED BENCH



BRICK CURB ALTERATIONS

- All brick curbing to remain in place except in two (2) locations
- Modifications are needed in two (2) locations for transition to park expansion, north and east
- Alteration will include removing the brick to eliminate the curb; brick to be reinstalled and recessed to keep the line and remove trip hazard



- All pavers and paving to be removed and replaced; pavers will be replaced with a similar paver
- GSD proposes alterations to the brick pavers when they are replaced
- Alterations are for maintenance and feasibility issues and do not contribute to changing the overall cumulative effect of the space



PAVER ALTERATIONS, PROPOSED TREE PIT

- Brick pavers were once here - due to tree roots and ground heaving, pavers have become dislodged and broken
- Replacing these pavers would provide a long-term financial burden due to ongoing repairs
- Removing pavers and cement (pictured) to larger footprints helps mitigate issues



DEGRADED TREE PIT

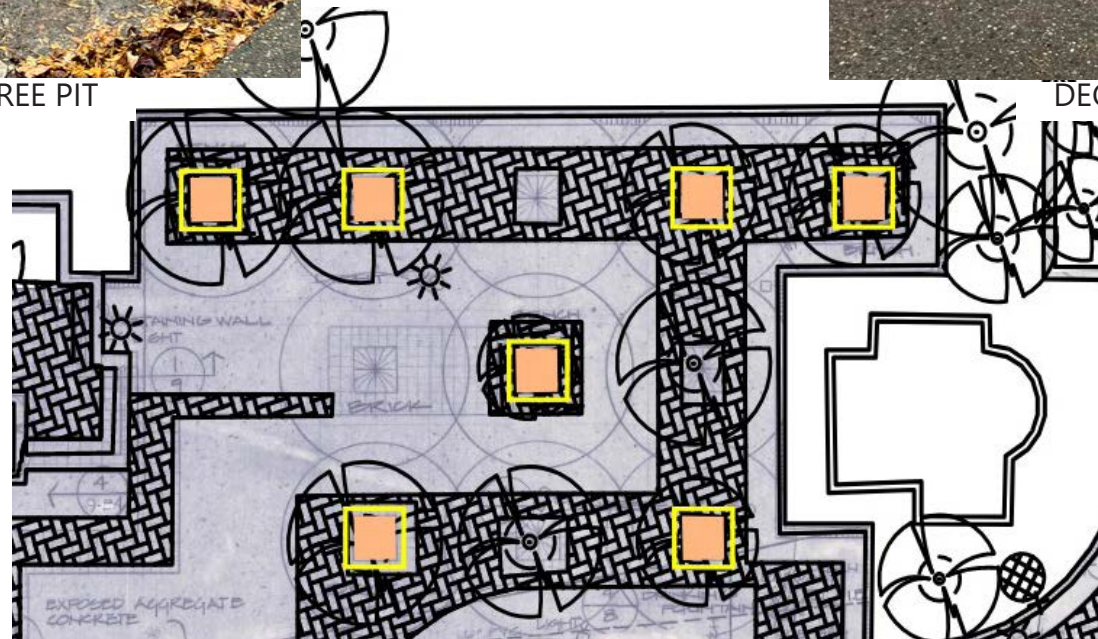
EXISTING 4'X4' TREE PITS



PROPOSED 5'X5' TREE PITS



DEGRADED TREE PIT

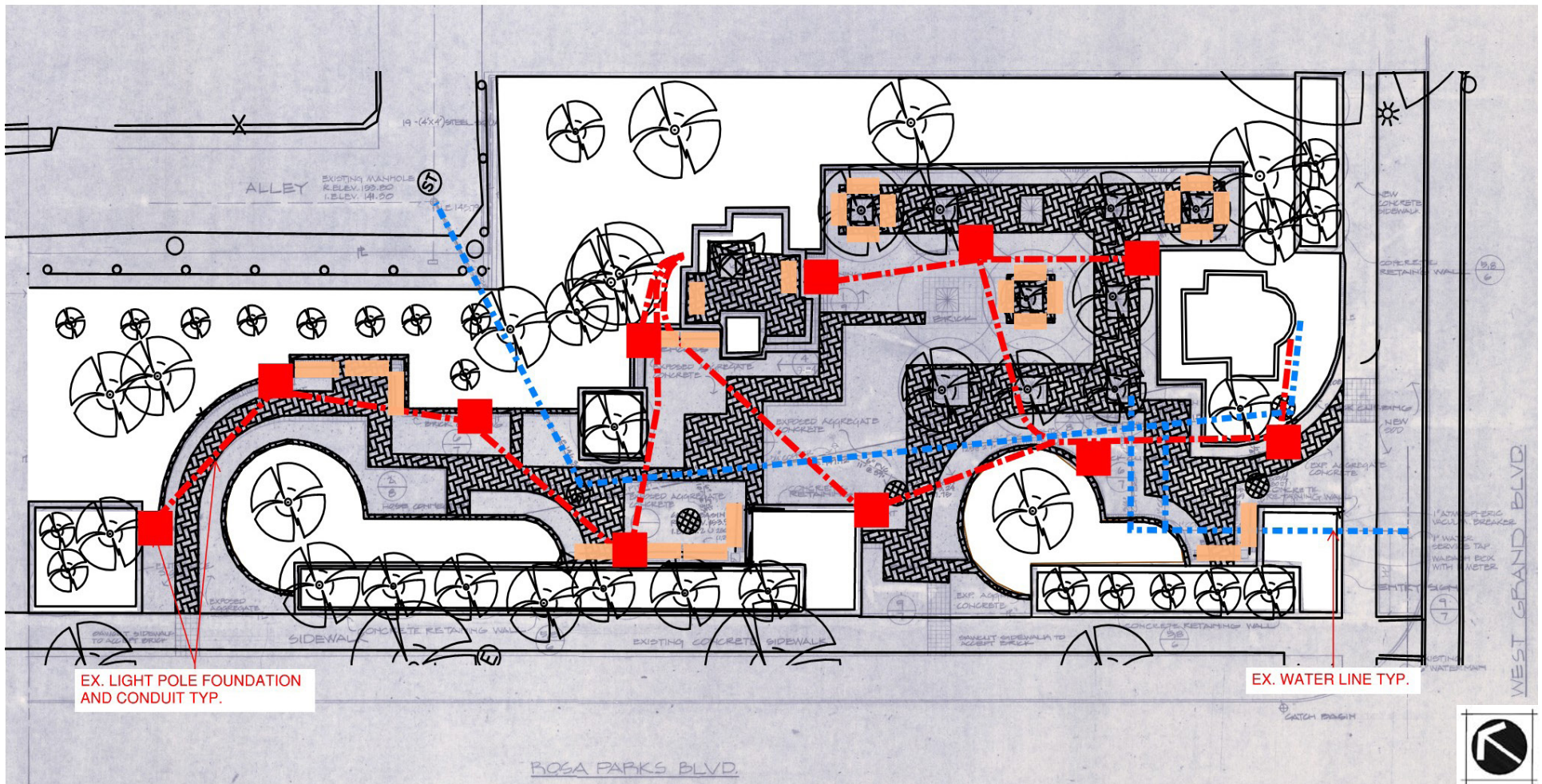
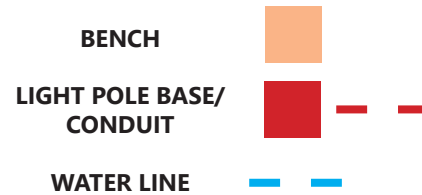


- All exposed concrete aggregate to be removed and replaced
- Additional exposed concrete aggregate to be added in the park expansion transitions



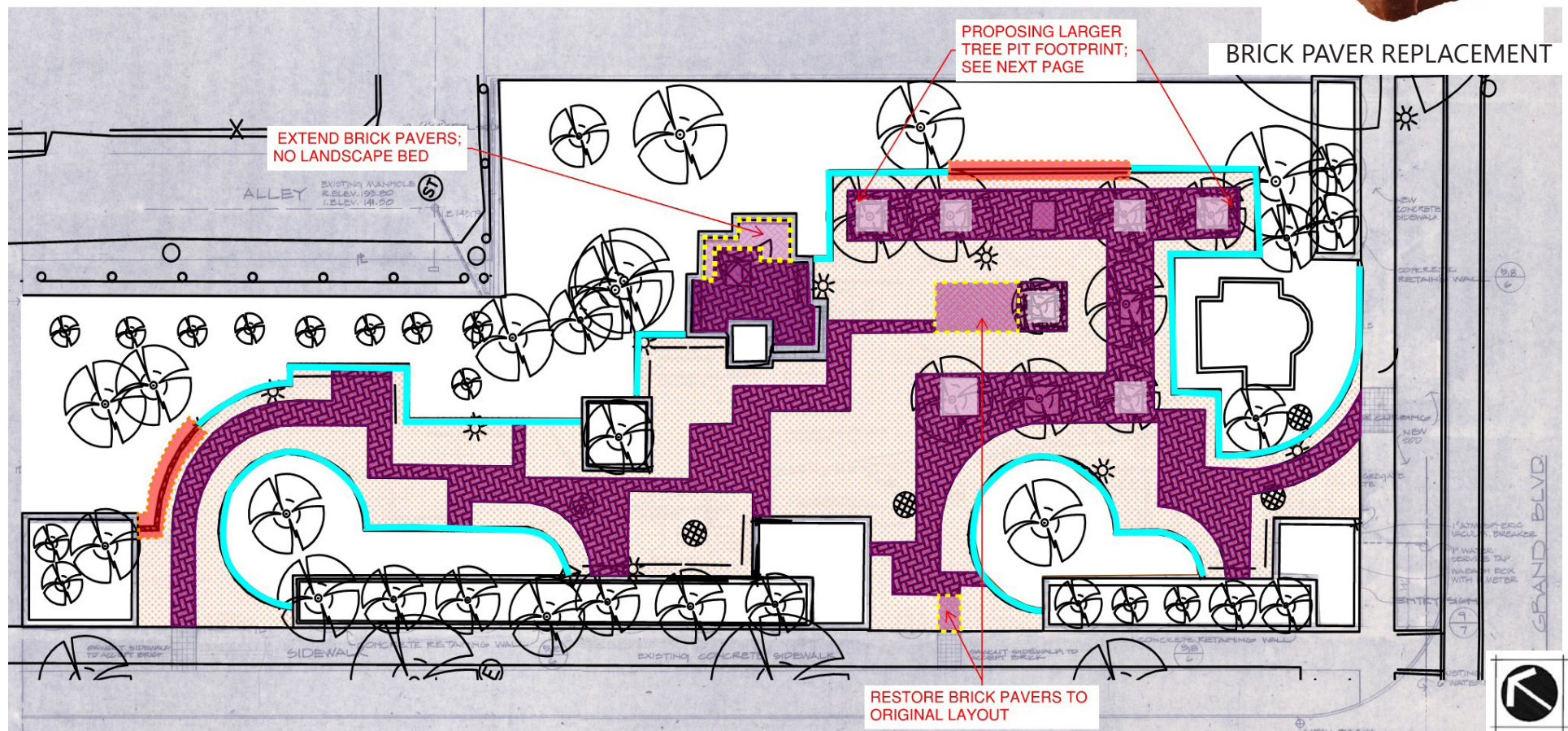
HARDSCAPE REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT PATCHWORK PLAN

- Plan shows the extent of removals that need to take place in order to remove hazards including repair park infrastructure and amenities
- GSD team concludes that the repairing and removal these items will further degrade the plaza and provide an inconsistent patchwork finish to the plaza surface



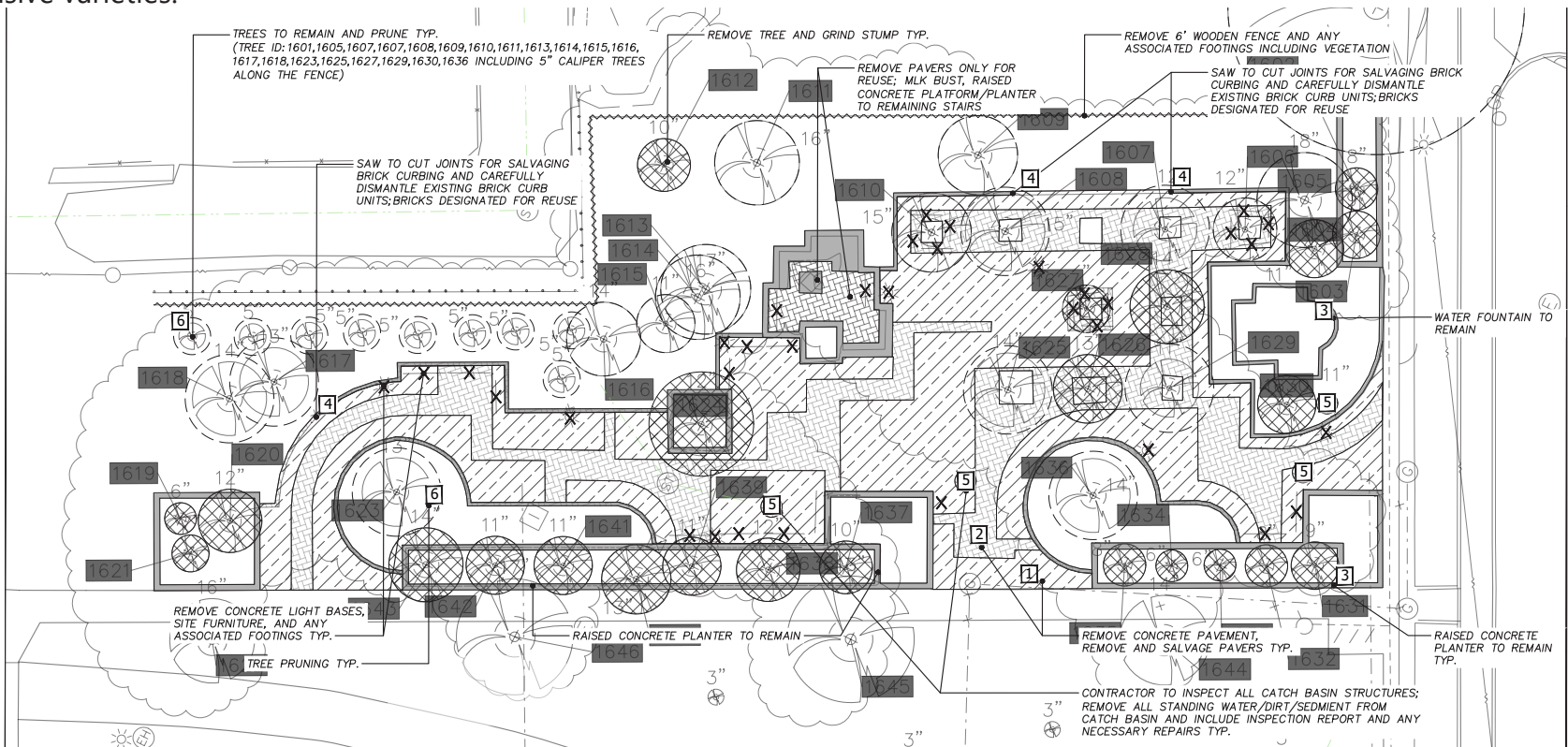
HARDSCAPE REPLACEMENT, ENTIRE FOOTPRINT

- Plan shows that if the entire footprint is removed and rebuilt it will eliminate a degrading plaza and patchwork finish. Furthermore removing the entirely preserves the intent, and integrity of the historic design
- Exposed concrete aggregate will be removed and replaced to match what was existing
- Brick curbing is in good shape, bricks currently are determined to be salvagable and if bricks need replacing, our intent is to use similar brick material to match
- Brick pavers are degraded and removing them will be difficult to maintain their integrity. GSD is proposing to replace brick pavers with new brick pavers that match what is currently there



PARK DEMOLITION PLAN

All exposed aggregate concrete to be removed, pavers to be removed and salvaged for potential reuse. All raised concrete planters will remain, most of the brick curbing will remain intact, and due to the proposed park layout selective trees will remain. The majority of the trees along the perimeter of the park are invasive trees (Bradford Pear), which will be replaced with healthier spacing and native and non-invasive varieties.



DEMOLITION NOTES:

QUANTITIES				NOTES
SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL	UNIT	
	FENCE REMOVAL	280	LF	REMOVAL TO INCLUDE FOOTINGS AND ANY ASSOCIATED VEGETATION; PROPERLY DISPOSE
	TREE REMOVAL 6"-18" DBH	22	EA	TREE ID: 1602,1603,1604,1612,1619,1620,1621,1624,1626,1 628,1631,1632,1633,1634,1635,1637,1638,1639,16 40,1641,1642,1643. TREE REMOVALS TO INCLUDE STUMP AND PROPERLY DISPOSE
	CONCRETE AND PAVER REMOVAL	4500	SF	REMOVE ALL PAVEMENT MATERIAL AND PROPERLY DISPOSE
	BRICK PAVER REMOVAL AND SALVAGE FOR REUSE	2650	SF	REMOVE, ASSESS, AND SALVAGE BRICK PAVERS FOR REUSE
	RAISED CONCRETE PLANTERS, BRICK EDGE, MLK BUST, FOUNTAIN TO REMAIN			THESE ITEMS TO BE KEPT IN STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY AND TO REMAIN INTACT

	SAW CUT EDGE OF BRICK CURBING AND SALVAGE FOR REUSE			SALVAGE 2 1/2" X 4" X 8" BRICK EDGING
	LIGHT BASE REMOVAL AND SITE FURNITURE	33	EA	EX. LIGHTS ARE DISCONNECTED; REMOVAL TO INCLUDE ANY ASSOCIATED FOOTINGS AND PROPOSEDLY DISPOSE ITEMS
	CATCH BASIN CLEAN UP AND INSPECTION	4	EA	CONTRACTOR TO REMOVE ALL ACCUMULATED SEDIMENT/DIRT/WATER FROM CATCH BASIN; VISUALLY INSPECT STRUCTURES FOR DEFECTS AND PROVIDE CONDITION REPORT; RESTORE EACH CATCH BASIN TO FULL OPERATIONAL CAPACITY, ENSURING PROPER WATER FLOW
	TREES TO REMAIN AND PRUNE	18	EA	CONTRACTOR TO ASSESS TREE HEALTH AND SAFETY, REMOVING DEAD OR HAZARDOUS BRANCHES AND SHAPING THE TREE FOR AESTHETIC OR STRUCTURAL REASONS; PRUNE TREES IN APPROPRIATE SEASON

	PRESSURE WASH RAISED CONCRETE PLANTER FACE	650	LF	APPLY A CONCRETE SAFE, BIODEGRADABLE CLEANING SOLUTION AND CLEAN THE CONCRETE FACE USING A PRESSURE WASHER AT APPROPRIATE PSI; ALL RESIDUE TO BE REMOVED; AVOID ETCING OR DAMAGING THE CONCRETE SURFACE
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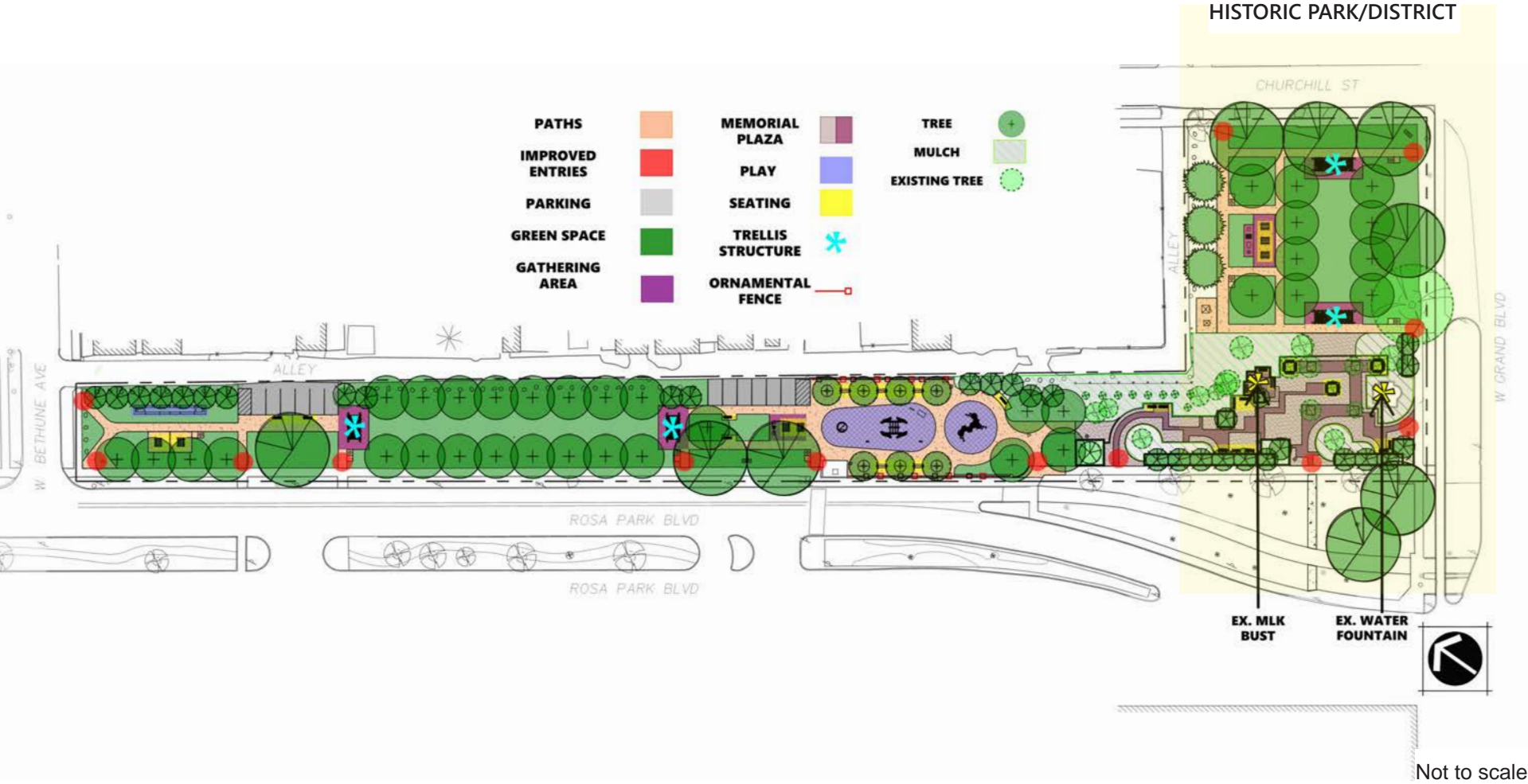
GENERAL NOTES

- A. THE CONTRACTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR VISITING THE SITE TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF THE WORK DEMOLITION AND CONSTRUCTION (WHETHER SHOWN ON THE DRAWINGS OR NOT).
- B. EXISTING MATERIALS/ITEMS TO BE SALVAGE BY CONTRACTOR SHALL BE STOCKPILED OR STORED IN APPROVED LOCATIONS BY CITY REPRESENTATIVE AND RELOCATED. CONTRACTOR TO PROTECT ALL MATERIALS DESIGNATED TO REMAIN AND SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR REPLACEMENT OF ANY MATERIALS THAT BECOME DAMAGED DURING CONSTRUCTION. THE EXTENT OF REPLACEMENT/REPAIR OF DAMAGED MATERIALS/ITEMS SHALL BE DETERMINED BY CITY REPRESENTATIVE.
- C. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL REMOVE AND CLEAR DEBRIS FROM OFFSITE IN A LI MANNER.
- D. CONTACT MISS DIG 72 HOURS PRIOR TO ANY DEMOLITION.



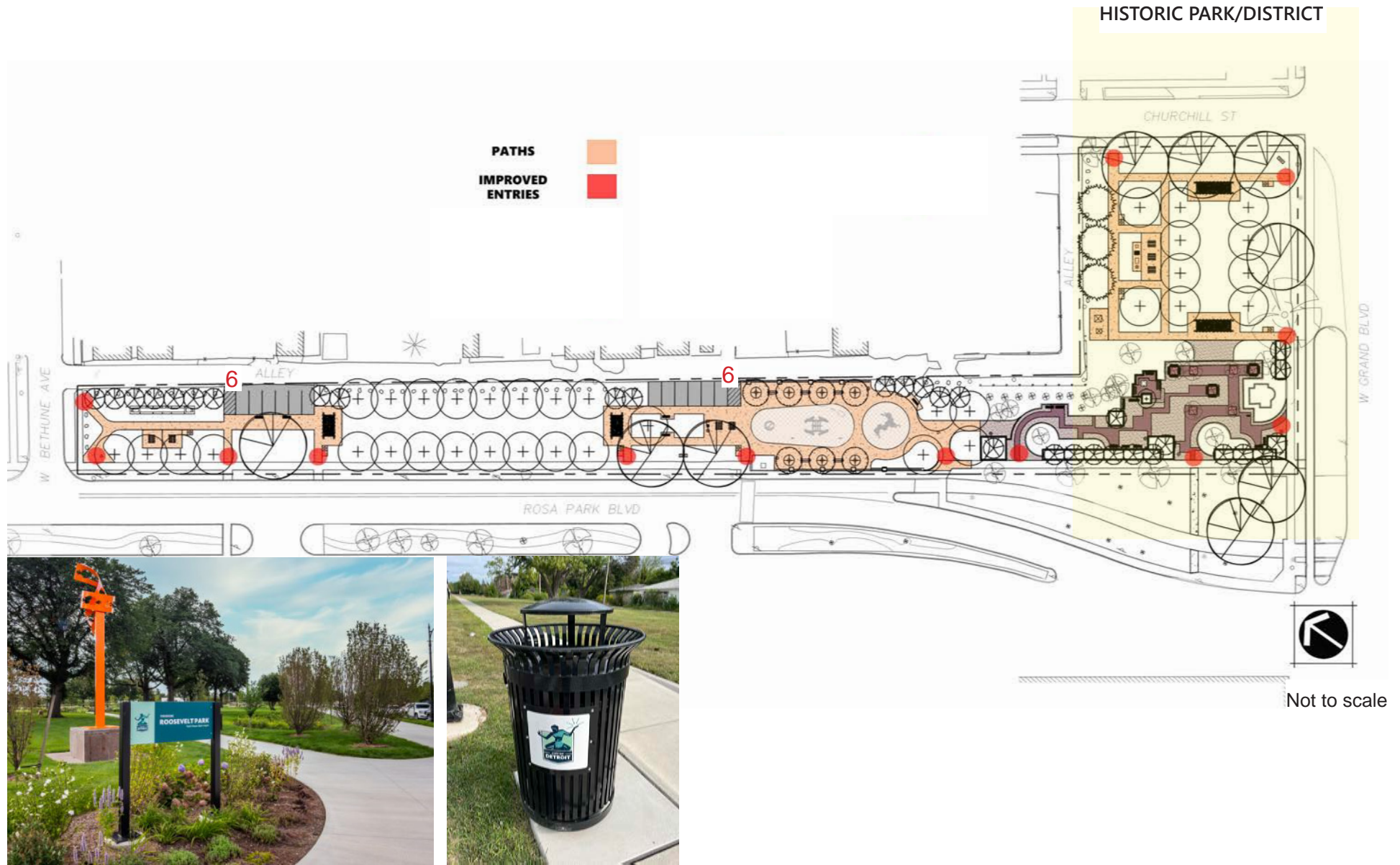
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MLK MEMORIAL PARK MASTER PLAN



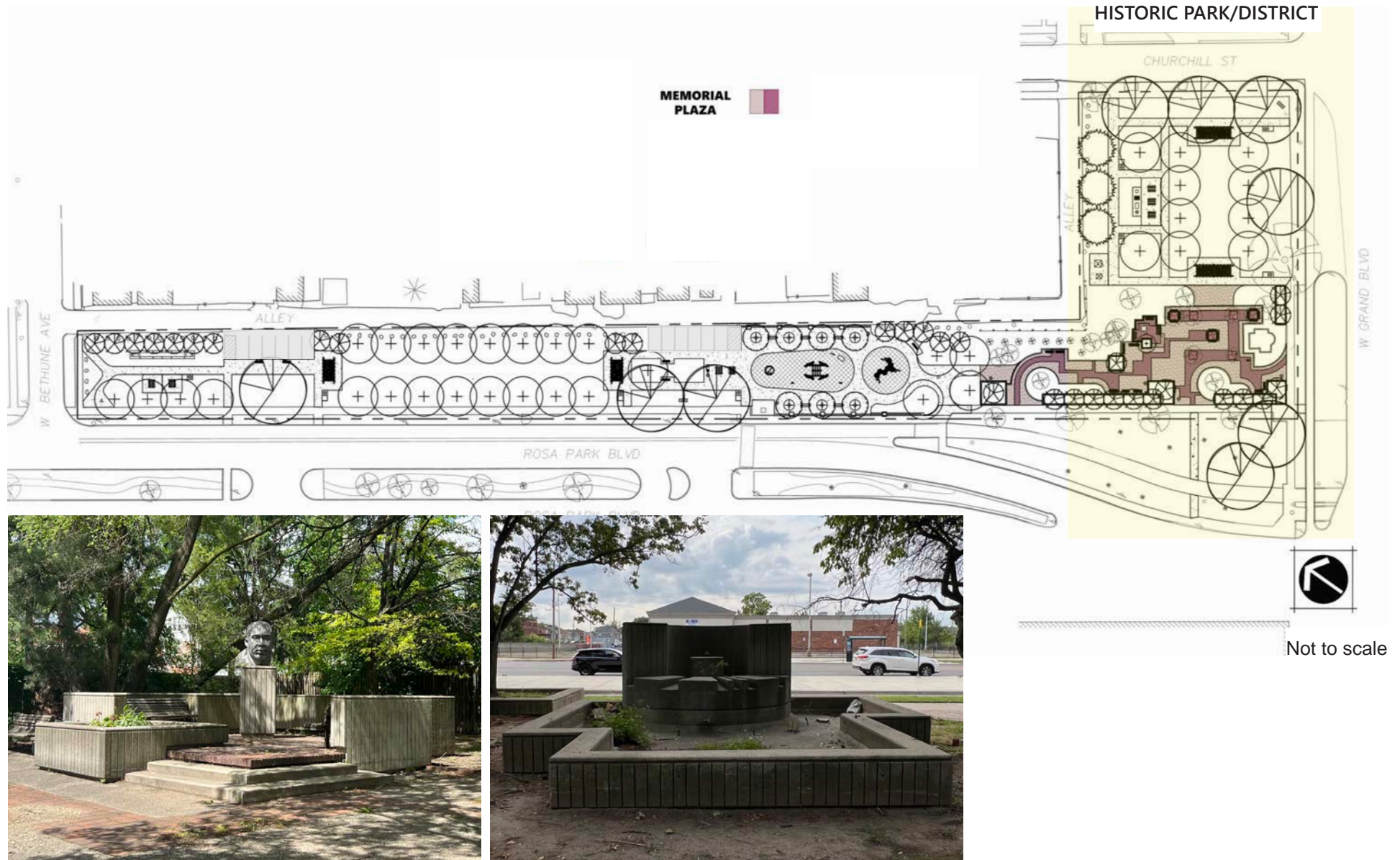
PROPOSED ENTRIES, PATHS, AND PARKING

The entries will be improved, enhancing direct access to park amenities and surrounding places; such as adding a new right-of-way walk from the Rosa Park Blvd bus stop to the park. Currently, there are no nearby parking spaces and park users use the alley to park; proposing 12 parking spaces along the alley. At each park entry park signs and trash receptacles will be placed.



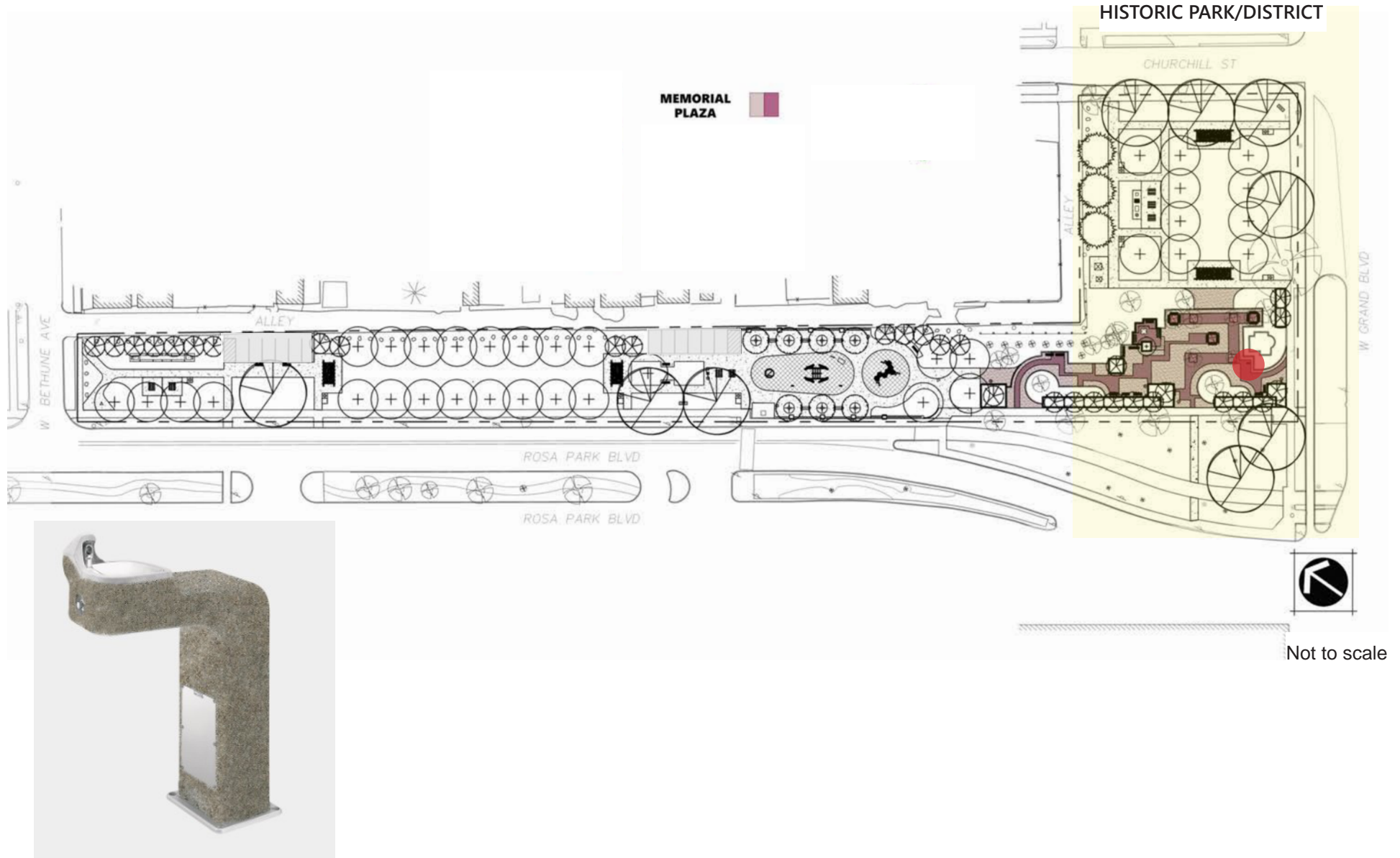
PROPOSED MLK MEMORIAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Proposal is to remove and rebuild original layout with minor alterations. The proposed park expansion will enhance the function of the MLK Memorial plaza space with additional park amenities; the MLK Bust will remain in its original location with restoration and the fountain will remain as is.



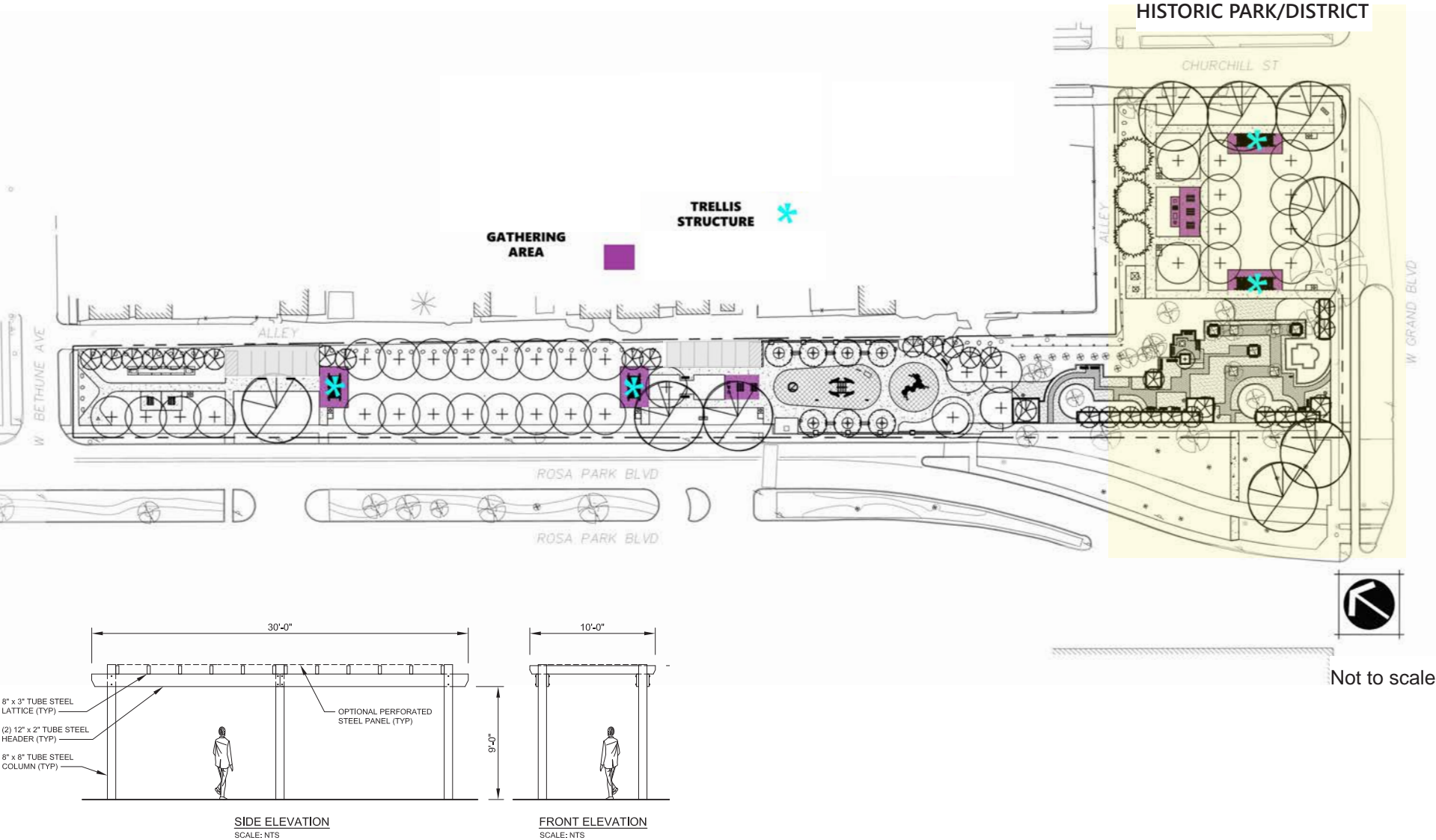
PROPOSED PLAZA DRINKING FOUNTAIN

The proposed drinking fountain is another improvement in reimagining the historic presence of the park. The drinking fountain will be accessible to all. The fountain will be located in the same location as the historic drinking fountain and be the same similar material as shown in the shaded area on the plan below.



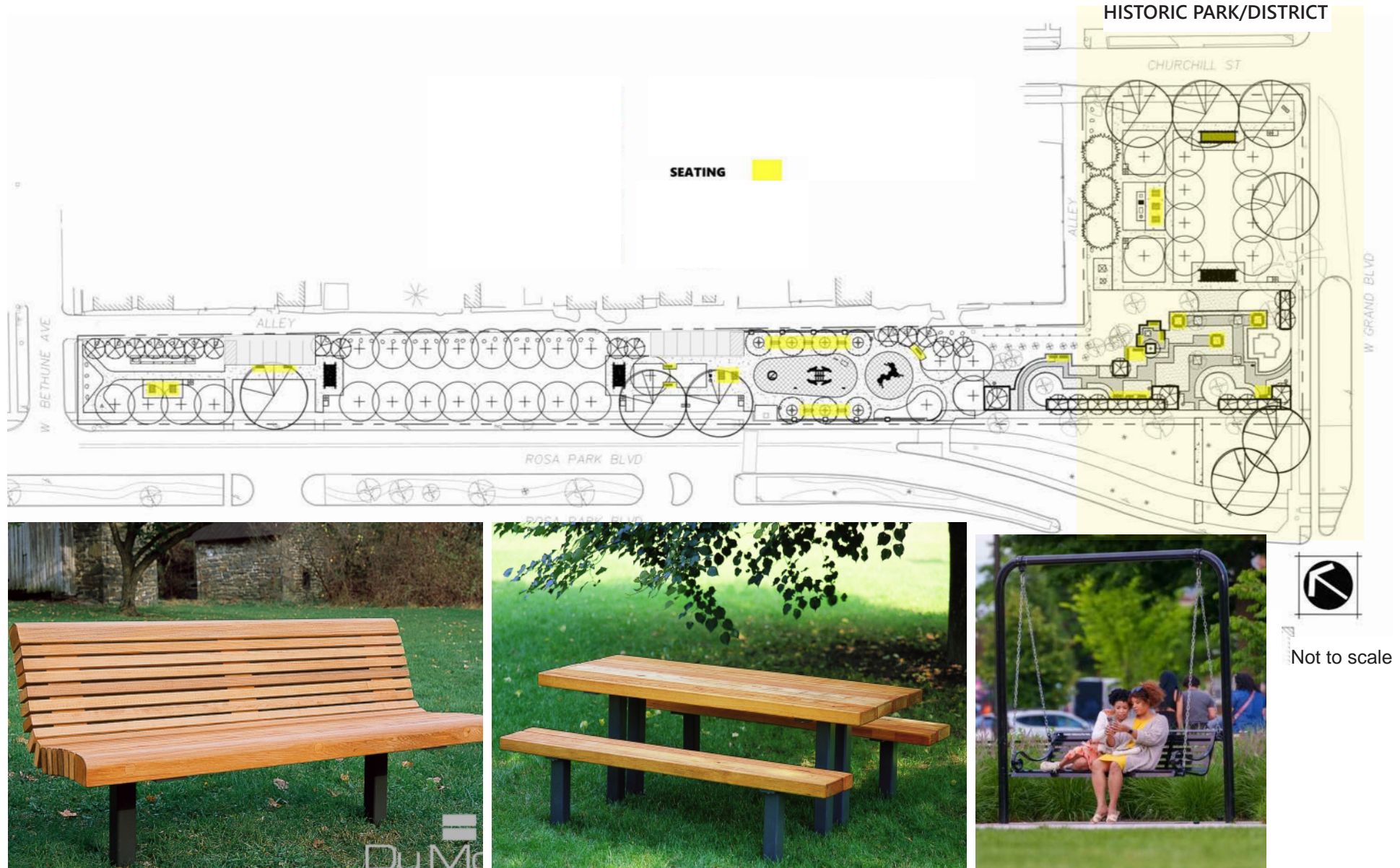
PROPOSED GATHERING AREA/TRELLIS STRUCTURE

The proposed gathering areas will serve as a meet up space with picnic tables and there are trellis structures anchoring each passive and active space overlooking green spacing. The trellis structures will be a steel frame material in the color black.



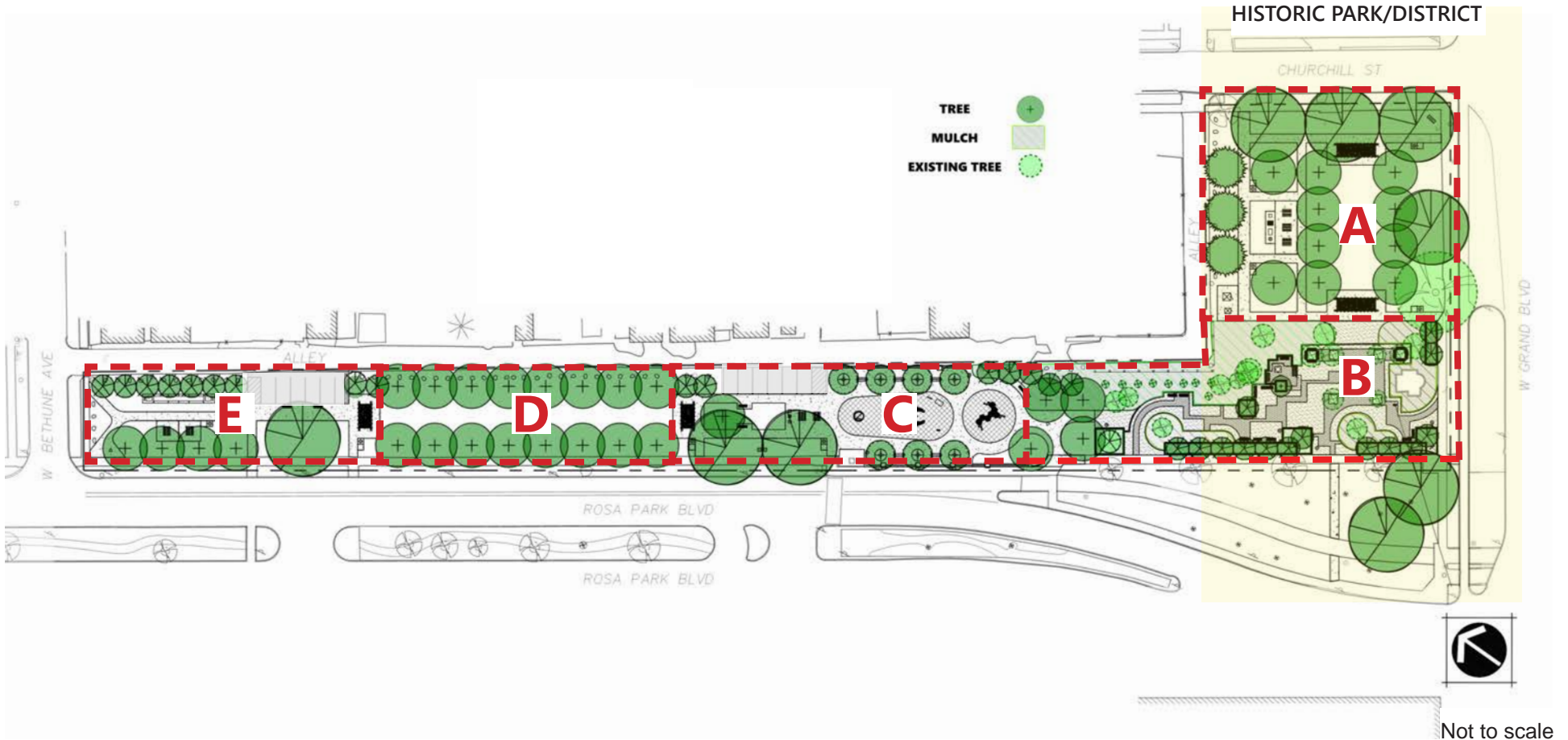
PROPOSED SEATING

There are various proposed seating types throughout the park: park benches, swinging benches, and picnic tables. All items are City Standards and found in various parks across the city for ease of maintenance. Benches and tables will be douglas fir wood with metal frames much like what use to be in the park. Swinging benches will be steel with a black powder coated finish.



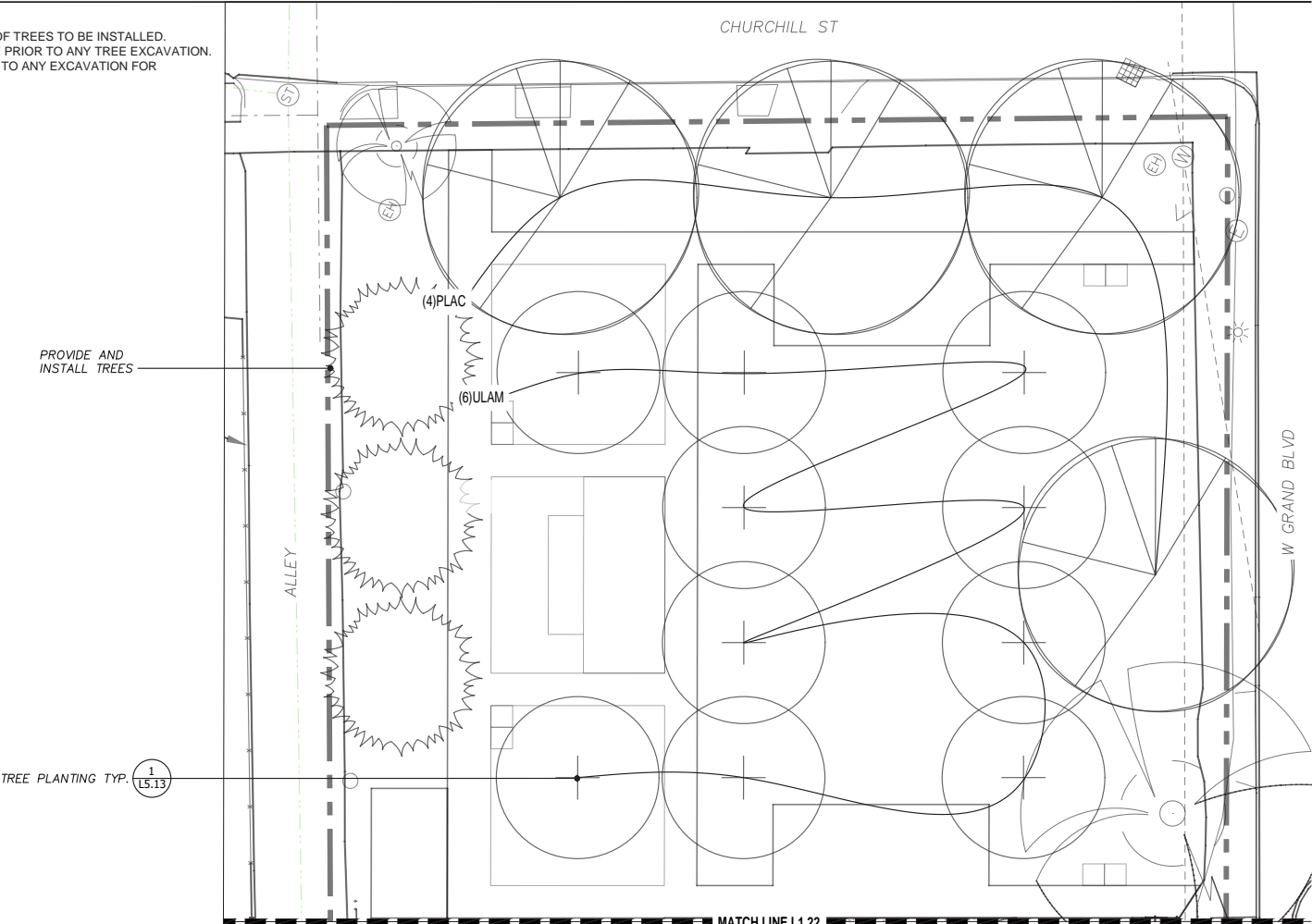
PROPOSED TREE SITE LAYOUT PLAN



For every tree removed in the park it will be replaced with native varieties. Any gaps in the perimeter planting will be replaced to ensure the sense of enclosure that the park historically has had is retained. There will also be shade trees planted along both sides of pathways creating an allee of trees



PROPOSED TREE PLAN A

- NOTES:
- CONTRACTOR TO STAKE LOCATION OF TREES TO BE INSTALLED.
 - REVIEW WITH CITY REPRESENTATIVE PRIOR TO ANY TREE EXCAVATION.
 - CONTACT MISS DIG 72 HOURS PRIOR TO ANY EXCAVATION FOR PRE-MARKING.



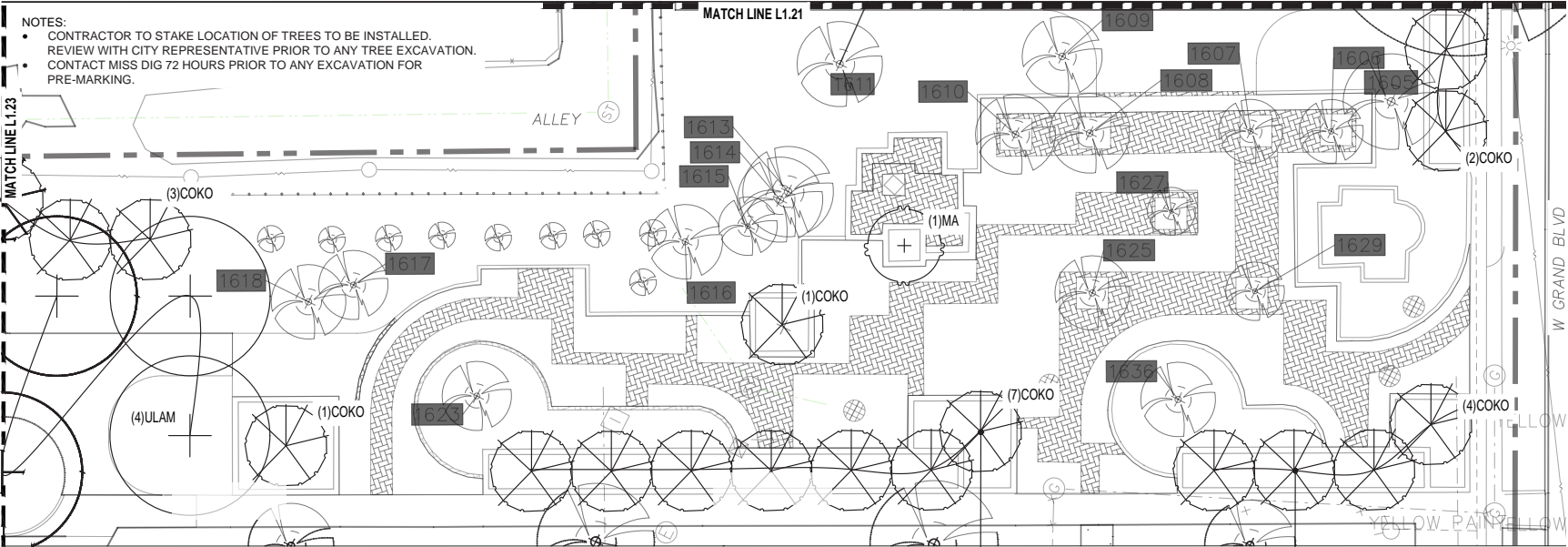
PLANT LIST					
SYMBOL	COMMON NAME	BOTANIC NAME	QTY	SIZE	ROOTBALL
 PLAC	'BLOODGOOD' LONDON PLANE	PLATANUS x ACERIFOLIA	4	2 1/2" CAL MIN.	B&B
 ULAM	'PRINCETON' AMERICAN ELM	ULMUS AMERICANA	10	2 1/2" CAL MIN.	B&B




 PIAB	NORWAY SPRUCE	PICEA ABIES	3	10'-12' HT	B&B
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Not to scale

PROPOSED TREE PLAN B



PLANT LIST					
SYMBOL	COMMON NAME	BOTANIC NAME	QTY	SIZE	ROOTBALL
 COKO	KOUSA DOGWOOD	CORNUS KOUSA	18	2 1/2" CAL MIN.	B&B
 ULAM	'PRINCETON' AMERICAN ELM	ULMUS AMERICANA	4	2 1/2" CAL MIN.	B&B
 MA	'ROYAL RAINDROPS' FLOWERING CRABAPPLE	MALUS X	1	2 1/2" CAL MIN.	B&B

EXISTING TREE INVENTORY		
TAG NO.	COMMON NAME	BOTANIC NAME
1601	AMERICAN ELM	ULMUS AMERICANA
1605	RED PINE	PINUS RESINOSA
1606	HONEYLOCUST	GLEDITISIA TRIACANTHOS
1607	HONEYLOCUST	GLEDITISIA TRIACANTHOS
1608	HONEYLOCUST	GLEDITISIA TRIACANTHOS
1609	OREGON WHITE OAK	QUERCUS GARRYANA
1610	HONEYLOCUST	GLEDITISIA TRIACANTHOS
1611	PIN OAK	QUERCUS PALUSTRIS
1613	SIBERIAN ELM	ULMUS PUMILA
1614	RED PINE	PINUS RESINOSA
1615	RED PINE	PINUS RESINOSA
1616	RED PINE	PINUS RESINOSA
1617	RED PINE	PINUS RESINOSA
1618	RED PINE	PINUS RESINOSA

1623	NORWAY MAPLE	ACER PLATANOIDES
1625	HONEYLOCUST	GLEDITISIA TRIACANTHOS
1627	HONEYLOCUST	GLEDITISIA TRIACANTHOS
1629	HONEYLOCUST	GLEDITISIA TRIACANTHOS
1636	NORWAY MAPLE	ACER PLATANOIDES
(9)	WASHINGTON HAWTHORN	CRATAEGUS PHAENOPYRUM



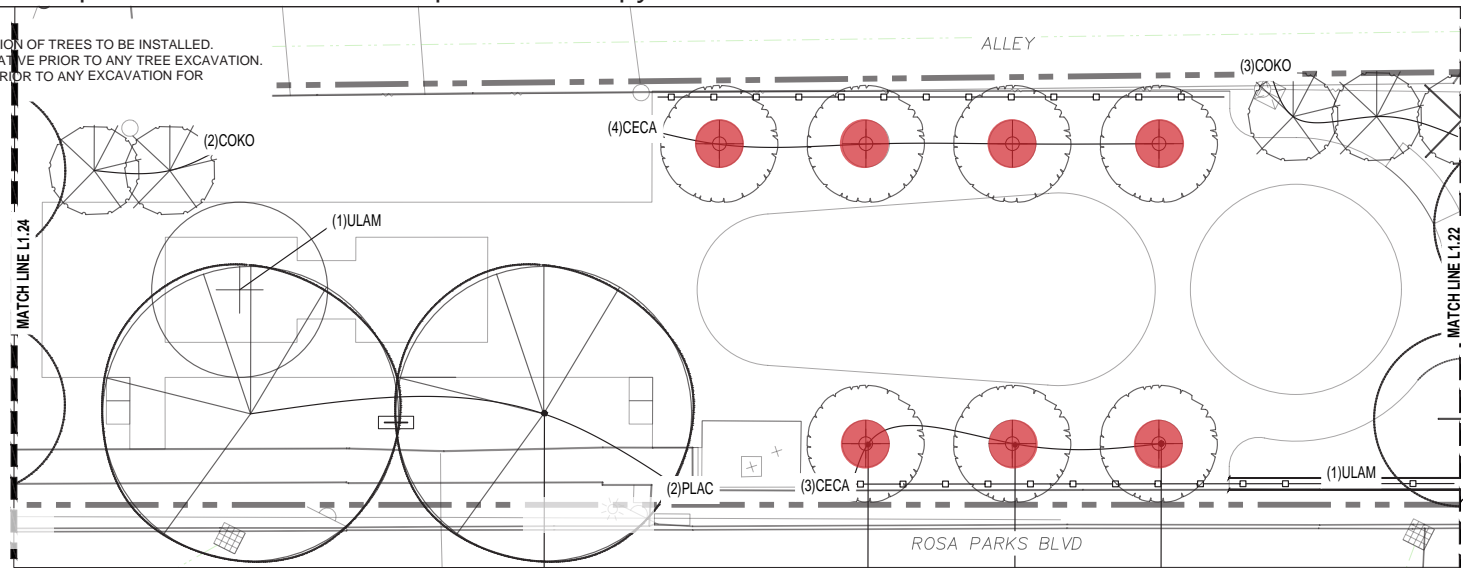
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PROPOSED TREE PLAN C


The tree grates will be located in the gathering and play area as shown on the map in shaded areas, providing shade in the active space. The surrounding green spaces with trees will also provide canopy shade.

NOTES:

- CONTRACTOR TO STAKE LOCATION OF TREES TO BE INSTALLED.
- REVIEW WITH CITY REPRESENTATIVE PRIOR TO ANY TREE EXCAVATION.
- CONTACT MISS DIG 72 HOURS PRIOR TO ANY EXCAVATION FOR PRE-MARKING.



PLANT LIST					
SYMBOL	COMMON NAME	BOTANIC NAME	QTY	SIZE	ROOTBALL
 COKO	KOUSA DOGWOOD	CORNUS KOUSA	5	2 1/2" CAL MIN.	B&B
 PLAC	'BLOODGOOD' LONDON PLANE	PLATANUS x ACERIFOLIA	2	2 1/2" CAL MIN.	B&B
 CECA	EASTERN REDBUD	CERCIS CANADENSIS	7	2 1/2" CAL MIN.	B&B
 ULAM	'PRINCETON' AMERICAN ELM	ULMUS AMERICANA	2	2 1/2" CAL MIN.	B&B

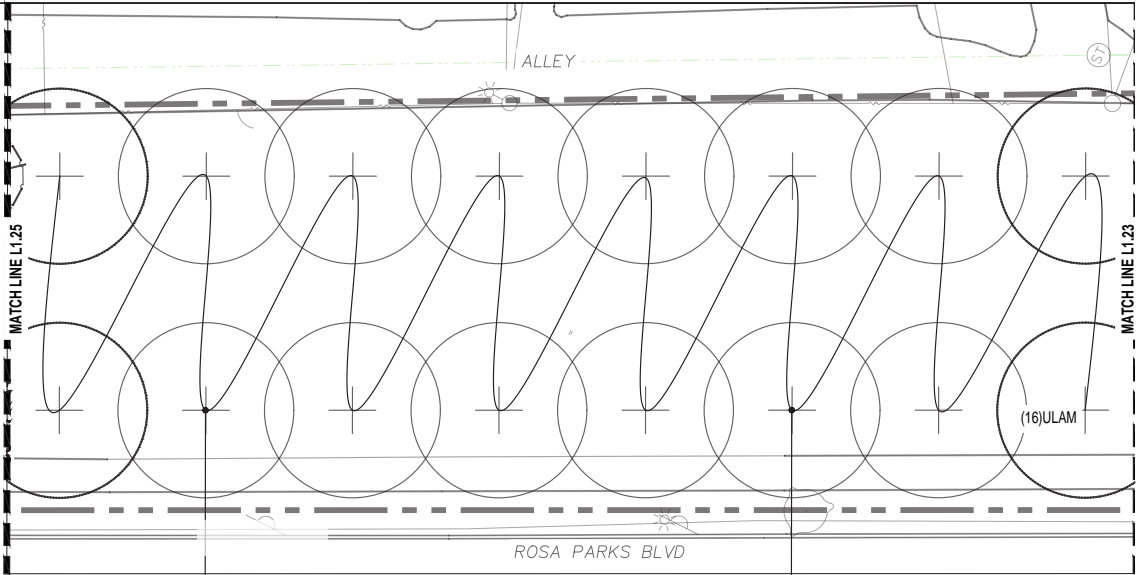
MATERIALS LIST				
SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL	UNIT	NOTES
	96" ROUND TREE GRATE	7	EA	IRONSMTIH, CUSTOM-1g, STARBURST SERIES 2, CAST IRON TREE GRATE, "ONE DETROIT" MULTI-LANGUAGE TEXT, INCLUDING STEEL ANGLE FRAME CROSS SUPPORTS, OR APPROVED EQUAL




Not to scale

PROPOSED TREE PLAN D

- NOTES:
- CONTRACTOR TO STAKE LOCATION OF TREES TO BE INSTALLED.
 - REVIEW WITH CITY REPRESENTATIVE PRIOR TO ANY TREE EXCAVATION.
 - CONTACT MISS DIG 72 HOURS PRIOR TO ANY EXCAVATION FOR PRE-MARKING.



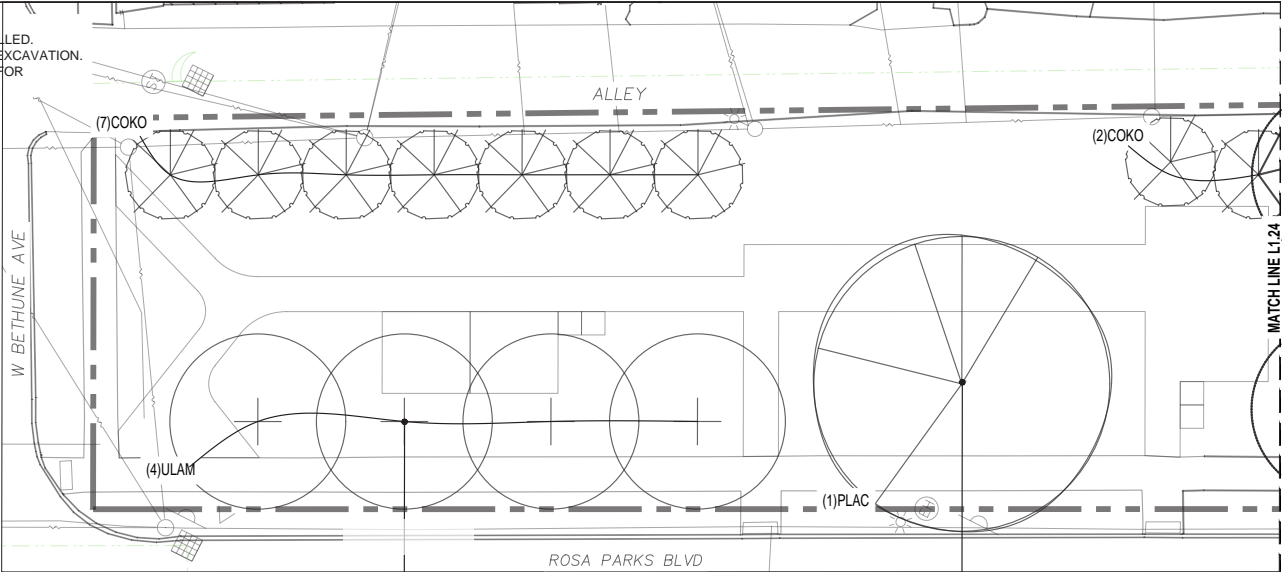
PLANT LIST					
SYMBOL	COMMON NAME	BOTANIC NAME	QTY	SIZE	ROOTBALL
 ULAM	'PRINCETON' AMERICAN ELM	ULMUS AMERICANA	16	2 1/2" CAL MIN.	B&B






Not to scale

PROPOSED TREE PLAN E

- NOTES:
- CONTRACTOR TO STAKE LOCATION OF TREES TO BE INSTALLED.
 - REVIEW WITH CITY REPRESENTATIVE PRIOR TO ANY TREE EXCAVATION.
 - CONTACT MISS DIG 72 HOURS PRIOR TO ANY EXCAVATION FOR PRE-MARKING.



PLANT LIST					
SYMBOL	COMMON NAME	BOTANIC NAME	QTY	SIZE	ROOTBALL
 COKO	KOUSA DOGWOOD	CORNUS KOUSA	9	2 1/2" CAL MIN.	B&B
 PLAC	LONDON PLANE	PLATANUS x ACERIFOLIA	1	2 1/2" CAL MIN.	B&B
 ULAM	'PRINCETON' AMERICAN ELM	ULMUS AMERICANA	4	2 1/2" CAL MIN.	B&B



Not to scale

PROPOSED TREE SELECTION



EASTERN REDBUD



'ROYAL RAINDROPS'
CRABAPPLE



'BLOODGOOD' LONDON
PLANE



'PRINCETON' ELM



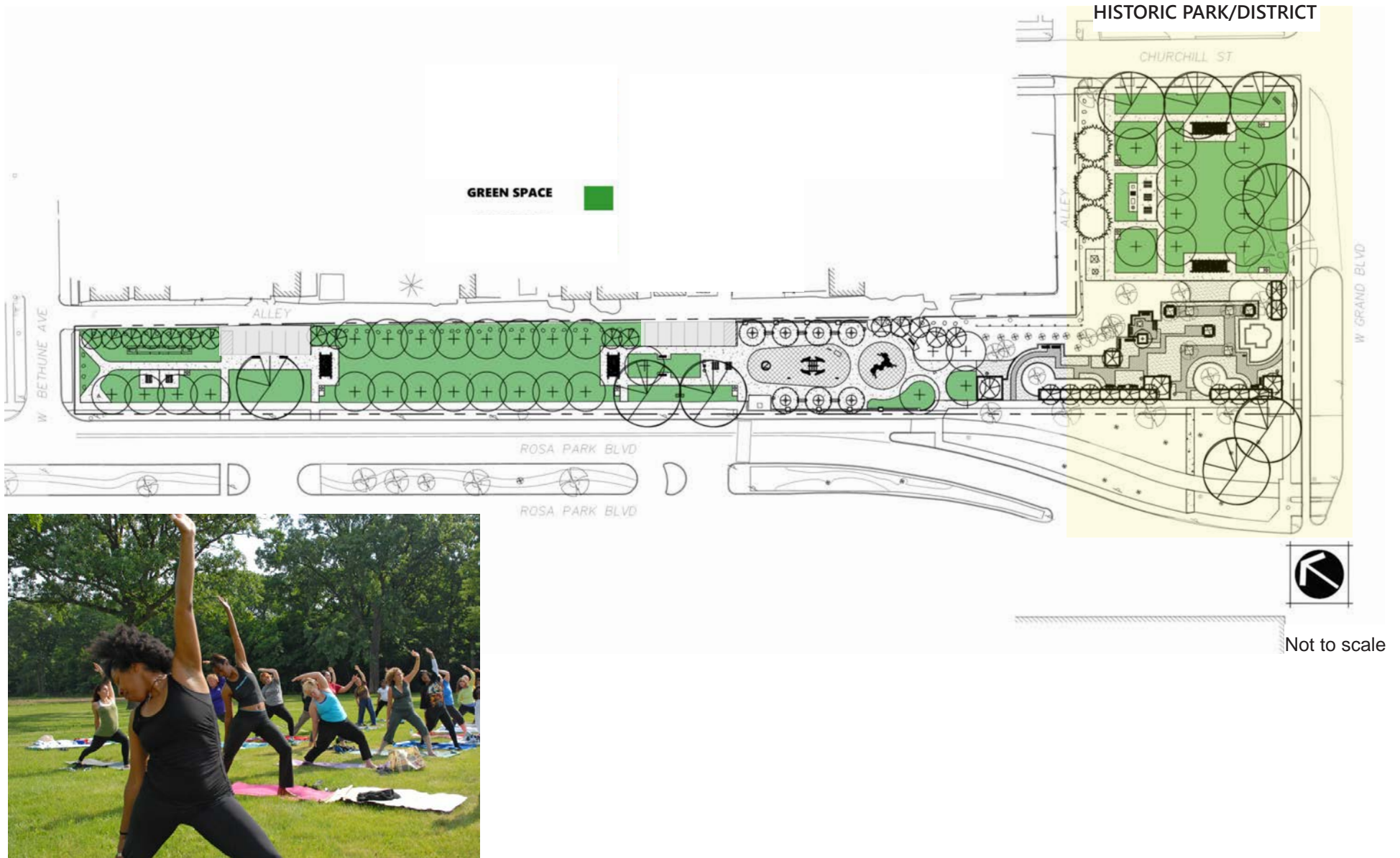
KOUSA DOGWOOD



NORWAY SPRUCE

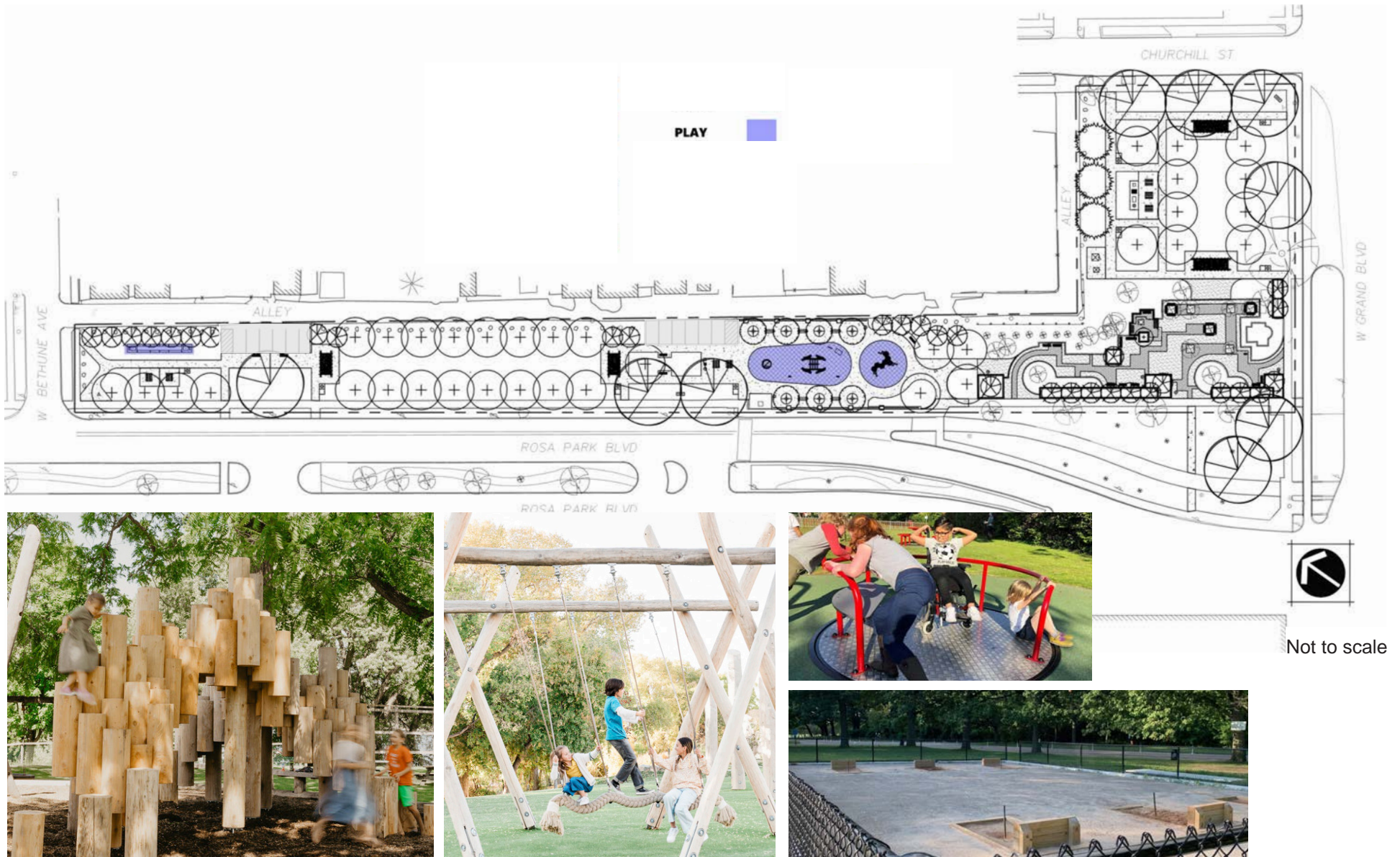
PROPOSED OPEN GREEN SPACE

The proposed greenspaces will allow passive activities such as relaxing, as well opportunities for community gatherings. Some of the green spaces will be able to accommodate small-sized events.



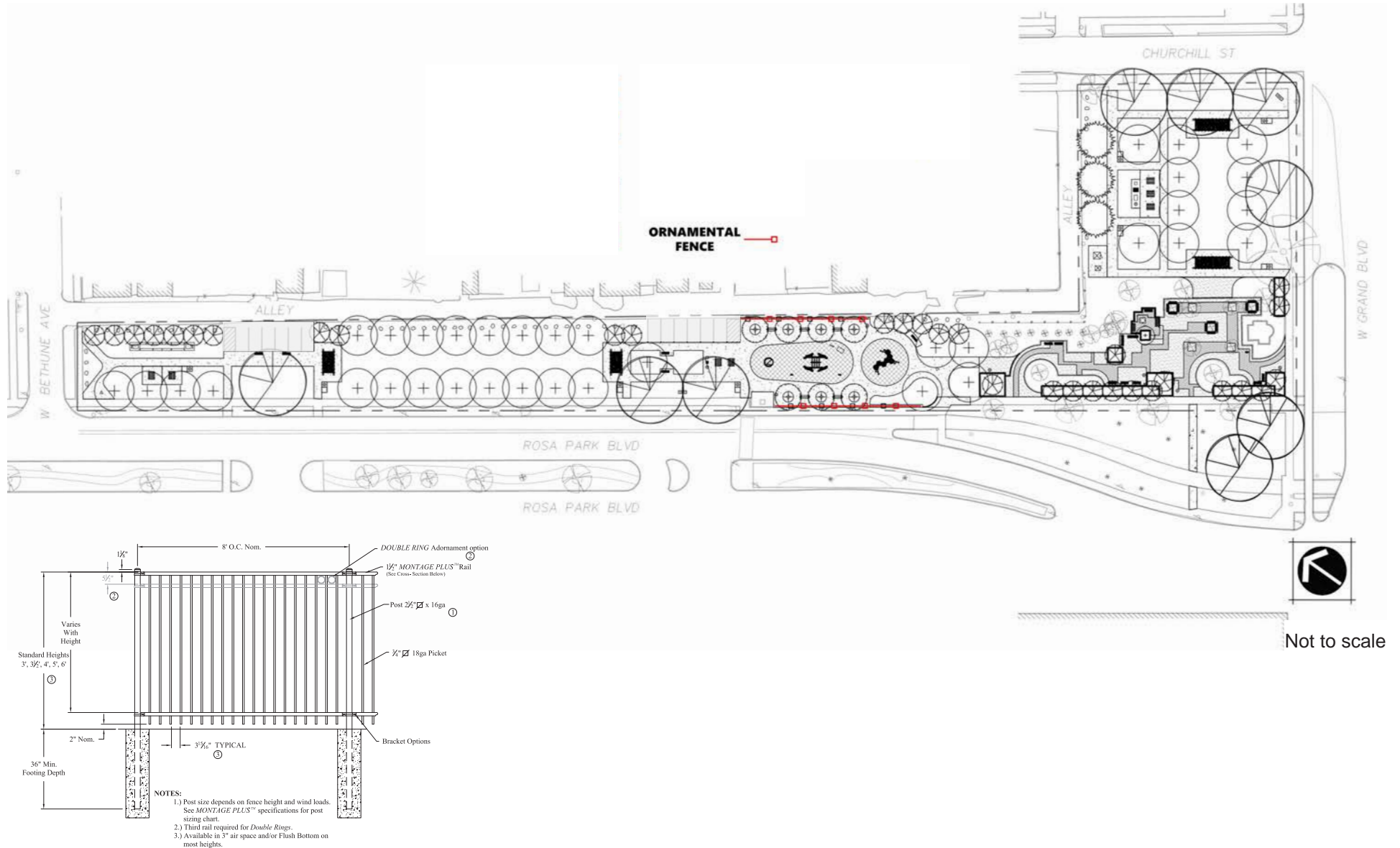
PROPOSED PLAY ELEMENTS

The proposed play elements are intended for people of all ages to have the opportunity to play and socialize. The swing posts and climbers are robinia wood. The spinner will be a element to influence people to play together. In addition, the horseshoe court will be located at Bethune Ave and Rosa Parks Blvd where residents currently bring their own to play.



PROPOSED ORNAMENTAL FENCE

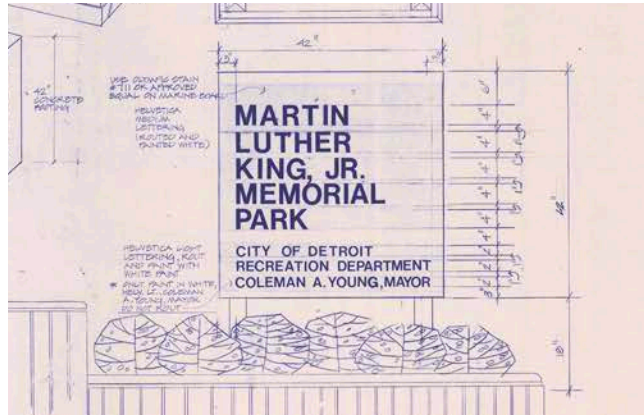
The four foot ornamental fence is being proposed along Rosa Park Blvd and along the alley. The intent is to protect park users using the play area and those who are sitting nearby.



PARK SIGNAGE

EXISTING PARK SIGN:

Currently, there are no park signs. Shown below is a drawing of the park sign that once existed. This park sign was implemented in the raised planter boxes visible from W Grand Blvd and Rosa Parks Blvd.



PARK SIGN, NONEXISTENT

PROPOSED PARK SIGNS:

The proposed design will place various standard park signs with city branding at all park main entrances. The park sign will identify the site as a City park as well as post park hours.



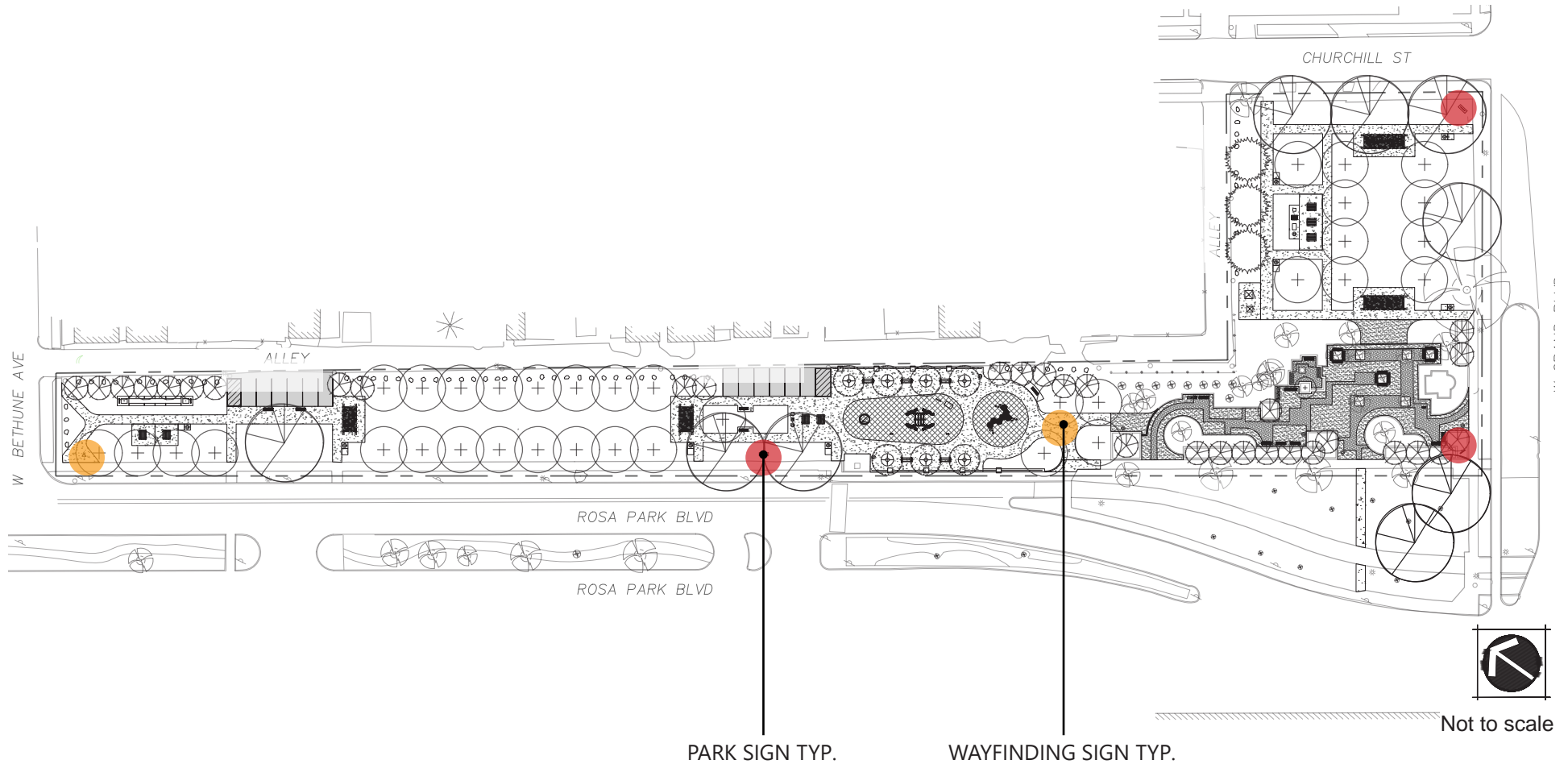
PROPOSED PARK SIGN



PROPOSED WAYFINDING SIGN

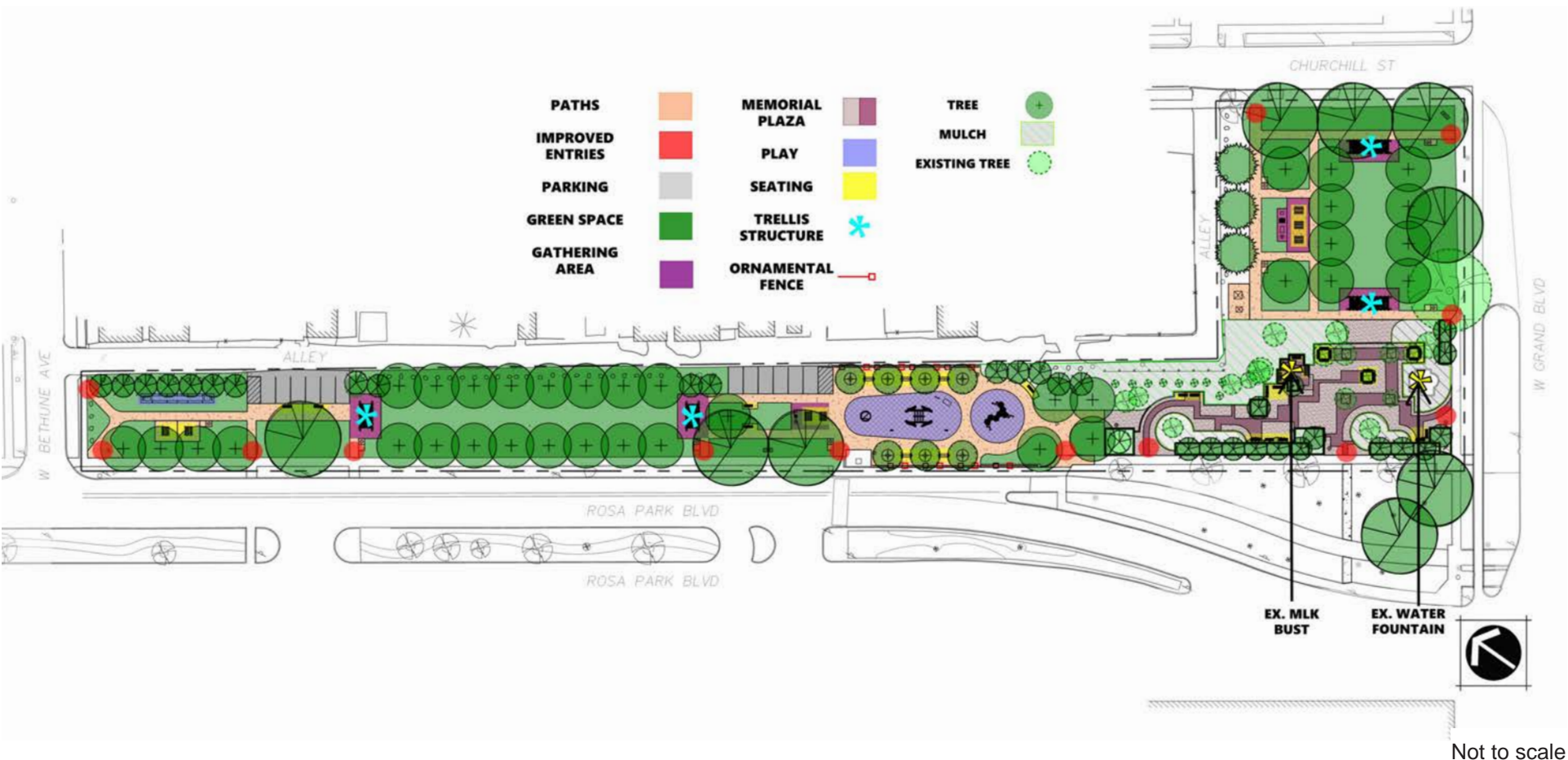
PROPOSED PARK AND WAYFINDING SIGN LOCATIONS

The proposed drinking fountain is another improvement in reimagining the historic presence of the park. The drinking fountain will be accessible to all and include a pet fountain; amenity will have black powder-coated finish. The fountain will be located in the shaded red area shown on the plan below.





MLK MEMORIAL PARK MASTER PLAN



CUT SHEETS ATTACHED

MLK MEMORIAL PARK

SUMMER 2025 DESIGN



GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Parks & Recreation
Division