



# MINGO CREEK PARK

Washington County, Pennsylvania  
December 2014





*“The nation behaves well if it treats its natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value.”*

*-Theodore Roosevelt*

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**WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Courthouse Square  
100 W. Beau Street  
Suite 701  
Washington, PA 15301

Phone: (724) 228-6811  
Fax: (724) 250-4110

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### **CLIENT**

Washington County Board of Commissioners

- Lawrence D. Maggi
- Diana Irey Vaughan
- Harlan G. Shober, Jr.

### **STAKEHOLDERS**

Lisa Cessna, Executive Director, Washington County Planning Commission

Jeff Donahue, Superintendent of Recreation, Washington County Parks and Recreation

Kevin Garrison, Superintendent of Parks, Washington County Parks and Recreation

Sherri Taddeo, Parks Programmer

Lisa Taylor, Parks Programmer

The People of Washington County

### **MASTER PLANNING TEAM**

Pat Gallagher, MBA, Principal in Charge, GAI Consultants

David Gilmore, RLA, Landscape Architecture Group Manager, GAI Consultants

Ryan Seacrist, RLA, Sr. Landscape Architect, GAI Consultants

Jayson Livingston, RLA, Sr. Landscape Architect, GAI Consultants

Jacob Burns, Land Specialist, GAI Consultants

Neelay Bhatt, Vice President, PROS Consulting

Sarah Durham, Planner, PROS Consulting

Andrew Knight, RLA, Sr. Landscape Architect, MKSK





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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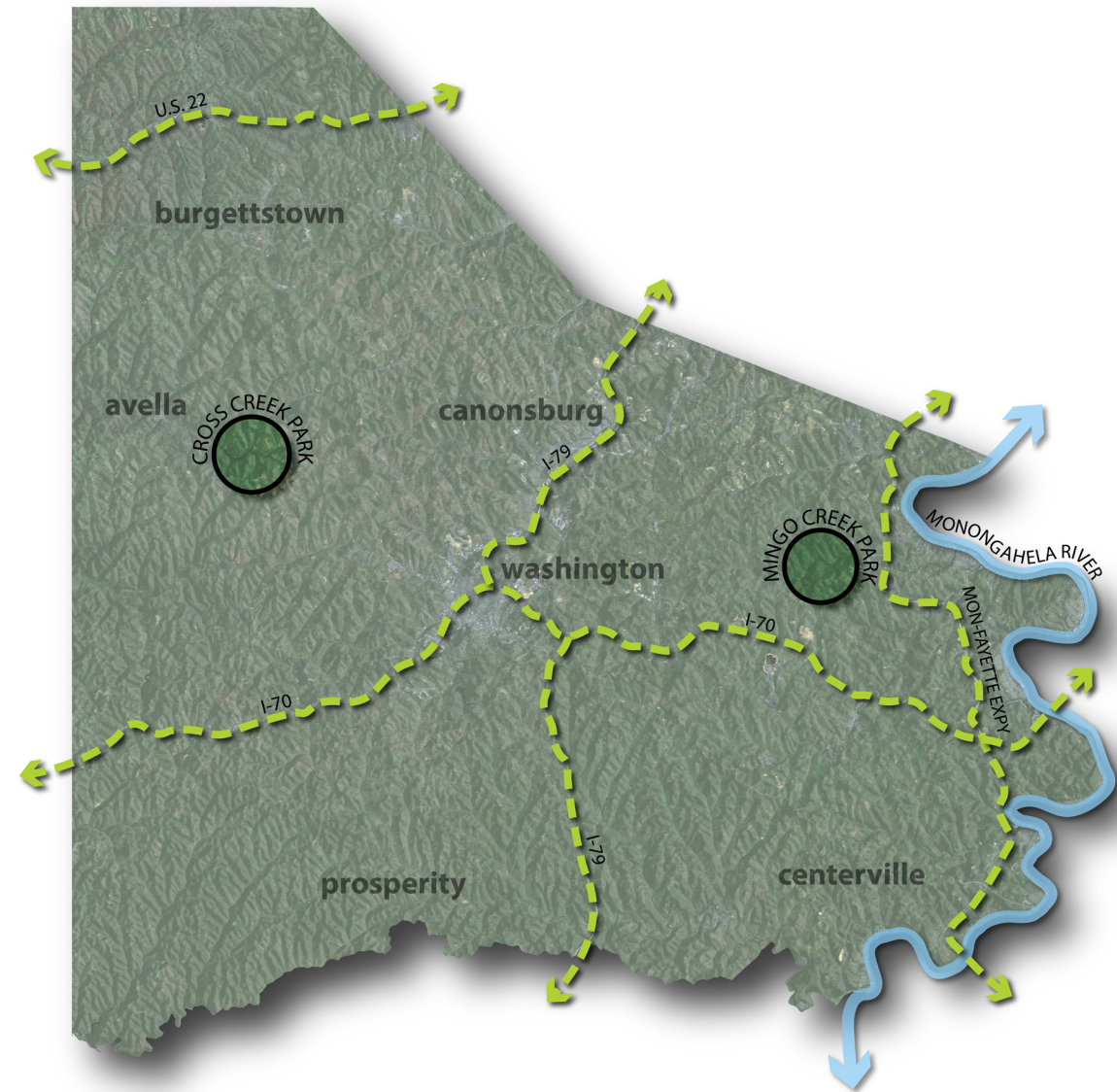
<b><i>ONE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</i></b>	<b><i>3</i></b>
Project Overview	
Planning and Design Process	
<b><i>TWO INVENTORY &amp; ANALYSIS</i></b>	<b><i>5</i></b>
Area of Study	
Site Context	
Demographics	
Community Engagement	
Site Inventory	
Site Analysis	
<b><i>THREE DESIGN MOTIVATION</i></b>	<b><i>19</i></b>
Planning Principles and Goals	
Best Practices	
<b><i>FOUR MASTER PLAN</i></b>	<b><i>21</i></b>
Master Plan Graphic	
Implementation Strategies	
<b><i>FOUR COMPONENT PLANS</i></b>	<b><i>23</i></b>
Park Core	
Organized Group Camping	
Equestrian Trailhead	
Disc Golf Course	
Nature Adventure Playground	
Leash-Free Dog Park	
Event Lawn	
Ice Skating Pond	
Human Stream Interactions	
Trail Typologies: Meadow, Woodland	
Signage and Wayfinding	

# CHAPTER ONE | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

This master plan report provides a comprehensive summary of a ten (10) month planning and design process which utilized community engagement, inventory and analysis of existing conditions, review of existing programs and facilities, development of planning and design goals, and exploration of alternative concepts for a variety of spaces and destinations throughout the park. This master plan serves as a vision for the community of Washington County to expand their open space and recreation offerings for a unique and world class park, fostering community interaction between nature and people, and the development of a sustainable Washington County: **Socially, Environmentally, and Culturally.**

The ideas in this report establish a comprehensive series of physical recommendations in support of ecology, history, programs/events, activities, and behaviors that echo the goals and objectives developed by the project team, stakeholders, and the community. The well-planned design and management of the park will further the goal of providing a community park with regional appeal, where spending an hour or a day at the park is a rewarding experience of opportunities for both individuals and groups engaging in expression, self-discovery, and recreation. It is also important to point out that all of the spaces within the park are intended to contribute to a sustainable environment honoring the legacy of the past while celebrating the future growth of the Washington County community. This renewed consciousness about rural park planning and design, and its impact on the health and wellness experience, will help create a dynamic and meaningful park signature for Washington County and the surrounding communities.





# CHAPTER ONE | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PLANNING & DESIGN PROCESS

Throughout the duration of the project, it is crucial that the design team abides by a process that, in the end, will provide validity and strength to any recommendations set forth. To achieve this, the design team utilizes the design process, which is a logical sequence of steps that are intended to guide the project from start to finish, with checks and audits along the way. In between gaining a wealth of knowledge and information on the park and proposing final recommendations, the design team will develop concepts and seek feedback from the public and stakeholder groups. While some concepts may make it through to finalization, others may be rejected or revised numerous times before being included in the plan. The following list outlines and describes each step of the design process:

### **Grounding**

An intensive period of interviews, observation, and research to gain a comprehensive understanding of the park site and its surroundings.

### **Exploration**

Developing in words and concepts, broad planning principles and goals in response to community and recreational issues and needs.

### **Recommendations**

The formulation of physical planning and design concepts, tested against planning principles and goals, in meeting identified program and enhancement needs.

### **Finalization**

The refinement and adoption of a comprehensive, unified set of ideas that comprise the master plan.

These steps were taken in concert with a master plan project team, which provided input and evaluation of each step throughout the planning and design process. The role and focus of the design team was to:

- a) Grow in knowledge and understanding of the site and the surrounding context, how it looks and how it works.
- b) Review and help determine planning and design principles and goals for the development and re-development of the site.
- c) Discover and explore new ideas and new ways of thinking about the site and the surrounding area.
- d) Share results of the planning and design process with key stakeholders and the community.
- e) Promote and be an advocate for the orderly planning, development, and re-development of the site.

Building upon the planning principles and goals of the Washington County Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Master Plan published in 2000, this master planning report has identified key park rules of form and overall development structure to allow both an understanding of the park as a total framework and of individual spaces within that framework. In understanding the park as a series of natural landscapes and recreational resources, the master plan provides detailed recommendations for the enhancement and character of each space in achieving both quantity and quality goals for the park. The master plan identifies key goals and recommendations regarding land use, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and broad landscape and enhancement recommendations to be implemented over time. The following goals form the touchstone of the goals and recommendations within the document:

### **1. Parkland and Natural Systems - "Stay Green"**

Provide seamless transition between ecology, community, and park development.

### **2. Pedestrian Connectivity**

Provide an extensive pathway system that promotes connectivity to destinations within the park as well as those for the surrounding context. The park should offer a variety of interconnected paths that offer views of the park and the reservoir: paths that are fast + slow, wide + narrow, hard + soft, and sunlit + shaded.

### **3. Multiuse Circulation**

Build upon and provide convenient and safe access throughout the park and along the riparian corridor. Link pathway network with existing pathways as well as future paths.

### **4. Park Core**

Provide a multifunctional space within the park that offers potential for both formal and informal uses and is a hub for Washington County Parks sponsored programs and events. This space should be centrally located or easily accessible from multiple directions.

### **5. Engage the Water**

Provide a variety of opportunities for people to engage and view Mingo Creek. The space should be designed to support environmental education, health and wellness, fishing, and constructed with materials that reflect the authentic character of the region and system of parks throughout the county.

### **6. Active Recreation**

Provide a variety of recreation opportunities throughout Mingo Creek Park. Recreation spaces should integrate with the surrounding landscape, using shade, landform, and native plantings to promote an inclusive and ageless destination for everyone.

### **7. Restore and Rejuvenate**

Breathe new life into successful existing park amenities and use areas.



## CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

### AREA OF STUDY

#### LOCATION

Following along the banks of the meandering Mingo Creek stream valley, Mingo Creek County Park is located in the eastern region of Washington County and entirely within Nottingham Township. With a total of five access points to the park, the primary access point is off of State Route 1059 (Sugar Run Road), while the four secondary access points enter off of Park View Road, Little Mingo Road, or State Route 136.

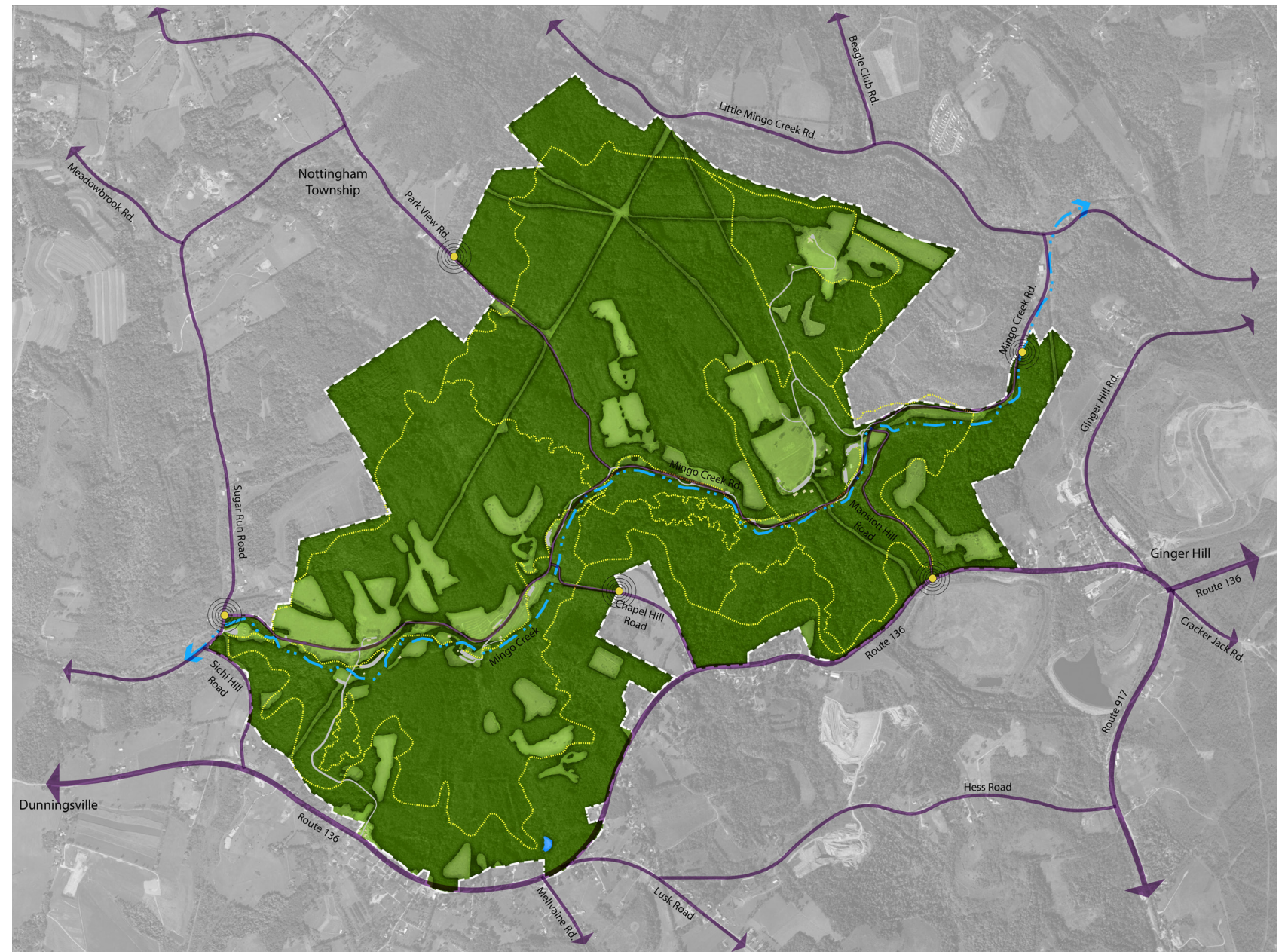
In addition to serving the immediately adjacent communities of Kammerer and Ginger Hill, Mingo Creek County Park also attracts users on a regional basis. With only 15 miles separating the park from downtown Washington and under 30 miles from Pittsburgh, the 2,600 acre park is a destination for various outdoor recreational opportunities, serving a wide demographic of local and regional communities.

#### HISTORY

During a Flag Day celebration on June 14, 1969, Mingo Creek County Park opened its gates to the public for the first time. In the three years leading up to the park dedication, a land acquisition, financed by Project 70 and federal HUD funds, resulted in approximately 1,500 acres that became the original park land. With the initiatives being “to provide a complete range of outdoor recreation facilities and activities that are compatible with each other and the existing environment”, and to “develop a plan that would protect, improve and enhance the natural qualities of the park site,” Mingo Creek County Park saw immediate success through dramatic increases in park usage throughout the years following the grand opening.

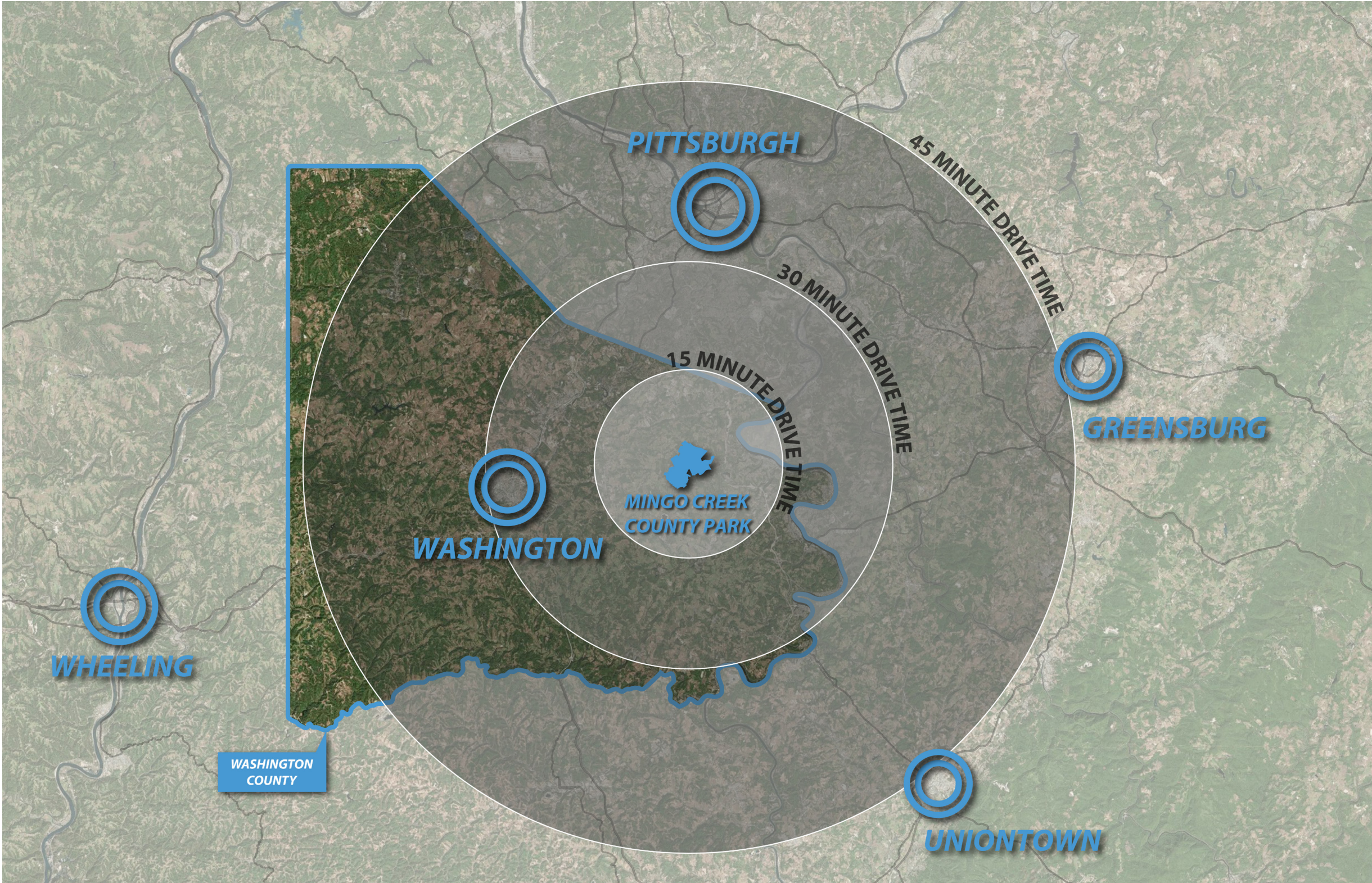
With the immediate success and obvious benefits and importance of providing recreation facilities within Washington County, Mingo Creek County Park began to grow in both size and amenities available to the public. By 1970 Mingo Creek Park provided 250 picnic tables, 50,000 newly planted pine trees, four 180 space parking lots and three restroom facilities. With the addition of facilities and amenities as time progressed, the park began attracting special events, such as the Covered Bridge Festival, which still occurs annually featuring two covered bridges in the park and hosts thousands of guests each year.

Although the park maintains a fantastic array of recreational opportunities such as playgrounds, a model airplane field, an observatory, large playfields, and shelters, its dynamic and lengthy trail system has become one of its greatest assets. From horseback riding to biking and gentle walking to hiking, Mingo Creek Park offers an array of opportunities for trail users that hail from both local and regional proximity to the park. In addition to trails, Mingo Creek Park also serves as the base for various Washington County Parks Department sponsored outdoor programs that are available to the general public for little to no cost.





**PROXIMITY MAP**





# CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

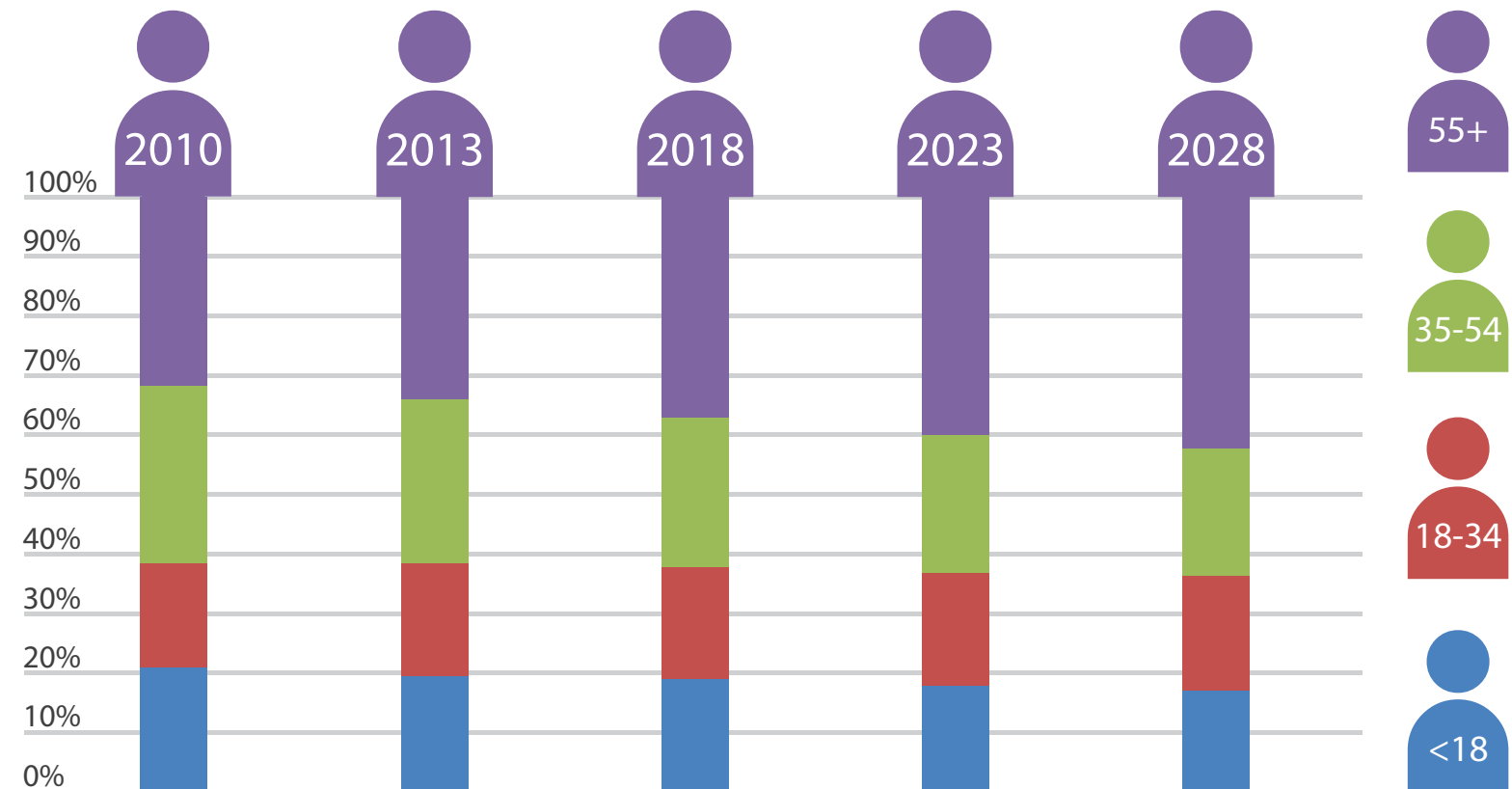
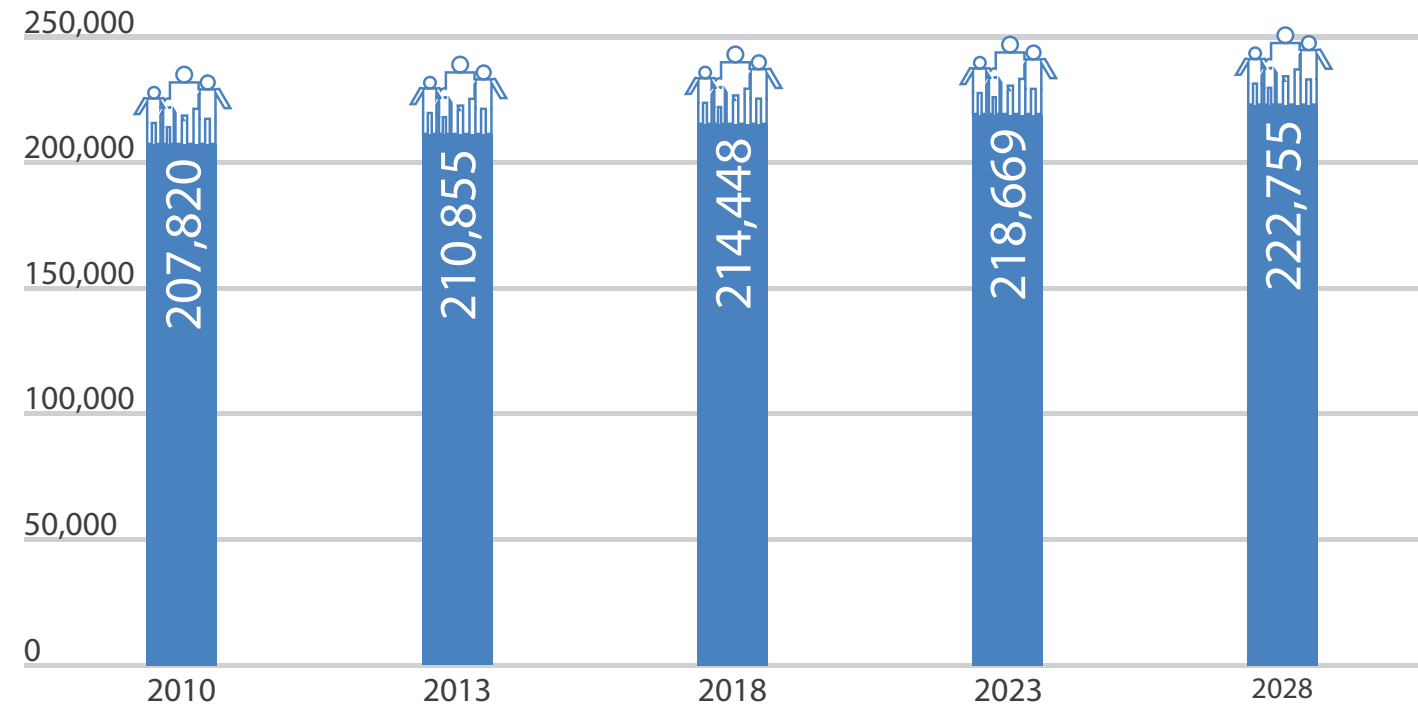
## DEMOGRAPHICS

### County Population

The County has witnessed a slight growth in recent years. From 2010 to 2013, the County's total population experienced an increase of 1.5%, which is slightly above national growth averages which were just over 1% annually. Projecting ahead, the total population of the target area is expected to slowly grow over the next 15 years. Based on predictions through 2028, the local population is expected to have approximately 222,755 residents living within 92,684 households.

### Population by Age Segment

Evaluating the distribution by age segments, the County has a skewed balance between middle-aged and older adults compared to youth and young families. Over time, the population is projected to continue an aging trend. Based on the 2013 estimate, the 55+ segment will emerge as the largest age group, constituting 34.0% of the population. Future projections through 2028 show that each age segment, except the 55+ group, will undergo small, but steady, decreases in size as compared to the population as a whole. The 55+ group is expected to continue to gradually grow to represent approximately 43% of the population by 2028 which indicates that more than 2 out of every 5 individuals in Washington County will be over the age of 55. This is consistent with general national trends where the 55+ age group has been growing as a result of increased life expectancies and the baby boomer population entering that age group.





## CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Effective communication between the project team, Washington County parks and recreation staff, and various stakeholder groups was essential for this master plan study to develop in an organized manner and meet a wide range of concerns represented by various interests. Working with the local community was deemed a critical and vital component to this study. A comprehensive community engagement approach was planned to gain feedback from the following stakeholders as design research and design alternatives were explored.

#### **PUBLIC WORKSHOPS**

Two workshops were conducted that incorporated a visioning component including activities based on audience involvement to actively engage them in the process. Topics included opportunities and constraints as well as sustainable design strategies. Alternatives were presented at a public meeting with opportunity for feedback. Surveys were used to facilitate input.

#### **PARKS SURVEY & WEBSITE**

A website and survey were developed in order to help reach out and gather the input of county residents. On the website, residents were able to participate in an interactive survey. The results of the survey, which had close to 300 individual responses, were used in order to help guide the master planning process.

#### **ADVISORY / TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Combined meetings with stakeholders were held to help keep participants informed of progress and to obtain feedback. The lines of communication were kept open throughout the study duration. These meeting included Washington County Planning Staff, Parks and Recreation staff, and the Washington County Board of Commissioners.



## CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

### SURVEY RESULTS: PARK AMENITIES

As part of the parks study, community members were asked to take part in an interactive survey in order to help determine which amenities and programs park users would like to see. The survey was open to the community throughout the life of the project and garnered close to 300 responses.

#### WHICH AMENITY IS YOUR TOP CHOICE?

Initially, community members were asked out of a provided list of amenities, which would be their top choice to be placed in Washington County Parks. The results, shown on the graph to the right, reflect the percentage of survey respondents who chose an amenity as their number one choice. The majority of respondents favored equestrian trails. Amenities such as walking and biking trails, an amphitheater, and boating docks were also chosen by many as a number one choice. Rounding out the survey were amenities such as nature centers, small picnic areas, and indoor event space.





# CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

## SURVEY RESULTS: PARK PROGRAMS

### WHICH PROGRAM IS YOUR TOP CHOICE?

Community members were provided a list of potential, broad-based park activities or programs and asked to select their top choice that they would like to see the parks department offer to the public. The number one choice of the majority of respondents was youth summer camps. Programs such as home school outdoor classroom, outdoor skills/adventures, and nature and outdoor programs were also select by many respondents as a top choice. Finally, environmental education, workshops, and 90 minute family oriented programs were among the least desired choices. Overall, the survey results will help guide Washington County Parks in determining which programs would be beneficial to incorporate into their existing park programming.





# CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

## EXISTING INVENTORY MAPPING

- PARK ENTRANCE
- PARK OFFICE
- RESTROOM
- PICNIC PAVILION
- PLAYGROUND
- MAINTENANCE
- PARKING LOT
- WALKING / HIKING TRAILS
- HORSEBACK TRAIL
- BIKE TRAIL
- AIRPLANE FIELD
- LEASH FREE AREA
- SCOUT CAMPING AREA
- OBSERVATORY
- COVERED BRIDGE
- POINT OF INTEREST





# CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

## OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



### PARK ENTRANCE

#### OBSERVATIONS

- Primary entrances announced at intersection of Sugar Run Rd and Mingo Creek Rd and at Little Mingo Creek Road and Mingo Creek Road.
- Secondary entrances at Park View Road, Chapel Hill Road, and Mansion Hill Road.
- Gateway signs are constructed of rough cut lumber and carved lettering
- Most of Mingo Creek Rd is paralleled by a paved walking and biking trail

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve entrance aesthetics: Improve/enhance signage visibility, add plant material while maintaining proper site distances
- Consider connecting the paved trail to the park entrance to provide direct multi-modal access from Sugar Run Rd into the park



### PARKING

#### OBSERVATIONS

- Each cluster of park amenities (shelters, restrooms, playgrounds, etc.) has a designated parking area
- In all, parking is not centralized due to the linear layout of the park along Mingo Creek and the distance between each amenity.
- Some small, informal road side parking exists intermittently throughout the park where larger paved lots are not within close proximity.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote more pedestrian activity by centralizing parking when possible
- Where appropriate, implement sustainable stormwater management strategies to reduce runoff into Mingo Creek



### RESTROOMS

#### OBSERVATIONS

- Most of the restroom facilities are dated and are in need of upgrades / repairs
- Distribution of restrooms throughout the park seems acceptable
- The architectural style is unique and is perhaps a relic of a past trend

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve current restroom facilities by upgrading fixtures and remodeling the facades
- Replace current restroom facilities and consider consolidating restroom structures in areas where proximity allows



### SHELTERS

#### OBSERVATIONS

- Most shelters are dated and are in need of remodeling or replacement
- The structures share the same unique architectural style as the restrooms
- Shelters are located in clusters throughout the park and are in reasonable proximity to restroom facilities and other park amenities (i.e., playgrounds)

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider replacing or performing major renovation of existing shelters
- Consider new shelters with a more timeless architectural style
- Provide small shelters along hiking and horseback trails as a destination for hikers



# CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

## OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



### PARK OFFICE

#### OBSERVATIONS

- Park office has limited parking and isn't wide enough for 90 degree parking spaces.
- The building has a residential character and is primarily utilized for park staff office space
- Office does not have ADA access from Mingo Creek Rd.
- Often used for indoor programs or as a meeting location for program attendees

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Widen the parking area to improve its functionality
- Improve pedestrian access to the office to allow park visitors to access the office for information
- Consider expanding office to accommodate indoor activities or creating an additional structure elsewhere to alleviate space issues



### HORSEBACK TRAILS

#### OBSERVATIONS

- Areas for horse loading / unloading are informal
- Horseback trails are in good condition, but may not be conducive to riding after inclement weather

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider providing designated paved trailer parking for loading / unloading of horses
- Provide restrooms and shelters near horseback trail-head to centralize niche users
- Provide clear signage that indicates where horseback riding is permitted and not permitted at every trail that may be accessed by horseback
- Consider posting changeable signage with daily conditions of horseback trails at trailhead



### PLAYGROUNDS

#### OBSERVATIONS

- Four (4) formal playgrounds are located throughout the park
- All playgrounds are within a close proximity to shelters and restrooms
- All of the formal playgrounds utilize manufactured play equipment and structures

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider less formal play structures to encourage interaction with nature



### OBSERVATORY

#### OBSERVATIONS

- Has no day to day connection to park functions other than existing within park property
- Structure is very visible from scout camping area
- Invites a niche group of users to the park

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider screening open view of observatory building
- Winding paved access road to the observatory could provide a sense of mystery and arrival for observatory users if the entry sequence is screened and staged properly
- Provide shelters and other park amenities around observatory that can be utilized by visitors of the observatory





# CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

## OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



### WALKING & HIKING TRAILS

#### OBSERVATIONS

- Numerous trails with varying levels of difficulty and length
- Not an abundance of resting points in secluded portions of trails

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider providing small shelters or seating areas along less rigorous trails for resting and as a destination for hikers
- Provide a trail rating system that can be incorporated into signage that will indicate the level of challenge that can be expected before navigating trails



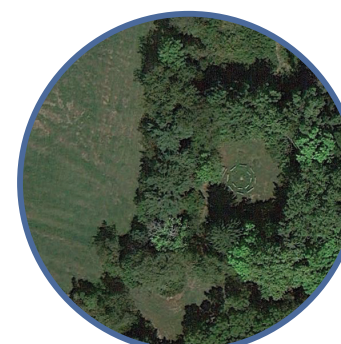
### ORGANIZED GROUP CAMPING

#### OBSERVATIONS

- Close proximity to observatory and roadway
- Defined by a dense tree line on the edge of an open field
- Small paved parking area

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider providing a structure within this area for more formal scout group activities
- Provide designated fire pits for fire safety
- Provide informal seating areas
- Provide a wooded area that has been cleared slightly for a more informal camp setting
- Consider screening camping area from direct visual of road and observatory



### MAINTENANCE

#### OBSERVATIONS

- Located off route 136 on the perimeter of the park
- A private paved access road links the maintenance area to the core of the park
- Multiple storage buildings and large pieces of equipment
- Very visible from Route 136

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider screening the maintenance facility from Route 136



### LEASH FREE AREA

#### OBSERVATIONS

- Large open field along Mingo Creek Road
- No formal dog park amenities

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide dog watering and waste amenities
- Provide seating and shade structures for dog owners
- Consider dog agility course to attract users





# CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

## PHYSICAL FEATURES

### Irreplaceable Park Assets

One of the greatest assets Mingo Creek Park has to offer is the abundant natural beauty. From open fields to dense forest canopies and the ecotones that lie between, the park contains a variety of habitats that present a diverse potential of use areas. Perhaps the most notable natural characteristic of the park is that it exists within the Mingo Creek stream valley. This trait alone provides both opportunities and constraints that must be considered while recommending any development that may directly or indirectly effect the quality of the stream.

The photographs on this page represent only a small sample of the natural heritage found within Mingo Creek Park. However, these examples capture and characterize the essence of the park and underscore the importance of designing in a way that promotes the stewardship of such natural resources.

Rolling Lowlands



Babbling Stream



Tumbling Cascades



Mountaintop Vista



Vast Meadows



Meandering Waterway





Harmonious Ecotones



Breathtaking Panorama



Expansive Views



Scenic Crossings





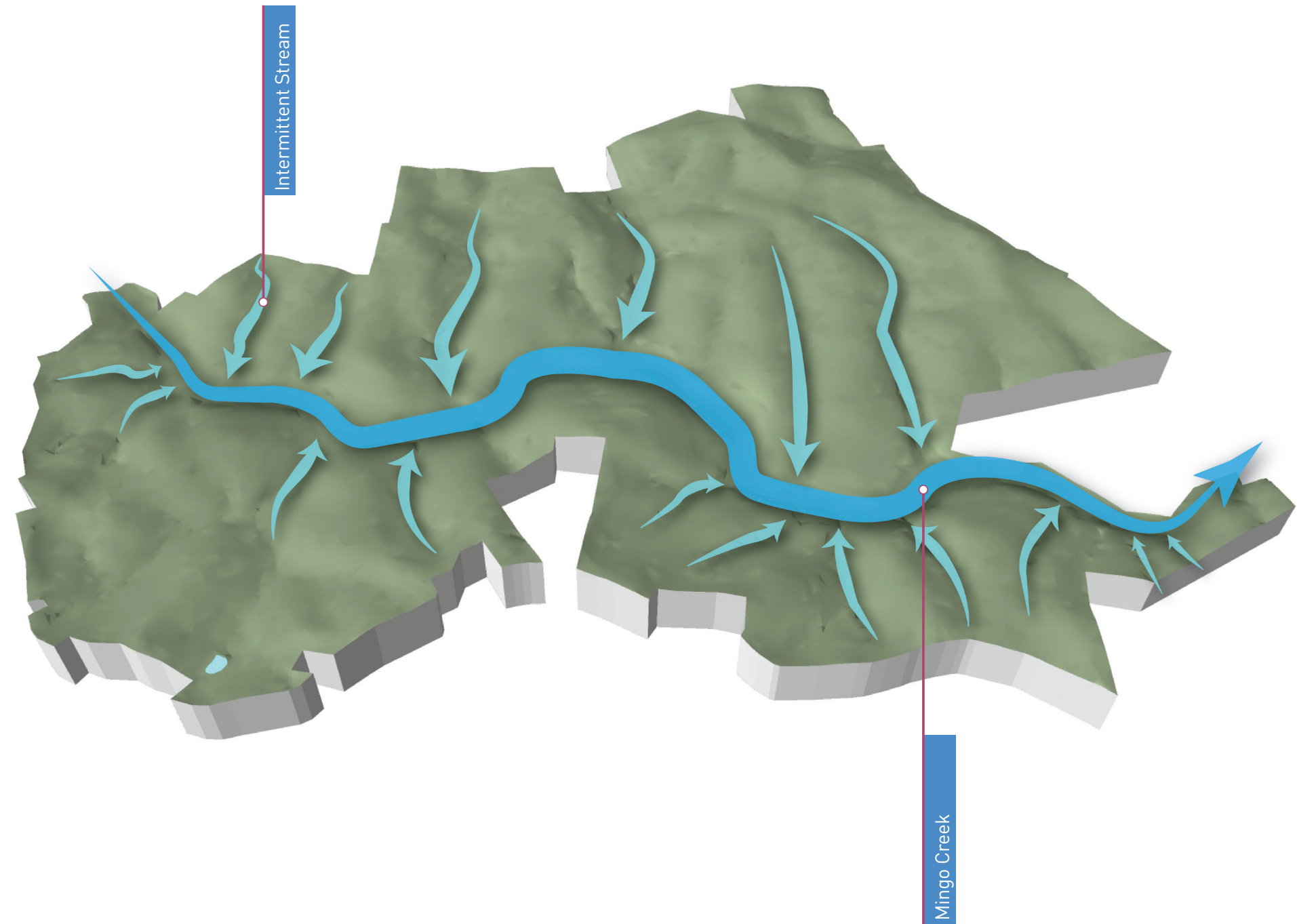
## CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

### PHYSICAL FEATURES

#### Site Hydrology

With Mingo Creek bisecting the park from east to west, a heightened level of sensitivity is necessary in considering development within the stream's riparian corridor. While it is important to protect the banks and areas immediately adjacent to the stream, it is equally paramount to consider the upland areas surrounding the riparian zone. Over development or poor stormwater management of the land surrounding a stream can be detrimental to a riparian habitat through increased runoff and/or the introduction of additional sediments and erosion.

Although Mingo Creek is the largest and most obvious perennial body of water flowing through the park, there are many small tributaries throughout the stream valley. Whether the streams are ephemeral streams that flow only during periods of precipitation or intermittent streams that flow only weeks or months at a time, they are all subject to the overall health of Mingo Creek. Any development that may impact these small tributaries should be considered in future planning.

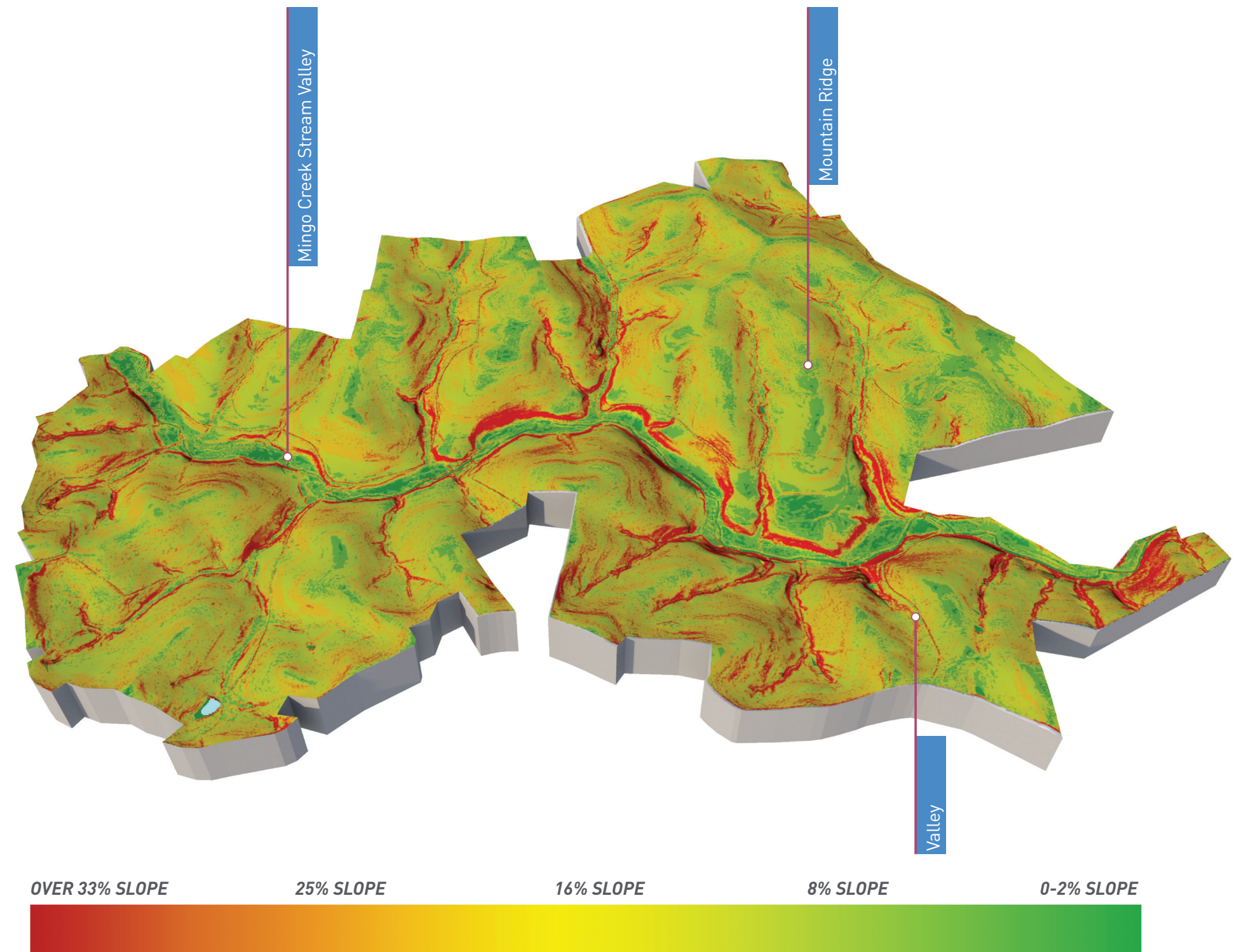




**Site Topography**

Nestled within the Appalachian Plateau, Mingo Creek Park consists of an undulating arrangement of valleys and ridges. Although the majority of the topography can be classified anywhere from gentle slopes to steep terrain, the park does offer flat regions along the floodplains of Mingo Creek.

Any considerations for development along the lowland regions and floodplains should be made mindful of flood potential. On the other hand, due to the steep terrain of the upland areas, a level of sensitivity should be observed while planning to avoid erosion and slip hazards.



## CHAPTER THREE | DESIGN MOTIVATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & BEST PRACTICE

### GOALS: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue to promote Mingo Creek Park as a destination for retreat, recreation, and education
2. Rejuvenate and improve current successful amenities, use areas, and park resources
3. Improve and build upon the existing trail system to encourage the growth and appeal of both multi-modal and specialized uses.
4. Promote Mingo Creek Park as a destination for all ages
5. Preserve and manage the existing natural resources throughout the park
6. Enhance and provide additional capabilities for Washington County sponsored programs and continue to promote Environmental Education opportunities
7. Promote authenticity; share the unique stories and character of the park landscape and surrounding community

### WHAT WAS SAID: STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

1. Enhance current trail system throughout the park
2. Encourage interaction with Mingo Creek and provide a variety of access
3. Promote Environmental Education within the park for all ages
4. Enhance existing and provide additional picnic shelters throughout the park
5. Conserve the natural resources throughout the park
6. Encourage camping as a future program opportunity
7. Provide safe and convenient access to existing park amenities and future park spaces

### PRECEDENCE: BEST PRACTICE EXPLORATION

In order to provide a perspective on the potential for the future character of the park, the planning and design team presented examples of a range of potential improvements. The variety of park improvement recommendations include the following topics:

1. Sport and Recreation
2. Circulation: Paths and Trails
3. Signage and Wayfinding
4. Playscape
5. Gateways and Entrances
6. Outdoor Learning
7. Park Structures: Offices, Restrooms, Pavilions, Shelters



# CHAPTER THREE | DESIGN MOTIVATION

## BEST PRACTICE



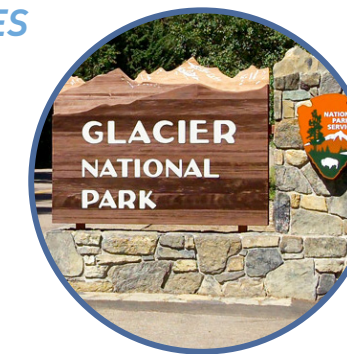
### SHELTERS

- Activities
- Dining
- Relax
- Socialize
- Retreat
- Gather
- Attractive
- Multi-use



### GATEWAYS & ENTRANCES

- Arrival
- Directional
- Attractive
- Visible
- Well-stated
- Access
- Defining



### RESTROOMS & FACILITIES

- Attractive
- Accessible
- Convenient
- Sustainable
- Close
- Safe
- Maintainable
- Durable



### AMPHITHEATER & OUTDOOR LEARNING

- Gathering
- Learning
- Speaking
- Listening
- Sitting
- Standing
- Demonstration
- Hands on
- Activities
- Nature
- Exhibits



### TRAILS & WALKING PATHS

- Variety
- Challenge
- Adventure
- Discovery
- Refuge
- Nature
- Fitness
- Directional
- Safe
- Intensity
- Simplicity



### PLAYGROUNDS

- Fitness
- Education
- Play
- Active
- Nature
- Tactile



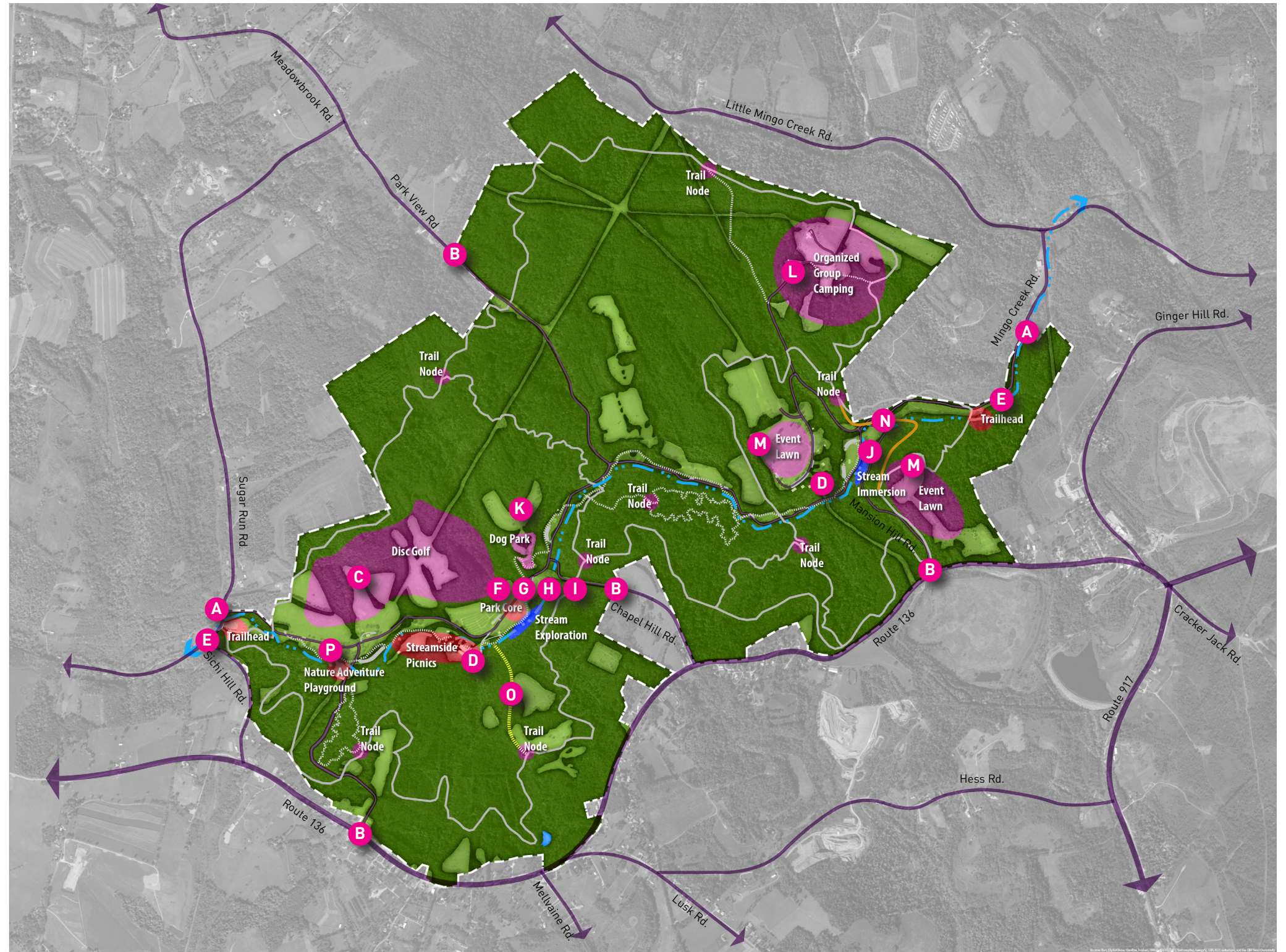


# CHAPTER FOUR | MASTER PLAN

## GENERAL PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

### LEGEND: PARTS OF THE WHOLE

- A. MAIN ENTRANCE / GATEWAY
- B. SECONDARY ENTRANCE
- C. DISC GOLF COURSE
- D. PICNIC AREA
- E. EQUESTRIAN TRAILHEAD
- F. MULTI-USE FACILITY
- G. AMPHITHEATER
- H. PARK CORE
- I. STREAMSIDE BOARDWALK
- J. STREAM IMMERSION
- K. LEASH-FREE DOG PARK
- L. ORGANIZED GROUP CAMPING
- M. EVENT LAWN
- N. HORSEBACK, BIKING, & HIKING TRAIL ADDITION
- O. WALKING / HIKING TRAIL ADDITION
- P. NATURE ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND





*ONGOING PROJECTS*

**Trail Maintenance**

Trail maintenance is an ongoing effort that is required in order to provide a safe experience for hikers, bikers, and horseback riders. Also, special care should be taken to ensure trails do not become eroded and cause environmental issues such as slips and landslides.

**Signage**

As new amenities are added, park signage should be kept up to date. To ensure continuity and a sense of place, a catalog or family of signage should be developed and carried uniformly throughout the park.

**Shelters and Facilities**

Although park shelters and structures should be designed to be as low maintenance and durable as possible, regular maintenance and upgrades should be observed to insure the longevity of the facilities.

*SHORT TERM*

**Disc Golf**

Minimal changes to the site and ease of construction enables this feature to be developed quickly. Additionally, the disc golf course will attract new users to the park.

**Leash-Free Dog Park**

The majority of this feature is already in existence. Completing the dog park will help draw in more visitors to Mingo Creek Park.

**Event Lawn**

Because the development of the event lawn is flexible and primarily based on event programming, the space can begin being utilized in its current state. While more permanent facilities, such as restrooms, concessions, and shelters, can be added in time, temporary structures and outside vendors could be utilized during events in the short term.

**Shelters and Restrooms**

Many of the current shelters and restroom facilities throughout Mingo Creek Park are dated or in need of upgrade. To see an immediate parkwide rejuvenation, it should be a short term goal to begin replacing these structures.

*MID-TERM*

**Nature Adventure Playground**

The nature adventure playground will be a popular item that will attract park visitors with children. This, coupled with the relative low cost of development, prioritizes it.

**Streamside Boardwalk**

To provide streamside access to users of all ages and levels of mobility, streamside boardwalks should be considered a midterm goal. Due to permitting and development costs, planning for this amenity should begin in the short term.

**Equestrian Trailheads**

In an effort to provide park amenities (shelters, restrooms, etc.) that are accessible to horseback riders without having to encroach on trails and areas of the park not designated for horseback riding, the development of equestrian trailheads should be a priority. Establishment of the trailheads could be broken down into smaller phases to spread out development costs.

*LONG TERM*

**Multi-use Facility**

The multi-use facility is meant to provide a flexible indoor space for visitor information, park sponsored programs and events, and an office for park staff. As a component of the larger “Park Core” recommendation in the master plan, the multi-use facility should be considered a long term goal that will require community and stakeholder buy in over time.

**Amphitheater**

In parallel to the multi-use facility, the amphitheater is an essential component in developing the “Park Core” within Mingo Creek Park. Once completed, the amphitheater will be capable of hosting large groups during outdoor park programs and events. The amphitheater should be a long term goal with planning that begins in the short term.

**Organized Group Camping**

Though already partially existing, this amenity will need further development in order to serve moderate to large sized organized groups. Due to the nature of this amenity, expansion is capable of occurring over time as demand increases.



# CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

## PARK CORE

### Park Core

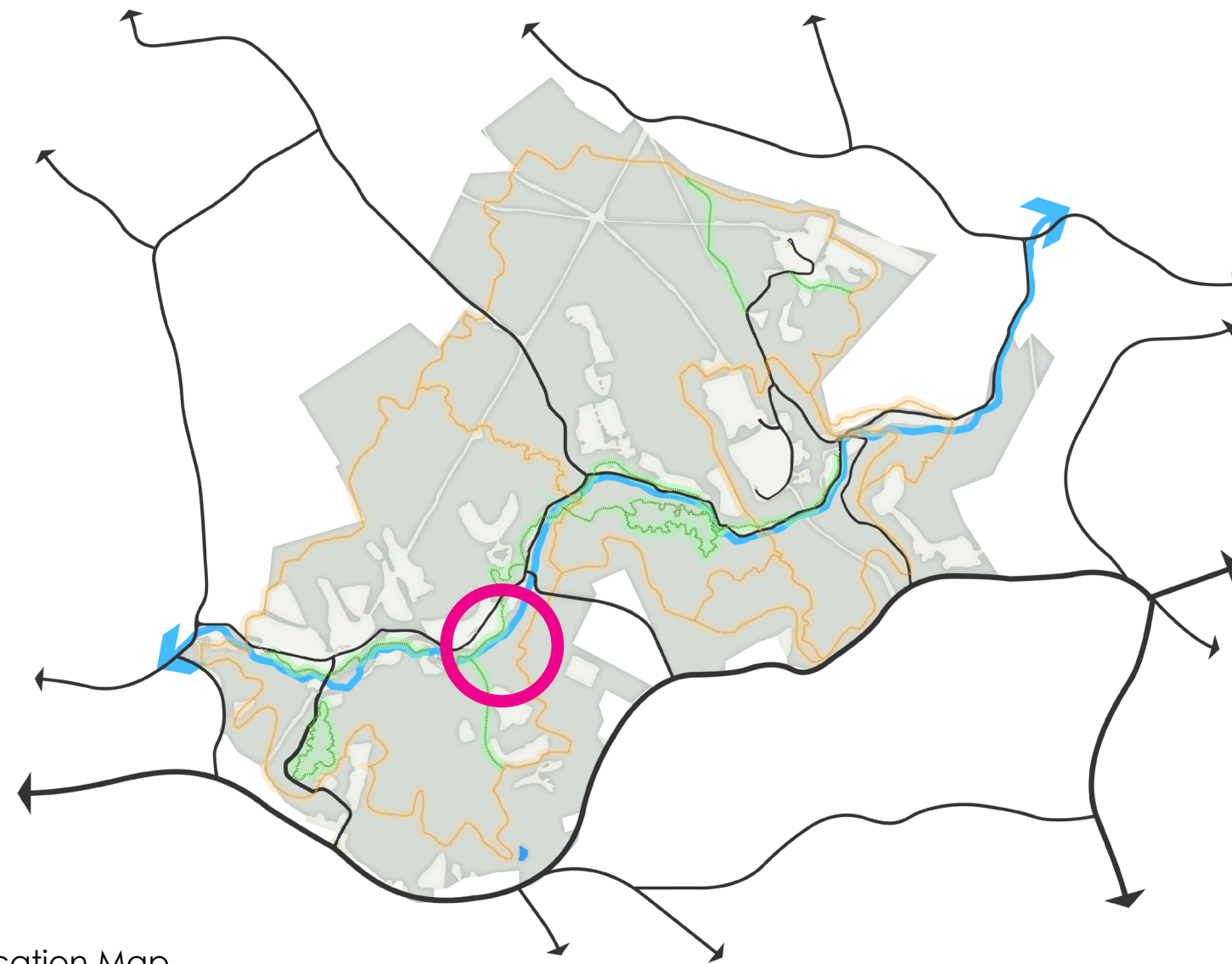
*Education + Recreation + Community*

Although the Washington County Parks Department sponsors programs that occur in each of the three county parks, Mingo Creek Park currently serves as the hub for a majority of the programs. A few reasons this holds true are the easy access to Mingo Creek Park from surrounding communities, the wide range of park amenities that are available, and the park environment itself, which lends itself perfectly to environmental education. However, among all of the resources Mingo Creek Park has to offer, there is still room to strengthen the park system's ability to provide the various community enrichment programs that have become a flagship of Washington County Parks.

To aid in the growth of the park system's successful community programs and to instill a public perception of Washington County Parks as a local and regional leader in community enrichment, it is proposed that a "Park Core" be developed in Mingo Creek Park to act as a state of the art stage for community programs. The Park Core is designed to be a central feature within the park and houses amenities such as a multi-use indoor facility, amphitheater, activity lawn, and a streamside boardwalk along Mingo Creek. Conveniently, the activity lawn and boardwalk are divided by the existing paved walking trail, which provides potential to embark upon hikes to different areas of the park.

### Features

- Multi-use Facility
- Activity Lawn
- Streamside Boardwalk



Location Map



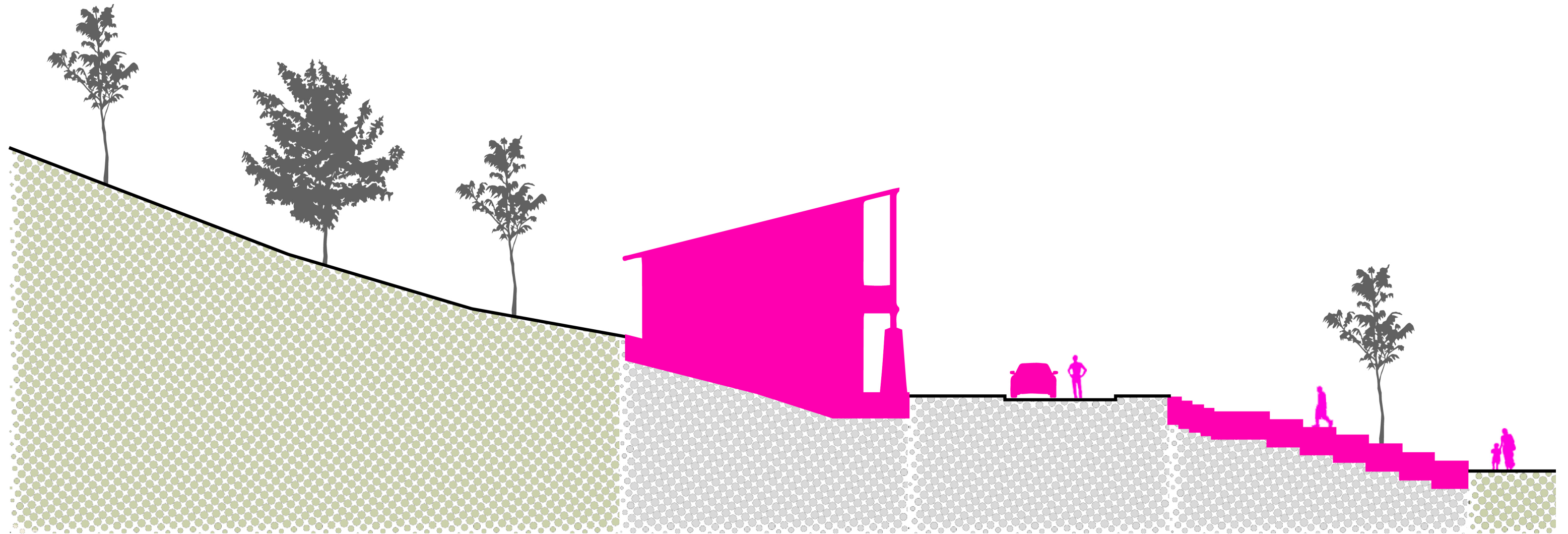
**PARK CORE RENDERING**





# CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

## PARK CORE CROSS SECTION

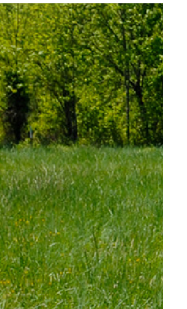
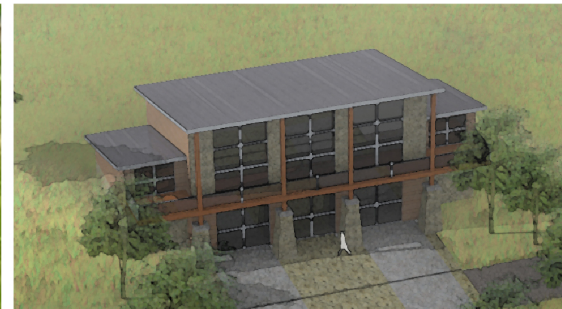


MEADOW

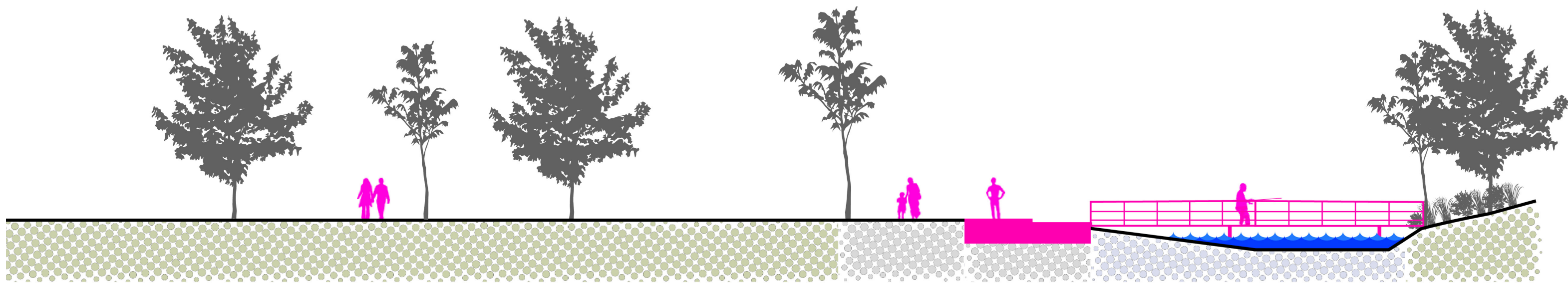
MULTI-USE FACILITY

ROAD

AMPHITHEATER







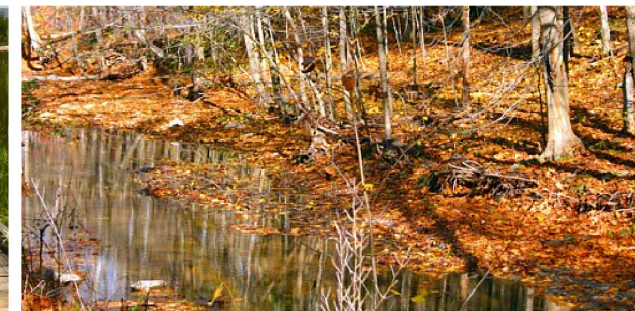
ACTIVITY FIELD

PAVED TRAIL

BOARDWALK

MINGO CREEK

RIPARIAN ZONE





## CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

### ORGANIZED GROUP CAMPING

#### Organized Group Camping

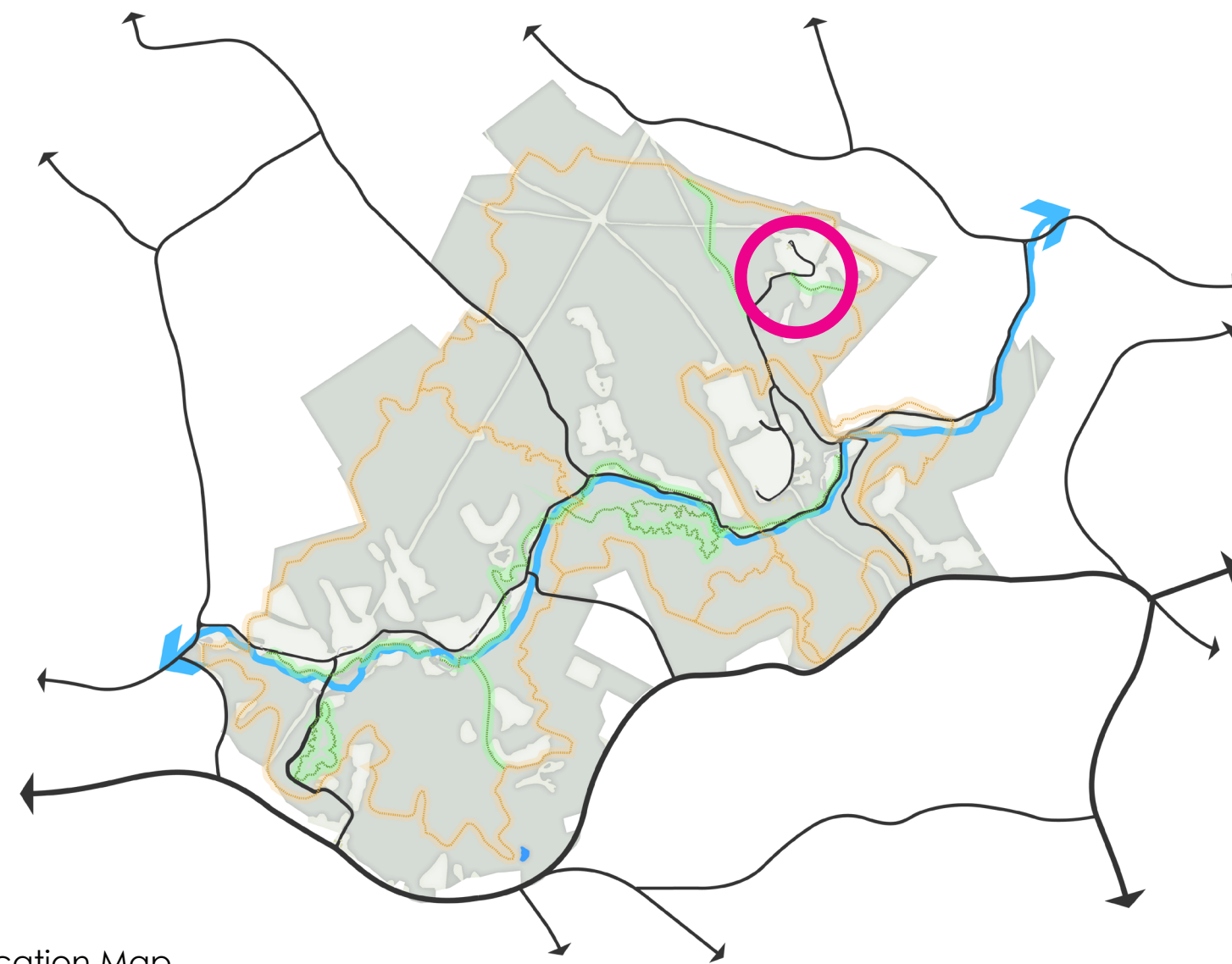
*Education + Camaraderie + Nature*

Unique to Mingo Creek Park, an observatory exists in the far northeast region of the property. Coincidentally, just south of the observatory exists a small campsite that is used by local scout troops. These two niche elements within the park, combined with the parks department's already established educational and community programs, create an interesting opportunity to develop a portion of the park centered around youth enrichment and education.

With the current observatory and scout camp already in close proximity to each other in a relatively undeveloped region of the park, there is potential to further develop the area in a way that both use areas can become one overall organized group camping facility. Once established, the camp can host single and multiple day educational retreats for school aged children. Also, the camp can continue to serve and attract local scout troops even more so than it does today.

#### Features

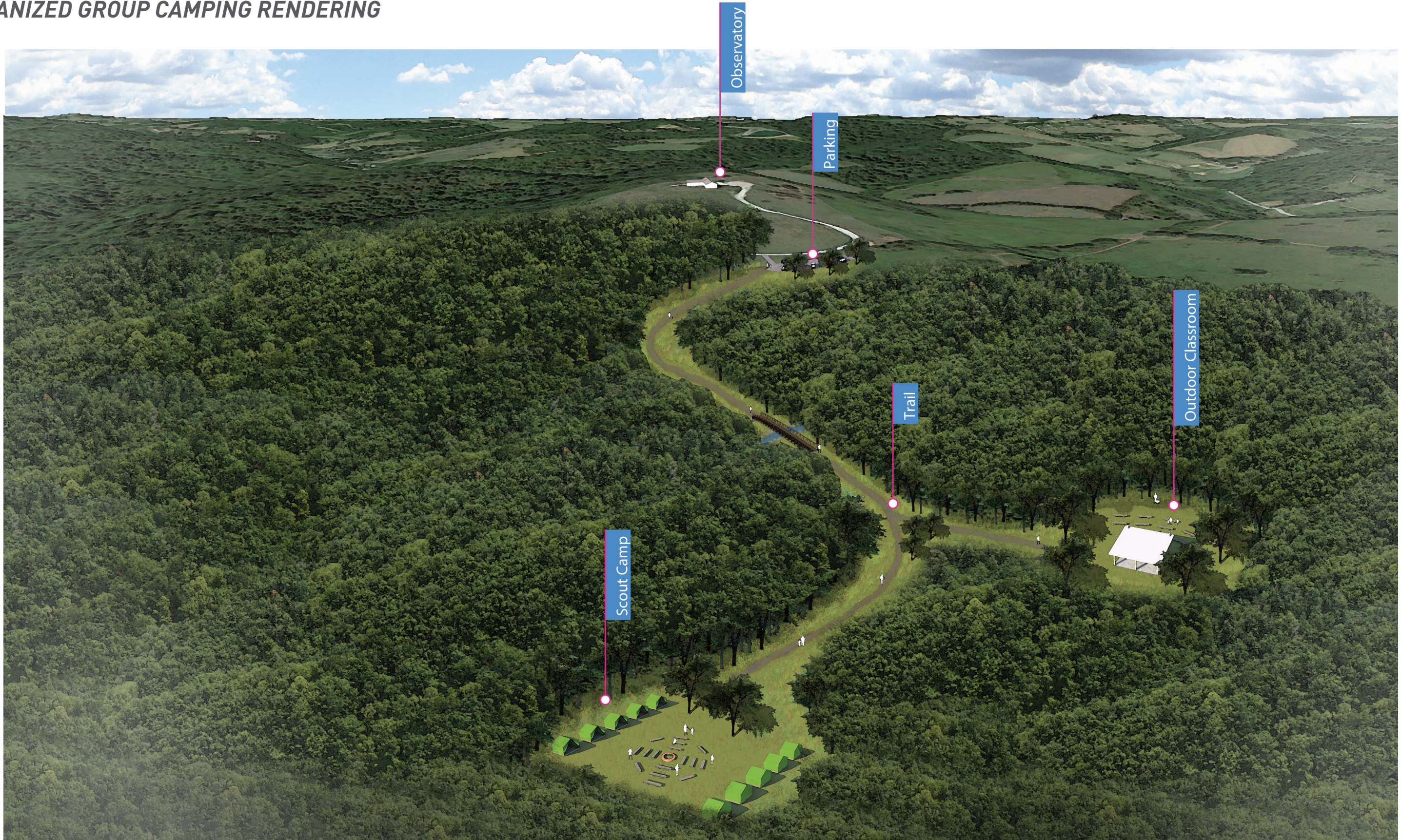
- Outdoor Classroom
- Camping Area
- Community Fire Ring
- Shelter



Location Map



**ORGANIZED GROUP CAMPING RENDERING**





# CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

## EQUESTRIAN TRAILHEAD

### Equestrian Trailhead

*Embark on an Adventure*

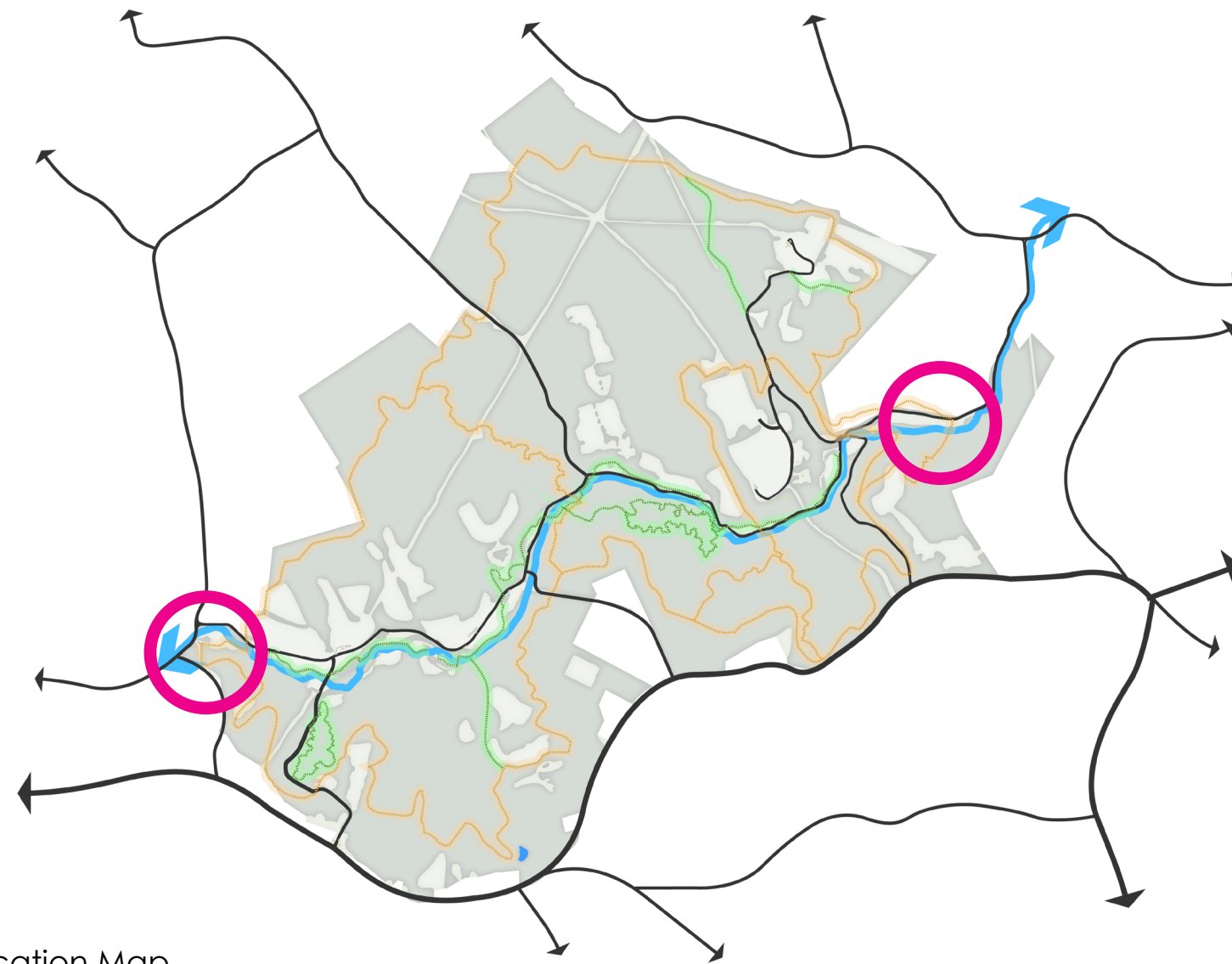
Located near each park entrance along Mingo Creek Road are two existing horse trailer parking areas. In addition to parking and unloading, these areas act as trailheads for equestrians to embark upon Mingo Creek Park's network of horseback riding trails. Although the trailheads are sufficient for parking and loading/unloading, they offer few amenities for horseback riders. The lack of amenities and facilities, such as shelters and restrooms, may, on occasion, cause riders to enter areas of the park and ride on trails that are forbidden to horseback riding in an attempt to access certain facilities. This can result in maintenance and safety concerns as a rider may travel along trails and roads that are not designed or rated for horseback traffic.

To mitigate the potential for horseback riding on unauthorized trails and to attract horseback enthusiasts to Mingo Creek Park, it is proposed that each of the two existing trailheads be upgraded by adding restroom facilities and shelters. Also, trail maps and informational kiosks are recommended to be located at each trailhead to guide and educate riders on trail conditions, rules, and general park information.

In parallel with the concern for horseback riders, special care and attention should be given to the horses as well. To cater to the well being of the horses, it is recommended that the surface material for the parking and loading areas be a crushed stone with fines that will supply traction and stability beneath a horses' hooves, in addition to the materials pervious and low maintenance attributes. It is also proposed that the trailheads have tie out posts to secure horses during loading/unloading and mounting blocks to assist riders.

### Features

- Trailer Parking
- Park Amenities
- Horse Riding Amenities



Location Map



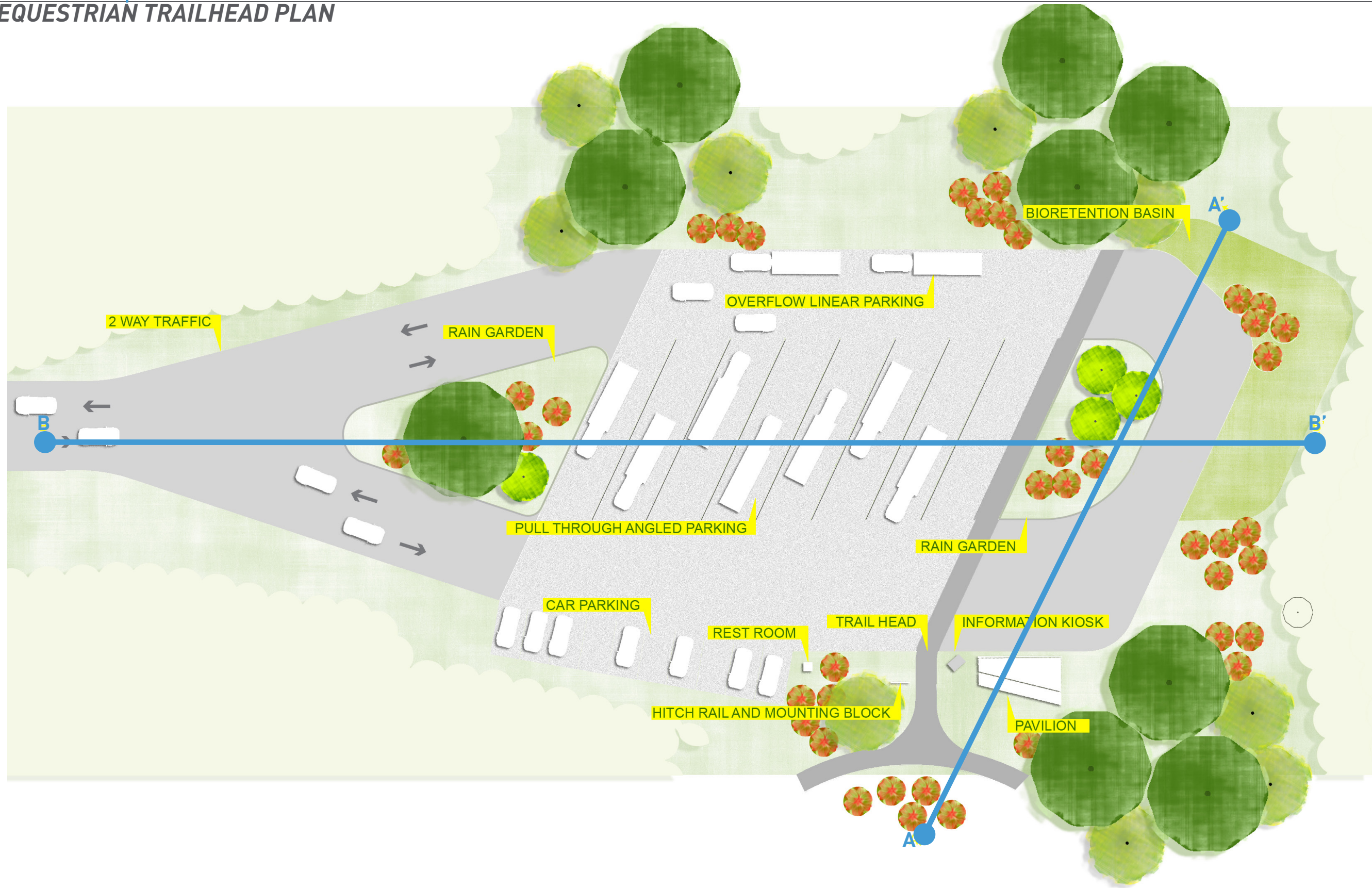
EQUESTRIAN TRAILHEAD RENDERING





# CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

## TYPICAL EQUESTRIAN TRAILHEAD PLAN

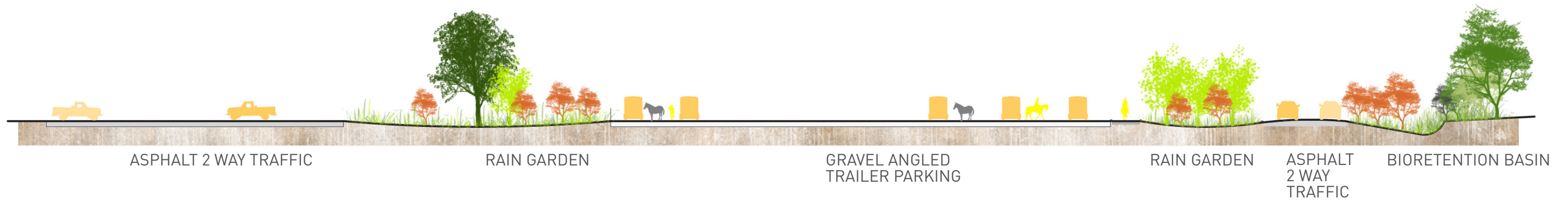




**TYPICAL EQUESTRIAN TRAILHEAD CROSS SECTION**



*SECTION A-A'*



*SECTION B-B'*



# CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

## DISC GOLF COURSE

### Disc Golf Course

*Ageless Recreation*

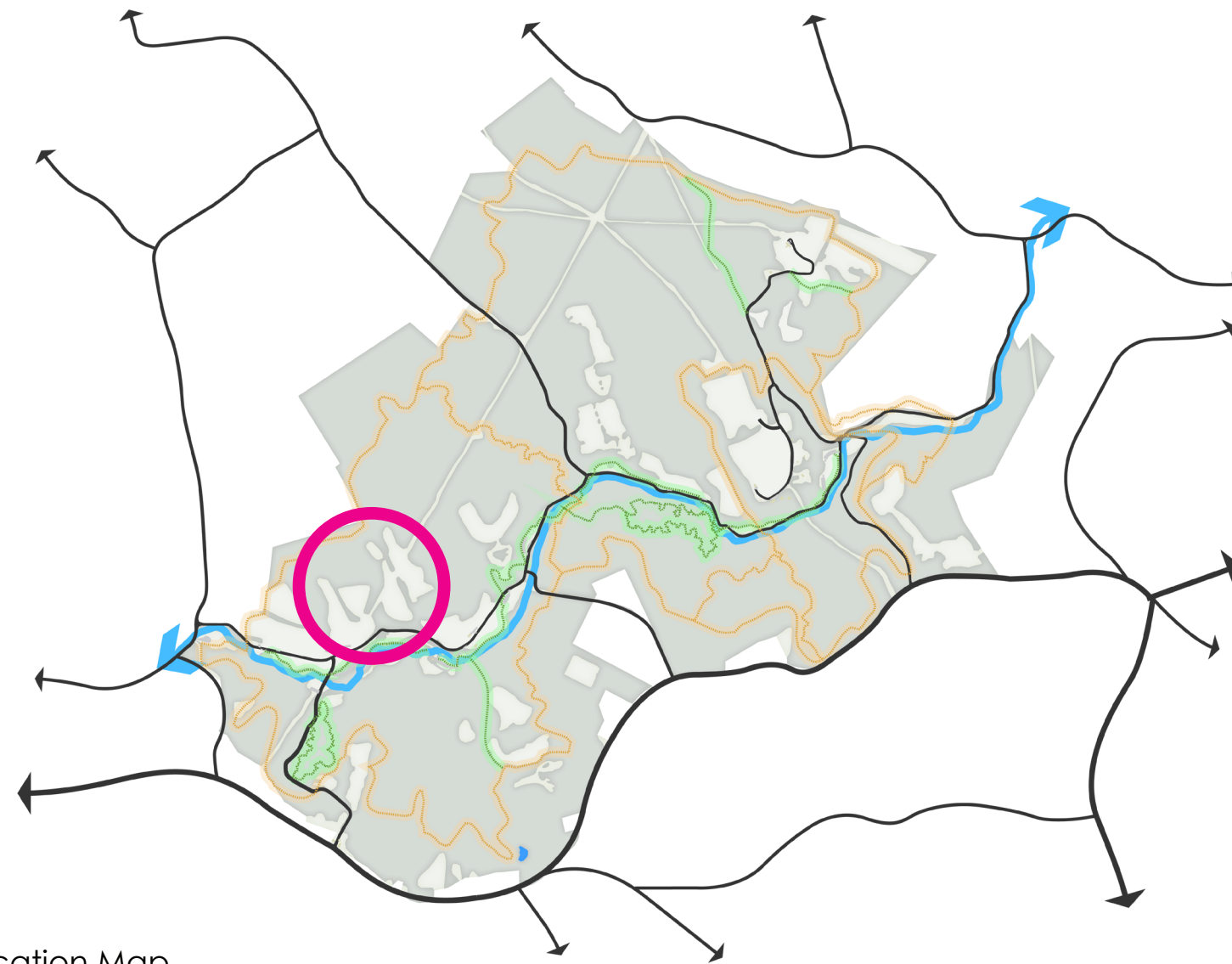
Much of Mingo Creek Park's appeal can be credited to its acres of pristine forest and open fields. Any recreational development planned within the park should take the value of its natural beauty into account in an asserted attempt to preserve it. With that said, many types of recreational sports require large cleared off areas of land, which may not be ideal in a park that draws visitors who enjoy its natural state. However, the benefits of offering a variety of recreational and sport opportunities can also be integral in attracting a wide demographic of park visitors.

In addition to being a fast growing pastime and competitive form of recreation, disc golf requires very little site disturbance and is extremely low maintenance. In fact, land with a variety of undeveloped forests and open fields is ideal for a challenging disc golf course. The sport is also a year-round form of recreation that can benefit both children and adults through exercise and friendly competition.

Currently there is a disc golf course open to the public in the neighboring North Strabane Municipal Park in Canonsburg, PA. Like traditional golf, disc golf enthusiasts typically enjoy playing a variety of courses. With the ever growing interest in disc golf and the limited number of courses in the region, the addition of a disc golf course has a high potential of attracting new visitors to Mingo Creek Park.

### Features

- 9 Hole Course
- Low Impact
- Wellness Potential



Location Map



**DISC GOLF COURSE RENDERING**





## CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

### NATURE ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

#### Nature Adventure Playground

*Environment + Play + Imagination*

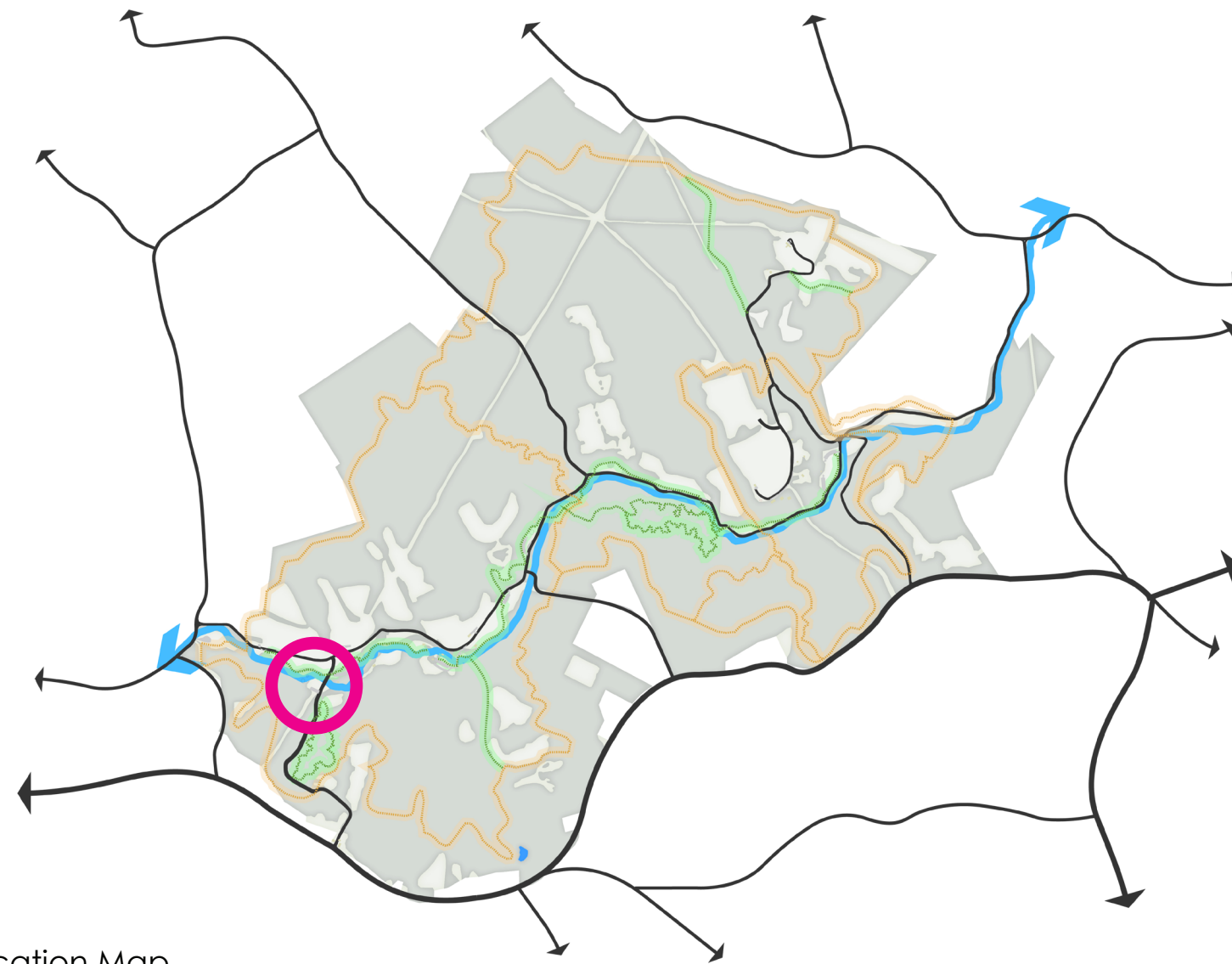
Throughout Mingo Creek Park, various playground areas and equipment are available to children of a variety of age groups. Most of the formal playgrounds are comprised of high quality pre-fabricated play equipment and offer a variety of play opportunities. While most of the equipment is in good to average condition, a few playgrounds are in need of updating.

In parallel with Washington County Parks' commitment to providing environmental education opportunities, it is proposed that the Park Road playground be updated into a natural playground. Unlike the various pre-fabricated playground equipment found in the park, a natural playground is made of materials found in nature and utilized mostly in the materials' natural form. These types of playgrounds encourage children to explore the environment and further expand their imagination while immersed in playful activity.

Aside from the benefits in education and wellness, these types of playgrounds are also cost effective and relatively low maintenance. Many of the materials, such as boulders and wood logs, can be harvested directly from resources in the park and installed by park staff.

#### Features

- Natural Play Elements
- Shelter
- Open Lawn



Location Map



NATURE ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND RENDERING





## CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

### LEASH-FREE DOG PARK

#### Leash-Free Dog Park

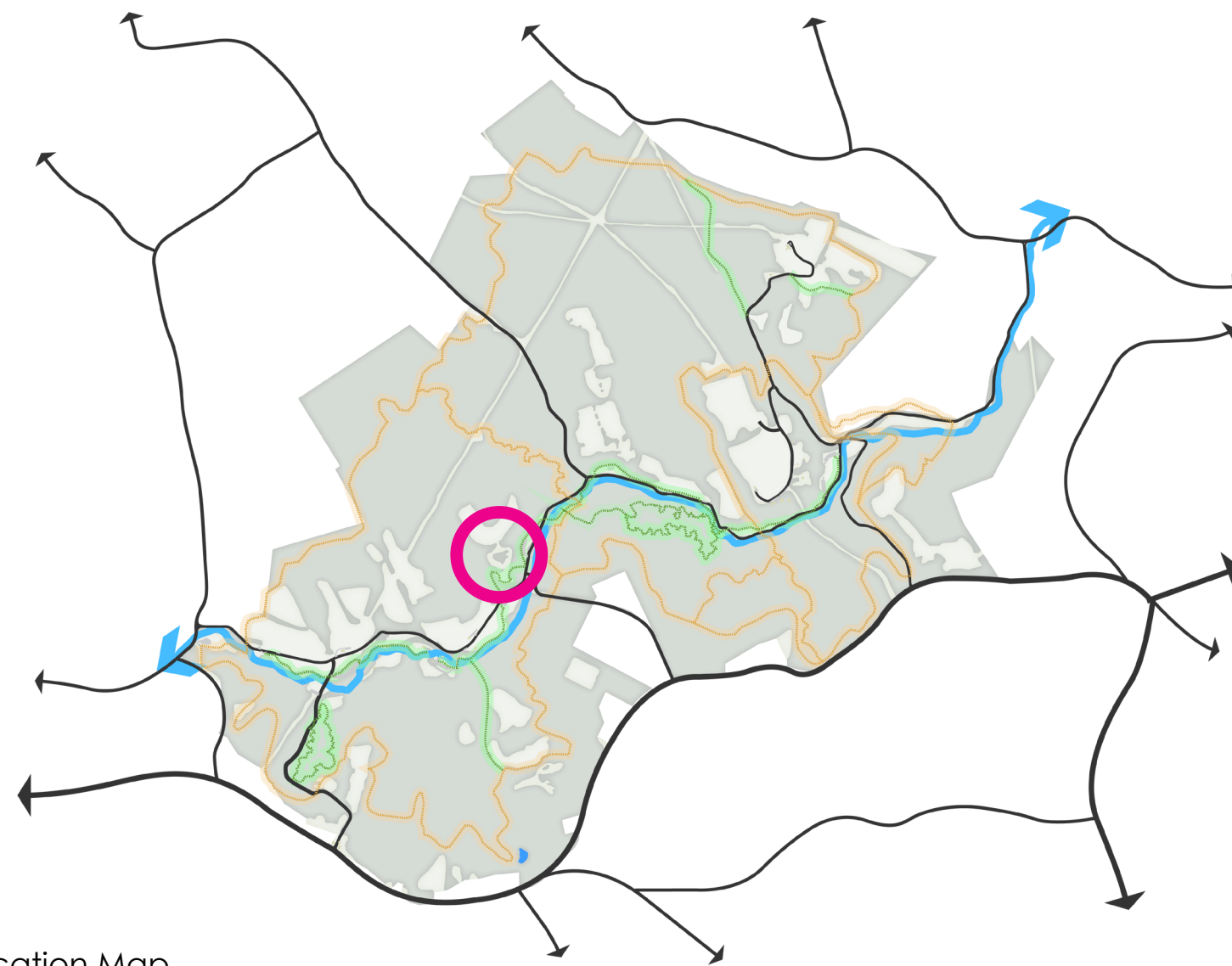
*Active and Secure*

Currently, Mingo Creek Park offers a leash-free area for dogs. However, the area does not have a complete fenced enclosure; a necessary component in avoiding the safety risk of a dog becoming loose in the park. On the other hand, the location of the current leash-free area does have the benefit of being adjacent to the paved walking trail, which creates a destination and allows easy access for dog walkers.

To encourage dog owners into utilizing the leash-free area without worry, it is proposed that the existing area become a fully enclosed dog park. In addition to just creating one large fenced enclosure, it is recommended that the area be divided into two sections. Not only does this allow for the potential to assign one area to large breed dogs and the other to smaller breeds, it also provides the opportunity to close a section for maintenance, such as sod repairs.

#### Features

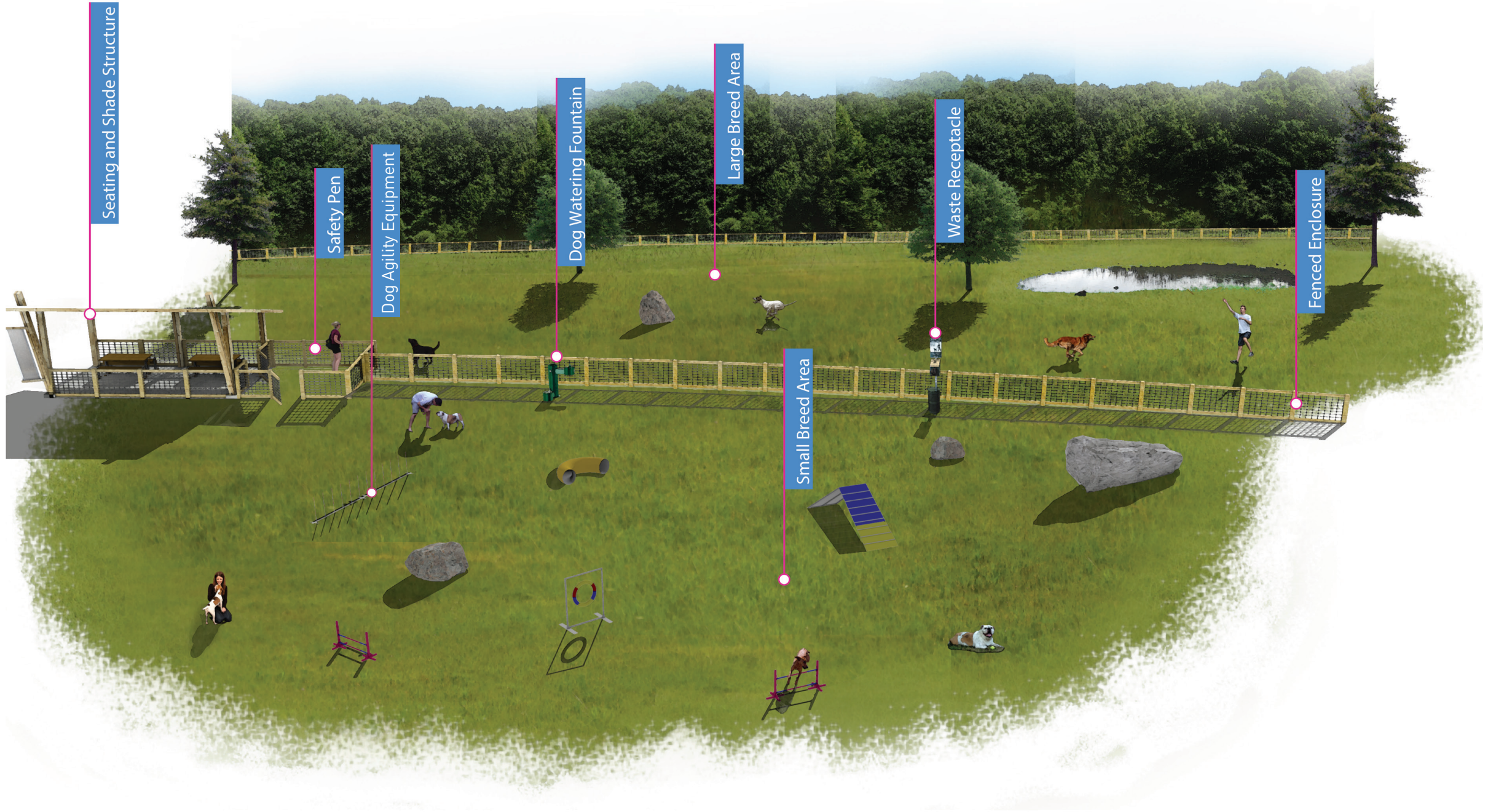
- Complete Fenced Enclosure
- Gateway Safe Pen
- Large and Small Breed Areas
- Seating and Shade Structures
- Dog Watering and Waste Amenities
- Dog Agility Course



Location Map



LEASH-FREE DOG PARK RENDERING





# CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

## EVENT LAWN

### Great Lawn

*Versatile...Expansive*

Already in existence, Mingo Creek Park is home to a large lawn which can be used for events. However, some relatively minor changes to the space can help to make it even more functional. The existing shelters are outdated and in need of replacement. Additionally, reworking the circulation of the space will help to make it more enjoyable for users.

The current area consists of a large hillside as well as a large flat lawn. By cutting terraces into the hillside, festival style seating for concerts and other events can be created. A temporary stage could be brought in and set on the flat area at the base of the hill. The remainder of the flat area can be used for carnival-like events such as a fall festival. Vendors and food trucks would be able to set up on the existing parking lot to provide nourishment for park guests. Finally, replacing the existing shelters with new shelters will help to round out the space.

### Features

- Terraced hillside seating
- Large flat lawn
- Food truck and vendor space
- Tent space
- New permanent shelters in place of the existing shelters.



Location Map



EVENT LAWN RENDERING





# CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

## ICE SKATING POND

### Skating Pond

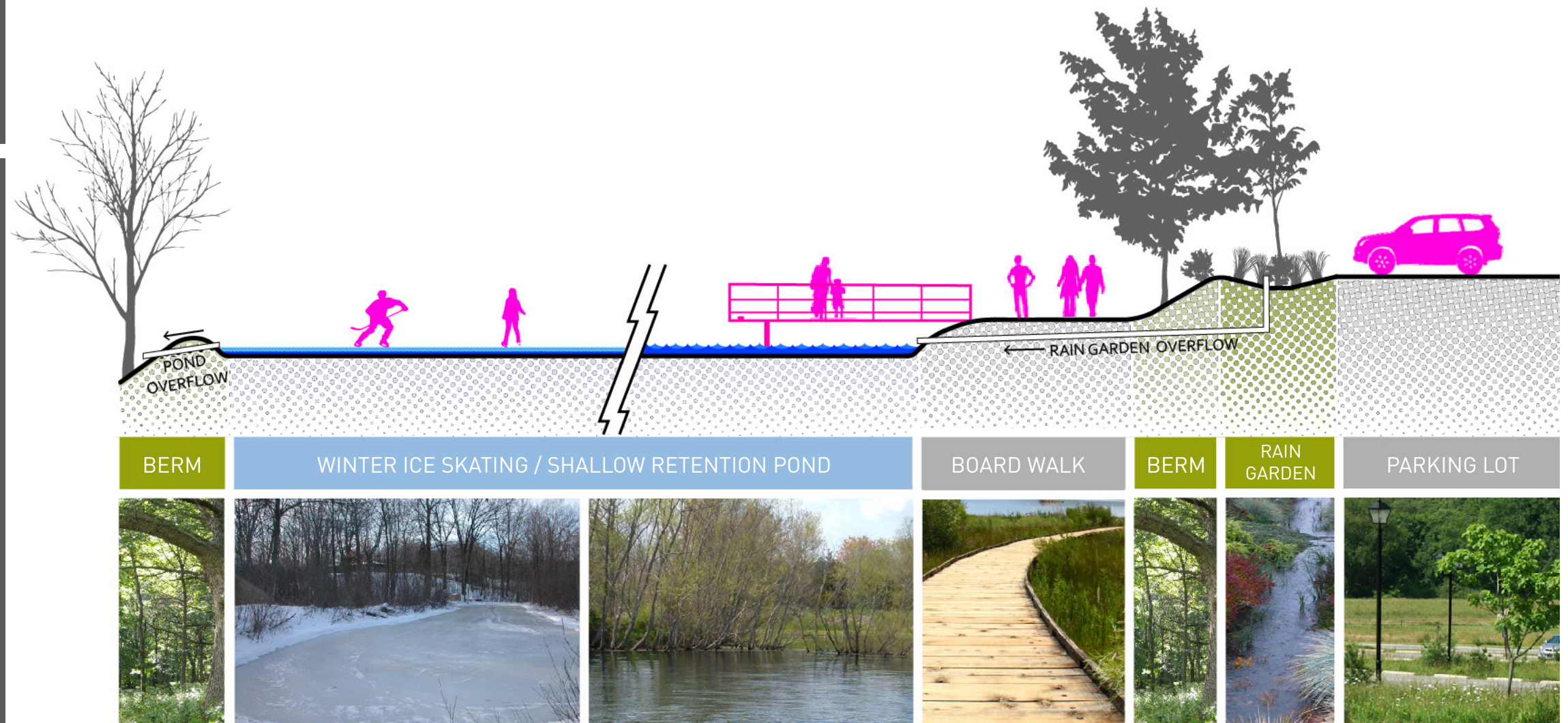
*Wintertime Fun*

Designed specifically with ice skating in mind, a shallow retention pond is proposed to help foster year-round use of Mingo Creek Park. During the warmer months, the pond will capture and filter runoff from an adjacent parking lot. In addition, it will act as an aesthetic compliment to the park.

A trail and boardwalk system will help to provide year-round access to the pond. Once frozen, the shallow pond will create an ice skating surface for park guests. The shallowness of the pond will help with user safety by reducing the risk of falling through the ice.

### Features

- Shallow water (Less than 1 foot in depth)
- Boardwalk extending into pond
- Trail
- Parking area
- Bioswale adjacent to parking area
- Winter ice skating surface





**ICE SKATING POND RENDERING**



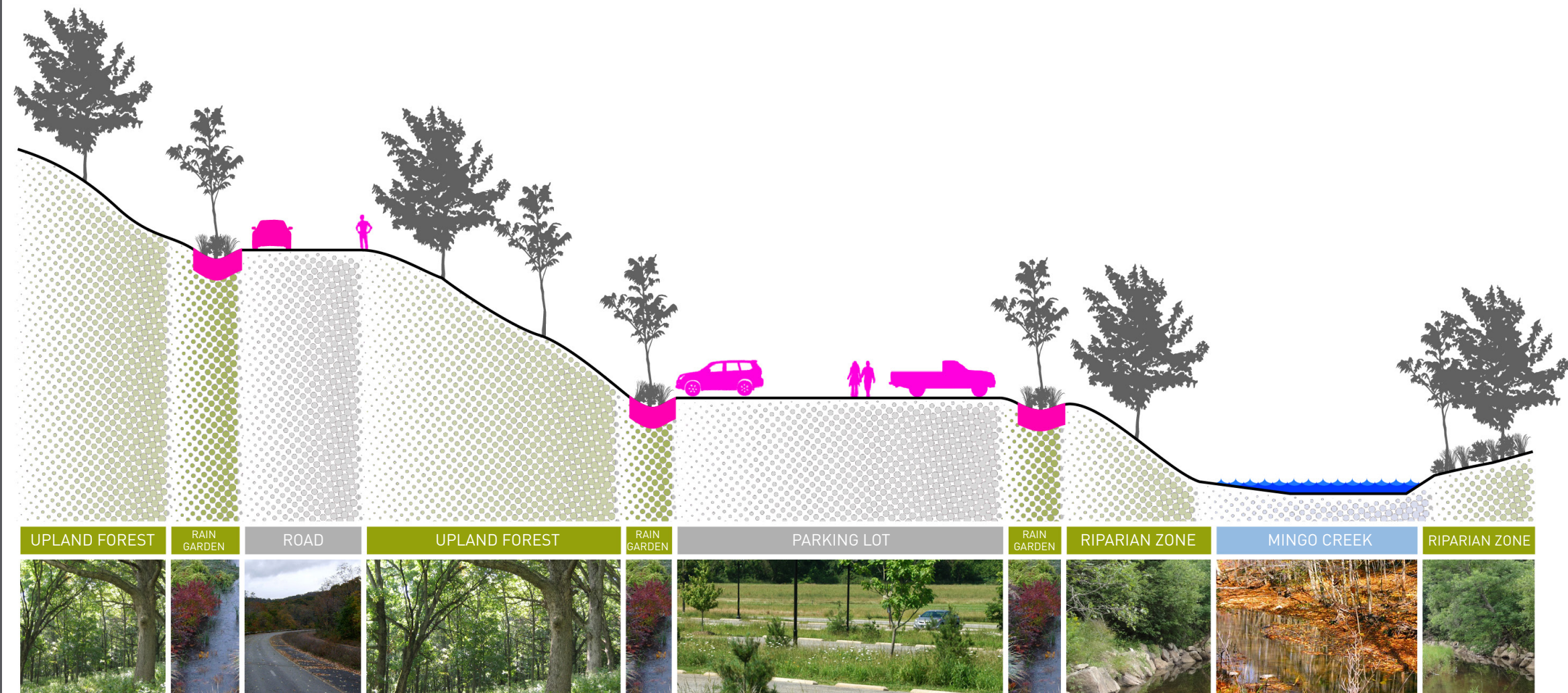


# CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

## HUMAN STREAM INTERACTIONS

Flowing through the heart of the park, Mingo Creek (stream) provides recreational and educational opportunities in addition to its natural beauty. Due to the stream's location, which divides Mingo Creek Park into two nearly equal halves, interacting with the body of water in some fashion is almost unavoidable. Most visitor's interaction with the stream may only be while crossing it to reach a park amenity on the opposite streambank. Others may find themselves knee deep in flowing water while fishing or attending an educational park program.

While human interaction with the stream corridor may vary, the need to minimize harm to the stream itself and, most importantly, to provide safe access for visitors should always be a concern. The following pages display how different levels of human stream interaction can be handled in a manner that is beneficial for park guests and minimizes environmental impacts on Mingo Creek.





#### *Human Stream Interactions* **Passive**

Whether traveling by vehicle, walking, bicycling, or riding horseback, nearly every visitor to the park will experience the stream passively. This means that the visitor is simply bypassing the stream and enjoying the sights and sounds it offers. While this form of interaction is typically safe and has very little impact on the stream, there are still issues to be mindful of.

Although this level of interaction is indirect, disturbance to land within the watershed of the stream can result in negative impacts to water quality. For example, if there are areas where people congregate (i.e. picnic shelter) located along a streambank, any litter or debris left behind has potential to end up in the stream. In this instance, adequate waste receptacles should be provided to encourage guests to properly dispose of refuse. Although it may be impossible to ensure good stewardship of park property by guests, proactively providing an opportunity to do so can assist in protecting the parks natural resources.





## CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

### HUMAN STREAM INTERACTIONS: EXPLORATION

#### *Human Stream Interactions* **Exploration**

For some park guests, the stream may seem to beckon their adventurous side resulting in direct interaction with the water. Whether it be an outdoorsman hoping to catch a fish or simply a curiously natured individual, it is important to provide safe access to the water while maintaining the natural state that makes the stream appealing to begin with. This can be achieved by utilizing low impact methods for trails, such as stone stepstones, which blend in naturally to the context of the streambank.

Aside from the importance of safely guiding people to the water, using step stones or a similar material can help in reducing the potential for erosion caused by foot traffic along streambanks. It is also recommended to limit direct stream access to key points along the stream. These locations can then be opened or closed to foot traffic on a rotating schedule to reduce the impact on any one area during a given time.





*Human Stream Interactions*  
**Immersive Crossing**

As the opportunity presents itself, unique stream crossings can be developed in shallow sections of Mingo Creek to add even more variety to Mingo Creek Park's already expansive network of trails. In lieu of a costly bridge crossing, a series of boulders can be placed in the stream in such a way that water can pass through while providing a playful obstacle for people to cross the stream on.

While hikers may enjoy this stream crossing method, special care is necessary to maintain it. Although water is intended to pass freely between the well spaced boulders, occasional blockages may form on the upstream side of the boulders due to debris that naturally enters and flows down the stream. To avoid any adverse impacts to the stream, regular monitoring and removal of debris build up is recommended.





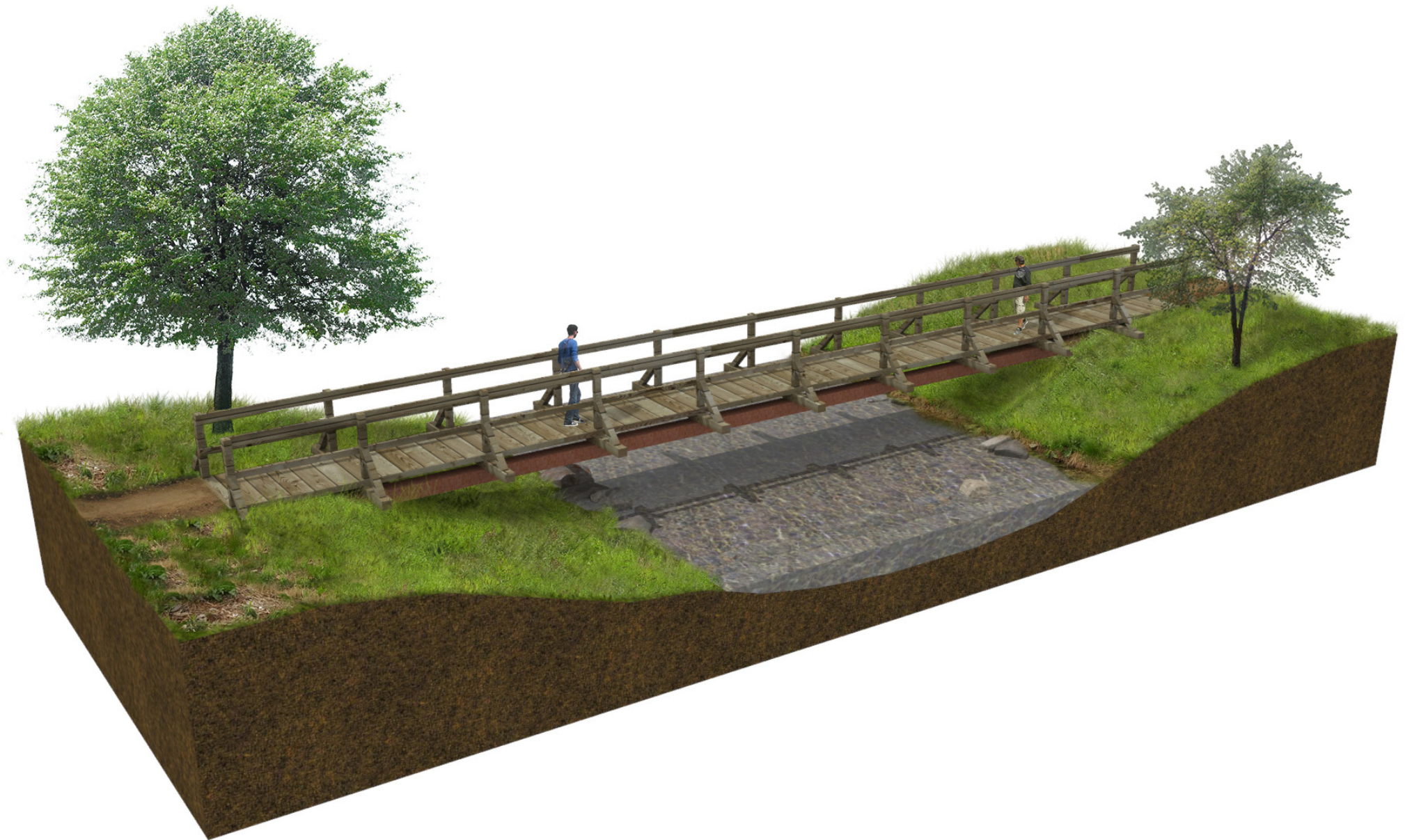
## CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

### HUMAN STREAM INTERACTIONS: BRIDGE CROSSING

#### *Human Stream Interactions* **Bridge Crossing**

Typical of most of the stream crossings found in Mingo Creek Park, bridge crossings provide a safe route from one side of a stream to the other. Unlike the previous stream interactions covered in this section, a bridge crossing offers accessibility to the stream to most visitors with varying levels of mobility.

Although the initial act of constructing a bridge across a stream causes an impact, the long term impacts are extremely minimal. In areas where streambank erosion potential is high and a crossing is necessary, a bridge would be the preferred method for consideration.





*Human Stream Interactions*  
**Streamside Boardwalk**

Mingo Creek Park attracts visitors of all ages and varying levels of mobility. As a result of this fact, the park should continue to offer a wide variety of recreational opportunities, both passive and active. This also holds true for activities that involve interaction with Mingo Creek.

In an effort to provide streamside access to all park visitors, boardwalks can be constructed in selected areas along the banks of Mingo Creek. While offering the potential for up close interaction with the stream, a boardwalk also enables the experience to be accessible to anyone.

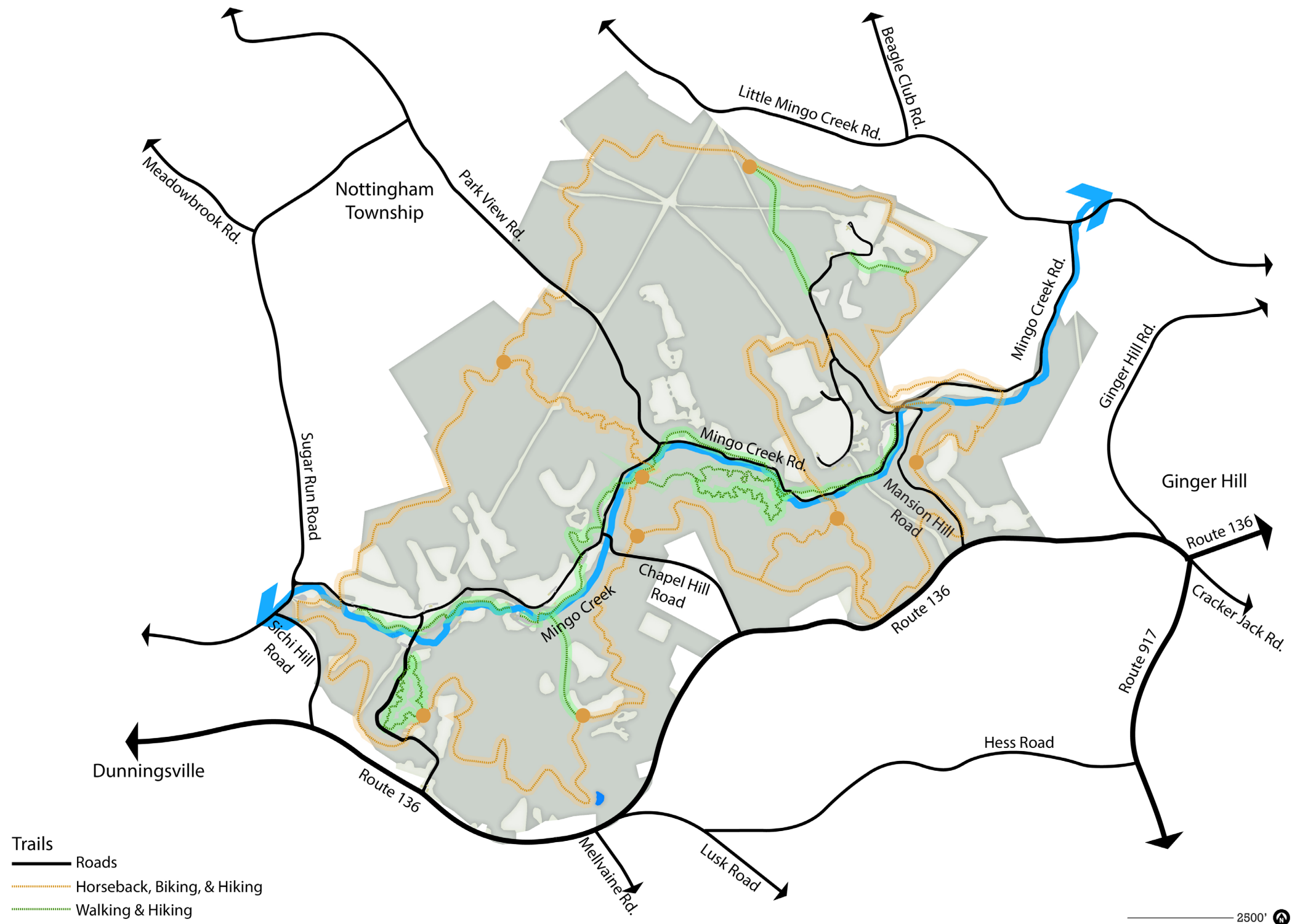
While a boardwalk encourages people to walk along the side of the stream, it won't come at a cost to the streambank. Much like a bridge crossing, a boardwalk may cause a slight impact during construction, but during the long run will save the streambanks from erosion caused by foot traffic.





# CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

## PARK CIRCULATION: EXISTING TRAILS & PATHS

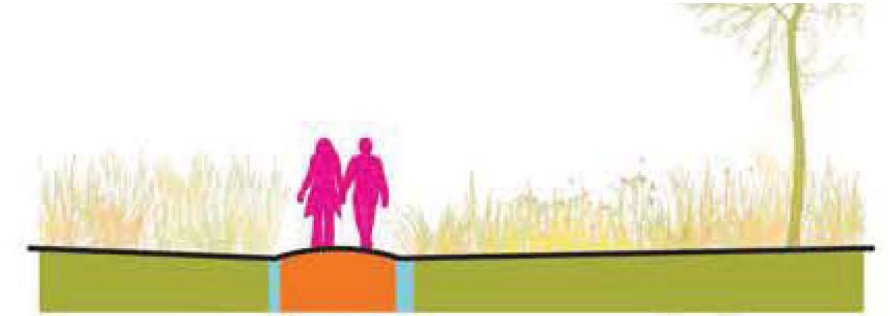
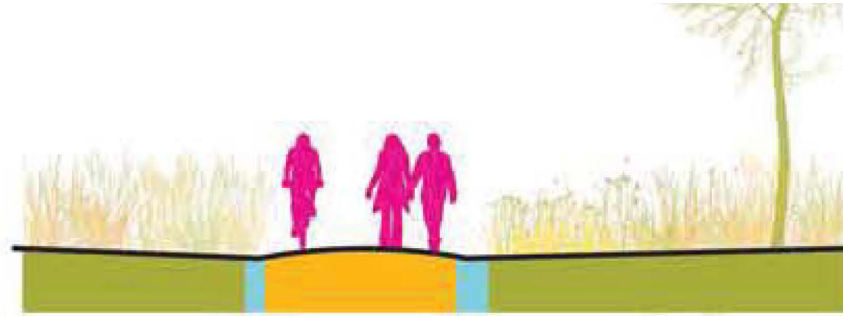




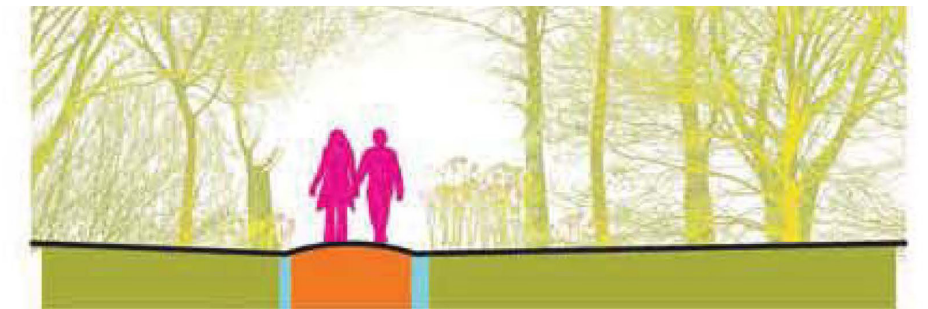
# CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

## PARK CIRCULATION: TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS

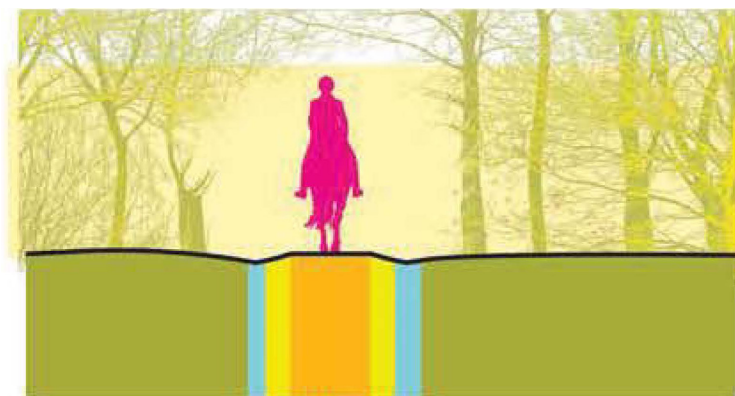
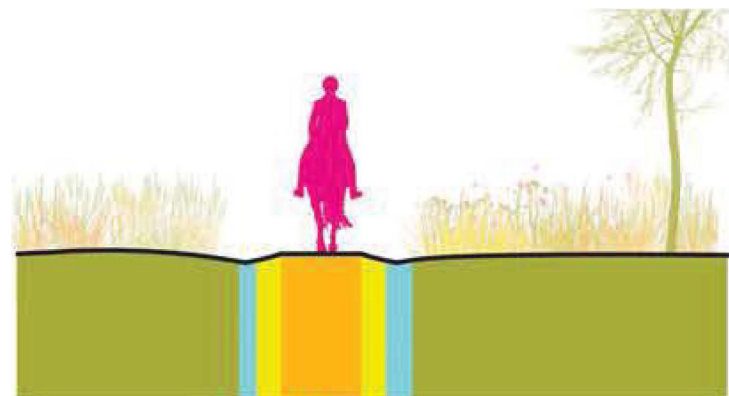
PRAIRIE
  SWALE
  MULCH FOOTPATH
  MULTI-USE TRAIL



WOODLAND
  SWALE
  MULCH FOOTPATH
  MULTI-USE TRAIL



WOODLAND/PRAIRIE
  SWALE
  4' NATURAL TRAIL
  8' CLEARED TRAIL





## CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

### TRAIL TYPOLOGY

#### Meadow Trails

##### *Upland Observation*

As trails and paths weave through the park, the existing meadows provide moments for the park visitor to view beyond the trail, and periodically observe the stream valley from above. The meadow trails should be composed of accessible surfaces (crushed limestone or mulch) to encourage participation and engagement from a variety of users. Placement of resting, educational, and exercise nodes should also be considered throughout the meadow trails. Meadow trails also serve as prime opportunities for bird watching. For this reason, the master plan recommends the construction of a few key observation areas and bird blinds for extended bird and wildlife watching.





**Woodland Trails**

*Under Canopy*

Similar to meadow trails, the woodland trails extend that vision to embrace the diverse vegetation and landscape that compose the Mingo Creek Park property. As the trails and paths weave through the trees and under the canopies, the visit is provided the opportunities throughout their journey to relax, education, and exercise. These nodes should be placed periodically throughout the trail as necessary and feasible, promoting a comfortable and relaxing hike or jog through the park.





## CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

### WAYFINDING & SIGNAGE

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#### *Navigating the Park* **WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE**

Park signage must contribute to a thoughtful, comprehensive system of wayfinding. The object is to successfully direct the park visitor to and through the park. Each major segment of a visitor's travel sequence represents an opportunity to simplify and clarify key visitor decisions, as a pedestrian and a driver.

#### **Sign Character**

The most basic component of a sign program is the sign's shape, size, and proportion. The character itself has the capacity to convey an identity. A consistent character should be adopted for all types of signage throughout the park.

#### **Materials**

Careful selection of materials for sign construction is essential. Some materials connote tradition, others convey contemporary style. Materials and fabrication techniques go hand in hand, to produce economical, durable, and aesthetically pleasing systems.

#### **Typestyle**

There are thousands of typestyles to choose from and each has its own unique character. A proper typestyle should be selected to match the overall character of the park system. The Society of Environmental Graphic Design (SEGD) has a list of approved ADA compliant type faces. Once a typeface has been selected and approved, it should be used consistently throughout the system to create a unified image.

#### **Graphic Layout**

All of the elements that will be displayed on each sign type must be carefully considered. The manner in which each of these elements are arranged on the sign panel determines the look of the sign. Once the relationship of the graphic elements is decided upon, the layout should be employed for each sign type.

The purpose of the signage system is to provide the viewer/user with efficient, concise building identification, directional, and informational assistance, and regulatory assistance. The system will create an easily discernible sequence from the park entry to a final destination. The signage elements separate into four basic categories according to function of the information they provide:

#### **Directional**

These signs indicate directions for vehicular and/or pedestrian traffic. The signs should be placed at intersections of roads and trails. They should subscribe to a linear decision-making process that will provide information in a progressively more specific manner.

#### **Identification**

These identify a place or structure.

#### **Informational/Educational**

These provide park-wide information through an overall map of the park. These should be positioned in heavily trafficked areas throughout the park to assist in an overall understanding of the park to the park visitors.

#### **Regulatory/Prohibitive**

These signs communicate regulations and restrictions as they pertain to vehicles and/or pedestrian.



# SAMPLE SIGNAGE CATALOG

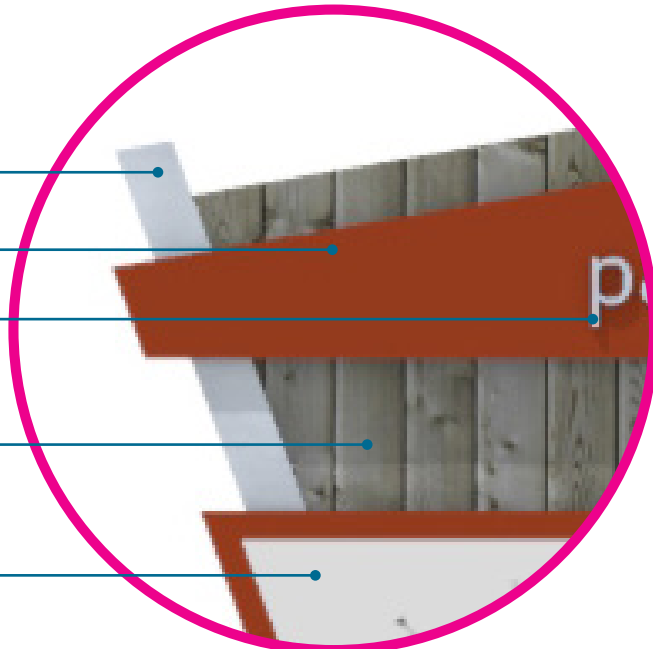
GALVANIZED STEEL POST

COR-TEN STEEL PANEL

ALUMINUM CHANNEL LETTERS

ROUGH CUT LUMBER PANEL

HIGH PRESSURE LAMINATE GRAPHIC



Signage Catalog