

PARK DEVELOPMENT PLAN

REBECCA HOWARD PARK

OCTOBER 2025



ABLE

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A VISION FOR PEACE AND HEALING

Rebecca Howard Park is a space for healing, gathering, and cultural recognition. It honors Olympia’s Black history, celebrates Black creativity and leadership, and offers a place of reflection, joy, and connection.

In 2018, the City of Olympia purchased this downtown parcel for economic development purposes. But in 2020, as Black Lives Matter protests filled the streets, community members saw an opportunity to create a place of peace, safety, and belonging

Now named for Rebecca Howard, the park carries forward her legacy. It stands as a reminder that Black stories are not footnotes in Olympia’s history, but foundations. With continued improvements, Rebecca Howard Park is envisioned as a site of memory and imagination. Here, Black history is visible. Black leadership is centered. Black joy is celebrated. And the broader community is invited to witness, learn, and join in creating a more just future.

This project centers Black healing by creating a welcoming, intergenerational space that brings life, beauty, and connection to downtown Olympia. Multi-use flexibility with a mix of open and intimate areas supports a wide range of activities and storytelling—ensuring history and culture remain alive and present whether through performance, plants, conversation, art or displays.

Stories are woven with everyday gathering: an open lawn encourages festivals and relaxation; a café provides a community hub and stage; storytelling gardens offer places to reflect and connect with the land; and a festival street hosts celebrations that connect the project with its surroundings, creating stronger ties across downtown. Together, these elements make the space open, inclusive, and rooted in Black community, honoring the past while creating a vibrant place for healing, gathering, and envisioning the future.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



ABOVE: Existing fruit trees in the park and along Adams St, including fig, pear, and apple. Currently, most of the park space consists of lawn.
BELOW: The existing park entrance at 9th and Adams, looking west toward the library. The existing Eco-house faces toward Adams.



SITE OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The site is located in a small residential neighborhood between historic downtown Olympia and the Capitol Campus. The north and east sides of the park are bordered by public streets and existing sidewalk and planter strips; the west property line abuts a private residence and the south side is a narrow gravel alley.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

North of the site are Media Island International, a cultural center dedicated to supporting women of color, and the Downtown Olympia Timberland Library.

GRADE CHANGE

The site slopes steeply to the southwest, with 8 feet of grade change between the highest and lowest point. This poses challenges for accessible circulation and stormwater management.

PAST USE

Some features from the site's past stewardship by Fertile Ground remain, including a small house, a rain garden, arbors and trellises, a small paved path and patio, and several mature fruit trees.

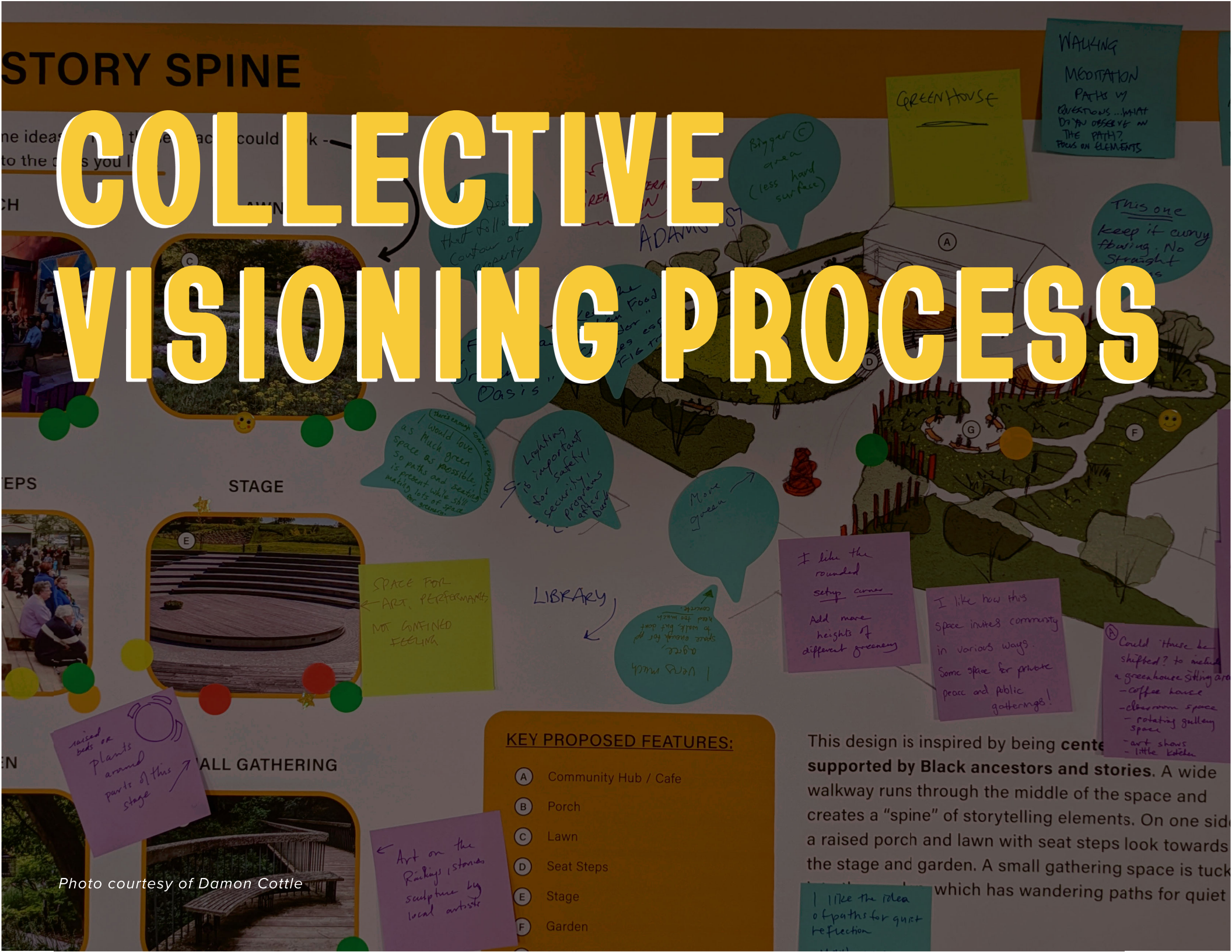


THE PURPOSE & GOALS OF REBECCA HOWARD PARK ARE ...

-  **To celebrate, honor, and recognize the local history and contributions** of our African American and Black community members.
-  **To find common ground with each other through storytelling, performance and art** - especially stories, performances, and art from, or promoted by and led by our African American and/or Black community members.
-  **To provide a safe place for peace and healing**, that honors representation and fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion.
-  **To promote equity, respect, and learning** as we build community together.
-  **To build strong connections** with the surrounding neighbors and organizations.

INITIAL PROCESS TIMELINE

- 2010-2018:** Fertile Ground stewards the park site and Eco-house. The site serves as a hub for urban permaculture and sustainability in Olympia.
- 2018:** City of Olympia buys property with intention of developing affordable housing
- 2020:** Black Lives Matter protests in response to the murder of George Floyd. The focus for the site shifts from housing to healing to provide a safe place for community members to find peace, connection, and belonging.
- 2021:** The property is transferred to the Olympia Parks Department to develop into a park. A stakeholder group of interested City staff and community members is formed to discuss the possibilities for this space and develops five purpose and goal statements.
- The first annual Juneteenth celebration is hosted at Rebecca Howard Park, created through the vision of Shawna Hawk. Later in the year. the park is named in honor of Rebecca Howard.
- “Naming the park...after such an amazing pioneer, and acknowledging an African American woman such as Rebecca Howard, would mean so much to women of color, especially Black women in this community and beyond. It could set the tone for growth, acknowledgement, and respect for the Black community as a whole. It shows that there are community members in Olympia that understand the importance of representation...of our contributions, accomplishments, and resiliency.”
- Shawna Hawk
- 2023:** The stakeholder group creates an early conceptual site layout with inspiration images to start bringing ideas together.
- 2024:** The City embarks on a Site Development Plan process to develop a design concept to guide future park development. The City hires a design and engineering team to lead the process.



PROCESS

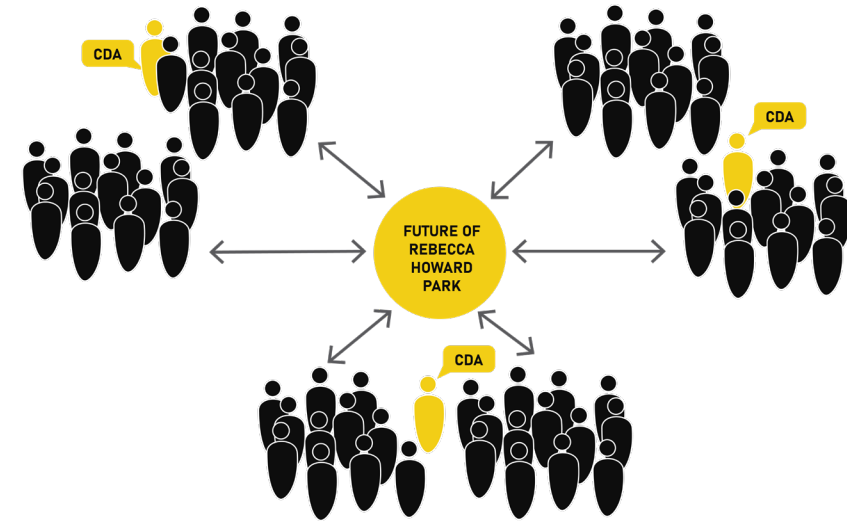
Over the course of the Rebecca Howard development planning process, we documented over 1000 comments through various engagement activities, such as but not limited to workshops, tabling events, community celebrations, focus groups, online surveys, and one-on-one conversations.

We worked with community members in three different ways: we hired two Community Design Advocates, met monthly with a Steering Committee of Black Cultural Advocates, and invited people into the design process at a range of public events. While this process generated rich feedback on the design, it also opened up broader conversations about how the City of Olympia can collaborate more effectively with Black residents.

COMMUNITY DESIGN ADVOCATES (CDA)

In addition to doing outreach (sharing information) and engagement (gathering information), we aim to organize. Organizing is about relationships. We hire community members from the most impacted stakeholder groups into the project team to give transparency to the project process, and enable communities to mobilize towards equitable change that is determined by the people most impacted by any project.

Photo courtesy of the Women of Color in Leadership Movement.



RELATIONSHIP NETWORK EXAMPLE

Colloqate Design builds and nurtures relationships to amplify community agency, increase process transparency, and ensure that we are accountable to those who face systemic barriers to exerting their influence.

The Rebecca Howard Community Design Advocates (CDAs) have conducted a variety of activities such as focus groups, individual conversations, workshops, event tabling, etc, centering underrepresented voices and ensuring the Design Team remains responsive to community priorities.

WHO WE'VE HEARD FROM

WHILE WE ENGAGED THE BROADER OLYMPIA PUBLIC, OUR PROCESS CENTERED THE VISION AND EXPERTISE OF BLACK RESIDENTS. BLACK CULTURAL ADVOCATES ON OUR CDA TEAM AND STEERING COMMITTEE SHAPED THE RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING PROCESS.

From 2020-24, a dedicated group of project stakeholders created the founding vision for this project. When the current design process began in 2024, stakeholders named that continuous Black leadership would be essential to carry that vision forward. To build Black leadership into every stage of the process, we convened a Steering Committee of Black Cultural Advocates - some of whom had worked on the project since its inception, and some of whom were newer to the process. Their hard work built upon previous efforts while expanding the project's network of relationships.

Rather than a single opportunity for community input, this plan represents one step in the larger process of building the relationships, infrastructure, and momentum for Black community members to steward and program the park in the long term.

Photo courtesy of Damon Cottle.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee of Black Cultural Advocates met nine (9) times throughout the planning process to co-design public engagement, review engagement outcomes, and give feedback on design. Steering Committee members also connected the project to their networks of relationships by sharing community events, surveys, and other materials. We are immensely grateful to everyone who shared their time, insight, and vision with this project.

Steering Committee (2024-25):

Shawna Hawk**
Stephanie Cholmondeley*
Devon Brim
Javoen Byrd
Jodie Childress
Derek Harris
Aisha Harrison
Imahni Hawkins
Quincy Henry†
Whitni Henry†
LaTonja Hunter
Dr. Thelma Jackson
Kamilah Keyes-Brown
Kyeshia Likely
Merritt Long
Kerensa Mabwa
Mayor Dontae Payne†
Kellie Purce-Braseth†
Talauna Reed
Alexandrea Safiq

**also served as CDA*

†also a member of the 2020-24 Stakeholder Group

Stakeholder Group (2020-24):

Neighbors:
Jim Dick
Scott Saunders

Library Staff:
Kerry Martin
Anthony Rodgers
Cheryl Heywood
Aggie Burnstein

Fertile Ground:
Marisha Auerbach
Jenny Schlee
Chris van Daalen
Karen Nelson
Gail O'Sullivan
Karen Gaul

City Representatives:
Paul Simmons
Sarah Giannobile
Charles Rambo
Sylvana Niehuser
Luke Burns
Lisa Parshley
Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

PHASE 1: SETTING A FOUNDATION

2020-2024

During the 2020 Black Lives Matters protests in response to the murder of George Floyd, the park site’s focus shifted to a **safe place for peace, connection, and belonging**. After transferral to the Parks Department, a stakeholder group of City staff and community members formed to discuss the space’s possibilities which led to its renaming to Rebecca Howard Park.

PHASE 2: GROUNDSETTING + TRUST BUILDING

October 2024 - February 2025

In this phase, we focused on **building relationships** with our Steering Committee and Community Design Advocates. We worked with these committed stakeholders to **confirm and build on the prior stakeholder group’s vision, map community relationships** to connect the project to, and **build trust** between community members and the City of Olympia.

PHASE 3: COLLECTIVE VISIONING

March 2025 - May 2025

Based on previous work and conversations in Phase 2, the design team developed **three concept options** and **potential storytelling strategies**. We gathered feedback on these ideas in person and digitally.

PHASE 4: CONFIRMING + REFINING

June 2025 - August 2025

Based on what we learned in Phase 3, the design team developed a single **preferred concept design** and **refined storytelling strategies**. These ideas were shared at additional community events before being finalized.

IN PHASE 2, WE ASKED...

How can we build on the vision of the previous stakeholder group? How can we invite more people into this process without discarding past work?

Who else do we need to reach?

What forms of transparency and commitment does the City need to demonstrate in order for new people to confidently join this process?

IN PHASE 3, WE ASKED...

What stories should be told about Black communities in Olympia + Thurston County? How could those stories be displayed?

What do you think about these design options? How can the park honor Black history, community, + culture?

IN PHASE 4, WE ASKED...

What would you change about this design?

What symbols represent Olympia’s Black culture?

How can storytelling engage people of all ages?

HOW WE REACHED PEOPLE

We used a range of methods to reach people, working to meet people where they already were and gather community for special events. Community events particularly focused on activating the park site.

In-Person

- Public Workshop
- Focus Group
- Community Events
 - Juneteenth
 - Read the Park
 - Rebecca Howard Mural Unveiling
- Tabling at Community Meetings + Events
 - Summer of Soul Film Screening
 - Reparations Panel Discussion
 - Pop-up Black History Museum
 - NAACP of Thurston County Meetings
 - Growing Home Collective Meetings
- Paper Surveys
- Flyering in Black-owned Businesses + Community Spaces

Digital

- Surveys on Engage Olympia
- Online Meetings
- Storytelling Website
- Social Media

https://engage.olympiawa.gov/rebecca-howard-park-plan

COMMUNITY EVENT BREAKDOWN

Date	Event Name	Event Type	Facilitators + Partners
10/28/2024	Stakeholder Gathering	Small Group Meeting	Design Team + City of Olympia
11/25/2024	Steering Committee Meeting 1	Small Group Meeting	Design Team + City of Olympia
12/16/2024	Steering Committee Meeting 2	Small Group Meeting	Design Team + City of Olympia
1/21/2025	Steering Committee Meeting 3	Small Group Meeting	Design Team + City of Olympia
2/14/2025	Summer of Soul Film Screening	Tabling at Community Event	Shawna (CDA), Women of Color in Leadership Movement (WCLM), Olympia Film Society, City of Olympia
2/15/2025	NAACP of Thurston County Meeting	Tabling at Community Meeting	Stephanie (CDA), NAACP of Thurston County
2/16/2025	Growing Home Collective Ourstory Brunch	Tabling at Community Meeting	Stephanie (CDA), Growing Home Collective
2/23/2025	A Conversation About Reparations	Tabling at Community Meeting	Shawna (CDA), The Hawk Foundation for Research + Education in African Culture, WCLM, City of Olympia
2/22/2025	Steering Committee Meeting 4	Small Group Meeting	Design Team + City of Olympia
3/24/2025	Steering Committee Meeting 5	Small Group Meeting	Design Team + City of Olympia
4/12/2025	Community Visioning Workshop	Public Workshop	Design Team, City of Olympia, CDAs, Timberland Library, Growing Home Collective
5/19/2025	Steering Committee Meeting 6	Small Group Meeting	Design Team + City of Olympia
6/2/2025	Steering Committee Meeting 7	Small Group Meeting	Design Team + City of Olympia
6/21/2025	Juneteenth	Community Event	Shawna (CDA), WCLM, City of Olympia, Design Team
7/19/2025	Read the Park	Community Event	Stephanie (CDA), Timberland Library, Design Team
7/30/2025	Steering Committee Meeting 8	Small Group Meeting	Design Team + City of Olympia
8/26/2025	Rebecca Howard Mural Unveiling	Community Event	Shawna (CDA), WCLM, City of Olympia
8/28/2025	Cultural Foods + Gardening Workshop	Small Group Meeting	Stephanie (CDA), Growing Home Collective

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

2024

- **September:** The consultant team begins work on baseline and groundsetting. This includes researching site histories, interviewing key stakeholders, and understanding the goals and vision of the previous stakeholder committee.
- **October:** An expanded steering committee holds its first meeting on the park site. This committee incorporates key voices from the previous stakeholder committee while welcoming in additional members to center Black community leadership. *(Steering Committe Members located on page 11)*
- **November:** The design team works with the steering committee to refine the project’s history and goals, and map important community relationships to bring into the project.
- **December:** Shawna Hawk and Stephanie Cholmondeley take on the role of Community Design Advocates, using their expertise and relationships to deepen the project’s connection to the people most impacted. The design team and steering committee discuss how to reach the broader community through a public engagement event.

2025

- **January:** While planning for broader community engagement, questions emerge in the steering committee about funding, the timeline for project approval and development, and overall transparency and trust between the City and Black community members. Outreach planning is paused to allow for more conversation and trust building.
- **February:** The steering committee discusses balancing new and past input, showing City commitment, and strengthening ties with Olympia’s Black communities. Meanwhile, City staff and Community Design Advocates share the project at Black History Month events to raise awareness and build connections.
- **March:** To create forward momentum and build on the work already done by the previous stakeholder committee, the design team creates three concept design options based on the conceptual site layout, the project purpose and goal statements, and ongoing conversations with the steering committee. The steering committee also begins discussing ideas for temporary site activations to show progress on the site.

- **April:** The project team welcomes Olympia’s broader community to a visioning workshop hosted at the Olympia Center. In addition to design activities and a collaborative timeline of Black histories in Thurston County, the event features table displays from the Women of Color in Leadership Movement, the Growing Home Collective, the Timberland Library, and local author Sidney Barker. An online survey invites additional input from the community.
- **May:** Based on community feedback, the design team develops a single preferred concept design that draws the best ideas from the three options. The steering committee discusses strategies for art and storytelling on the site.
- **June:** The design team shares the concept design at the annual Juneteenth celebration in Rebecca Howard Park organized by the Women of Color in Leadership Movement, gathering feedback on design and storytelling. Community members also create adinkra symbols to share their visions, while a second online survey collects additional input.

- **July:** The design team shares the concept design at Read the Park, a new event that activates the park through celebrating Black histories and authors, organized by Stephanie Cholmondeley. Based on the feedback from both events and the survey, the design team refines the site design and storytelling strategy.
- **August:** The design team finalizes the site design and technical drawings. Shawna Hawk, the Women of Color in Leadership Movement, and the City of Olympia unveil a new portrait of Rebecca Howard created by local artist Kay the Paint lady; the portrait is displayed on the existing house on the park site.

Stephanie Cholmondeley and Kerensa Mabwa host a Cultural Gardening Workshop with Black gardeners and land stewards to envision how gardening and planting can enrich the storytelling and programming at Rebecca Howard Park.
- **September-October:** The park development plan is reviewed and finalized with City and community stakeholders.

STAKEHOLDER GATHERING

OCTOBER 28, 2025

SMALL GROUP MEETING

FACILITATORS + PARTNERS:
City of Olympia, Design Team

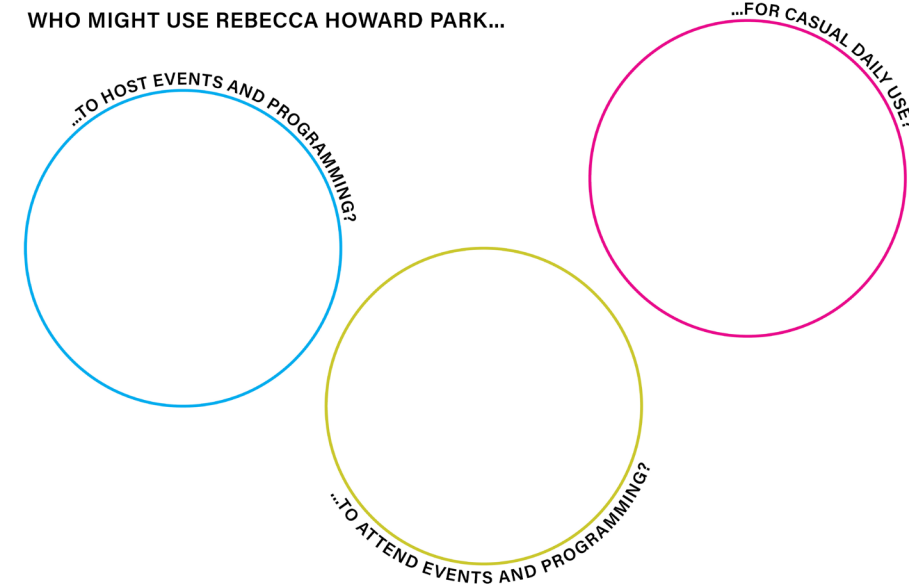
We kicked off this new phase of work with a meeting at the park site that brought together members of the past stakeholder committee and members of the newly forming steering committee. This meeting focused on grounding in and appreciating the past work on the project, building a shared vision of success by imagining future newspaper headlines about the opening of the park, and beginning to envision what our engagement process might look like.



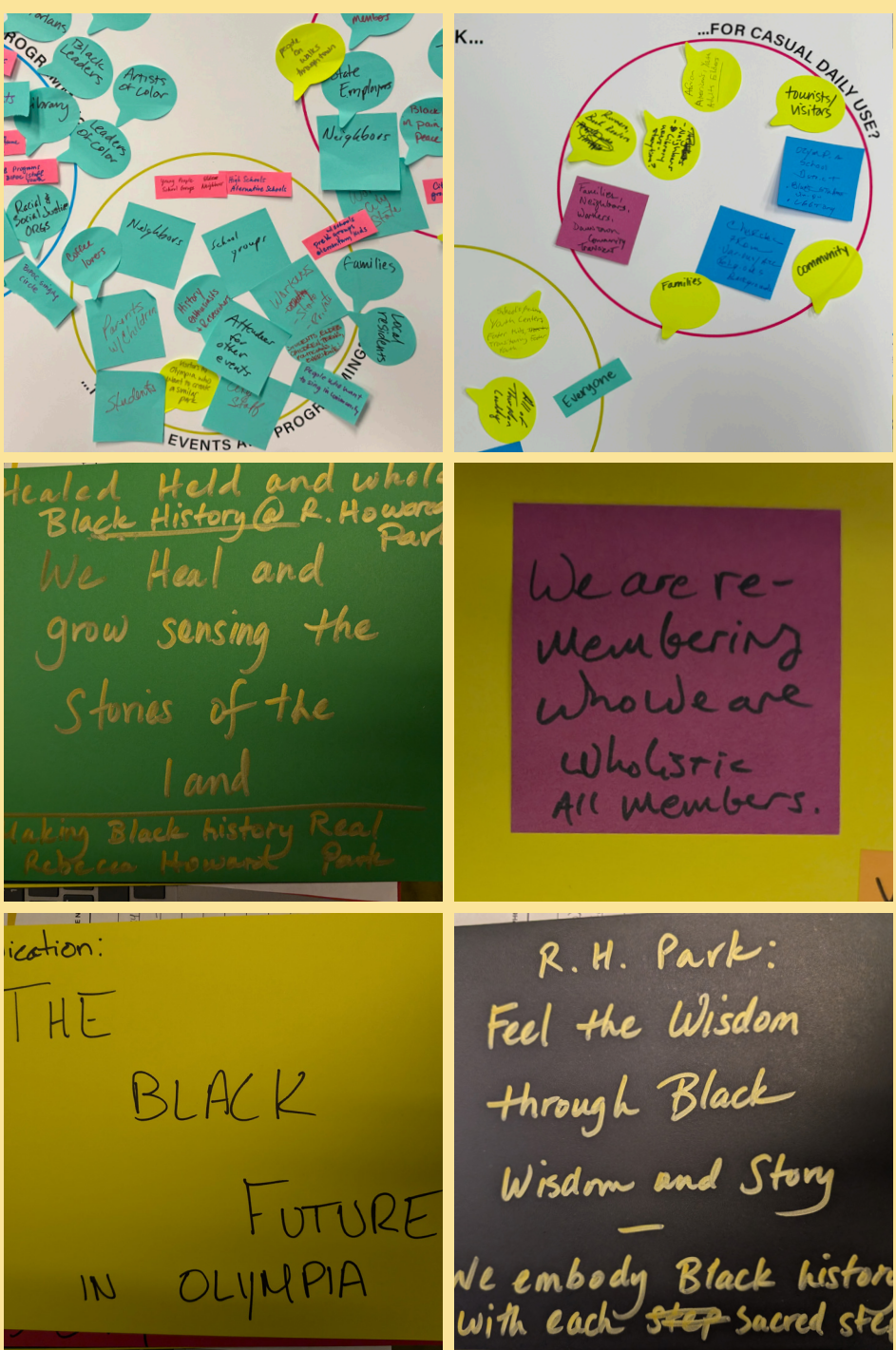
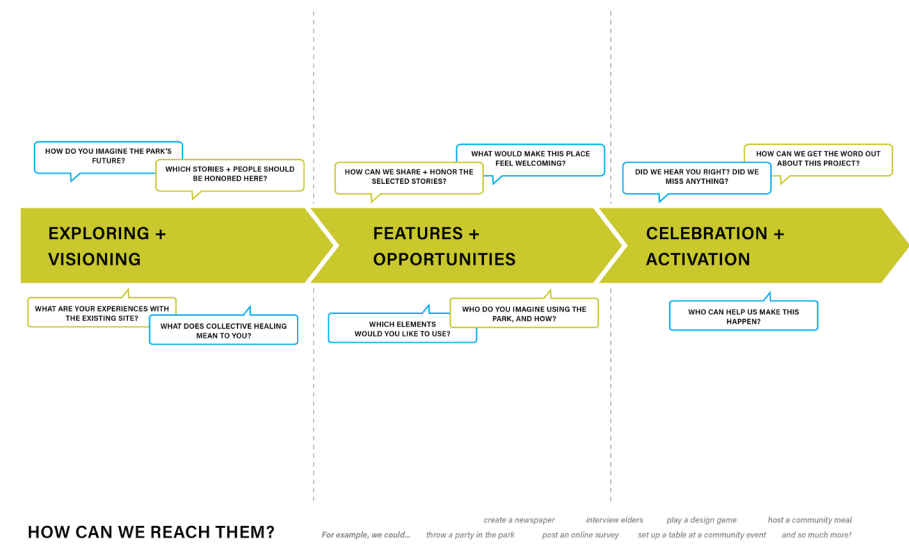
EVENT MATERIALS

Brainstorming+ engagement planning, newspaper headline activity

WHO MIGHT USE REBECCA HOWARD PARK...



WHO DO WE NEED TO HEAR FROM?



COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

APRIL 12, 2025

PUBLIC WORKSHOP

FACILITATORS + PARTNERS:

City of Olympia, Design Team, Community Design Advocates, Women of Color in Leadership Movement, Timberland Library, Growing Home Collective

We developed design ideas with the public with a community visioning workshop held at the Olympia Center. Community members shared stories through a collaborative timeline of Black history in Thurston County and imagined the future of the park with design activities. We were also excited to feature the work of several local partners, including a table display from the Women of Color in Leadership Movement, seed starting from the Growing Home Collective, Black history resources from the Timberland Library, and readings from local author Sidney Barker.



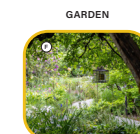
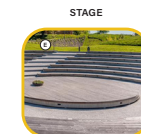
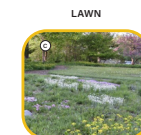
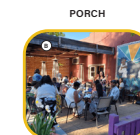
EVENT MATERIALS

Collaborative timeline, concept options, storytelling idea collage



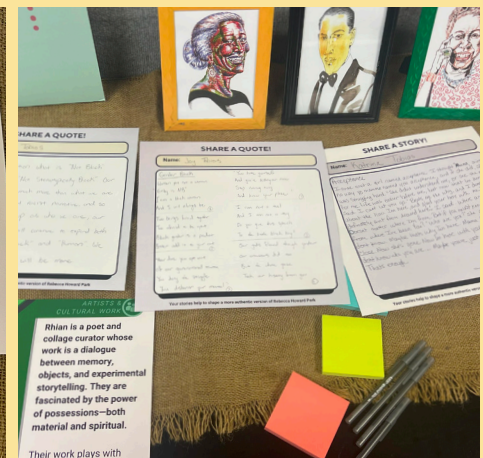
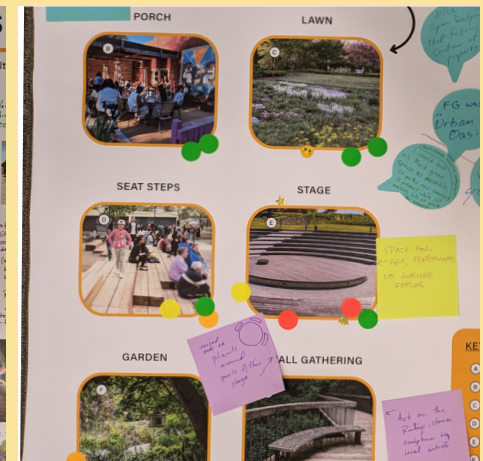
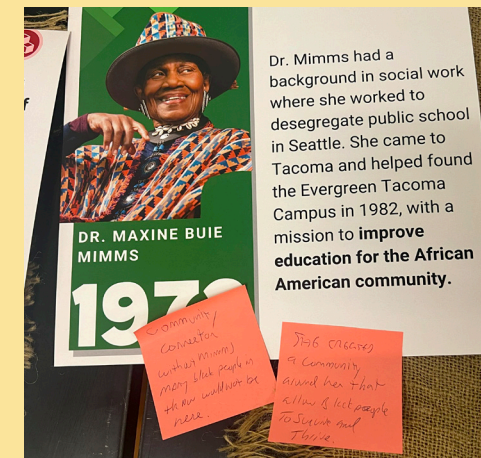
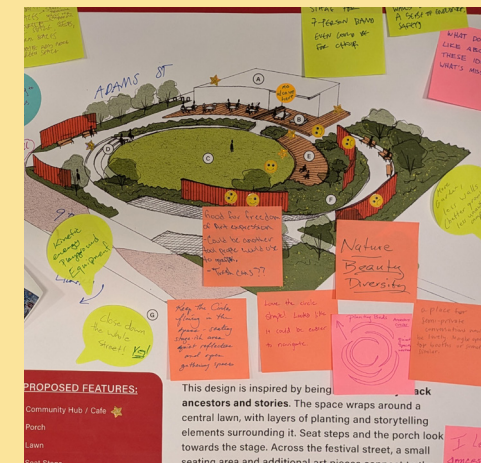
THE STORY SPINE

These are some ideas of how these spaces could look - add a sticker to the ones you like!



- KEY PROPOSED FEATURES:**
- Community Hub / Cafe
 - Porch
 - Lawn
 - Seat Steps
 - Stage
 - Garden
 - Small Gathering Space

This design is inspired by being centered and supported by Black ancestors and stories. A wide walkway runs through the middle of the space and creates a "spine" of storytelling elements. On one side, a raised porch and lawn with seat steps look towards the stage and garden. A small gathering space is tucked into the garden, which has wandering paths for quiet reflection.



JUNE 21, 2025

COMMUNITY EVENT

FACILITATORS + PARTNERS:

Shawna Hawk (CDA), Women of Color in Leadership Movement, Media Island International, City of Olympia, Design Team

Photos courtesy of the Women of Color in Leadership Movement.

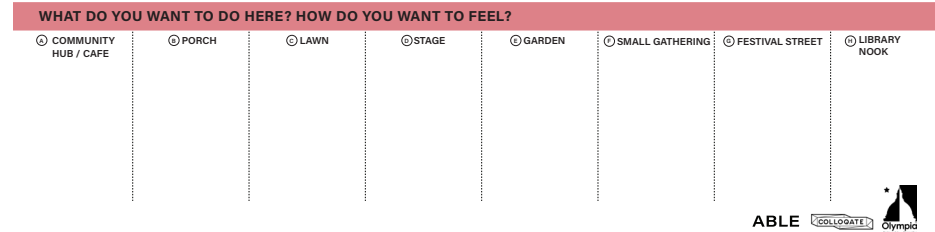


EVENT MATERIALS

Concept design feedback board, storytelling ideas, Adinkra activity

CONCEPT DESIGN: THE EMBRACE

This design draws inspiration from being **embraced by Black ancestors and stories**; its circular layout also invokes the **Sankofa principle of reaching back into the past to build a better future**. A large circular lawn faces the stage for events and performances; a winding garden path offers space for quiet reflection. The festival street extends the park across to the library.



HOW COULD STORIES BE TOLD?

WHICH STORYTELLING MEDIUMS DO YOU FEEL MOST DRAWN TO?

REBECCA HOWARD PARK, STORYTELLING THROUGH ADINKRAS

Community members are invited to share about the influences of Olympia's Black culture and use the look and process of Ghanaian Adinkras to develop an Olympia specific Adinkra collection to better understand experiences and stories.

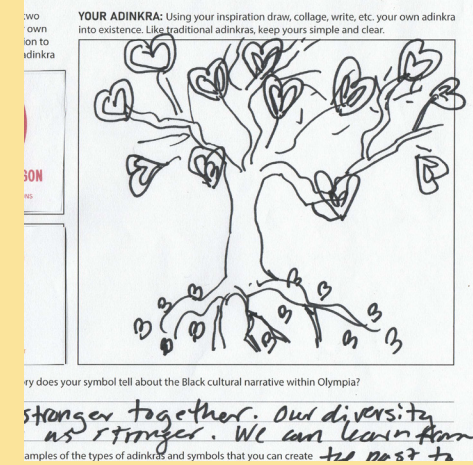
WHAT EXPERIENCES CAN YOU SHARE ABOUT BLACK OLYMPIA'S CULTURE THROUGH VISUAL REPRESENTATION?

START: select one or two symbols or create your own gestures as an inspiration to then create your own adinkra

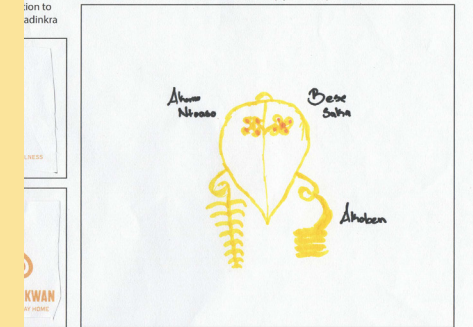
YOUR ADINKRA: Using your inspiration draw, collage, write, etc. your own adinkra into existence. Like traditional adinkras, keep yours simple and clear.

THE STORY: What story does your symbol tell about the Black cultural narrative within Olympia?

EXAMPLES: Some examples of the types of adinkras and symbols that you can create.



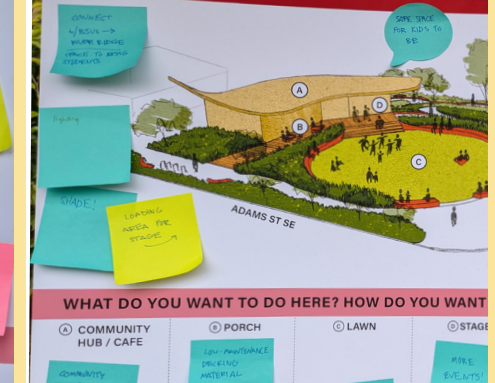
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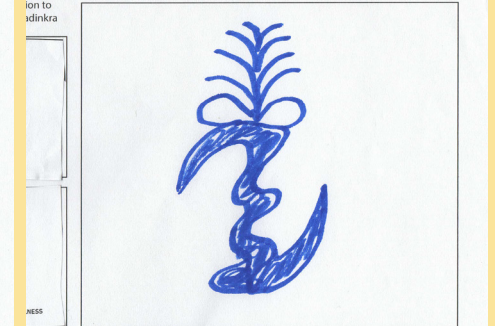
↳ who have gathered in the PNW work together toward self & community.

Examples of the types of adinkras and symbols that you can create

CONCEPT DESIGN: THE EMBRACE



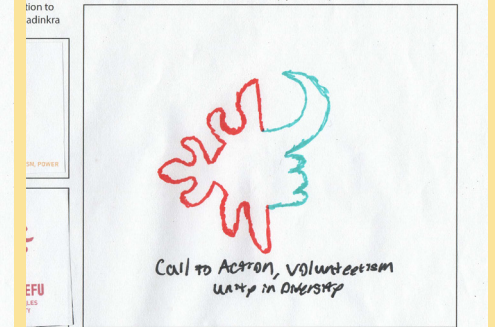
YOUR ADINKRA: Using your inspiration draw, collage, write, etc. your own adinkra into existence. Like traditional adinkras, keep yours simple and clear.



Why does your symbol tell about the Black cultural narrative within Olympia?

iron on high loading, community
source, new creation of shops

YOUR ADINKRA: Using your inspiration draw, collage, write, etc. your own adinkra into existence. Like traditional adinkras, keep yours simple and clear.



Olympia is an active community, full of nonprofits, & diversity from Sweden to the Greeks

examples of the types of adinkras and symbols that you can create

READ THE PARK

JULY 19, 2025

COMMUNITY EVENT

FACILITATORS + PARTNERS:

Stephanie Cholmondeley (CDA), Timberland Library, Growing Home Collective, Design Team

To continue refining design and storytelling ideas, we joined Read the Park: We Were Here Before the State, which further activated the park space to celebrate Black histories and culture. In partnership with the Timberland Library, the event featured the work of Black authors and historians and lifted up local Black histories. We continued to hear feedback on the concept design and storytelling strategies.

Lower photo courtesy of Damon Cottle.



EVENT MATERIALS

Concept design feedback board, storytelling ideas, Adinkra activity

CONCEPT DESIGN: THE EMBRACE

This design draws inspiration from being embraced by Black ancestors and stories; its circular layout also invokes the Sankofa principle of reaching back into the past to build a better future. A large circular lawn faces the stage for events and performances; a winding garden path offers space for quiet reflection. The festival street extends the park across to the library.



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO HERE? HOW DO YOU WANT TO FEEL?

① COMMUNITY HUB / CAFE	② PORCH	③ LAWN	④ STAGE	⑤ GARDEN	⑥ SMALL GATHERING	⑦ FESTIVAL STREET	⑧ LIBRARY NOOK

ABLE COLLABORATE Olympia

HOW COULD STORIES BE TOLD?

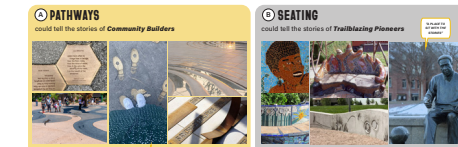
WHICH STORYTELLING MEDIUMS DO YOU FEEL MOST DRAWN TO?

REBECCA HOWARD PARK, STORYTELLING THROUGH ADINKRAS
Community members are invited to share about the influences of Olympia's Black culture and use the logic and process of Ghanaian Adinkras to develop an Olympia specific Adinkra collection to better understand experiences and stories.

WHAT EXPERIENCES CAN YOU SHARE ABOUT BLACK OLYMPIA'S CULTURE THROUGH VISUAL REPRESENTATION?

START: select one or two symbols or create your own gestures as an inspiration to then create your own adinkra

YOUR ADINKRA: Using your inspiration draw, collage, write, etc. your own adinkra into existence. Like traditional adinkras, keep yours simple and clear.

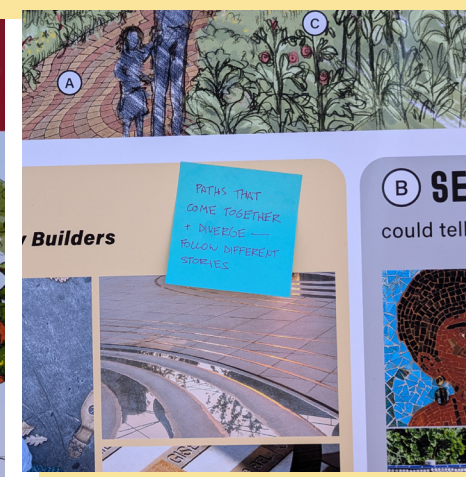
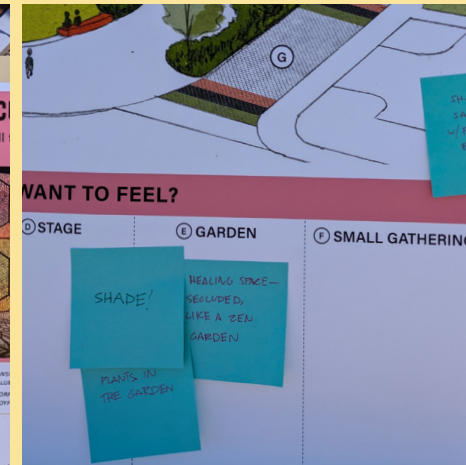
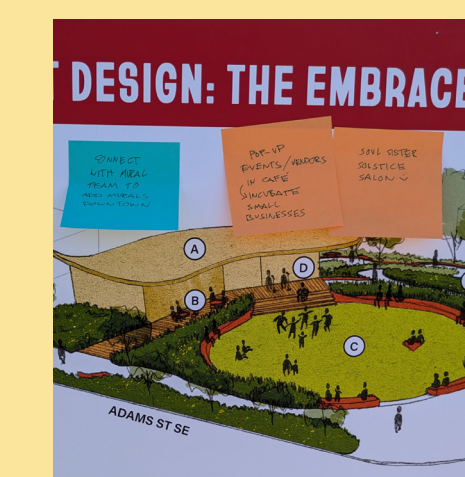


THE STORY: What story does your symbol tell about the Black cultural narrative within Olympia?

EXAMPLES: Some examples of the types of adinkras and symbols that you can create



ABLE COLLABORATE Olympia



MURAL CELEBRATION

**AUGUST 26, 2025
COMMUNITY EVENT**

FACILITATORS + PARTNERS:

Shawna Hawk (CDA), Women of Color in Leadership Movement, Media Island International, City of Olympia

To continue activating the park site and marking it as a place for Black community and history, Shawna Hawk and the Women of Color in Leadership Movement worked with local artist Kay the Paint Lady to create a portrait of Rebecca Howard that was transformed into a mural-scale banner. The banner, displayed on the side of the existing house at Rebecca Howard Park, takes up the call heard from community throughout this design process to make tangible improvements to the park that show forward momentum and investment while the longer-term development of the park is still in progress.

Photo courtesy of the Women of Color in Leadership Movement



CULTURAL GARDENING WORKSHOP

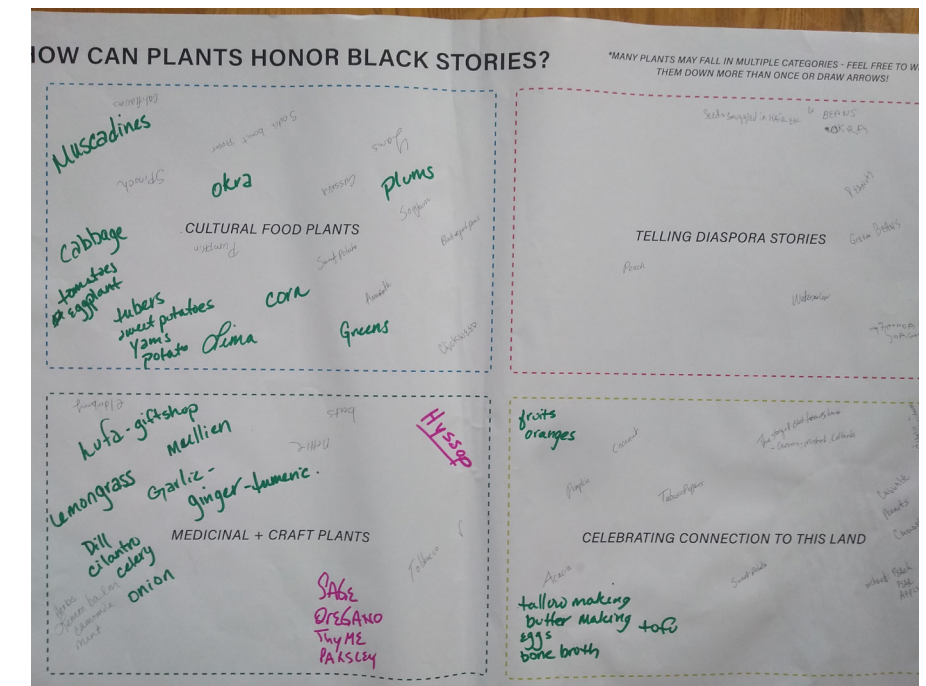
**AUGUST 28, 2025
SMALL GROUP MEETING**

FACILITATORS + PARTNERS:

Stephanie Cholmondeley (CDA), Kerensa Mabwa, Growing Home Collective

In partnership with the Growing Home Collective, a local Black affinity space that uplifts Black foodways and land-based knowledge, this workshop invited Black gardeners and land stewards to envision how gardening and planting can enrich the storytelling and programming at Rebecca Howard Park. In addition to developing recommendations around Black cultural planting, participants explored possibilities for community-led garden stewardship and a potential garden mini-pilot on the site.

Photos courtesy of Kerensa Mabwa.





WHAT STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITIES SAY

AT REBECCA HOWARD PARK, WE WANT TO...

This following pages describe the full range of insights heard from community members which build out the purpose and goals that were introduced at the beginning of the report.

GOAL: CELEBRATE, HONOR, AND RECOGNIZE BLACK HISTORY AND CONTRIBUTIONS IN OLYMPIA

- p.30 A. Big and Present
- p.31 B. Immersive Storytelling
- p.32` C. Past, Present, and Future
- p.34 D. Naming Oppression + Struggle & Celebrating Success + Overcoming
- p.35 E. Threads Across the City

GOAL: FIND COMMON GROUND WITH EACH OTHER THROUGH STORYTELLING, PERFORMANCE AND ART

- p.36 A. Finding Common Ground
- p.38 B. Active Storytelling

GOAL: PROVIDE A SAFE PLACE FOR PEACE & HEALING

- p.40 A. Safety
- p.41 B. Peace & Healing
- p.42 C. Healing with the Land
- p.44 D. Representation, Belonging & Inclusion
- p.46 E. Vibrant Expressions of African American Culture

GOAL: PROMOTE EQUITY, RESPECT, AND LEARNING AS WE BUILD COMMUNITY TOGETHER

- p.52 A. Equity
- p.53 B. Continued Black Leadership
- p.54 C. Respect
- p.55 D. Learning

GOAL: BUILD STRONG CONNECTIONS WITH THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORS & ORGANIZATIONS

- p.56 A. Neighbors
- p.57 B. Organizations
- p.58 D. Build Relationships

GOAL: CELEBRATE, HONOR, AND RECOGNIZE BLACK HISTORY AND CONTRIBUTIONS IN OLYMPIA

Black people have always been here. Our wisdom, creativity, and impact have shaped this place for generations. Yet across the United States, these contributions were often excluded from histories most widely told.

In Olympia—a city where whiteness has long been centered—this absence has meant that many in the broader community lack knowledge and exposure, while within the Black community there is a deep need to know and honor our own stories. Sharing these histories ensures contributions are affirmed and remembered.

A. BIG AND PRESENT

The design should have character—big, present, and unmissable—drawing people in to learn and making a powerful claim of belonging. It should transform the space into something magnetic from the street and unforgettable once inside. *Think: bold architectural or sculptural elements that are visible from the street.*



*See pages 46-49 To learn more about expressions of African-American culture.

"I like the big architectural and sculptural ideas. They send an impactful message and stake a claim of belonging."

B. IMMERSIVE STORYTELLING

The park should be full of stories in many forms, woven into the very elements of the space. Different people are drawn to different ways of experiencing stories, and no single approach is the “right” one—many visitors loved having a variety to explore.

Storytelling mediums should include those that are straightforward and educational as well as those that are playful or experiential

- **Text-based:** informational panels, quotes, poems
- **Visual:** images/photos, large murals
- **Large Sculptures** with interactive potential
- **Plantings:** ancestral, medicinal, thematic
- **Digital media:** QR codes, website, video/audio
- **Sound:** spoken stories, music, sound
- **Books:** cultural collections
- **Multi-modal:** designed for walking, sitting, or play
- **Contextual:** responsive to what is happening on the site



C. PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

Stories in this park reach across time. Black ancestors laid foundations generations ago, and today we continue building on that legacy. The histories we tell, and the ones we make now, shape the future we will leave behind. Community members emphasized that history should not be thought of as only in the past.

- Include:
- Community Builders
 - Entrepreneurs and Creators
 - Land and Food Stewards
 - Educators and Scholars
 - Activists and Advocates

Scan to explore stories:
bit.ly/RHP-Stories



Image: Early Childhood Education at the National Museum of African American History & Culture



Intergenerational Connection

To connect past, present, and future; multiple generations connect, learn from one another, and share joy together. This site can be a place where elders pass on wisdom, young people bring new energy

This site will need:

1. Things to do for all ages as permanent features and events.
2. Relatable stories for children and teens through toys, games, hair, clothes, and food
3. Opportunities for Shared Learning through programs and exhibits where generations exchange knowledge
4. Rotating exhibits, performance, and storytelling that highlight current Black community members and invite participation from young people.

Tell Stories That Connect Past, Present, and Future:

How far back does your history go here, what is your legacy here?

Trailblazers who made opportunities, community, and home despite barriers

Foundational Presence with radiating impact starting before WA became a state



Future Ancestors Today's doers, whose actions create tomorrow's stories

Arrival: How Olympia became home to Black communities

D. NAMING OPPRESSION + STRUGGLE & CELEBRATING SUCCESS + OVERCOMING

Some community members have asked whether the site would acknowledge discrimination. Guided by the Black Cultural Advocates on our steering committee, we are centering the park’s purpose as a healing space for Black community—avoiding retraumatization.

Healing cannot come without truth-telling, yet it must also uplift. *Here, discrimination is acknowledged not through apology or pity but through stories of resistance, success, and celebration that honor the full legacy of Black presence.*

This is a space for Black healing, guided by Black voices—histories will not be written for or by others, and hard truths will not be softened to comfort outside audiences.

Community members have also been clear that acknowledgement alone is not enough—without action, it risks being hollow. **This project therefore links naming oppression with the ongoing work of repair, justice, and creating space for thriving.**

“Uplift the amazing creativity of Black folks through challenge.
That doesn’t water down the hard parts, but also isn’t retraumatizing for people to read”

“We do need to focus on celebrating stories of Black success, but still need to acknowledge the harm and offer space to heal from that, make amends, seek justice + reparations...”

You cannot heal from harm if you do not know the history... *if that harm is a result from the past, if it’s not acknowledged and put out into the sunshine to be sterilized and start the healing process, then you’re still wondering what am I healing from.”*

“Healing happens through action and not words... *focus on telling stories of Black success and making sure this is a place that supports more Black success.”*

E. THREADS ACROSS THE CITY

Community members emphasized the importance of connecting the experiences here to the broader city, showing that Black history, creativity, and impact exist everywhere in Olympia. This space can guide visitors outward, inviting them to notice, engage with, and create more spaces of belonging throughout the city.

Ways to Connect Beyond the Park:

- **Maps and Signs** to highlight other spaces touched by Black Olympians (i.e. schools, churches, businesses, organizations, homesteads, military, and government spaces)
- **Take-home resources:** websites, social media, or other materials to continue learning from home or schoolVisual Pathways leading out, carrying the park’s grounding into other places
- **Representations of Black presence citywide** through murals, markers, and tours
- **Viral Photo Ops** that get shared

“THIS PARK ALONE CANNOT BE THE SOLUTION—HOW DO ALL CITY PARKS & SPACES BECOME MORE WELCOMING?”

GOAL: TO FIND COMMON GROUND WITH EACH OTHER THROUGH STORYTELLING, PERFORMANCE AND ART

ESPECIALLY STORIES, PERFORMANCES, AND ART FROM, OR PROMOTED BY AND LED BY OUR AFRICAN AMERICAN AND/OR BLACK COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

This park is a space to share and celebrate Black culture through stories, art, and performance—led by and for Black community members. From story circles to festivals, music, dance, and hands-on creative activities, people of all ages can participate, witness, and contribute.

These shared experiences build understanding, highlight cultural richness, and foster solidarity across generations and backgrounds.

A. FINDING COMMON GROUND

Art, storytelling, and performances invite people in, sparking curiosity and creating shared experiences where learning happens naturally.

1. Create spaces where art, dialogue, and culture co-mingle, inviting sharing and learning.
2. Highlight how Black culture enriches the broader community through music, dance, food, myth, and spiritualism.
3. Connect people through shared interests, from gardening to creative practices.

**Note: The park invites shared understanding, but its content must stay centered on Black stories. Experience demonstrates that losing this focus can dilute the space's intended purpose as a safe space for Black communities.*



Juneteenth celebrations, hosted by The Women of Color in Leadership Movement, have shown the potential for this park to be a gathering place for cultural celebration and connection.

To find common ground with each other through storytelling, performance and art

B. ACTIVE STORYTELLING

This space invites the community to share, perform, and record stories in many forms—from intimate circles to large festivals. Activities should be supported by flexible spaces, comfortable seating, and amenities that allow people to gather regardless of weather or time of day.

Ways to Share and Experience Stories:

- 1. **Story:** Oral traditions, folktales, myth, story circles, storytime, roleplaying/acting, movies, storytelling festivals, conversation, poetry/spoken word
 - 2. **Creative & Performing Arts:** Drumming, singing/song circles, dancing, band/ensemble performances, hands-on maker activities (drums, jewelry, hair braiding, sewing)
 - 3. **Recording & Archiving:** Areas for families and community members to document histories (with potential library partnerships)
 - 4. **Gallery & Exhibitions:** Rotating displays, art shows, multimedia installations (interior spaces are more accessible than outdoor-only programs)
 - 5. **Art Integrated in the Park:** Local Black artists’ work in stairs, stage, railings, benches, inlaid in sidewalks, and supporting café/hub structures
- **Supportive Amenities:** Built in seating, Food, Lighting for evening use, Shelter from rain/sun
 - **Spaces:** Gathering circles, lawn & stage, coffeehouse, festival street, messy maker spaces, gallery

Sound Considerations: Interactive music elements should respect nearby residents; options include headphone-accessed sound libraries or audio tours available from the hub.



*Left: The Black Gallery
Top: Vanport Jazz Festival
Bottom: Dances for a Variable Population, Play Africa*

GOAL: PROVIDE A SAFE PLACE FOR PEACE & HEALING

THAT HONORS REPRESENTATION AND FOSTERS A SENSE OF BELONGING AND INCLUSION

This park is envisioned as a sanctuary—
where Black community members can feel safe in mind, body, and spirit;
where belonging and representation are affirmed;
and where healing, joy, and connection to the land are nurtured through practices that offer a place to rest, to gather, and to be fully oneself.

Images: Sct. Olai Square by MASU Planning & International African American Museum

A. SAFETY

Safety in this park means feeling secure in mind, body, and identity—having space to relax, to hold uncertainty or fear, and still feel restored, energized, loved, supported, and seen.

Spatial Cues for Safety:

- 1. Clear visual connection across the park
- 2. A sense of refuge and enclosure without walls
- 3. Gentle, supportive lighting
- 4. Representation, see page 44
- 5. Maintained and Respected, see page 54
- 6. No police presence

“Can you feel safe in your mind, body, in who you are to relax?”

B. PEACE & HEALING

This park is not only about history and activity—it must also be a sanctuary. A place to rest, reflect, and find personal peace.

- 1. **Places to Just Be:** Comfortable areas to hang out, lie down, or practice yoga/movement; porch swings and rocking chairs invite lingering.
- 2. **Reflection & Meditation:** Paths for strolling, meditating, and absorbing stories. Consider active meditation such as finger labyrinths and spaces for song. Running water creates a sense of calm and reinforces the deep connection Black communities hold to “blue spaces.”
“I keep coming back to meditation which all about breathing – ‘I can’t breathe’ - George Floyd”
- 3. **Get-Away / Personal Spaces:** Nooks, reading areas, and seating for individuals or small groups. Quieter zones are set back enough to feel private, while remaining safe and connected.
“I like that the garden is set away from the re-creation areas. I think this will provide folks with some private space to reflect and connect with the land.”

- 4. **Softened:** Curves, circles, and organic forms give a feeling of calm, embrace, and protection. A “homey café vibe” was suggested to reinforce a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere.



C. HEALING WITH THE LAND

Being in nature is calming and healing. Fill gardens with fragrance, color, and texture—designed not just for function, but to embody joy, memory, and care.

“Spiritual connection to the land was and continues to be fundamental to Black communities. It was stolen and weaponized through the colonial history of slavery and racism. It’s time to reclaim our intrinsic right to ecologically based spiritual healing and identity.”

Images left to right: NY Botanical Garden Culinary Demonstration, Black Futures Farm, Peninsula Park, Media Island International

COMMUNITY GARDENS

celebrate the role of gardening in Black culture while also encouraging gatherings.

Include teaching spaces for growing food, making jam, and holding harvest events that help build purpose and confidence. Introduce people to growing techniques that honor ancestral knowledge, showcase sustainable practices, and support both personal and community food resilience.

Support food justice with donations to food banks.

STORYTELLING GARDENS

Share ancestral traditions, including African & African American foodways, plants (cultivated and wild), bright flowers, fragrances, and medicinal herbs.

Plant selections can also be inspired by and **tell diasporic stories; and stories of local Black gardeners, agricultural workers, and food/environmental justice advocates** like Festus Campbell.

Signage is essential to share the significance.

“We were so tied to the land and responsible for so many agricultural inventions and innovations.”

PLANT INSPIRATION:

Cultural food plants: muscadins, spinach, okra, cabbage, tomatoes, eggplant, tubers, sweet potatoes, yams, potato, Lima, Greens, Corn, Plums, beets, elderberry, chickweed, pumpkin, amaranth, cassava, cauliflower, scotch bonnet pepper, sorghum, black eyed peas, okra, collards, turnips, mustard, kale, beets, yams, cassava, peanuts, green beans, peaches, watermelons

Medicinal herbs: lemonbalm, chamomile, mint, nettle, peppermint, sage, oregano, thyme, parsley, hyssop, mullein, lemongrass, garlic, ginger, turmeric, dill, cilantro, rosemary, celery, onion, tobacco

Diasporic stories: Seeds smuggled in hair, Botanist Edmond Albius breeding orchids produced vanilla beans

Connecting to this land: orange, peach, pear, apple, pumpkin, coconut, tabasco, acacia, sweet potato, cabbage, peanuts, carrots, cilantro, coriander, blackberry, blueberry, rhubarb, mustards, collards

*The idea of a greenhouse emerged, however, it would be challenging to fit more built structure on this small site.

Consider how **spaces within the building can still be designed to support plants growing indoors with beautiful views out to the park.**

Image: Women of Color in Leadership Movement Greenhouse at Media Island International



D. REPRESENTATION, BELONGING & INCLUSION

A true sense of belonging requires not only being welcomed, but also being able to see your identities reflected, affirmed, and celebrated. In Olympia, finding Black community and representation has long been a challenge, and many have left because of that absence.

From that need comes the commitment to center Blackness and Black communities in this park. Doing so is not about exclusion; it is about repair, visibility, and recognition.

Strategies:

- 1. Make stories visible, page 30
- 2. Active storytelling, page 38
- 3. Vibrant Expressions of African American Culture, page 46
- 4. Visibility that extends beyond the park, page 35
- 5. Black leadership and voice in the creation and governance of the park, page 53
- 6. Accessibility

A RESOURCE FOR BLACK COMMUNITY LIFE
Think of this space as a resource for Black community life—not a showcase or performance for others, but a living cultural center.

a place to gather in celebration, tell stories, honor ancestors, and root community in the city’s future. It supports commemorations, seasonal celebrations, youth programs, and other community-led events, answering the long-standing need for a space where Black people in Olympia can meet, connect, and call their own.

“I hope that people will feel more connected and grounded - it can be isolating in Olympia, so I want this to be a space where Black people can feel a sense of belonging, see and learn from the other Black folks who are here and have been here.”

“There isn’t really a space right now where the Black community goes to meet and call their own.”



Image: Storia Defrag, Colloqate Design

ACCESSIBILITY
This park should ensure that people of all abilities, body types, and mobility needs can fully participate, feel welcome, and connect with nature and community.

Design Strategies:

- 1. Paths: Smooth, well-maintained surfaces, clear boundaries, gentle slopes where possible, and tactile or textured markers for wayfinding.
- 2. Gathering & Resting Areas: Wheelchair-accessible picnic tables, benches with adjacent pads, and flexible seating for all body types.
- 3. Amenities: Fully accessible restrooms (consider Changing Places standards), disability-reserved parking, charging stations for mobility devices, and emergency phones.
- 4. Lighting & Safety: Low-level solar-powered lighting along paths, visual contrast at trail edges, and clear sightlines for safe navigation.
- 5. Multisensory & Interpretive Access: Braille maps, tactile signage, motion-activated audio, QR codes for storytelling, and sensory features like sound tubes, touchable textures, and fragrant plantings.
- 6. Information & Communication: Updated website with accessibility details, clear and readable text on signage, and visually prominent wayfinding cues.

E. VIBRANT EXPRESSIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE

This park is a living reflection of Black life and culture—a place where unmistakably Black expression comes alive through *people, activity, and visual language*.

Stories aren’t only remembered here—they are alive through contemporary culture, community life, and creative practice. The park is a space for authentic self-expression, where community members can be themselves without code-switching or holding back.



Images: Black Heritage Markers, Soapbox Theory. M&M Lemonade Bar at Juneteenth 2024. Black Cultural Center at North Portland Library, Lever



SHOWCASE BLACK TALENT

Highlight contemporary artists, makers, and leaders. Black maker and farmers markets have a long history as sites of economic resilience, cultural expression, and community-building.



CLEAR VISUALS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN PEOPLE & CULTURE

Reflect the diversity and richness of African American culture. Bold colors, patterns, murals, sculptures, and other forms of art communicate joy, pride, and heritage.

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL BLACKNESS

Black identity is diverse, layered, and intersectional. This space affirms that diversity while lifting up the stories of Foundational Black Americans, whose experiences of slavery and its lasting impacts remain a crucial part of the repair and recognition this park is committed to.

Community members we engaged emphasized the inclusion of community members who are:

- Black Male, Female, and Transgender
- Multi-racial and/or White passing
- From all over the US and globe
- Across religious and spiritual practices (Christian, Jewish and Spiritualism)
- Native bloodlines, including those denied on tribal rolls
- Known and less known individuals and contributions
- Across generations and age groups

Each person has multiple intertwining identities.

JOY & PLAY

are essential for making this a place for all ages that is engaging for families and inspires curiosity.

Storytelling becomes approachable and interactive through playful design: footprints that teach a dance, rotating pieces that form a story, rubbings to take home, seek-and-find, questions to answer, sensory play, or a climbing structure rooted in African folktales.

**Some asked for playgrounds and courts to create a park for families. The approaches above provide family-friendly play without losing sight of the park’s role as a place for stories, peace, and healing.*

“I have been looking for black community in this town for a long time and finding spaces that are not for me.”

“Don’t have it be designed in a specific way of “Blackness”... Within blackness is a whole beautiful universe of diversity.”



Dancer’s Series: Steps, Jack Mackie

Photos of Ancestors:



Our pioneers
Community Builders
Spaces created by Black community
PEOPLE & PLACES
Places that have influenced Black culture
Rippling Impact

Clothing
Language
Hair
Plant traditions
Spirituality
Medicine

CULTURAL PRACTICES

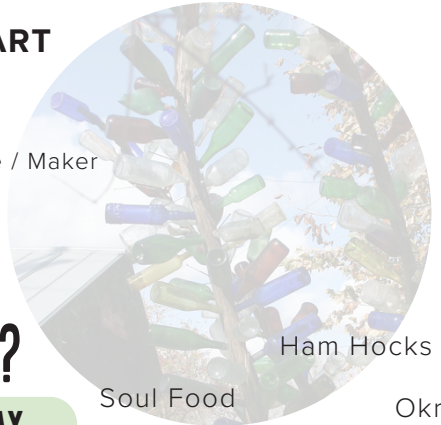
The Wiz
Jazz
Blues
Gospel / Spirituals
Activism
Genre crossing
Drum circles

MUSIC

Any music played by anyone Black

DANCE

Art
ART
Creative / Maker



Ham Hocks
Okra
Soul Food

FOODS

Collards
Corn Bread
Black eyed peas
Yams
Barbecue

WHAT REPRESENTS BLACK CULTURE IN OLYMPIA?
WHAT OLYMPIA'S BLACK COMMUNITY MEMBERS SAY

Sankofa
Kente Cloth
Bold Colors
SYMBOLS, PATTERNS, COLORS
Mudcloth

Pan-African Flag
Black Power Salute
Juneteenth Flag
Progress Flag

MOVEMENTS & SOLIDARITY



Photos of present day community:



To Provide a Safe Place for Peace and Healing

Community Made Symbols



Above: Community Members were invited to create Olympia specific Adinkra symbols.

Left: Stora Djembe shows an example of how symbols can be embedded into design elements.

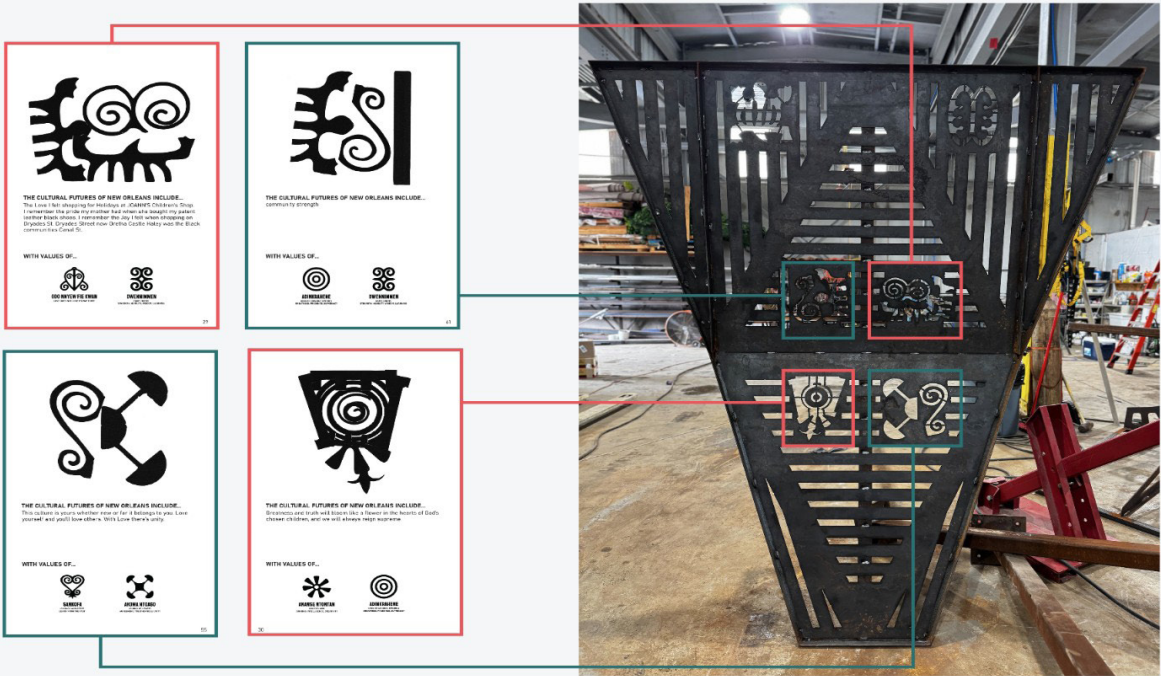
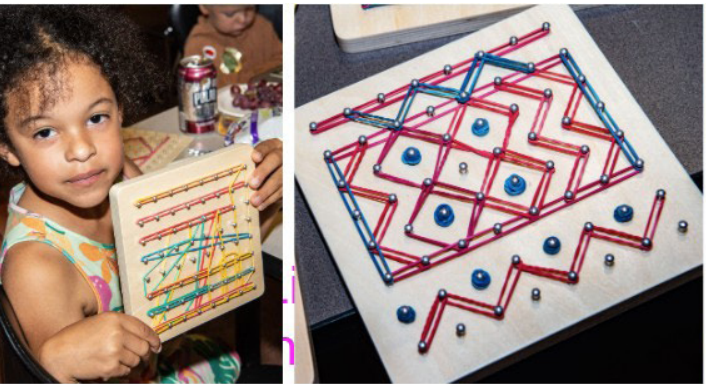


Figure 6: Diagram of the direct translation of community made Adinkras to the design of the canopy



STRENGTH Thatch = adaptable, unity of many polices Mountain = support, being together is stronger Rooster = bravery, victory, protection	GENERATIONS Spine = geneology of ancestors Journey = life course, initiative, versatility, highs & lows Land = enduring, inheritance
PROSPERITY Mouth = to be fed and nourished Interlocking = connection between cultures & ideas water = universal, essential to life, afterlife	HOPE Sun = richness, brilliance, rebirth Seed / Rain = abundance, new growth Flower = spring, new beginnings

Right: Midland Library shows an example of how themes from community patternmaking could be developed into a collective pattern.



GOAL: TO PROMOTE EQUITY, RESPECT, AND LEARNING AS WE BUILD COMMUNITY TOGETHER.

Through shared learning, community-building, and modeling of new practices, this park has the potential to *grow equity, respect, and empathy* across generations and cultures.

“This needs to be a space that says that Olympia recognizes, honors, and wants Black individuals to be safe and respected in this space and the larger community”

A. EQUITY

Equity in this park will require more than representation—It is about valuing lived experience, showing sustained commitment, and creating economic opportunity

- 1. Voice & Participation:** Ensure Black community members guide conversations rather than just attend them.
- 2. Whose Knowledge Counts:** Value lived experience alongside academic or professional expertise
- 3. Maintain Commitment:** The Black community has historically experienced repeated unfulfilled promises. Municipal processes can feel drawn out and result in questioning of commitment. Consider demonstrating ongoing commitment through visible, phased site development as well as short term interventions—such as signage, seating, gardens, story tables, and art. *Note: short term interventions can sometimes lengthen overall process. Work with community to balance short and long term priorities.*
- 4. Economic Equity:**
 - Incubate Black-owned businesses in the café
 - Encourage Black vendors, artists, and contractors from design to build
 - Ensure gathering spaces are accessible without financial barriers. Allocate funds to reduce financial barriers for community-led programming

B. CONTINUED BLACK LEADERSHIP

“Leadership and self-determination gets me excited. Ownership, pride in a space we’re colearning and cosharing.”

BLACK STEWARDSHIP

Black voices must lead—in the park’s creation and in its long-term governance, programming, and stewardship. Self-determination ensures the park remains a space for Black healing and joy. *Ideas to explore include:*

- 1. Seek partnerships** with Black led orgs and individuals to steward the park, manage events, or care for garden spaces.
- 2. Involve Black youth** in land stewardship, teaching, and cultural programming.
- 3. Shift decision-making power around public art** to be held by Black community.
- 4. Explore a stakeholder oversight body** of Black cultural advocates with established collective decision making processes.
- 5. Pay community members** for time, expertise, and leadership.
- 6. Grow Black leadership within city roles** that steward this park.

**See appendix for potential stewardship models*

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is essential for Black leaders to guide this work. Progress and decisions should be shared openly so community leaders remain informed and able to shape direction; and so that silence does not become a signifier of loss of momentum and commitment or of decisions being made for Black community behind closed doors.

- 1. Communicate regularly** with invested stakeholders on project progress
- 2. Share long-range schedules, milestones, and funding updates** as early as possible to avoid misaligned expectations.
**See appendix for early funding research*
- 3. Share any design changes** created by unexpected conditions.
- 4. Be open about challenges** and engage the community in problem-solving.

C. RESPECT

The park should feel valued, cared for, and enduring—a space that demonstrates the community is seen and supported within its process and outcomes.

- 1. **Design quality** should evoke respect for the space.
- 2. **Ensure the space is maintainable** and cared for, with clear provisions for upkeep.
Note: maintainability can sometimes result in avoiding the unfamiliar. As this park is intended to uplift practices that have been absent, empower Black community members to make decisions balancing maintainability and cultural authenticity.
- 3. **Address vandalism rapidly and proactively**, to communicate respect for the park and its people.
- 4. **A consistent, caring presence** can help set expectations for respectful use of the space, including by unhoused community members.
- 5. **Give credit** to those who have put in work and honor contributions by building upon them.

PRIORITIZATION OF BLACK COMMUNITY

All communities of color have faced barriers, yet anti-Black racism has been the most enduring and systemic, shaping inequities that persist today.

Equity means going beyond equal treatment—it ensures that resources address the greatest need and historic gaps. Consider strategies for project work to be expedited within larger city development timelines.



International African American Museum, Hood Design Studio

D. LEARNING

The park can be a space of learning that builds both understanding and empowerment.

Storytelling displays and events will deepen awareness; while classrooms, field trips, and community programs make the park a living resource. Opportunities such as job training, scholarships, mentorship, and teaching of Black history can equip young people to lead, give back, and pursue new economic paths, while also supporting community wellbeing.

- 1. **Inspire.** Just as Rebecca Howard’s legacy has inspired members of Olympia’s Black community that they too can stay and make a way for themselves, the installations here will invite visitors to find strength and determination in the stories of Black Olympians. The park will encourage young people to see themselves as part of a powerful legacy, carrying it forward into their own futures.
- 2. **Empathy.** By sharing full stories—including struggles and triumphs—the park helps us better appreciate our neighbors, strengthen unity, and nurture a sense of human family.

“As the county grows and increases in its diversity, the park can be a learning space. There is so much healing that needs to happen. One little spot may not be able to do it, but it’s a start. There is tremendous potential.”



Power of the Written Word and Young Historians Institute at the National Museum of African American History & Culture

GOAL: TO BUILD STRONG CONNECTIONS WITH THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Through collaboration rooted in relationship and reciprocity, we expand our resources and grow our opportunities for continued success.

A. NEIGHBORS:

Rebecca Howard Park sits next to the library, Media Island International and the Woman of Color in Leadership Movement (WOCLM), offering natural opportunities for collaboration.

Many see potential for **THE LIBRARY** to host events, feature Black authors and stories, or provide ways for families to document their histories. Tours could visit the park and library. Some suggest having a park-side entrance for a seamless experience.

THE WOMAN OF COLOR IN LEADERSHIP MOVEMENT at Media Island supports the leadership and empowerment of women of color—especially Black women, girls, and families. *As the Black-led organization nearest the park, they are well positioned to contribute to ongoing stewardship and programming.* Shawna Hawk has played a key role in guiding the park’s vision and has hosted events that demonstrate the site’s potential.



B. ORGANIZATIONS:

Building relationships and partnerships will help expand the impact of this site as a resource to the community.

- **Organizations are excited to have flexible spaces to gather and host** programs, workshops, and events; including the indoor meeting room, café, gathering circles, lawn and garden spaces.
- **Schools and youth programs** can engage through field trips, student internships, and opportunities to create digital storytelling projects, connecting learning with hands-on experience and community involvement.

! YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Despite outreach to schools, organizations and potential youth design advocates; we did not engage youth to the desired extent over the time frame of this Park Development Plan. Upcoming storytelling design efforts provide a strong platform for engaging with youth.

1. Invite youth to co-create storytelling and storytelling approaches for the park
2. Explore youth ownership in stewarding the land

Top: Baldwin Books features black authors
Bottom: Media Island is just up the street!

C. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Strong relationships are built on trust, reciprocity, and meaningful engagement.

1. **Personal connection, not transaction:** Engage consistently and genuinely, not only when insight and participation are needed. Show up at schools, churches, and community spaces; have conversations over coffee. People want to feel cared for, not used.

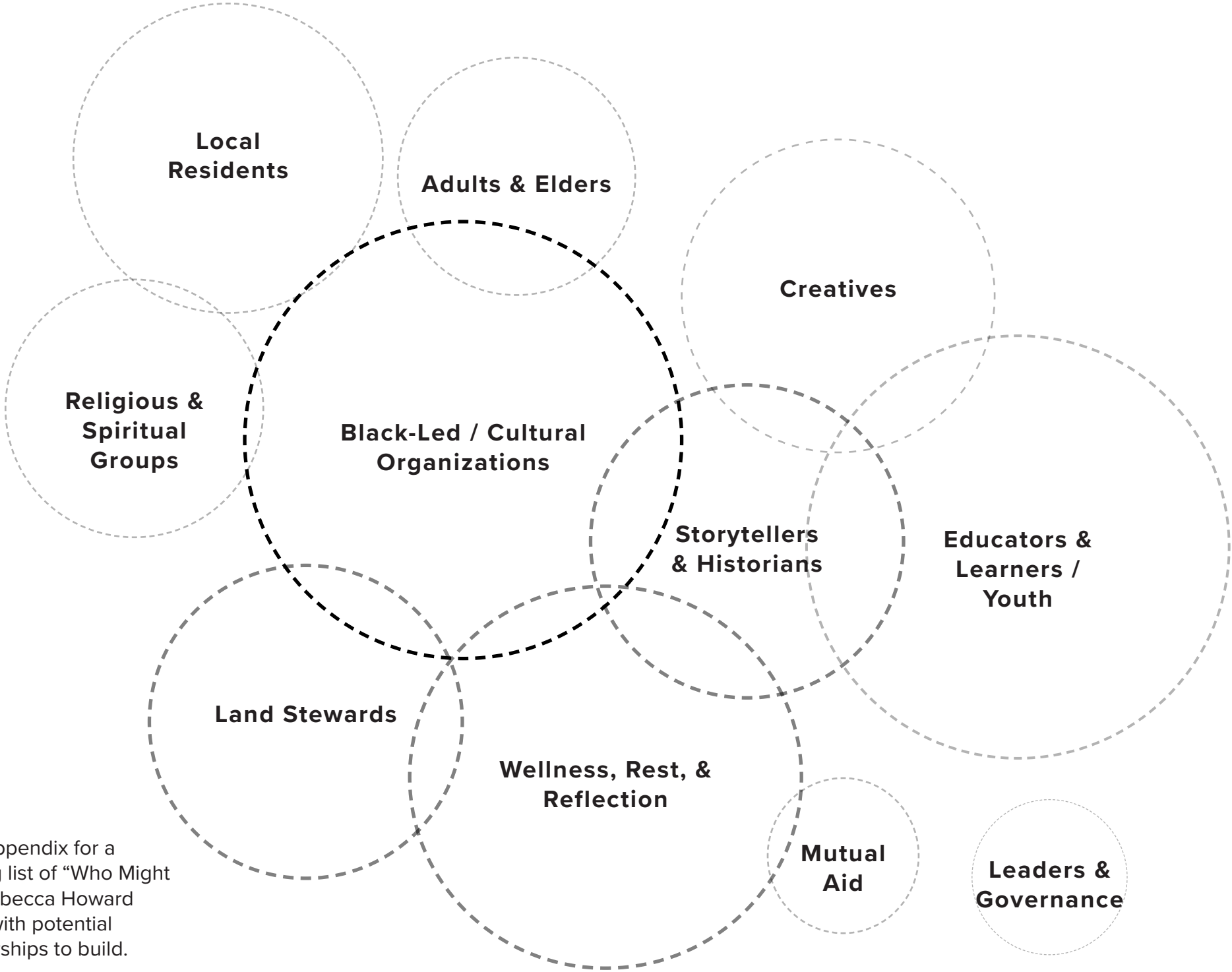
“When meeting someone for the first time you say hi, how are you? Not ‘I need this thing from you.’”

2. **Include a wide range of Black voices:** The Black community is not a monolith.

“We need a vast array of ideas, experiences, skills, talents. To have voices at the table. Elders, youth, others. We’re not a monolith. We’re artists, teachers, homeless, farming, scientists. We have so many experiences that are valuable.”

3. **Reduce silos:** City efforts often operate independently, but community members experience the work as a whole. Disconnected asks for participation can spread energy thin, create unnecessary repetition, or obscure the bigger picture. Consider a consolidated approach that sees all efforts moving together towards a shared goal of Black reparations.

Think: How will the community needs and priorities reflected in this plan shape broader city process & initiatives?



*See appendix for a starting list of “Who Might Use Rebecca Howard Park” with potential partnerships to build.



A COMMUNITY VISION



EMBRACED BY ANCESTORS

IMAGINING REBECCA HOWARD PARK

The design of Rebecca Howard Park is inspired by Sankofa, a word from the Akan people of Ghana that signifies returning to the past in order to move forward. Through our work with community, we found that circular, organic forms held many meanings that resonate with the project's goals: continuity between past present and future, a welcoming embrace, and gathering in community.

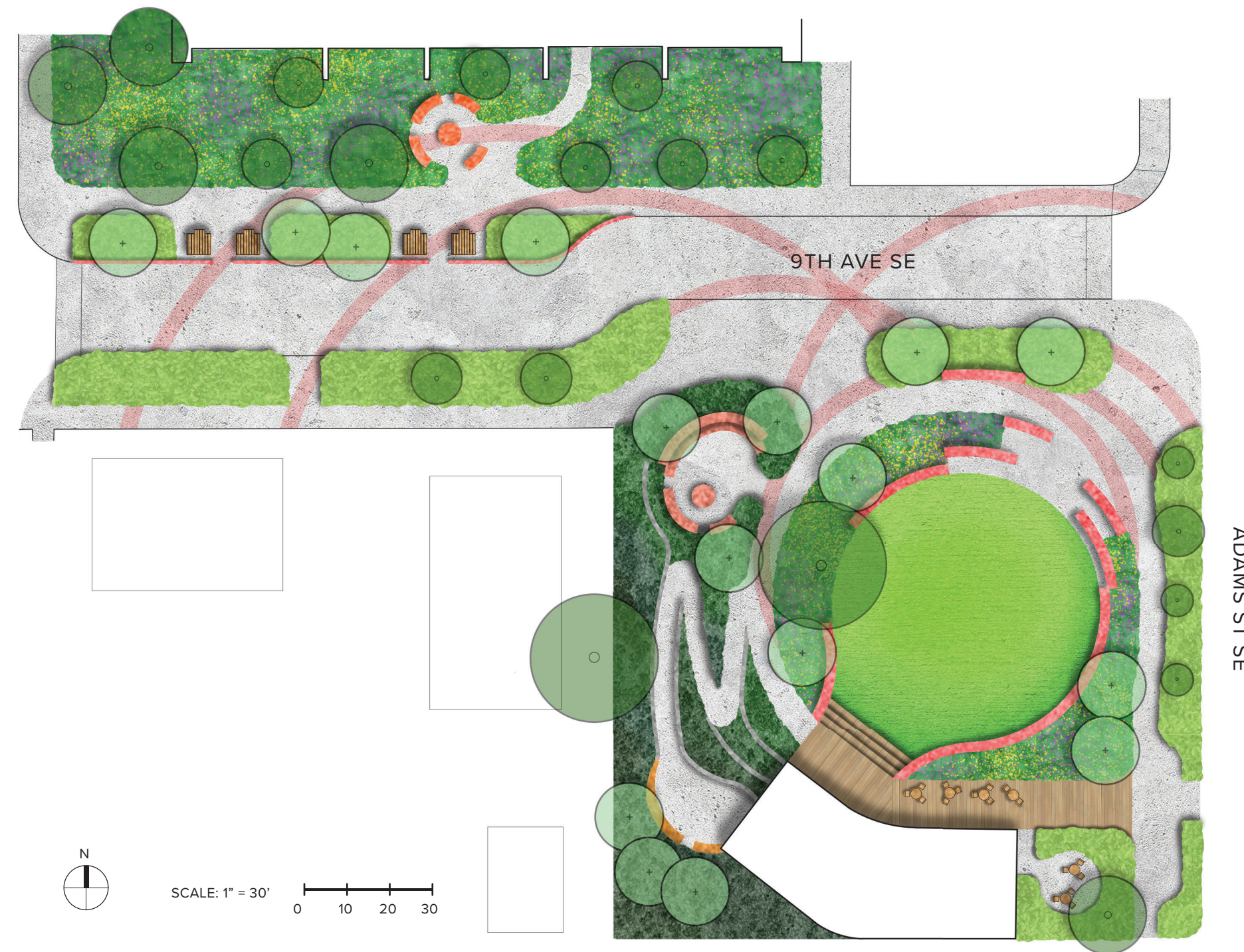
The concept design draws its key spaces from the original vision developed by stakeholders: the lawn, the stage, the cafe and porch, the garden, the small gathering space, and the festival street. Invoking the welcoming gesture of an embrace, the spaces radiate out from the central lawn, which, together with the cafe and porch, serves as the heart of the park.

We heard from stakeholders that flexibility was key for such a small space; the park's spaces support gathering at many different scales, from large celebrations on the lawn to small group meetings in the gathering circle to quiet solitude in the garden. The porch draws the function of the cafe into the outdoors, offering a comfortable place to sit and enjoy the view of the park. Visual connectivity and accessible circulation between the spaces creates a

sense of interconnection and safety, while layers of planting turn the small park into an oasis in the midst of downtown.

We know that Black presence in Olympia is not limited to this site; to reflect the expansive impact of Olympia's Black communities, the design extends beyond the boundaries of the site. A festival street on 9th Avenue slows traffic and supports large community events. Across the street, additional seating areas and a reading nook connect the park to the Downtown Olympia Timberland Library, emphasizing the power of education and storytelling in celebrating Black legacy.

Throughout our community process, we heard that Rebecca Howard Park should be both an expression of and a container for Black stories. Community members envision a space that elevates Black artists in many mediums, from paving and planting to walls and canopies. This park is also a space where Black stories are alive; the stage and lawn support active storytelling and performance, while the community hub offers space to gather and document local histories.





IN REBECCA HOWARD PARK, THERE IS...

- 1 **A cafe + community hub** for indoor gathering and workshops
(pg. 84-85)
- 2 **A porch + stage** for outdoor seating and performances
(pg. 90-91)
- 3 **A lawn** for large gatherings and day-to-day relaxing
- 4 **A garden** for quiet contemplation and reflection
(pg. 74-75)
- 5 **A gathering circle** for smaller group meetings
(pg. 72-73)
- 6 **A festival street** that can be closed off for special events
(pg. 76-77)
- 7 **A reading nook** near the library for storytimes and workshops

A note about the drawings in this document:

These concept design images reflect the ideas, vision, and priorities developed through the community co-design process. The design will continue to evolve as features are refined, materials are chosen, artists are selected, etc.

The community hub shown here reflects preliminary massing and key spaces, not a final architectural design.

IN THE PARK THERE IS A...

GATHERING CIRCLE

“[...]circular sitting spaces - being able to see everyone’s faces at once, it naturally builds community.”

“A circle connects us as a human community...[it] includes everyone and circles are historic gathering spaces.”

PLANTING TEXTURES

Small trees and shrubs create a soft, fragrant screen and provide shade while showcasing Black cultural and local native plants:

- Blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *cerulea*)
- Coral Sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*)
- Cassava (*Manihot esculenta*)
- Anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)
- Oval-leaf blueberry (*Vaccinium ovalifolium*)

VISUALIZING THE GATHERING CIRCLE

IMAGINE... A cozy seating nook surrounded by shady trees and fragrant planting, with colorful artwork and local Black stories on every surface—this space invites conversation and storytelling, learning and connection, and quiet relaxation.



INSPIRATION



IN THE PARK THERE IS A...

GARDEN

“Spiritual connection to the land was + continues to be fundamental to Black communities.”

“I’d like to see a section for medicinal plants important to Black culture in the garden.”

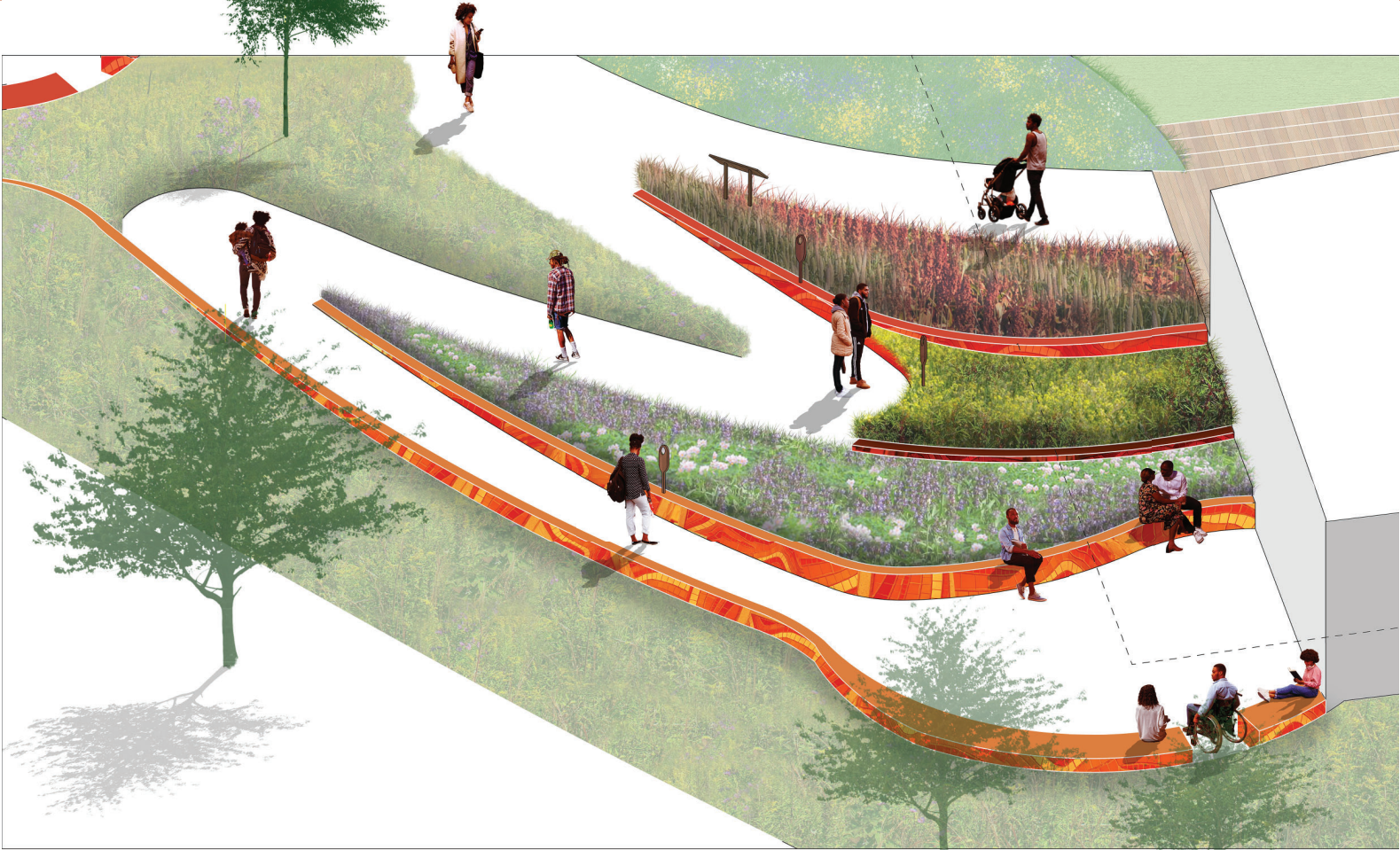
PLANTING TEXTURES

Educational signage highlights Black land stewards and celebrates plants that embody Black memory, joy, and healing: vegetables, peppers, tubers, peas + grains, greens, fruit trees + vines, and herbs.

*For a complete list of plants recommended by a focus group of gardeners and farmers, see appendix.

VISUALIZING THE GARDEN

IMAGINE... A meditative walk surrounded by plants that honor the connections between Black people and the land—this garden invites visitors to explore, learn about the rich histories of Black land stewardship, and take a moment for rest and reflection among the plants.



INSPIRATION



EXPLORING A POTENTIAL WATER FEATURE

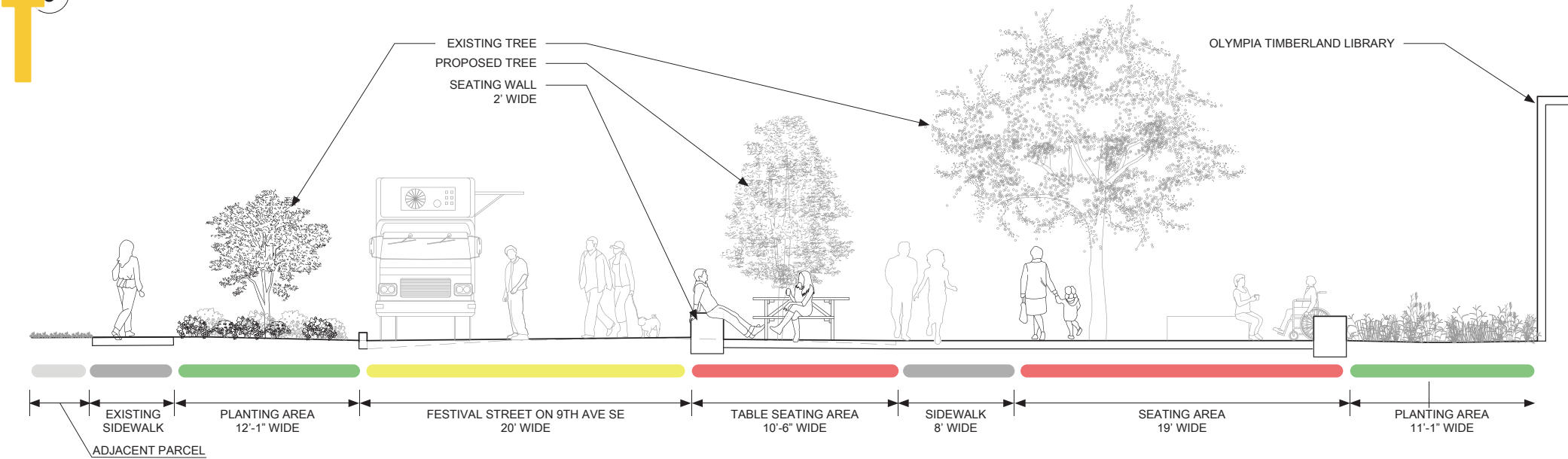
Through our process of imagining a healing garden space that celebrates the connection between Black communities and the land, we heard the importance of honoring Black connections to water. A water feature would enrich the garden’s healing properties by offering a space for contemplation and connection to ancestors. We explored 3 possible strategies for a potential water feature; this will need to be studied further to understand what is feasible within Department of Health regulations and the project budget.



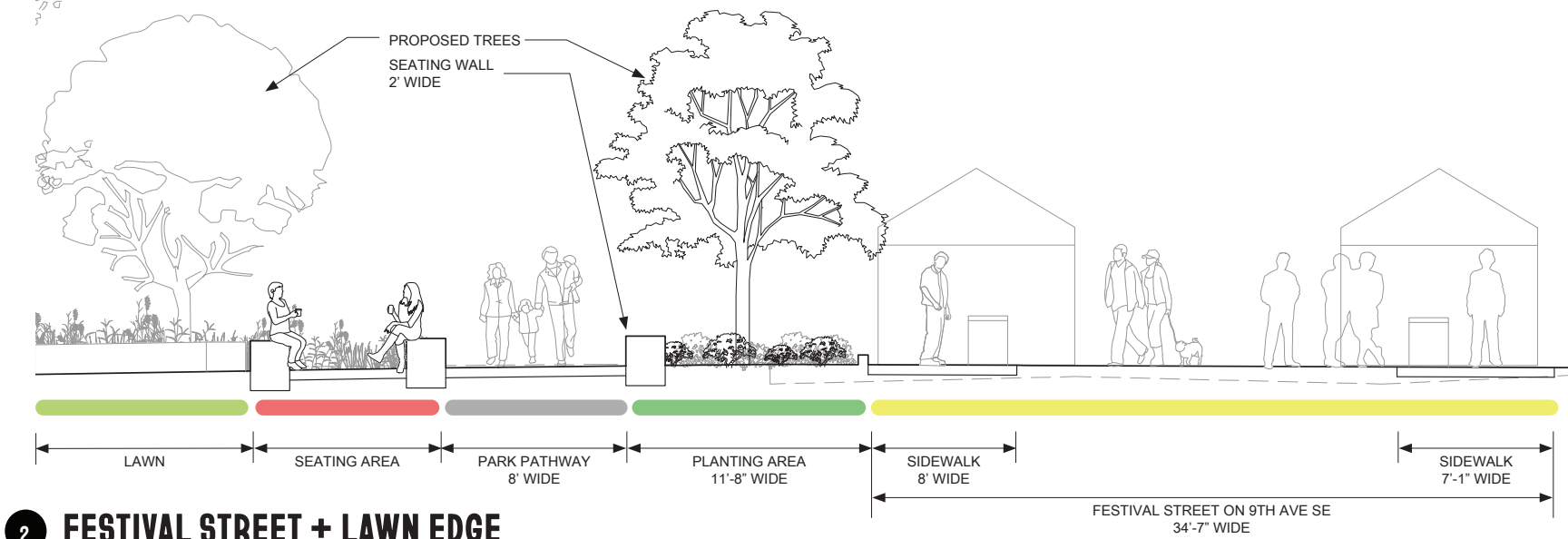
- 1. Rainwater collection that gathers runoff from the cafe roof (such as a rain chain)
- 2. Recirculating water that cascades down the terrace walls
- 3. A reflective pool or small fountain in the garden seating area

FESTIVAL STREET

Narrowing 9th Avenue SE and raising the street level to match the sidewalks creates a Festival Street that can be closed for special events. When closed to traffic, the Festival Street offers space for food trucks, vendors, and community gathering. When open to traffic, the narrowed street, new planting beds and trees, and seating areas near the library make 9th Ave a more enjoyable place to walk and linger.



1 FESTIVAL STREET + LIBRARY SEATING AREA



2 FESTIVAL STREET + LAWN EDGE

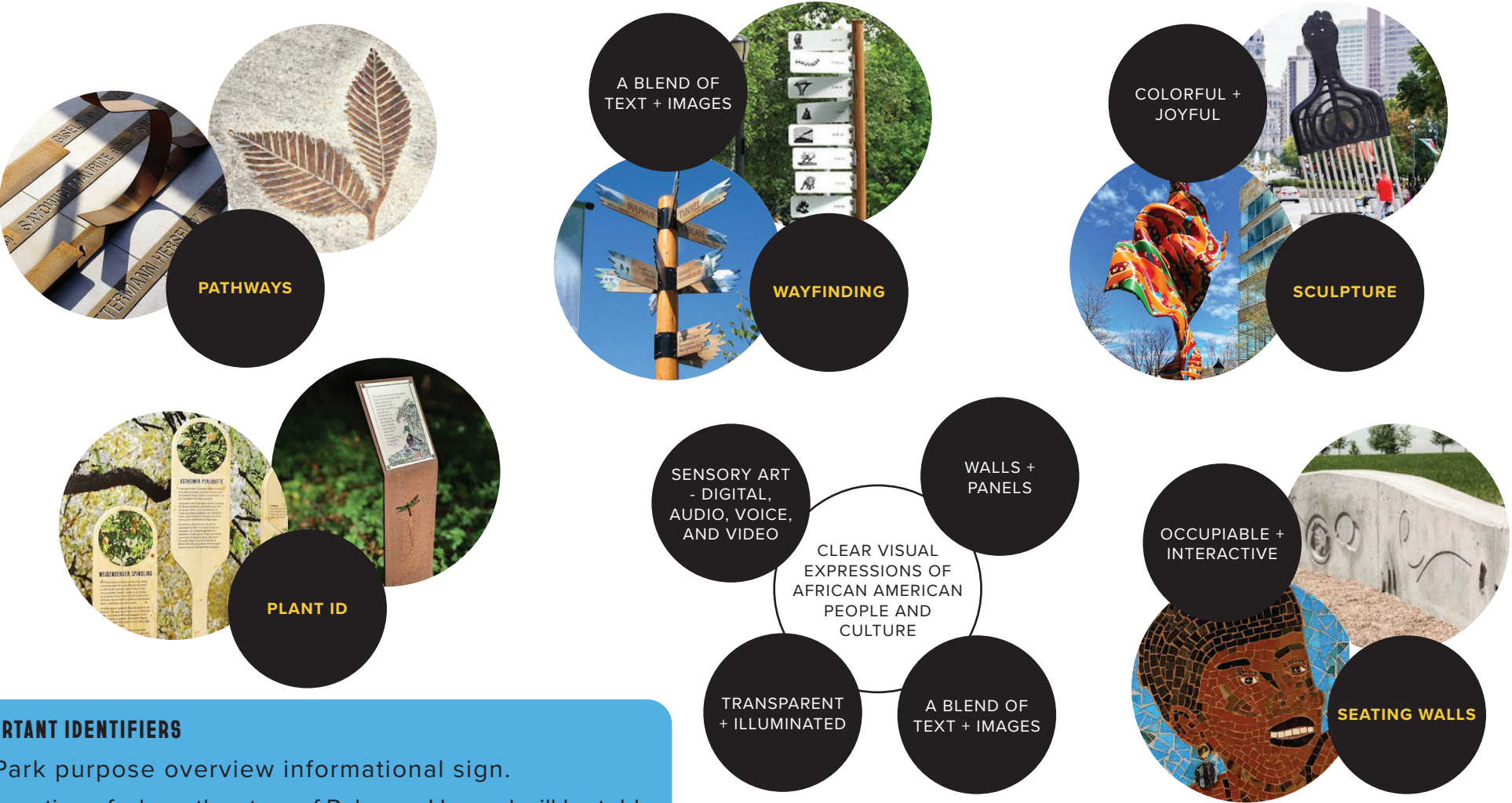
INSPIRATION



WE HEARD THAT REBECCA HOWARD PARK SHOULD...



SITE STORYTELLING + ART ACTIVATION

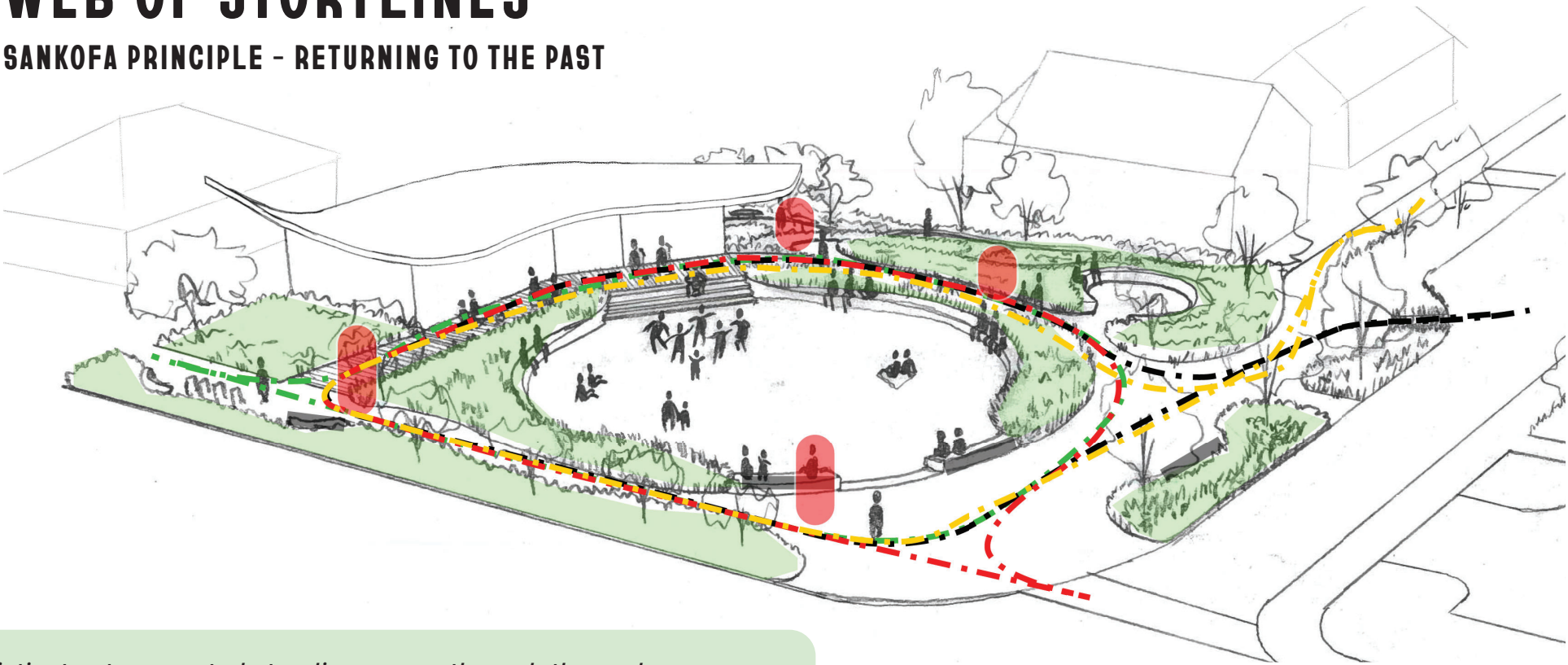


IMPORTANT IDENTIFIERS

- 1. Park purpose overview informational sign.
- 2. Location of where the story of Rebecca Howard will be told

WEB OF STORYLINES

SANKOFA PRINCIPLE - RETURNING TO THE PAST



Distinct yet connected storylines move through the park. Inspired by Sankofa, each path returns to its beginning, honoring the past to shape a shared future.

Proposed storylines include:

- **Pathways** telling the stories of **Community Builders**
- **Sculpture** telling the stories of **Creators and Entrepreneurs**
- **Plant Stories** telling the stories of **Land & Food Stewards**
- **Seating** telling the stories of **Trailblazing Pioneers**



It is important that these storylines not be experienced in silos. They intertwine to form **a web reflecting the richness of Black experiences.**

Pages 80-87 describe additional art opportunities at the community hub.

Images in this document are conceptual, showcasing *opportunities* for art. **Final art types and locations will be refined.** This may look like:

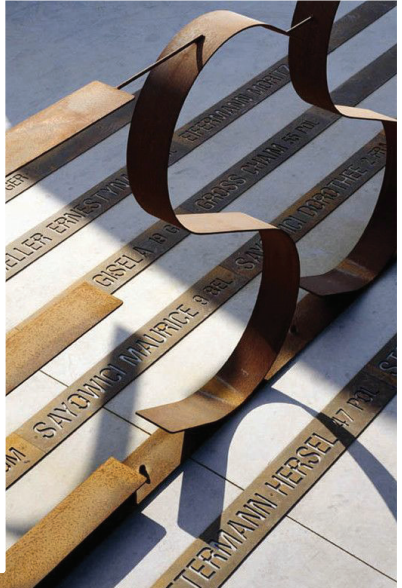
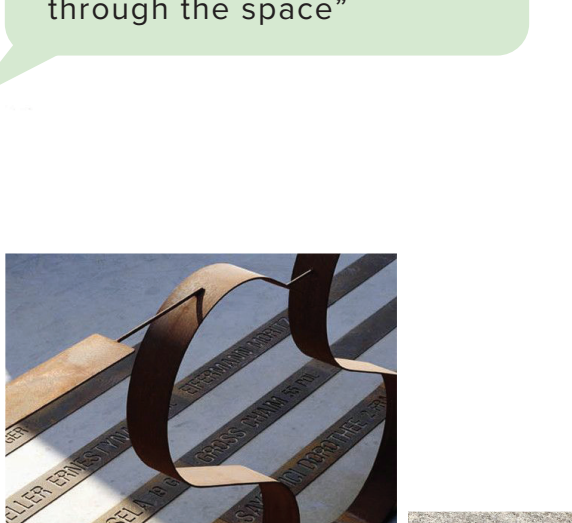
- Target budget created for each storyline.
- A call for artists for a storyline includes the location, budget, and an initial collection of histories.
- Artists have creative freedom to propose the extent of their art within the parameters of each storyline. Artists across storylines may also chose to work collaboratively.
- A selection committee from Olympia’s Black Community selects artists, with technical oversight from the City as needed.

Stories of Black Olympian Community Builders, Entrepreneurs, Creators, Land & Food Stewards, Trailblazing Pioneers, and more can be found here:



PATHWAYS

TELL THE STORIES OF... COMMUNITY BUILDERS



SCULPTURE (WAYFINDING MARKERS)

TELL THE STORIES OF... ENTREPRENEURS



Highlight other places in town that have been touched and influenced by Black communities

Signage, maps, or posts showing that Black community touches other spaces in the city in the festival street.

SCULPTURE

TELL THE STORIES OF... CREATORS



Clearly & Uniquely Black



Transparent & Illuminated



Colorful & Joyful



“It would be cool to have stories or symbol on tree carved - storytelling within trees is important; within my ancestral roots people would carve symbols and stories on land trees”



PLANT STORIES

TELL THE STORIES OF... LAND AND FOOD STEWARDS

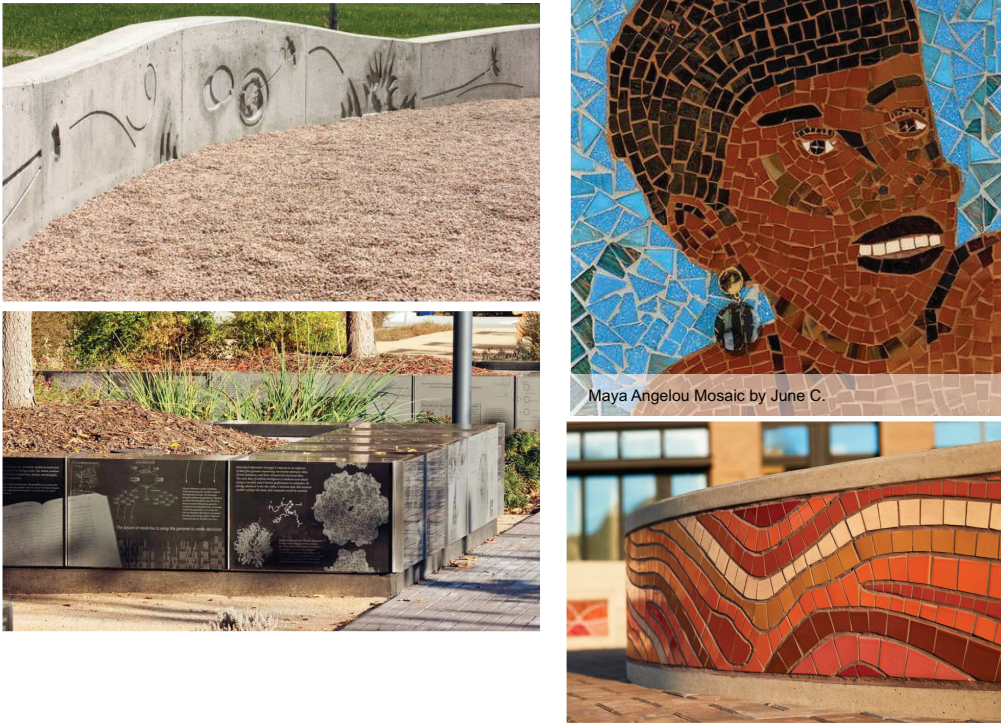
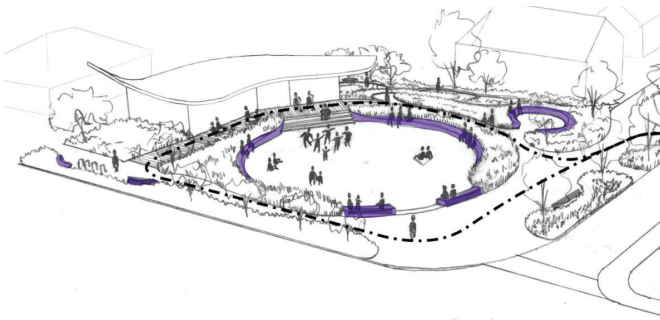


Story of Stewards CONNECTED TO Story of Plants



SEATING WALLS

TELL THE STORIES OF... TRAILBLAZING PIONEERS



Multi-dimensional representations of Blackness across the storytelling elements

IN REBECCA HOWARD PARK, THERE IS A...

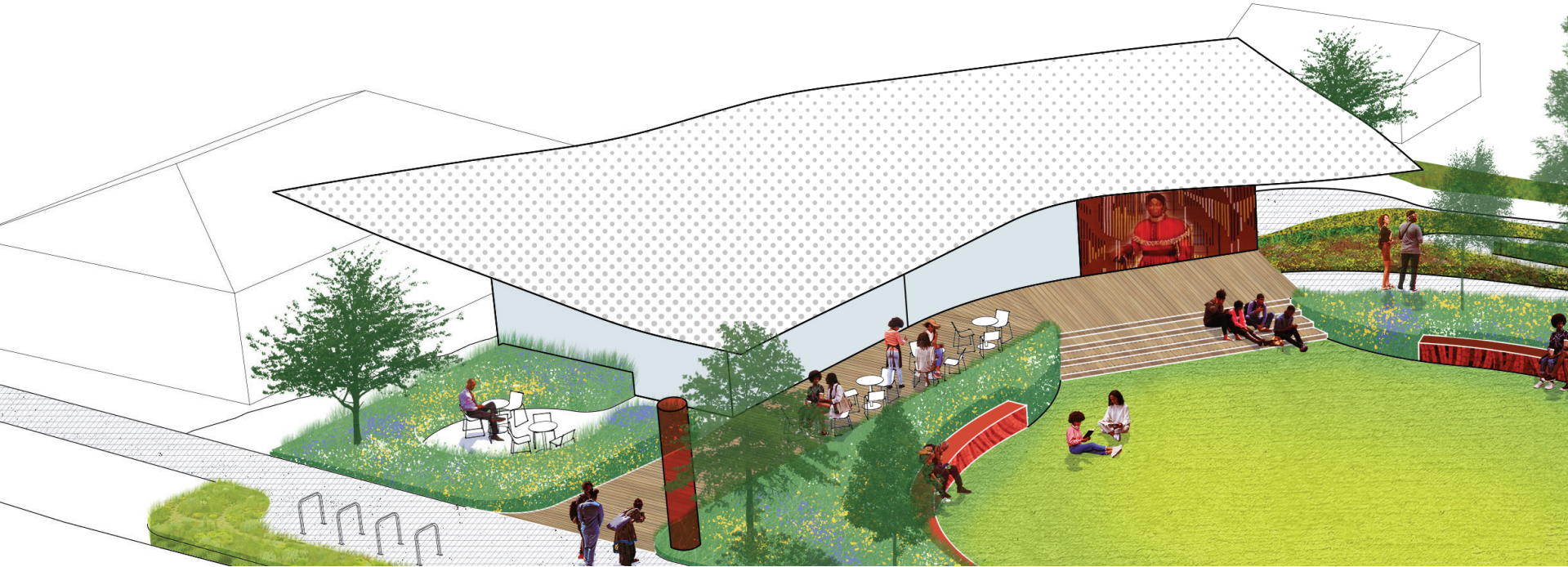
COMMUNITY HUB

MAJOR SPACES :
Cafe & Multipurpose Room

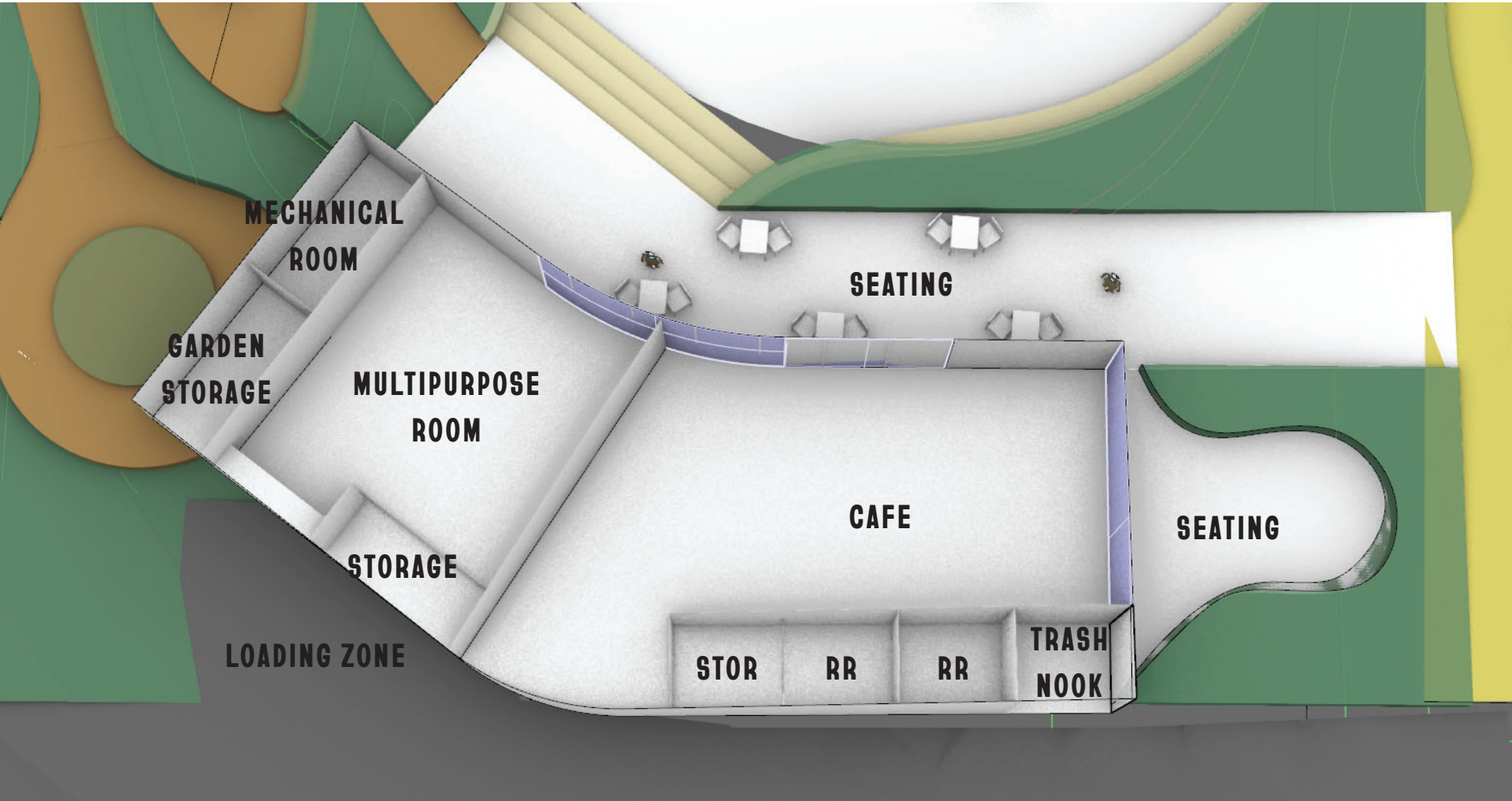
SUPPORTING SPACES :
Restrooms (one for cafe and one for park users),
Trash Nook, Cafe Storage, Multipurpose Room
Storage, Mechanical Room, Garden Storage
(ground level access)

UTILITIES :
Water (note additional sink in multipurpose room), gas, sewer, electrical, grease trap

- NOTABLE FEATURES/MATERIALITY :**
- Retractable partition wall separating the Multipurpose Room from the Cafe.
 - Perforated roof overhang with roof rainwater catchment
 - Art infused architectural surfaces
 - Change in floor treatment from the Cafe to the Multipurpose
 - Partial glazing on the North and East walls
 - Mobile kitchen cart that is housed in the Garden Storage



COMMUNITY HUB BUILDING LAYOUT



NOTE: The provided building layout is a programmatic spatial layout concept. Future design development and construction document drawings will be determine the exact layout.

IN THE COMMUNITY HUB THERE IS A...

CAFE

“Cafe could host pop-up events and vendors, incubate small businesses”

Functional Necessities:
3-compartment sink, hand wash sink, mop sink, and dump sink. Non-shelf stable items stored in double door fridge adjacent to coffee bar.

IMPORTANT SPATIAL FEATURES

- Views out toward park for community connection in addition to connection to land and nature
- Rotating art display
- Lending library
- Modularity from intimate gatherings to larger events
- Outside walk-up counter to order from coffeeshop

VISUALIZING THE CAFE

IMAGINE... A welcoming café rooted in Black culture—serving soulful food, great coffee, and music—this space nourishes community, supports Black entrepreneurship, and flows seamlessly into the park as a hub for connection and care.

SQUARE FOOTAGE: ~ 825 sf



INSPIRATION

“...something that can be rotated out and updated to honor and celebrate black community members of today, not just the past.”
“Have some rotating art pieces.”



“A little lending library would be awesome in the space”

IN THE COMMUNITY HUB THERE IS A...

MULTIPURPOSE ROOM

“Imagine a Cultural Center that is both indoor and outdoor... A community space for gathering, programming, and education.”

IMPORTANT SPATIAL FEATURES

- Views out toward park for community connection in addition to connection to land and nature
- Kitchenette
- Story Sharing*

VISUALIZING THE MULTIPURPOSE RM

IMAGINE... *A flexible classroom and gathering space for creative programs, cross-cultural learning, storytelling, and youth-led education—this welcoming indoor hub fosters community connection and centers Black history.*

SQUARE FOOTAGE: ~ 500 sf



*If there is a community partner interested in facilitating, this space may also serve as a site to continue to gather current day stories and imagined futures, through events or asynchronous contributions.

Imagine a story collecting bulletin board or app, oral storytelling interviews, or the screen programmed as story booth when not being used for events. Black histories are past, present and future.

INSPIRATION

Buildings offer a canvas for immersive representation



IN THE PARK THERE IS A...

PORCH + STAGE

“[...] sitting out on the stoop people watching/
listening to music vibes”

“[...] shelter on [...] hot sunny days”

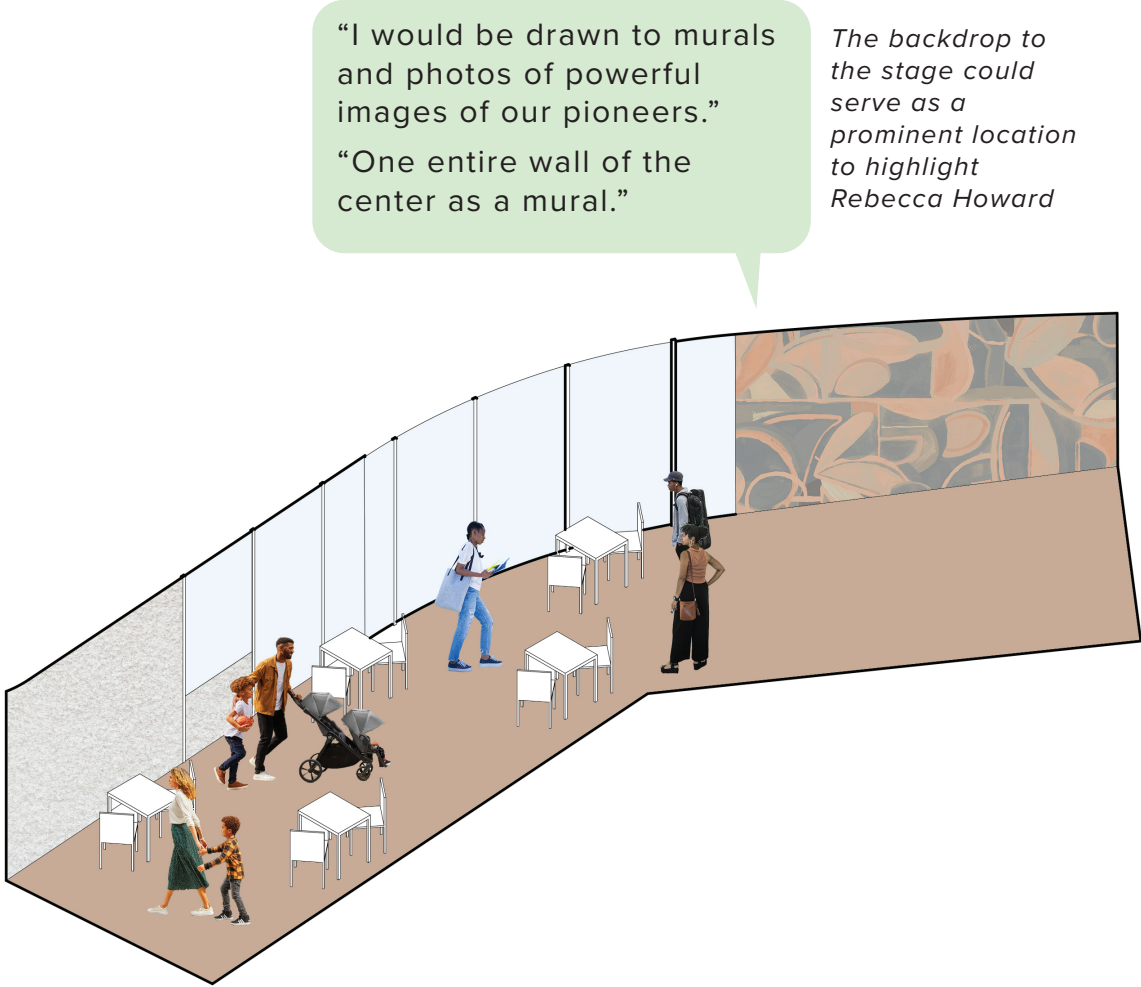
IMPORTANT SPATIAL FEATURES

- Outdoor coffeeshop seating
- Perforated roof with varied cover for sun protection
- Gathering space during park events

VISUALIZING THE PORCH

IMAGINE... A covered porch on the lawn invites gathering, moments of rest, and performance—doubling as a stage for music, storytelling, and celebration; and as a quiet spot for reading, rest, and reflection.

SQUARE FOOTAGE: ~ 685 sf min



“I would be drawn to murals and photos of powerful images of our pioneers.”
“One entire wall of the center as a mural.”

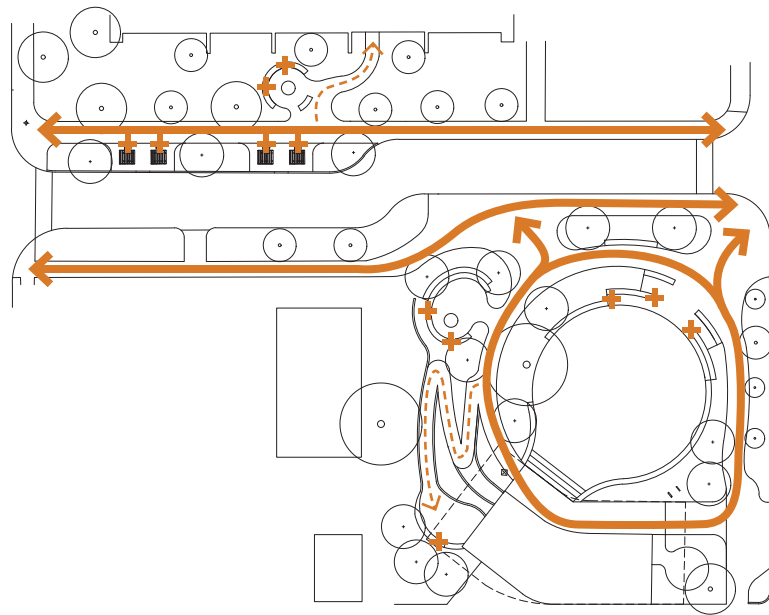
The backdrop to the stage could serve as a prominent location to highlight Rebecca Howard

INSPIRATION





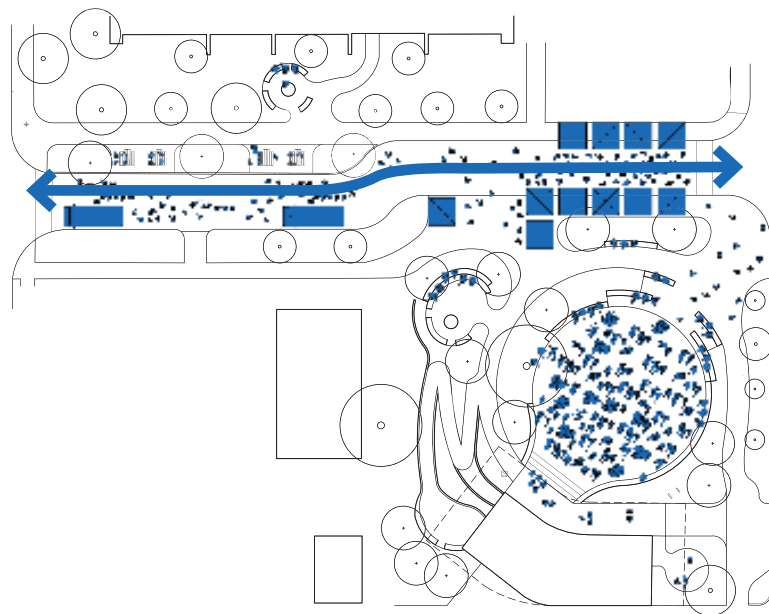
PROGRAMMING & OPERATIONS



CIRCULATION / ACCESSIBILITY

- ↔ Primary accessible route (7-8')
- ↔ Secondary accessible route (5')
- + Companion seating

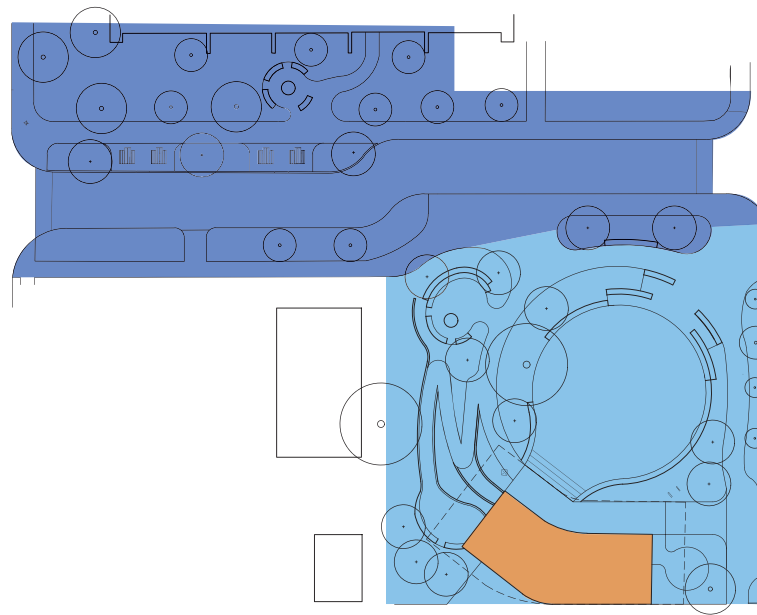
All routes through the park are accessible for visitors with mobility devices; primary pathways are wide enough for a wheelchair user and companion to travel side-by-side. All seating areas include companion seating for people using wheelchairs.



FESTIVAL USE

- Vendor tents (10')
- Food trucks
- ↔ Emergency access route (14')

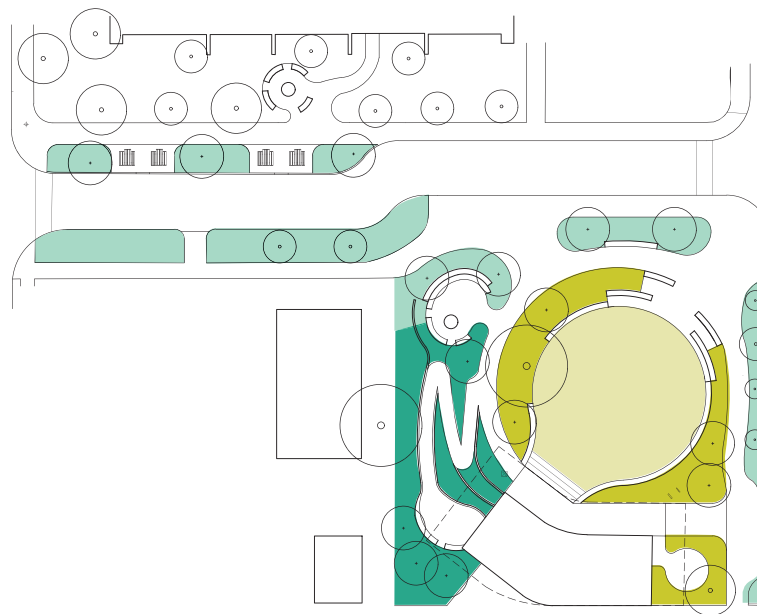
The park is designed to host community events of around 300 people, with the festival street accommodating vendor tents and food trucks while keeping a clear route for emergency access.



POSSIBLE PHASING

- Festival Street Phase
- Park Phase
- Building Phase

Depending on funding, this project may be developed in phases. The park is designed to work in phases to allow tangible change to happen on site as funding becomes available.



PLANTING AREAS

- **Interior Planting**
Low planting to preserve sightlines; soft textures to frame gathering areas
- **Edge Planting**
Taller + hardier planting to protect from street; could include stormwater planters
- **Terrace Garden**
Colorful, fragrant, textural planting that highlights Black cultural plants

SUSTAINABILITY + CLIMATE RESILIENCE

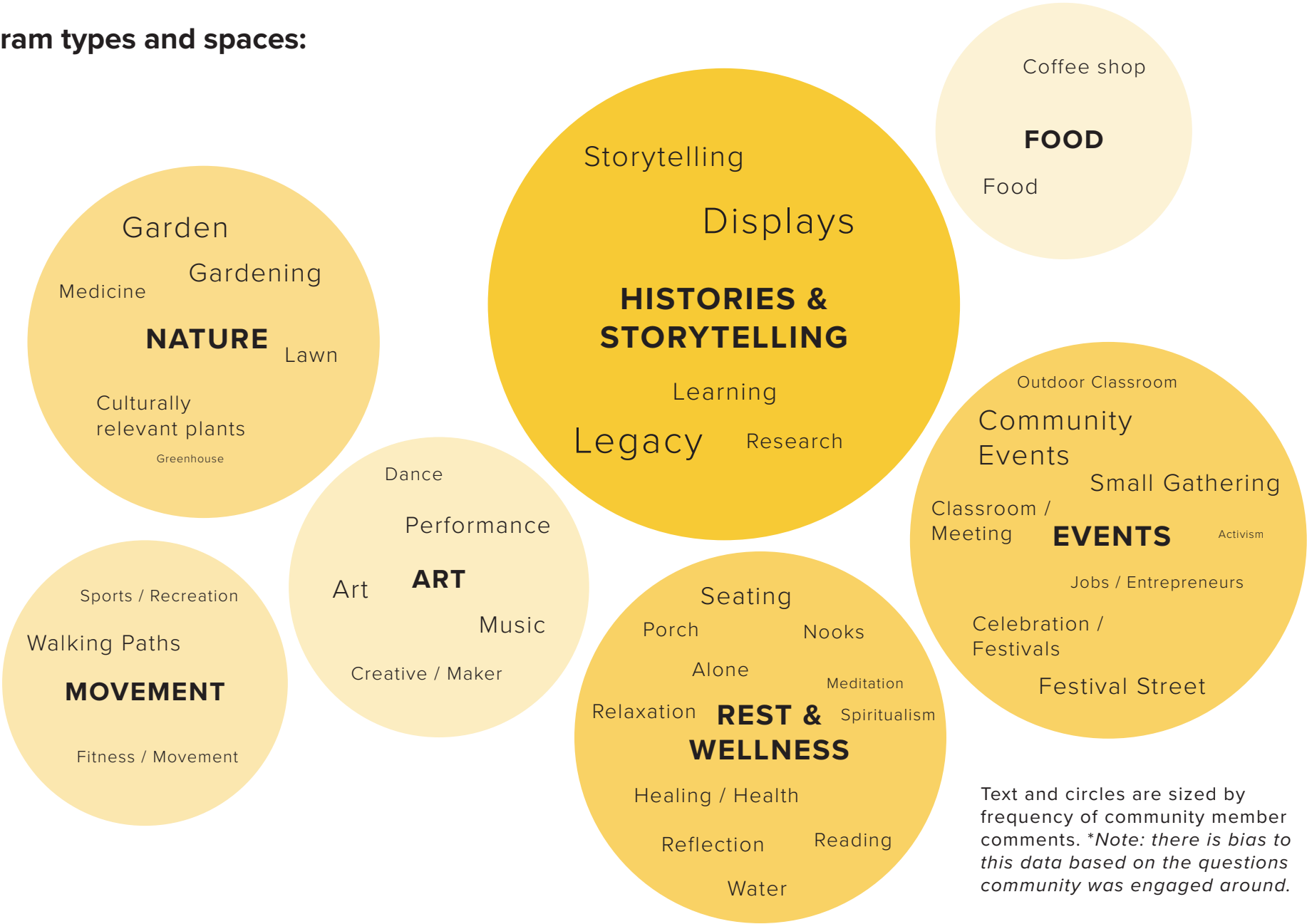
We heard from many community members that climate impact, sustainability, and care for local ecologies are important to this project. To support that vision, these strategies should be implemented where possible:

- Incorporate Olympia 2045 Climate Action & Resilience Goals where possible. Explore strategies for solar power and rainwater reuse.
- Limit light pollution impacts by following DarkSky lighting recommendations and keeping lighting pedestrian scale.
- For all planting and lawn areas, select plants that are drought-tolerant and create habitat for pollinators and other local species. Include stormwater planting strategies. Wherever possible, planting areas should feature Black cultural plants identified by community partners.
- Preserve existing trees wherever possible. Plant drought-tolerant shade trees that will increase canopy coverage on the site.
- Prioritize natural materials, permeable paving strategies, and material reuse.
- Support pedestrians and cyclists through bike racks, traffic calming, and the festival street.

PROGRAMMING AND STEWARDSHIP

The park is designed for programming that builds community and celebrates Black culture.

Program types and spaces:



Operations & Stewardship: For the park to remain culturally alive, historically accurate, and continuously activated through community-led programming, intentional investment is needed in leadership and community partnerships.

1. Programming & Activation: Regular events and activities keep the park welcoming and vibrant. By lowering barriers and making visible investments in community activation, the park can remain an active gathering place for celebrations, education, and cultural expression.

This could look like subsidizing fees or offering logistical support for Black-led and culturally relevant programming. A community partner organization could manage scheduling and partnerships.

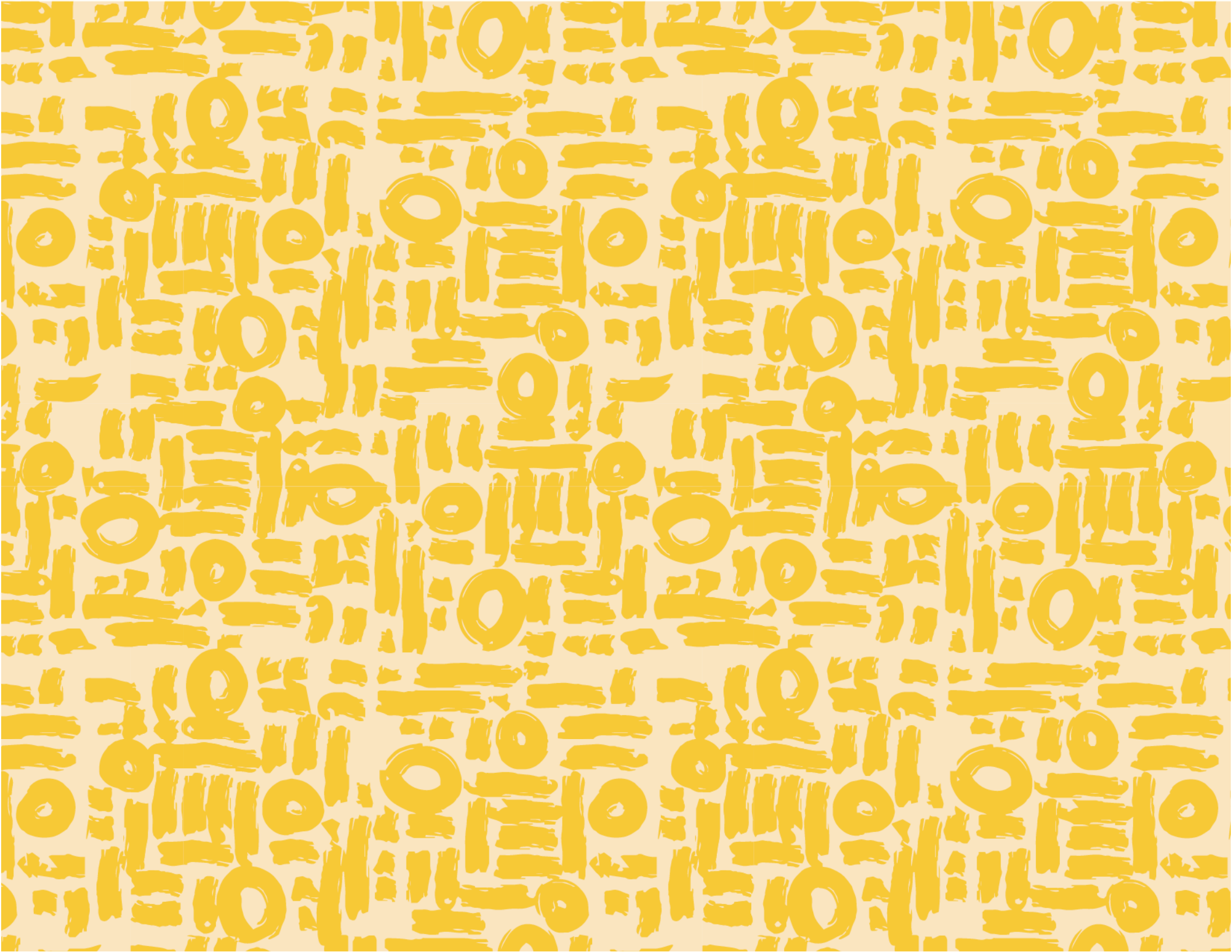
2. Cultural Stewardship: Long-term vitality depends on Black leadership guiding cultural direction and decision-making. The City should explore shared stewardship models that ensure Black community leadership has a defined role in guiding programming and interpretation.

Examples that could be explored for feasibility:

- *Formal agreements* (e.g., MOUs with Black-led organizations)
- *Advisory or oversight board* led by Black community members
- *Community-managed spaces or Planting* within the park reserved for cultural use
- *Roles* such as a Black Cultural Advocate or Community Historian

EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMMING

1. **Youth tours** on Rebecca Howard’s legacy, Black history, and ecology
2. **Intergenerational storytelling and oral history circles**
3. **Community-led art** (murals, sculpture, performance)
4. **Cultural festivals**
5. **Foodways and culinary workshops**
6. **Environmental stewardship** (planting, gardens, habitat care)
7. **Youth leadership and mentorship programs**
8. **Volunteer clean-ups and habitat care**
9. **Community forums on equity, history, and healing**
10. **Screenings, media events, and performances** showcasing local artists



COST, ENGINEERING & REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

LANDSCAPE SITE PLAN

The following diagrams illustrate the proposed design for Rebecca Howard Park: Landscape Site Plan shows site layout, topography, and materials; Site Survey shows existing utilities and stormwater drainage; Civil Utility Plan shows proposed utilities & stormwater drainage; Site Sections show a vertical cut through the site.

ANTICIPATED PERMITS

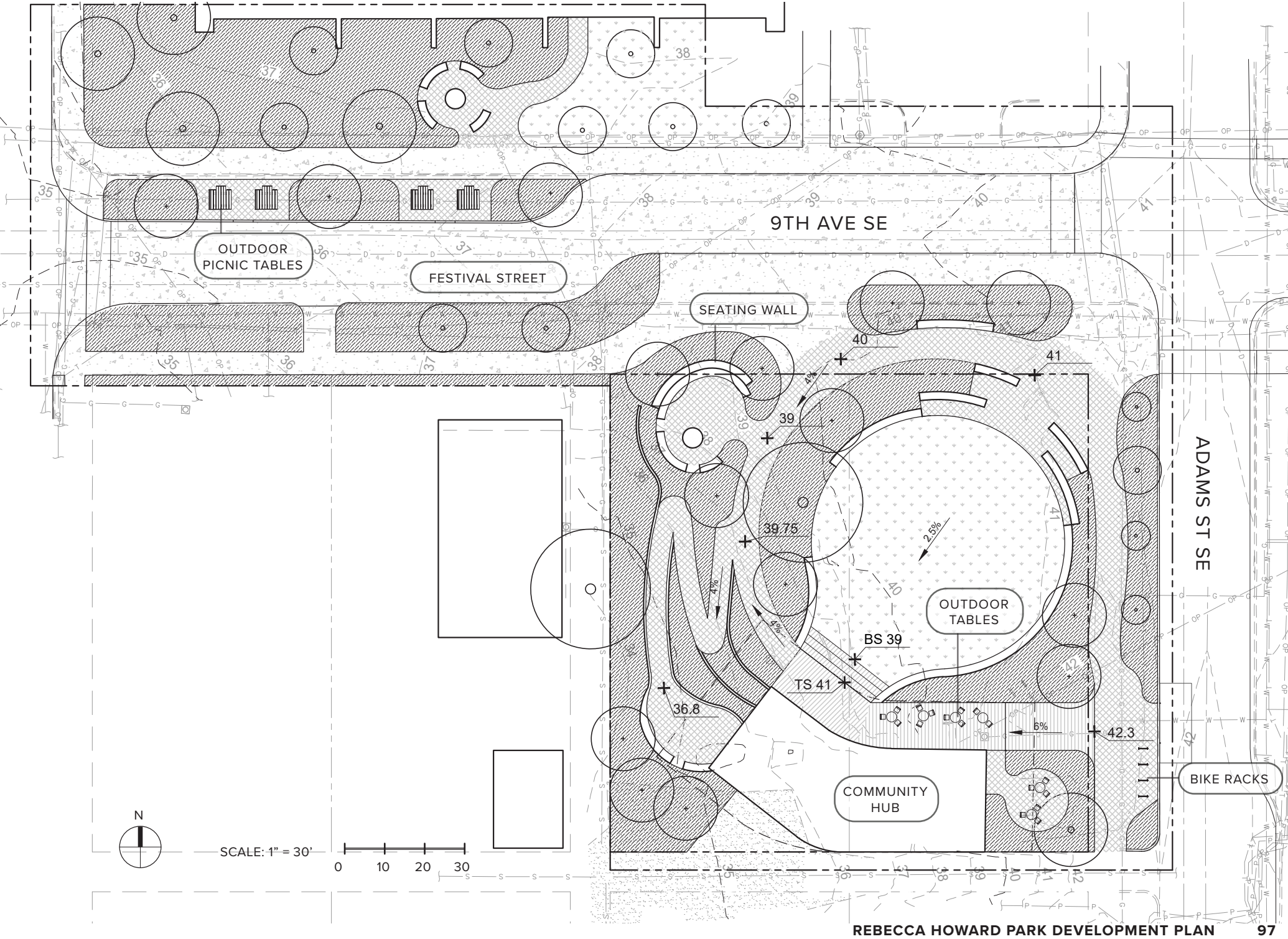
The following permits are anticipated to be required prior to construction for the project:

- 1. Civil Engineering Permit
- 2. Right of Way Permit
- 3. Sewer Lateral Permit
- 4. Tree Permit
- 5. Building Permits (Building, Electrical, Fire System, Mechanical, Plumbing)

**Note: The civil permits are anticipated assuming that the entire site will be contained under one permit. If park improvements and library frontage improvements are permitted separately, 2 separate Civil Engineering permits may be required.*

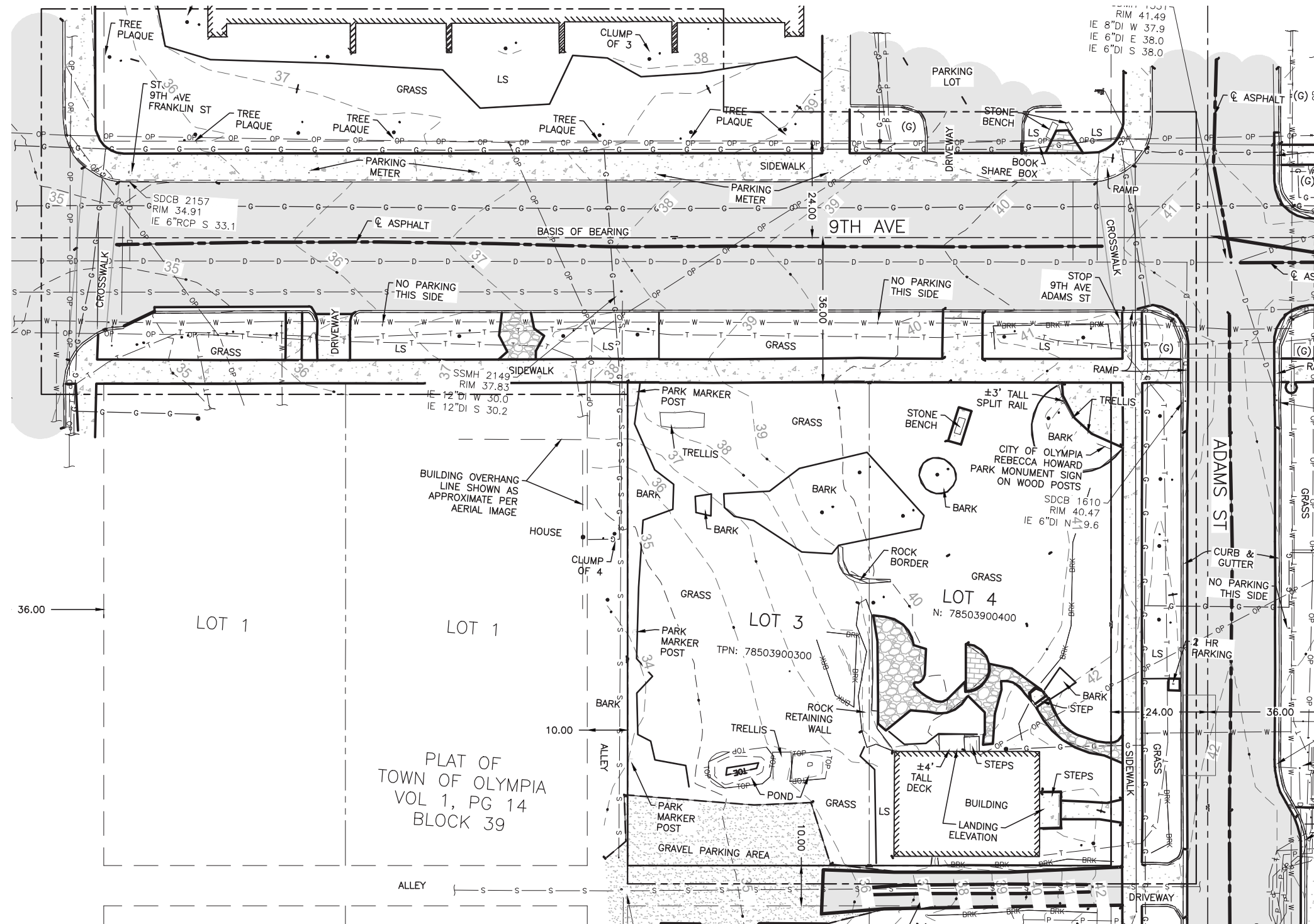
LEGEND

- LIMIT OF WORK
- PROPERTY LINE
- - - - - EXISTING GRADE
- PLANTING AREA
- CONCRETE PAVING
- PAVERS
- LAWN
- WOOD DECKING
- EXISTING TREE
- PROPOSED TREE



completed by Mtn2Coast LLC,
04/30/2025

Under existing conditions, stormwater that falls onto Rebecca Howard Park flows southwest from the northeast corner. Water into the alley at the south of the site, where it flows west and collects in a catch basin adjacent to Franklin St that conveys to the nearby gravity main. Stormwater that falls onto the Timberland Library frontage currently flows into the street and collects in a catch basin at the corner of 9th Ave SE and Franklin St SE. This conveyed to the same gravity main as existing park flows. Water in the gravity main flows and eventually outfalls from a 36 inch main into Capitol Lake.



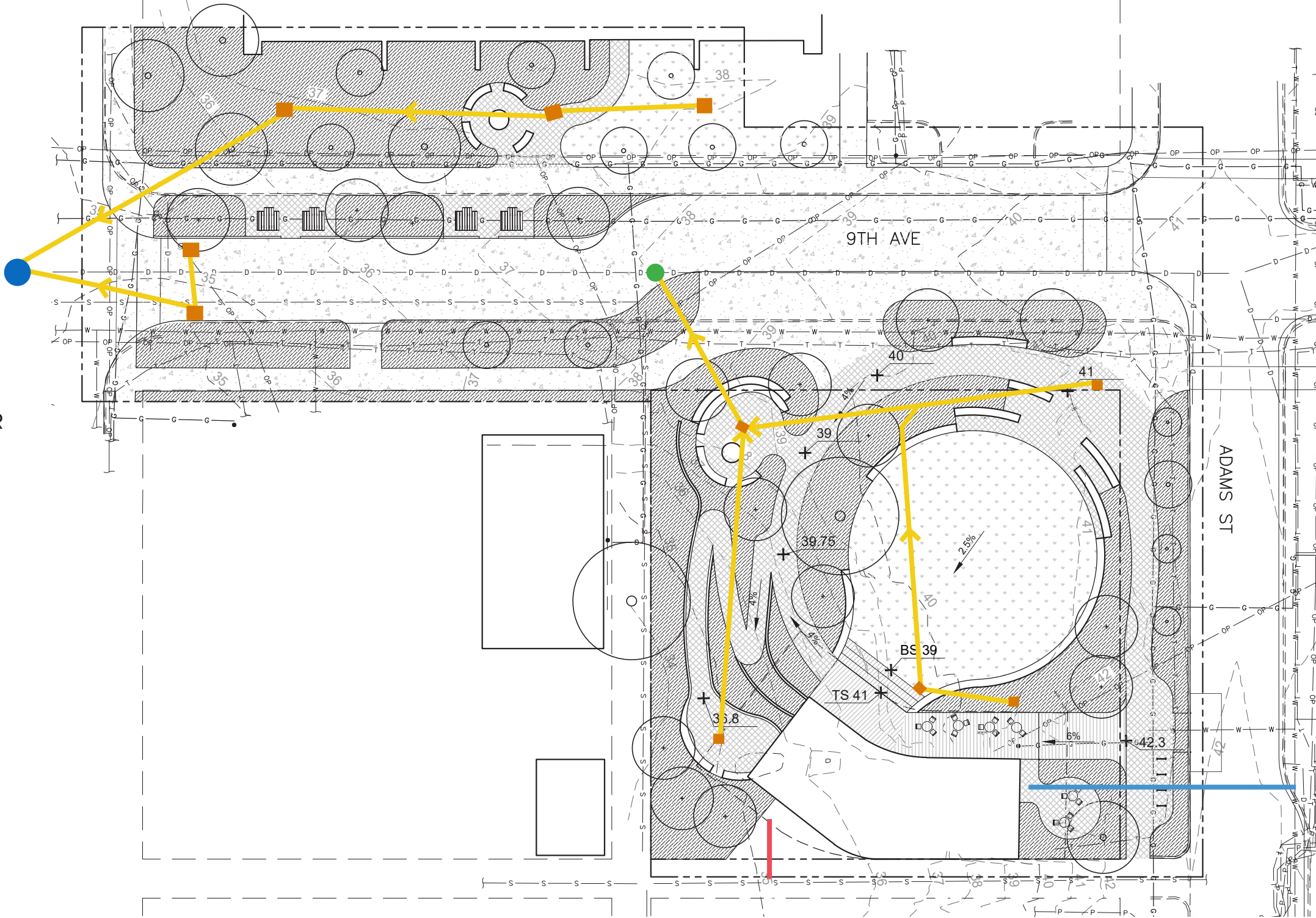
CIVIL UTILITY PLAN

PROPOSED STORM DRAINAGE

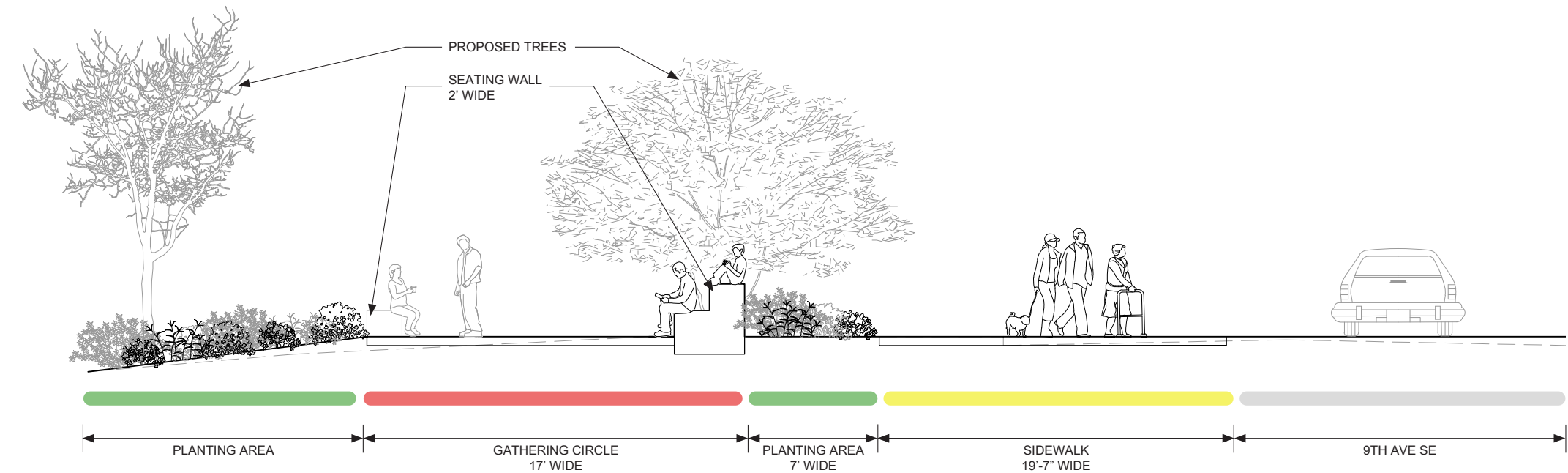
Under proposed conditions, site drainage patterns will remain the same. Five catch basins will be installed around the park, which convey stormwater to a proposed manhole at the northwest corner of the park connecting to the existing manhole on the 9th Ave gravity storm main. Along the south end of the Timberland Library a series of two catch basins and an area drain will convey storm flows into an existing catch basin at the corner of 9th Ave SE and Franklin St SE which connects to the same existing structure. All water will still flow through the existing gravity mains where it will eventually outfall into Capitol Lake.

LEGEND

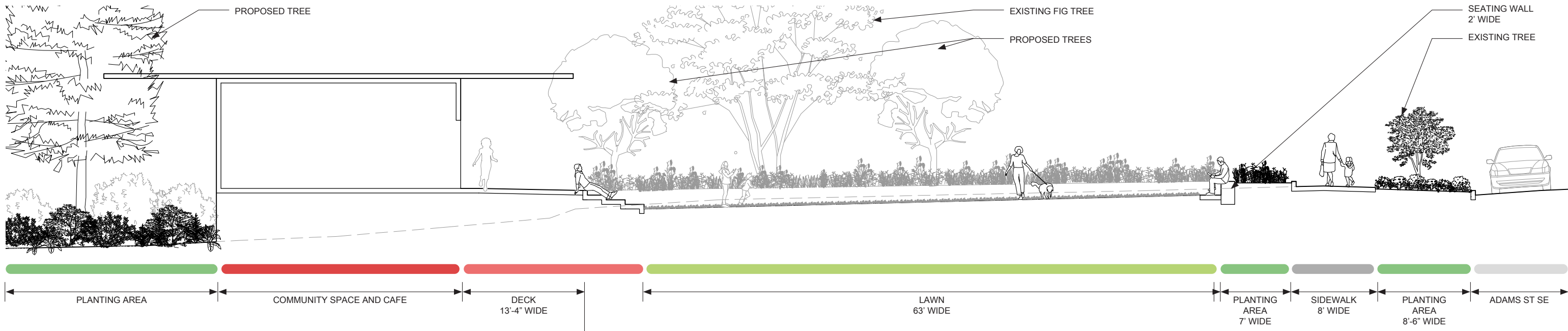
- STORM DRAIN LINE
- SEWER LINE
- WATER LINE
- CATCH BASIN / AREA DRAIN / STORMFILTER
- MANHOLE
- EXISTING CATCH BASIN



SITE SECTIONS



1 GATHERING CIRCLE SECTION

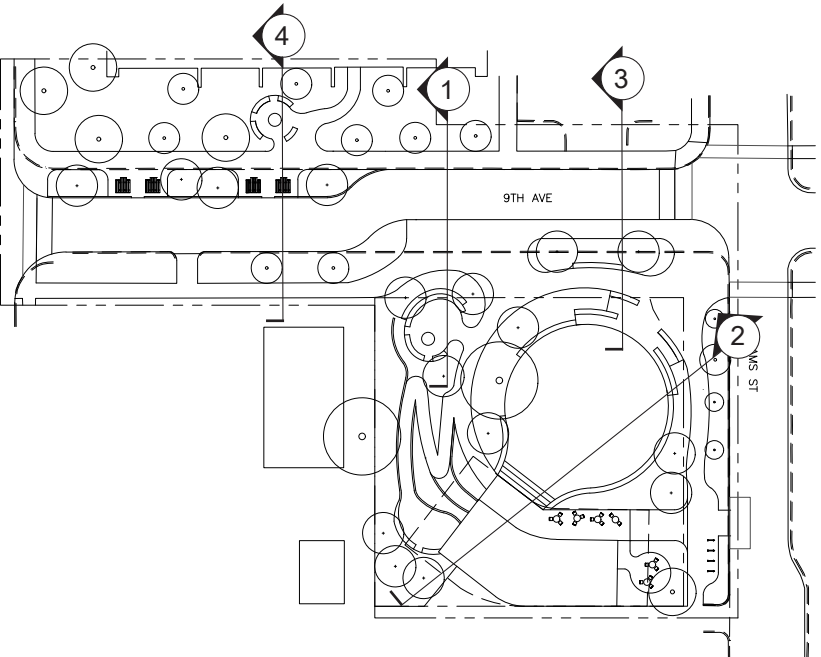


2 COMMUNITY HUB SECTION

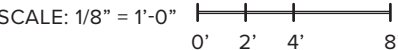
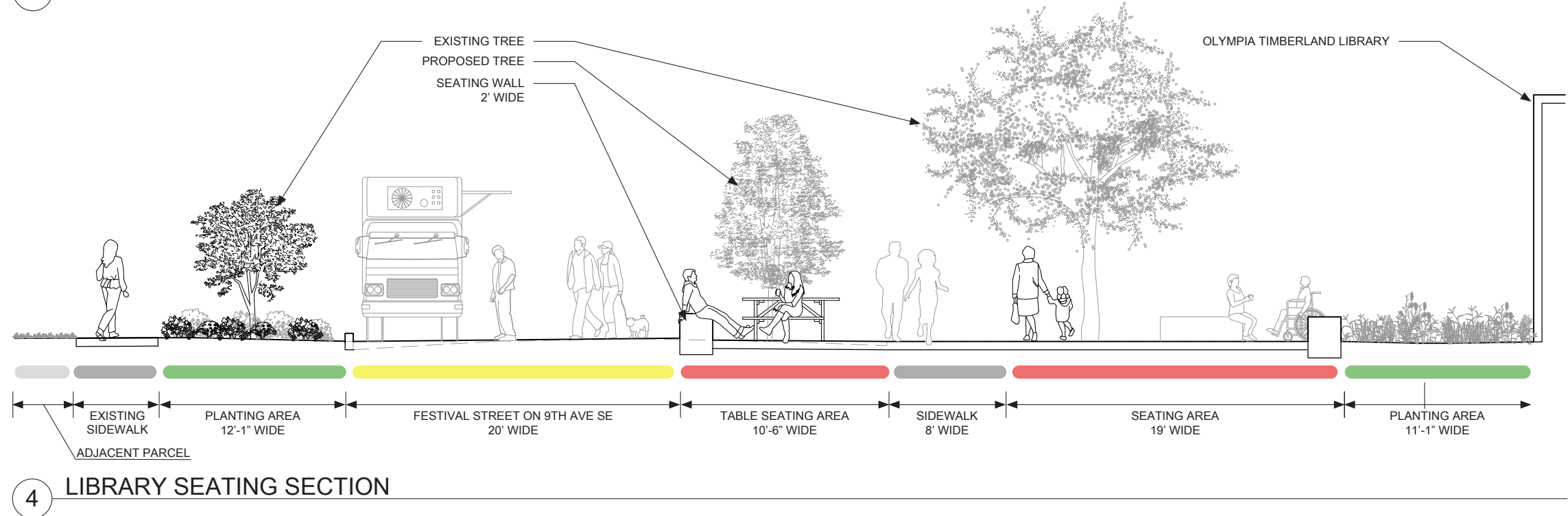
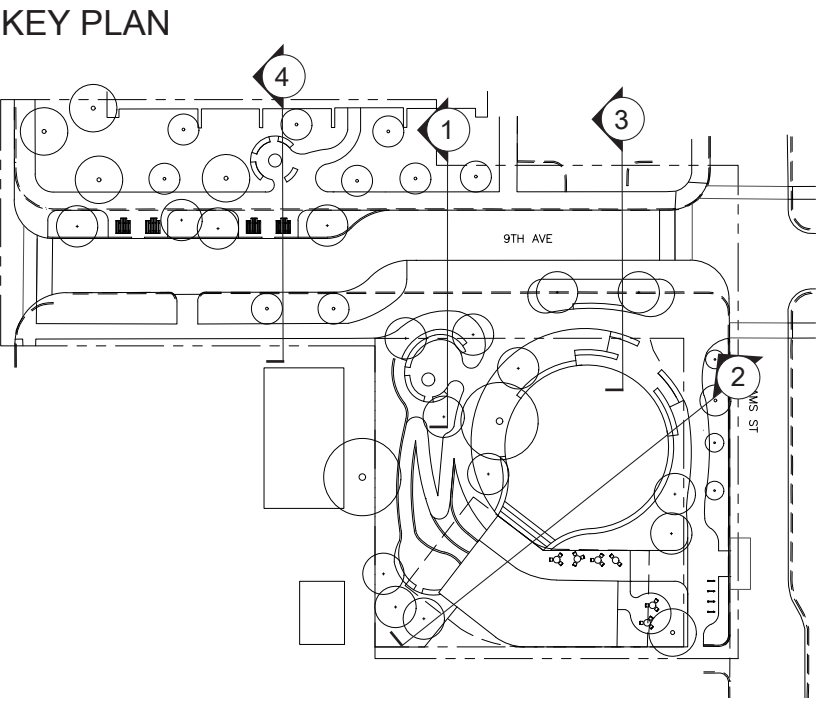
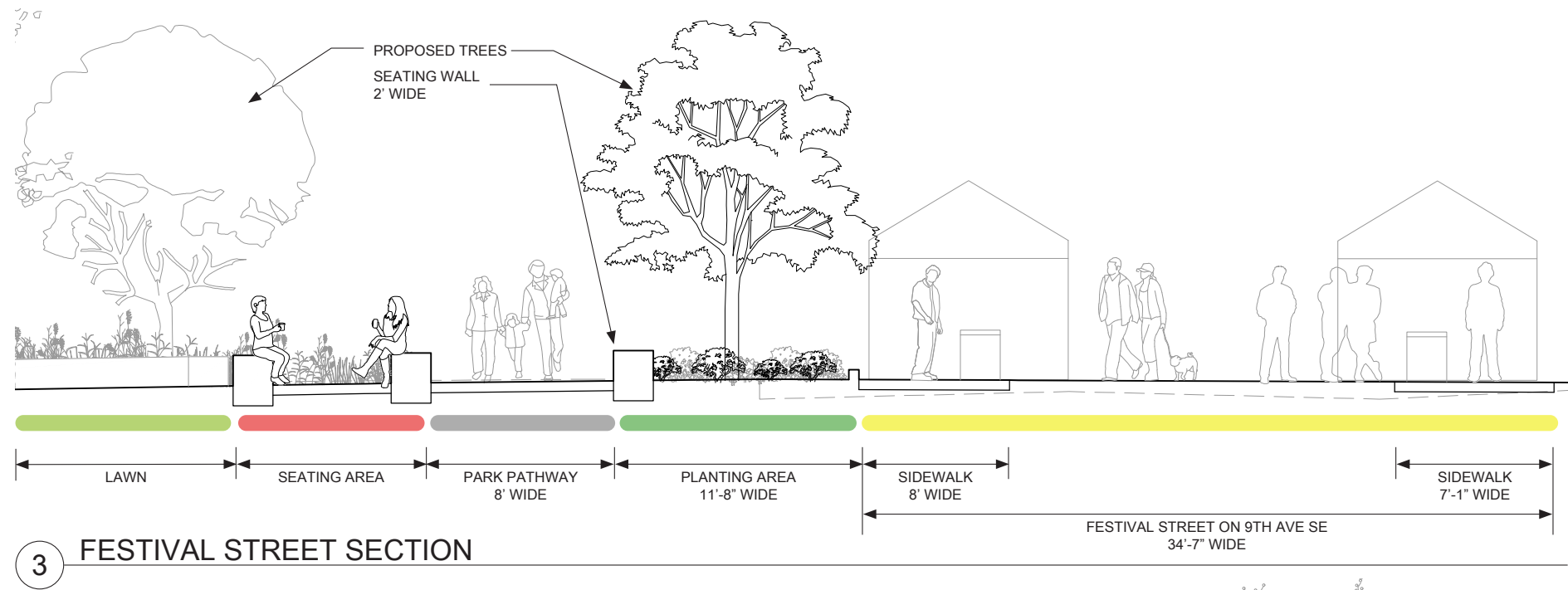
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

0' 2' 4' 8'

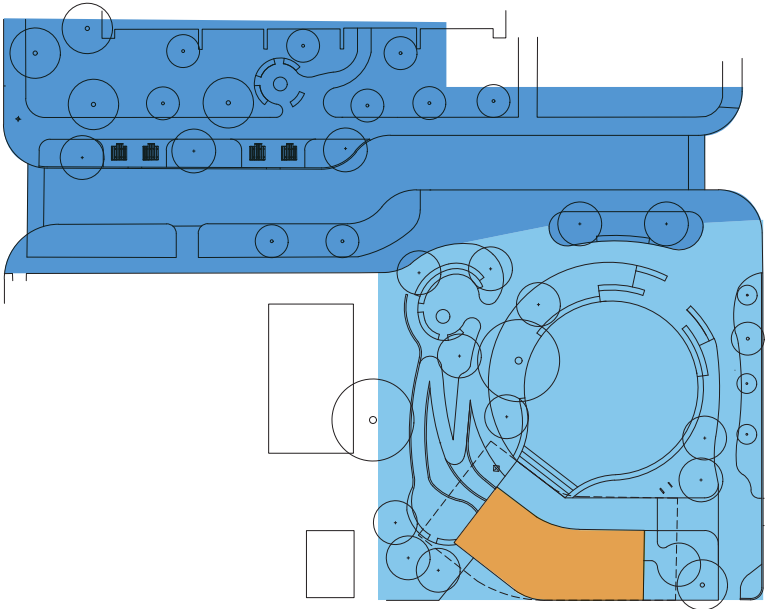
KEY PLAN



SITE SECTIONS



COST ESTIMATION BY PHASE			
PHASE	DESCRIPTION	COST (LOW)	COST (HIGH)
BUILDING	Substructure, Exteriors, Roofing,	\$	\$
	Interiors, HVAC, Plumbing, Fire Protection, Electrical	\$	\$
	Equipment & Furnishings	\$	\$
	General Conditions, Contingencies, Overhead, etc.	\$	\$
	Building Total	\$	\$
PARK	Site Prep	\$	\$
	Hardscape, Fixtures + Furnishing	\$	\$
	Planting, Irrigation, Soils, etc.	\$	\$
	Civil + Electrical Utilities	\$	\$
	General Conditions, Contingencies, Overhead, etc.	\$	\$
	Park Total	\$	\$
FESTIVAL STREET	Site Prep	\$	\$
	Roadway Improvements	\$	\$
	Planting, Irrigation, Soils, etc.	\$	\$
	Civil + Electrical Utilities	\$	\$
	General Conditions, Contingencies, Overhead, etc.	\$	\$
	Festival Street Total	\$	\$
ART BUDGET	Artwork to possibly include mural, sculpture, signage, plant signage, mosaic, paving, map, kiosk	\$	\$
ANNUAL BUILDING O&M	Janitorial staffing, Utilities, Waste & Recycling, Fire Alarm Service, Fire Inspection	\$	\$
ANNUAL PARK O&M	Groundskeeping, Irrigation Maintenance, Hardscape Upkeep, Waste & Recycling, Seasonal Plant Care	\$	\$



COST PHASES

- Festival Street Phase
- Park Phase
- Building Phase

Depending on funding, this project may be developed in phases. The park is designed to work in phases to allow tangible change to happen on site as funding becomes available.

COST ESTIMATES

The construction for Rebecca Howard Park will likely be completed in phases and funding becomes available for each phase. The cost estimates **include** the following:

- ☐ General Requirements
- ☐ Design and Construction Contingencies
- ☐ Contractor’s General Conditions, Insurance, Payment & Bond, Overhead, and Profit Fees
- ☐ Escalation to January 2027

The cost estimates **exclude** the following:

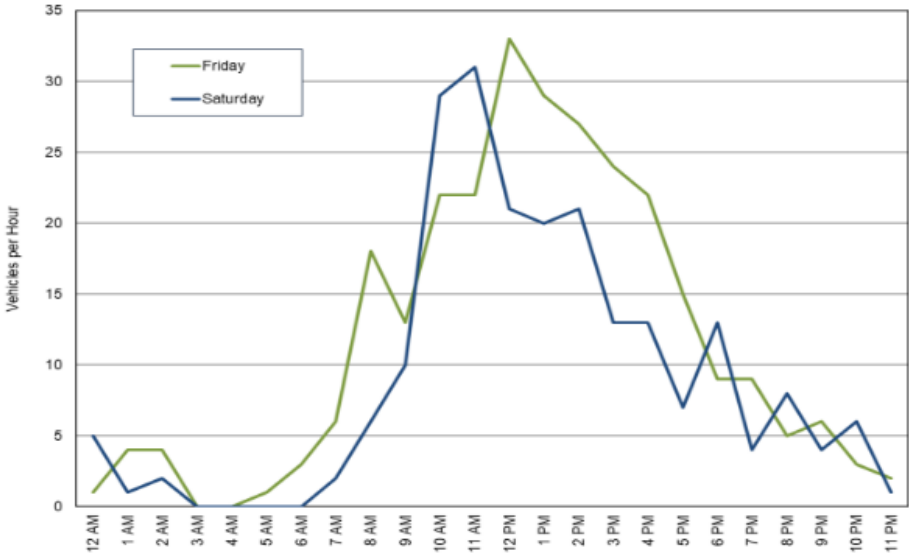
- ☐ Permitting and Jurisdictional Fees
- ☐ Sales Tax
- ☐ Owner’s Contingencies
- ☐ Design Fees
- ☐ Hazardous Waste Abatement

TRAFFIC VOLUME ANALYSIS & STREET USE

EXISTING TRAFFIC VOLUMES

New traffic counts were performed by a two-day machine count on 9th Avenue SE that captured vehicle volumes and travel speeds. These counts were performed on Friday from 4:00 to 6:00 P.M. to capture the weekday evening commute, and on Saturday from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. to capture a story-time event at the library. The following highlight findings from these data:

- Hourly traffic volumes on 9th Avenue SE are very low, peaking at about 33 vehicles per hour (in both directions).
- Over the course of full count, just over half of the traffic travelled eastbound on the street. A similar pattern was observed during the peak hours.
- The peak traffic on both a Friday and Saturday occurred during the middle of the day rather than during the traditional commuter peak hours.
- The driveway traffic counts determined that nearly 40% of the traffic volumes during the peak hour on Saturday entered or exited the library.



Source: Traffic volume data collected by IDAX Data Solutions and compiled by Heffron Transportation, Inc. Data for Friday, November 15, 2024 and Saturday, November 2, 2024.

- During all turning movement count hours, no trucks or delivery vans entered or exited the library. (It is acknowledged that some delivery vehicles could use this driveway during non-peak times, but were not captured by the count).
- During the four hours when turning movement counts were performed, a total of 27 pedestrians crossed 9th Avenue SE at the Adams Street intersection (east of the library driveway).
- About 2% of vehicles travelled faster than the speed limit of 25 mph (assuming the city-wide speed limit applies here).

STREET USE OBERVATIONS

IDAX provided video of 9th Avenue SE from midnight Friday to midnight Sunday. Heffron reviewed portions of the video to gain a better understanding of how the street is utilized by the community, including residents on 9th Avenue SE who could be impacted by a redesign. The following were observed:

- General curbside use: Intermittent delivery trucks, almost no parking besides a handful of nearby residents.
- There were 4 vehicles parked overnight on Thursday night and 3 vehicles on Friday night, likely reflective of street parking for residents on 9th Avenue SE.
- The majority of the vehicles using the library driveway appeared to be accessing from and egressing to the east.
- Many pedestrians were observed crossing 9th Avenue SE at random mid-block locations, which is indicative of the low traffic volumes on this street.

DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings of very low traffic volumes and almost no street parking, the proposed festival street on 9th Avenue narrows the roadway and removes street parking. The narrowed street retains a 20' wide clear aisle for fire access.

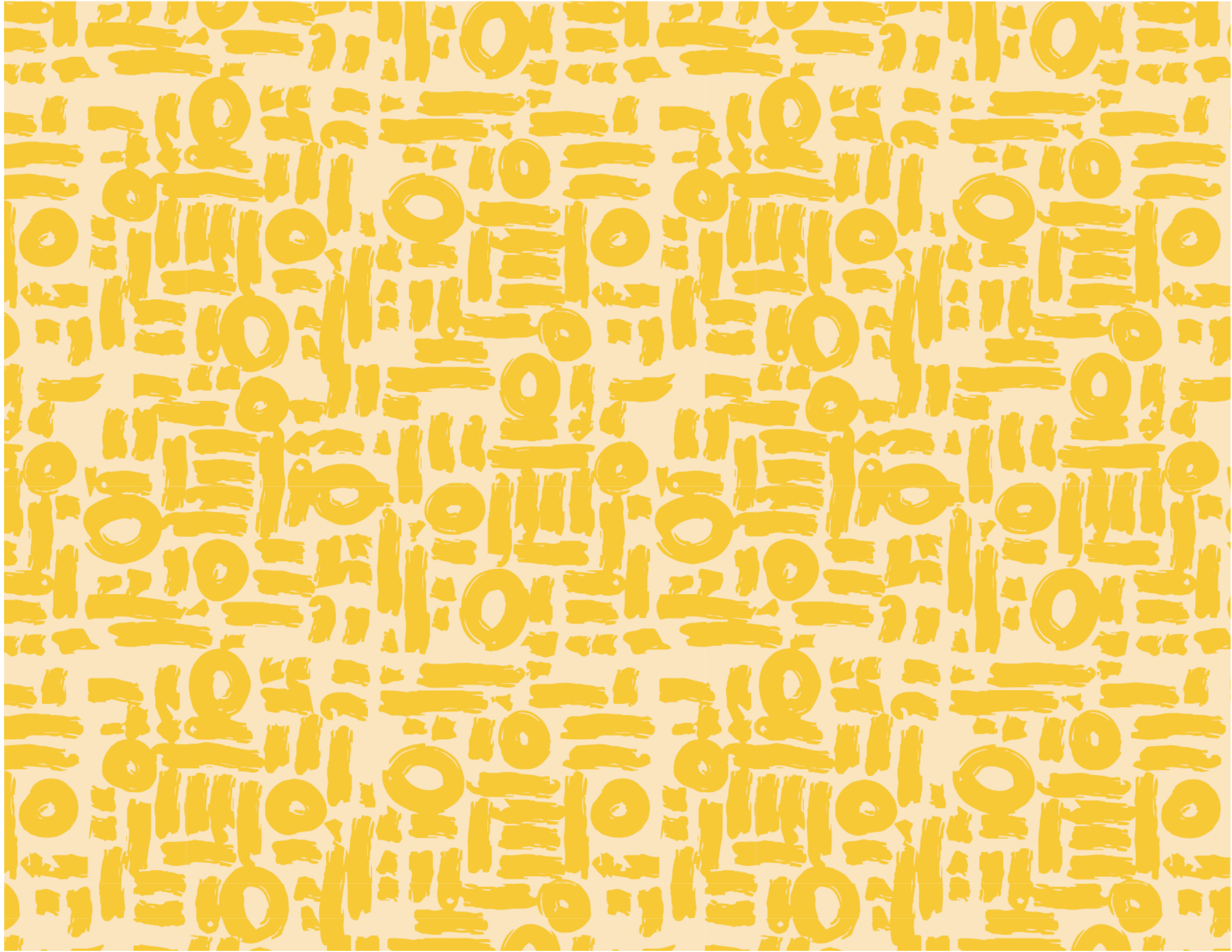


IMAGE SOURCES

Image Sources: Visioning Process

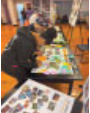
	Olympia Juneteenth 2024. <i>Photo by Sophia Austrins</i>		Read the Park, July 2025. <i>Photo by Ari Vamos</i>
	Community Visioning Workshop, April 2025. <i>Photo by Ashley Ludwig</i>		Project Kickoff, October 2024. <i>Photo by Photo by Ashley Ludwig</i>

Image Sources: What Stakeholder Communities Say

	Wind sculpture by Yinka Shonibare CBE RA https://artoutdoorsdl.com/2022/05/03/harvard-business-school-features-sculptures-by-three-black-artists-yinka-shonibare-melvin-edwards-and-thaddeus-mosley/		Olympia Juneteenth 2024 https://www.facebook.com/cityofolympia/posts/here-are-a-few-highlights-of-the-2024-olympia-juneteenth-festivalcelebration-tha/886047100223304/
	Attitude of Gratitude by Fin DAC https://oregonessential.com/best-murals-portland/		The Black Gallery. Art by Eric Orr and Keith Haring. <i>Photo by Mika Martinez</i>
	All Power to All People by Hank Willis Thomas https://www.phila.gov/2021-09-24-a-monumental-tour-explores-the-african-american-experience/		Vanport Jazz Festival https://www.oregonlive.com/living/2024/08/vanport-jazz-festival-returns-to-north-portland-this-weekend.html
	Grandma's Garden by Mystic Mountain Arts http://www.mysticmountainarts.com/GrandmasGarden.html		Dances for a Variable Population https://www.ourtownny.com/news/fun-at-dances-for-a-variable-population-outdoor-performance-BA2211452

	Born to Be Wild by Neon https://www.neon.uk/born-to-be-wild <i>Photo by Simon Anning</i>
	Natuurdisplay Pic Bois by Faberrek lame
	Weeksville Heritage Center by Caples Jefferson Architects https://www.capjeff.com/weeksville-heritage-center
	Early Childhood Education at the National Museum of African American History and Culture https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/early-childhood-education
	Black Futures Farm. https://edibleportland.com/fall-2024/rooted-in-purpose-black-futures-farm-cultivates-community-and-healing/
	Peninsula Park Pollinator Garden https://www.penrosefriends.org/pollinator-garden
	Peninsula Park Pollinator Garden <i>Photo by Sophia Austrins</i>
	Media Island International Greenhouse <i>Photo by Sophia Austrins</i>

	Play Africa - The World of Dreams with storyteller Tsholo Shounyane https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sgIJF556MHA
	Sct. Olai Square by MASU Planning. <i>Image source:</i> https://landezine.com/sct-olai-square-by-masu-planning/
	International African American Museum by Hood Design Studio. <i>Image source:</i> https://www.hooddesignstudio.com/iaam
	New York Botanical Garden <i>Photo by Ben Hider</i>
	Dancer's Series: Steps by Jack Mackie. https://seattlearts.emuseum.com/objects/2635/dancers-series-step-s?ctx=9cd8f96d-a64a-4849-b1d5-6f764cf15ca2&idx=0
	Storia Djembe by Colloqate Design <i>Images by Colloqate Design</i>
	Midland Library by Colloqate Design. Bora Architecture & Interiors, Architect of Record. <i>Photo by Josh Partee</i>
	Midland Library Pattern Workshop <i>Photos by Naim Hasan</i>

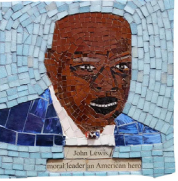
	Storia Defrag by Colloqate Design <i>Image by Colloqate Design</i>
	Black Heritage Markers by Soapbox Theory <i>Photo by Diversa Edu</i>
	Olympia Juneteenth 2024. <i>Photo by Sophia Austrins</i>
	North Portland Library, Black Cultural Center. Art by Sadie DuBoise. https://www.oregonlive.com/books/2025/02/historic-north-p-ortland-library-will-reopen-after-2-years-of-renovations-get-a-glimpse-at-its-new-look.html
	Baldwin Books https://www.baldwinandcobooks.com/3-d

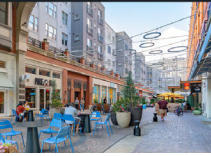
	International African American Museum by Hood Design Studio. <i>Image source:</i> https://www.hooddesignstudio.com/iaam
	International African American Museum by Hood Design Studio. <i>Image source:</i> https://www.hooddesignstudio.com/iaam
	Power of the Written Word at the National Museum of African American History & Culture https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/students
	Young Historians Institute at the National Museum of African American History & Culture https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/students
	Media Island International <i>Photo by Sophia Austrins</i>

Image Sources: Vision

	Community Visioning Workshop, April 2025. <i>Photo by Ashley Ludwig</i>
	Schoolyard in Berchem, Belgium. <i>Image source:</i> https://www.caue75.fr/media/download/10010

	African American Garden: Diaspora I Same Boat Different Stops, at New York Botanical Garden. <i>Image source:</i> https://www.bxtimes.com/new-york-botanical-garden-juneteenth-br-onx-day/
	International African American Museum by Hood Design Studio. <i>Image source:</i> https://www.hooddesignstudio.com/iaam

	78 by Paul Rucker. <i>Image source:</i> https://www.cascadepbs.org/culture/2021/12/year-review-10-seattle-artworks-exemplify-2021/
	Mural by Liz Morrow. <i>Image source:</i> https://www.lizmorrowstudios.com/blog/retaining-wall-mural-process-tacoma-mural-artist
	John Lewis by June C. <i>Image source:</i> https://blog.piecebypiece.org/stories/blogs/news/celebrating-black-history-month-with-mosaics-by-june-c-1
	Sarah Vaughan by June C. <i>Image source:</i> https://blog.piecebypiece.org/stories/blogs/news/celebrating-black-history-month-with-mosaics-by-june-c-1

	Bavaria's Original Inhabitants, Exhibition Design by TULP Design. <i>Image source:</i> https://www.tulp.de/case/ausstellung-bayerns-ureinwohner/
	Roberto Maestas Festival Street, Seattle WA. <i>Image source:</i> https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1180586547433608
	8th Avenue N Festival Street, Seattle WA. <i>Image source:</i> https://www.theurbanist.org/2021/12/28/exploring-seattles-festival-s-trees/
	Bethesda Row, Bethesda MD. <i>Image source:</i> https://www.homes.com/local-guide/bethesda-md/edgemoor-neighborhood/