



HICKORY HILL PARK MASTER PLAN

“A bit of wilderness that inspires adventure,
exploration and contemplation.”

July 2016



SNYDER & ASSOCIATES
Engineers and Planners



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OVERVIEW

The primary plan objective is to create a clear and concise direction for re-development and enhancements to the existing park system. The planning process included analysis of current and forecasted needs for the next 15-years, existing site conditions, potential improvements and implementation strategies.

An Advisory Committee was assembled consisting of City of Iowa City Staff and representatives of Friends of Hickory Hill Park. The Committee helped guide the planning process and develop the project goals and objectives. Two public meetings were held to gather crucial public feedback on proposed improvements and priorities.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

City Staff

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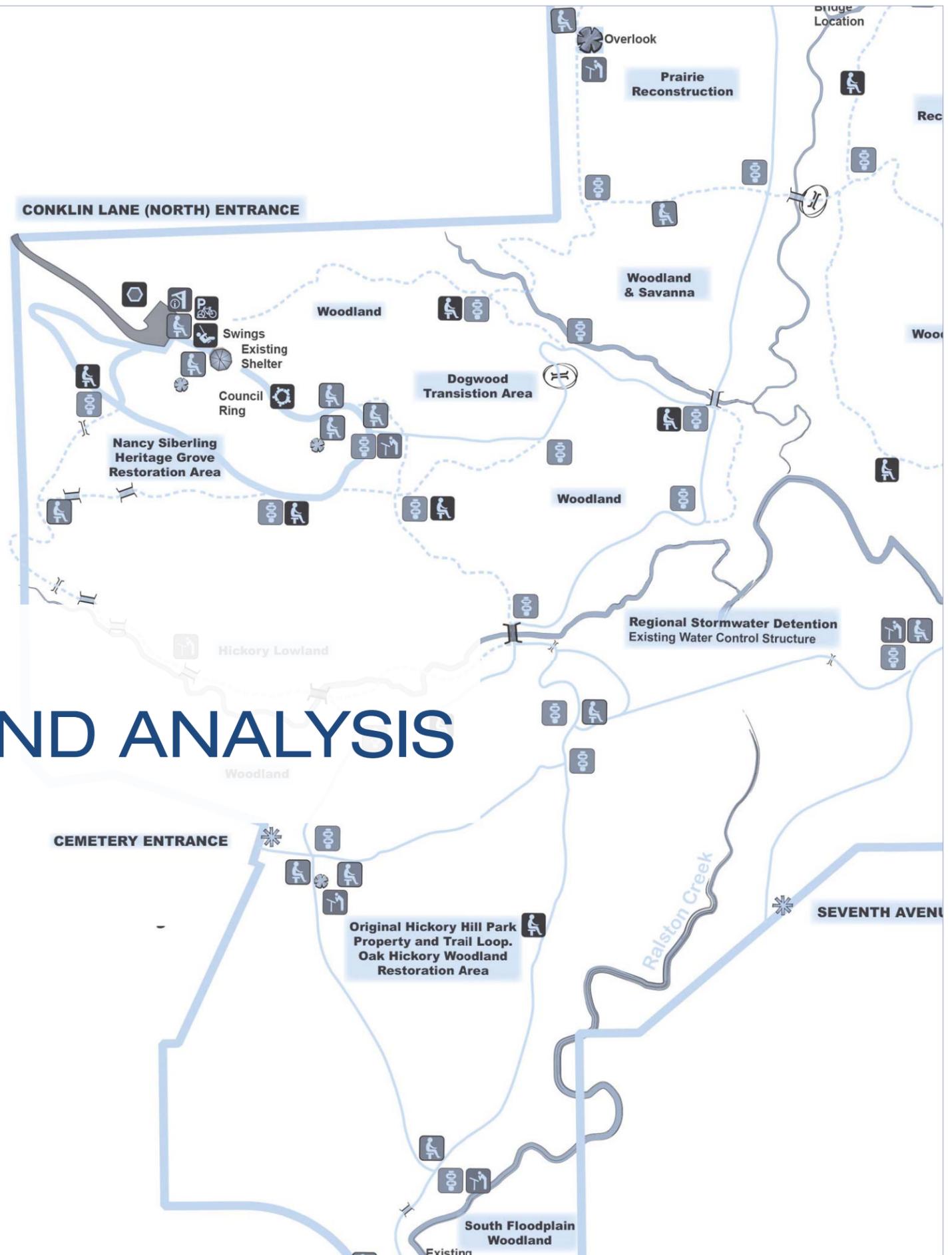
John Thomas
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DESIGN TEAM

Snyder & Associates, Inc.

Don Marner, Project Manager
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 Jeff Walters, Environmental Scientist
 Diane Goering, Landscape Architect
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SECTION 1 INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS



DESIGN PROCESS

In creating a park master plan, the Design Team works through a design process which includes three stages of design. This design process includes meetings, opportunities investigation and discovery, input, and building the design around decisions made through the process. The following is a summary of the stages and items which occur with each stage of design:

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Activities which occur during this stage include identifying park issues, establishing project goals and objectives, reviewing previous parks plans and studies, creating a base map system, conducting site analysis from field reviews, review of existing park programming, and conducting meetings with the Advisory Committee.

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

This stage utilizes the information gathered from the Inventory and Analysis stage to create design ideas which work towards addressing the project goals and objectives. The design accounts for park programming opportunities, vehicle access, pedestrian circulation, trails, bridges, and signage. Multiple meetings with the Advisory Committee are held. A first public meeting is conducted to provide project background and allow for input on potential park improvements and enhancements.

MASTER PLAN

The input received from the public meeting is reviewed with the Advisory Committee and the concept options designed are then finalized for direction into creating the park master plan. Activities during this stage include finalizing the park programming improvements, trail types and routing, bridge improvements, and signage improvements. A budgetary cost for improvements is prepared for the project. Project phasing is also reviewed to identify the priorities of improvements in the park. This allows for a phasing of the improvements as funding becomes available. A public meeting is held during this stage, which provides final input and direction for the master plan.



PARK HISTORY

Protected for over half a century this unique 185-acre park preserves a sense of wilderness in northeastern Iowa City. Over the years there have been several studies concerning the parks cultural and vegetative history. Several proposals for various improvements within Hickory Hill Park have also been developed.

1837 SAC AND FOX TREATY

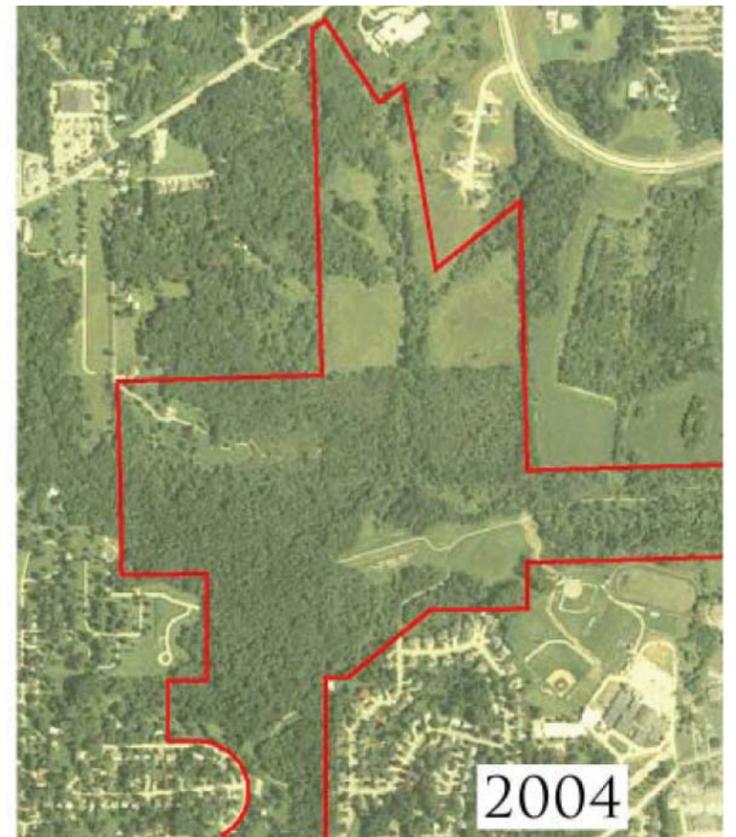
The parks history can be traced back to 1837 as part of a 1.25 million acre U.S. Government land purchase via a treaty with the Sac and Fox.

1839 SURVEY AND LANDSCAPE

The land was first surveyed by John Frierson as part of Township 79 North, Range 6W, 5th principal meridian on July 29th, 1839. The Sections crossing Hickory Hill Park included Section 2, 11 and 12. His survey described the land as first rate, with a mixture of prairie, thick hazel underbrush, scattering oak and

heavy black and white oak timber. After the land survey was complete, the land now titled Hickory Hill Park was purchased as five separate parcels for no more than \$1.25 per acre.

The landscape has changed over the years as can be seen in the aerial photographs below. The surround area has become more urban and continues to trend in this direction as more development has occurred to the north and east since 2004. The interior of the park has also changed over the last 75 years. Since 1839 the landscape has been changed due to grazing, plowing, fire suppression and urbanized watershed disturbances have altered the park landscape overtime. The park has become increasingly more wooded overtime. Restoration efforts and management of invasive species is currently a challenge Hickory Hill Park faces.



PROMINENT LANDOWNERS

Over the years the property was purchased and sold by many early and prominent citizens of Iowa City including, Dana Stone, Philip Clark, Charles F. Ransom, Rush Clark and James H. Gower. However, only two families are known to have owned portions of the current park for any considerable period of time. They were the families of Frederick Macy Irish and Samuel H. Fairall.

Frederick Macy “Captain” Irish: originally from Hudson, New York, F.M. Irish officially purchased his portion of land in 1846. Known for assisting Robert Lucas, Governor of the Iowa Territory, Irish helped locate the Territorial Capital of Iowa City. Irish designed a rig to sling large stones and transport them to the Capital’s building site. Over the years Irish continued to play an active role in Johnson County Public Affairs. When his log cabin, not far from the park became unsuitable he built the family home called “Rose Hill” which still stands at 1415 E. Davenport Street. The estate included all of the land within the northwest corner of section 11. For many years the area was known as “Irish’s Woods”.

18-Acres of today’s park were once part of the Rose Hill Estate. Adjacent to the Norton Wayside Shelter, a monument stone donated by the Irish family commemorates the estate.

Samuel H. Fairall: after being sold to multiple owners a part of the northeast quarter of section 11 was eventually sold to Samuel H. Fairall in 1863. The Fairall family went on to purchase this entire portion of the park. Originally from Alleghany County, Maryland, Fairall came to Iowa City in 1855 to study law. In 1861 he was elected to the house of representatives and later continued to serve the public as City and County Attorney and two terms in the Iowa State Senate.

1915 “PEST HOUSE”

Iowa City Hospitals did not always have facilities to quarantine patients with infectious diseases. In the late 1800’s, isolated buildings and homes were used to serve patients with smallpox. Three different buildings are known to have been utilized for this purpose in Iowa City. All three were located within the general area of Oakland Cemetery and Hickory Hill Park. Remnants

of one of the buildings built in 1915 can be found in the park just 200 yards east of the Black Angel monument in Oakland Cemetery. Frank Yavorsky, a survivor of small pox and Civil War Veteran, was the sole caretaker of patients.

“THE ICE POND”

Remnants of an ice dam can be found in the northwest edge of the park. Ice dams and houses were used commonly prior to the invention of the refrigerator. The dam formed a man-made basin for harvesting ice. This low basin was once known as Greazel’s (or Peter’s) Pond. The ice was harvested by the Greazel Ice Company. They would collect the ice during the winter months and store it in an ice house for use throughout the year.

OTHER HISTORIC ITEMS TO EXPLORE

Additional historical items mentioned during the master planning process included an arboretum, limestone quarry, site of Boart’s brickyard and a former Indian campground. These items could be investigated further and included in the historical interpretation signage at Hickory Hill Park.

1927-1952 OAKLAND CEMETERY EXPANSION

The first portions of Hickory Hill Park purchased for public use was a 40-acre wooded and farmed parcel adjacent to Oakland Cemetery. The purchase was to accommodate the cemeteries expansion. However, the cemetery expanded slowly and the land continued to naturalize. In 1952 an additional 50-acres was added.

1965 CITY BOND REFERENDUM

In 1965 the City passed a bond referendum with a \$750,000 earmark for purchasing of park space in Iowa City. This included the development of Hickory Hill Park.

1966 PARK NAMED

“Hickory Hill” was adopted as the name of the new park. Louise Janes was an early advocate of the park and credited for naming it.

1967 PARK DEDICATION

Thanks to the efforts of several Iowa City residents including Dee Norton, in 1967, 98-acres adjacent to Oakland Cemetery and in the southwest portion of the current park were dedicated as the original Hickory Hill Park. 80-acres of land was originally part of the Oakland Cemetery purchase and 18-acres were purchased from the Irish Rose Hill estate. Early trails were developed over time, many by youth crews and Boy Scouts.

1982 STORMWATER DETENTION

As Iowa City grew and became more urban flooding concerns increased. To address these concerns the City purchased 43-acres from Gatens and 49-acres from Regina Catholic School to accommodate a regional stormwater detention area for Ralston Creek which bisects the park. An Army Corp of Engineers dam and water control structure was added to elevate flooding downstream.

1992 PARK EXPANSION

The stormwater detention property was officially dedicated as park of Hickory Hill Park in 1992. This property forms the northern and eastern portions of the park.

1999 FRIENDS OF HICKORY HILL PARK (FHHP) ORGANIZED

In 1999, the Friends of Hickory Hill Park was formed. An all-volunteer non-profit organization, the FHHP continue to dedicate time and fund raise for protecting this natural sanctuary in the urban Iowa City.

“Our mission is to permanently protect and preserve the park’s unique qualities as urban park land. Hickory Hill’s woodlands, fields, and waterways provide habitat for a variety of wildlife and provide citizens the opportunity to enjoy a natural setting within city limits.”

For more information or volunteer opportunities see their website www.hickoryhillpark.org.

2001 TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

In 2001, a crushed limestone trail system was added to the park increasing the level of accessibility into the park.

2009 PARK EXPANSION

In 2009, the Friends of Hickory Hill Park purchased 14-acres of land adjacent to the northernmost section of the park.

NATIVE VEGETATION STUDIES AND MANAGEMENT PLANS

1. Hirokawa, K.E. 2003. “Hickory Hill Past, Present and Future: A Vegetation Analysis and Management Plan.” Thesis. University of Iowa.
2. Vitosh, Mark A. 2007. “General Forest Management Plan.” District Forester. Iowa DNR/Forest and Prairies. Iowa City, Iowa.

2011 TRAIL AND BRIDGE STUDY

In 2011, the City worked with a consultant to study the bridges and trails within the park. The plan provided an inventory and analysis of the parks existing conditions and made recommendations for improvements and maintenance within the park.

REFERENCES FOR HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Historical information was collected from Friends of Hickory Hill members, Iowa City staff and the following sources:

“The Landscape History of Hickory Hill Park”, Prepared by Chris Bair Land Stewardship Program Iowa Valley RC&D, March 2006.

“Small But Ours” By Marybeth Slonneger, Hand Press Iowa City, 1999.

Friends of Hickory Hill Website (<http://www/hickoryhillpark.org/index.htm>)

Historical interpretive poster at Norton Wayside Shelter in Hickory Hill Park.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

SITE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

As part of the design process the design team conducted a site inventory and analysis. This process included the following:

- Review of past plans and studies.
- Multiple site visits to document site conditions and trail locations.
- Collected GIS data for bench, bridge, trail and other feature locations.
- Review of existing vegetation management efforts.

Review of historic past plans, projects and studies revealed an ongoing effort to address trail erosion concerns, flood damage to bridge structures and a continued effort to manage invasive species and restore a more native flora and fauna to the park.

Trail erosion and bridge damage from flooding continue to be a concern in the park. The majority of the crushed limestone trail system installed in 2001 has declined into a more natural surface. This is primarily due to improper drainage patterns and natural degradation of the limestone surface over time. The Friends of Hickory Hill Park (FHHP) have recently removed sediment buildup behind existing water bars along the much of the trail. This will continue to be an ongoing maintenance need if this method of erosion control continues to be utilized. Asphalt millings have currently been used to repair portions of the limestone trail system impacted by heavy erosion due to runoff from the Regina Elementary property. This method of trail surface is holding up much better to the erosion currently compared to the prior use of crushed limestone.

Natural surface trails have developed naturally by park users overtime following wildlife trail or natural drainage ways. Some of these trails, particularly those following natural drainage ways, create great concern due to extreme erosion affecting long term trail stability and water quality in Ralston Creek.

Several bridges were identified for improvement or replacement. Some of the bridges had been given wing walls as recommended in the 2011 Trail and Bridge Study. Bridge 18 (P40), near the N. 1st Avenue entrance, is currently scheduled for replacement in 2016.

The FHHP volunteers are currently providing restoration and reconstruction efforts for native vegetation communities. Currently the prairie reconstructions in the northern half of the park are being burned to encourage prairie establishment. Maintenance access to these prairie sites is currently limited and could be improved. The area identified as the “Original Hickory Hill Park Site” has also been recently cleared of understory invasive species as part of the FFHP’s current forest management plan.

EXISTING AMENITIES AND ACTIVITIES

Trails	Picnicking	Park History & Natural Resource Education	Support Amenities	Other Supported Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiking and Nature Walks • Jogging and Trail Running • Cross-Country Training • Cross-Country Skiing • Snow Shoeing • Sledding • Dog Walking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnic Shelter (2 provided) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norton Wayside Shelter • Native Plant Communities and Restoration Efforts • History: Ice Pond, Pest House, Rose Hill and Arboretum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Storm Shelter • Restrooms/ Drinking Fountains • Memorial Benches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Group Camping • Wildlife viewing and bird watching • Painting and Photography • General Open Space Activities

POTENTIAL RECREATION AND SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Trails	Picnicking	Park History & Natural Resource Education	Support Amenities	Other Supported Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear & Documented Trail Designations and Wayfinding Signage (Link to map on phone?) • Erosion Control Improvements • Bridge and Drainage-way Crossing Improvements (Iconic Suspension Bridge?) • Designated Cross-Country Course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace or Enhance Existing Picnic Shelters • Open Picnic Areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature Center • Outdoor Classroom Space • Create a management plan for restoration efforts • Interpretive Signage on native ecosystems, restoration efforts and flood control efforts. Interactive Signage? • Council Ring for small class activities and group camping use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Parking (Bus Access?) • Improved Restroom Facilities / Drinking Fountains (Nancy Seiberling Heitage Grove Area) • Maintenance Access • Consistant Site Amenities (Standard Benches etc?) • Continue or Modify Memorial Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated Small Group Camping Area • Wildlife Observation Deck or Tower • Birdblind • Nature Themed or Natural Playscape, PlayTrails • Butterfly and/or Healing Garden • Labyrinth • Canopy Tours/Zip Line • Outdoor Excercise Equipment • Horseshoes • Bocce Ball Court • Sand Volleyball • Public Art

PARK STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

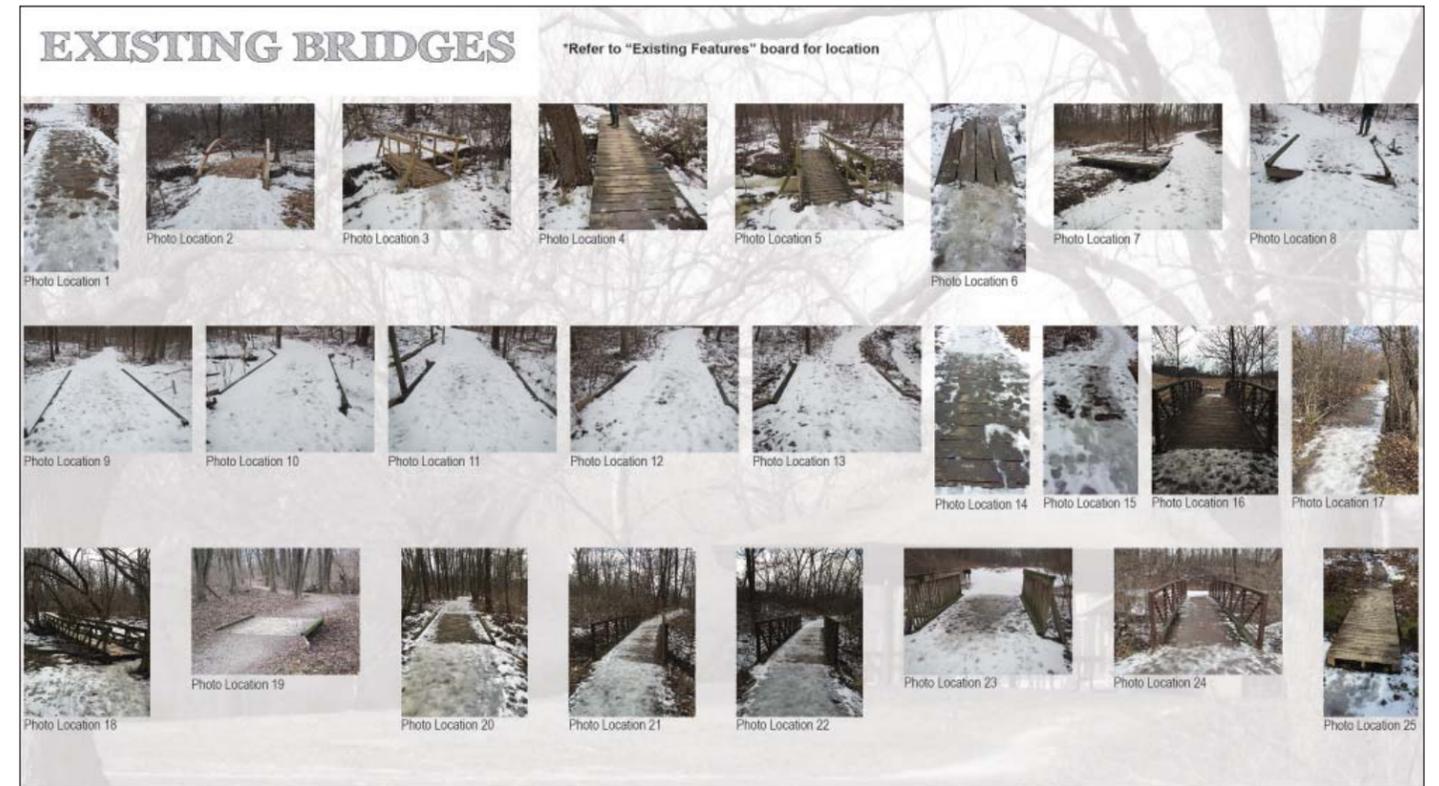
The following strengths and weaknesses were identified by the Advisory Committee and the public during the design process.

Strengths

- Tremendous resource for community.
- Heavily used trails and picnic facilities.
- Unique urban park setting with natural and tranquil setting.
- Strong volunteer group helps promote and maintain park features.
- Year-around outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Resource for nature education programs and birding.
- Diverse trail routes.

Weaknesses and Concerns

- Lack of visibility and entrance signage.
- Lack of maintenance access, particularly to the northern and northeastern half of the park.
- Muddy/eroded trails and damage to bridges by flooding and unmanaged stormwater drainage.
- Lack of informational and wayfinding signage.
- Concerns with dogs walkers allowing dogs off leash.
- Unauthorized camping in the park.
- Lack of identity. Variety of site amenity and signage styles utilized.
- Need for additional invasive species control and removal of dead trees near or on trails.
- Underutilized neighborhood park space at Bloomington Street and Conklin Avenue entrances.
- Creek stabilization improvements needed due to increased runoff.



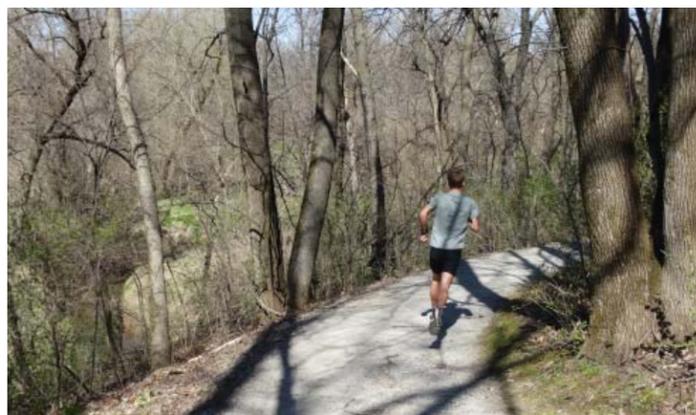
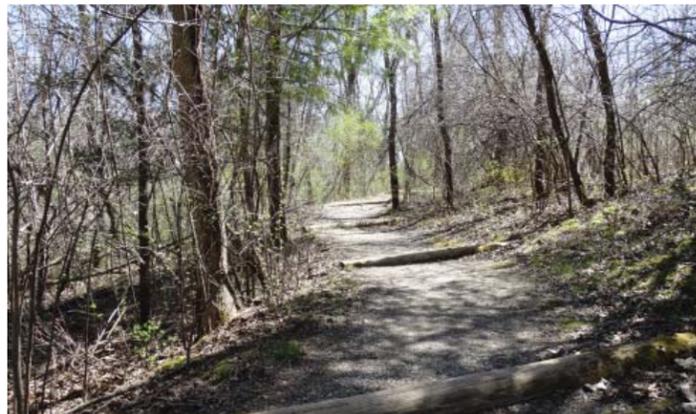
EXISTING HISTORICAL MARKERS AND BENCHES



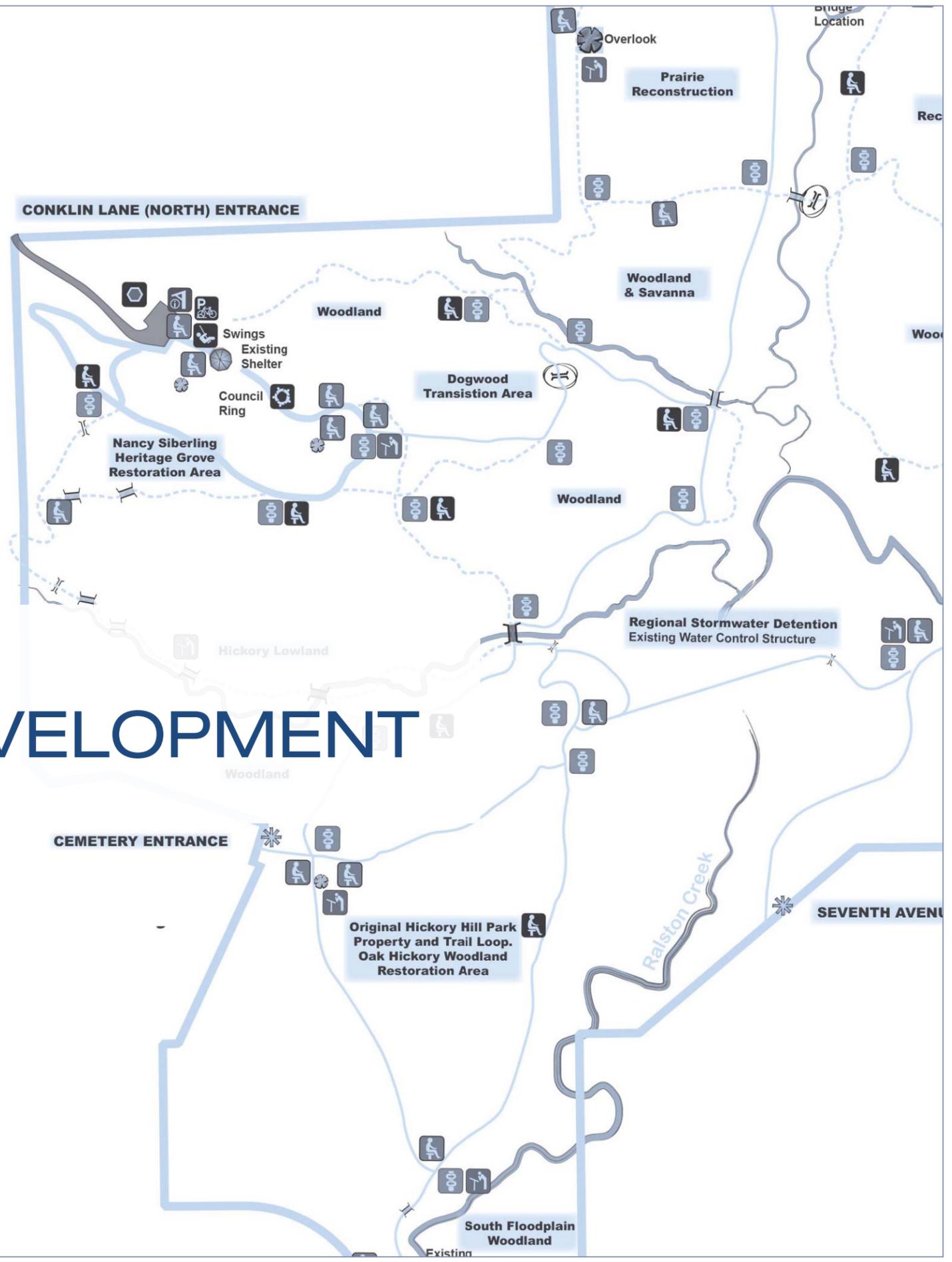
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

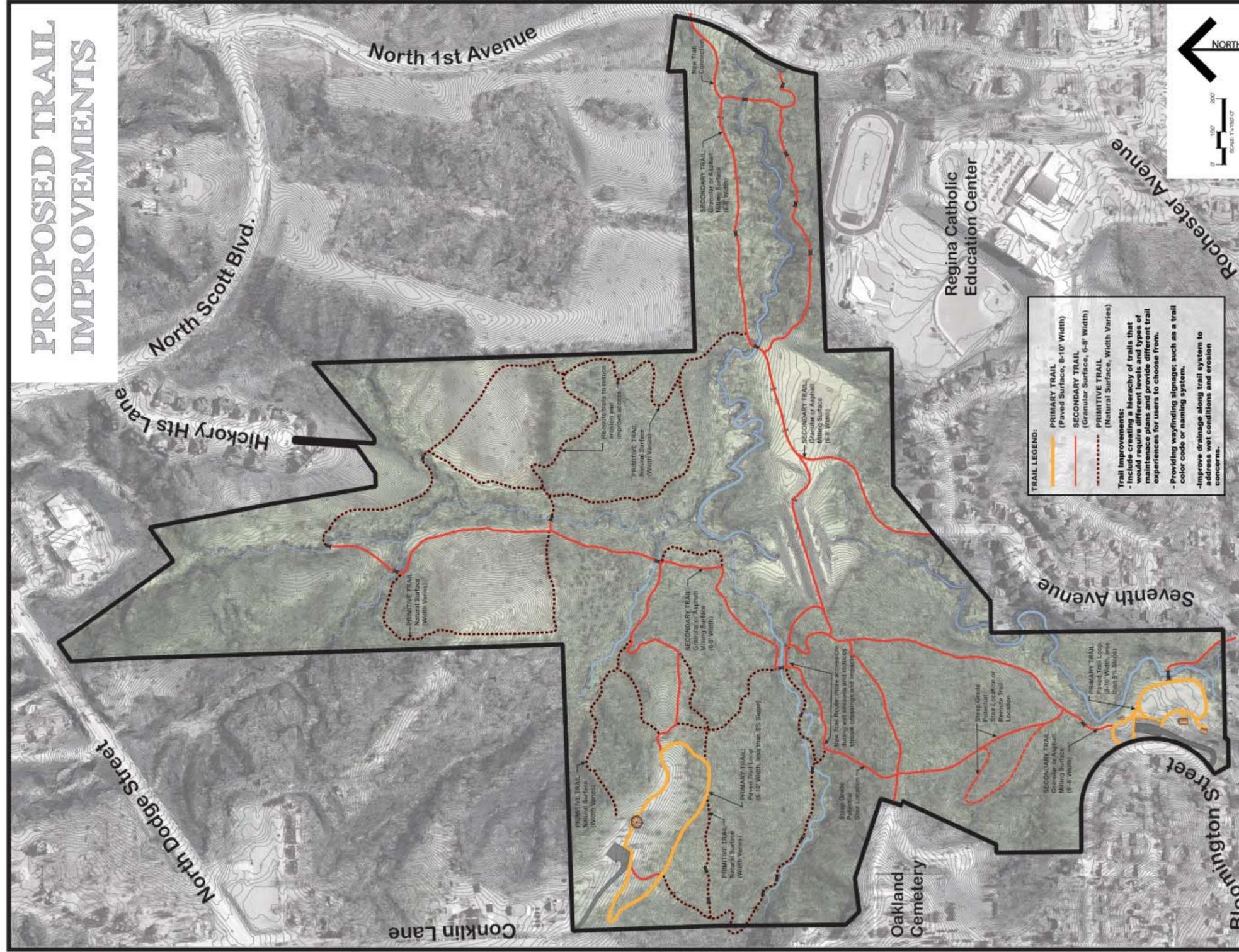
Project goals and objectives that were identified are listed below.

1. Improve wayfinding and informational signage throughout the park.
 - Provide consistent wayfinding signage throughout the park.
 - Enhance existing information kiosks.
 - Provide additional interpretive signage throughout the park.
2. Address erosion and flooding concerns along trails and bridges.
 - Review prior trail and bridge study completed in Fall 2011.
 - Assess trails and bridges for current needs and improvements.
 - Provide recommendations for trail surfacing and routing improvements.
 - Provide recommendations for addressing erosion concerns along trails and bridges.
3. Review park programming.
 - Consider additional park programming, recreation and outdoor education opportunities while protecting the park's unique qualities as a natural sanctuary and place of passive recreation within Iowa City.
4. Improve parks accessibility for all users.
 - Provide opportunities for users of various abilities to utilize park amenities.
5. Improve maintenance access to the northern park area.
 - Evaluate maintenance access needs and designate maintenance access improvements.
6. Evaluate options for trail surfacing materials.
 - Evaluate recommended materials and designs for long-term costs associated with maintenance and replacements.
7. Prioritize improvements for future funding.
 - Develop a cost estimate of proposed improvements that can be used for prioritizing and seeking funding.
 - Provide a phasing chart for proposed improvements to identify priorities.



SECTION 2 CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT





Hickory Hill Park Master Plan

SNYDER & ASSOCIATES
Engineers and Planners
CITY OF IOWA CITY
March 13, 2016

THREE TYPES OF TRAILS WERE PROPOSED.

- 1. Primary Trails:** A paved surface trail 8-10 feet in width. These trails were shown at the Bloomington and Conklin Lane entrances. A paved trail surface would improve park access into the park and would be built to meet Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines for accessible routes.
- 2. Secondary Trails:** A granular surface trail 6-8 feet in width. These trails would be similar to the trails provided with the 2001 improvements. The wider maintained trail and granular surface improve access and maintenance routes into the core of the park.
- 3. Primitive Trails:** A natural surface trail of bare ground, mown grass or mulch chip paths. These trails are similar to the current condition of trails throughout the majority of the park. Drainage improvements and trail rerouting will need to occur along these trails to reduce wet and eroding trails.

PRECEDENT IMAGES

TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

MULTIPLE TYPES OF TRAIL EXPERIENCES

Primary Trail - Paved Surface
Secondary Trail - Asphalt Millings or Gravel Surface
Primitive Trail - Natural Surface

TRAIL STREAM AND SWALE CROSSINGS

Wooded Boardwalk
E3 Structural Suspension Bridge
A1 Grade Water Crossings

TRAIL CROSSINGS ITEMS TO CONSIDER:

- Erosion Potential
- Flooding Concerns
- Drainage Patterns

TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS:
Images from IMBA International Mountain Bicycle Association Guide to Building Great Singletrack, 2004.

March 13, 2019

Hickory Hill Park Master Plan
Precedent Images

PLAY AREA

MANUFACTURED PLAYGROUNDS

Precedent: Landmark Structures, Inc. Play Equipment Manufacturer
Precedent: J & F Brown Collection Before Play Equipment Manufacturer
Precedent: Big Top Play Equip. Manufacturer
Precedent: Columbia Cascade Play Equipment Manufacturer

NATURE GROUNDS
Play environment needed around a living landscape.

Precedent: Columbia Cascade Play Equipment Manufacturer
Precedent: Lewis A. Jester State Park, Polk County, Iowa
Precedent: Children's Grove, Lake County Forest Preserves, Illinois
Precedent: Nature Explore Classrooms
Precedent: Terry Trustad, Iowa City, Iowa

NATURAL PLAYGROUNDS
Designing play environments that use natural elements to create play areas and learning environments.

March 13, 2019

Hickory Hill Park Master Plan
Precedent Images

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

OVERLOOKS: Located at key viewpoints these structures can be extremely simple or complex, but can provide a spot for contemplation and rest along the trail.

Precedent: Aldo Hayden, Ames, Iowa
Precedent: Marston Lane, Jasper County, Iowa
Precedent: Shively Lake and Four Mile Creek, Linn County Forest Preserves, Illinois

NATIVE GARDEN: A lushly or low-lying garden that provides an ecological purpose, education purpose and can be designed to be aesthetically pleasing meeting area.

Precedent: Independence Grove Forest Preserve, Libertyville, Lake County, Illinois

SMALL GROUP GATHERING SPACE

Precedent: Council Ring: A gathering space for small groups
Precedent: Columbus Park, Chicago, Illinois
Photo Credit: Photographer Charles Bombard, 2005, The Cultural Landscape Foundation

ART AND SCULPTURE

Precedent: Aldo Hayden, Ames, Iowa
Precedent: Artist Patrick Dougherty (Stick Sculpture)
Precedent: Mabel Buffalo along Ramonson Trail, Prairie City, Iowa

March 13, 2019

Hickory Hill Park Master Plan
Precedent Images

SIGNAGE

SIGNAGE NEEDED:
The proposed signage would have a consistent and easy to read format. Signage should provide entrance, directional, safety, regulatory, accessibility, resource protection, and interpretive information.

SIGNAGE ITEMS TO CONSIDER:

- Considered style and materials throughout the park
- Logo or symbol as a park identifier (Could be the park district logo or with one unique to the park)
- Wayfinding signage at key intersections
- Emphasize the use of existing signage theme at South Entrance and Horton Woods
- Consider marking trails with distance markers for trail users and cross country posting

EXISTING SIGNAGE

Precedent: Hickory Hill Park, Iowa City, Iowa

WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

Precedent: Wayfinding Signage, Galien River Park, Benner County, Michigan
Using a color code system for trails can help users quickly identify key information.
Precedent: Customized Wayfinding Signage
Simple photographs can quickly communicate park regulations and laws.
Precedent: Hart Design for Golden Gate National Recreation Area

March 13, 2019

Hickory Hill Park Master Plan
Precedent Images

ARCHITECTURAL IMPROVEMENTS

EXISTING SHELTERS AND KIOSKS

Existing North Shelter
Existing Restroom and Storm Shelter
North Wayside Educational Shelter
Existing South Shelter
Existing Kiosk at 1st Avenue Entrance
Existing Kiosk at Corbin Lane Entrance

IDEAS FOR FUTURE ARCHITECTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Precedent: Putzger Shelters Using lighter wood materials and styles can also help unify the site and provide a sense of park identity.
Precedent: Classic Recreation Shelter
Precedent: Littlefield Shelter Adding some simple stone work to the shelter improvements can help unify the site and provide additional interest.
Shelter and kiosk improvements using similar architectural style to North Wayside Educational Shelter provides consistency in architectural elements and sense of park identity.

March 13, 2019

Hickory Hill Park Master Plan
Precedent Images

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Below is a summary of comments received from the first public meeting and input session. This summary is based on the general comments received via all response options (comment form, general email statement, or facebook comments [*facebook likes not included*]).

SIGNAGE

- Minimize amount of signage. Don't over sign the park. Keep them from becoming obstructions etc. Should be clear and easy to understand.
- icbirds.org has a map with trails and names.
- Vertical signs are preferred.
- Wayfinding signage was very desirable. A total of nineteen (19) comments desired wayfinding signage improvements.
- Color coding and distance markers were desirable. Several comments disliked the bright colors. Need to fit into the landscape.
- Interpretive signage to identify birds, plants and historic features was desirable.
- Entrances signage was desirable.
- Signage like woodpecker/squire pt. was mentioned.
- Trail maps available for new users was desirable. (Existing kiosks have lg. map but possibly something online. A map one can access via a mobile device or print out).
- Trail distance markers were desirable. Potentially 5K Trail course with markings for races.

SHELTERS AND RESTROOMS

- Open picnic shelters and pavilions seemed preferred. Conklin shelter needs to remain open for birding activities.
- Carrying the theme of Norton Wayside Shelter through the park was desirable.
- Consider Norton Wayside style kiosk/shelter at 1st Avenue.
- Consider additional restrooms at 1st Avenue entrance. Could be a year-round pit toilet or portable toilets.

TRAILS

- Overall three-tiered trail system was desirable. A total of twelve (12) out of thirteen (13) comments were in favor of the three-tiered system.
- Address erosion and drainage concerns. A total of seventeen (17) out of twenty-four (24) were in favor of addressing these trail concerns.
- Paved Trails received mixed reviews with seven (7) in favor of paved trails out of fourteen (14) total comments.
- Trail Removals & Reroutes:
 - » Removal of trails in concept received mixed reviews. A total of two (2) undesirable responses to trail removals and one (1) positive response.
 - » Additional primitive trails in loop south of eastern prairie were identified as needing additional consideration for re-routing due to erosion and steep grade.
 - » Consider providing bicycle access (com-muter bicycle and singletrack mountain bicycle routes/access were discussed). Overall a positive response to bike access was provided at the 1st public meeting, with fourteen (14) positive responses for overall bike access out of sixteen (16) total comments.
 - » Consider making primary paved trail from N. 1st Avenue to 7th Street or Bloomington Street entrance and allow bicycle access along this section of trail due to safety concerns and steep grade along 1st Avenue. This was a key topic of discussion at the open house. In the comment responses ten (10) comments in favor of this commuter bike access were provided.
- Additional trail routes to consider:
 - » Trail from N. Dodge through Trust owned land.
 - » Trail through northern "oak savanna". Potential trail head parking at PC building owned by school district?
 - » Trailhead and access from ACT property.

- » Secondary trail running north south in the northern interior of the park could form a loop instead of dead ending.

PARKING

- Minimal feedback...
- Bloomington Entrance: Consider additional parking to the north of existing lot not east.
- Parking option with more trees.
- 1st Avenue Entrance: Consider additional parking.

BRIDGES

- Streambank stabilization and bridge repairs are desirable.
- More permanent stable bridges preferred. Eagle Scout bridge design was mentioned multiple times as desirable.

NATURAL RESOURCES

- Reduce invasive plant material and increase desirable native species.
- Expand Regina Prairie and reduce mowing in this area.
- Clean up of dead trees near trails.

PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

- Received mixed reviews; however, the majority were in favor of playground improvements. Of the comments received seven (7) were in favor of a playground at Bloomington Entrance and three (3) in favor of a playground at the Conklin Entrance. There were five (5) responses not in favor of a playground at the park.
- Bloomington entrance preferred location.
- More natural play area or wood structure preferred.
- Minimize impacts to open play area.
- Consider playground for older kids (pre-teen – 100 years).

BENCHES

- Received mixed reviews and minimal feedback.

- One comment mentioned they preferred diversity of bench styles vs all park district standard.

OVERLOOK

- Received mixed reviews and minimal feedback.
- One comment preferred location at the east prairie reconstruction site.

PUBLIC ART & NATIVE GARDEN

- Public art received mixed reviews and minimal feedback. Suggestions included:
 - » A kinetic sculpture similar to mini park on Miller.
 - » Something natural looking.
 - » Art in the benches.
- Native Garden also received mixed reviews and minimal feedback.

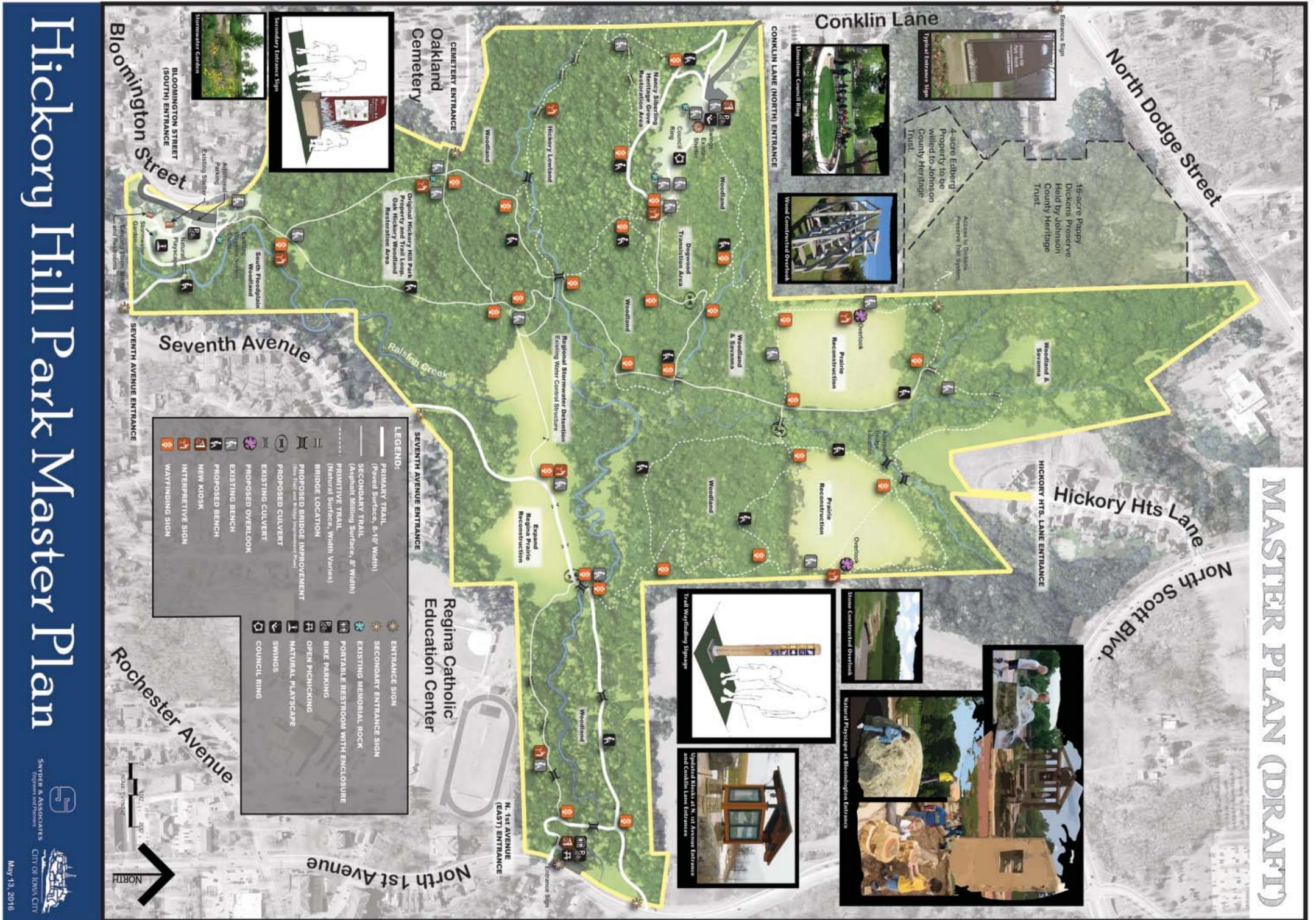
OTHER IDEAS PRESENTED

- Edible Forest (native to Iowa...walnuts, black-berries, strawberries, crab apples, gooseberries, chokeberries etc.)
- Bring back arboretum feature.
- Disk golf
- Bocce ball court
- Green & Blue Nordic ski trails (Similar to Macbride green ski trails).
- Reconstructed wetlands
- Nesting boxes
- Amphitheater for nature programs.
- History to look further into: Pest House history, indian campground, limestone quarry and site of Boart's brickyard.
- Labyrinth
- Bicycle racks at entrances.
- Review the potential of singletrack bike trail access at the park. Mixed reviews were received eight (8) comments considered single-track trails undesirable, while ten (10) would like these trails considered in the park.

DRAFT MASTER PLAN & PUBLIC MEETING NO. 2

Based on feedback received from the public and Advisory Committee the concept development plan was refined into a draft master plan. The following draft master plan and relative information was shown at a public meeting on May 15, 2016 for further feedback.

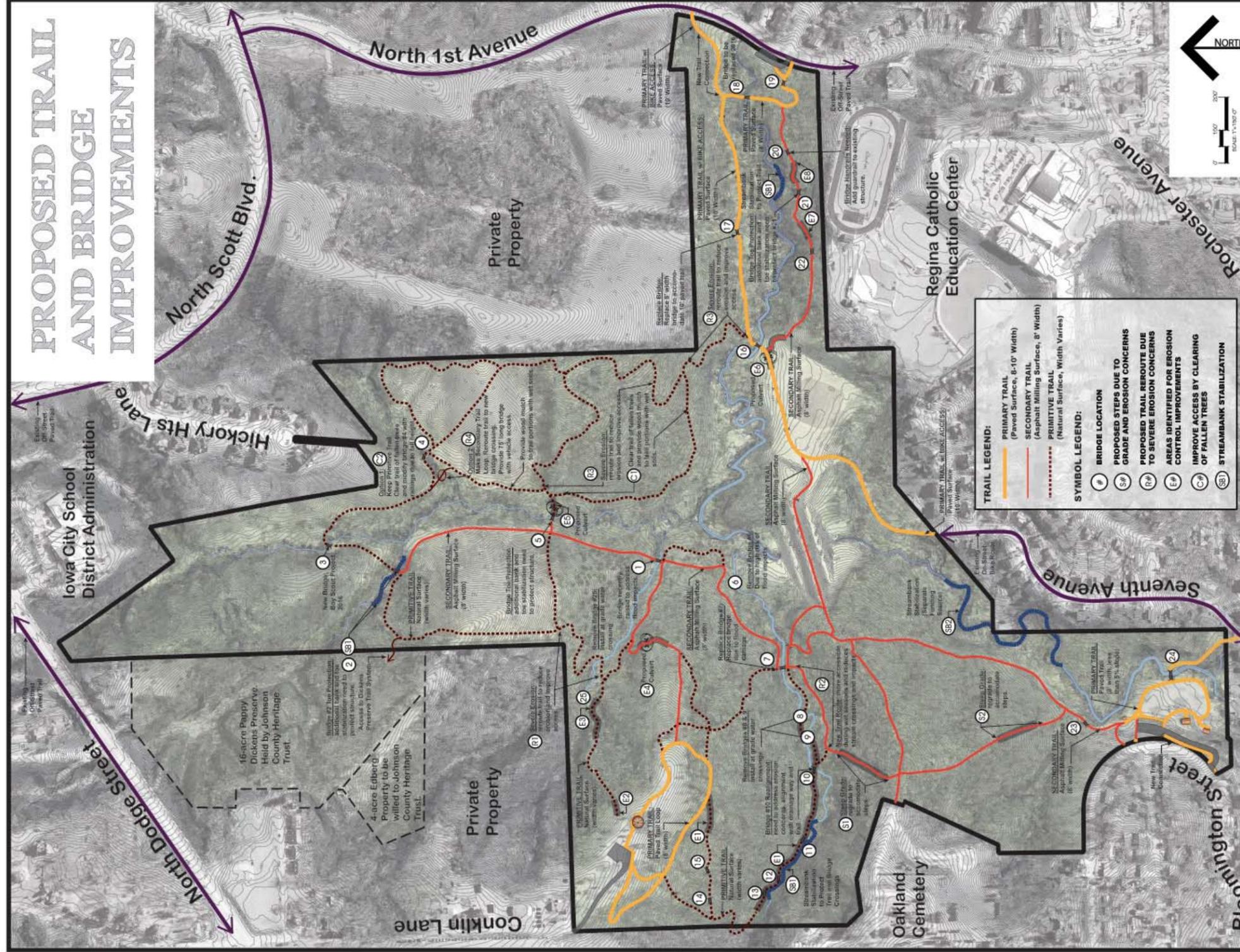
Improvements included wayfinding and interpretive signage, a natural playscape and stormwater garden (Bloomington entrance), swings and council ring (Conklin entrance), additional bench locations, trail and bridge improvements, bicycle parking, portable restroom and picnic area (N. 1st Ave entrance).



Hickory Hill Park Master Plan

SNYDER & ASSOCIATES
ENGINEERS AND ARCHITECTS
CITY OF IOWA CITY
May 13, 2016

MASTER PLAN (DRAFT)



Hickory Hill Park Master Plan

SWYDER & ASSOCIATES
Engineers and Planners
CITY OF IOWA CITY
May 13, 2016

The Proposed Trail Improvements Plan was also updated to reflect comments received. The trail hierarchy was maintained but modified to accommodate additional trail rerouting, a potential commuter bicycle route between N. 1st Avenue and 7th Avenue and streambank stabilization areas.

Additional details on bridge improvements were also provided for review.



Improvements proposed at the Bloomington Street entrance included a paved primary trail loop, natural playscape and stormwater garden, bicycle parking and room for future parking expansion. A 4' paved trail connection to the existing neighborhood sidewalk system is also provided to improve safe pedestrian access.



Improvements proposed at the Conklin Lane entrance included a paved primary trail loop, a council ring for small group gatherings, a new kiosk, swings and bicycle parking.



Improvements proposed at the N. 1st Avenue entrance included adding a primary trail route to 7th Avenue, a portable restroom, updated kiosk, picnic table and bicycle parking.

DRAFT MASTER PLAN INPUT

During the second public input processes, trails dominated the majority of the comments. There was a lot of feedback about trail types (paved vs unpaved) and types of use (bicycles vs no bicycles).

TRAIL COMMENTS USING COMMENT FORM FORMAT FOR RESPONDING

1. A total of fifteen (15) individuals used the comment form format for responding. Of the fifteen (15) responses eleven (11) disagreed with trail improvements shown on the master plan and four (4) agreed with the trail improvements.
2. The number one reason listed as opposed to Draft Master Plan Improvements was “paved trails undesirable”. Also mentioned was the increase in width of secondary trails from 6’ width to 8’ width and adding bicycle access to the park.

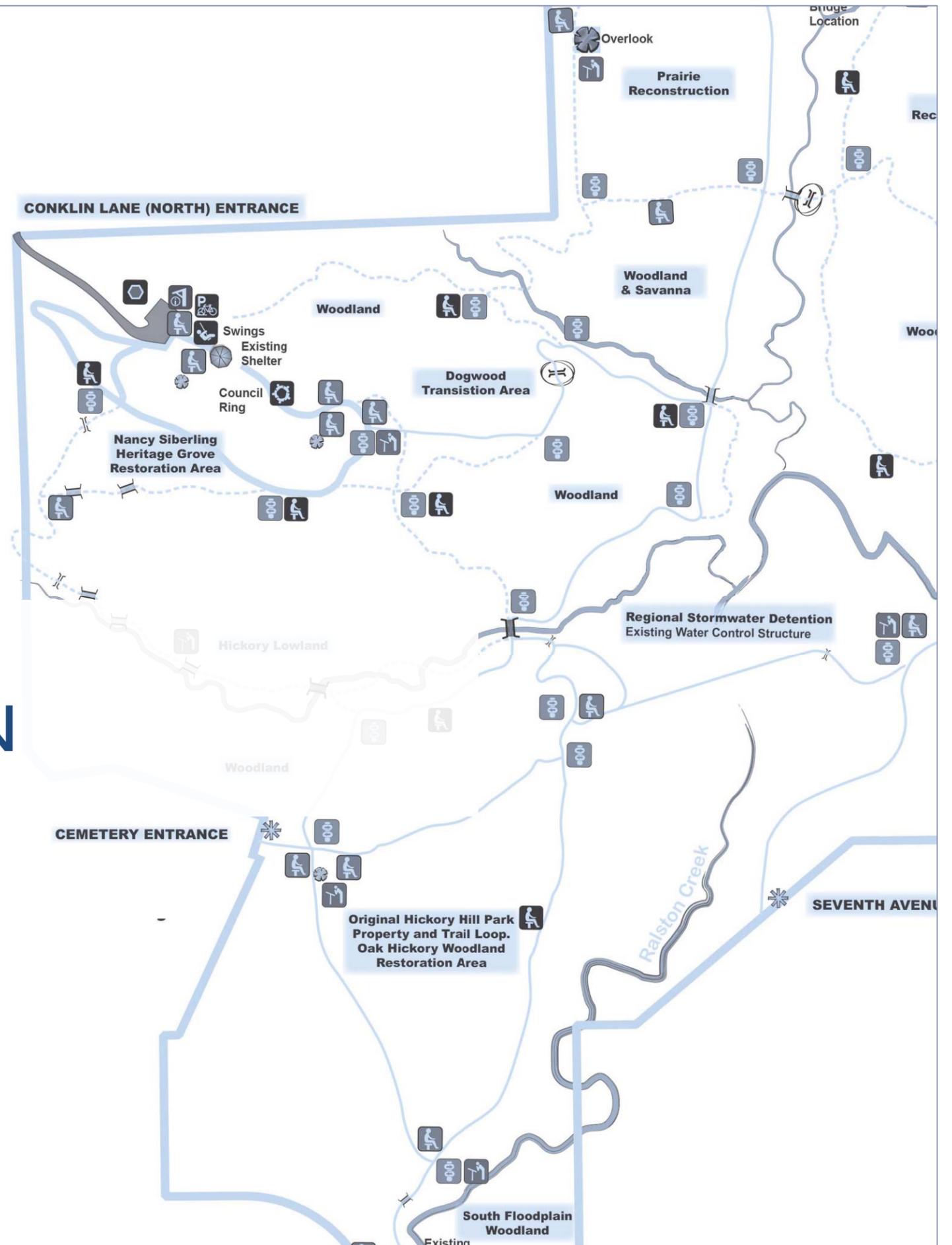
GENERAL TRAIL COMMENTS PROVIDED

1. This summary of responses to proposed trail improvements is based on the general comments received via all response options (comment form, general email statement, or facebook comments [facebook likes not included]). Forty-seven (47) responses had unfavorable comments about the trail improvements proposed in the Draft Master Plan. Eight (8) responses had only favorable comments about the trail improvement proposed.
2. The number one reason listed as opposed to Draft Master Plan Improvements was “paved trails undesirable”. Bicycle access was also another large concern. Also mentioned was the increase in width of some trails from 6’ width to 8 or 10’width. Forty-two (42) had unfavorable comments about paving trails. Twenty-six (26) responses had unfavorable comments about bicycle access to the park. Seven (7) responses stated concern with the increase trail widths.

SINGLETRACK BICYCLE ACCESS

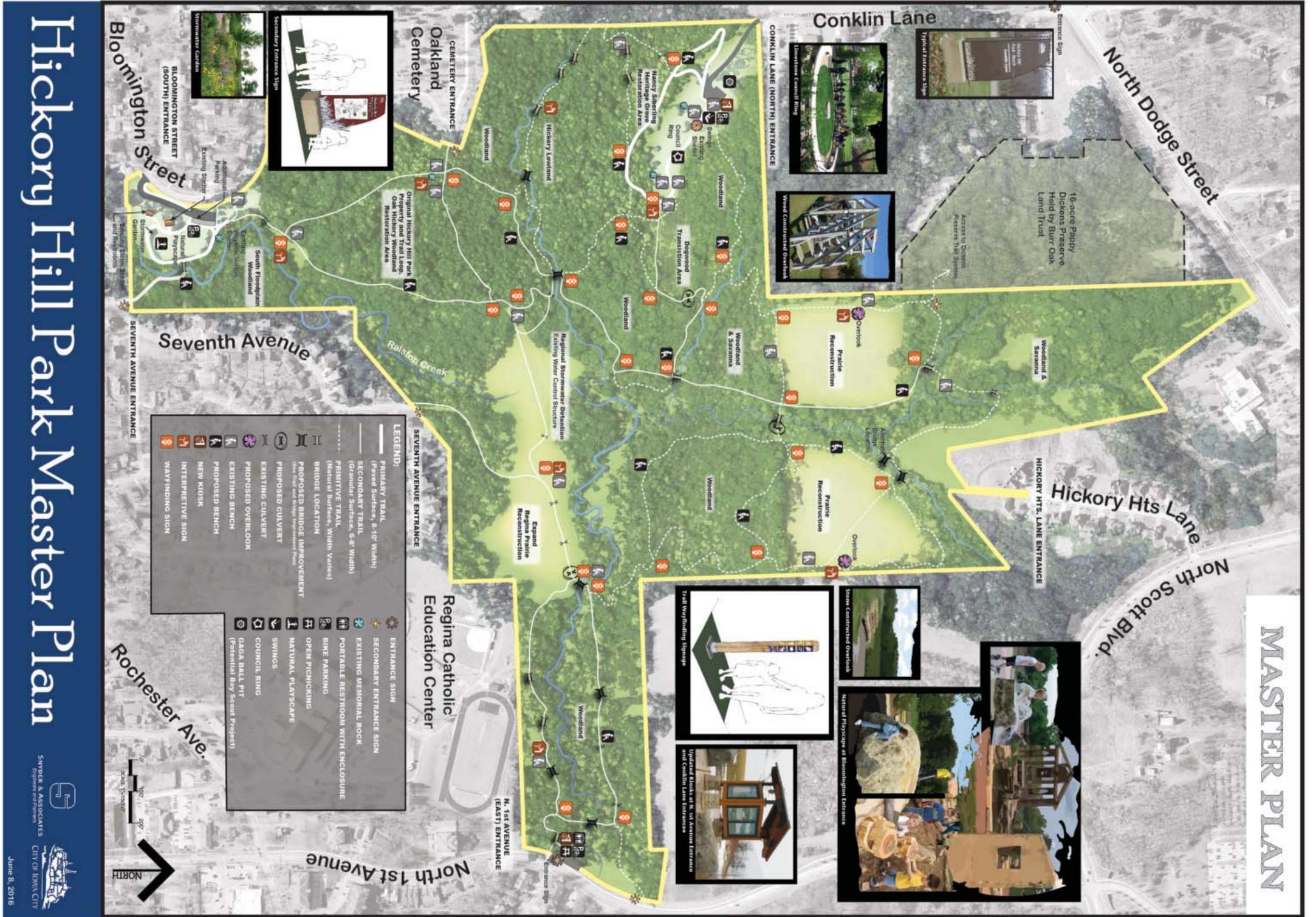
Several comments were made concerning singletrack bicycle trail access either through shared or separate trail systems. (Please note singletrack bicycle trails were not proposed on the master plan). The summary below only includes those who specifically spoke about off road or singletrack bicycle trail systems and not bicycle access in general. Three (3) undesirable and thirteen (13) desirable responses were received for singletrack bike access via all response options (comment form, general email statement, or facebook comments [facebook likes not included]).

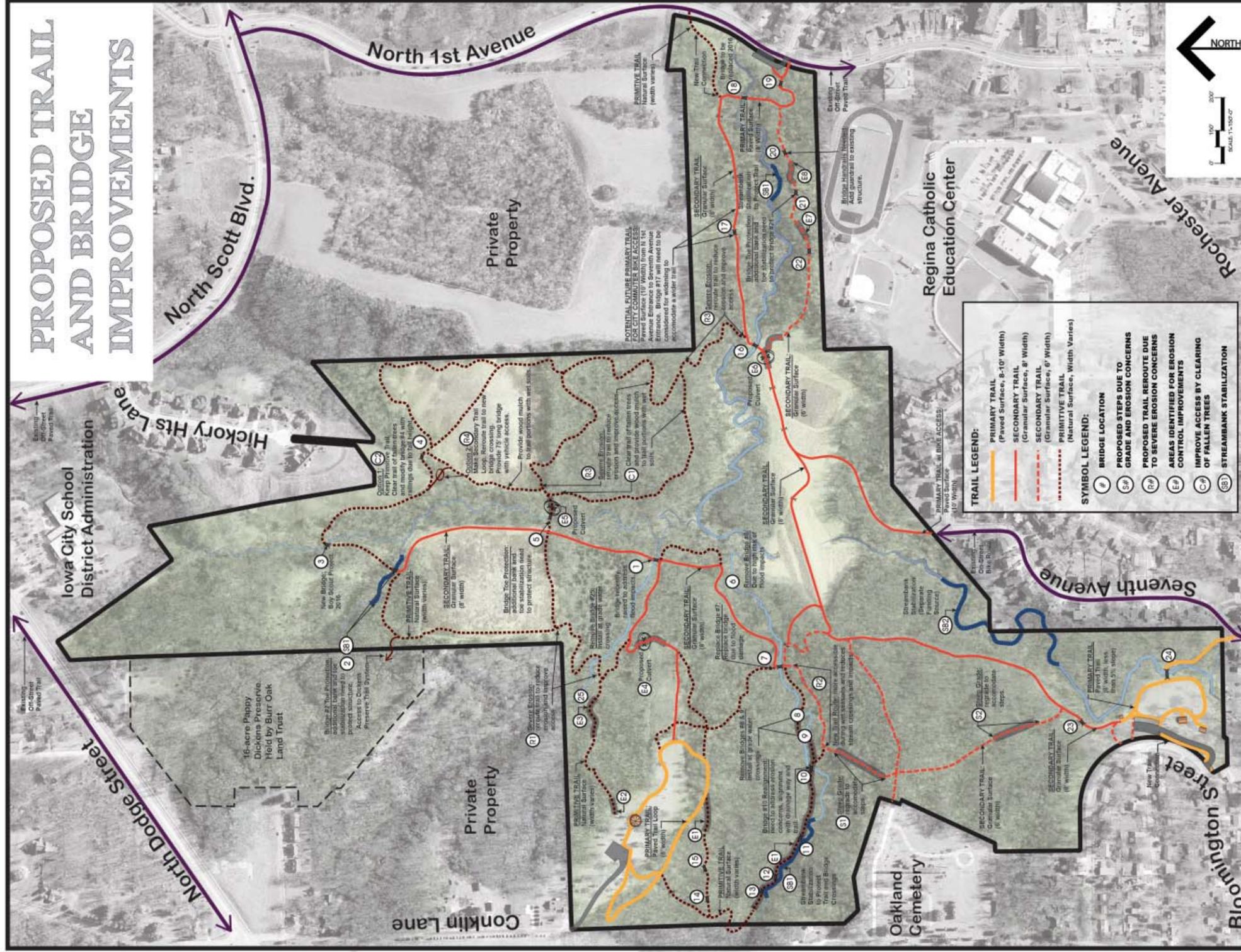
SECTION 3 MASTER PLAN



FINAL MASTER PLAN

Base on feedback received from the public and Advisory Committee the draft master plan was updated to form the final master plan. The following master plan and relative information was shown to the parks Commission Board on June 6, 2016 for their review and comment. There were minimal changes to the master plan. The majority of comments were centered on the trail improvements. The proposed trail plan was updated to reflect this.





Hickory Hill Park Master Plan

SNYDER & ASSOCIATES
Engineering & Planning
CITY OF IOWA CITY
June 8, 2016

The public comment received during the second public meet showed a strong desirability for minimal primary paved surface trails; as well as, limited or no bicycle access. The master plan currently shows the paved commuter bicycle route from N. 1st Avenue to 7th Avenue as a granular secondary trail. As the City continues to further develop their overall bicycle trail and route plans, a bicycle route through Hickory Hill could be further considered.

Several comments were provided on the width of the secondary and primary trails. A 6' width was preferred for hiking in several comments provided. The 8' width provides better maintenance access for trail and bridge repairs. The plan was updated to provide 6' width secondary trails in areas on non-primary maintenance routes.

Singletrack mountain bicycle facilities were also mentioned. Although a singletrack bicycle route is not identified in this 15-year master plan, potential facilities should be considered within the City's park system. It was felt the park did not currently have an area to accommodate a proper facility without too much negative impact to the existing desirable uses. Items the City should consider for a future singletrack bike trail facility are parking, visibility, restrooms, emergency access, various skill levels and trail maintenance needs.

The following images provide clarification on the proposed trail hierarchy system.

IMAGE REFERENCES

EXISTING PATH SURFACING			
			
PROPOSED PATH SURFACING			
			

June 8, 2016

Hickory Hill Park Master Plan

Reference Images




PROJECT PHASING

When creating a park master plan which is intended to be used as a guideline for park improvements for a period of time, it is important to identify the priorities for implementation. This allows improvements to be made as funding becomes available. Through the design process, meetings with the Advisory Committee and the public, the following Phasing Chart has been created for the park.

PROJECT COSTS & IMPLEMENTATION

The budget cost projections provided in the chart are based upon a public bidding process. The cost projections are approximate and are to assist with construction sequencing as funds are available for park improvements.

PHASING PRIORITIES		BUDGET COST PROJECTIONS
High Priority		
Secondary Trails		\$195,000
Bridge Improvements		\$290,000
Signage Improvements		\$40,000
Sub-Total		\$525,000
Medium Priorities		
Primitive Trails		\$100,000
Portable Restroom with Enclosure		\$5,000
Natural Playscape at Bloomington Entrance		\$10,000-\$100,000
Swings at Conklin Entrance		\$3,500
Bike Parking		\$3,000
Kiosks		\$6,500
Sub-Total		\$128,000-\$218,000
Low Priorities		
Primary Trails & Conklin Lane Entrance		\$150,000
Primary Trail, Bloominton Street		\$105,000
Council Ring		\$3,500
Overlook – Elevated Wood Structure		\$4,000
Overlook – Elevated Stone Area		\$3,500
Gaga Ball Pit		\$2,500
Prairie Reconstruction Areas, north area		\$10,000
Expand Regina Prairie Reconstruction		\$10,000
Sub-Total		\$288,500
TOTAL		\$941,500-\$1,031,500

“It is beautiful on any day,
even a windy rather drab late fall one,
because it has hills, streams and long views...and quiet.
It’s a walking kind of park, where in spring and summer
the air is filled with birdsong and the groundcover of bushes
hums with twittering life...Here’s country at your doorstep,
near enough for after-school troop and group hikes and nature games and observations.
No great caravans of cars necessary, with mothers transporting half a half-hour drive, then waiting”

by Louis Janes an early park advocate and credited for naming the park, 1965

HICKORY HILL PARK MASTER PLAN



CITY OF IOWA CITY



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