



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: December 6, 2018

PROJECT Franklin Park Rehabilitation 14th and K Streets, NW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 7545
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 21.00(70.00)44841
REVIEW AUTHORITY Federal Projects in the District per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of preliminary site and building plans
	PROPOSED ACTION Approve preliminary site and building plans with comments
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Staff Presentation

PROJECT SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS), in partnership with the Government of the District of Columbia (DC) and the DowntownDC Business Improvement District (BID), is proposing a revitalization of Franklin Park. Located in downtown Washington at 14th and K Streets, NW, the historic urban park occupies a 4.8-acre city block and is the second largest NPS square in the central business district.

Providing a unique opportunity to serve the community and enhance urban living, the park is located in a thriving commercial district and growing residential area three blocks northeast of the White House. It is served by Metro (McPherson Square), over two dozen Metrobus lines, two DC Circulator routes, and four Capital Bikeshare stations within two blocks. The District has experienced significant population growth downtown in recent years, resulting in a population nearing 10,000 residents and increased demand for high quality urban parks. Currently, the park does not meet today's diverse urban needs. Historically a place of natural respite, the partners seek to improve upon this role, and additionally create a more urban park space, with amenities that will attract and serve residents, employees, and visitors. Improvements include:

- Multiple active and passive recreational opportunities; essential services such as restrooms, food and flexible seating; and actively managed daytime and evening events and programs.
- Restoration of the fountain.
- An enhanced streetscape and public realm, integrated with multiple transportation modes, including Capital Bikeshare, Metrobus, DC Circulator, Metrorail and planned streetcar.
- A new public/private management structure to fund, program, maintain, and provide security for the park.

The new design will celebrate and respect the park's historic character and sense of place through restored historic resources, rich landscaping and seasonal plantings, and high-quality site and building materials. It will also be sustainable, maintainable, and ecologically sensitive, serving a diverse group of users including young and old District residents, workers, and visitors.

NPS, DC and the BID came together in 2012 to collaboratively plan and implement park improvements through a public-private partnership. Recognizing that downtown Washington parks serve national, regional, and local audiences, the agencies see the Franklin Park project as a model for new partnership structures to improve and manage urban parks.

KEY INFORMATION

- The NPS park is a contributing feature to the L'Enfant Plan. Congress set aside this park land to protect the site's natural springs, once the primary water source for the White House.
- The park's period of significance is from 1867 to 1936. The elements contributing to the period of significance include the following: the fountain and central plaza; views inward toward the central plaza and fountain; the Commodore John Barry Statue and plaza; trees planted before 1936; replacement trees after 1936 that are the same species as the ones they replaced; the park furniture including benches, squirrel basins, and Saratoga light fixtures; lawns and lawn curbs; and the pathway system.
- The collaborative partnership between NPS, the District and the BID to fund a capital and operational program for the park follows recommendations from the 2010 *CapitalSpace Plan*.
- Downtown Washington has experienced a significant increase in residential population over the past ten years, and is now home to nearly 10,000 people. Residents are asking for more urban parks and recreational amenities in the area.
- NCPC reviewed the preliminary design in 2015 and provided comments to NPS.
- The 2015 design was developed through a concurrent NEPA Environmental Assessment and Section 106 processes conducted from September 2013 – June 2015.
- The preferred alternative was selected because it strikes a balance between respecting the historic integrity of the park while modernizing the space for today's recreational needs, including revenue-generating programs for the park's long-term economic viability.
- A June 2015 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) fulfilling Section 106 responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires additional design review to ensure adverse effects are minimized and impacts to the cultural landscape and/or archaeological resources are properly mitigated.
- In 2016, the NPS and its partners hired a new landscape architect who is moving the design forward and refining certain elements to address the changing context of downtown and the needs of the park.
- Key elements of the revised design include:
 - Upgrades to the center plaza and studying upgrading the fountain
 - A revised children's garden
 - A new café with restrooms, a park operations space and other basic amenities
 - A pedestrian plaza with outdoor seating and cultural/historic interpretive elements

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- Significant landscape improvements
 - Programmed event space: west and east lawns, central plaza and the café plaza.
 - The new design includes the removal of 46 trees due to poor health, the redesign of the central fountain and plaza and the desire to vary the life span of the trees so that the park always has a tree canopy.
 - The new design will plant over 80 trees, providing the space and care necessary to grow a healthy canopy for the park. Understory shrubs and perennials native to the mid-Atlantic region are also a part of the enhanced landscape plan.
 - The submission includes several concepts for the plaza fountain which vary from maintaining the existing fountain to full replacement with a water scrim and jets.
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RECOMMENDATION

Approves the revised preliminary site and building plans for the rehabilitation of Franklin Park, located in downtown Washington, DC.

Notes that Franklin Park is a contributing element of the L'Enfant Plan and is located in a thriving and changing part of downtown Washington, DC.

Notes that unlike other NPS squares and circles in Washington, DC, the design of Franklin Park is unique in that it offers a more natural respite with mature trees, circular paths, and a fountain with a pool as its focal point.

Notes that given the changing context of downtown, the partners are mutually interested in the park serving a diversity of users including young and old District residents, workers, and visitors.

Finds the revised design must celebrate and respect the historic character of the park while addressing present day opportunities and concerns.

Provides the following findings and recommendations regarding the park design:

Children's Garden

- **Supports** the children's garden as a concept and encourages NPS to fully explore the use of natural materials in creating a unique play space for children.

Café/Pedestrian Promenade

- **Notes** the scale and materials are appropriate and the revised design now allows access to the restroom through the café and from outside.
- **Supports** the design direction of the updated café and restroom building.
- NPS has not included further information of interpretative elements for the pedestrian promenade, and staff **continues** to recommend that these elements be developed in the future.

Tree Canopy

- **Supports** the proposed changes to the tree canopy because it will allow more natural light infiltration, improve the overall environmental health of the park by increasing tree age diversity, and allow for stormwater management facilities on site.

East/West Lawns

- **Supports** the use of the east and west lawns for use as programmed event space, because it provides additional opportunities for events at the park and it reduces the need for the central plaza to be a major programmed space within the park.

Fountain/Central Plaza

Notes that NPS has provided nine concepts for a rehabilitated/reimagined central fountain that range from restoring the existing fountain and pool to full removal and replacement with a scrim and jet water feature.

Finds that analysis of the fountain design should be based on three over-arching criteria:

- 1) Historic Preservation – the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement states that NPS will ensure that the redesign of the center fountain, including lighting, new jets and other features, will reflect the general character and retain the shape of the existing historic fountain; will maintain the fountain as a central park feature; and will reuse and incorporate the existing historic coping into the redesign of the fountain.
- 2) Central Plaza Programming – NPS and its partners prefer a fountain design that will provide an interactive experience during warmer months and allow for plaza programming during winter months when the fountain is turned off.
- 3) Design and Scale –the fountain should be appropriately designed and scaled in the context of the expanded paved plaza and the removal of some of the large trees surrounding the existing fountain.

Finds that concept 1 (restore the existing fountain as is) meets the historic preservation criteria but does not include an interactive water feature, is less conducive to year-round plaza programming, and is no longer appropriately scaled for the larger plaza and therefore should be eliminated.

Finds that concepts 8-9 fail to meet the historic preservation criteria as outlined in the MOA and therefore should be eliminated.

Finds that the concepts 2-7 can all be appropriately scaled and designed to include an interactive water feature while maintaining the historic character of the fountain in varying degrees.

Finds that the main difference between these concepts is whether the water feature maintains the pool of water (only concept 2), which differentiates this park from other L'Enfant Plan reservations

and contributes to its natural character; or whether the pool is eliminated to allow for more year-round programming flexibility.

Requests that NPS provide a more detailed explanation of the programming needs for the central plaza, given programming is now proposed for the east and west lawns as well.

Requests that NPS analyze concepts 2-7 regarding the specific programming needs of the central plaza and whether maintaining a pool with the water feature is feasible.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	September 2014 – Information presentation December 2015 – Preliminary Design approval with comments.
Remaining actions (anticipated)	– Final site and building plans review expected by mid-2019

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

As was noted in 2015 when the Commission reviewed the initial preliminary design, the rehabilitation of Franklin Park from its current state into a modern urban park will help the city provide needed amenities and programming for a growing downtown residential population, nearby employees, and visitors to Washington. This revised design continues to respect much of the existing historic park infrastructure, including the central plaza, the historically significant statue commemorating Commodore John Barry, and the circulation system that enhances the existing asymmetrical pathways on an east-west axis with open turf areas throughout the park. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission **approve the revised preliminary site and building plans for the rehabilitation of Franklin Park, located in downtown Washington, DC.**

The submission includes refinements to most of the 2015 design. The submission includes more detailed designs and programming ideas for the children's garden, the west and east lawns, the plaza, and the café. The submission also proposes several concepts for the historic fountain which sits at the center of the plaza. Staff's analysis of the fountain alternatives considers the role of the

fountain in the park; its historic design; and how it works with the proposed programming for the plaza area.

Analysis

Similar to staff's 2015 review, the analysis of the revised design for Franklin Park is organized by the various areas within the park and how the applicant has addressed the Commission's previous comments.

Children's Garden

In 2015, NPS also proposed a 12,000 square foot children's play area. According to the 2005 Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI), Franklin Park contained a play space for neighborhood children from the mid-19th to the early 20th century, including a sandbox, swings, and slides. The Franklin School, located just east of the park, used the open space for recess and community events. These uses faded as the park became heavily planted and fell into disrepair, and by the park's redesign in 1936, disappeared altogether.

This area was intended to serve as a children's garden and play space. Taking its cues from the park's pastoral setting and ecological context as part of the Potomac watershed, many of the proposed elements embody a more natural approach to play than typically found in Washington playgrounds.

The Commission 2015 comments on the children's garden were as follows:

- Per the MOA signed on June 3, 2015 pursuant to Section 106 and 110 of the NHPA, incorporate the Potomac watershed theme throughout the design.
- Identify the type and location of specific play elements to be located within the Children's Garden.
- Consider use of the "living" fence as the preferred option to best integrate the protective measures necessary for a safe play space with the organic design of the park.

The current design NPS proposes is a more natural play area that will have small boulders, fallen logs for climbing, and a slide. This design does not include a fence at this time as the proposed topographic changes provide a barrier on the eastern edge of the garden. In addition, parents would be able to sit and keep an eye on their children from a bench located south of the garden.

As this project will introduce natural materials that will encourage interactive play, staff **supports a garden as a concept and would encourage NPS to fully explore the use of natural materials in creating a unique play space for children.**

Café/Pedestrian Promenade

The 2015 design included approximately 2,100 square foot café in an effort to pay homage to the 1913 lodge, which NPS removed from the park around 1974. The proposed café also included

restrooms and a park operations room. It was sited adjacent to a new 35-foot wide pedestrian promenade that could be converted to an event space with tents, as needed.

The Commission's 2015 comments on this element were as follows:

- Provide further details regarding the design, materials, and construction of the café, including the green roof.
- Enhance visitor safety by providing restroom access directly from the interior of café.
- Per the MOA signed on June 3, 2015 pursuant to Section 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), integrate cultural and historic interpretive features on the history of Franklin Park within the pavement area of the pedestrian promenade to engage visitors and activate the space.
- Provide further details regarding site programming and sustainable design features within the pedestrian promenade.

While the redesigned café/restroom building will be the same size as in the 2015 design, it has been further explored and NPS states it is intended to “float” over the proposed LID that will stretch along the entire southern portion of the park. The café will also incorporate a large canopy that includes a green roof.

Staff has reviewed the revised design and is overall pleased with the direction of the updated café and restroom building. Staff also notes the scale and materials are appropriate and the design now allows access to the restroom through the café and from outside. Finally, staff notes NPS has not included further information of interpretative elements for the pedestrian promenade, which are required under the MOA, but understands that this will be developed in the future.

Tree Canopy and Understory Plantings

In 2015, the staff noted that Franklin Park serves as an organic counterpoint to the more structured character of downtown Washington. At that time, we noted that the rehabilitation plan continues to respect the park's role, and it would require the removal of some of the existing landscape in order to ensure its long-term integrity and health through increasing its age diversity. The 2015 plan included the removal of 46 trees throughout the park.

In addition, the staff report noted that opening up the tree canopy and allowing natural light to filter into the park will provide a more pleasant and hospitable setting for visitors. It will also allow for the restoration and long-term maintenance of understory plantings and turf areas throughout the park. A well-funded and staffed operations and maintenance plan will be needed to ensure the long-term success of the landscape.

Currently, the 2018 design also includes the removal of 46 trees within the park. The landscape plan proposes planting over 80 new trees throughout the park. NPS noted that many of the trees being removed are due to poor health or their location in the southern portion of the site. The southern portion of the site is where the stormwater management areas are planned and these requirements will require changing the topography causing the removal of some trees. NPS notes

the other reason for removing trees is to increase the tree age diversity for the park. This issue was identified and raised in 2015, since many of the trees are mature specimens.

Staff continues to believe the changes to the tree canopy will be beneficial to the overall park health and longevity and would recommend that the Commission **support the proposed changes to the tree canopy because it will allow more natural light infiltration, improve the overall environmental health of the park by increasing tree age diversity, and help provide stormwater management facilities on site.**

East/West Lawns

The east and west lawns in the 2015 plans were open areas in the park and did not include any programming. At that time, these lawn areas were intended to be areas for informal sitting and areas for programmed events at the park would be on the expanded central plaza and new pedestrian promenade.

The 2018 design includes changes to the east lawn design and NPS is now allowing event programming throughout the park. The 2018 east lawn design includes a pedestrian sidewalk that connects the 13th Street sidewalk with the Central Plaza and separates the Children's Garden from the east lawn. NPS is also proposing both the east and west lawns for programmed space which frees up the central plaza from being the largest space to hold events.

Staff is **supportive of the use of the east and west lawns for use as programmed event space, because it provides additional opportunities for events at the park and it reduces the need for the central plaza to be a major programmed space in the park.**

Fountain/Central Plaza

In 2015, the NPS stated that a broken fountain, overgrown tree canopy, safety concerns, and lack of comfortable seating contributed to the current underutilization of Franklin Park's central area. At that time, the rehabilitation plan proposed an overall reduction in the size of this area (from 120' x 175' to approximately 108' x 160'). The space would have also opened up to additional sunlight, seating was to be provided, and the historic fountain would have been reimaged as a more interactive water feature as described below.

The 2015 preliminary design for the fountain repaired the existing historic fountain with some of the existing coping and proposed changing the specific water feature. The existing water feature would be expanded from just two vertical sprays in the center of the fountain to a larger water feature where water would jet from several places outside the existing coping in an arc into the existing fountain bowl. The purpose of this approach was to maintain much of the historic integrity of the fountain and its pool while making it more interactive. Since this portion of the park design was still in the early phase, the Commission's recommendation was for NPS to identify in greater detail those elements of the historic plaza and fountain that will be retained, reused, rehabilitated or replaced.

The applicant is now taking a closer look at the role of the fountain in the plaza area and has developed nine concepts (including the existing condition and 2015 design) for consideration. The applicant noted these concepts either propose the fountain as an object in the park or as a place-making feature that could allow year-round programming. Staff does not believe that these are not mutually exclusive and that it is important for the design to achieve both objectives.

Staff's analysis of the fountain concepts under consideration includes an evaluation of the following:

1) Historic Preservation

Franklin Park is eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2005 the NPS developed a Cultural Landscape Report that identified several elements as contributing to the park landscape including the central fountain/plaza and views toward it. The parties entered into a MOA pursuant to Section 106 included a determination that the undertaking will have an adverse effect on the entire Franklin Park Cultural Landscape. This adverse effect determination is based in part on "...the removal of components of the historic fabric including alterations to the central fountain and plaza." While the fountain bowl was to be retained in the preferred alternative, the sandstone coping around it was supposed to be removed which would have allowed seating around the fountain. The MOA also states that through Section 106 consultation that "NPS made significant progress in avoiding and minimizing some adverse effects..." in part by "...retaining the fountain as the Park's focal point." Finally, NPS and the other signatories also agreed to Stipulation I(1)(d)(i) which states "NPS would ensure that the redesign of the center fountain, including lighting, new jets and other features, will reflect the general character and retain the shape of the existing historic fountain; will maintain the fountain as a central park feature; and will reuse and incorporate the existing historic coping into the redesign of the fountain."

While the L'Enfant Plan included many squares, triangles and circles as open spaces, very few include a fountain with pool of water. Staff conducted a quick survey of these parks and believe that only Dupont Circle and Lafayette Square are the only others that include fountains. As this park is historic, its significance as a feature of the L'Enfant Plan is unique from other downtown park squares and circles such as McPherson, Farragut, or Dupont. Franklin is not located on a diagonal avenue and lacks the significant viewshed and prominent location of other downtown parks. Instead, the park was created to protect the White House's primary water source, a spring that ran through this block of downtown Washington. Looking back at the Franklin Park from 1867 at the park's inception, a fountain – albeit smaller - was present in nearly the same location than what is there today. When the last major park redesigned occurred in the 1934 the central plaza was created, and the fountain was placed in its center. Water is and has been an integral part of this park since its inception. Given the history of this park and why it was originally created, an argument could be made for maintaining a fountain with a bowl and its capacity to hold water at this site.

2) Central Plaza Programming

In 2015, the proposed use of the plaza was to provide a large event space for the park. At that time the lawn areas were not going to be used for any events. Staff now understands that NPS is proposing park programming on the east and west lawns, reducing the need to have a large central plaza that is available for events. The main central plaza programming use that is identified in the current submission is for a market. NPS also noted that the plaza could be a location for downtown workers who need a place to sit and eat after visiting the food trucks which are parked along the 13th Street, NW side of the park. NPS and its partners suggest providing movable tables and chairs in the plaza is support of this informal use. Finally, the revised design includes a new pathway connecting the plaza directly to 13th Street, NW to facilitate this movement. NPS noted that the fountain could also incorporate an interactive element. This desire to include an interactive aspect with the fountain has so far conflicted with the 2015 MOA and historic preservation goals of maintaining the integrity of the fountain itself.

3) Design and Scale

Fountains are found in parks throughout Washington, DC and their scale relative to the park is important. Some fountains are very large and have vertical elements like the Columbus Fountain which is 66 feet wide and 45 feet tall and located in a large plaza in front of a very large building, Union Station. While others are smaller and more horizontal, such as the Andrew Mellon Memorial Fountain, which is 30 feet wide and located in a small triangular park along Pennsylvania Avenue and across Constitution Avenue from the National Gallery of Art. The fountain at Franklin park is surrounded by mature trees which have grown up in planting strips within the plaza and make the plaza feel intimate. The proposed design includes the removal of some mature trees and their planting strips from the plaza. While staff understands that this is being done because of the health and age of the trees, Staff believes this decision may visually reduce the scale of the existing fountain within the existing plaza – thereby making the existing fountain seem small and out of place. While this submission does not indicate the dimensions of the existing plaza or proposed plaza it appears to be larger. NPS is proposing to include some trees in the design of the plaza to provide shade, but it is unclear if this will be able to sufficiently address this change in scale. Staff believes it is important to understand this scale and would encourage NPS and its partners address this issue.

Concepts 1-2: Variations that retain the original fountain bowl and pool of water

Concepts 1-2 include variations of the fountain design that both retain the original fountain bowl with a pool of water.

Staff believes these concepts meet the historic preservation criteria by retaining most of the existing coping and fountain bowl with pool and serve as a focal point within the park; however, they are not fully interactive nor would they allow flexible programming in the winter. The scale of concept 1 (existing fountain design) appears small in the context of the proposed larger plaza

with fewer trees. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission eliminate Concept 1 from further evaluation.

Concepts 3-7: Variations that retain some/all of fountain coping but eliminate the bowl and pool of water

Concepts 3-7 include variations of the fountain design that all retain some or all of the original fountain coping without retaining the bowl and pool of water. The coping would be the only retained part of the fountain. Sprays and a water scrim would be installed to make it more of an interactive feature.

Staff understands these concepts largely meet the historic preservation criteria as they incorporate the existing historic coping into the redesign; however, concepts 5 and 7 are less successful in this regard. All concepts no longer retain the pool of water which has historically differentiated this park from other NPS reservations. The proposed scrim and jets however, will be more interactive for a diverse group of people. Maintaining the existing coping design will create a focal point within the plaza throughout the winter when the water feature is off. Some of the concepts appear larger in scale which may be more appropriate for the larger plaza; however, more information regarding dimensions is needed.

Concepts 8-9: Variations that eliminate the fountain bowl, coping, and pool of water

Concepts 8-9 include variations of the fountain design that completely eliminate the original fountain bowl with a pool of water. These two concepts include adding water jets and scrim for an interactive element.

While the proposed scrim and jets will be more interactive for a diverse group of people, staff finds these concepts do not meet the historic preservation criteria and the terms of the MOA as the fountain bowl and coping are completely eliminated. These concepts would allow for the greatest flexibility in programming throughout the year as they result in a large open plaza when the water is turned off; however, the role of the fountain as a focal point in the plaza would be gone. For these reasons, staff recommends these concepts should be eliminated.

After reviewing all of these concepts, staff therefore **recommends** that the Commission:

- **Find that concept 1 (restore the existing fountain as is) meets the historic preservation criteria, but does not include an interactive water feature, is less conducive to year-round plaza programming, and is no longer appropriately scaled for the larger plaza and therefore should be eliminated.**
- **Find that concepts 8-9 fail to meet the historic preservation criteria as outlined in the MOA and therefore should be eliminated.**

- Find that the concepts 2-7 can all be appropriately scaled and designed to include an interactive water feature while maintaining the historic character of the fountain in varying degrees.
- Find that the main difference between these concepts is whether the water feature maintains the pool of water (only concept 2), which differentiates this park from other L'Enfant Plan reservations and contributes to its natural character; or whether the pool is eliminated to allow for more year-round programming flexibility.
- Requests that NPS provide a more detailed explanation of the programming needs for the central plaza, given programming is now proposed for the east and west lawns as well.
- Requests that NPS analyze concepts 2-7 regarding the specific programming needs of the central plaza and whether maintaining a pool with the water feature is feasible.

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff reviewed the project in accordance with the Federal Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. As noted below, the project is consistent with policies in the Historic Preservation Element, the Federal Environment Element, Urban Design Element and the Parks and Open Space Element. The project will improve Franklin Park's overall appearance, urban park amenities, and the functionality of this significant downtown park. The project promotes high quality design and sustainability principles while also preserving open space in downtown Washington and providing visitor amenities and educational opportunities.

National Historic Preservation Act

As part of the Section 106 process, NCPC entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the National Park Service (NPS) and the DC State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO), dated June 3, 2015, to outline mitigation measures, design evaluation, and protection of archeological resources. The MOA identifies specific mitigation measures to protect the park's cultural landscape and other features where feasible, including reuse of existing hardscape materials and furnishings, replanting of the historic landscape, and protection of the Commodore Barry Monument. It also provides the opportunity for additional design refinement as the plans are submitted for the US Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) and NCPC approval.

National Environmental Policy Act

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), NPS in cooperation with the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and working with the District and the

DowntownBID, completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) in December 2014. Based on analysis of the EA and consideration of an extensive public comment process, NPS determined that the work in Franklin Park will not result in significant impacts to the environment. NCPC staff reviewed the EA and concurred with the selection of the preferred alternative. On June 22, 2015, NPS released a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the preferred alternative outlined in the EA. The impacts related to cultural and historic resources were mitigated through the implementation of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between NPS, NCPC and the DC State Historic Preservation Officer, dated June 3, 2015.

NCPC staff has reviewed the EA and FONSI and determined that the information and analysis provided meets the standards for an adequate EA as set forth in NCPC's Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures and that a FONSI is warranted based on the information contained in the EA. In November 2015, the NCPC Executive Director issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Alternative 3, "The Edge" alternative.

CapitalSpace Plan

The rehabilitation of Franklin Park supports one of the six big ideas of the 2010 CapitalSpace Plan. This plan, developed in partnership between the National Park Service, National Capital Planning Commission, and District of Columbia, identified holistic planning strategies to create a more seamless and functional park system for Washington.

The 5th Big Idea, Enhance Center City parks, includes the following strategic policies:

- Meet Park and Open Space Demands (*CCP-1*): Increase capacity of existing parks by improving quality, diversity in amenities, programming, and access to green spaces.
- Build Stronger Partnerships and Resources (*CCP-2*): Building and strengthen community support through partnerships with businesses, residents, workers, and visitors.
- Utilize Placemaking and Programming to Expand Recreational Opportunities (*CCP-3*): Create unique places for neighborhoods, strengthen the overall identity of parks and open space, and identify strategies to expand programs and amenity options.

CONSULTATION

As part of the development of conceptual designs, NPS, DCOP and the DowntownDC BID formed a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of key stakeholders to provide guidance and refine the conceptual design work. NCPC participated in this group along with federal and local partners including the US Commission of Fine Arts, DC State Historic Preservation Office, District Department of the Environment and the District Department of Transportation. The TAG met in December 2013 and February 2014.

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its November 14, 2018 meeting. Without objection, the Committee forwarded the proposed comments on revised concept design to the

Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The SHPO is coordinating on the project but notes that further consultation will be required regarding the redesign of the central fountain. DOEE noted that the café may require a certificate of occupancy, which would then trigger compliance with Green Area Ratio requirements. DDOT requested that the applicant provide additional information on loading areas for the café and confirm the underlying ownership along 13th Street NW where new street trees are proposed. The participating agencies were: NCPC, the DC SHPO (via email); the DDOT, the District Department of Energy and the Environment, the National Park Service; the General Services Administration and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) has reviewed this project twice at a concept and revised concept level, in July 2014 and October 2018. CFA commented favorably on the preferred design at its July 17, 2014 meeting. NPS and its partners further refined the design during its first review. At the October 18, 2018 meeting CFA again commented favorably on the revised concept design. These letters are attached to this report.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at www.ncpc.gov:

- Submission Package

Prepared by Carlton Hart
11/29/2018

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

Attachment # 1 - CFA Letter (2014)

CFA 17/JUL/14-2

LOCATION:

bound by 13th, 14th, I, and K Streets, NW

OWNER:

National Park Service (NPS)

PROPERTY:

Franklin Park (Reservation 9)

DESCRIPTION:

Rehabilitation of park

REVIEW TYPE:

Concept

PREVIOUS REVIEW:

[CFA 15/JAN/04-10](#)

Letter

24 July 2014

Dear Mr. Whitesell:

In its meeting of 17 July, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed alternative concepts for the rehabilitation of Franklin Park, a square in the L'Enfant city bounded by 13th, 14th, I, and K Streets, NW. The Commission expressed strong support for the project team's preferred option and approved this concept with several recommendations for the development of the design.

The Commission members commented that the preferred scheme builds upon the historic configuration of Franklin Park while allowing diagonal circulation through the site and providing new areas for programming. Noting the laudable desire to introduce new programs and amenities to the park, they encouraged balancing the needs of a wide range of visitors using this public space. They observed that the playground would be a new element with a potentially strong visual impact within the landscape, and they recommended paying careful attention to the design of this area to ensure its compatibility with the park as a whole. They acknowledged the site's rich history, suggesting emphasis on its natural spring as the inspiration for the central fountain and as the focus of limited historic interpretation.

The Commission looks forward to further review of this project and requested further information on the design of the park's many elements—such as the pavilion, paving, fountain, and lighting—as the project is developed for the next submission. As always, the staff is available to assist you.

Sincerely,

/s/Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Steve Whitesell, Regional Director
National Park Service, National Capital Region

1100 Ohio Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20242

cc: Hallie Boyce, OLIN
Rich Bradley, Downtown Business Improvement District
Peter May, National Park Service

Attachment # 2 - CFA Letter (2018)

U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS 17 MAY 1910

401 F STREET NW SUITE 312 WASHINGTON DC 20001-2728 202-504-2200 FAX 202-504-2195 WWW.CFA.GOV

25 October 2018

Dear Ms. Mendelson-Ielmini:

In its meeting of 18 October, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a revised concept design for the rehabilitation of Franklin Park, bounded by 13th, 14th, I, and K Streets, NW. The Commission approved the submission with recommendations for the development of the design.

The Commission members expressed support for the proposal, which they said will revitalize the park by balancing its layers of historic designs with current needs. They endorsed the goal of treating the central plaza as the primary public gathering space, with a larger, redesigned fountain that will draw visitors year-round; they expressed support for reintroducing shade trees in order to encourage comfort for many users. Providing comments on the range of options for reconceiving the deteriorated fountain—which they found to be underscaled within the context of the new design—they noted that its reconstruction would constitute an overemphasis on a historic object that may compromise the goals of this rehabilitation project. They observed that preservation principles may allow for a range of other possibilities, such as enlarging the fountain or changing its shape, which would keep its essential characteristics while avoiding a nostalgic reconstruction. They also expressed support for other proposed elements of the redesigned park, including the pavilion at the south and the garden at the northeast.

The Commission looks forward to further review of the design for this important downtown park. As always, the staff is available to assist you with your next submission.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Lisa Mendelson-Ielmini, Acting Regional Director
National Park Service, National Capital Region
1100 Ohio Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20242

cc: David Rubin, Land Collective
Ashton Allan, Studios Architecture
Neil Albert, Downtown DC Business Improvement District

Attachment #3 - PowerPoint Presentation

Franklin Park Rehabilitation

14th and K Streets, NW, Washington DC

Approval of Revised Preliminary Site and Building Plans

United States Department of the Interior

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: December 6, 2018

NCPC Review Authority: 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

Applicant Request: Approval of Revised Preliminary Site and Building Plans

Session: Consent Calendar

NCPC Review Officer: Carlton Hart

NCPC File Number: 7545

Project Summary:

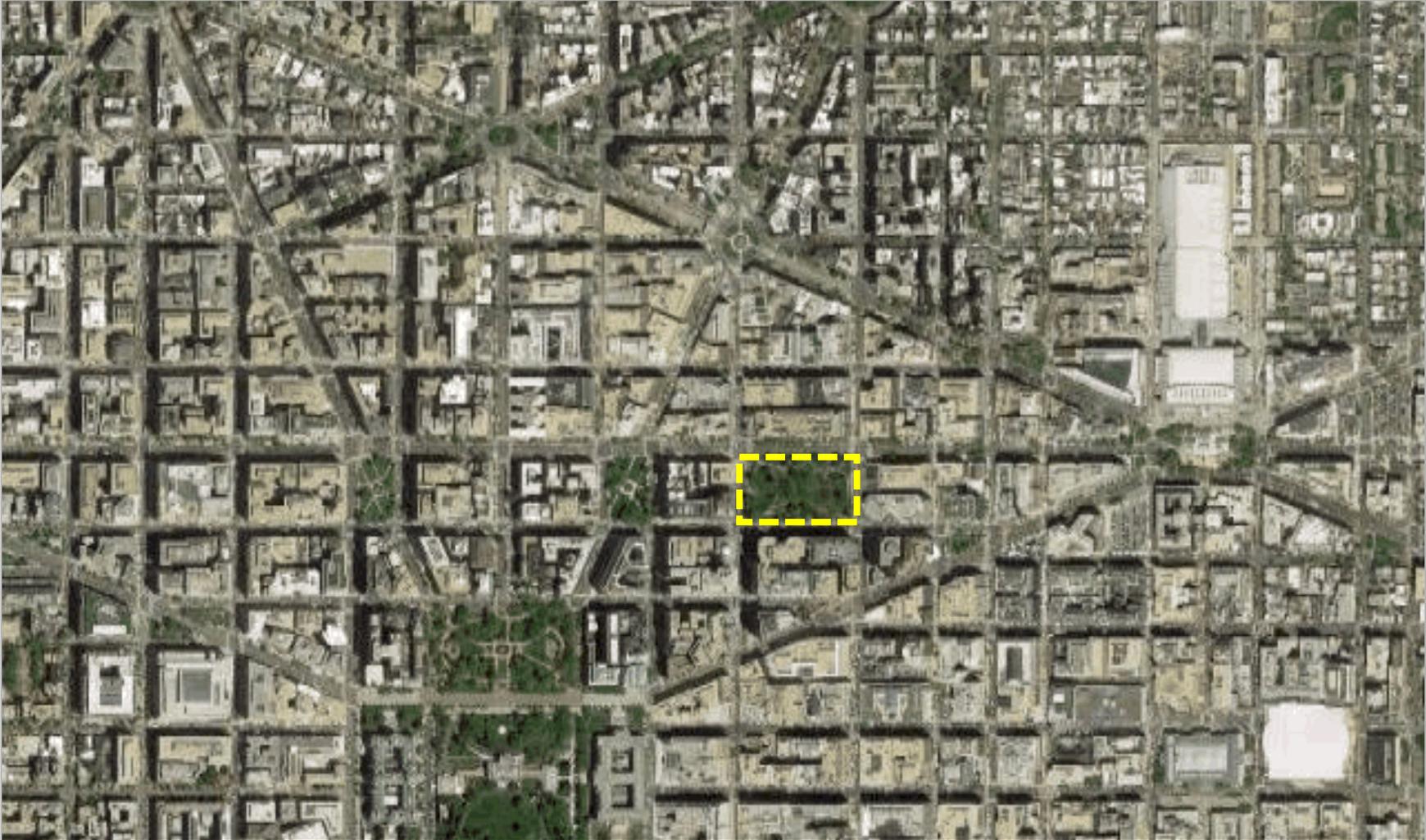
The National Park Service (NPS), the District of Columbia (DC) and the DowntownDC Business Improvement District (BID) formed a partnership in 2012 to revitalize Franklin Park, an historic urban park occupying an entire city block of 4.79 acres in Downtown Washington. It is the second largest NPS square in downtown, providing a unique opportunity to serve national tourism as well as local community needs. The park is located in a thriving commercial district and growing residential area three blocks northeast of the White House and is served by Metro, Metrobus lines, and DC Circulator routes.

Project Summary

The District has experienced significant population growth downtown in recent years, resulting in increased demand for high quality open space. Currently, Franklin Park is in disrepair and does not meet today's diverse urban needs. Improvements to the park include:

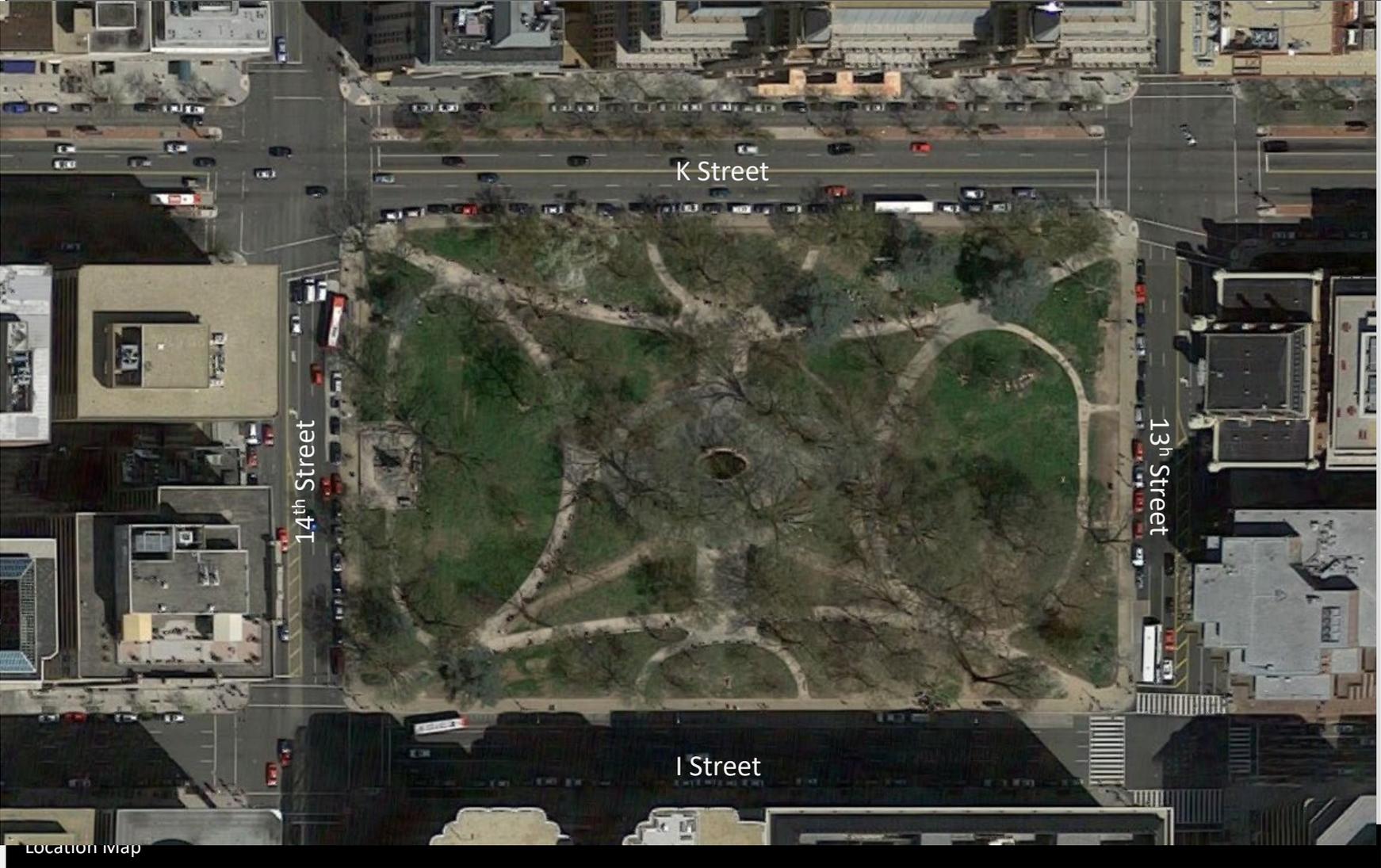
- Improvements to circulation, seating, lighting and stormwater management
- Enhancement of the tree canopy, including protection of many large trees
- Cultural/historic interpretation elements
- New Children's Garden
- Café to provide retail space and office space for park staff
- Stronger park activation and programming targeted at those who live, work and/or visit downtown

Site Location



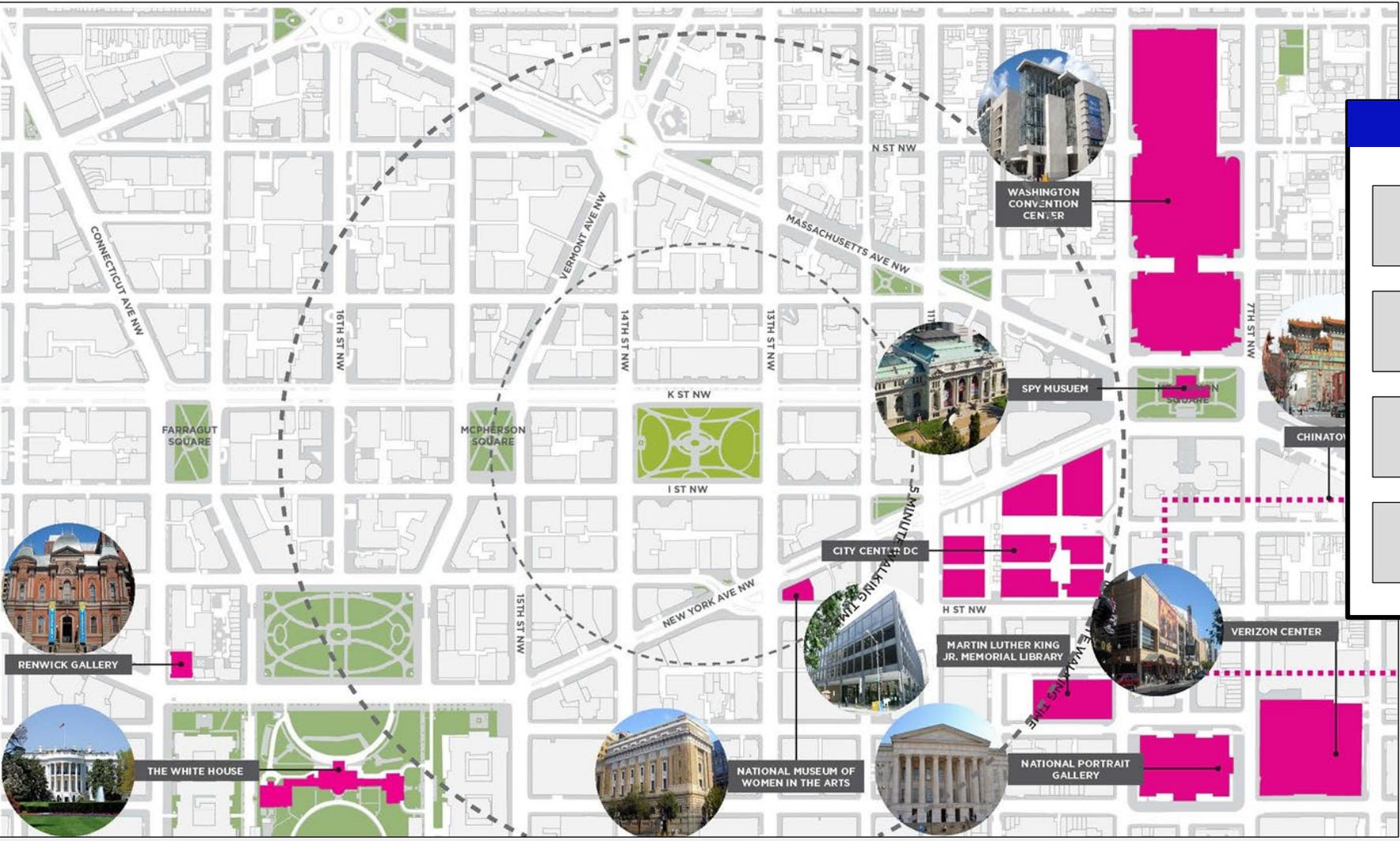
Location Map

Site Location



Location map

Franklin Park and Nearby Attractions



- Existing Buildings
- Parks and Open Space
- Attractions
- Roads

Existing Conditions



POOR TREE HEALTH



DENSE CANOPY COVERAGE



PREVENTS UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY



DETERIORATING PATHS

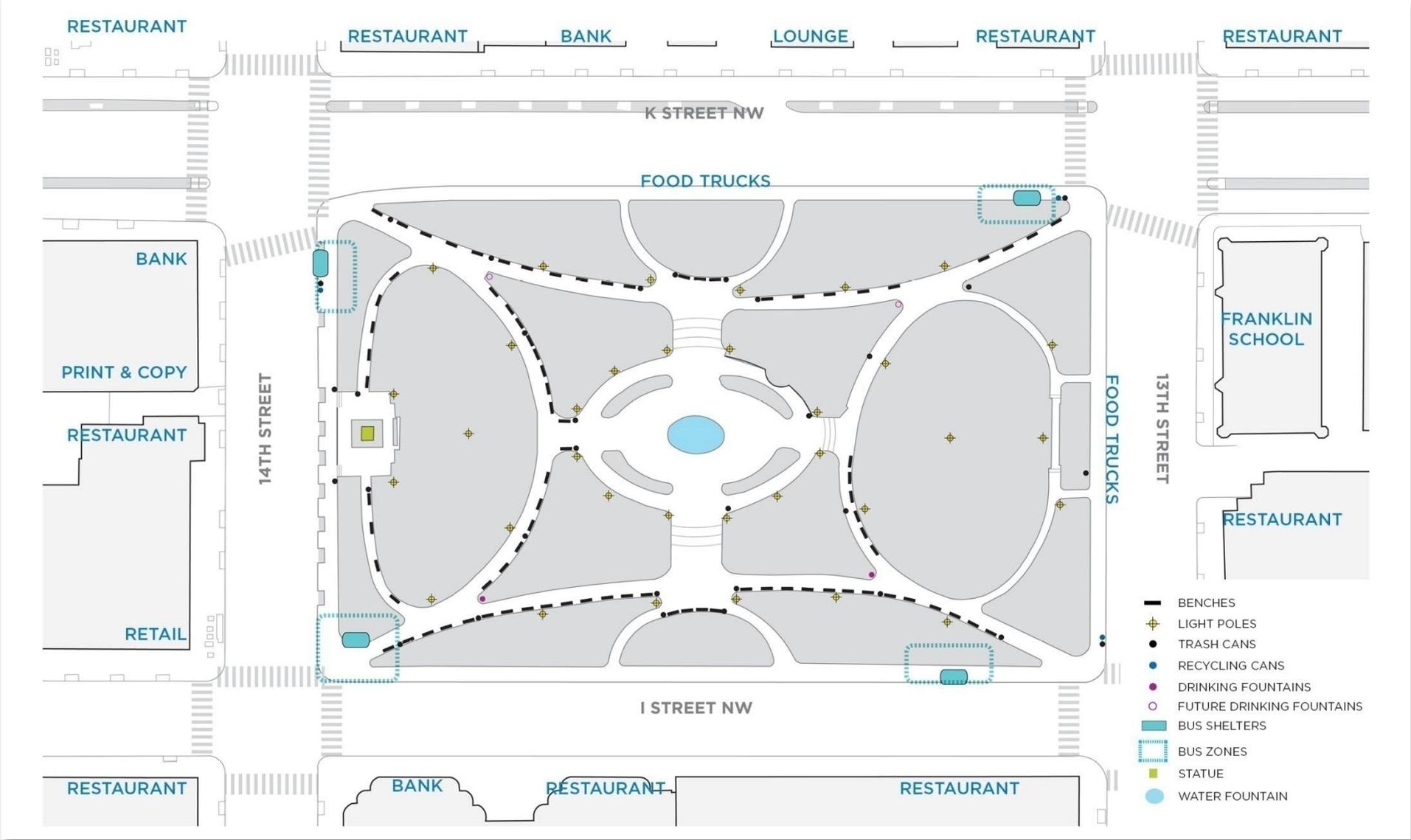


ACTIVATED FOUNTAIN PLAZA

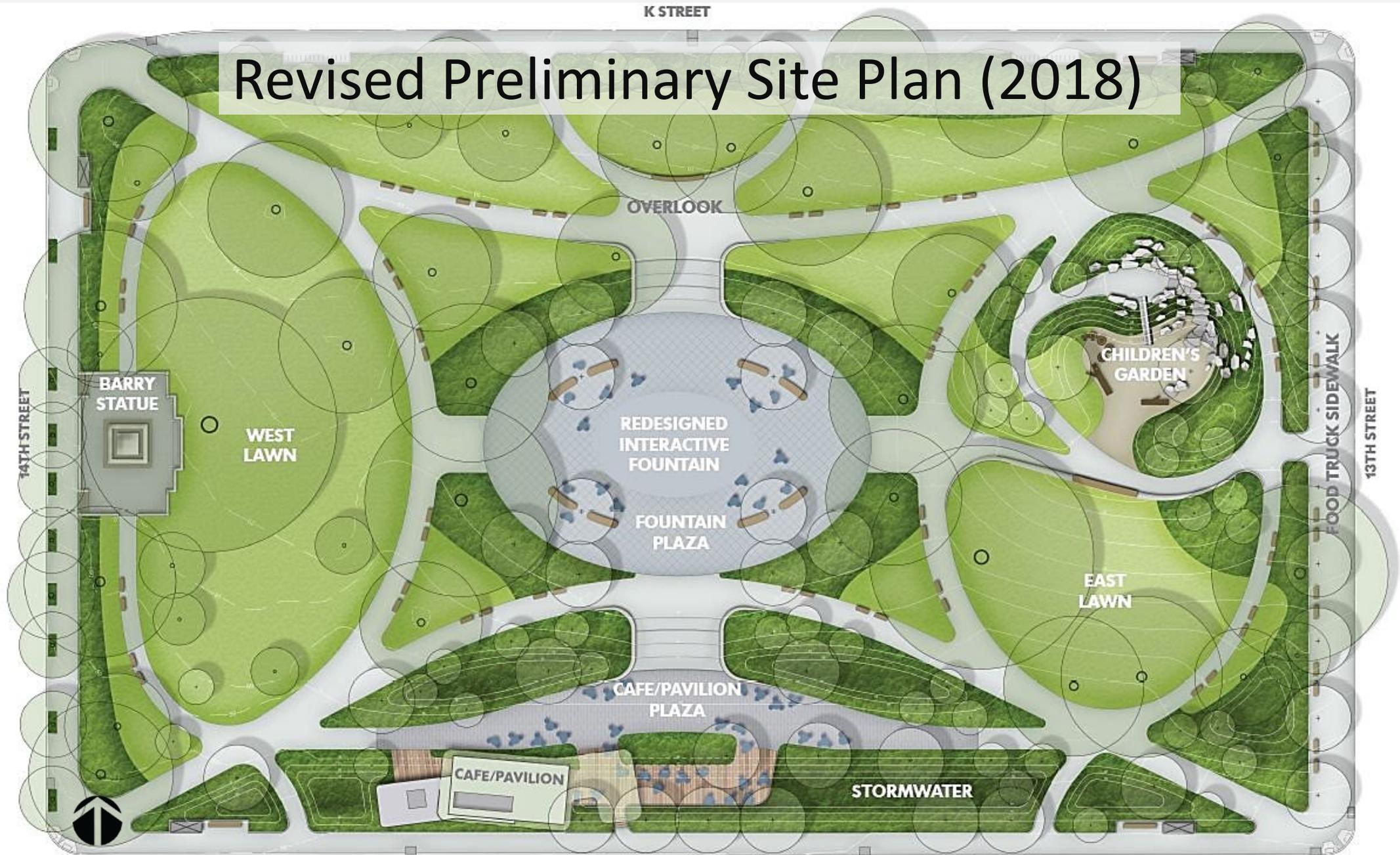


COMPACTED SOILS

Existing Site Plan



Revised Preliminary Site Plan (2018)



Site Plan Comparison

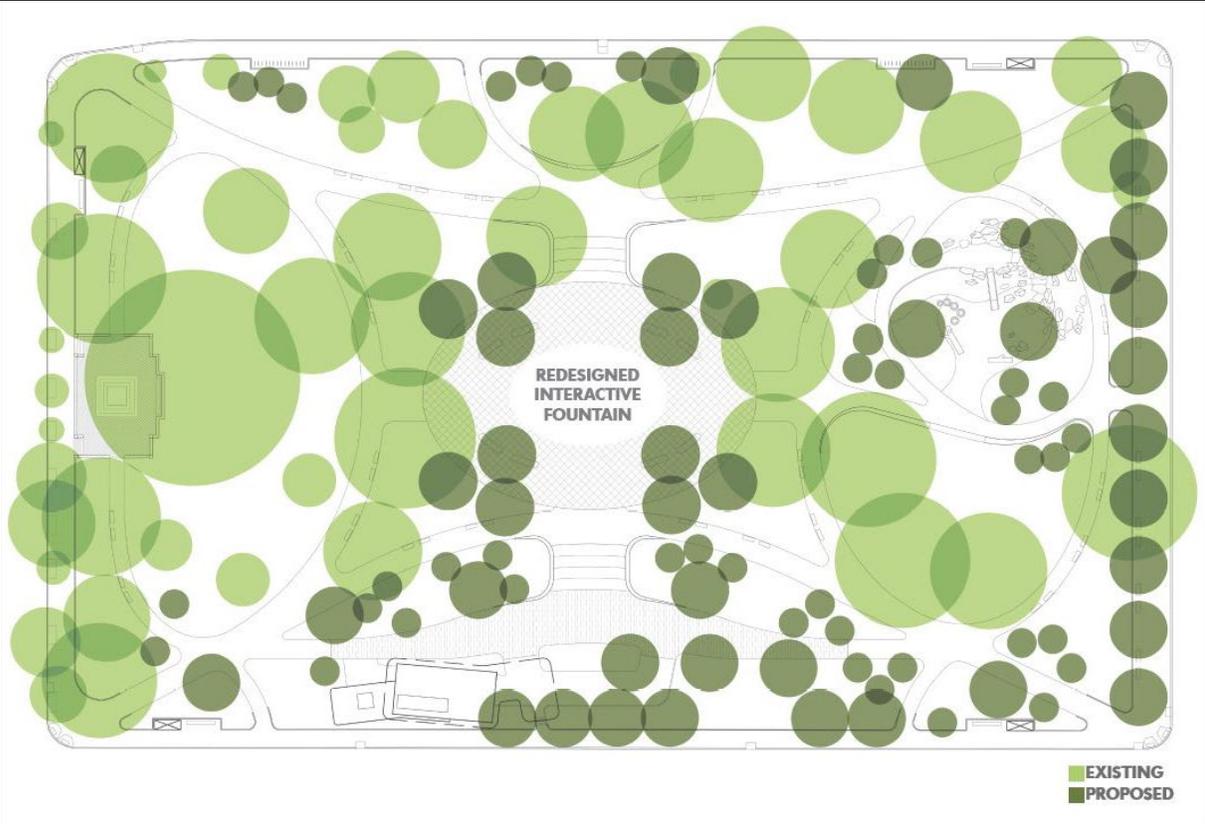


Preliminary Site Plan (2015)

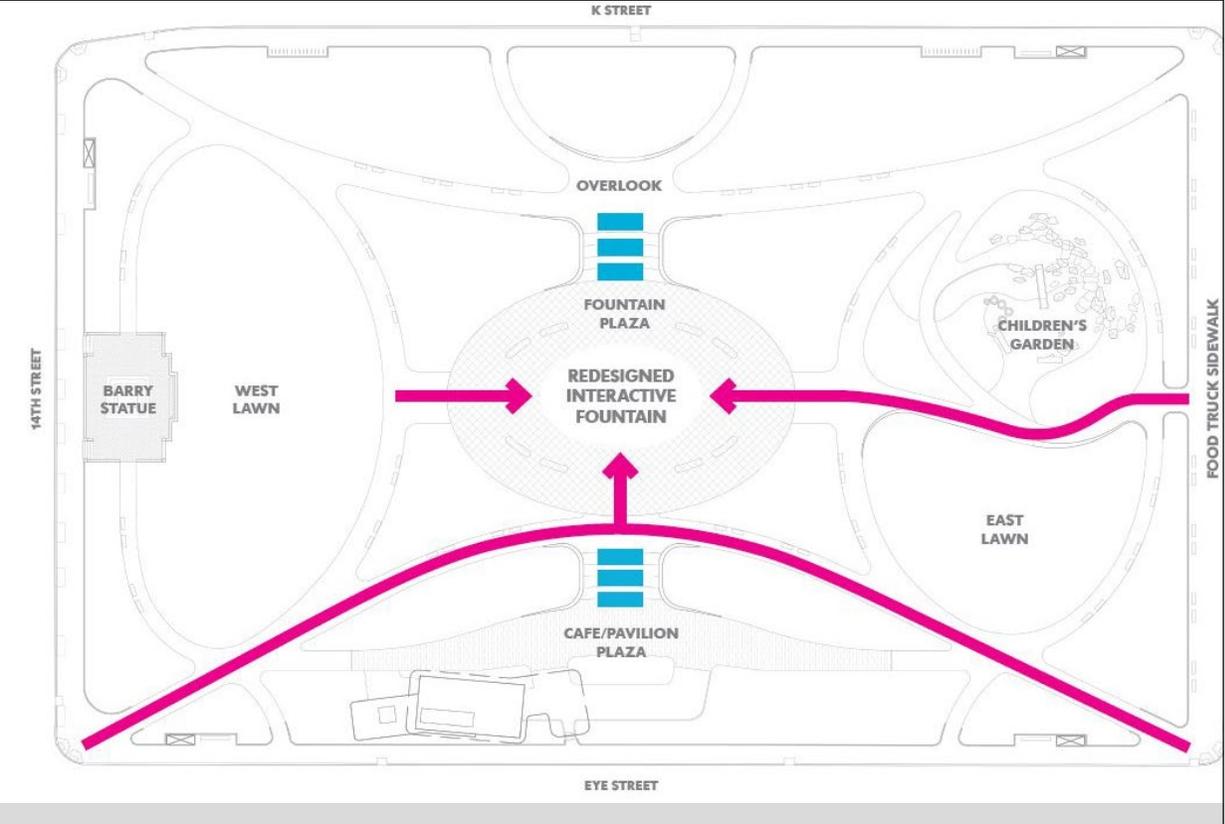


Revised Preliminary Site Plan (2018)

Tree Cover and Circulation Plans (2018)

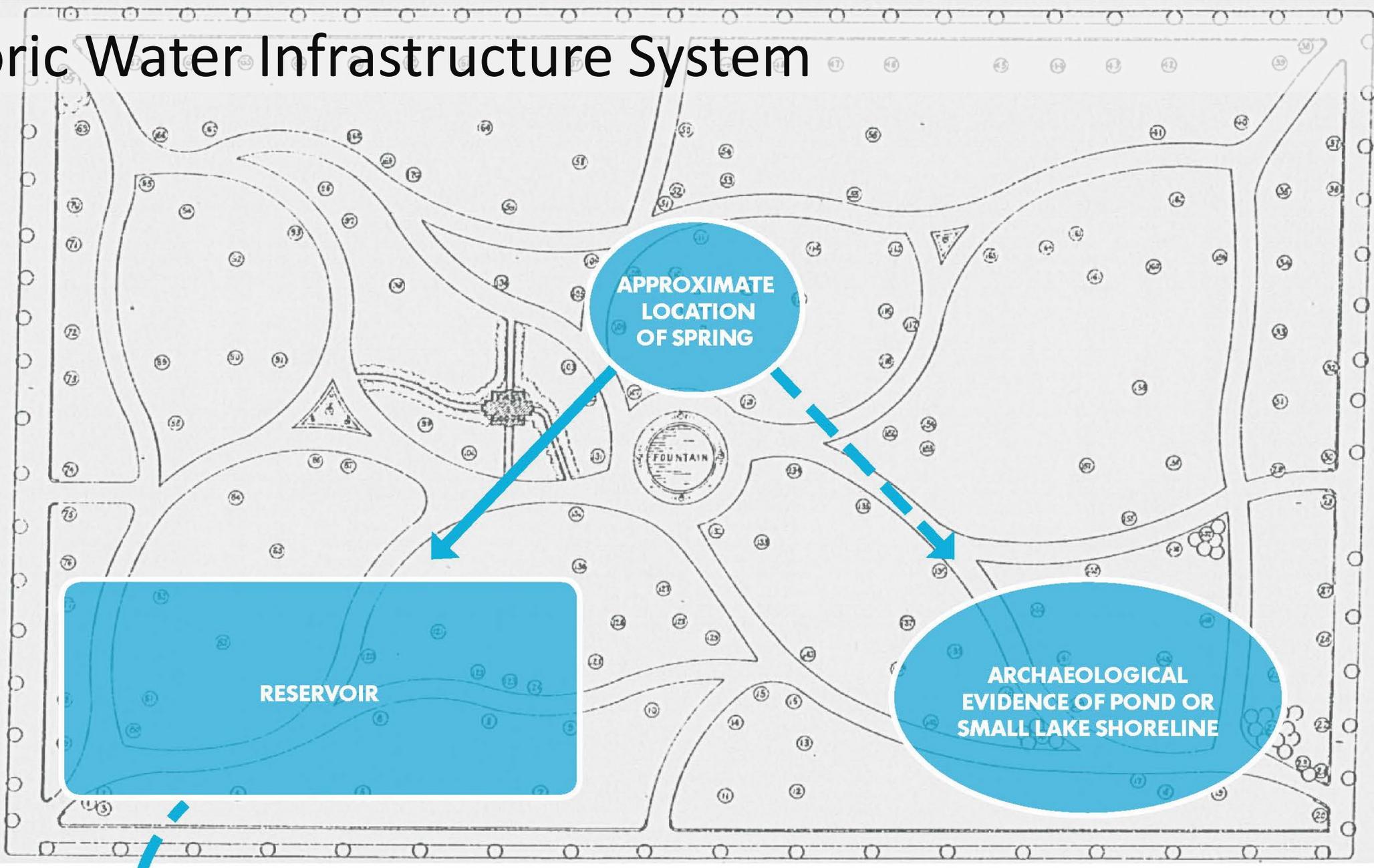


Site Plan – Tree Cover



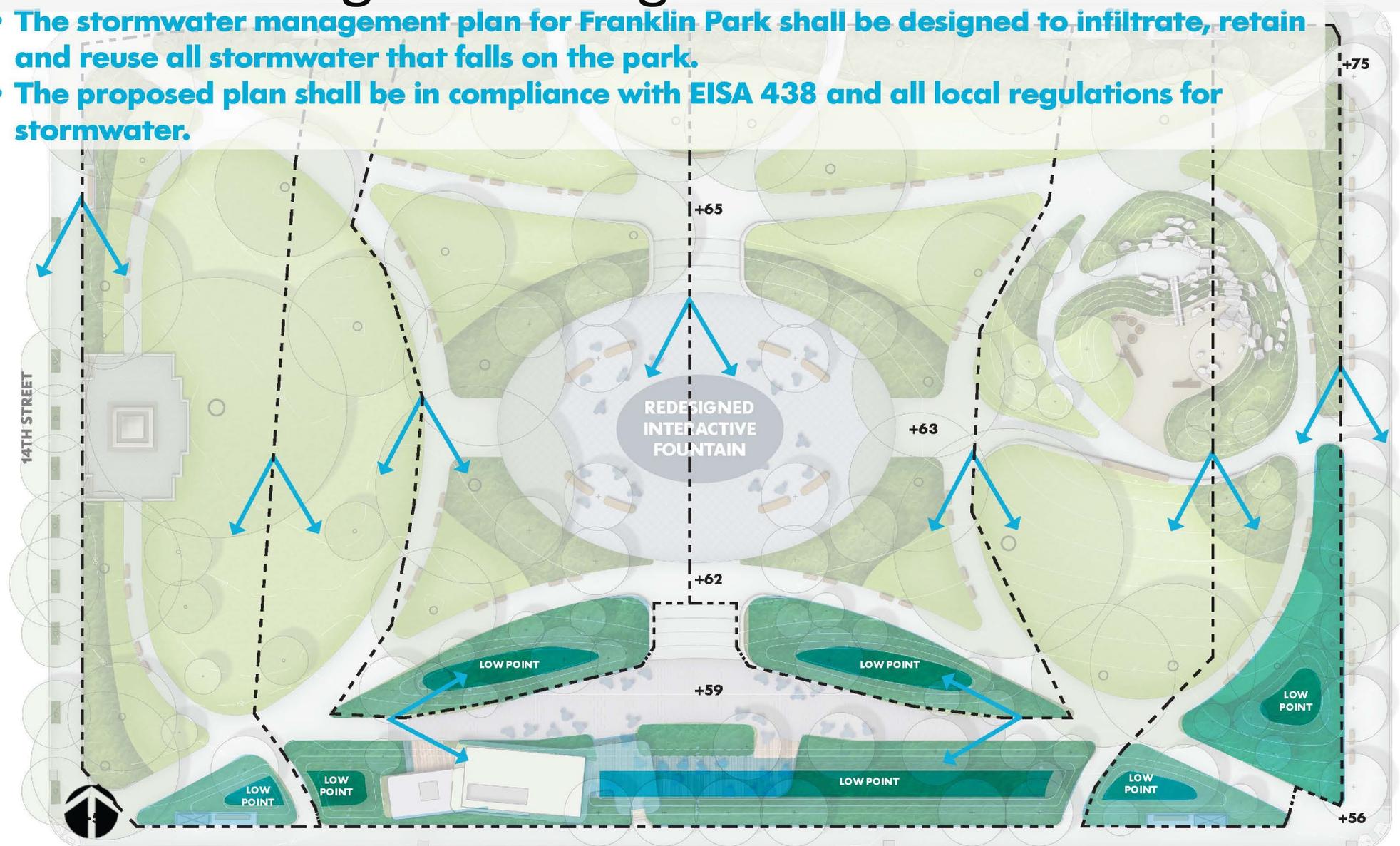
Site Plan – Circulation

Historic Water Infrastructure System

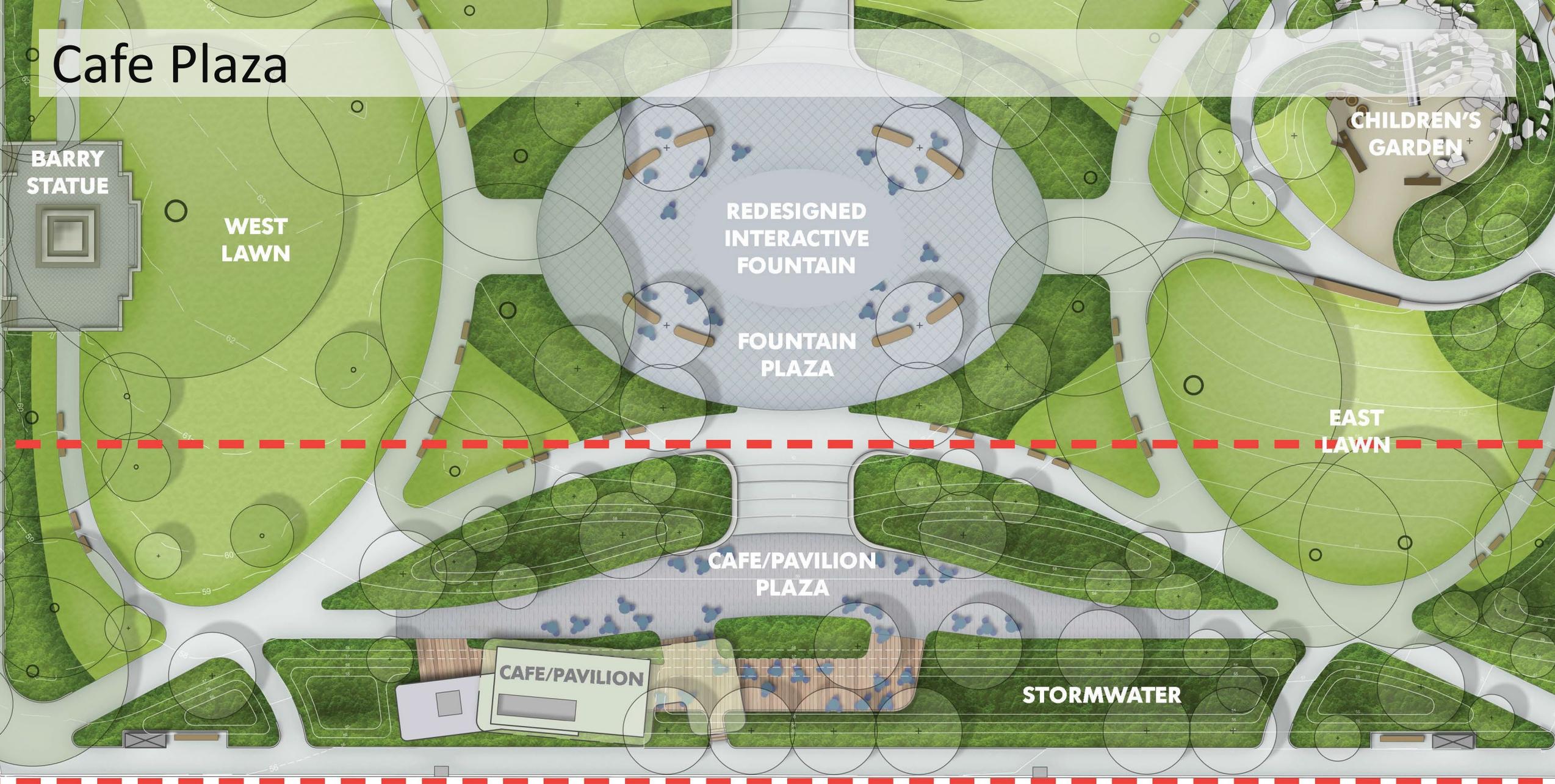


Stormwater Management Regs and Goals

- The stormwater management plan for Franklin Park shall be designed to infiltrate, retain and reuse all stormwater that falls on the park.
- The proposed plan shall be in compliance with EISA 438 and all local regulations for stormwater.



Cafe Plaza



BARRY
STATUE

WEST
LAWN

REDESIGNED
INTERACTIVE
FOUNTAIN

FOUNTAIN
PLAZA

CHILDREN'S
GARDEN

EAST
LAWN

CAFE/PAVILION
PLAZA

CAFE/PAVILION

STORMWATER

Café Plaza – Aerial View



Café Plaza – Recommendations (2015)

- Provide further details regarding the design, materials, and construction of the café, including the green roof.
- Enhance visitor safety by providing restroom access directly from the interior of café.
- Integrate cultural and historic interpretive features on the history of Franklin Park within the pavement area of the pedestrian mall to engage visitors and activate the space.
- Provide further details regarding site programming and sustainable design features within the pedestrian mall.

Café Plaza Images



View looking south

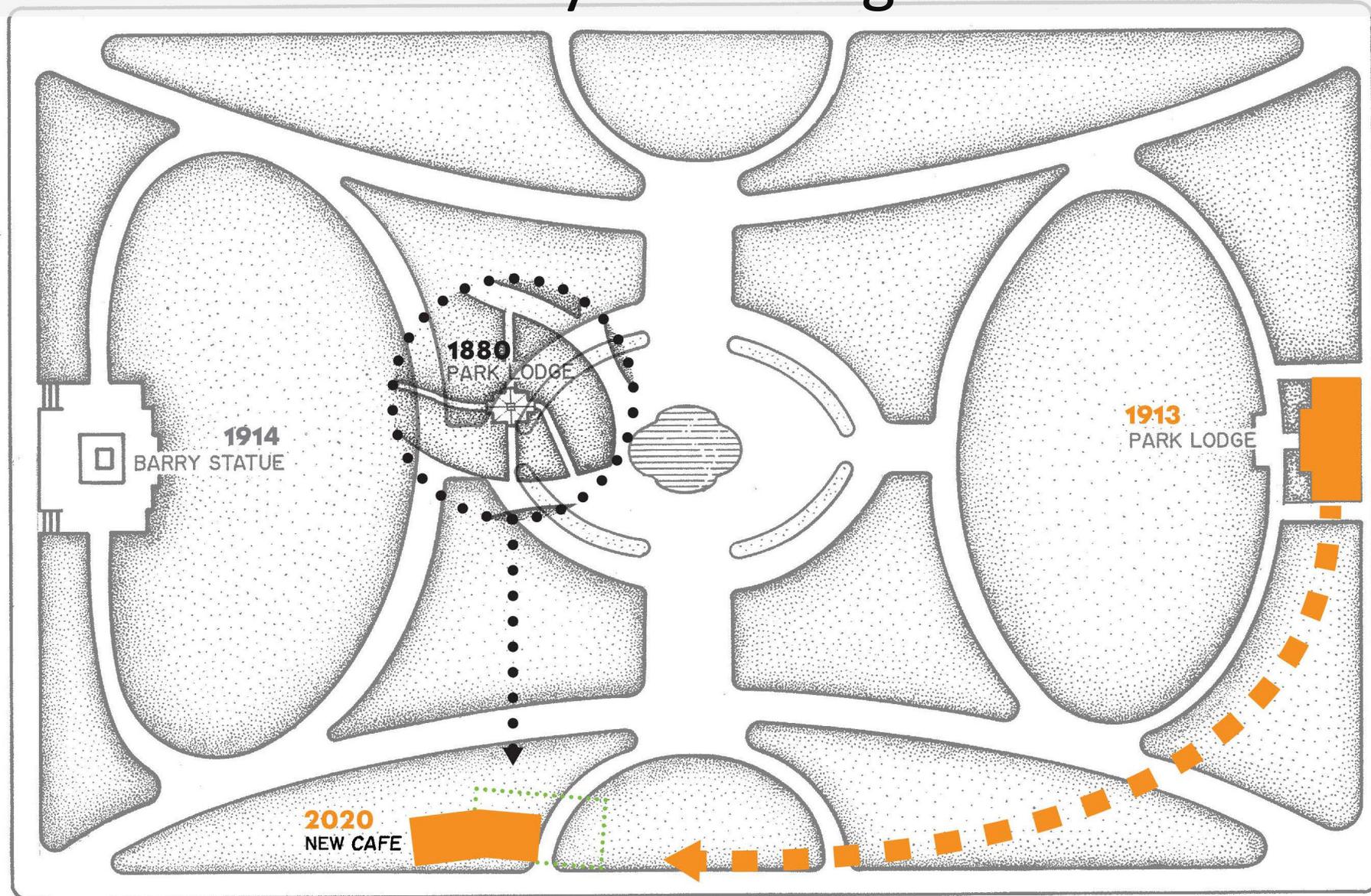


View of Café Plaza



View of stormwater management

Café – Scale of 20th Century Park Lodge



Café – Site Plan Comparison

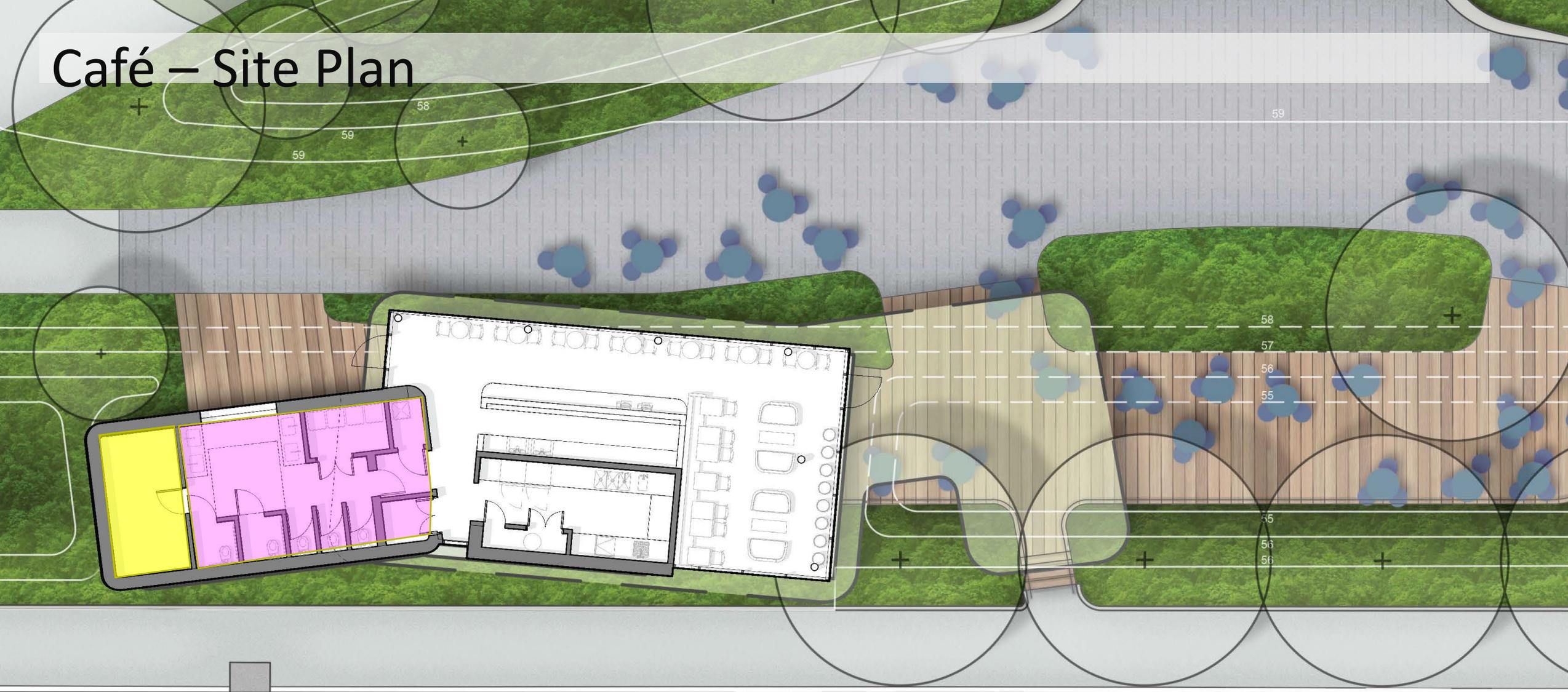


Preliminary Site Plan (2015)



Revised Preliminary Site Plan (2018)

Café – Site Plan



Café – Views from the Franklin Park



View looking southwest

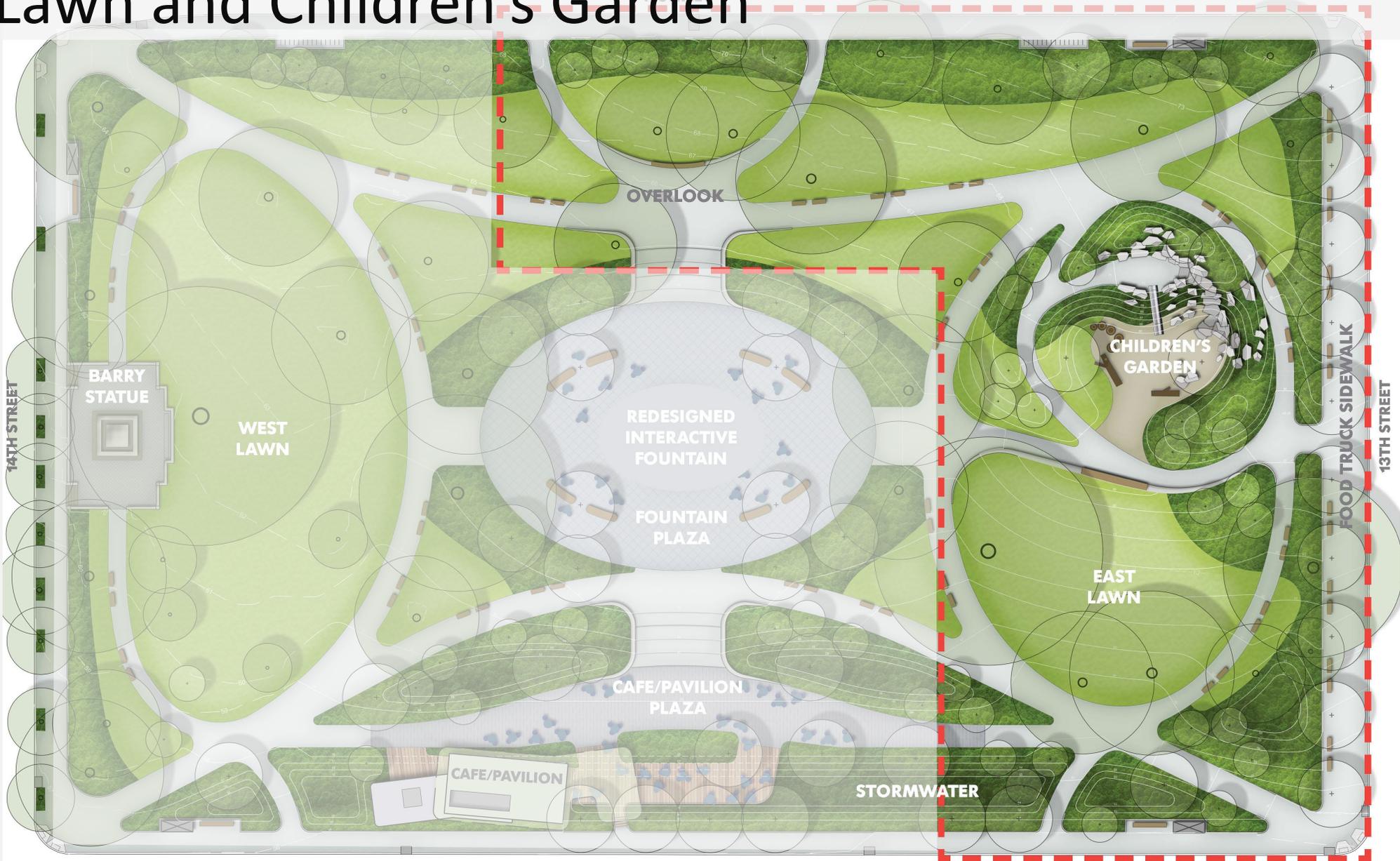


View looking southeast

Café – Views from the I Street, NW

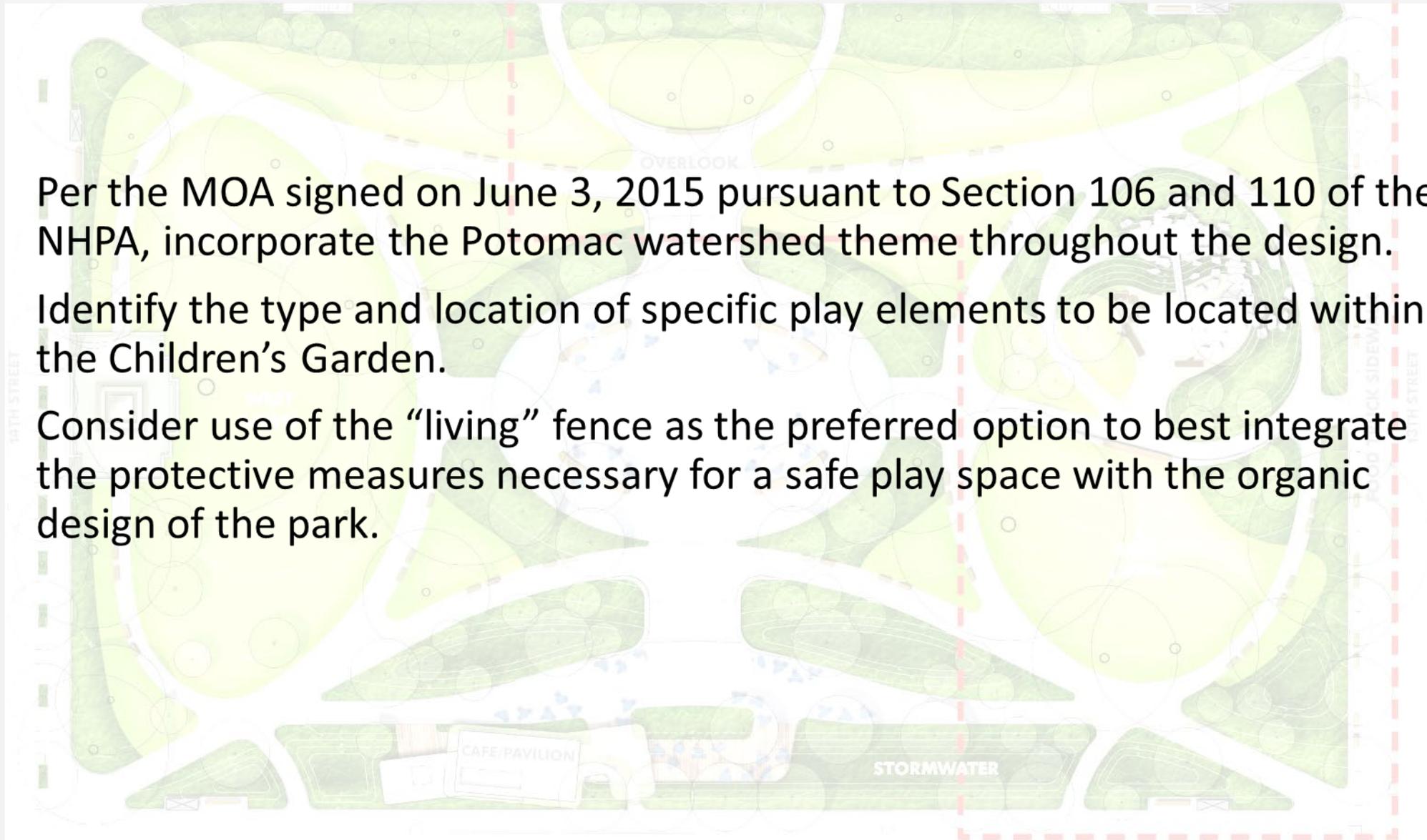


East Lawn and Children's Garden



Children's Garden Recommendations (2015)

- Per the MOA signed on June 3, 2015 pursuant to Section 106 and 110 of the NHPA, incorporate the Potomac watershed theme throughout the design.
- Identify the type and location of specific play elements to be located within the Children's Garden.
- Consider use of the “living” fence as the preferred option to best integrate the protective measures necessary for a safe play space with the organic design of the park.



East Lawn and Children's Garden Views



Children's Garden



East Lawn

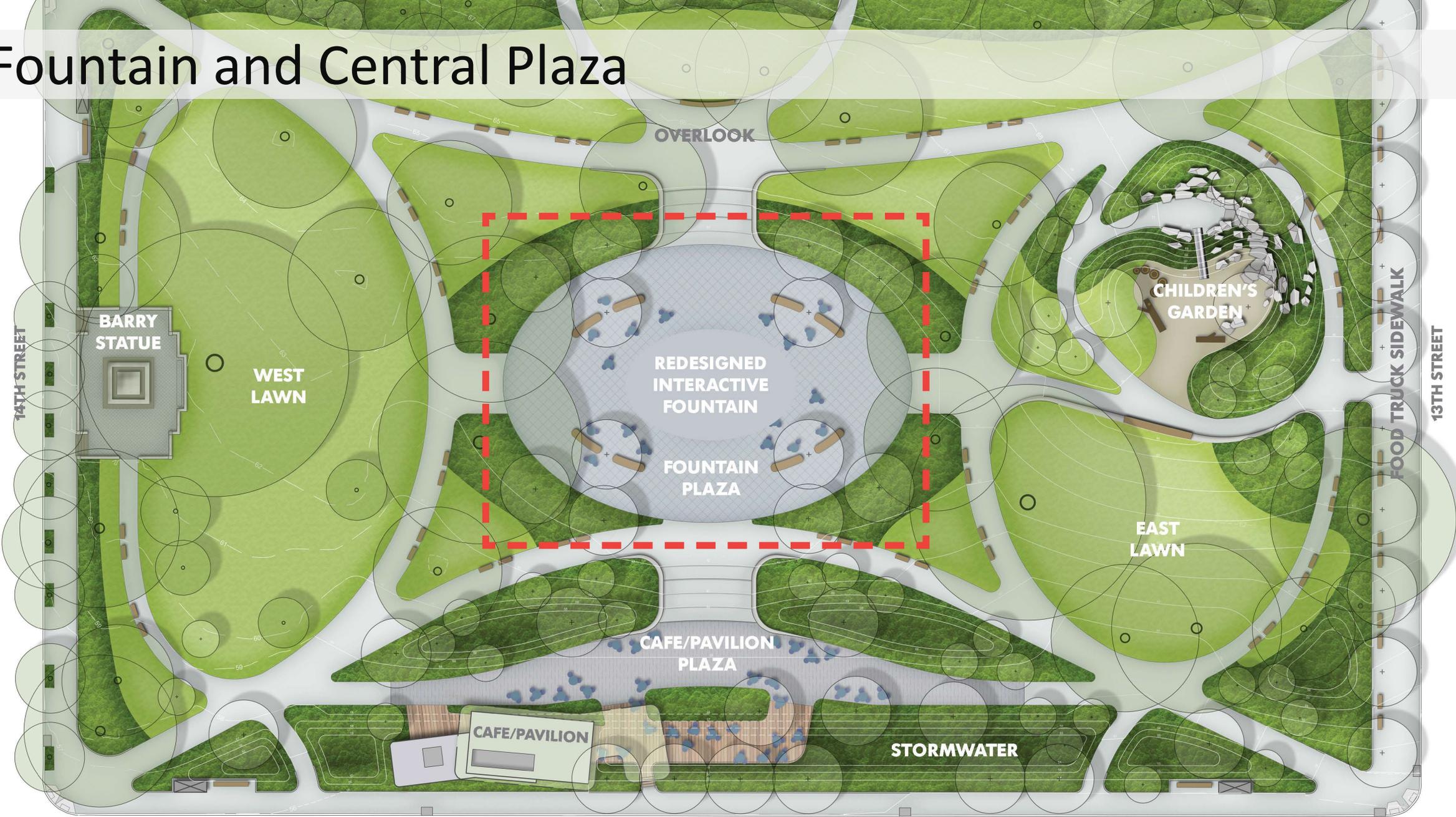


13th Street, NW Food Trucks

Children's Play Area

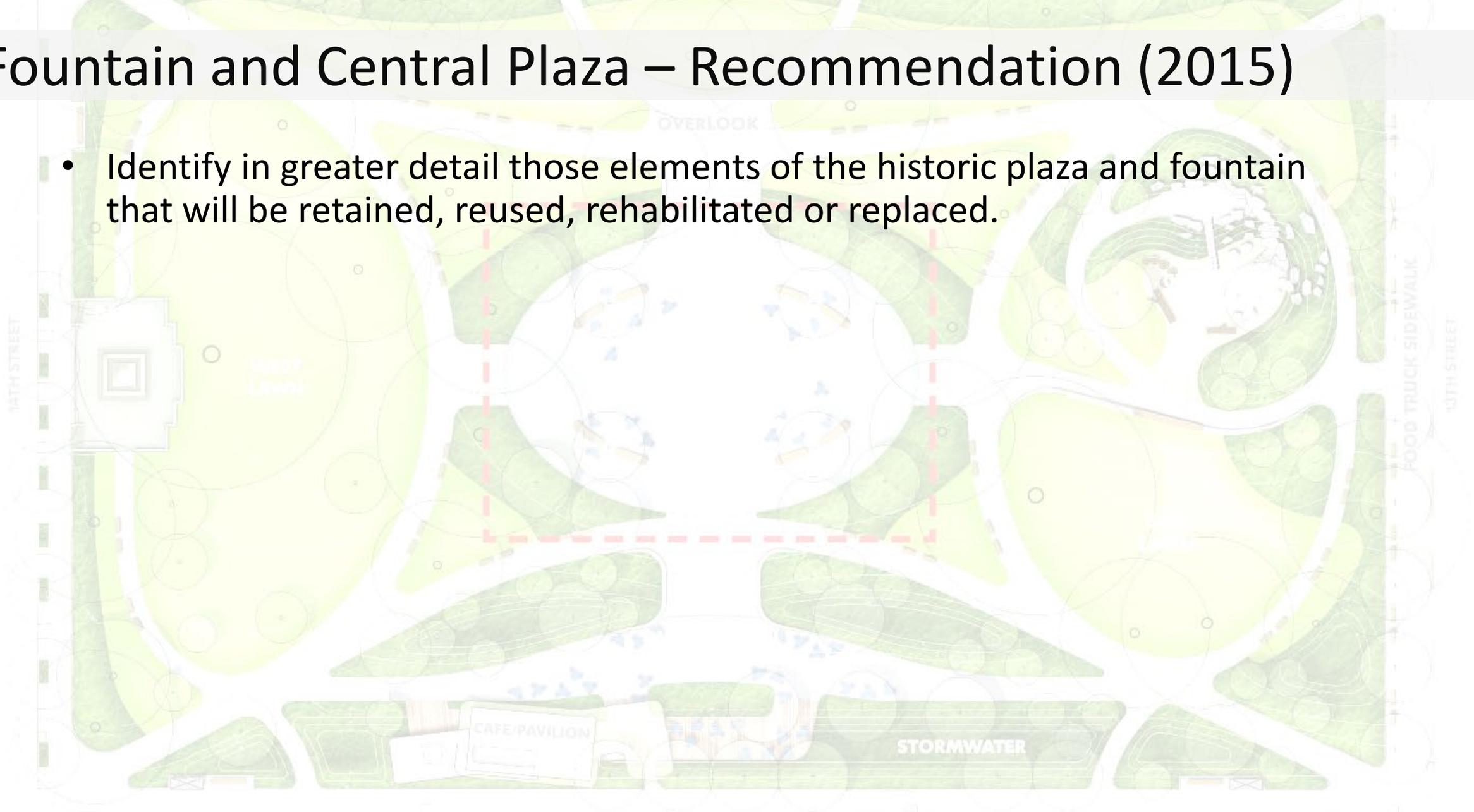


Fountain and Central Plaza



Fountain and Central Plaza – Recommendation (2015)

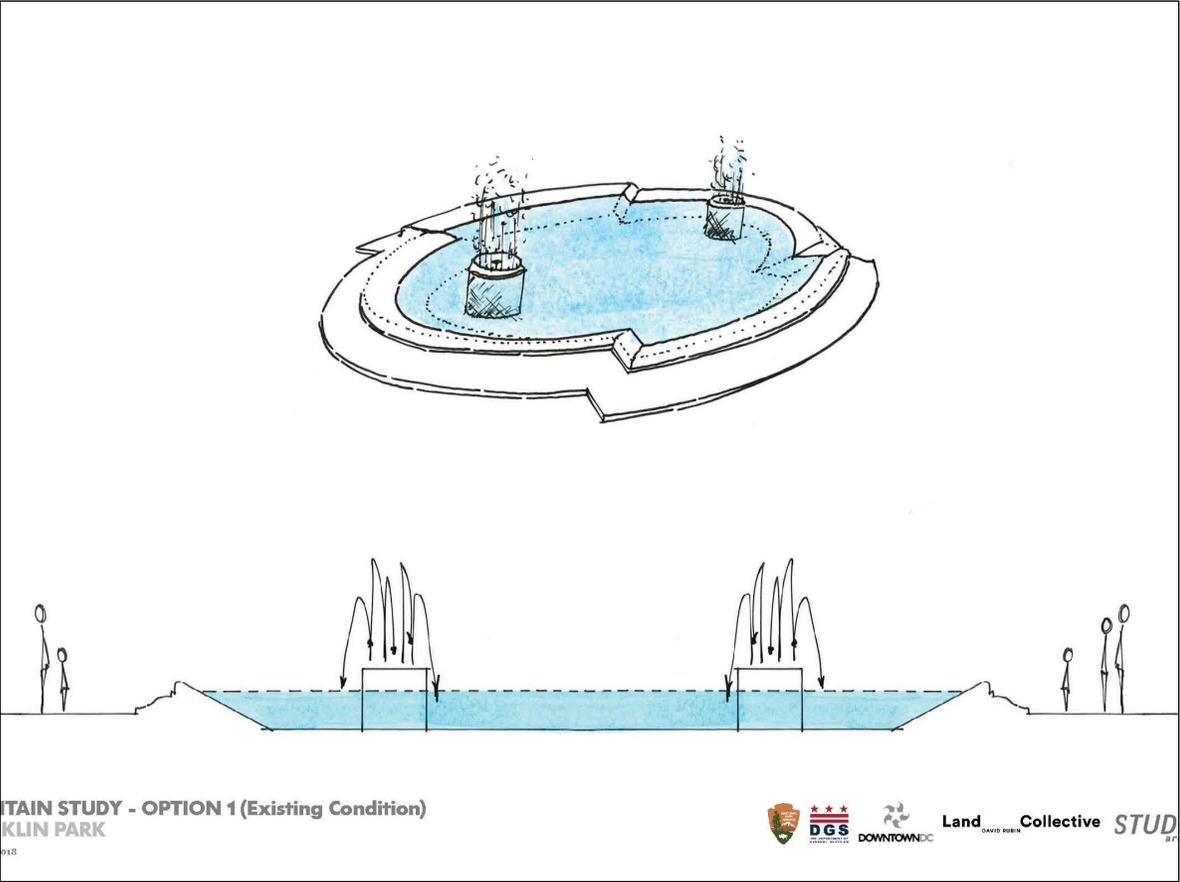
- Identify in greater detail those elements of the historic plaza and fountain that will be retained, reused, rehabilitated or replaced.



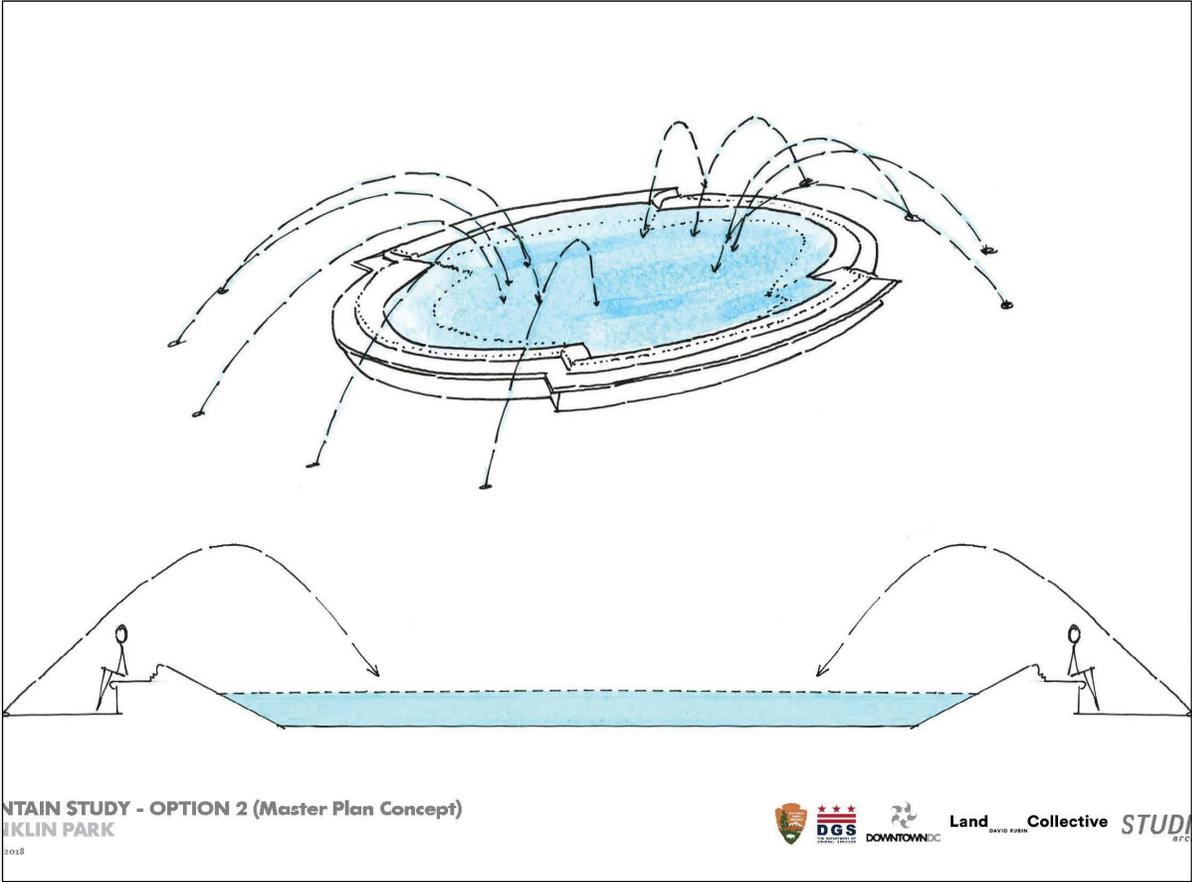
Existing Fountain and Central Plaza



Fountain Study – Options 1 and 2



Option 1 – Existing Condition

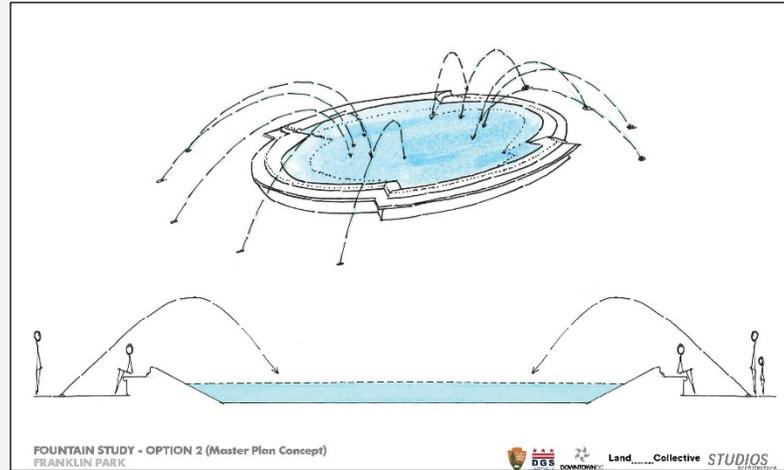


Option 2 – 2015 Design Alternative

Fountain Study – Options 2-5

Option 2

Retain interior of fountain



Option 2

Option 3

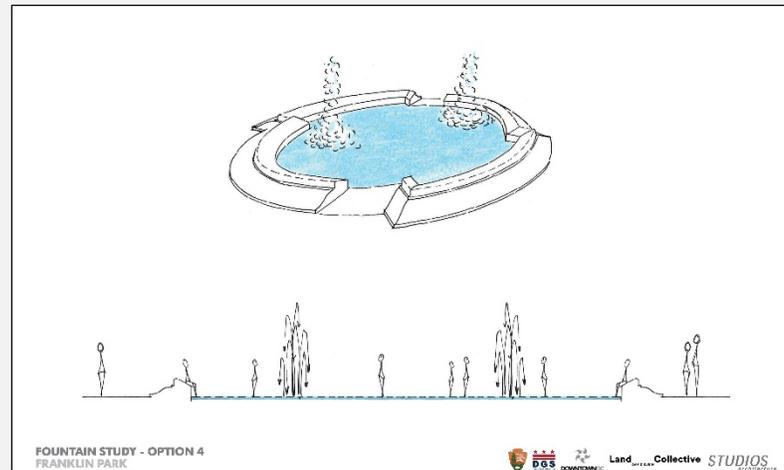
Retain fountain, raise inner floor



Option 3

Option 4

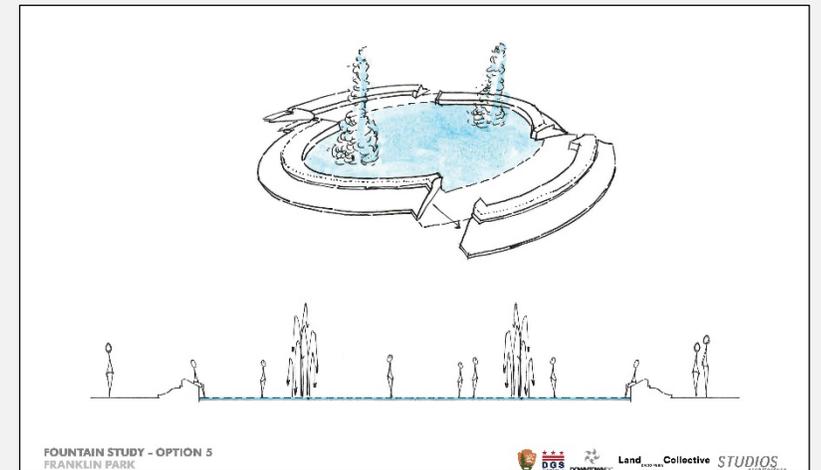
Retain fountain but shift east/west sides away from center



Option 4

Option 5

Retain fountain but shift north/south sides away from center

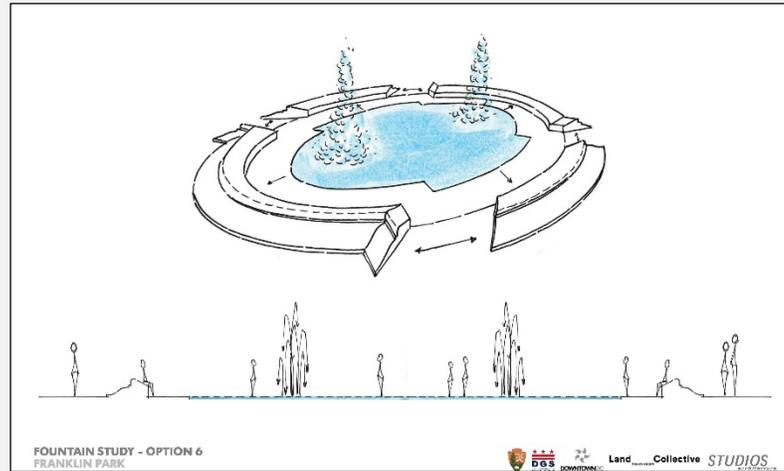


Option 5

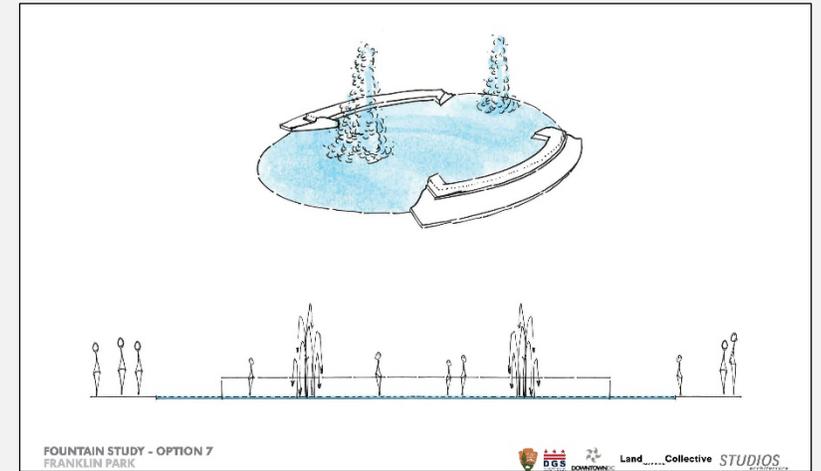
Fountain Study – Options 6-9

Option 6

Retain interior of fountain and shift all sides away



Option 6



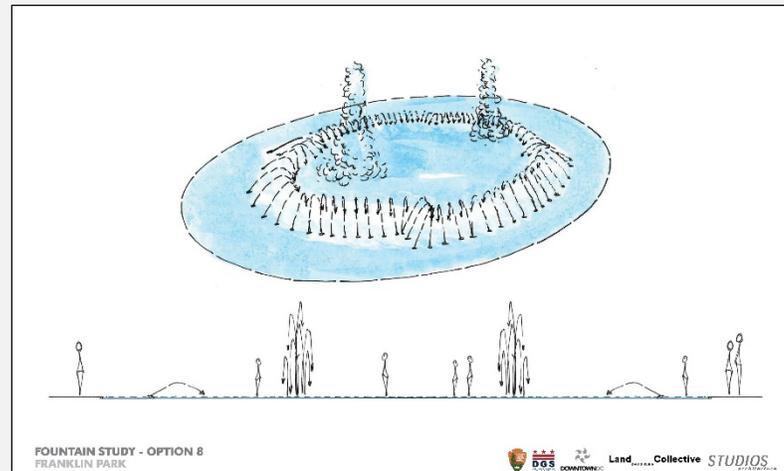
Option 7

Option 7

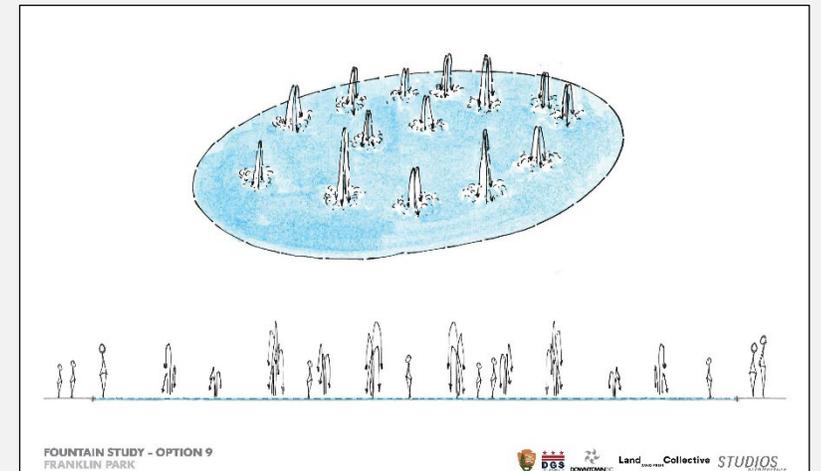
Retain north/south sides of fountain, remove east/west sides

Option 8

Remove fountain and recreate fountain shape using small water jets



Option 8

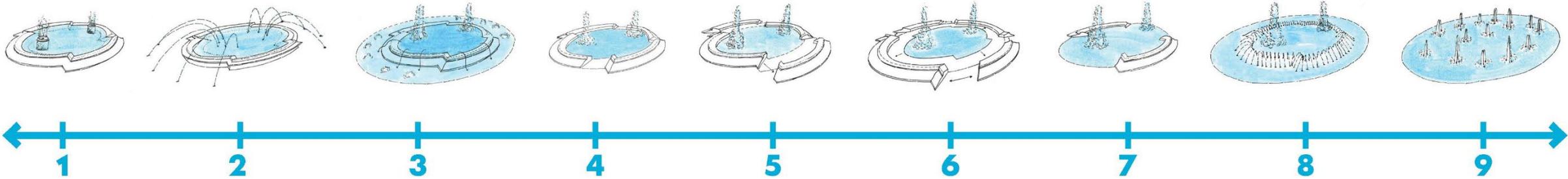


Option 9

Option 9

Remove fountain and install vertical water jets

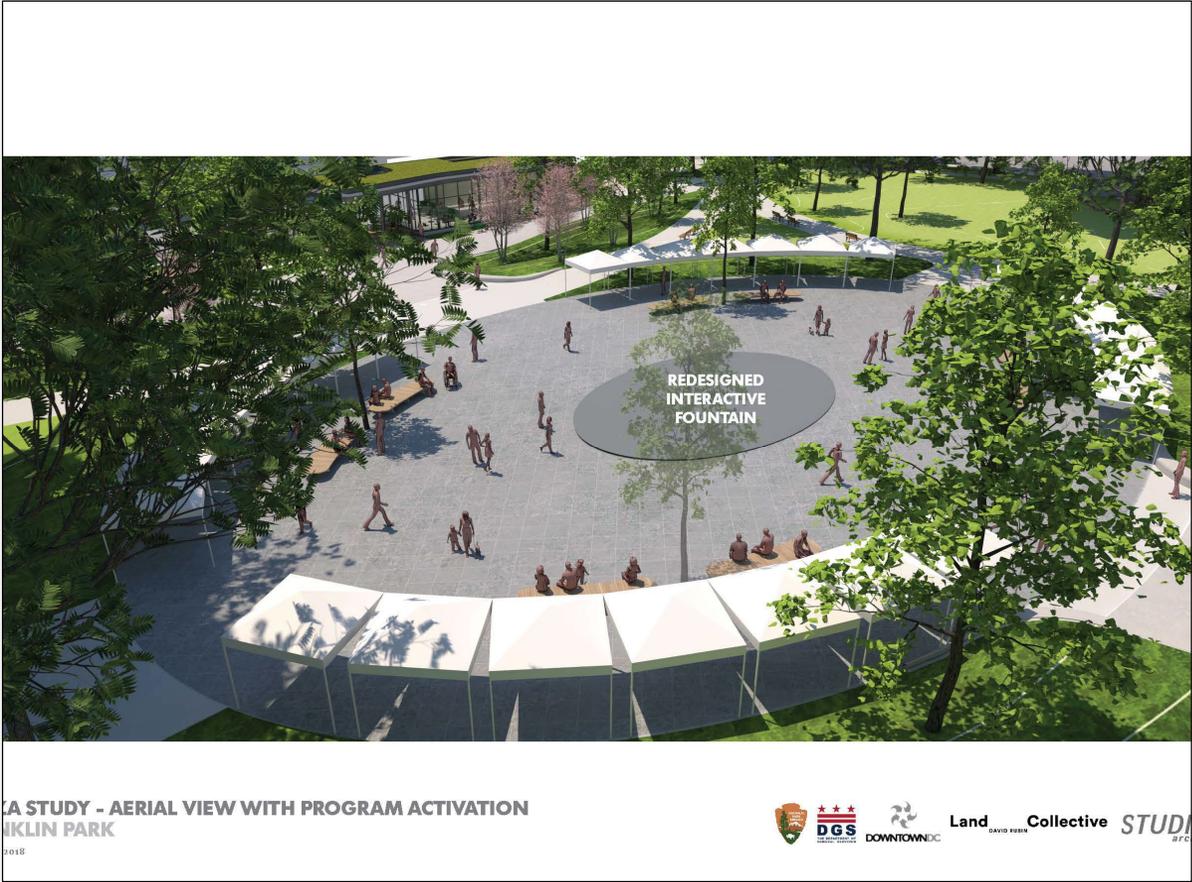
Central Fountain – Design Study



Central Plaza Study

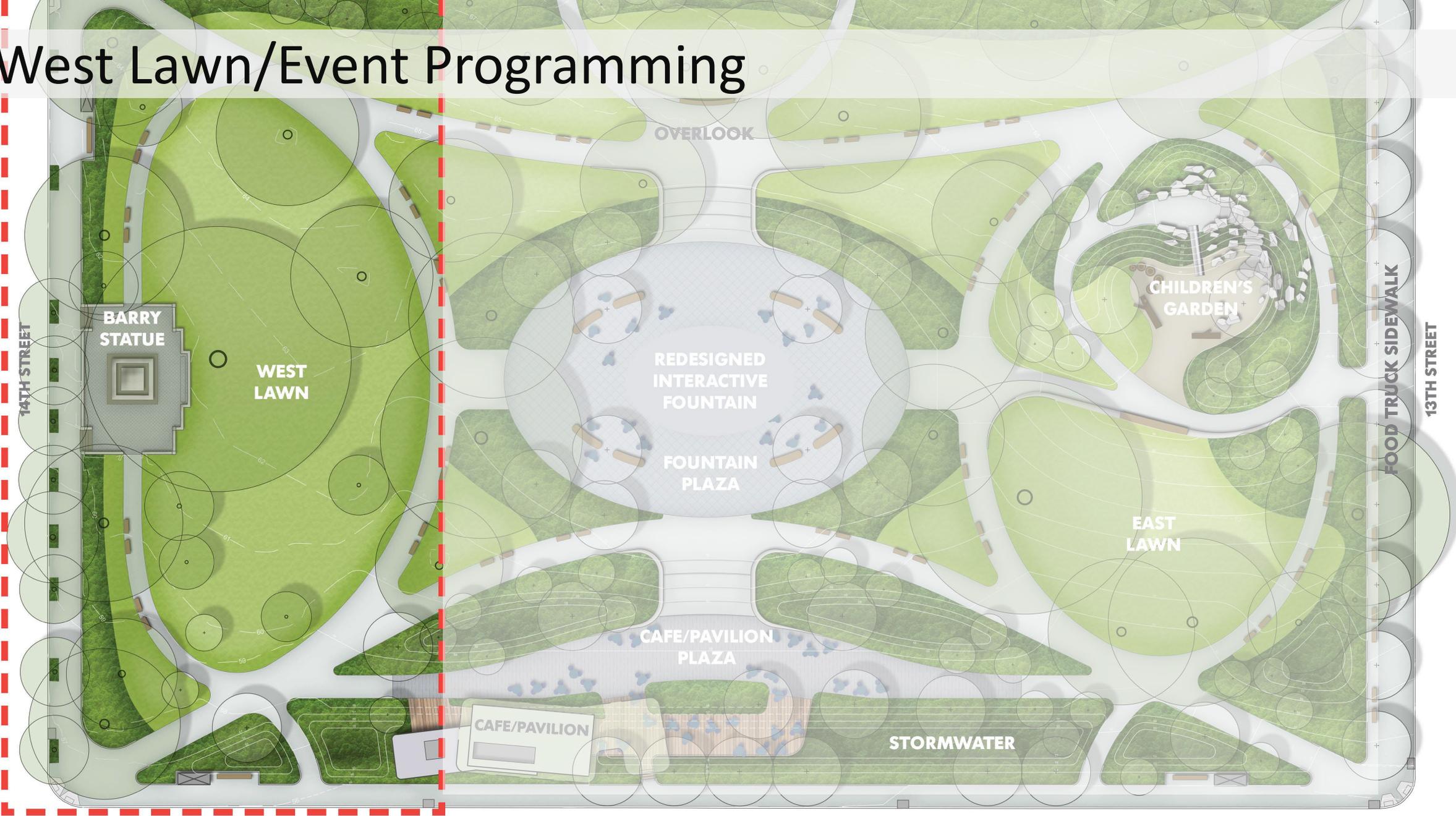


Central Plaza without tents

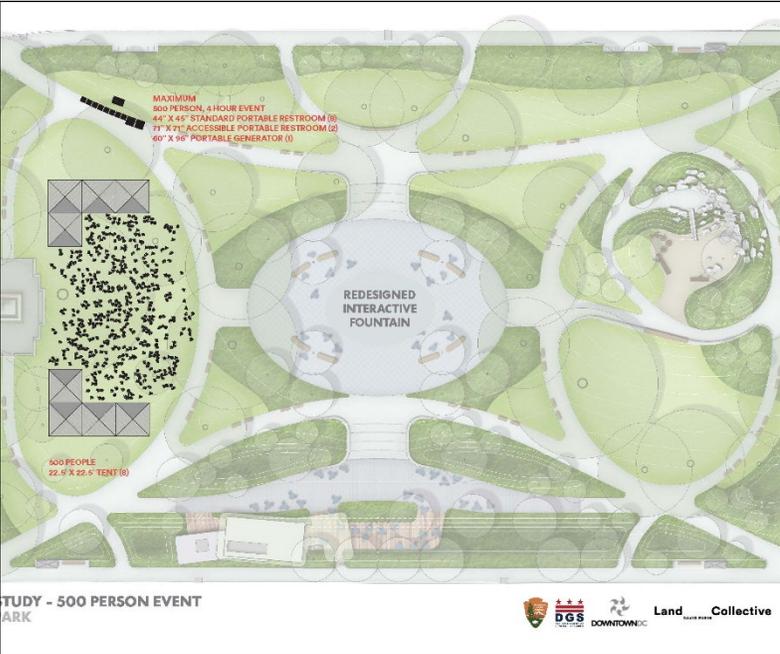


Central Plaza with tents

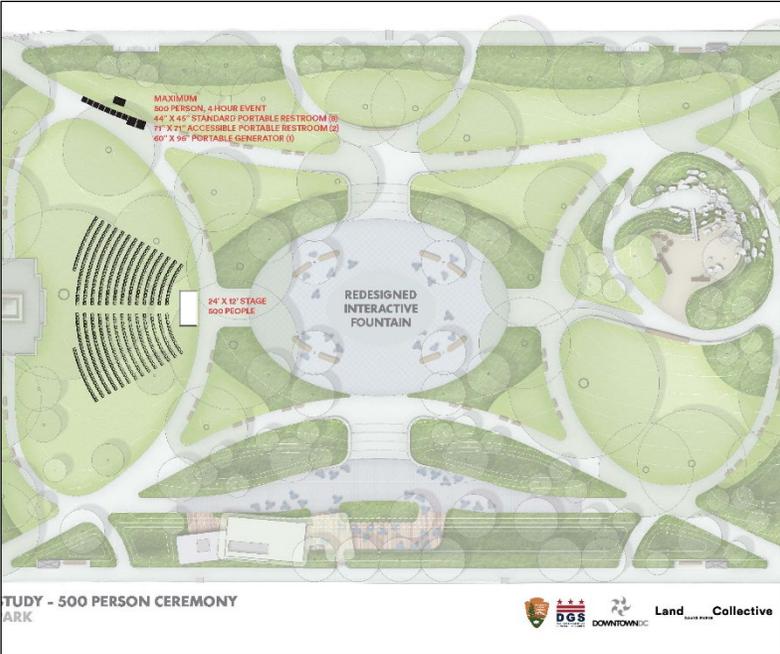
West Lawn/Event Programming



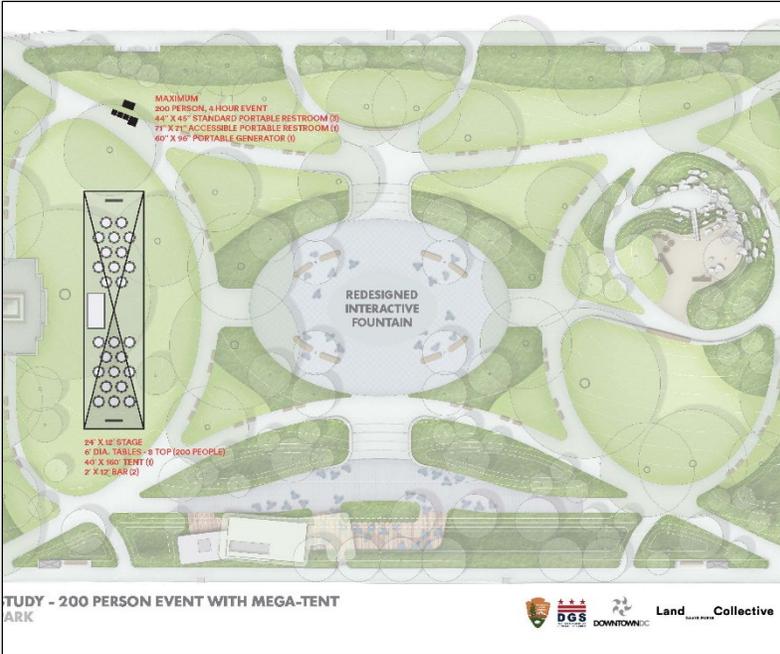
Event Program Study



500 person event

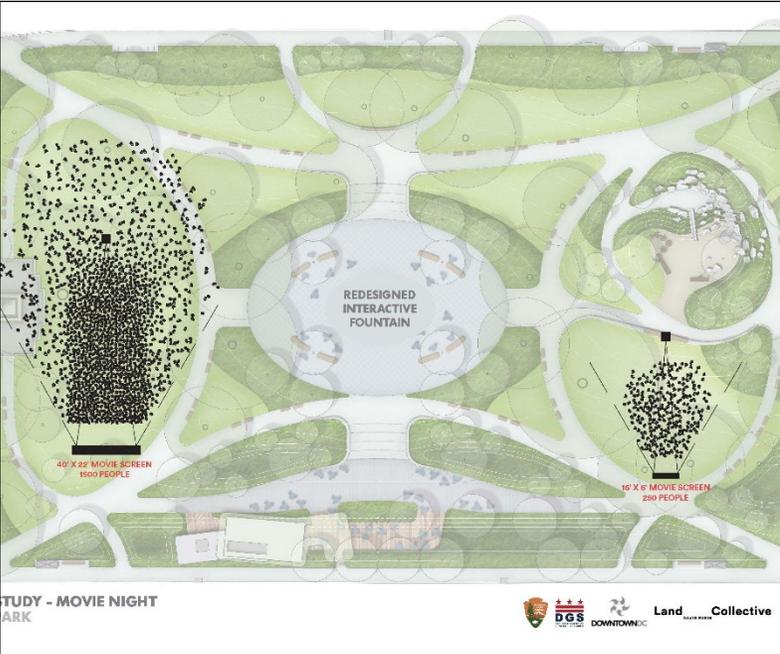


500 person ceremony

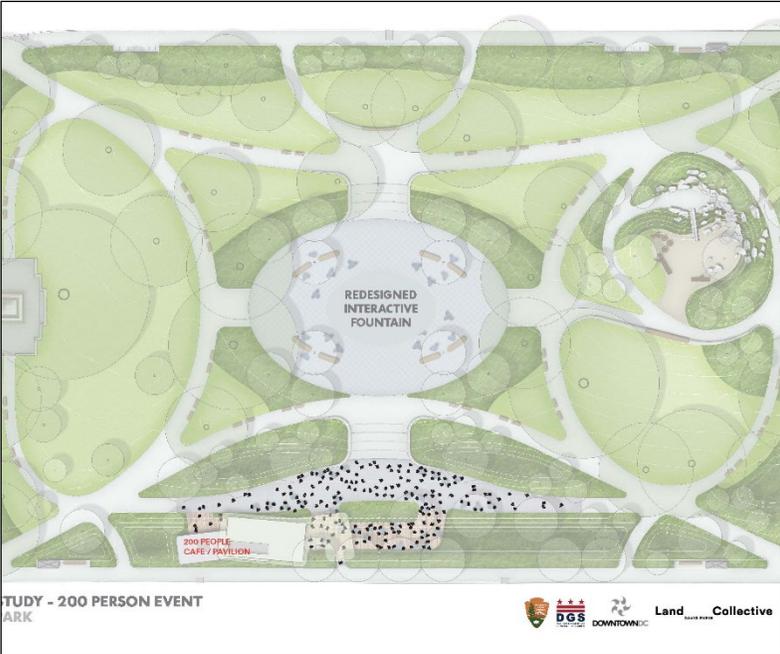


200 person event w/ mega tent

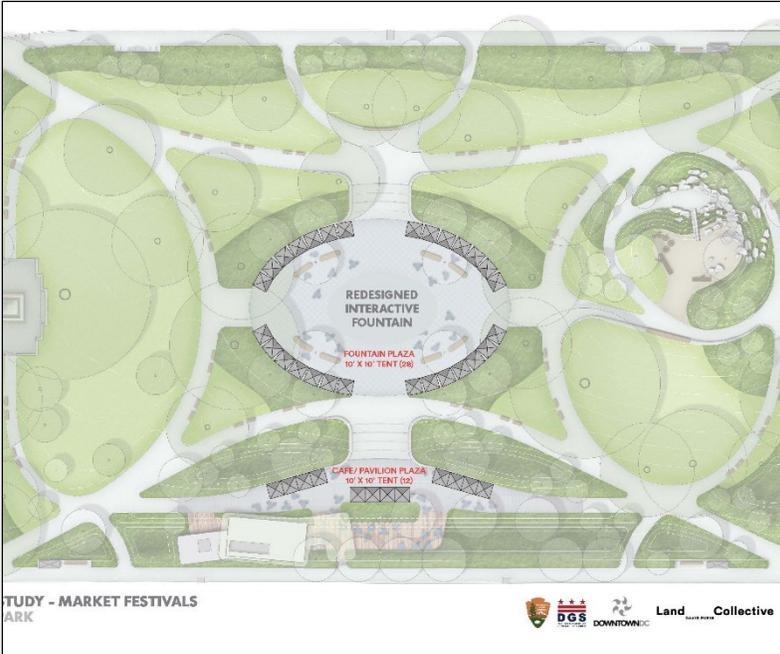
Event Program Study



Movie night



200 person event



Market festivals