

# The Lower Park

## *Scissortail Park*

### *Oklahoma City, OK*

LA 5515: Introductory Studio I  
**Fall 2016**



Cover images:

Top left: In-progress review with Arjan Jager.  
Photo credit: Niloufar Soltanimofrad

Bottom Left: Final review with Jack McMahan  
and invited guests. Photo credit: Sridhar  
Yalamanchili

Right: Site visit. Photo credit: Niloufar  
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## **Acknowledgements**

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*Executive Director of AccessWorks, Inc.*

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### **Arjan Jager**

*Urban Designer, Oklahoma City Planning Department*

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## Introduction

In the fall 2016 semester, University of Oklahoma Landscape Architecture students created a master plan for the Lower Park in the new Scissortail Park in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Scissortail Park is one of the eight projects included in the MAPS 3 program, a bond initiative focusing on improving the quality of life in Oklahoma City while spurring downtown growth and redevelopment. Plans for the Upper Park are well on their way to completion by Hargreaves Associates.

The Lower Park is approximately 35 acres located south of I-40 (see below). The Skydance Bridge forms a pedestrian connection between the Upper and Lower Parks. The Lower Park is adjacent to property currently owned by the Oklahoma City Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services: Manuel

Perez Park and the Riverfront Park. Students were allowed to incorporate these areas into their master plan if doing so would strengthen their designs.

The design project occurred in LA 5515: Introductory Studio I. All students were first professional degree candidates in the Masters' of Landscape Architecture program. Students came from various undergraduate backgrounds, but most students had no design background. Students were directed to consult the 2013 Master Plan prepared by Hargreaves Associates, but were encouraged to create their own program and design direction. One program element was mandatory for all master plans: an accessible nature playground.

Lower Park site image modified from Hargreaves (2013, p. 11).





Master plan for the Lower Park

## A Park for Health and Wellness

Yujie Dong

In the master plan, I focused on health and wellness by incorporating elements which address the mental, physical, and nutritional requirements of a healthy lifestyle. Visitors enjoy natural places within the park which help to restore their mental capacities after a stressful day. Also, water features and spaces for yoga facilitate in restoring the soul. The park provides opportunities for physical exercise for the entire family with the addition of tennis, badminton, and basketball courts; a driving range, mini-golf, and dog parks. Finally, health and wellness must include healthy eating habits. Park visitors can enjoy fresh vegetables and fruit available for purchase in the city farm (see opposite page).

During the site inventory and analysis process, I identified many interesting aspects of the site. The park has one main entrance on S Robinson Ave, and another entrance connects the Oklahoma River which is at SW 15th St. There are five residential streets which

cross the site: SW 10th, SW 11th, SW 12th, SW 13th, and SW 14th. To avoid pedestrian and vehicle conflicts, I will end these streets at S Harvey Ave. Skydance Bridge provides a pedestrian connection between the Upper and Lower Parks. The connection to the river could be strengthened if SW 15th ends at S. Robinson Ave allowing the Lower Park to extend to the river.

The lower park is located south of downtown and near residential areas; therefore, many different users will visit the park, the age range of users from 0 to 100+. The program list was compiled with these users in mind (see below).

Program list

User	Activities	Facilities
Biker	Navigate on a safe trail	Especially bike line
Runner	Run on a safe trail	Setting up the run line
Children	Play, run, trail, eat	Playground, food center
Older people	Exercise, rest, talk with friends	Exercise equipment, shade, opening area
Students	Reading, group discuss, homework	Café store, quite private area with table and chair, accessible trail, shorter parking
Office worker	Coffee, eat, rest, business discuss, smoking	Café store, food center, quite private area, accessible parking, smoking space
Dog owner	Dog pee, walk trail	Dog park, sidewalk
Housewives	Bring baby, rest	Accessible parking, toilet,
Disable people	Move with wheelchair	Safe wheelchair trail and parking place
Traveler	Travel around the park and take a rest	Culture introduces area, food center
Family	Outside exercise, picnic	Open space, grass area
Blind people	Walk with their seeing eye dog or guide rod	Safe trail inside the park, leave away the bike line and sidewalk

Since exercise is part of a healthy lifestyle promoting health and wellness, the Lower Park provides many opportunities to participate in physical activity. For children (5-10 years), I incorporated a mini-golf near the adult golf, so the kids can play golf with their parents. Teenagers and adults experience the thrill of competition in the sports area

including an extreme sports or x-sports area. Even dogs are considered in promoting health and wellness. The dog park accommodates dogs of different sizes. A separate area is provided for smaller dogs in order to prevent the small dogs from getting hurt by the large dogs.

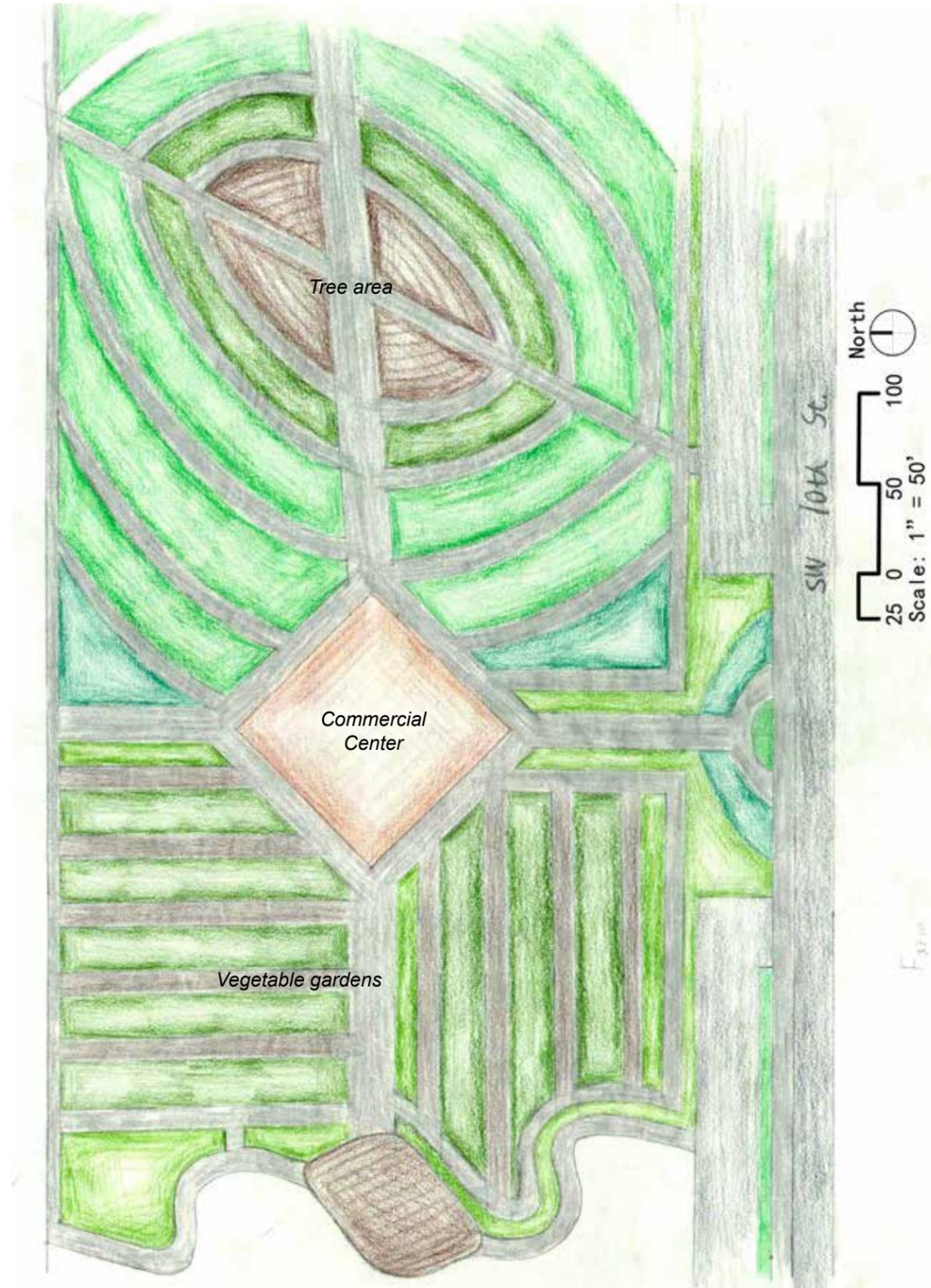
Adult golf and mini golf courses offer families the opportunity to play in close proximity.



Above: Entrance to the adult golf area.

Below: View of the mini golf course from the secondary entrance at S. Robinson Ave. and SW 15th St.





One of the most critical components for a healthy lifestyle includes a healthy diet complete with fruits and vegetables. The City Farm provides nearby residents access to healthy food in an area with limited healthy food options, also known as food insecurity. People can grow their own food in a plot or can purchase from farmers at the Commercial Center. The Tree Area provides a shady spot to relax after a hard day's work in the garden or to enjoy your newly purchased fruits and vegetables.



*Opposite page: Plan view of the City Farm.  
Right: Gardeners tend the vegetable plots located behind the Commercial Center.  
Below: The Tree Area provides a shady spot for visitors to relax.*



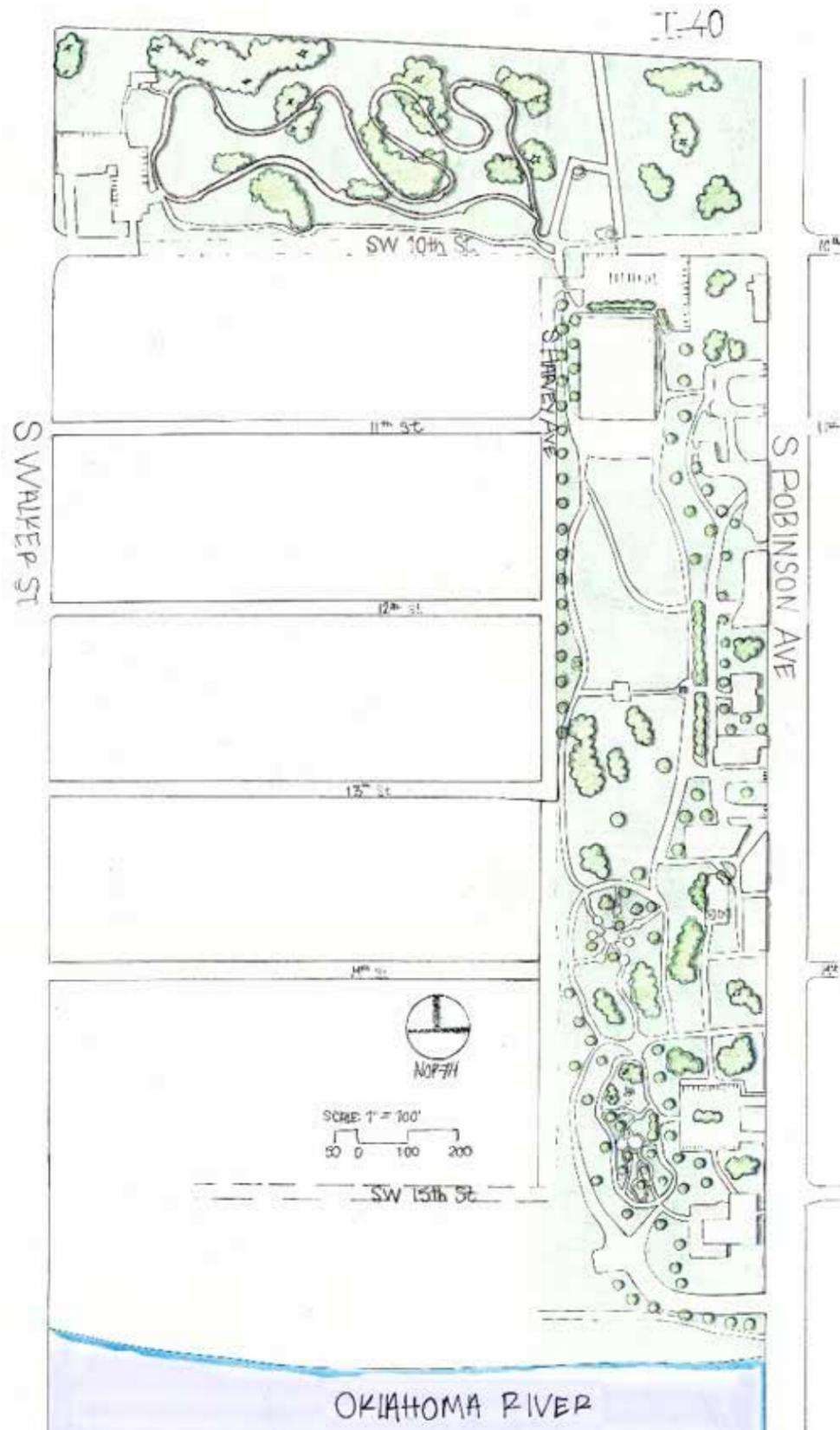


The accessible nature playground is a very special space in the park. It is unique because I designed it as an area free of limits where everyone regardless of ability can access this area and have a great experience.



*Opposite page: Accessible nature playground  
Clockwise from left: Treehouse in the nature playground. One of five accessible bridges crossing the playground creek. The nature playground. An accessible wooden boardwalk surrounds the nature playground*





## An Accessible Park for the Community

Amanda Hall

In the Lower Park, I wanted to create a park that made the experience of being surrounded by nature accessible to everyone, and I wanted to strengthen the community by creating a common area. This Lower Park design concept can be separated into three themed sections. The northern section of the park from SW 10th St to I-40 is the recreational area consisting of accessible walking trails as well as bike trails. The second section is the commercial core which is located along Robinson Ave from SW 12th St to just south of SW 14th St. This is where some of the existing Hubcap Alley buildings will be restored and new buildings will join them to create the ultimate local shopping experience. The last section of this design is the public space located in the southern portion of the park extending down to the Oklahoma River. This includes the accessible nature playground and a riverfront restaurant.

All of the programs within this park design have an accessible aspect so that all users may share the same experience. Throughout the park there will be tactile signage and various methods of wayfinding (see below). The nature play will be accessible but will be aimed to accommodate cognitive disabilities a little more. Within the nature play area there will be quiet areas

located separately from the other programs. These will be areas where children, and adults, who become overstimulated may retreat for a quiet moment without having to leave the park entirely.

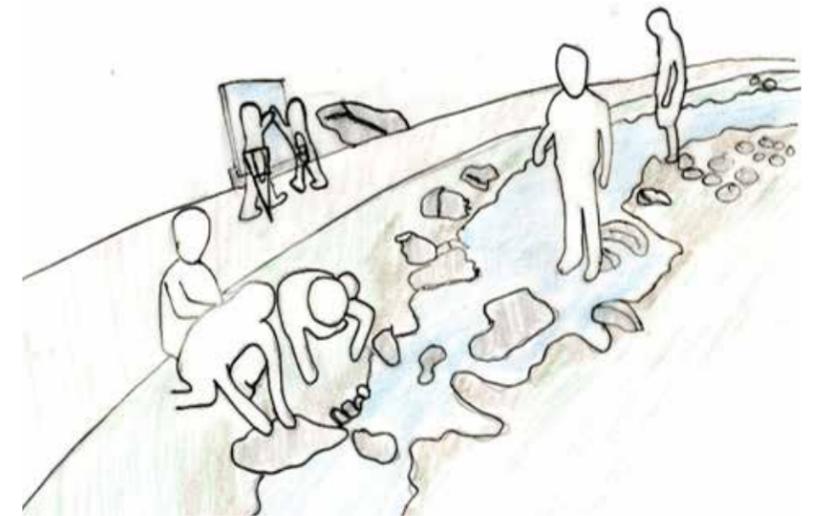
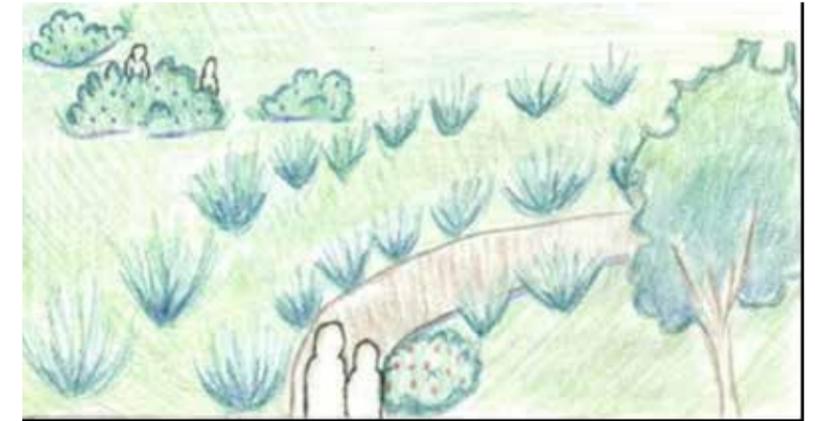
*Opposite page: Lower Park Master Plan  
Below: Tactile signage to facilitate wayfinding*



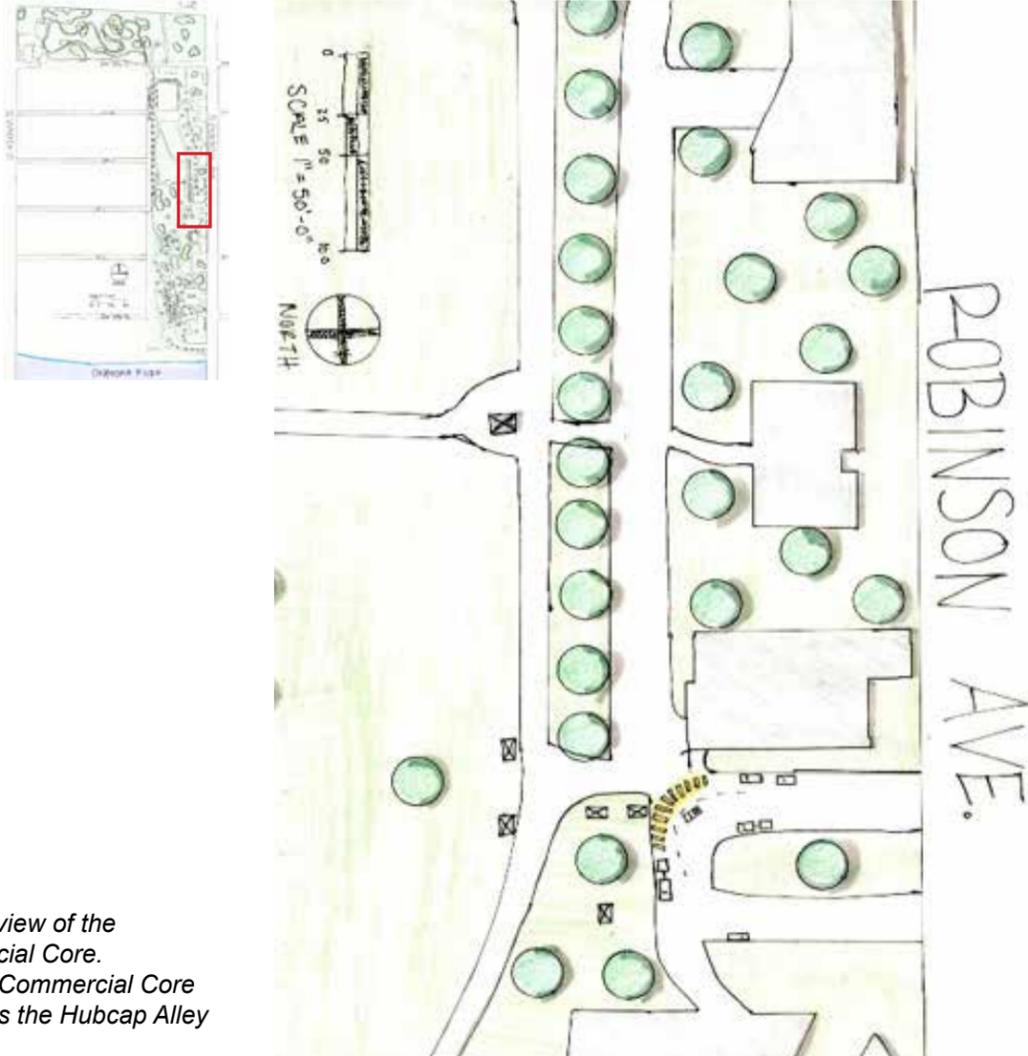
Plan view of the Public Space in the Lower Park.



This downtown OKC nature play area is an accessible outdoor experience incomparable to most. It will include a sensory garden. This garden will create a dynamic experience engaging all 5 senses through the various plants and structures within it. From the sound and feel of the native tallgrasses and wind chimes blowing in the wind, to the different smells of the fragrant plants used. A stream will be located at the northern end of the nature play, creating a natural experience within an urban setting. If you don't feel like getting your feet wet, there will be an accompanying water wall directly off the path. Next to the stream there will be an accessible learning garden, where everyone can learn about different plants and how they grow.



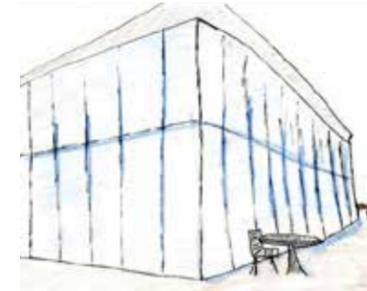
Top: Sensory garden in the accessible nature playground.  
 Middle: Creek play with an adjacent water wall.  
 Bottom: Accessible learning garden.

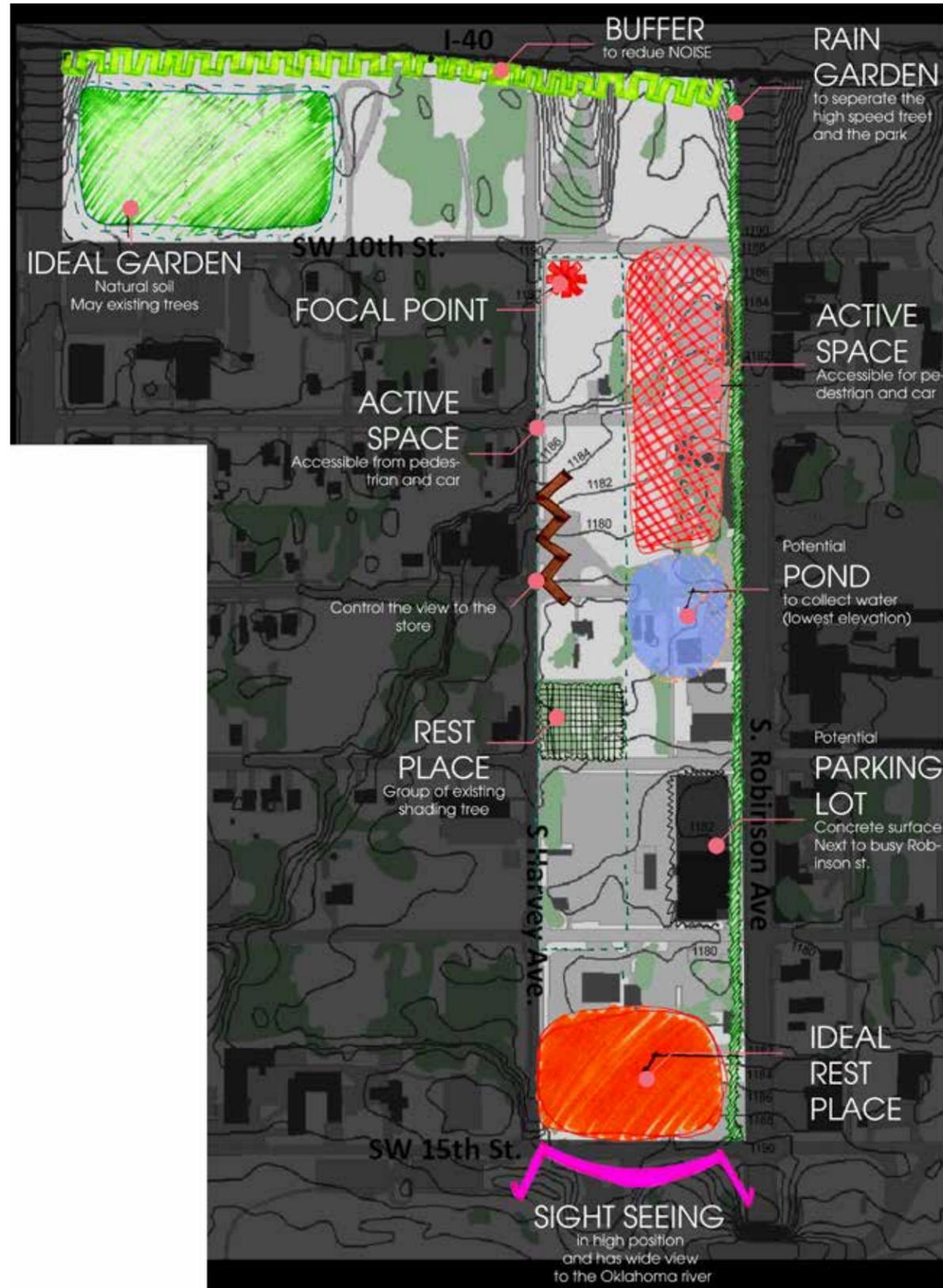


Right: Plan view of the Commercial Core.  
Below: The Commercial Core reinforces the Hubcap Alley theme.



Clockwise from above: Bike rental shop located along the trails. Accessible bike trails within the Recreational Area. Bike trails along the OKC skyline. View of the Oklahoma River from the restaurant balcony. The glass facade of the waterfront restaurant.





## The Activation

Minh Nguyen

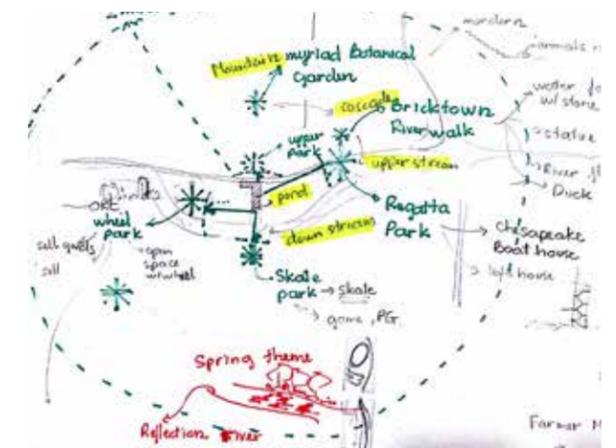
Juxtaposed between the vibrant downtown Oklahoma City and the quiet and serene Oklahoma River is the site of the Lower Park of the new Central Park in Oklahoma City. While much redevelopment has invigorated downtown, little attention has been paid to the area surrounding the Lower Park. This new development offers an opportunity to **ACTIVATE** the area.

Imagine walking south on the Skydance Bridge and seeing a grand destination. You feel curious and start to walk more quickly toward the Lower Park. The closer you get, the more excited and eager you become. You join the crowd in the Lower Park and marvel at all the activities. When you feel tired of the hustle and bustle, you relax and refresh in the gardens. When you walk toward the Oklahoma River, you are overwhelmed by the lively and beautiful cityscape at the end of your journey. These experiences are deliberately designed into the Lower Park.

When I visited the site, there were four features that caught my attention. First, many parks exist within a two-mile radius of the Lower Park. Each park has a unique character, such as a skate park, a Ferris wheel, and Bricktown River Park. The amenities offered at the Lower Park should complement the existing parks. Second, the topography on the site is interesting. The northern and southern ends are higher with a low point occurring between SW 12th and SW 13th streets. The low point collects water and

provides an opportunity for low impact design features, rain gardens and bio-retention ponds. Third, a diverse population currently resides near the park site. Each group has their own unique style in garden design, so I wanted to use that culture style to influence garden designs. Last but not least, the site had a very big advantage – the proximity to the Oklahoma River and the wonderful views of the skyline.

Opposite page: Site analysis  
Below: Site inventory

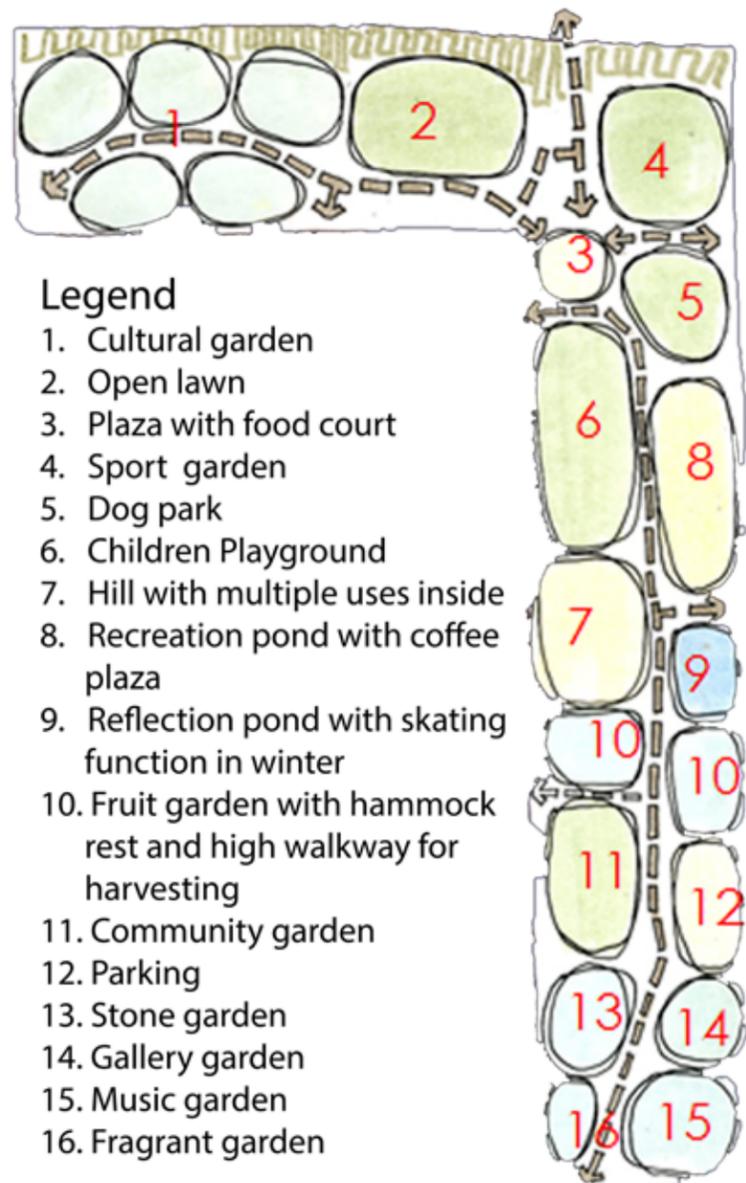


The program focuses on two types of people: introverts and extroverts. Introverts prefer private spaces where they can recharge. Extroverts prefer spaces that accommodate gatherings of friends. I created multiple large areas, so people can organize and use the space as they wish. I designed

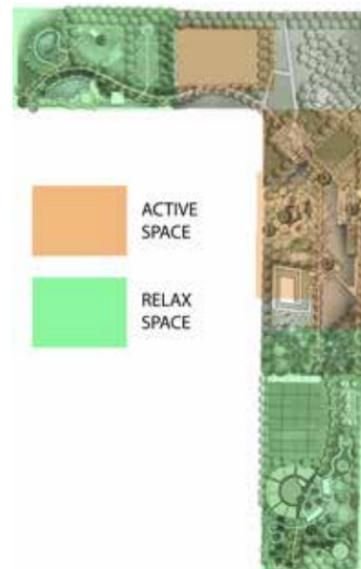
plantings of trees and shrubs in these areas to naturally create private spaces.

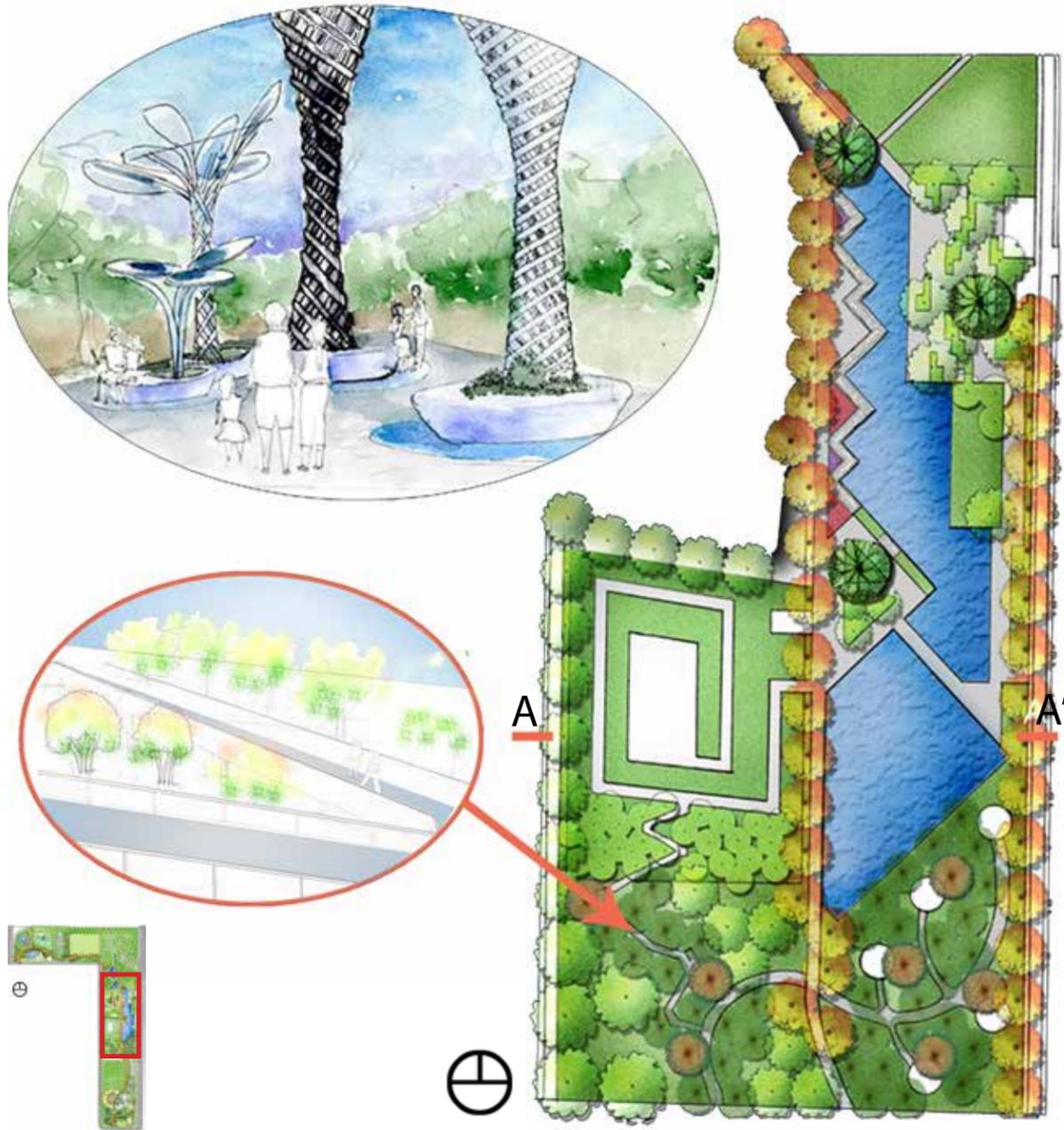
In the master plan, I focused on pedestrians. Assuming the Skydance Bridge is the main pedestrian access, I created a plaza which has solar collection features as a welcoming element.

Every active and noisy activity will be located around this plaza. Relaxing gardens will buffer the areas between the active space, the Oklahoma River, and the neighborhood. I utilized straight and perpendicular lines for the active space, and the curvilinear lines for the passive, natural spaces.



Left: Program elements in the Lower Park.  
Below: Active and relaxing areas in the Lower Park.  
Opposite page: The Cultural Area

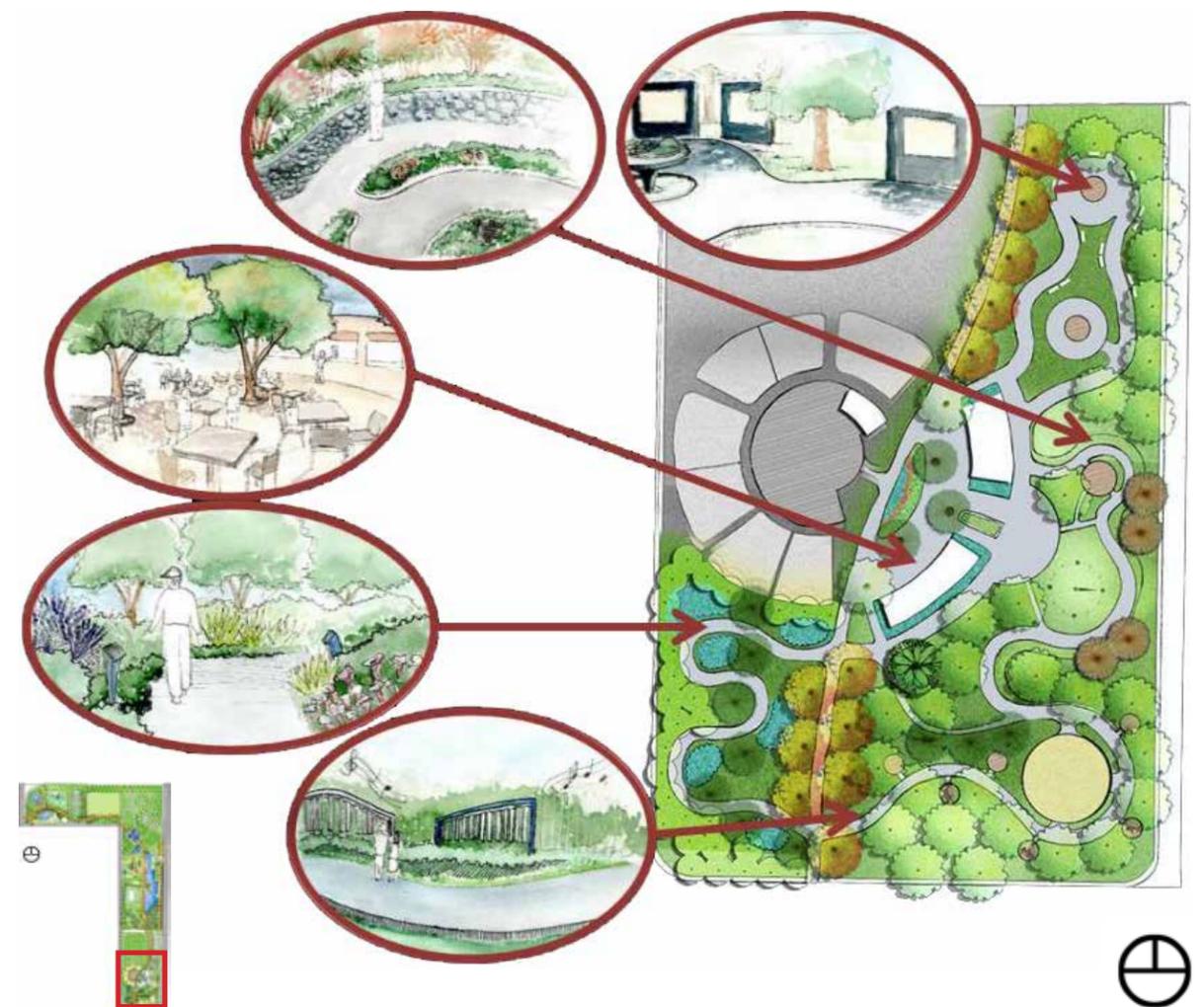




Above: The Sustainability Area  
Below: Section A-A'



Below: The Experience Area



The program for the nature playground focuses on three groups of children: toddlers (1-3), young children (4-6), and older children (6-10), because each group has their needs for the playground. For example, toddlers want to learn to control their movements and explore the world. Their parents will need to observe and support toddlers in the playground. I designed the playground with a fence with limited entrances to control access. Young children enjoy gross motor movement and

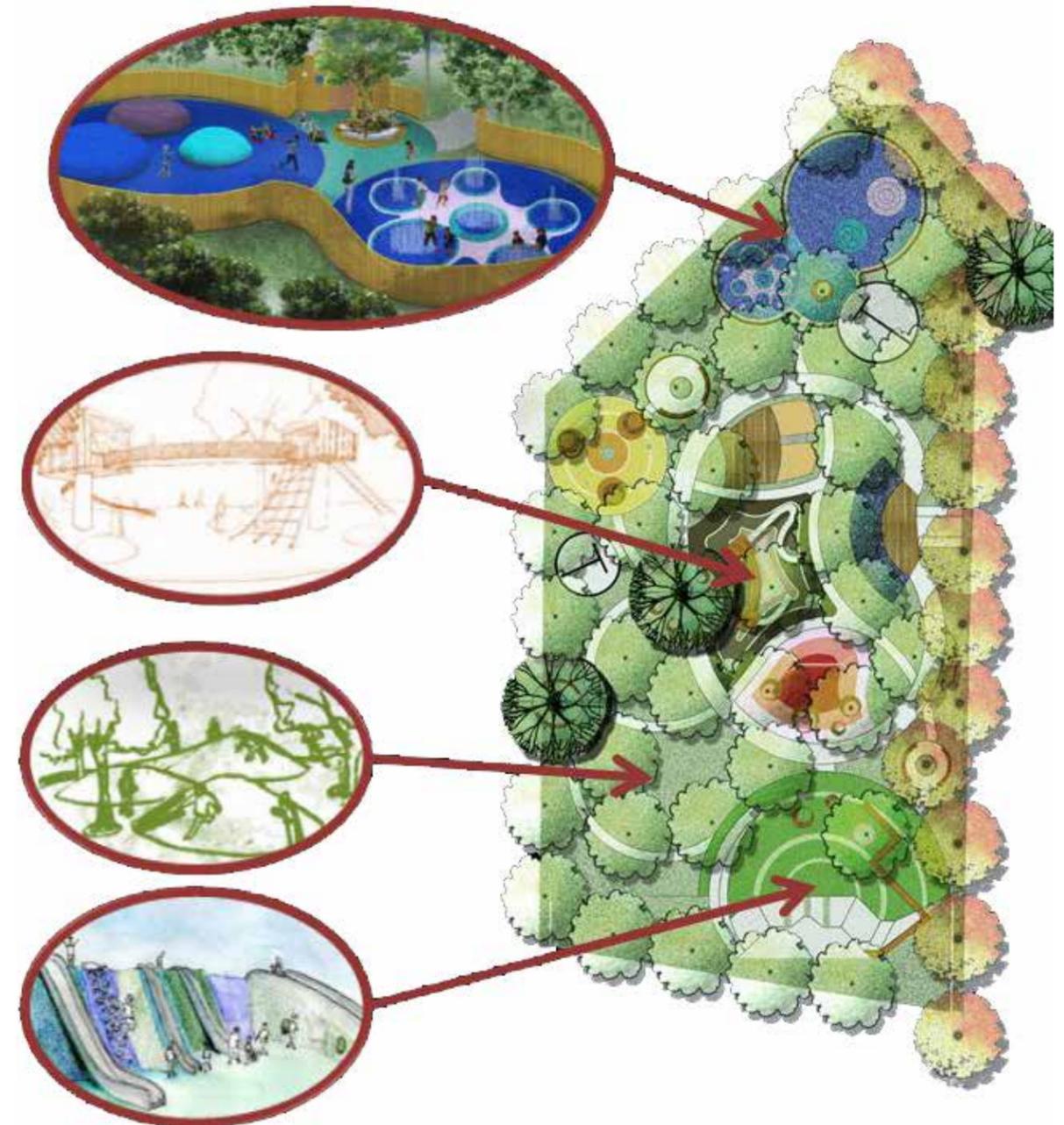
are beginning to form social awareness. So, the space for them will have tools to facilitate group play and no fences to limit their activity. These spaces will be located in center of the playground

and connect with each area so the children can easily play. Older children love to challenge themselves with complex tasks. I designed various climbing and hiking opportunities on the hill.

Right: Activities on the nature playground are sorted by age. Below: To reinforce the natural concept, areas mimic natural ecosystems.



Major activities in the nature playground.



## A Community Destination

### Heartsong Turnbull

The current state of the park site consists of automobile lots, a few residences, and some vacant lots. It is just south of downtown Oklahoma City on the other side of I-40. It is an area that a lot of people would not ordinarily go due to safety concerns or lack of destination. My goal in designing this park was not only to transform this space into a safe destination that would be user-friendly but also to enhance the lives of those who live in the surrounding area.

As I walked the site, I took note of several connections that I wanted to incorporate into my design. These included the Skydance bridge that will connect the upper park to the lower park, the Manuel Perez Park, the river front trails, and the Latino Agency.

One of the things that stood out to me was that 30% of the people in that area were living below the poverty level and were on food stamps. I have worked in the mental health field for the past 10 years, and it is my experience that people who depend on food stamps usually run out of food 3 weeks into the month and are hungry that last week. I began thinking about how this park might help remedy some of these issues.

I also was intrigued by the historical aspect of Hubcap Alley which borders the park on Robinson. I wanted to incorporate this piece of history into the park somehow as well.

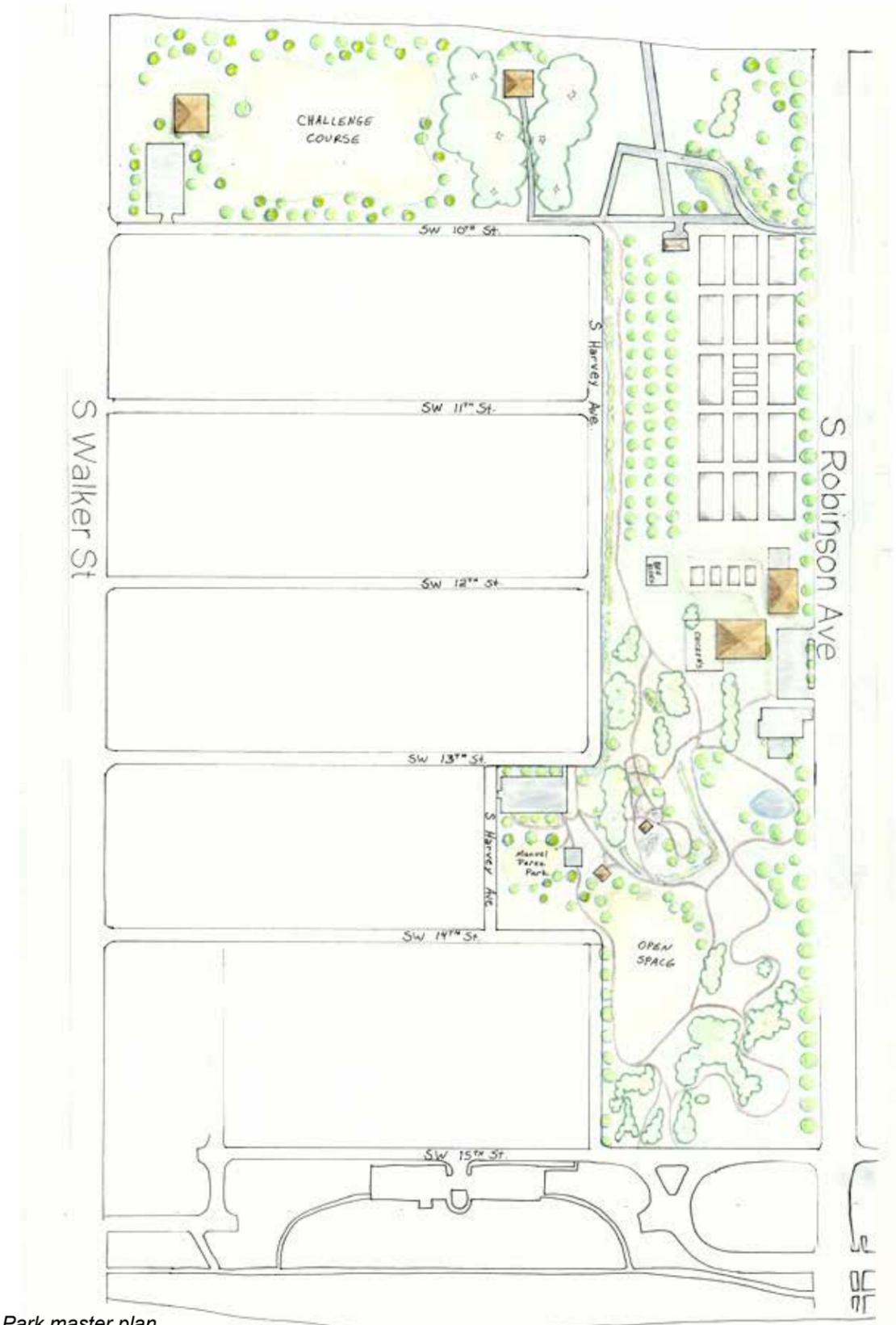
My goals in developing programs were to

provide people with an experience of nature within the urban context, to make healthy food available to low income families, and to provide an opportunity for team building to strengthen the community. The programs I developed were a city farm, a challenge course, trails, a nature play area, and a restaurant. The restaurant will be located in one of the existing buildings along Robinson and will have a Hubcap Alley theme.

Accessibility was taken into consideration when designing the programs in the park. When designing the challenge course, I located it across the street from the Latino Agency. I thought the challenge course could help enhance the services they already provide. The challenge course was designed to be partially wheelchair accessible to be as inclusive as possible.

The city farm is made up of about 3.5 acres and is estimated to be able to produce enough food to feed approximately 200 families of 4 during the growing season. It is my thought that the farm can accept food stamps as well as offer a work/share program to help people get extra food each month.

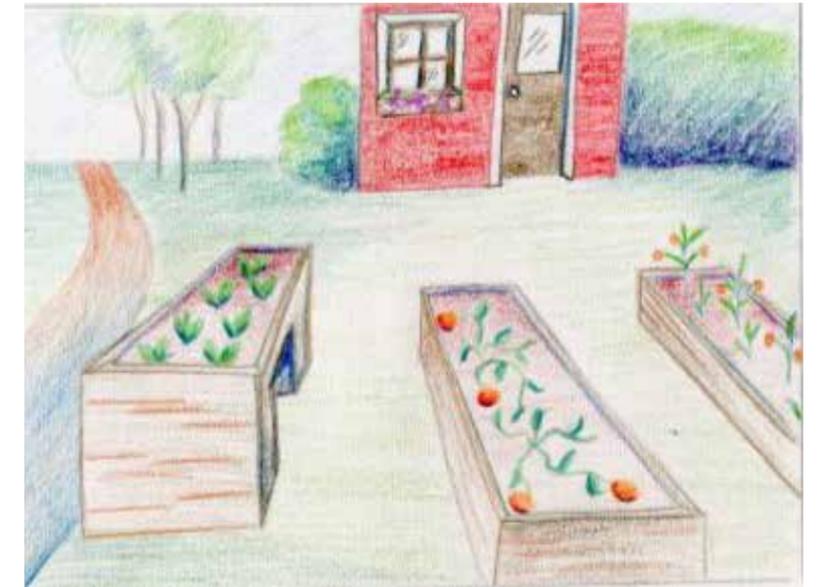
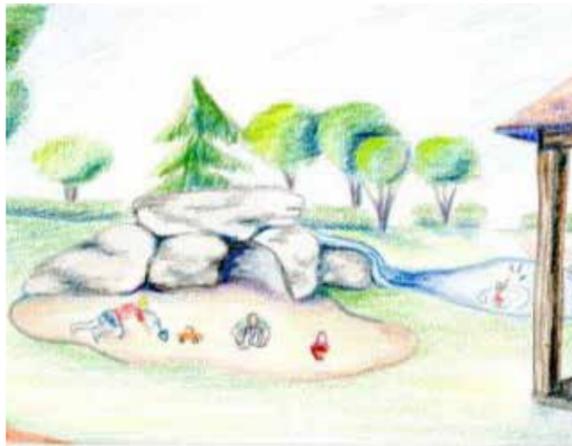
The nature play area was placed across from the Manuel Perez park. The Manuel Perez park has structured play equipment and the nature play area is nature-based play. To ensure safety in this area, I relocated Harvey Avenue to the East of Perez park so children can go from one park to the next safely.



Lower Park master plan

In the age of computers and video games, I wanted to create an area where kids can reconnect with nature. As they enter the park through a grove of trees, there is a fairy village on the left and a loose parts play area to the right. Once they emerge from the grove of trees, the area opens up to water and sand play to the right, a teepee straight ahead, and fort building and log play to the right. There are edible plants such as fruit trees and berry

bushes throughout the playground to engage multiple senses. A children's garden which is wheel chair accessible is located in the nature play area so children can learn about where food comes from and how to grow it. There is a two-tiered treehouse that is wheelchair accessible on the lower deck. Within another grove of trees, there are hammocks and swings.



Opposite top left: Sand and water play area.  
Opposite top right: Fairy hut village inspires imagination.  
Opposite bottom: Treehouse with accessible swing.  
Right: Children's garden with accessible planters.  
Below: Accessible challenge course.

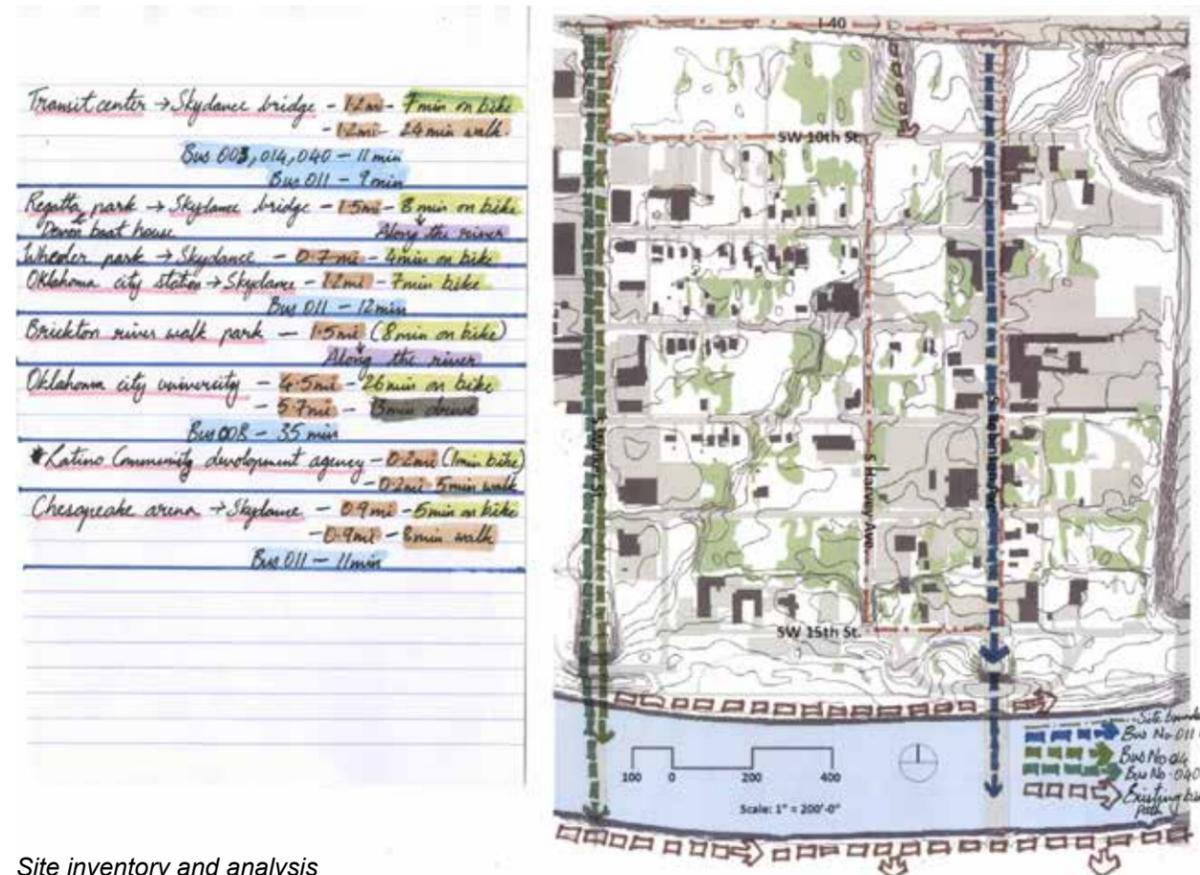


## An Urban Retreat

Goutam Vella

The Lower Park has the potential to attract people from Oklahoma City and residential areas nearby. The space is designed in such a way that it has access from all sides and can accommodate many people. This park can give people a wide range of amenities for leisure and recreational needs. Keeping in mind about the commercial places existing along S Robinson Ave, a commercial space has been allocated within the park. Lower Park is accessible and aesthetically pleasing, which gives an individual a sense of refreshment.

The park is adjacent to I-40 to the north & Oklahoma River to the south. On the west side is a residential area and Latino Community Development Agency. There are many car accessory shops along S Robinson. The main challenge in designing this park is noise from I-40, which makes the north side of the park a little unpleasant. Accessibility from the city and nearby well-known places is good. There is bus service available from different places. The vegetation is sparsely scattered and the land is unmaintained. Most of the space is vacant.



Site inventory and analysis

The anticipated users of this park include nearby residents and people coming from downtown. The park is designed in such a way that it can accommodate people of all ages and abilities. It becomes a major gathering and recreational space for the public. A place has been designed for children to play with nature and strengthen their motor and cognitive skills. It has a defined place for athletes to practice their sport and get trained.

The northern part of the park is designed for farm lands and a wetland, making it sustainable and providing food for the community. It also has a farmers' market, so everyone can get fresh organic fruits and vegetables. The wetland maintains rain water and makes the land fertile, it attracts different species of birds and also maintains small wildlife habitat. Nature play is designed right at the end



Lower Park master plan.

of Skydance Bridge, making it accessible for everyone who is coming from the Upper Park. The main entrance is from Robinson and Harvey, which unfolds into a large plaza/gathering space for the public. There is space designed for food trucks by the plaza, so that everyone can enjoy good food. I have designed the center of plaza as a shady place that has a fountain which is coordinated with music that plays in the background; this gives the public refreshment and a social gathering space for their recreation. To the north side of the plaza there are perennial gardens which has attractive flowering

interest throughout the year which makes the plaza more welcoming. For small concerts, performances, or small shows there should be a defined space for these individuals. As the park is a recreational space for the public a small amphitheater is designed to encourage these activities. There is multipurpose lawn which can be used for different activities

*Top left: Food truck space near the plaza  
Top right: Musical fountain in the center of the plaza.  
Bottom: Pavilion in the plaza.*



such as small social gathering, yoga festival etc. Adjacent to the multipurpose lawn there a pond designed for people who love to read, it is called as The Reading Place. The surroundings of this place is covered by lots of trees and shrubs, it differentiates the experience of a park into serene quiet place for reading. There are seven cabin spaces which are extended into the pond creating the experience for a person that they are floating on water, so that they can peacefully read or enjoy the quietness. There is also a boating pond for family recreation. Right next to it is a restaurant for public to enjoy family

dinners which helps family bonding. Dining space is designed into islands, each island accommodates one dining table which acts as privacy for people using the space.

*Top left: Amphitheater.  
Top right: 'Cabins' in the Reading Place.  
Bottom: Intimate dining areas near the restaurant on S. Robinson Ave.*



Nature play consists of different activities for kids of all age group. It is designed to develop motor and cognitive skills for children and also helps as a learning environment. There are only two entrances into nature play, one is from Robinson Avenue and the other is from Skydance Bridge. Kids coming from Skydance Bridge have a staircase and a slide to enter into the nature play area, the slide is interesting for kids so it draws them into the playground. This playground has a large multipurpose lawn for toddlers and kids, to play and have fun with their parents. This place helps toddlers to safely explore the area and can learn walking or crawling as the grass is soft and safe. Children learn new things by observation, so the multipurpose lawn helps them to observe other kids and parents and learn

new things. I have designed sand and clay pit which is accessible as everyone can play in sand and can create magnificent clay models which helps in their creativity and enhances learning. There is a small waterbody near the clay pit as they can use the water for creation. There is a place – Build your own, which has adequate space for children to construct small forts or shelters which brings out the creative ideas in them. The place A to B is small game, which is going from place A to place B on wooden logs balancing their body weight. The interesting place for me in nature play area is the play pocket, which is designed to create

*Below: Perspective of the nature playground.  
Opposite page: Master plan of the nature playground.*



an experience for a kid that he/she is entering into a special place where they are free to play, scream, and run! The entrance is through a tunnel which opens into an interesting space with a watchtower and a small play area in midst of thick vegetation. With all this play

space there are also some places around the play area for parents to sit and relax and keep an eye on their little ones. I think this place is magical!



## A Park to Enhance a Community

Xiaoxiao Wei

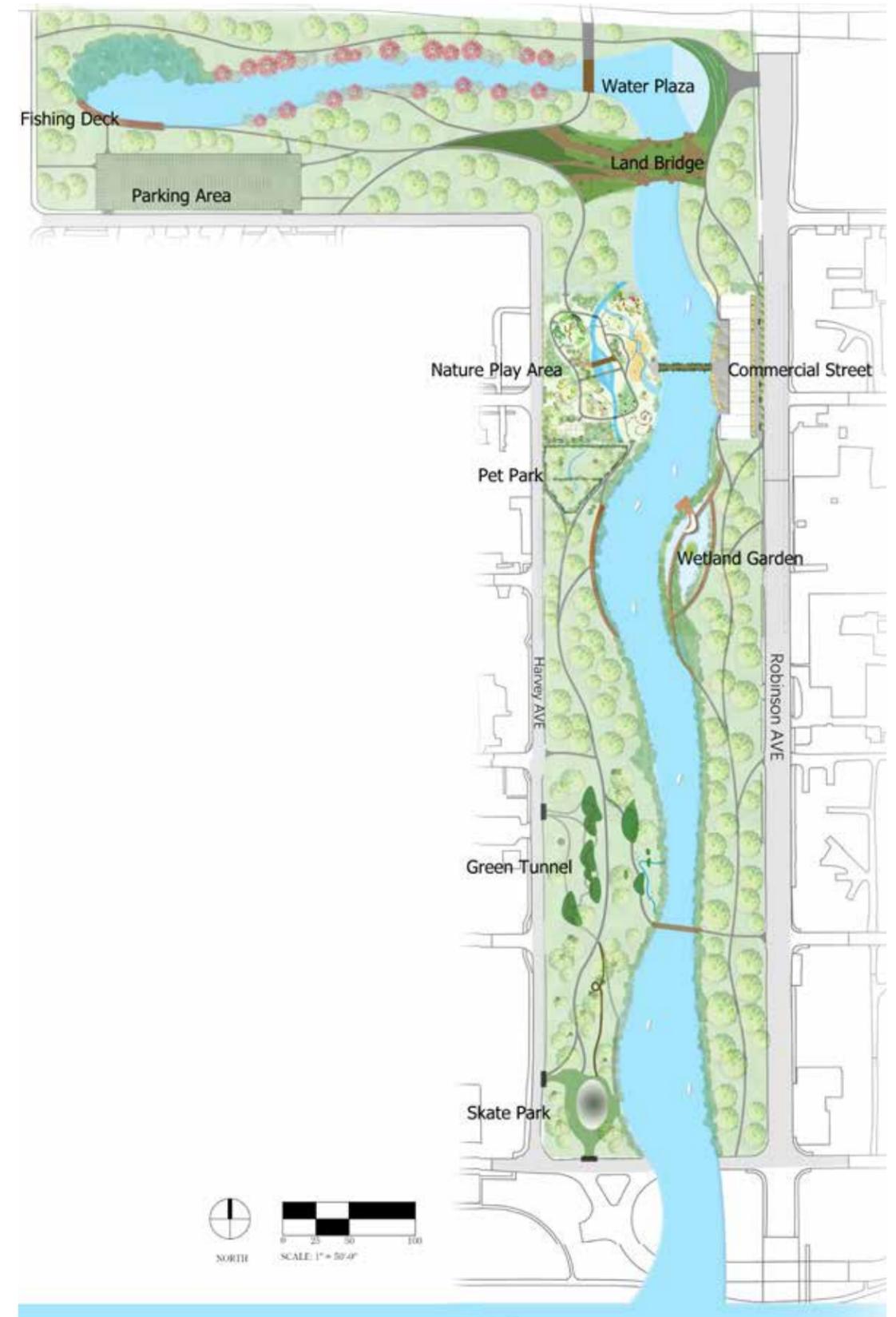
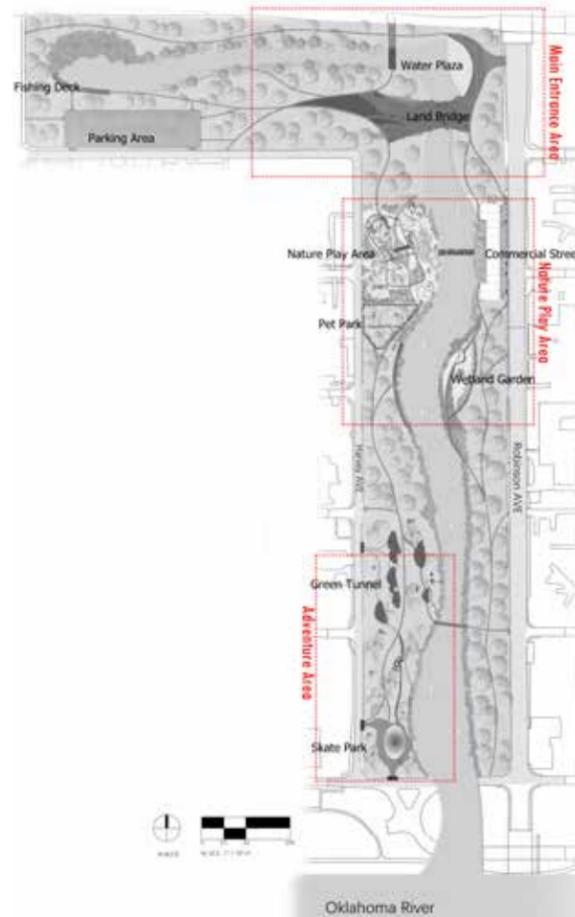
In designing the Lower Park, I want to enhance the community by capitalizing on the existing site features, such the proximity of the Oklahoma River, existing topography and vegetation, and commercial corridor along S. Robinson Ave., in order to create unique experiences and provide diverse activities for people of all abilities. Three main areas which highlight the diverse experiences are the main entrance area, the accessible nature play area, and adventure area.

During the site inventory and analysis process, I identified as assets the proximity of the Oklahoma River, existing topography and vegetation, and the function of buildings along S. Robinson Ave. I wanted to utilize the original topography and vegetation to create programs in this park. The highest place is near SW 15th Street, and the existing vegetation is located between SW 12th St and SW 13th St., SW 14th St and SW 15th St. Most of the buildings along S. Robinson Ave. are commercial or use to be commercial, but the building condition is not good and the commercial use is separate and disordered.

The potential users are categorized into seven groups. These are bicycle riders, children, parents, skateboarders, runners, senior citizens, and people with disabilities. The bicycle riders and skateboarders need adventurous facilities, special trails, and varying topography. For children, they need open green spaces and natural elements in the playground to facilitate learning from

nature. And runners need trails with shade. And for the people with disabilities, they need special facilities such as braille on signage and accessible routes. For senior citizens, they like quiet places with seating and shade to read the newspaper or watching children play. For the parents, they might need a covered shelter to watch children play and talk to other adults.

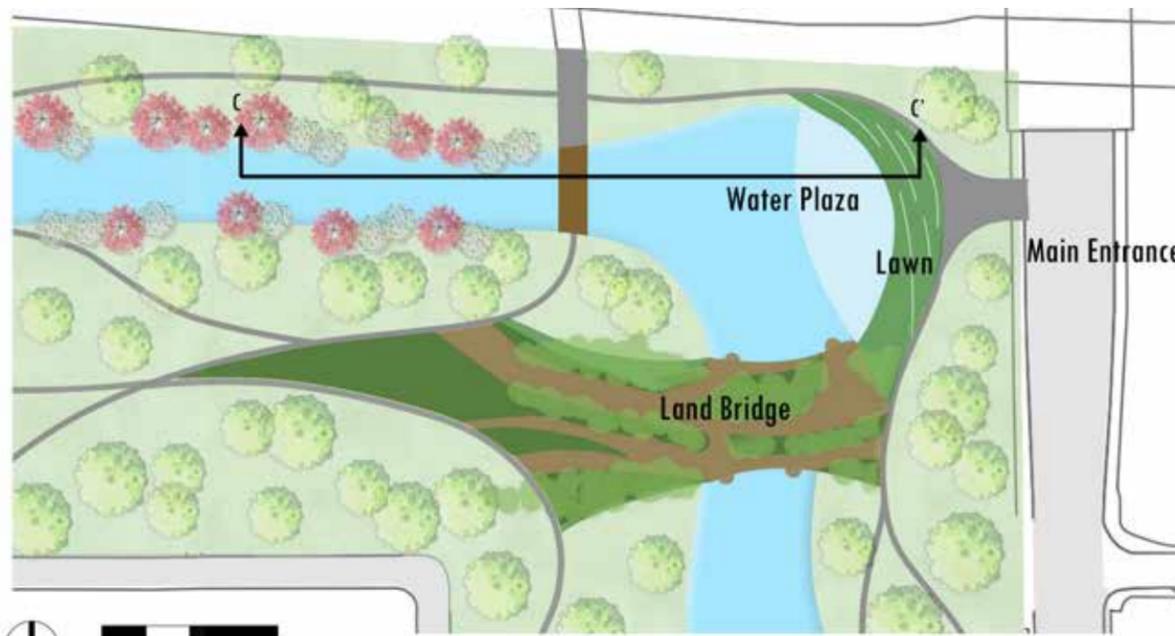
*Below: Master plan with highlighted areas which focus on enhancing the existing site features. Opposite page: Lower Park master plan.*



The first main area is the main entrance on S. Robinson Ave. The area contains a sloped lawn and plaza surrounding a water feature. The sloped lawn contains several linear seats for people to rest, and the water plaza contains very shallow water for children to play. When people walk into the entrance, they have a good view of the water. The land bridge connects the different program areas. Besides, in the northern part, some colorful trees and flowers are planted along the river to provide a special experience for people who are utilizing the boats for rent.

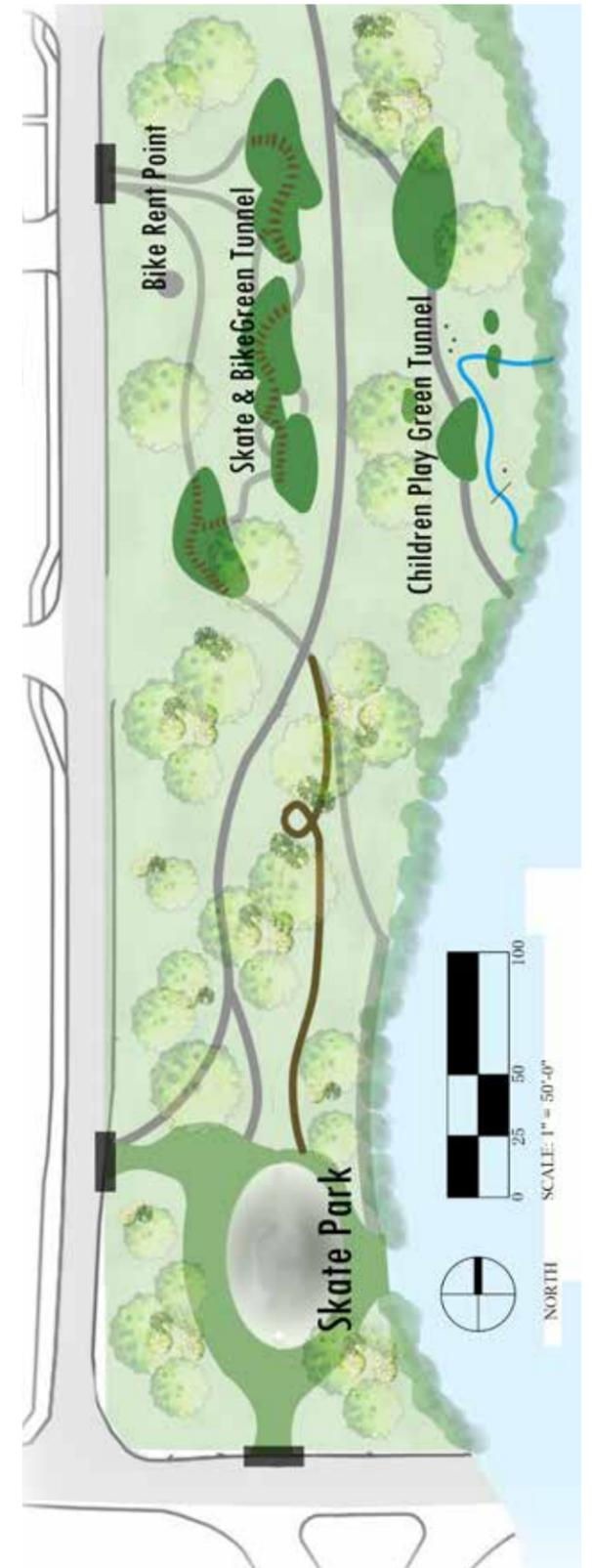


Above: The sloped lawn contains seating for visitors to view the water plaza.  
Below: Plan of the main entrance.



The second main area is the adventure area which includes a skate park and green tunnels for biking and exploring in two areas. The first is in the children's play area. The second is for bicyclists and skateboarders. The path through the tunnels moves in one direction for safety. In addition to the tunnels, skateboarders can enjoy a skate park located at SW 15th St, one of the highest points on the site. While watching the skateboarders, visitors enjoy the skyline of Oklahoma City.

Top: Green tunnels for bicyclists & skateboarders.  
Middle: Green tunnels in the play area.  
Bottom: Skate park with views to downtown.



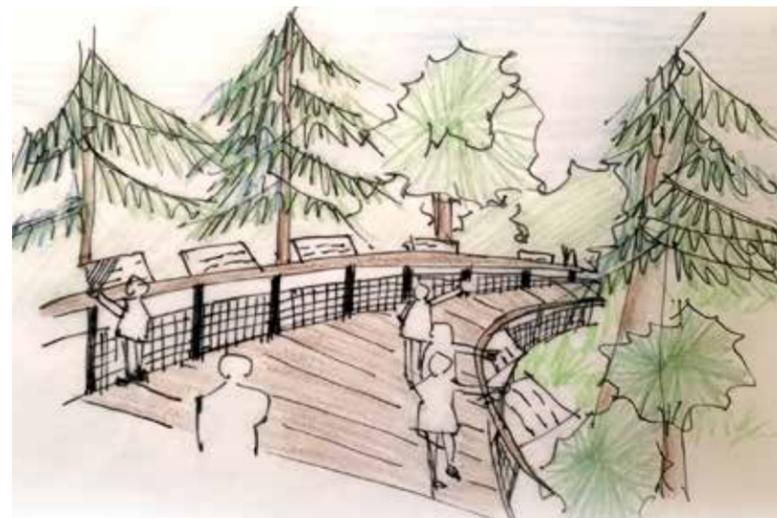
Master plan of the adventure area.

The third main area is the accessible nature play area. This area includes a nature playground, dog park, commercial street, and wetland garden. The playground consists of several different programs. The climbing net provides a place for children to climb on the net above grass. In the messy mud area, natural elements are provided to dig and play in the mud. The logs test a child's balance. A shady sitting area for parents is nearby. In the middle of the playground, there are two bridges that cross the water. One is a rope bridge for adventure while the other is an accessible bridge which connects to the canopy walk area. Interpretative signs on the handrails have information in Braille of different trees so that children can learn and discover in the forest. Also, the signs include 3-dimensional natural objects, such as seed pods and pine cones, so that people with vision

impairments can experience the forest. Behind is a sand play area and checkerboard lawn. The fairy ring area is surrounded by a circle of mushrooms sculptures of several sizes. A green bridge connects the nature playground to the commercial street. An outdoor plaza suitable of concerts and outdoor dining at the commercial area overlooks the water providing a special experience. The commercial center supports mixed use. The first floor is commercial/retail, the

second floor is office, and the third and fourth floors are residential. The commercial street is connected to a wetland garden with boardwalks.

*Opposite page: Master plan of the accessible nature playground.*  
 Clockwise from top left: Mushroom sculptures create a fairy ring. Climbing nets in the playground. Canopy walk with accessible signage. Covered boardwalk overlooking the wetland gardens.



## A Park for the Water Sport Enthusiasts

Kim White

The major idea behind my design was to incorporate natural shorelines and coves for an exploratory water experience in this part of the city. Stormwater collection provides water for the stream. Wetlands remove impurities from the stormwater. Visitors enjoy viewing wildlife in the riparian habitat within the wetlands. The stream eventually flows to the Oklahoma River with the removal of SW 15th St.

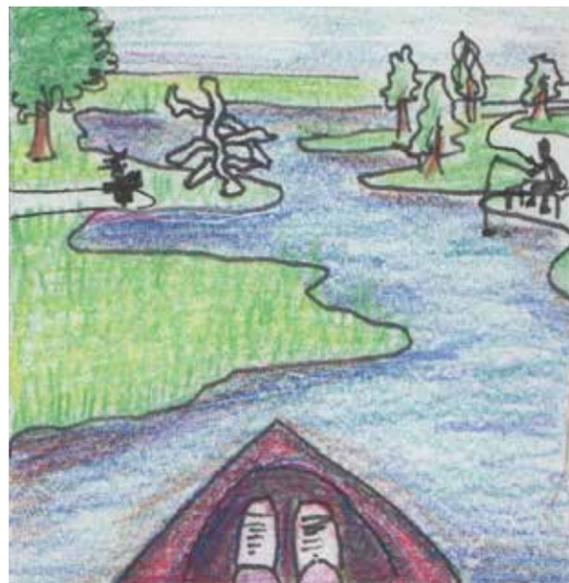
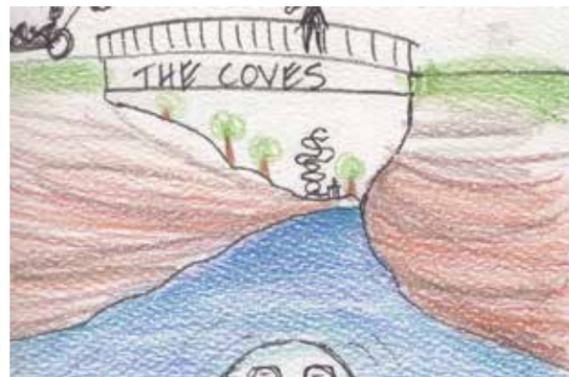
In the 1-2 miles surrounding the site, there are many chances for water activities, such as taking a water taxi in the canals of Bricktown, participating in the rowing at the Devon boathouse, or whitewater rafting with the Riversports Adventures. One aspect that was missing was the opportunity to explore coves and paddle up a meandering stream. Dogs can also enjoy the water. The few dog parks in the vicinity are relatively small and do not

include water features. Dog owners in this area will benefit from a large dog park with a pond. Incorporating this water body onto the site would allow for unique water experiences not found in Oklahoma City.

*Below: Entering the park stream from the Oklahoma River.*

*Bottom left: Wildlife habitat within the stream buffer.*

*Bottom right: Exploring the coves of the park.*



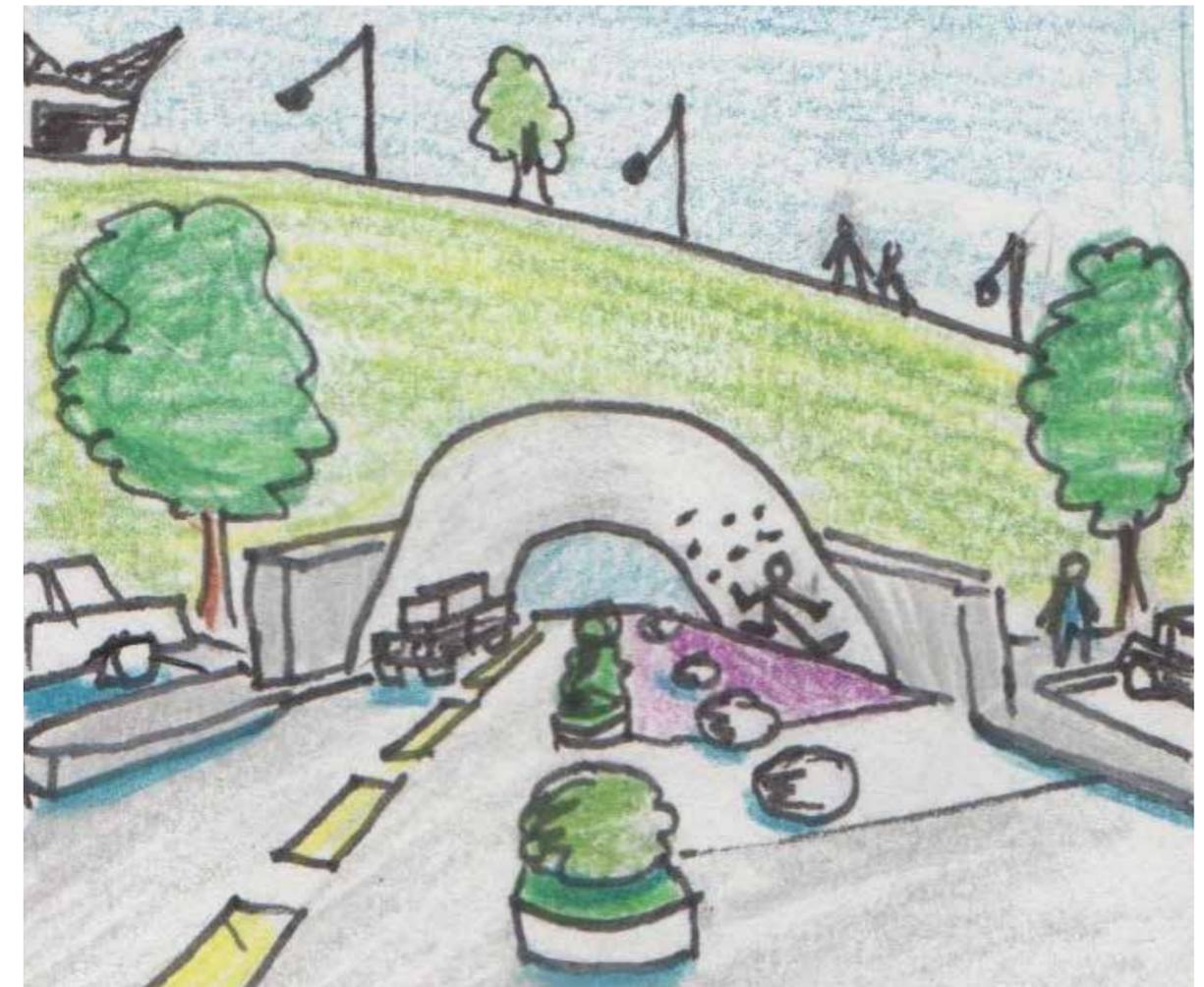
Biking activities in the nearby Wheeler District accommodate road bikers. The biking trail that is at the south end of the site connects through the site to lead to the northern park. Proposed mountain bike trails accommodate the mountain-bike user base as well as the trail-runners.

There are not many opportunities outdoors to include rock climbers. The

tunnel south of the Skydance Bridge will have pedestrian and automobile access along with a small bouldering area.

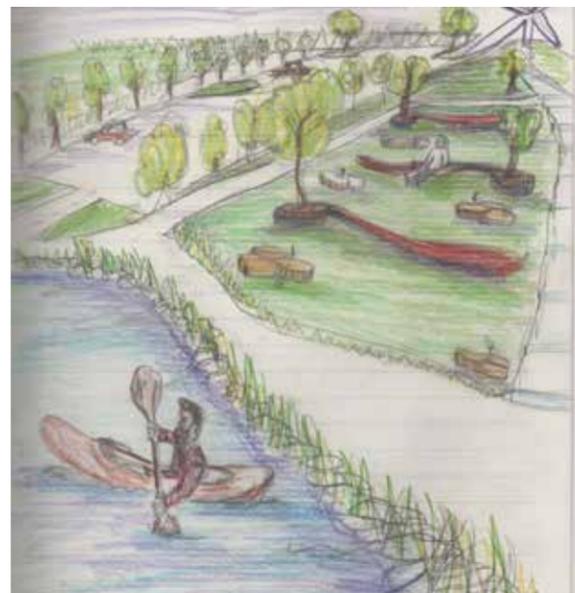
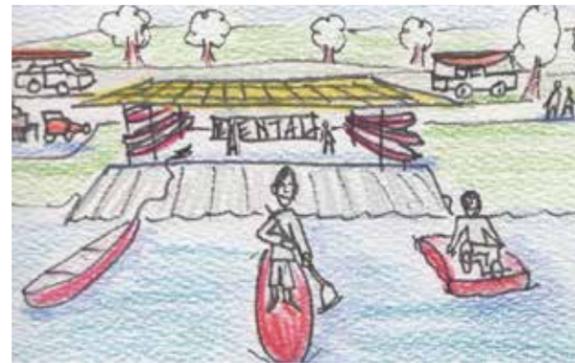


*Top left: Climbing in the tunnel near Skydance Bridge.*  
*Top right: Bouldering area.*  
*Bottom: Tunnel under the Skydance Bridge walkway.*



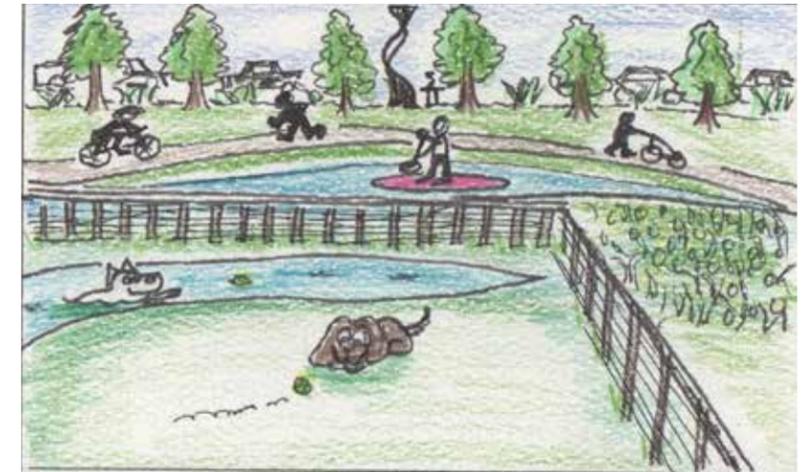
The population that will use this park will be from the adjacent community. These users would be all ages, with differing levels of activity from sporty to meditative. There are many interesting, hilly trails with switchbacks for runners, mountain-bikers, walkers, and joggers, as well as quiet areas for sitting, relaxing, birdwatching, art viewing, eating, and socializing. There are accessible exercise pockets along the path for a short workout circuit. All of the paths and benches are accessible with companion seating and decomposed granite surrounding them. The main path has sculptures from local artists every few hundred feet and include 3-D,

tactile representations nearby. The boat-rental house will have all styles of boats to accommodate all mobility levels. The community center across SW 10th St, will be able to have community classes on water activities and water-related education and safety. Nearby dog owners will have a large, open space with a water body to let their dogs swim in the summer. Also included, is a wash pad when owners leave to rinse the dogs. There is an app available to download that can triangulate your position and describe what you are looking at, based on the direction you are facing. This will describe things such as the wetlands, the nature play

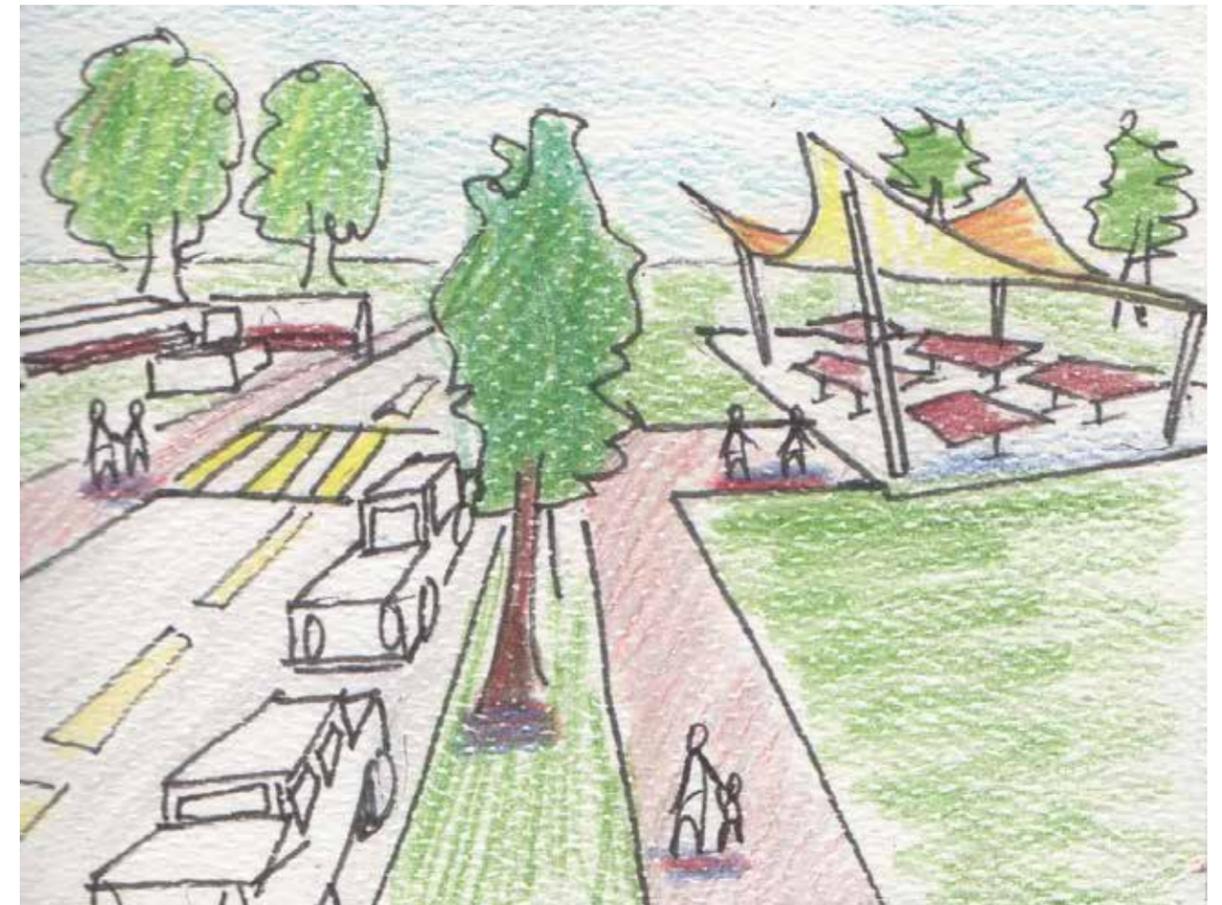


Clockwise from top: Visitors rent boats to explore the many coves. Boaters enjoy the natural beauty while viewing the skyline. Sculptures from local artists grace a trail. Switchback trails provide mountain bikers an enjoyable experience.

area, the cove area, the stream running through the park, etc. The adjacent neighborhood park, Manuel Perez Park, is incorporated into the site with a crosswalk to the new pavilion/picnic/open-space area across Harvey St. The parking lot on the Eastern side of the park has multiple handicap parking places, with ramps to the sidewalks.

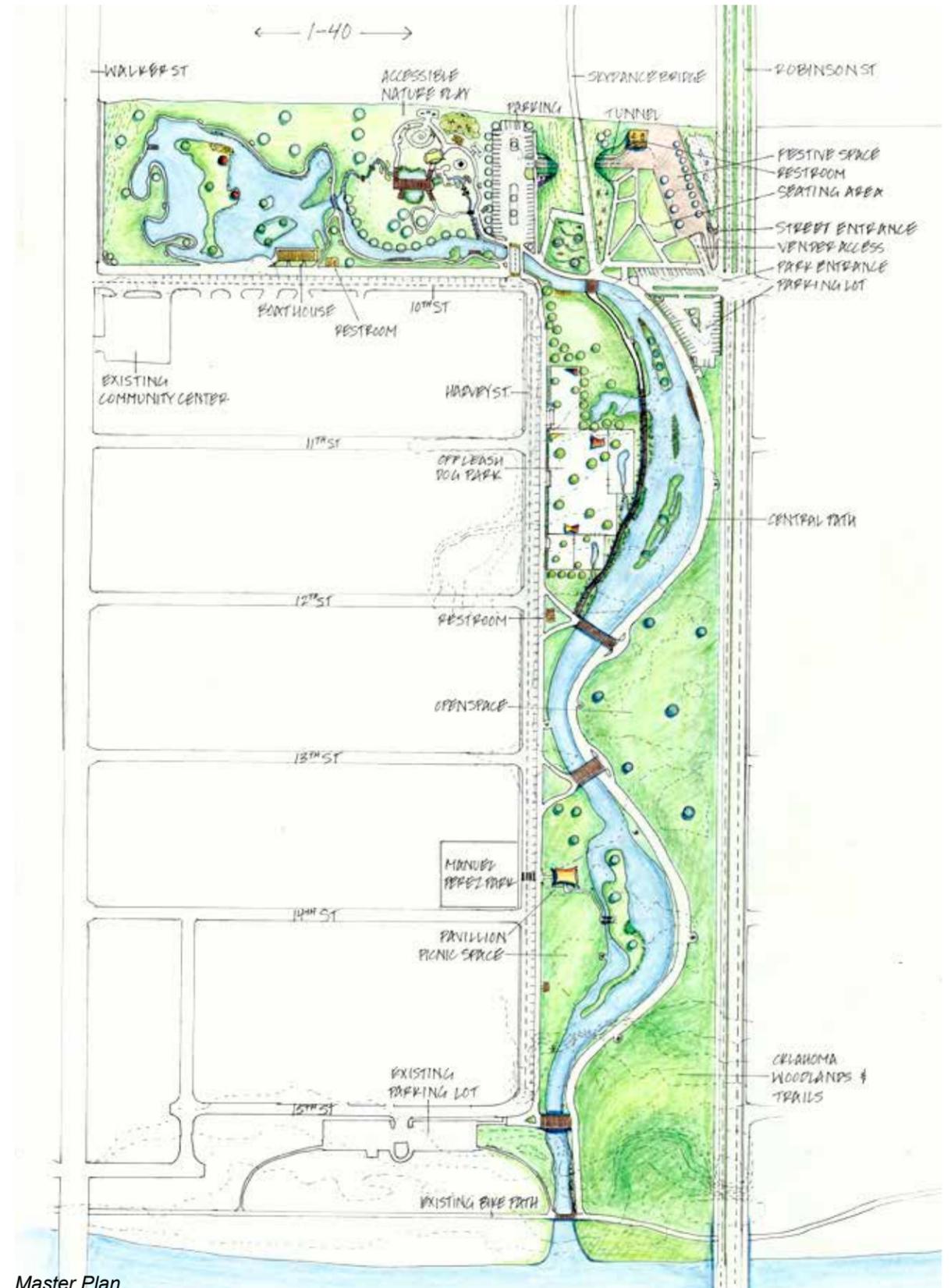
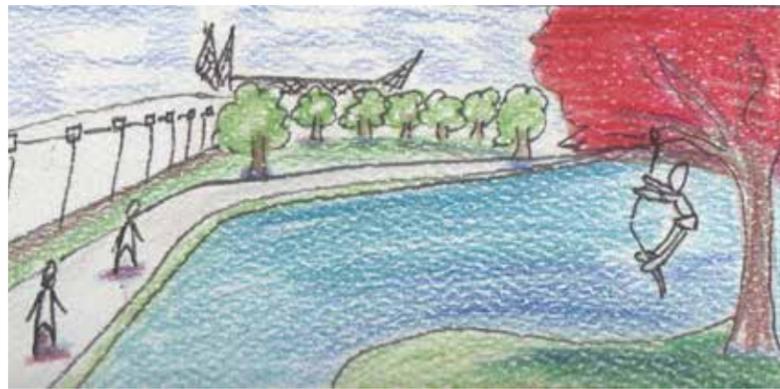
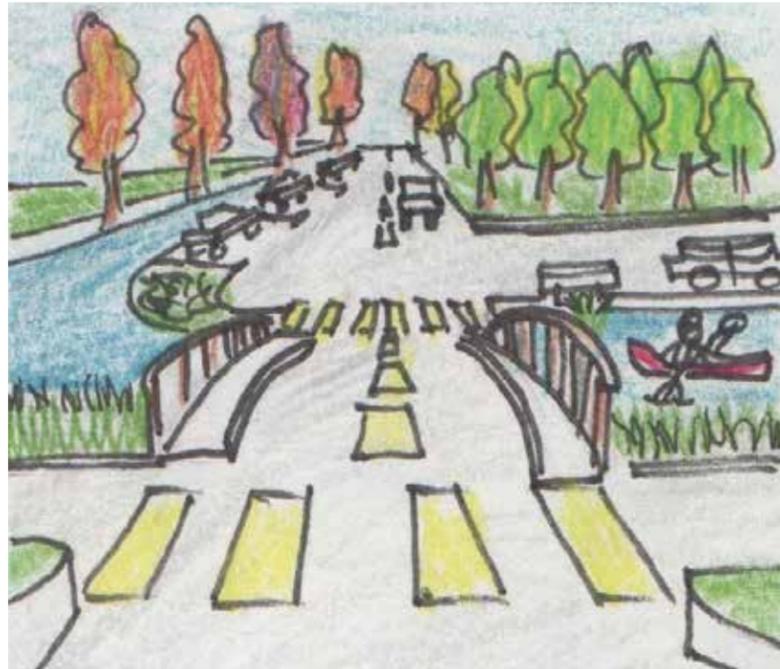


Above: Dogs frolic in the dog park.  
Below: Pavilion over the existing sitting area in Manuel Perez Park.



The master plan encompasses the entire 35 acres of the southern portion of the OKC Downtown Central Park. There are five main regions: the Cove/paddling area with bridges and views; the accessible nature playground; the flexible festive space; the Dog Park; the Manuel Perez adjacent open space and pavilion; the Oklahoma woodlands and trails.

*Clockwise from top: Bridge connecting parking lot with SW 10th St. Visitors playing in the water. Food truck area in the festival plaza. Vendors sell goods in the festival plaza. Boating under a trail bridge.*



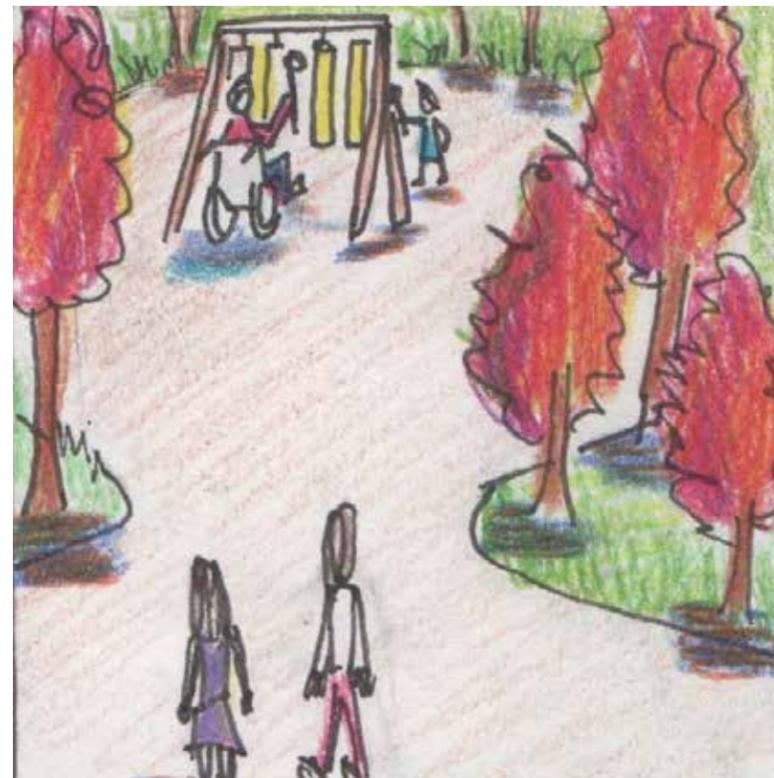
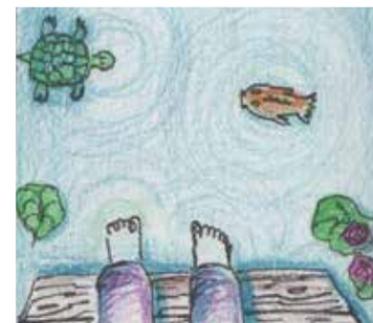
Master Plan

The major idea behind the nature playground was creativity and learning. The music garden is a place for the users to create sound. The prairie grass maze is a place where adventures will happen. There are multiple sand and water play tables next to the sand and gravel pit and shallow creek. There are boulders in the river and next to the river and other play areas for sitting and climbing. The shallow pond in the center of the play area has small turtles and native fish. All of the paths are made from decomposed granite or wood. The GPS app applies in this area as well, for describing all of the parts of the park. There are classic swings and accessible tripod swingpads. The boardwalk has a little bump out over the stream to get a better view of the water. The bench located on the boardwalk has companion seating. There are quiet areas near the NW and SW

for escaping the sensory stimulation. The “parents pavilion” is centrally located, on a slight elevation for a vantage point to the major play area: prairie grass, sand and water play, wetlands boardwalk, loose parts, music garden entrance. The architecture of the pavilion reflects the shape of the Skydance Bridge to form a connection with it. There will be an area for imagination play for building forts or other things with sticks or logs or other loose parts. The loose parts area will include tree cookies, sunflowers, loose sticks and pine trees to provide pinecones for

playing. A restroom is located within the park with water fountains and small wash pad for rinsing off sand. A 4-foot fence surrounds the entire park and will have only one entrance for safety. The fence will be a wire panel fence with wooden posts, so that views to the stream will be visible still.

*Bottom left: The boardwalk allows children to dip their feet in the water while viewing pond life.*  
*Bottom right: Children of all abilities play side by side.*  
*Opposite top: Master plan of the accessible nature playground.*  
*Opposite bottom: The boardwalk is the centerpiece of the nature playground.*



## An Urban Plaza Park

Sridhar Yalamanchili

The Lower Park is connected to the Upper Park of the MAPS 3 Central Park by the monumental Skydance Bridge. The Lower Park aims to attract everyone who seeks a get-away from the busy urban stress and wants to explore nature. The goal of the design is to leave the users with an unforgettable and rejuvenating experience. The Lower Park design is well integrated with various types of programs to cater to different users with different cultural backgrounds. The programs include an open-air theatre; food court; serene garden with yoga, tai chi, and meditation programs embedded into the

surrounding landscape; playgrounds; and nature play area. The programs are tailored to all age groups irrespective of culture and personality. Programs are connected with an artistically designed urban plaza. The plaza is slightly elevated from the ground level to give dominion to users over the surrounding landscape.

*Below: Existing land use of the site and surrounding.  
Opposite page: Master plan of the Lower Park.*



The site is bounded to the east by S. Robinson Ave which is a commercial street, on the west by S. Harvey Ave. which is a residential street, on the north by I-40, and on the south by SW 15th St. Adjacent to the site is a Latino Community Center. The site is located within a context of mixed zoning uses which is quite challenging to integrate different functions.

The Park is designed to widen the range of anticipated users, which could range from visitors from the neighborhood and as well as from city. Amenities range from picnic spaces, nature trails, nature play areas, food courts

with nighttime lighting, food trucks, open-air theatre, spa, yoga, and meditation halls.

The design focus is mainly on providing fun and rejuvenating experiences. The plaza is well-integrated to embed different functional spaces while it remains

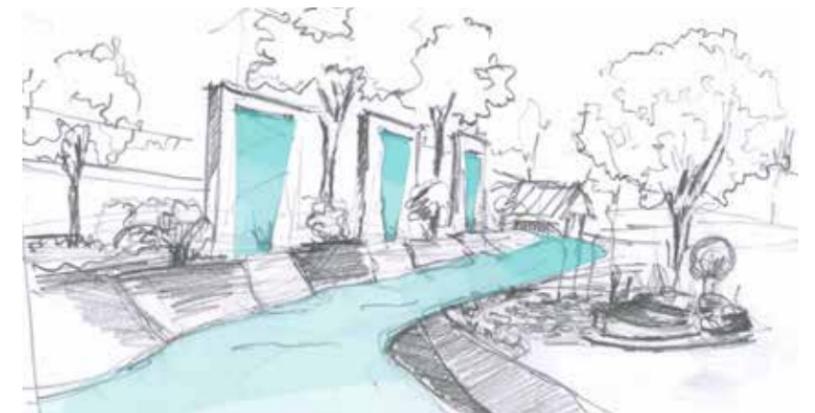
elevated from the rest of the site. The geometric definition creates a contrast between the plaza and natural trails along the length of the park. The park accommodates different age groups for

*Bird's eye view (top) and perspective (bottom) of the open-air theatre.*



different activities and is designed to become part of daily life. The open-air theatre is designed almost in the middle of the site to act as a focal point and aims to host a diverse multifunctional space. It is embedded with a stage to program for musical events, as well as plays and drama. Serene gardens are designed on south of the site to take advantage of incorporating the subtle environment provided by the Oklahoma River. All entrances to the plaza are comprised of staircases and ramps making it easy for access.

*Top: S. Harvey Ave entry plaza. Middle: Serene gardens on the south side of the site. Bottom: S. Robinson Ave entry plaza.*



Nature play is designed with the aim to make it accessible for all ages of kids including children with specific requirements. Ramps are provided from the plaza to the nature trail to create an obstacle-free environment for kids. Nature play is designed on basis of age classification such as toddlers to primary school children and primary to middle school children and high school children. The design is perceived to create visual contact between parents and kids by providing multiple gazebos for parents to interact with each other and as well as to have secure visual dominion with surrounding play areas. Toddler play areas have flat lawn spaces which provide opportunity to kids to explore the world around them and as well as learn to walk, crawl, or even explore their senses at the sensory garden and mini orchard. A two inch deep water creek is designed at the central space of nature play area which divides different zones as well as which connects them along its length. Small open-

air theatre is designed next to the creek to host skits/plays or musical concerts or magic shows for kids. Picnic spaces and multipurpose lawn can accommodate school groups or family groups who seek to have a visit. Plaza space provides perfect vantage point for visitors with shading devices are designed for leisure and fun.

*Opposite page: Master plan for the accessible nature playground.*  
*Top left: Small open-air theatre for skits and plays.*  
*Top right: Shady sitting area for parents to watch their children play.*  
*Bottom: West-east section through the center of the nature playground.*



- LEGEND:**
- 1. Waterbody
  - 2. Plaza
  - 3. Lawn
  - 4. OAT
  - 5. Log balancing
  - 6. Preschool Play area
  - 7. Earth Play
  - 8. Infant Toddler Area
  - 9. Infant Toddler Area
  - 10. Mini Orchard
  - 11. Sensory Garden
  - 12. Sandpit\_Castle Playarea
  - 13. Natural Construction
  - 14. Multipurpose Lawn
  - 15. Gazebo
  - 16. Garden
  - 17. Pergola
  - 18. Picnic area





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