

Greenbelt Station Green Spaces

Community-led Visioning and Strategy

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Greenbelt Station Workshop September 2022

LOGOS

Greenbelt Station Greenspaces Vision

Community-led master plan

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25 Crescent Road
Greenbelt, MD 20770
Project #: 3730
Feb 2023

1. Introduction

This report captures the process and concept designs for the Greenbelt Station Greenspace Vision project. It includes research, site analysis, a community engagement summary, conceptual plans and renderings, and recommendations.

1.1 Project Background

At the beginning of 2022, NDC set an agreement with the working group from the City of Greenbelt and representatives from the Greenbelt Station and Verde Apartment community to generate a community led greenspace plan for the future of public green space in the neighborhood. The goal of the project is to create welcoming and safe spaces that foster community connections and supports a healthy, inclusive thriving neighborhood. The process is aligned with the Greenbelt Community Pledge, *'The strength of Greenbelt is diverse people living together in a spirit of cooperation. We celebrate all people. By sharing together all are enriched. We strive to be a respectful, welcoming community that is open, accessible, safe and fair.'*

NDC staff and volunteers worked with community members to understand existing opportunities and constraints, and explore design and location options for neighborhood amenities and landscape improvements to possibly include Community gardens, Dog park, Fit zone, Play, Gathering, Sustainability/energy, Walking/biking connecting trails, Placemaking and public art opportunities. NDC conducted several engagement opportunities to understand the wants and needs of the Greenbelt Station residents for their outdoor spaces. The plan considers short-term, medium and long-term proposals, budget expectations, maintenance and staffing, and connectivity.



GUMC Workshop May 2022



GUMC Workshop July 2022

1.2 About NDC

Mission

Founded in 1968, the Neighborhood Design Center is a nonprofit organization that facilitates the development of healthy, equitable neighborhoods through community-engaged design and planning services. By providing the tools, expertise, and partnerships necessary to realize neighborhood visions, we support broad participation in the evolution of the built environment.

Work

Neighborhood Design Center projects are collaborations between residents, community stakeholders, design professionals, local government agencies, fellow nonprofits, and our staff. Together we lay the groundwork for improving blocks, renovating parks and school grounds, reclaiming abandoned structures for community use, and revitalizing commercial districts. We believe that these unlikely partnerships provide mutual benefit, offering invaluable experiential learning to design professionals and positioning historically disinvested neighborhoods to attract future investment. Since 1968, NDC has worked on over 4,000 community-initiated projects across Maryland.

Organization

NDC maintains a 12-person full time and 5-person part time staff of highly trained program and executive staff. Staff hold bachelor's degrees in: Architecture, Environmental Studies, Studio Art, Geography, Interior Design, English, Sculpture, as well as masters degrees in Landscape Architecture, Historic Preservation, Social Design and Urban/Regional Planning. Additional qualifications include: Registered Architect, Registered Landscape Architect, Certified Arborist (ISA), Post Graduate Certificate-Urban Studies, National Charrette Institute Certification, and SITES AP.

NDC's Board includes Architects, Landscape Architects, Planners, representatives from local government agencies, universities, and local law, design and engineering firms. In addition, NDC's roster of over 450 design volunteers includes professionals in the following fields: Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Planning, Engineering, and other design and technical fields.

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1.3 NDC Values

Committed to building just places. Disparities in well-being, health, wealth, policing, and education are distinct across race and class lines. We* acknowledge that business as usual in the development of the built environment will continue to perpetuate the social, economic, environmental, and geographic inequalities that exist in our communities today. Unless we are actively working to mitigate immediate effects and dismantle long-standing power structures, we are complicit in upholding systemic oppression and white supremacy.

We use these criteria to guide where we work, the projects we take on, how and where we invest resources, and the culture of our own practice.

Courageous in our curiosity. We come to our work with open minds and a readiness to ask hard questions, listen deeply, and change course when necessary. Through this responsive approach, we make room for radical imagination, creativity and inspired action in our collaborative practice. We strive to maintain a curious and critical lens on our own processes, programs, biases and patterns, and to incorporate what we learn from our partners, peers, and environment.

Inclusive in our collaboration. We create participatory spaces anchored in support, connection, and mutual respect, where diverse experiences and types of expertise are valued. This approach recognizes everyone's innate agency, surfaces a range of perspectives and opinions, and makes space for all who want to join in. We welcome the opportunity to work through differing perspectives and priorities and build deeper understanding. By fostering connections across traditional hierarchies, we support new relationships, the redistribution of power, and increased access to resources long after an individual project ends.

Designing for just futures. Systemic inequity has both created current conditions of disinvestment and disproportionately accorded influence and resources to white-led nonprofits. We acknowledge the privilege our organization holds within the existing system. To push back on that system and support community power, we work where we are invited and on community- identified and community-led efforts. Further, we commit to decision-making structures that break down existing barriers; broadening our definitions of "skill" and "expertise" in community design; making space for new models of community development and ownership; and building an organization that centers those furthest from power. We believe in the radical potential of these actions.

*We are the current staff and board of the Neighborhood Design Center.

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1.4 NDC Project Team

NDC Staff

Sophie Morley

Program Manager
Prince George's County Office
smorley@ndc-md.org
(301) 830-8251

Sophie is an architect with a background in inclusive design and international development. She came to NDC from her home city of London where she was working on affordable housing projects for charities, social landlords and Councils. Since 2010 she has been collaborating with the architecture organization Architecture sans Frontieres leading projects in Ghana, South Africa and Sierra Leone. She has taught architecture at several UK universities and her teaching focuses on equitable practice and social justice in the built environment.

Angelica Arias

Program Coordinator
Prince George's County Office
aarias@ndc-md.org
(301) 830-6517

Angelica is a recent graduate from the University of Maryland, College Park. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture and a minor in Construction Project Management. She interned at NDC in summer 2021 to continue learning about community-engaged design and using equitable design methods to help shape the built environment of our local communities. Angelica then joined our team as a full time staff member in September.

NDC Project Volunteers

Erin Hulbert - Undergraduate Architecture and Studio Student, University of Maryland - College Park

Judy Tram - Graduate Architecture and Community Planning Student, University of Maryland - College Park

Meredith Ver Steeg - Associate Landscape Architect, Moody Graham

Dorothy Estrada - Community and Economic Development Coordinate, City of Hyattsville



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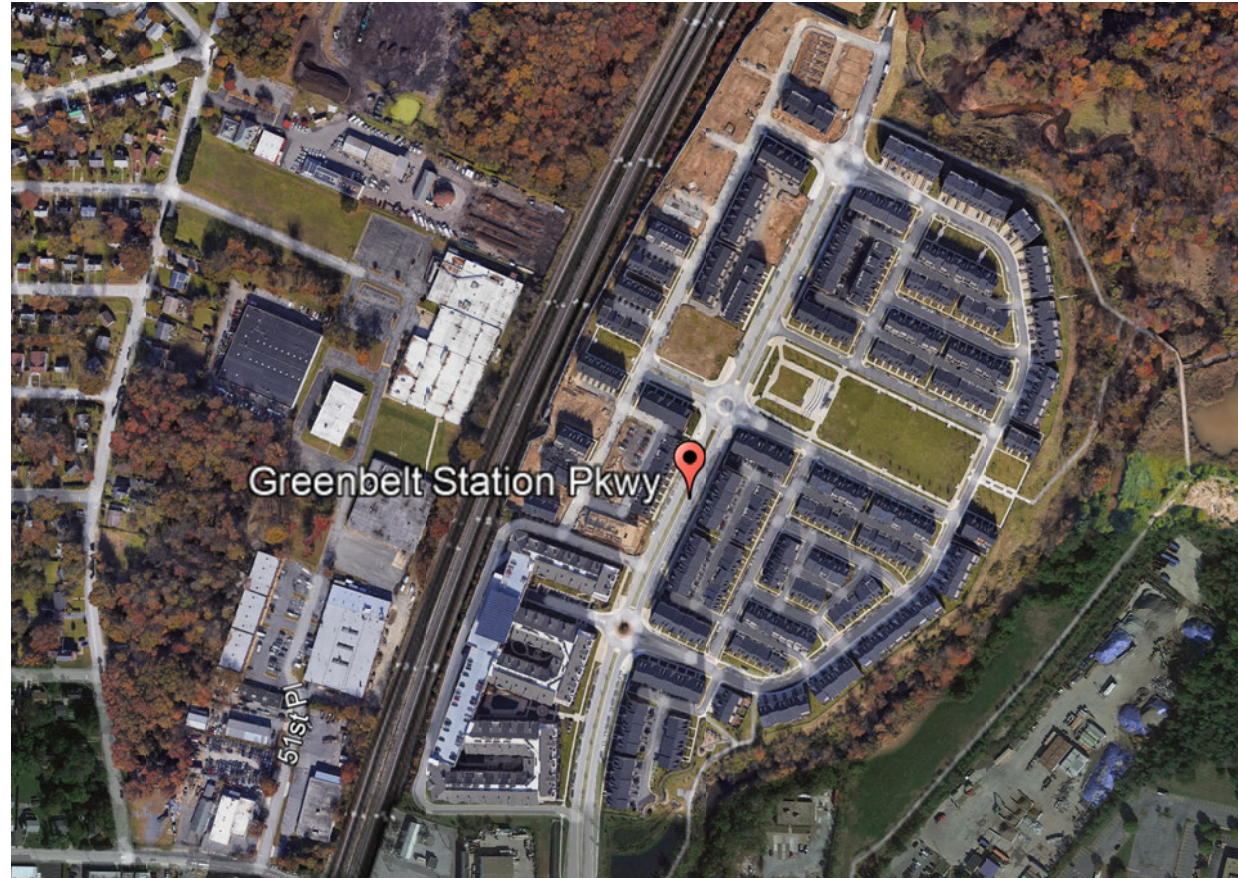
**Greenbelt Station
Greenspaces
Vision**

Community-led master
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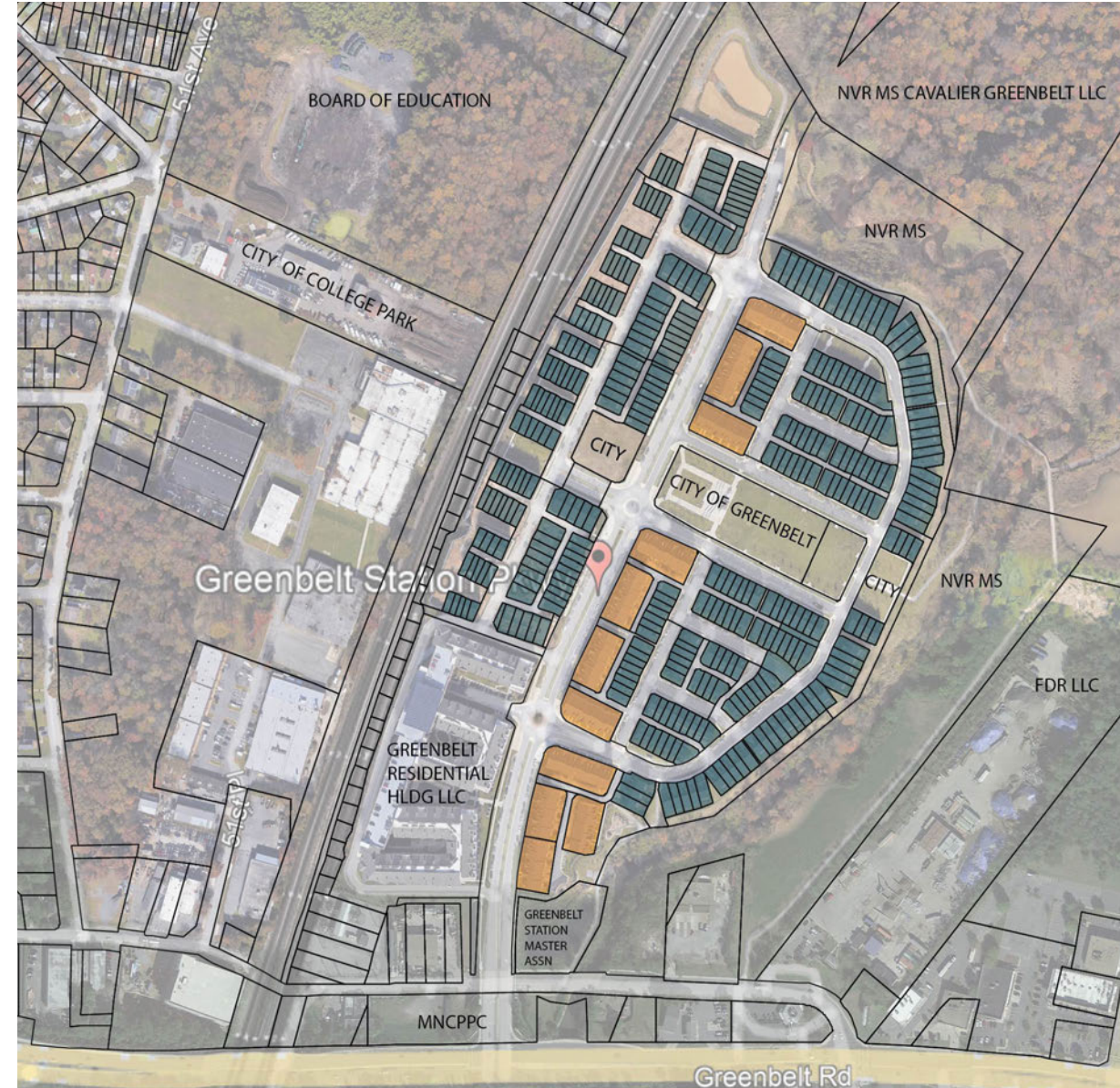
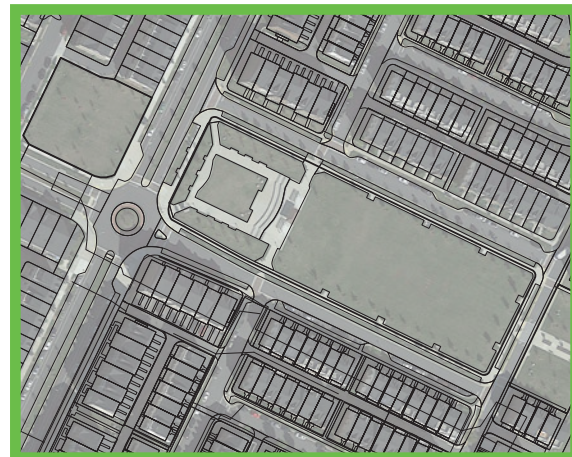
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2. Site Context



Greenbelt Station is a 87-acre townhome and condominium community location in Greenbelt, MD - Prince George's County. The neighborhood has several outdoor amenities such as several open greenspaces, a tot-lot, trails, and a nearby lake.



Legend - Building Type

- CONDOS
- TOWNHOMES

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2.1 Existing Site Conditions



Greenbelt Station Greenspaces Vision - Focus Areas



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Greenbelt Station Greenspaces Vision

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Existing Site Conditions - cont.



Greenbelt Station Greenspaces Vision - Focus Areas



the Neighborhood DesignCenter

NDC Staff: SM, AA
 NDC Volunteers: EH, MVS, DE, JT

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Greenbelt Station Greenspaces Vision

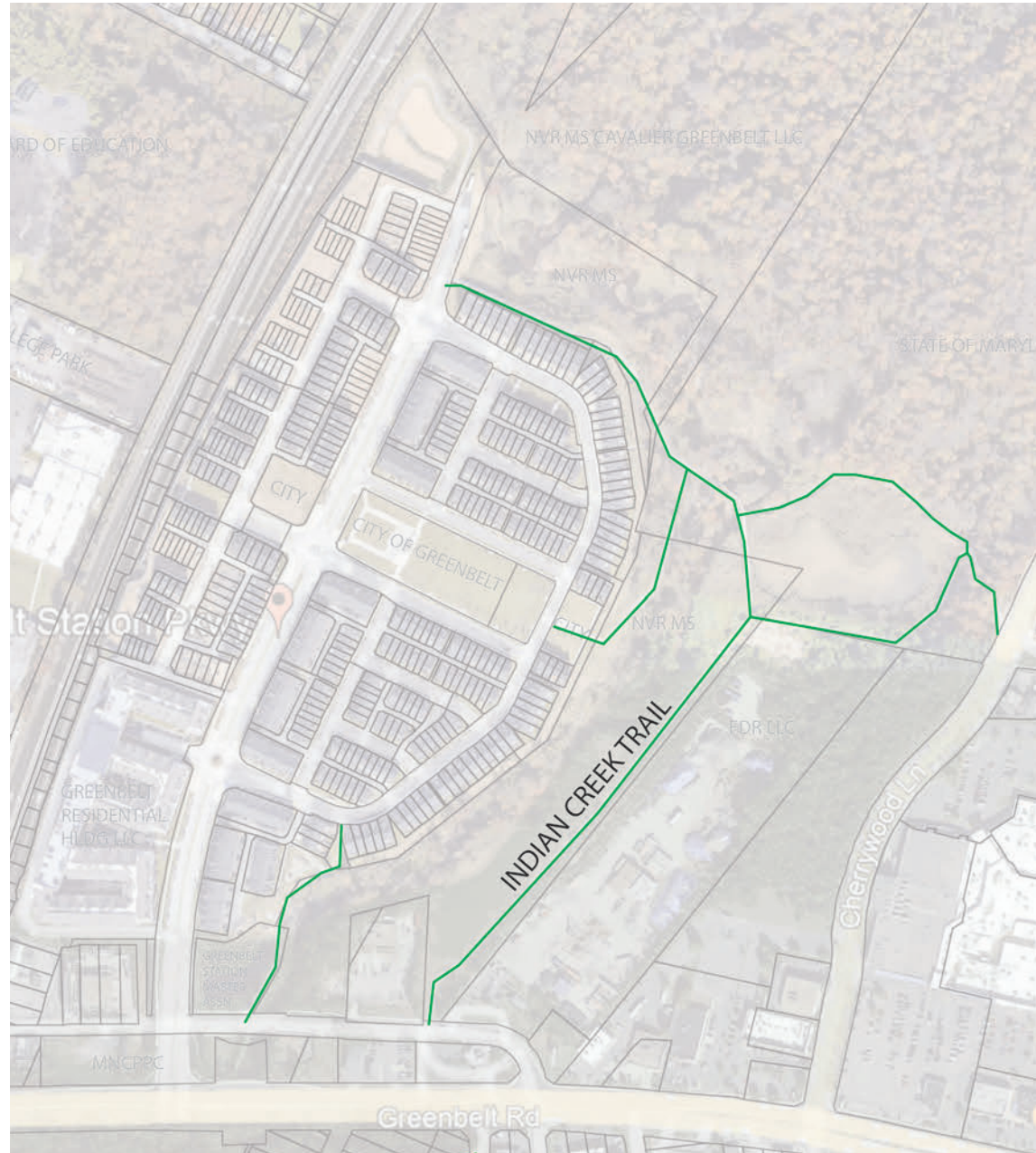
Community-led master plan

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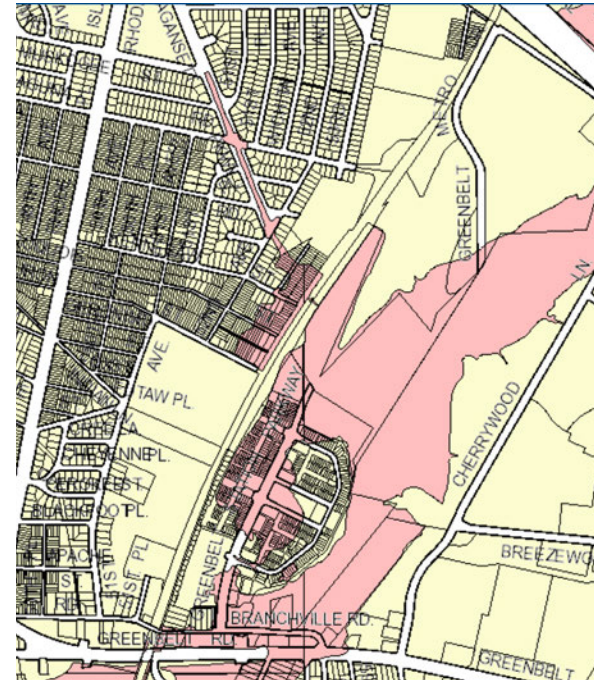
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2.2 Existing Conditions Discoveries



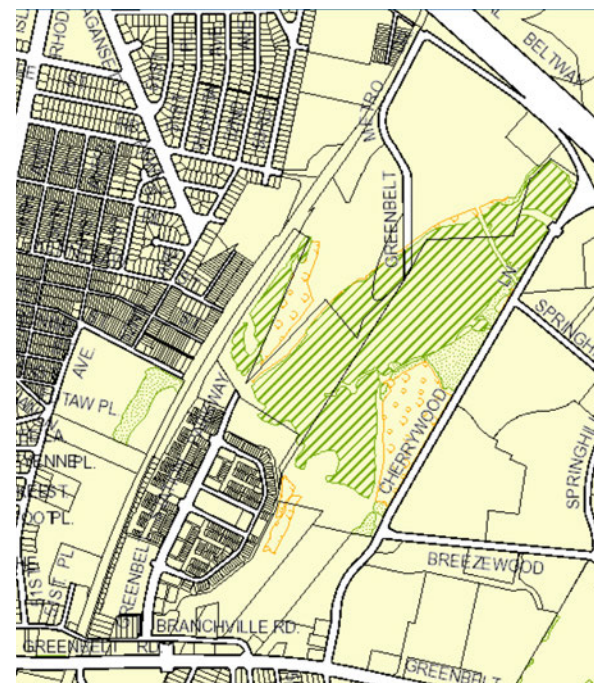
Indian Creek Trail - *diagram created by NDC team members*



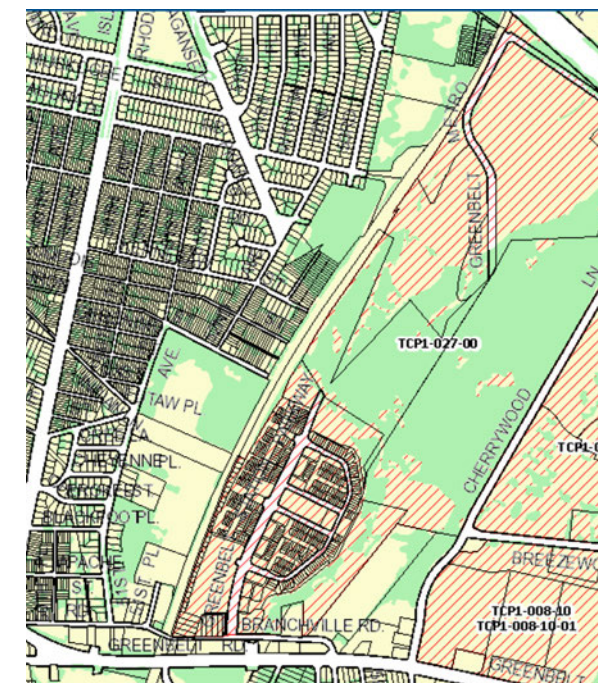
Floodplain Zones



Stream Capture & Drainage



Woodlan Conservation Area



Tree Conservation and Canopy

Maps retrieved from PGAtlas

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3. Research - History of Greenbelt

A National Historic Landmark

From the beginning, Greenbelt was designed as a complete city, with businesses, schools, roads and facilities for recreation and town government. It combined best aspects of rural life (i.e lakes, woods, open spaces) with best aspects of urban life (recreational facilities, theaters, commercial shops). The city is noted for its interior walkways, underpasses, system of inner courtyards and one of the first mall-type shopping centers in the United States. It was modeled after 19th century English garden cities. See references for more info.

Art Deco Architecture in Greenbelt

Greenbelt is recognized for its Art Deco style architecture that was popular at the time the city was developed in the 1930s. The curved lines, glass bricks, and the buttresses along facade walls are found in some of the city's most important civic and commercial buildings. Some examples are the city's community center, the Roosevelt Shopping Center, and the Greenbelt Theatre. See references for more info.

Segregation before and after the city's development

About 14 African Americans total lived on farms on the land that would become Greenbelt. In June of 1936, early plans for the land that would become Greenbelt included a "separate development area" set aside for use by African American families, to be called the Rossville Rural Development. Planners denied this idea due to strong opposition from local communities and lawmakers. Although the workers who built Greenbelt were both African American and white, the community would be segregated and open only to white families. (Joseph Arnold, The New Deal in the Suburbs: A History

****It was brought to our attention that Greenbelt's rich history and culture/traditions should be recognized and honored in the project's final design decisions. The above information can influence final design/placemaking decisions.***



Example of Art Deco
Architecture in Greenbelt.
**Greenbelt Museum
Website**



African American relief workers on site at the
Greenbelt Community Center.
Greenbelt Museum Collection

4. Community Engagement

3 In-person community events

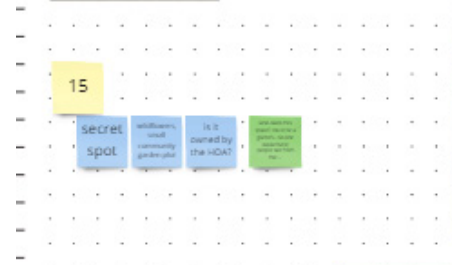
6 Working group visioning meetings

4.1 Community Walk

The Community Walk was an introductory event for all interested parties—residents, maintenance workers, local government officials, and NDC faculty and volunteers—to meet up and gather information about the current state of Greenbelt Station. Participants broke up into groups and wandered the premises to see what stuck out, what could be improved, and what about the space was working. This allowed for multiple viewpoints to arise as the groups walked and made comments, each person giving their own perspective based on their own experience and background. The end result was a preliminary understanding of the concerns with each major space, and a number of brainstormed ideas about what changes could be made. This information was used to generate ideas to be presented in the following Stakeholder Workshops.



14 Secondary Pavillion Area - north of Central Park



Greenbelt Community Walk

Write down or sketch your observations for each space corresponding to the number on the map. We want to understand the opportunities and constraints for each area. Include anything that will help capture stories you might have about the space.



Screenshots captured from June 2022 Community Walk Feedback Review

“There are few areas in the community with adequate shade. In the summer this area can feel like an urban heat island. It would be great to find natural or environmentally-friendly ways to get more shade.” - Community member

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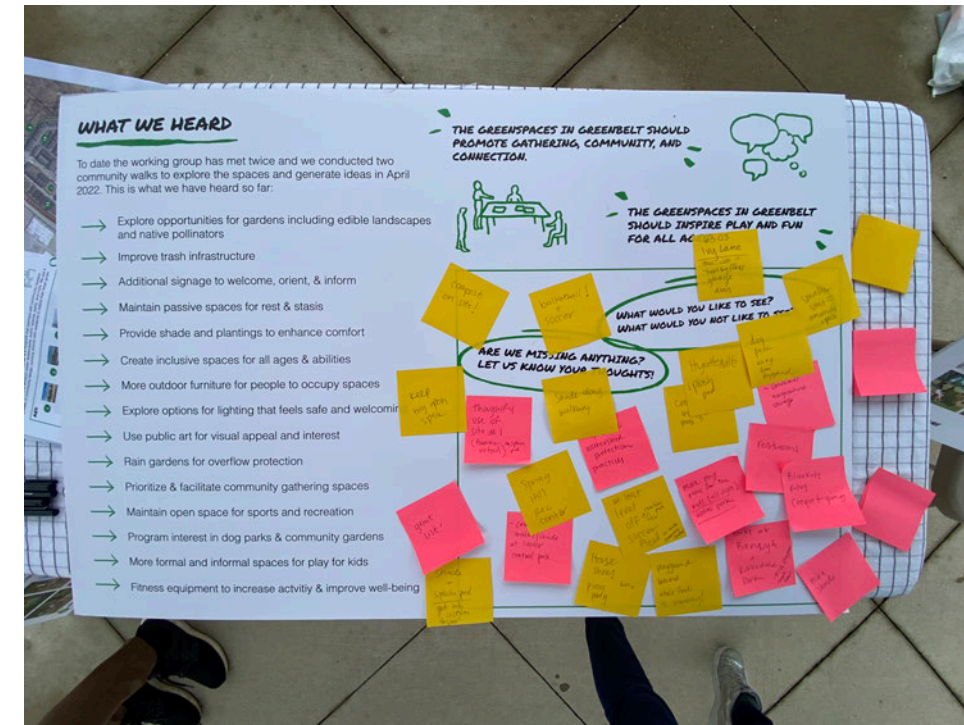
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4.2 Community Stakeholders Workshop 01

This first Community Workshop took place on June 11, 2022. Greenbelt Station residents were invited to learn about the Greenbelt Greenspaces Vision project, the project's focus areas in the neighborhood, and what the project working group heard from previous community walks. Individuals who attended the workshop had the opportunity to respond and provide feedback to the list of design ideas and the example images. Some ideas included pavilions, dog parks, fitness, gardens, signage, public art, etc. The engagement also allowed everyone to share what they felt was missing and what people would like to see.



“More play areas for kids of all ages.”

“Keep big open space.”

“More shade.”

- Greenbelt Station Residents

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Greenbelt Station Greenspaces Vision -
Workshop June 2022

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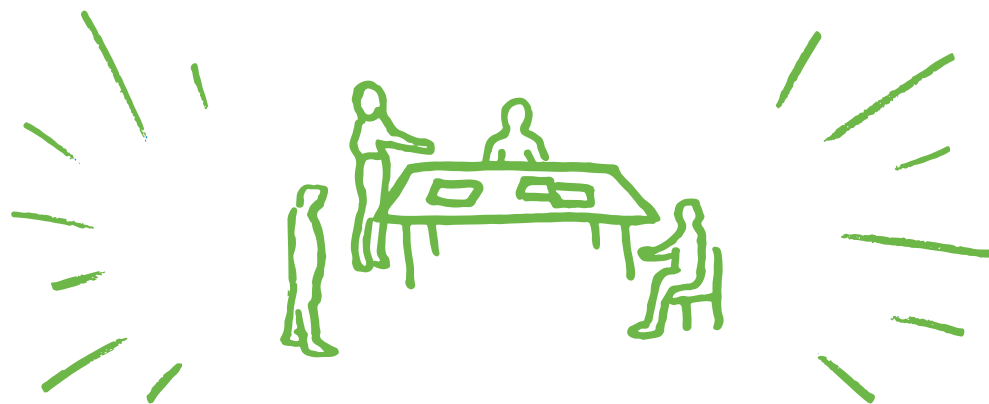
4.3 Community Stakeholders Workshop 02

The second stakeholder workshop took place in September 2022. The NDC team and the Greenbelt Station Working Group collaborated to set up a public workshop outside in the Central Park within the Greenbelt Station community. Four stations were set up showing various aspects of the site plan—one focused only on the largest green parcel, the Central Park area, and the two other stations other showed the entire site plan for the community's boundary. A fourth station showed a variety of pictures of landscape elements on a matrix, asking people to rank their stylistic preference for the site. Attendees included the Working Group, comprising of residents and HOA members, as well as City of Greenbelt officials. Several members of the general public also stopped by to participate, an advantage of the open-air format.

After the facilitator-guided working period, each group reported back their major decisions and justifications for placing design elements in specific places on the map. The two groups working on the community-wide site plan had similar ideas about design implementations despite working separately, indicating there was consensus about the vision. Participants then rotated stations and gave additional input on the other boards. Detailed discussion on how design elements would solve previously identified problems took place, and these suggestions were used to generate the first site plan options.



In-person workshop at Central Park - Greenbelt Station



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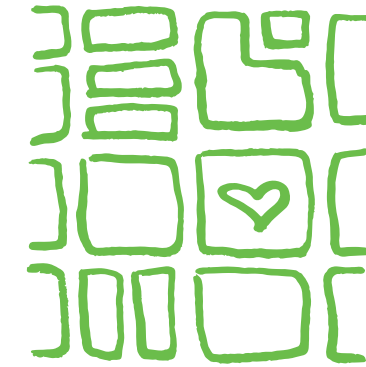
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4.4 Design Principles

- 1 Explore opportunities for gardens including edible landscapes, native pollinators, and a community vegetable garden.
- 2 Enhance shade and maintain passive spaces for rest and stasis.
- 3 Use public art for visual appeal and interest, and create a cohesive identity for the community's features.
- 4 Prioritize and facilitate community gathering spaces.
- 5 Maintain sports and recreation areas, while installing new signage and fitness equipment to enhance physical activity.
- 6 Create a designated dog park for the community.
- 7 More formal and informal spaces for play for kids.
- 8 Rain gardens for overflow protection.
- 9 Improve trash infrastructure.
- 10 Create welcoming, inclusive spaces for all ages & abilities.



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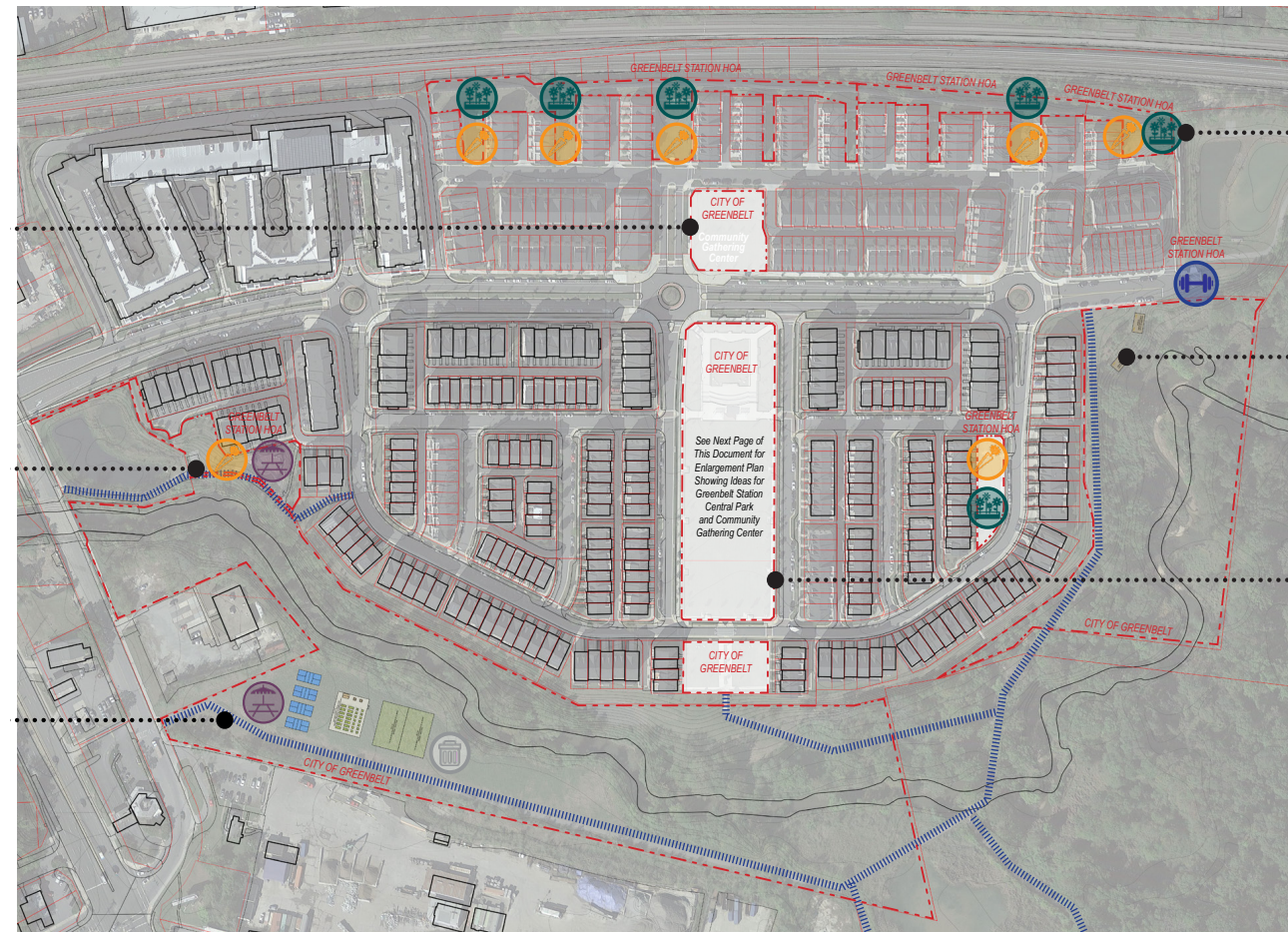
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5. Design Ideas

The primary concern about the open spaces of Greenbelt Station is a lack of accommodations and spatial definition. Its current state does not provide decent infrastructure for residents to sit, gather, and play, nor does it provide any protection from the sun. Through information gathering sessions, we identified the types of outdoor activities that residents wanted to be able to do within the neighborhood so that these wishes could guide the design process. Community gathering spaces, adequate seating, play areas, community gardens, shading, and open fields were the main findings—we then searched for precedential examples of different types of seating, pavilions, shade structures, and urban gardens.

The NDC team took these ideas and developed a master plan at two different scales: a neighborhood scale and a zoomed in site plan of the central park area.



Site plan 1 - Neighborhood



Site plan 2 - Central Park

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GREENBELT STATION FULL SITE SCHEMATIC MASTER PLAN

Community Gathering at the Greenbelt Community Center

This area prioritizes and facilitates community gathering, both formal and informal. Programmed activities take place in the indoor community center, but features surrounding the structure encourage rest and informal play, such as a playground, bocce ball, ping-pong, and flower & herb gardens.

Flexible Sport & Play at the Southwest Corner Lot

The existing Tot Lot will transform into an improved family-friendly space. It will include shade structures, seating, and a small sensory garden. Adjacent to it will be a half-court basketball court, which will encourage residents to use it as a flexible sports and recreation space for a greater range of ages.

Programmed Spaces at the Creekfront Recreation Area

This space will be activated with more formalized sport activities and a dog park. The dog park will be an enclosed area which will have areas for big and small breeds. Other play courts may include pickleball, tennis, and basketball. A larger vegetable garden plot is a possible addition in this area, as it gets a lot of sun and can be tended to by frequent visitors to the dog park and recreation courts.

Increased Biodiversity at the Northwest Boundary Gardens

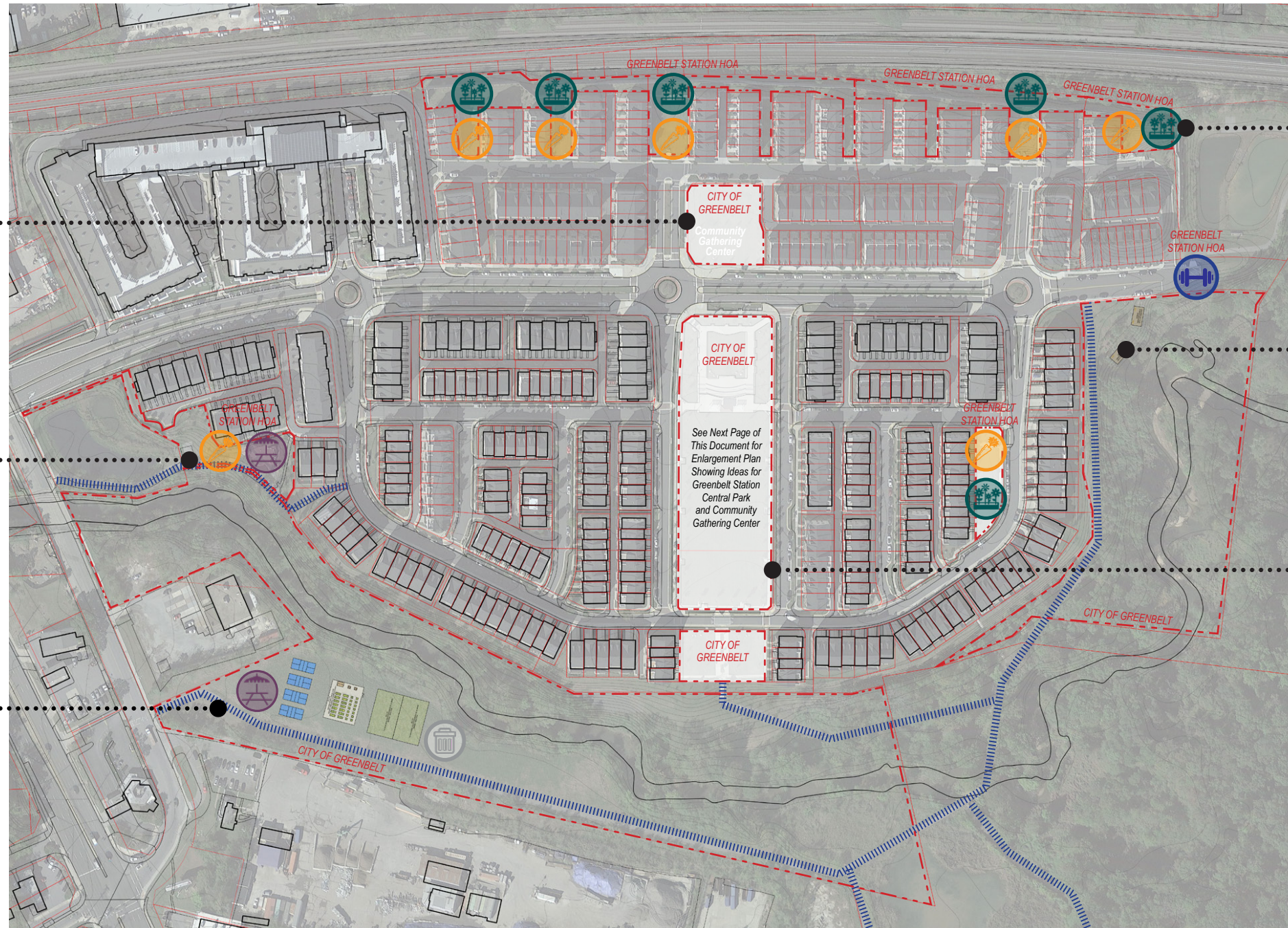
These neighbor-friendly gardens enhance the overall appeal of the green spaces while providing environmentally friendly functions like pollinator-friendly habitat and stormwater management, and serve as a source for local edible plants and produce. Examples of the types of gardens that could be established include an edible display garden, a vegetable garden, collections of edible plants in pots or a shrub collection, or pollinator beds.

Rest & Stasis at Nature Point Overlook

The existing Indian Creek Trail provides a great route for walkers, bikers, and joggers, but this installation will be a place for rest and stasis. It will be ADA accessible, but will be a scenic overlook to the creek and surrounding wooded area.

Maintaining Open Space at Greenbelt Station's Central Park

As the largest open space and centralized point in the community, this space will remain open and flexible in use. The existing pergola will be extended for weather protection, and shade and cooling elements such as shade sails, covered benches, and a splash pad may be added to enhance comfort in hotter months.



SYMBOLS LEGEND

See Previous Page of This Document for Descriptions and Examples

- 
Shaded Seating
- 
Art Installations
- 
Recycling & Garbage Receptacles
- 
Rain Gardens & Pollinator Plantings
- 
Edible Landscapes
- 
Playable Feature
- 
Exercise Equipment



-  **Property Lines + Ownership**
-  **Existing Indian Creek Trail**

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GREENBELT STATION CENTRAL PARK PLAN

NDC Staff: SM, AA
NDC Volunteers: EH, MVS, DE, JT



Maintaining Open Space at Greenbelt Station's Central Park

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Playable Feature
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Exercise Equipment

0 60 120



- - - - - **Property Lines + Ownership**
- ||||| **Existing Indian Creek Trail**

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5.1 Design Sketch - Central Park

Expanded pavilion to create a larger shaded space

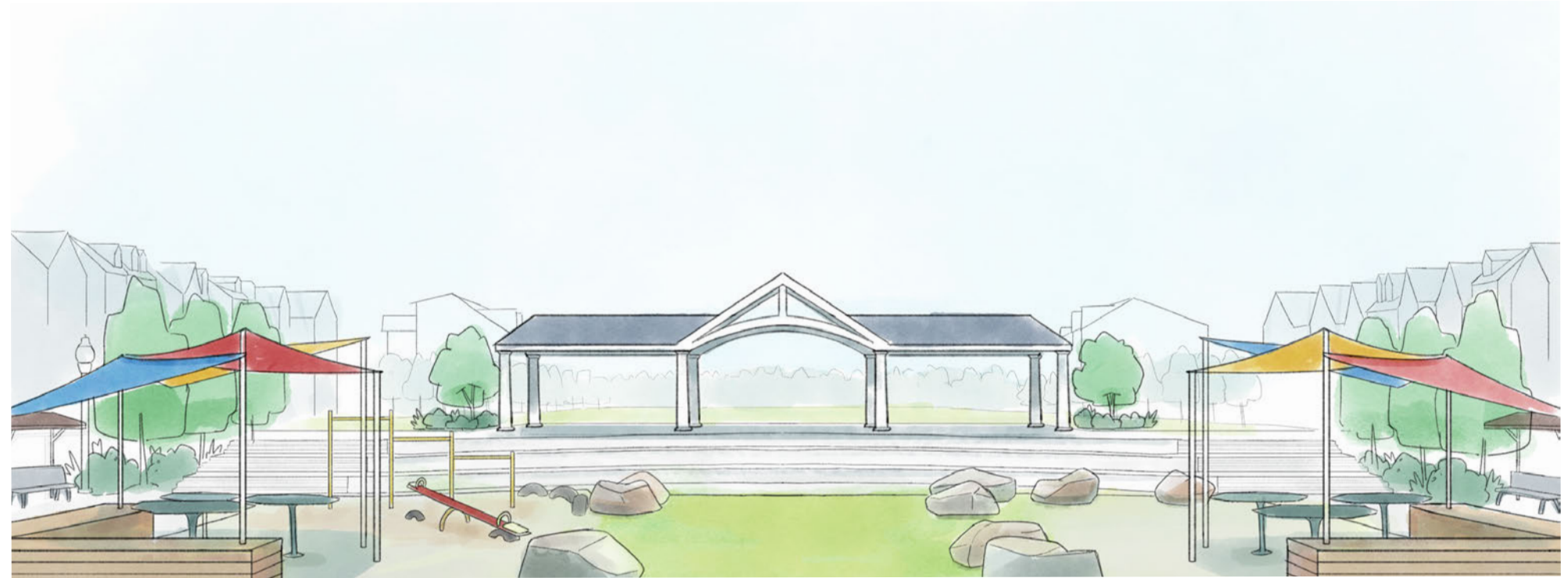
Shade sails on the lower half create the same effect

Mixture of tables and wood benches under the sails creates a new, sheltered hangout spot. Parents can easily sit here while their children run around central park

Existing rocks on site were popular with residents for creating a natural playspace, so this design includes more of them

Small scale playset (climbing bar, seesaw) allows more opportunities for residents to play without overtaking the entire space (ex: swingset)

Adding more flora, especially smaller scale plants such as grasses and bushes, grow much faster than trees and will help fill in green space. This is a great opportunity to create rain gardens, passive cooling, and to help give the space more visual identity



Sketch produced by NDC Volunteer: Erin Hulburt

5.2 Design Sketch - Community Outdoor Gathering Center

Space is divided up into four quadrants for different activities that were requested in the information gathering sessions

Pickleball court

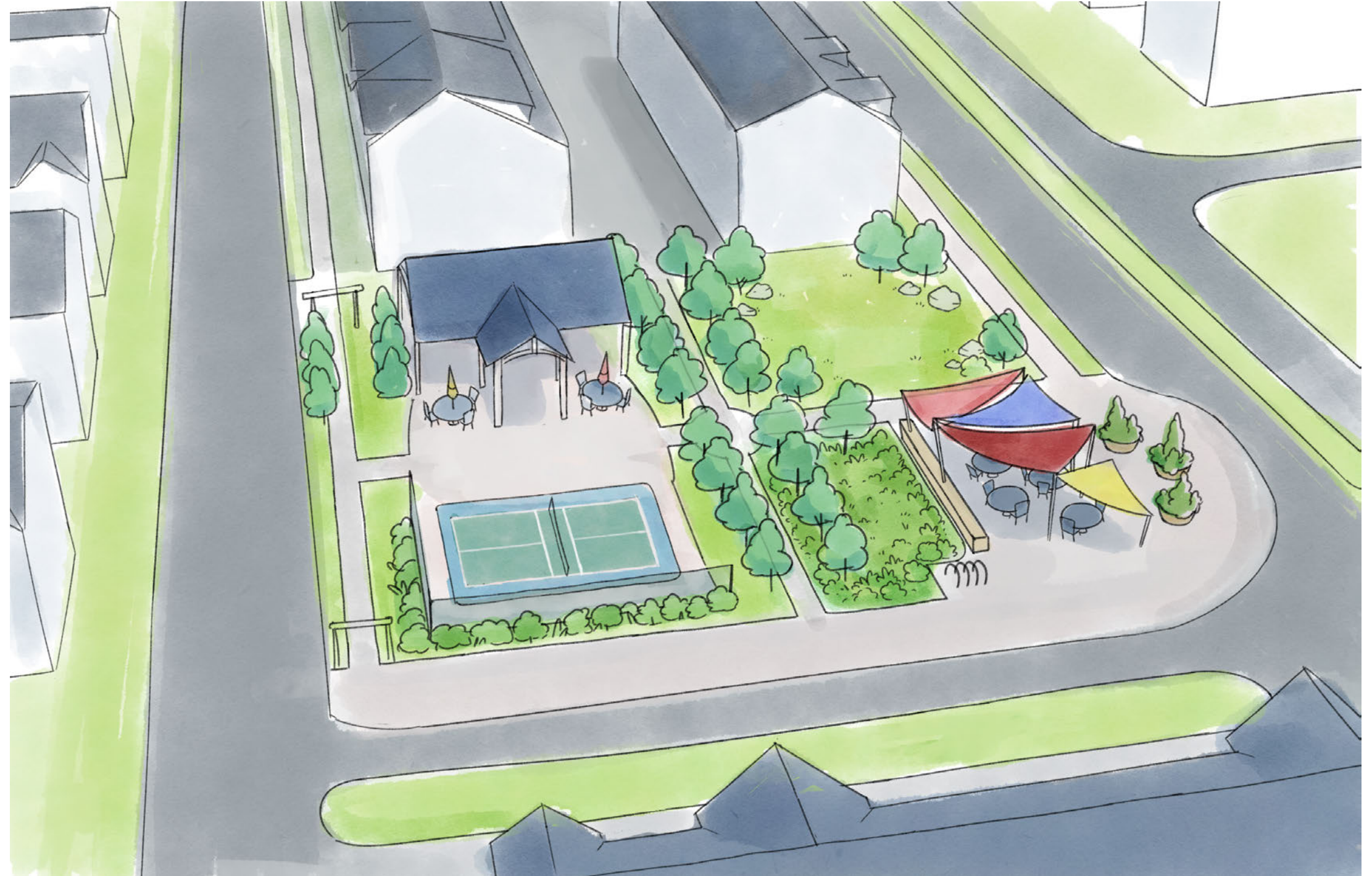
Community pavilion

Shaded seating area

Open play space

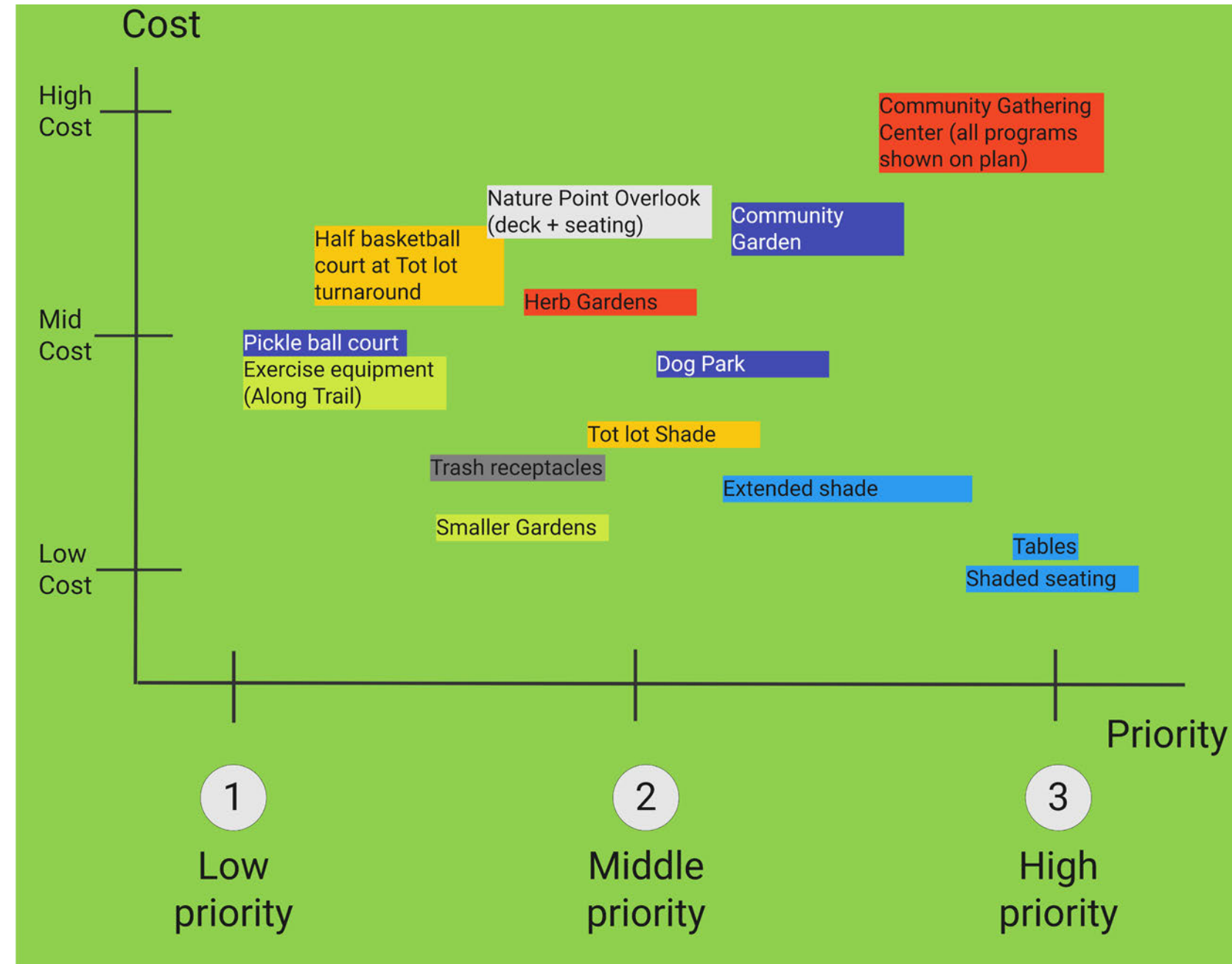
Sidewalks are extended into the space to allow for better access, and to define the edge of each quadrant. Bike racks further encourage pedestrian access.

The shaded seating quadrant also includes space for a type of garden (planted garden, rain garden, etc) to help bring residents closer to nature.



5.3 Design Priority

In November 2022, NDC met with the Greenbelt Station Working Group and began putting together their priority design elements in a matrix. The group pulled elements from each project focus area and ranked their priority and costs levels.



Design Ideas

Regions/Focus Areas:

- Central Park
- Community Gathering Center
- Nature Point Overlook
- Creek-front Recreational Area
- Tot lot
- Smaller Gardens All map sections



Matrix developed at November 2022 working group visioning session

6. Recommendations - Implementation Matrix

The NDC team developed an implementation matrix, which listed the proposed project, their defined priority, the specific design elements required, estimated cost, and the duration of time needed to implement. These estimations may serve as a guide in planning for funding proposals and starting work on the site. It is possible priorities may shift in the future, but this matrix is meant to be adjusted and served as a starting guide on which elements may be most feasible and high-impact to implement first.

KEY:

Est. Cost: Estimated cost of the project		Duration: How long the project will take to complete	
\$ < \$5k	\$\$\$ < \$20k	1-3 months	6-9 months
\$\$ < \$10k	\$\$\$\$ < \$50k	3-6 months	1 year +

Project	Priority	Design Elements	Est. Cost	Duration	Description
Tables and shaded seating in Central Park	HIGH	Furnishings, concrete bases, shade sails	\$		Bench / seating areas
Build large indoor/outdoor Community Gathering Center	HIGH	Building materials- concrete, lumber, glass	\$\$\$\$		An indoor/outdoor community center to for a building to fit approx. 50-70 people
Extended shade in Central Park	MIDDLE-HIGH	Large scale shade structure	\$		To be extended off of existing pergola
Community garden in Creek Front Recreation Area	MIDDLE-HIGH	Raised beds needing sun, soil, gravel, landscape fabric, plants, water access, seed, lumber, pots, plants	\$\$\$		Edible Display Garden / "Feature" Vegetable Garden
Dog Park in Creek Front Recreation Area	MIDDLE	Fencing, gates, benches, doggie play features, signage, lighting, trash receptacles,	\$\$		An enclosed open area with sections for large and small breeds
Shade in Tot Lot area	MIDDLE	Shade sails, playable features	\$\$		Added into existing Tot Lot playground
Herb gardens in Community Gathering Center	MIDDLE	Sun, soil, gravel, landscape fabric, plants, water access, pots	\$\$		Herb gardens bordering the Community Gather Center
Deck and seating in Nature Point Overlook area	MIDDLE	Decking material, screws, lumber, bench / seating areas	\$\$\$		An area for rest & statis adjacent to the trail
Small pollinator/native gardens throughout community	MIDDLE-LOW	Sun, soil, gravel, landscape fabric, plants, water access, pots	\$		Small gardens plots distributed throughout the community
Trash receptacles through community	MIDDLE-LOW	Receptacles for both trash, recycling, and potentially compost	\$		Distributed in high-traffic areas of the community
Half basketball court in Tot Lot area	LOW	Paved court, basketball hoop	\$\$\$		In the turn-around section next to the Tot Lot
Pickle Ball court in Creek Front Recreation Area	LOW	Paved court, fencing, net	\$\$\$		A new recreation installation adjacent to trial and dog park; suitable for all ages
Exercise equipment along Creek Front Recreation area/trail	LOW	Various equipment (leg press, weights, elliptical, etc.)	\$\$		Fitness equipment to increase activity and improve well-being

LOGOS

**Greenbelt Station
Greenspaces
Vision**
Community-led master plan

**DRAFT of Final
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6.1 Resources

Chesapeake Bay Trust – Watershed Assistance Program
<https://cbtrust.org/grants/watershed-assistance/>

MD Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) Project Grants
https://mht.maryland.gov/heritageareas_partners.shtml

NPS – Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grants (ORLP)
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/outdoor-recreation-legacy-partnership-grants-program.htm>

NPS – Conservation and Recreation Challenge Cost Share Program
<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1837/apply.htm>

DNR - Community Parks & Playgrounds Program Grant
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Pages/ProgramOpenSpace/PPP-Grant-Process.aspx>

Anacostia Heritage Trail Authority - Rocket Grants
<https://anacostiatrails.org/grants/>

Prince George’s County Stormwater Stewardship Grant Program
<https://cbtrust.org/grants/olni>/<https://cbtrust.org/grants/prince-georges-storm-water-stewardship/>

Prince George’s County Community Impact Grants
<https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/3535/Community-Impact-Grants>

Kaboom!
Offers grants and consulting assistance to improve play areas
<https://kaboom.org/grants>

Partners for Places Grant: <https://www.fundersnetwork.org/new-grant-opportunities-partners-for-places-grant-applications-now-open/>

Funding Source	Organizer	Link	Description	Amount

Resources list to be organized in table format.

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7. References

<https://www.greenbeltmd.gov/home/showdocument?id=2656>

<https://www.greenbeltmuseum.org/post/2018/05/11/preservation-month-greenbelts-civic-commercial-buildings>

<https://www.greenbeltmuseum.org/african-american-history-in-greenbe>

<https://www.tpt.org/10-changed-america/video/10-changed-america-towns-greenbelt-md/>

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