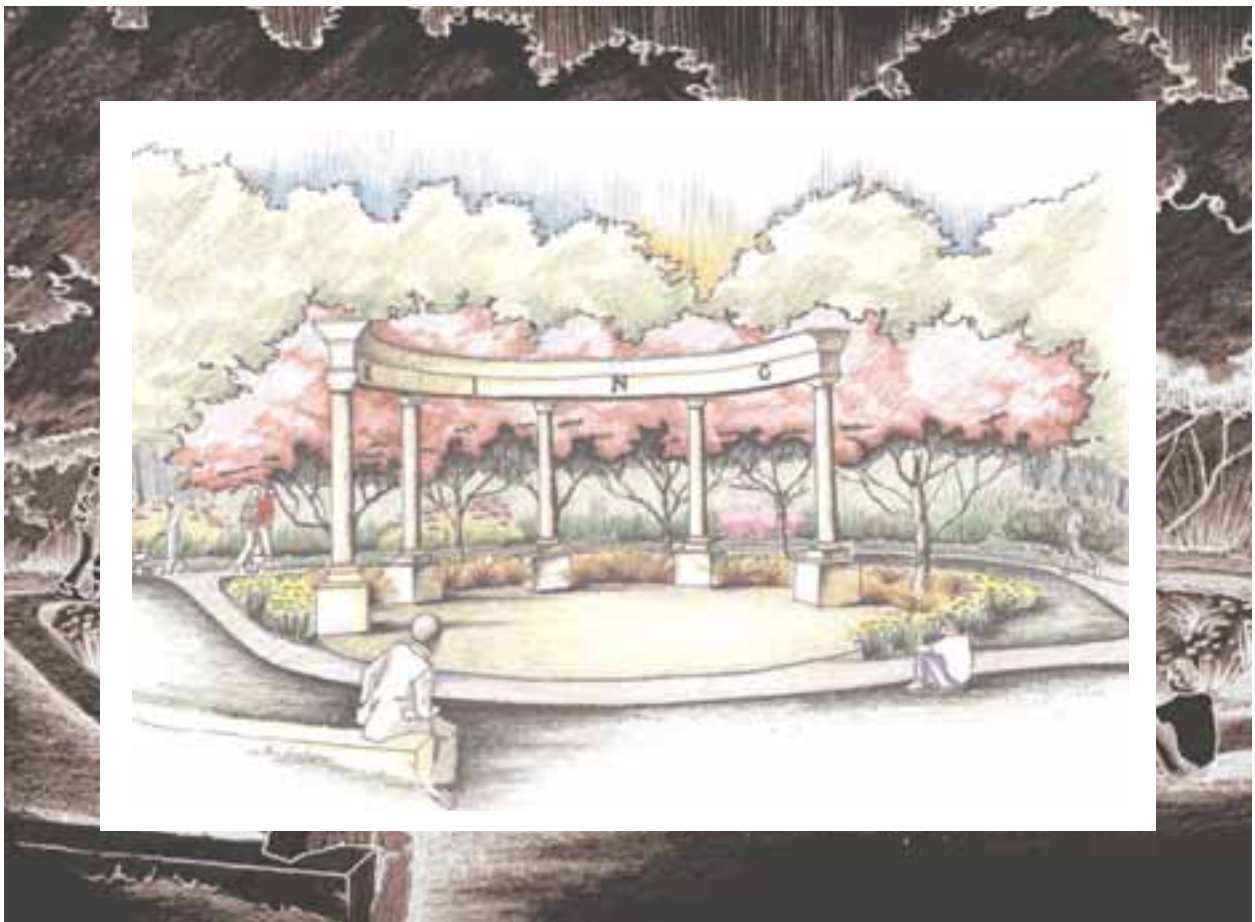


MASTER PLAN

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL, SCAGG COTTMAN, AND SIMMONS PARKS

Borough of Norristown



October 2001

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Norristown Economic Revitalization Strategy, completed in the Summer of 2000, identified Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park (MLK Park) as an exceptional opportunity within the Borough's Neighborhood and Housing District, and recommended improvements to revitalize the park. The Norristown Borough Department of Municipal Planning and Development took quick action and began the process resulting in this master plan report.

During the public participation process, it became apparent that many of the issues surrounding the MLK Park improvements are directly related to the nearby Scagg Cottman and adjacent Simmons Parks. The need for a cohesive plan to include recommendations for all three of these parks was recognized and subsequently developed within this Master Plan report, in addition to the more specific improvements recommended for MLK Park.

Five Community Meetings were held during the planning process to gather input from local residents and stakeholders. Meeting attendees expressed their ideas and concerns about the park with the Borough. Park planning consultants reviewed existing conditions, concept plans, and draft plans for the three park area and MLK Park. A one month review period followed, and comments received from the public were incorporated into this final Master Plan and report. A brief description of each park and its recommended improvements follow:

Simmons Park is the most heavily used of the three parks and lacks sufficient parking. Due to its Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ) status, no improvements are proposed for this park. However, to alleviate the existing parking problem around the park, the plan proposes to:

- **Provide for additional Street Parking** on Oak and Arch Streets by increasing the cartway width; and
- **Construct an Off-Street Parking Lot** off Walnut Street in the upper portion of the park.

These improvements will provide for a total of 80 additional parking spaces. Preliminary costs for these improvements are estimated at: **\$65,000**.



Bird's eye sketch of proposed improvements at Scagg Cottman

Scagg Cottman Park is the only one of the three parks with space available for the development of additional active recreational facilities. The community expressed the interest to keep MLK Park as passive in character, and in the event that Simmons is developed as a KOZ, Scagg Cottman is able to provide space for the relocation of the possible displacement of active recreation facilities.

Proposed improvements include:

- **Active Recreation Facilities** (tennis, basketball, or multi-use courts); and, a
- **Greenway Trail** along Sawmill Run to connect Scagg Cottman to MLK and Simmons Parks.

The Trail Connection is an important element in connecting these three parks and may eventually serve as the precursor for a larger greenway project connecting to Bartasch Park, located farther north. Preliminary costs for these improvements are estimated at: **\$80,000**.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park (MLK Park)

receives relatively little use due to the lack of facilities and well-defined spaces. After receiving programming ideas through the public participation process, the consultants developed three concept plans for MLK Park. These plans were reviewed and refined into the plan shown to the right. Public sentiment favored keeping MLK Park a passive recreation facility with interpretation of the MLK legacy. Proposed improvements include:

- MLK Entry Plaza
- Gazebo
- Expanded Play Area
- Picnic Grove
- Reconfigured Parking
- Loop Trail
- Benches/Seating
- Lighting
- Landscape Plantings
- Memorial Enhancements
- Stream Access

Preliminary costs for the proposed improvements are estimated at: **\$530,000.**



Plan of MLK Park

Funding - This Master Plan report will serve as both a guidebook for park development and a fundraising tool. There are several sources of grant funding available through a number of federal, state, and county programs. The commonwealth's Keystone Community Grant Program, DCED Community Revitalization Funds, and the DCNR Recreational Trails Program are key state funding programs. Park improvements can be implemented in phases as funding allows.



Sketch of MLK Park Front Entry Plaza

Maintenance - An outline of basic maintenance activities and an estimate of man hours to complete these tasks is included within the report. Community involvement will also be a key element in the park's long term success. Community involvement can help to keep the park clean and litter free, and make the park a safer place through monitoring and sponsorship of park events.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

This Master Plan was originally intended for improvements to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park (MLK Park) located on Oak Street. Through the public participation process, it became apparent that many of the issues surrounding these improvements described herein are influenced by and/or are directly related to the nearby Scagg Cottman and adjacent Simmons Parks. Although these parks are in relatively close proximity to one another and have an effect on each other's uses, there are no common elements that currently link these green spaces as a harmonious park and recreation resource.

This Master Plan will provide general recommendations to unify the three parks and address the issues raised in the public participation process. General improvements are proposed for Simmons and Scagg Cottman Parks. Specific proposed improvements to MLK Park are also provided with a more detailed estimation of probable costs.

Vision / Project Goals

The Norristown Economic Revitalization Strategy serves as the genesis for this Master Plan Report. Completed in the Summer of 2000, this plan identified Simmons Park and MLK Park as exceptional opportunities within the Borough's Neighborhoods and Housing District (NHD). Simmons Park is identified as heavily used and MLK Park is identified as being underutilized.

The Implementation Strategy for the NHD recommends a project to "seek out local artists to work with local residents to enhance the MLK Memorial Park with

outdoor art, upgrade the play equipment in the MLK area, and get residents who live nearby to work together with the Pagus Gallery and other Norristown-based artists to add other park elements to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."

This recommendation was identified with an 'immediate' timeframe for implementation. The Norristown Borough Department of Municipal Planning and Development took quick action on this recommendation and developed a request for a proposal to develop an improvement plan for this park.

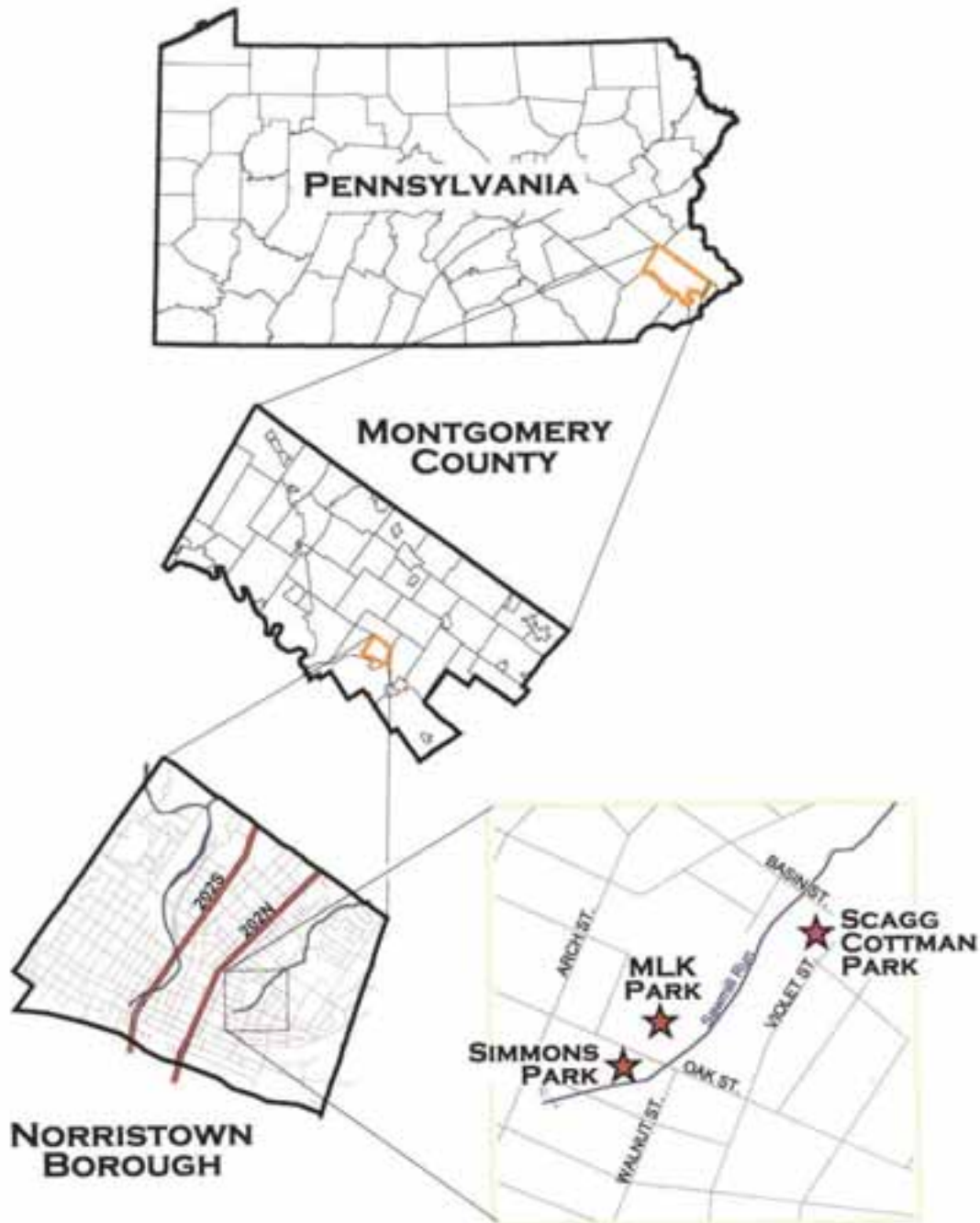
Other goals identified at the project start were to investigate the possibilities of providing additional parking - needed primarily due to the heavy use of the adjacent Simmons Park, and encourage park use by involving the community. This may be done by providing use areas and/or facilities that will promote more community-oriented programs and events such as the annual Unity Day currently held in MLK Park.

Location

The three parks are located in the eastern portion of the Borough and linked by the Sawmill Run.

Scagg Cottman Park - approximately 2 acres - is located at the corner of Violet and Basin Streets and is the northern and eastern most of the three parks. It is bordered by Saw Mill Run along its western edge.

MLK Park - 2+ acres - is located on and



Location Map

bounded by Oak Street (between Arch Street and Walnut Street) to the south, Tack Alley to the west, Sawmill Run to the east, and a vacant parcel to the north.

Simmons Park - approximately 6.5 acres

- is located directly across Oak Street from MLK Park. Simmons is bounded by Oak Street to the north, Walnut Street to the east, Arch Street to the west, and Blackberry Alley to the south. Sawmill Run flows through the park dividing it into two distinct areas.

SECTION 2

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Scagg Cottman Park

Scagg Cottman Park is perhaps the least used of the three parks and located in a relatively quiet and medium density residential area. This 2 acre park consists of a large, level, open lawn area with a baseball/softball backstop, fencing, and team benches at the southern end of the park. The northeastern corner of the park has a fenced children's play area complete with a combination bench/shelter, benches, and small children's play equipment with wood chip safety surfaces. No parking is provided within the park, but parking is allowed in the streets adjacent to the park.

In general, this park seems underutilized. The play equipment is intended for small children. The baseball/softball field is sized for a regulation little league or softball field (sixty-foot base lines), but does not have a defined infield surface.

The park was created by earthen fill into the Sawmill Run floodplain. This is evidenced by the steep slopes descending to the stream's edge on its western and southern borders. The significance of this fill landform is that it presents a barrier to installing an accessible pathway to the stream valley and subsequently MLK and Simmons Parks, both located within the Sawmill Run floodplain.

Additional parking may be possible in the vacant lot located directly adjacent to the park on the northern side of Basin Street. This vacant lot is known as the Blue Mill Property and was purchased by the Borough as a result of a recommendation from the Borough's Open Space and Environmental Resource Protection Plan of 1994. Parking facilities should be



Existing sign at Scagg Cottman Park.

coordinated with any future development plans for the Blue Mill property, including, but not limited to a comprehensive greenway master plan for the Sawmill Run corridor.

Simmons Park

Sawmill Run bisects this park into two distinct areas. Existing facilities for the lower and northern portion of the park along Oak and Arch Streets include two basketball courts, a baseball field, and a walking trail following the northern bank of Sawmill Run. The upper portion of the park along Walnut Street is unstructured and consists of an open lawn area with some shade trees and a picnic grove with picnic tables.

Simmons Park is the most heavily used park of the three in this study. The two basketball courts in the lower, more active part of the park are the only two out-door basketball courts in the area and are a major attraction. The existing lot across the street at MLK Park is filled to capacity during tournament basketball games. Street parking is permitted on the south side of Oak Street and on the

east side of Arch Street directly adjacent to Simmons Park. Illegal on-street parking occurs on opposite sides of both these streets during peak use times. This overflow on-street parking causes the road to be nearly impassable by not allowing for two-way traffic.

The little league baseball/softball field, with home plate located at the corner of Arch and Oak Streets, is seldom used for baseball. However, the field area does receive significant use for pick-up soccer games/practice.

The upper portion of Simmons Park atop the hill on the southern side of Sawmill Run has a distinct unstructured character. This gently sloping portion of the park does not receive much use and is in very good condition. Facilities include lawn, shade trees, and a picnic grove tucked away in the far western corner.

On the eastern side of Walnut Street directly across from Simmons Park exists the Walnut Street Playground. This playground contains a "train form" climbing apparatus, a pedestrian plaza, shade trees and a pair of swing sets.

Simmons Park was designated a Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ). KOZ's are state designated areas with no tax burden for property owners, residents and businesses for a period of ten years. There is approximately seven years remaining for this designation. Due to this designation, the Mayor's office has determined that no improvements should be planned for Simmons Park at this time. Therefore, this Draft Master Plan proposes no new facilities at Simmons Park, but treats Simmons Park as an existing park facility.



Existing sign for the Simmons Picnic Grove off Walnut Street.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park (MLK Park)

This two acre park, located directly across Oak Street from Simmons Park, contains a parking lot sized for 28 cars, a small children's play area, picnic tables, an interpretive walkway leading to a significant memorial structure dedicated to Dr. King, and an amphitheater with bench seating. This is the only Park of the three that provides any off-street parking.

A more detailed analysis of this park was conducted relative to the other two parks due to this project's original scope of work and the fact that the borough determined Phase I construction will be in MLK Park. This analysis is summarized on the Existing Conditions Plan (insert). This analysis identified a number of site-specific opportunities and constraints for improvements to MLK Park.

The primary reason this park receives little use is due to the lack of well-defined spaces within the existing design. The interpretive path leading from the ill-defined pedestrian entrance to the dramatic memorial structure in the rear of the park takes a sinuous path that unfor-

Unfortunately breaks and dissects the usefulness of the open, passive recreational space between the park's entrance and the memorial / amphitheater area. The play area, designed primarily for small children, does receive use. However, the picnic tables adjacent to the play area, where parents of the children using the play area would likely sit, are located in full sun. This makes the benches a rather uncomfortable place to rest for a long period of time, especially in summer months. The existing parking configuration also does not provide for the best use of park space. An equal amount of parking could be provided within the park with much less intrusion into the park's open space.

Trash control in the park is an existing problem. This abundance of trash may be explained by the lack of trash receptacles and/or maintenance of the trash receptacles, causing them to overflow during times of heavy park use at the adjacent Simmons Park. Dumping is also prevalent, and visually evident along Tack Alley to the west and the vacant parcel to the north. Dumping from the adjacent parcel to the north is causing a drainage problem resulting in standing water. These dumping areas are quite visible, especially in the winter months when vegetation is unable to hide them. Efforts should be made in the park development process to clean up these areas and prevent future dumping and trash accumulation.

The Existing Conditions plan at the end of section 2 was used with the park programming information gathered through the public participation process to develop three concept plans. These concept plans and the Public Participation



Existing MLK memorial.

Process are discussed in further detail in the Programming Chapter of this report.

Common Issues

Sawmill Run - This natural feature could provide a physical link to connect the three parks. A site visit was conducted to check the viability of placing a trail along the stream to connect MLK Park with Scagg Cottman. Access to the stream from MLK is very possible with some light grading and clearing of the thick understory growth prevalent in the floodplain area. The eastern bank of Sawmill Run has a fairly level and continuous land area varying from 30-50 feet in width between the stream and the base of the existing steep slope extending parallel to Violet Street. This landform is heavily overgrown with thick brush and debris, but does provide a gentle enough grade to allow for a walking trail. Where this level land meets the southern edge of Scagg Cottman Park, the fill slopes from the park create a barrier that must be crossed in order to access the park.

Adjacent Land Uses - Residential neighborhoods surround each of the three parks. Housing density is greater around the lower portion of Simmons Park and



Sawmill Run



Play equipment at MLK Park.

MLK Park. Most park users are from the surrounding neighborhood and access the park by walking or bicycle. However, there is a wider demand created by the basketball courts in Simmons Park that draw from a larger area, resulting in cars filling the MLK parking lot.

Parking - MLK Park is the only park of the three that provides off-street parking (28 cars). On-street parking is permitted in certain areas along surrounding streets, but does not provide a sufficient number of spaces to meet the demand created by the basketball court use at Simmons Park. The public participation process identified parking as an issue to be addressed in the Master Plan. The consensus among those who attended the public meetings was that there needs to be more parking, but not in MLK Park. Ideas for the placement of this additional parking are discussed in the Master Plan Recommendations chapter of this report.

Active/Passive Recreation Facilities - The facilities provided at the three parks do not cover a very wide range of recreational opportunities. The playground equipment at both MLK and Scagg Cottman Parks are intended for small

children less than 4-5 years of age. The baseball/softball fields at Scagg Cottman and Simmons Parks are underutilized resulting in the fields becoming passive recreation space. When this occurs, the only areas of active recreation space within the three parks are the two basketball courts at Simmons. When older teenagers and adults are using the courts, there are no active recreation spaces that may be used by those in the 8-16 age range. Therefore, there is a demand for more active recreation facilities, primarily court sports such as basketball, tennis and/or volleyball.

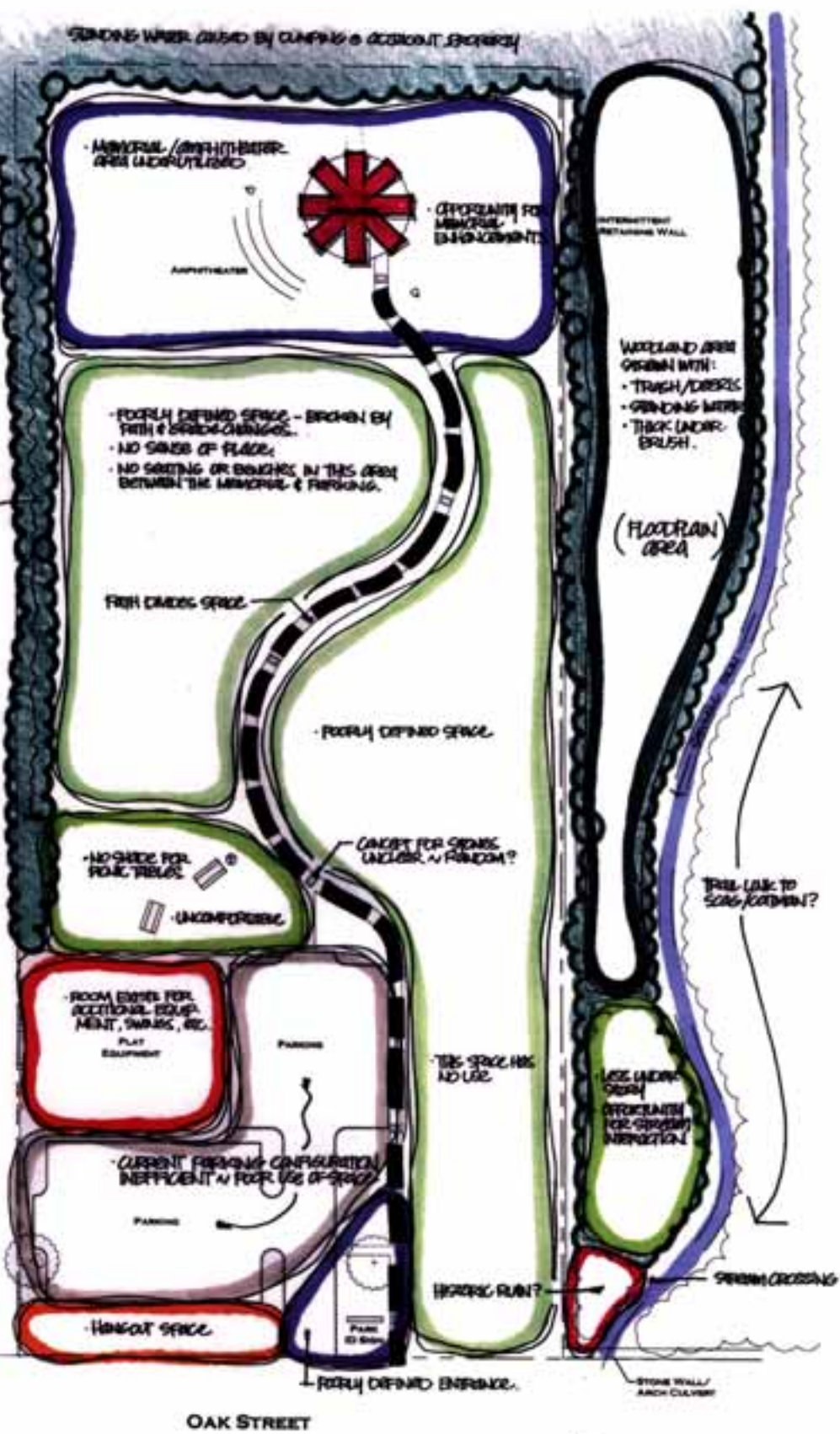
GRINDING WHEEL CAUSED BY CLIPPING & ACCIDENT ENERGY

LEGEND

- PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING TREE
- EXISTING TRASH RECEPTACLE
- EXISTING PICNIC TABLE
- EXISTING BENCH
- EXISTING LIGHT FIXTURE
- MILK QUOTE STONES

TRASH/DEBRIS DUMPED FROM TRUCK & IS VISIBLE FROM PARK

TACK ALLEY



EXISTING CONDITIONS
MLK MEMORIAL PARK
 BOROUGH OF NORRISTOWN

NOTES:

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SECTION 3

PROGRAMMING

Programming

The original programming idea for MLK Park from the Borough of Norristown Revitalization Strategy Report was to provide for public art showcase areas. Realizing that MLK Park will require more than just these spaces to make the park successful, a public participation process was mandated by the Borough Planning Department as part of the master plan process.

Public Participation Process

Public participation is a key ingredient in the success of any community project. The first Community Meeting was held April 18, 2001 at the George Washington Carver Center. Initial ideas for what people would like to see were sorted into goals, facts, and concepts and displayed on the wall for all attendees to see. This meeting was followed by a Community Site Walk on Saturday, April 21, 2001 at the park to further discuss options.

Attendance at the initial Community Meeting and Site Walk was low, so the Borough took a more aggressive approach to getting people to attend these meetings. Mailings were sent to approximately twenty-five community leaders, activists, and individuals known to have an interest in the park's improvements. Included in this mailing were the Existing Conditions plan and three Concept Plans for the recipients' review along with an invitation to the second Community Meeting.

The well-attended second Community Meeting took place on June 25, 2001 at the George Washington Carver Center. This meeting was to present findings

from the inventory and analysis phase and the three (3) Concept Plans prepared from ideas generated at the First Community Meeting in April. It was at this meeting where the attendees suggested that the Borough prepare a Master Plan to include Scagg Cottman and Simmons Parks with the MLK Park improvements.

The third Community meeting took place on July 23, 2001, again at the Carver Center, where the DRAFT Master Plan for the three parks and the DRAFT design for the MLK Park improvements were presented for review. After an extensive review period by the public, the Draft Plan was revised into a Final Plan. To receive comments on the Draft Master Plan, a meeting was held on September 17, 2001.

The community meetings allowed Norristown Borough residents the opportunity to provide their input and address their concerns as well as answer any questions they may have relative to the impact the proposed park improvements would have on their neighborhood. Attendance lists and minutes from each of these meetings are contained in the appendix of this report.

Public Input Summary

The first Community Meeting generated many good ideas that could be applied to the improvements at MLK Park. These ideas could be divided into the following categories: active vs. passive recreation, parking, safety & security, water elements, MLK Legacy interpretation & educational opportunities, and community participation.

The second Community Meeting featured the presentation of the three (3) concept plans that were generated from the first meeting's range of ideas. Basically, these plans were developed to explore the range of options from most of the idea categories listed above. For example, Concept Plan One has less parking, Concept Two reconfigures the parking, and Concept Three uses the existing parking configuration.

Concept Development

The following are descriptions of each of the concept Plans. In general, the 'bubbles' in these bubble diagrams represent the approximate area each design element will require. Trees are placed as vertical elements to help define spaces and their character. These bubble diagram plans, including the tree placements are not intended to reflect the actual design form, but are intended to show the interrelationships between the potential design elements.

All three plans have common elements, such as additional benches, enhancements to the memorial area, and a loop trail. These elements vary in number, size, and/or locations on each plan (see inserts at end of section 3).

Concept Plan 1

This plan provides the least amount of parking in the form of head-in parking directly from Oak Street. The removal of the existing parking lot creates much more green space in the park. Other elements include an MLK Legacy entry plaza, picnic groves on both sides of the plaza, an expanded play area including

water play equipment, public art space, and a creek side access area at Sawmill Run. This option shows the longest loop trail and the greatest amount of passive recreation space.

Concept Plan 2

The parking lot in this plan is reconfigured, but contains the same number of parking spaces as presently exists. A basketball court and a relocated play area serve as a buffer between the proposed parking lot and the passive recreation areas on this diagram. The MLK Plaza and picnic groves are set between the passive recreation space and the basketball court & play area. The introduction of a gazebo adjacent to the play area and an expanded creek access area will provide an excellent vantage point to observe the park surroundings.

Concept Plan 3

This diagram shows the inclusion of a basketball court, additional play equipment, and two MLK legacy interpretation areas. The existing parking, the creek side access area, and walkway to the memorial at the rear of the park remain unchanged. The passive recreation space is the smallest and the loop trail length is the shortest of the three diagrams. This plan would create the fewest changes to the existing park but would increase the active recreation and MLK Legacy interpretation opportunities.

Public Input (cont'd)

The presentation of the three Concept Plans at the Second Community meeting sparked even more ideas from the attendees. This is the point where it became

apparent that the study should include improvements for Scagg Cottman Park and include the existing context of Simmons Park with MLK Park as part of a cohesive plan that will link and provide connections between the three parks.

Overall, most attendees felt that MLK Park should have its own character and be separated from Simmons Park. The character of MLK Park should be passive with active elements to be placed elsewhere in the other two parks. Meeting attendees felt that Concept Plan Two - minus the basketball court - should form the basis for further study and design as a draft master plan for MLK Park. A general consensus was arrived at that the following elements should be considered and/or included in the park design: an expanded children's play area; a loop trail; a gazebo; a picnic grove with shade trees; drinking fountains; and, MLK Legacy interpretation. Meeting minutes and the attendance list are contained in the appendix of this report.

The above elements were used to develop the Master Plan. A detailed description of the proposed improvements to MLK Park may be found in the following Master Plan chapter of this report.

MLK Legacy

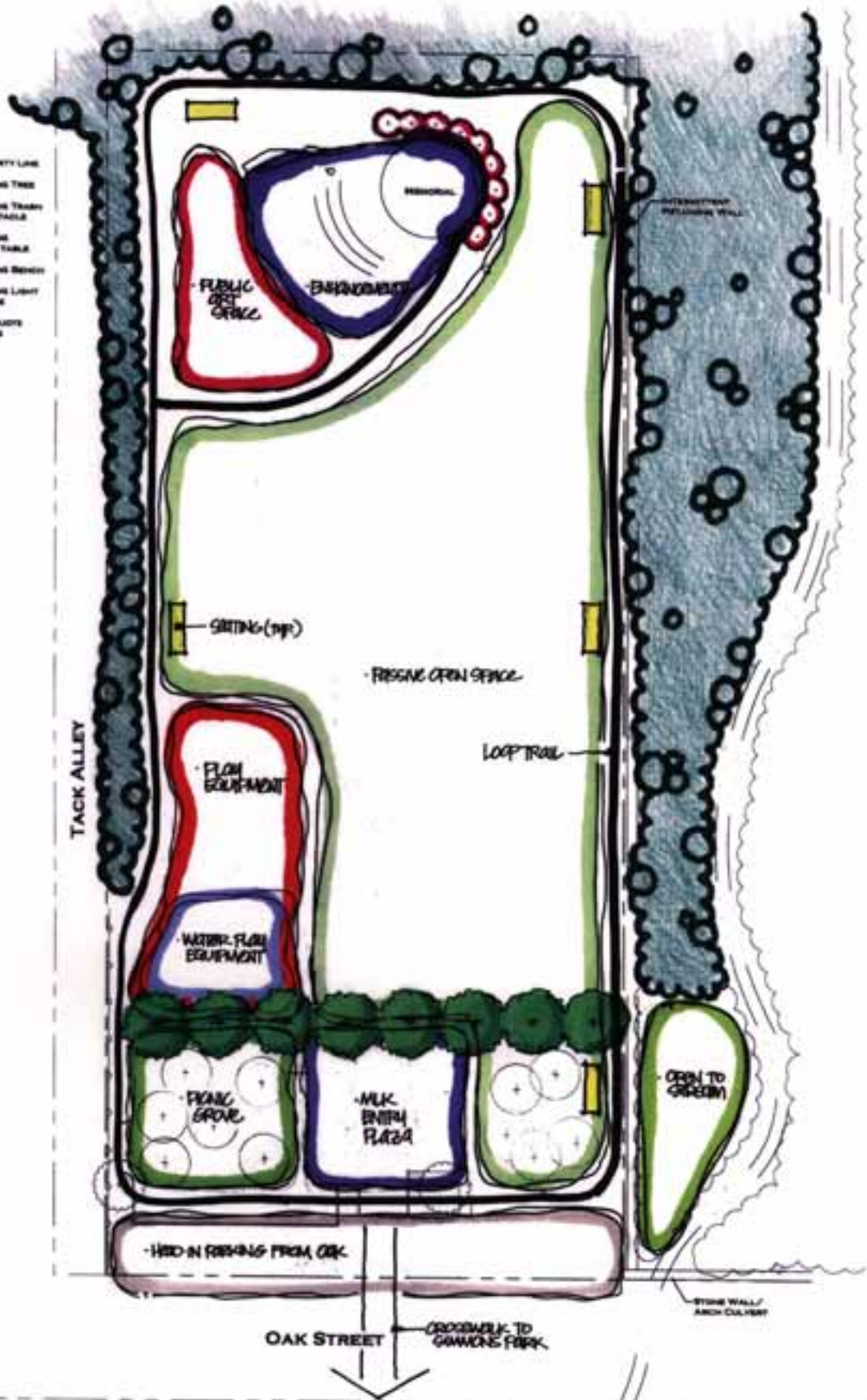
The existing interpretive path at MLK Park is comprised of a series of granite stones (6) engraved with information about the life of and quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. These stones are placed periodically along the sinuous path leading to the memorial at the park's north end. There is no obvious sequencing to the engraved stones placement,

but the materials and craftsmanship of these stones make them worthy of salvaging and reincorporating into the design for the park improvements.

The overriding theme that will help link elements of the park design are the inspirational quotes of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The MLK Legacy application to the park design may be one that not only provides the opportunity for education, but also has an influence on the placement of the program elements agreed upon by the public participation process attendees.

LEGEND

- PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING TREE
- ⊙ EXISTING TRUNK RECEPTACLE
- ▬ EXISTING PONDING TABLE
- EXISTING BENCH
- EXISTING LIGHT FIXTURE
- MLK QUOTE STONE



CONCEPT PLAN I
MLK MEMORIAL PARK
 BOROUGH OF NORRISTOWN

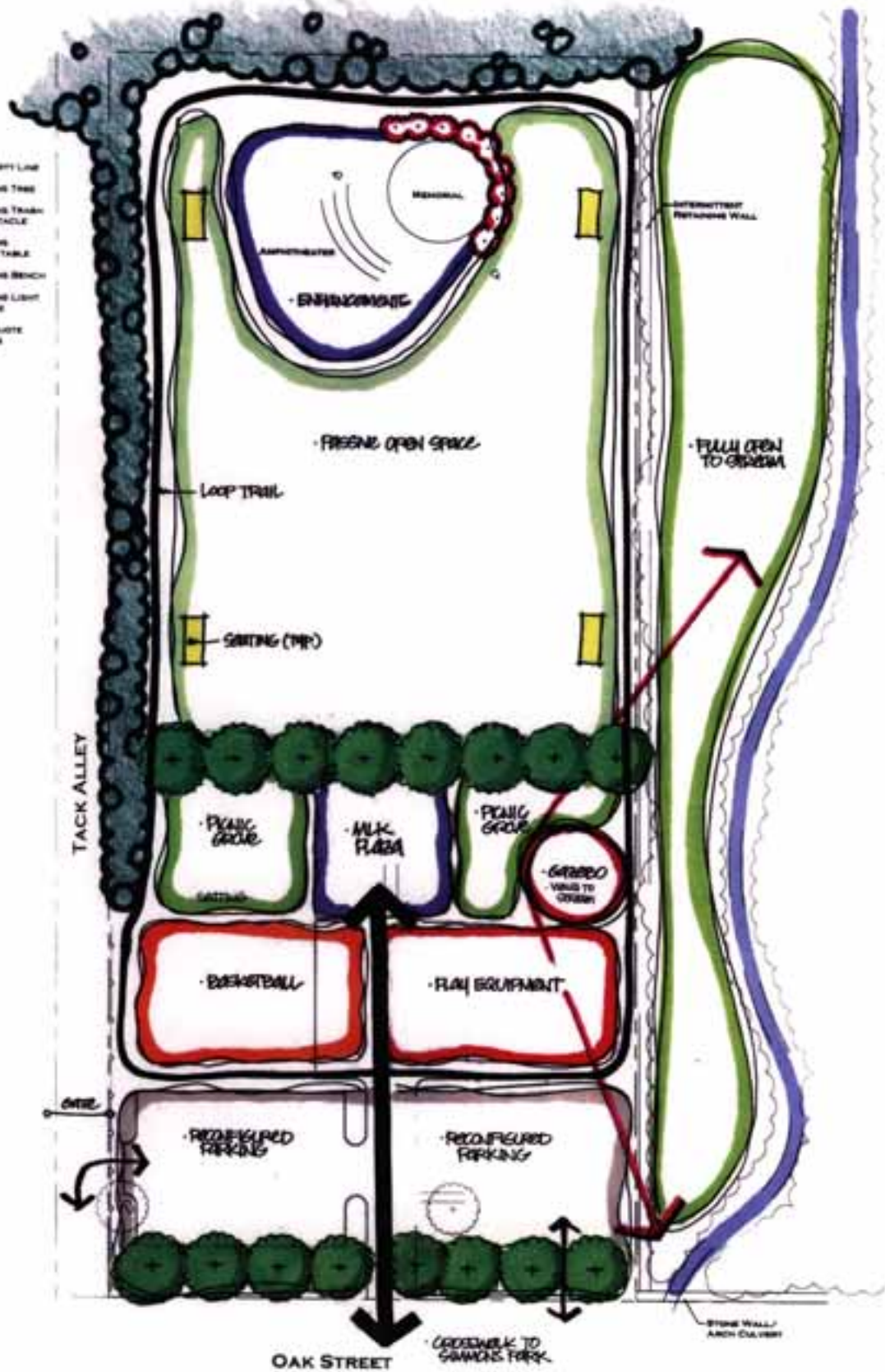
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LEGEND

- PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING TREE
- EXISTING TRASH RECEPTACLE
- EXISTING PICNIC TABLE
- EXISTING BENCH
- EXISTING LIGHT FIXTURE
- MLK QUOTE STONES



CONCEPT PLAN 2
MLK MEMORIAL PARK
 BOROUGH OF NORRISTOWN

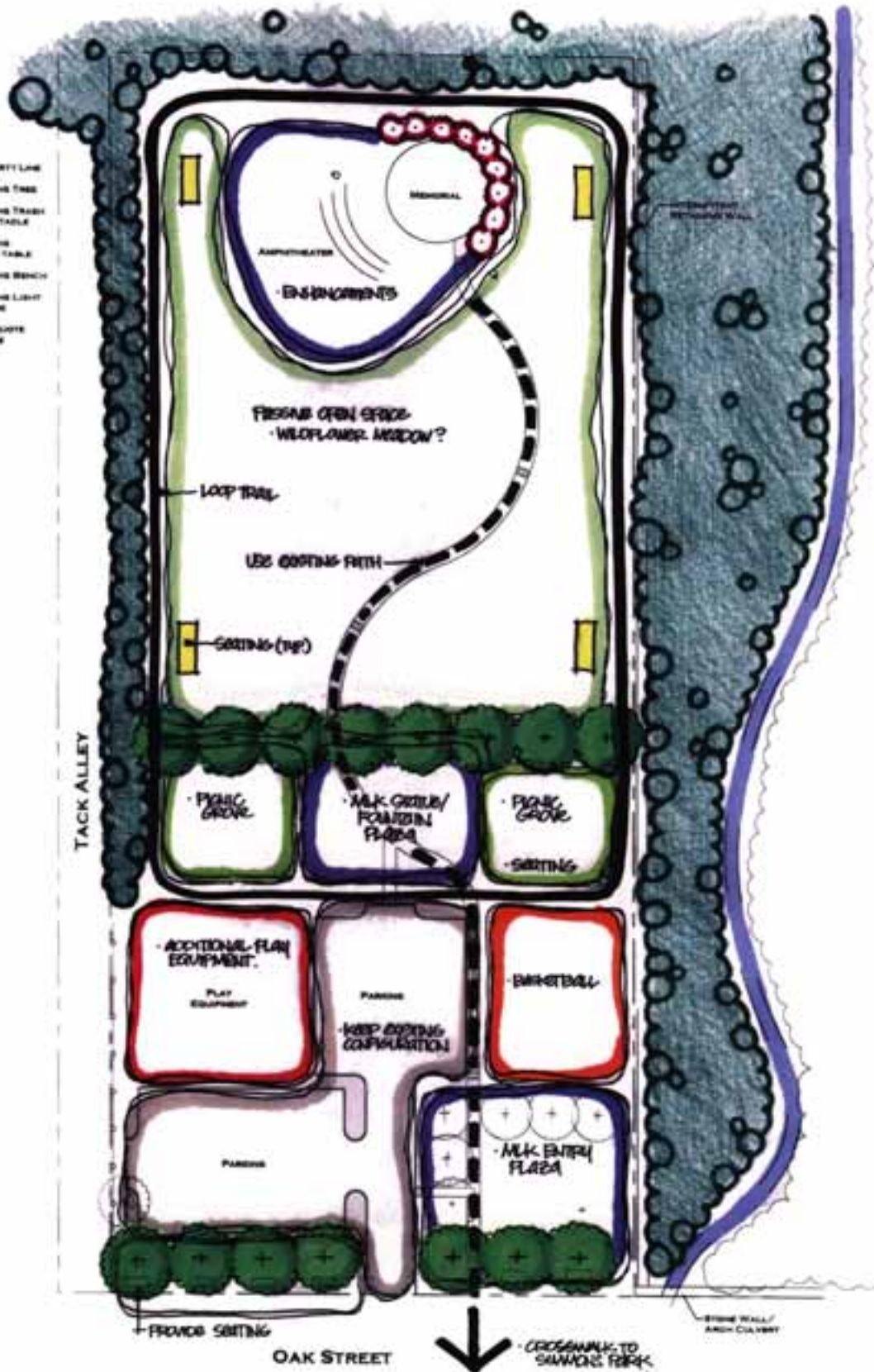
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LEGEND

- PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING TREE
- EXISTING TRASH RECEPTACLE
- EXISTING PICNIC TABLE
- EXISTING BENCH
- EXISTING LIGHT FIXTURE
- MLK QUOTE STONE



CONCEPT PLAN 3
MLK MEMORIAL PARK
 BOROUGH OF NORRISTOWN

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SECTION 4

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The following descriptions relate to the overall master plan exhibit showing the recommended improvements for the three parks. Proposed improvements for MLK Park are shown and described in more detail with the inclusion of a Site Plan, Estimation of Probable Development Costs, and written text following the overall Master Plan exhibit.

Scagg Cottman Park

The proposed improvements for this park depend on the community's willingness to develop some active recreation facilities such as basketball, tennis, or even perhaps a multi-use court at this location. The KOZ status of Simmons Park will prohibit any active recreation development there, and the consensus of the community is to keep MLK Park primarily a passive recreation facility. This leaves Scagg Cottman Park as the only of the three parks available for the development of additional active recreation facilities.

There is sufficient space and level land allowing for these facilities to be constructed rather easily along the park's north end adjacent to Basin Street. Additional parking could be provided either within the park or possibly across Basin Street to the north in an existing, borough-owned vacant lot, known as the Blue Mill Property. There is currently one baseball/softball field at both Scagg Cottman Park and Simmons Parks, both of which are underutilized. If the baseball/softball field at Scagg Cottman is no longer used and subsequently abandoned, then more space would be available for the development of other recreation facilities.

A trail connection to MLK and Scagg

Cottman Park along the Sawmill Run is feasible. The trail should begin at some point along Scagg Cottman's southern edge. Fill slopes leading down to Sawmill Run along the western border of Scagg Cottman Park will prohibit a walking trail in this location. The trail could travel along the eastern bank of the stream in a southward direction approximately two hundred (200) yards to a point where a bridge would lead to a cleared area of floodplain and MLK Park. Significant clearing & grubbing and environmental permits will be necessary to construct the trail and bridge within this floodplain area. Many Community Meeting attendees expressed their concerns over the relative safety of having a



Open area adjacent to Basin Street at north end of Scagg Cottman.

trail along the stream, primarily due to the lack of visibility from outside the park. In order to increase this visibility, a combination of removing most, if not all understory vegetative growth and providing significant lighting would help to increase visibility from the park's perimeter and subsequently the general safety of park users. Ultimately, the construction of this trail will provide park users with a safe, non-vehicular transportation

alternative for traveling between the parks, all within a beautiful natural setting.

Simmons Park

Due to Simmons Park's KOZ (Keystone Opportunity Zone) status, physical improvements to the bulk of the park are not recommended.

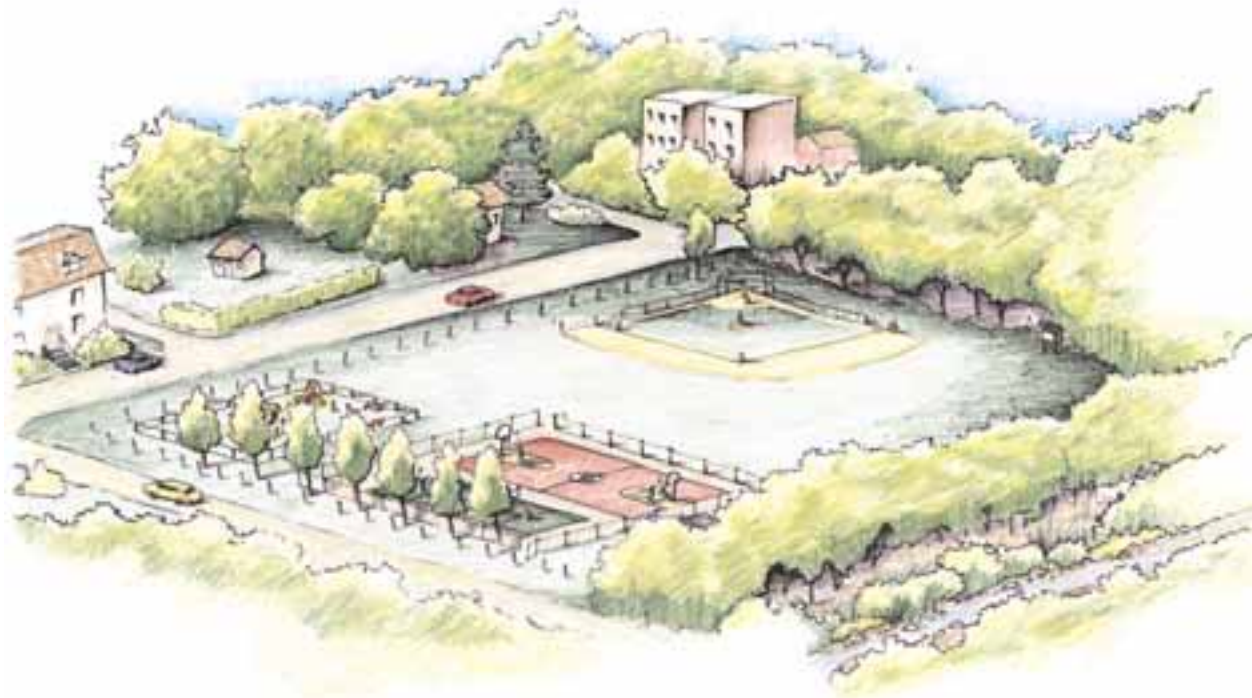


Simmons Park picnic grove from Walnut Street.

However, there is an existing parking problem centering around the basketball courts at Simmons for which many of the Community Meeting attendees had suggestions. One idea was to provide an off-street parking lot off Walnut Street in the park's upper portion.

Another idea is to expand the cartway widths of Arch Street and Oak Street along the park's edges to allow for parallel parking on both sides while still permitting enough room for two traffic lanes. This will provide enough room to park 98 cars along the borders of the park. This is a net increase of nearly 50 spaces.

The number of spaces at MLK Park, although reconfigured, will remain the same.



Bird's eye sketch of potential development at Scagg Cottman Park



Sketch of proposed path linking MLK and Scagg Cottman Parks

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park*MLK Interpretation/Legacy*

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is amongst the world's best known advocates for non-violent social change and the most prominent leader of the Civil Rights movement in the United States during the 1960's.

In April of 1963, Dr. King was serving as the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and lending his support to one of their affiliated organizations, the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights in the city of Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. King was arrested and placed in jail for his participation in a street demonstration. Reacting to a statement by the eight councilmen who imprisoned him, Dr. King penned one of his more famous works - "*Letter from Birmingham Jail*". In this letter, Dr. King explains to the councilmen his positions and views and the voracity of his desire to make the world a better place, not only for the African-American community, but for all members of society. In his closing paragraph, Dr. King writes:

"...in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty."

*- Letter From Birmingham Jail,
April 16, 1963*

This incredible quote not only serves as the centerpiece for the park's proposed entry plaza, (with radiating paving bands

and other park elements) but also provides a reference to the hierarchical order of the park's program elements.

Proposed Improvements

MLK Entry Plaza - This pedestrian plaza will contain the "Letter From Birmingham Jail" quote engraved into the circular piece of stone that will serve as the origin for the radial placement of most design elements within the park. The surface is proposed to be colored concrete with a radial scoring pattern extending outward to the park. Above and beyond the quote stone in a semicircular form, a decorative/interactive fountain is proposed that will shoot water up from beneath the surface through metal grates. Children and adults will be able to stand in and play in the water if they would like, or simply admire its beauty from afar. The outer ring of the plaza will contain benches and bollards lights.

Gazebo - The other major feature being introduced to the park is a covered gazebo. This gazebo will include lighting and will be placed in a spot where all elements of the park can be appreciated and observed. Careful consideration should be taken in the detailed design of this park not to select a gazebo that will create hiding places or that may be easily damaged by vandalism.

Expanded Play Area - In addition to the existing play equipment, the installation of additional play equipment is proposed for the slightly older child (8-12 years) and a new poured in place safety surface. While installation is costly, poured in place safety surface will require much less maintenance than wood chips.

Water play equipment was considered for this portion of the park, but due to the cost effectiveness and required maintenance issues, it was felt that MLK Park was not the proper place for the installation of water play equipment. Additionally, the above mentioned entry fountain will serve both a play and aesthetic purpose.

Picnic Grove - Located between the expanded play area and proposed gazebo will be a picnic grove. This grove will contain a number of picnic tables and canopy trees for shade. These tables, too, will be strategically located to allow for parents to watch their children in the play area while still being able to enjoy their own time in a comfortable setting.

Reconfigured Parking - The parking lot has been reconfigured for two reasons. First, it allows for better use of the park's interior and development of additional park facilities. Secondly, vehicular circulation will be improved by providing an entrance/exit from the adjacent Tack Alley. A Security Gate will be installed to prevent unwanted vehicles from proceeding up Tack Alley beyond the parking lot. Keys will be distributed to the Police and Tack Alley residents. Bench Seating will be provided as a streetscape element for those who will park at MLK and wish to "hang out" or watch from a distance basketball games being played at Simmons Park.

Loop Trail - One of the elements most Community Meeting attendees wanted was a loop trail around the perimeter of the park. This loop is proposed to be a ten foot (10') wide asphalt path with the length of 0.22 miles (4 ½ laps = 1 mile).

Benches/Seating - Located adjacent to

the play area, and all around the perimeter of the loop trail there will be benches. At the base of the benches placed along the loop trail - where the radial lines intersect the trail - the existing MLK quote stones will be reset into the paving.

Lighting - The loop trail will be lit with pedestrian scale light fixtures to provide sufficient lighting coverage (approximately .50 footcandles) to ensure the safety and comfort of park users at night. These lights can be equipped with a timer to shut off the lights at a prescribed hour. These details can be finalized during construction documentation of the park.

Landscape Plantings - Shade tree plantings will consist of a variety of hardy species and are placed on the radial lines extending from the MLK Entry Plaza. Low flowering shrubs are proposed for the park perimeters. These will provide seasonal color and interest and mask some unsightly views.

Memorial Area Enhancements - In addition to providing an accessible walkway to the memorial surface from the loop trail, we propose the planting of some elegant flowering trees and low maintenance ornamental grasses and perennials to serve as a backdrop to the memorial structure. As it now exists, the memorial "floats" in a lawn area without creating a feeling of an outdoor room. The proposed planting will complete the wall of this "room" and create a more comfortable and interesting outdoor space. These accent trees will also "draw the eye" of people standing in the MLK Entry Plaza toward the memorial.

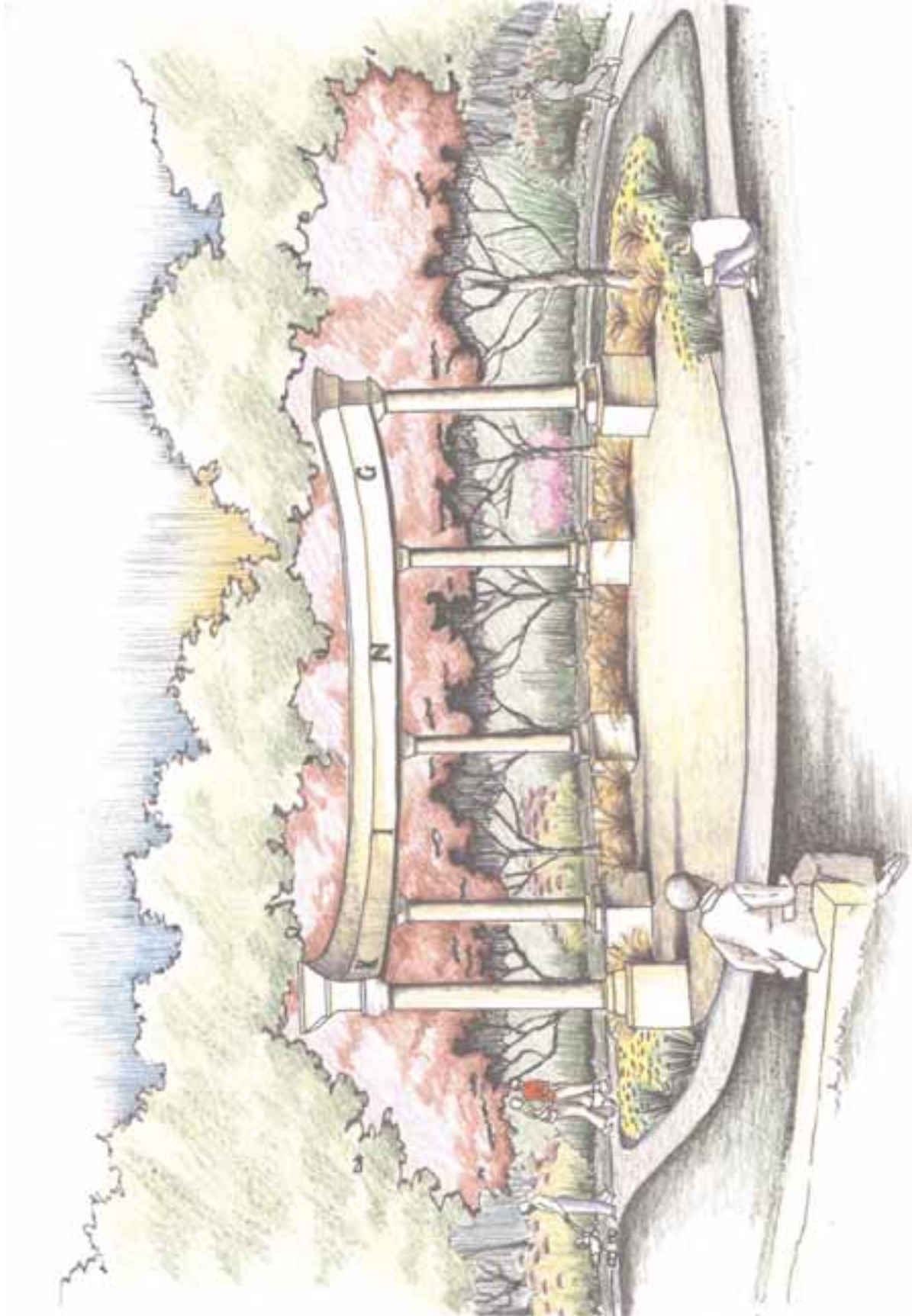
Stream Access - Opening a portion of the floodplain adjacent to Sawmill Run by



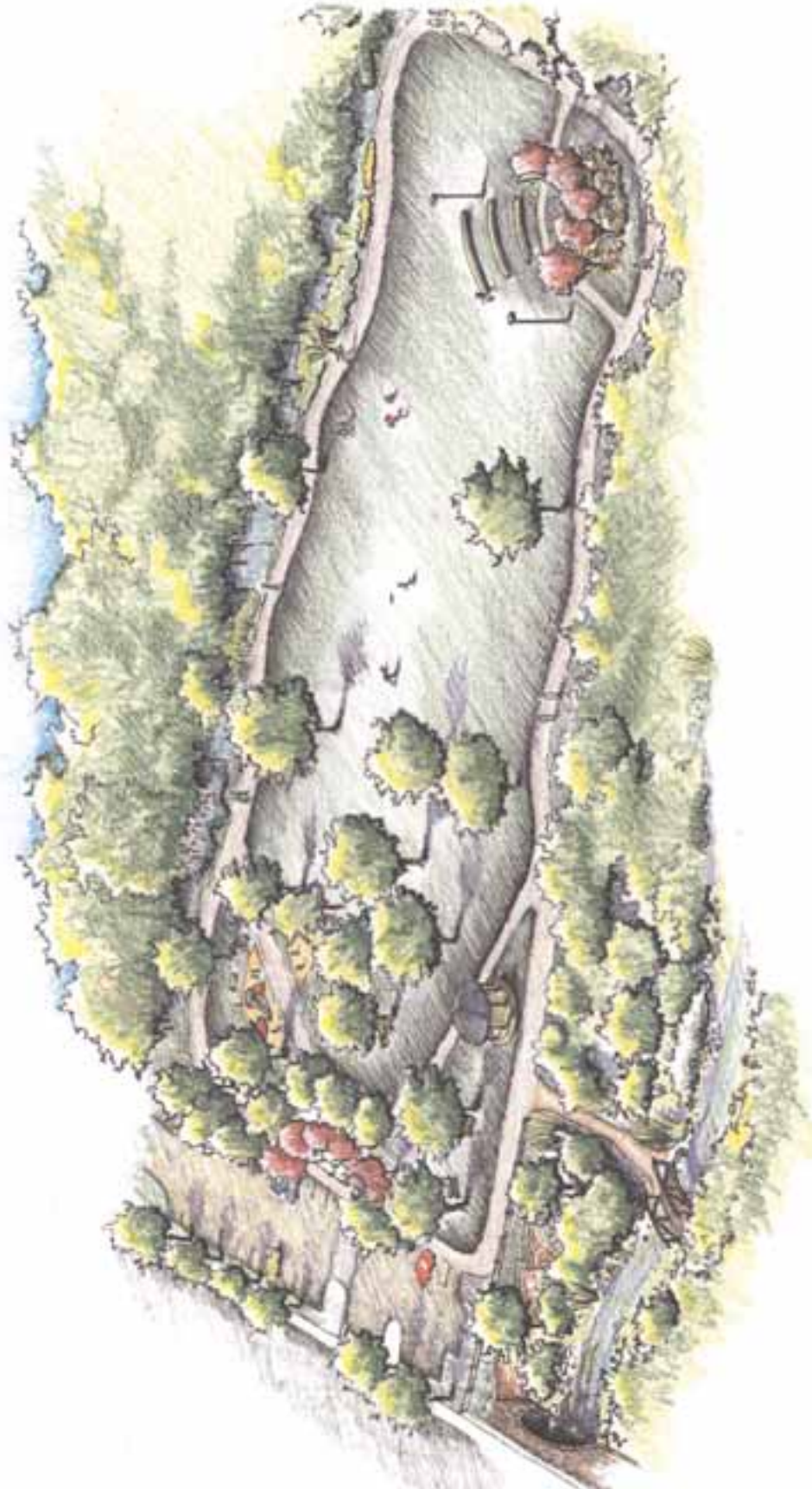
removing some of the thick vegetation will add a nice element to the natural character of the park. People will be able to access and interact with the stream and experience a completely different environment than what is normally found in this urban setting. Care should be taken to sensitively and selectively clear vegetation to allow clear views to the creek while still keeping sufficient riparian vegetation to allow the natural feel of the creek to remain. This area will also serve as the beginning point for a connecting trail through the stream valley to Scagg Cottman Park, as proposed in the three-park master plan overview. A pedestrian bridge will be necessary to connect to the east bank of Sawmill Run.



Sawmill Run arch culvert adjacent to MLK Park



Sketch of proposed improvements to MLK memorial.



Bird's eye sketch of proposed improvements to Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park.

MLK / Scag Cottman / Simmons Parks Master Plan
Borough of Norristown

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SJC# 01022.10

Estimation of Probable Development Costs

SCAG COTTMAN PARK

Proposed Improvements

	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Tennis Court	EA	\$28,000.00	2	\$ 56,000.00

Trail Connection to MLK/Simmons

Clear Vegetation - assume 15' width	LF	\$4.50	875	\$ 3,937.50
Grade and Surface Trail - 10' wide - asphalt	LF	\$16.00	875	\$ 14,000.00
Improve drainage - 3' swales to culvert	LF	\$3.50	875	\$ 3,062.50
Improve drainage - 24" culvert (2)	LF	\$45.00	40	\$ 1,800.00

Subtotal: \$ 78,800.00

SIMMONS PARK - Area Improvements

Additional Street Parking

	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Demolition	SY	\$6.00	675	\$ 4,050.00
Increased Cartway	SY	\$16.00	675	\$ 10,800.00
Relocate/Replace Concrete Curb	LF	\$18.00	750	\$ 13,500.00
Striping	LS	\$1,000.00	1	\$ 1,000.00
Signage	LS	\$2,000.00	1	\$ 2,000.00

Subtotal: \$ 31,350.00

Walnut St. Off-Street Parking Lot (30 cars)

	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Asphalt Surface	SY	\$16.00	1125	\$ 18,000.00
Concrete Curbing	LF	\$14.00	525	\$ 7,350.00
Catch Basins	EA	\$1,800.00	2	\$ 3,600.00
Drainage Piping	LF	\$25.00	150	\$ 3,750.00

Subtotal: \$ 32,700.00

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL PARK

Proposed Site Improvements

Site Preparation

	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Clearing and Grubbing	LS	\$3,000.00	1	\$ 3,000.00
Erosion & Sedimentation Control	LS	\$750.00	1	\$ 750.00
Demolition - Parking Lot	SY	\$6.00	1135	\$ 6,810.00
Demolition - Concrete Curb	LF	\$3.00	630	\$ 1,890.00
Demolition - Path	SY	\$6.00	375	\$ 2,250.00
Trash Removal	LS	\$2,000.00	1	\$ 2,000.00
Tree Removal	EA	\$100.00	2	\$ 200.00
Remove Existing Fence	LS	\$1,000.00	1	\$ 1,000.00
Finish Grading	CY	\$18.00	100	\$ 1,800.00

Subtotal: \$ 19,700.00

Parking

	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Asphalt Surface	SY	\$16.00	1,305	\$ 20,880.00
Concrete Curbing	LF	\$14.00	635	\$ 8,890.00
Relocate catch basins	EA	\$1,800.00	2	\$ 3,600.00
Stormwater Detention	LS	\$2,000.00	1	\$ 2,000.00
New drainage piping	LF	\$25.00	150	\$ 3,750.00

Subtotal: \$ 39,120.00

Pedestrian Paths

	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Asphalt - 10' width - Loop trail	SY	\$16.00	1,215	\$ 19,440.00
Asphalt - 6' width - Other walkways	SY	\$16.00	200	\$ 3,200.00
New Concrete Sidewalk - Oak Street	SF	\$5.00	525	\$ 2,625.00

Subtotal: \$ 25,265.00

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION 4

MLK / Scag Cottman / Simmons Parks Master Plan
Borough of Norristown

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SJC# 01022.10

Entrance Plaza	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Colored Concrete Paving	SF	\$5.00	1500	\$ 7,500.00
Lighted Bollards	EA	\$ 1,500.00	7	\$ 10,500.00
Quote stone centerpiece	LS	\$ 10,000.00	1	\$ 10,000.00
Fountain	LS	\$20,000.00	1	\$ 20,000.00
Subtotal:				\$ 48,000.00

Children's Play Area	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Play Equipment	LS	\$50,000.00	1	\$ 50,000.00
Safety Surface	SY	\$40.00	235	\$ 9,400.00
Concrete curb (around safety surface)	LF	\$14.00	260	\$ 3,640.00
Subtotal:				\$ 63,040.00

Planting	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Shade Tree - 30' Canopy	EA	\$650.00	14	\$ 9,100.00
Shade Tree - 25' Canopy	EA	\$650.00	30	\$ 19,500.00
Flowering Trees	EA	\$375.00	10	\$ 3,750.00
Shrubs	SF	\$10.00	1000	\$ 10,000.00
Ornamental Grasses	SF	\$8.00	370	\$ 2,960.00
Lawn Seeding	SY	\$0.45	3000	\$ 1,350.00
Subtotal:				\$ 46,660.00

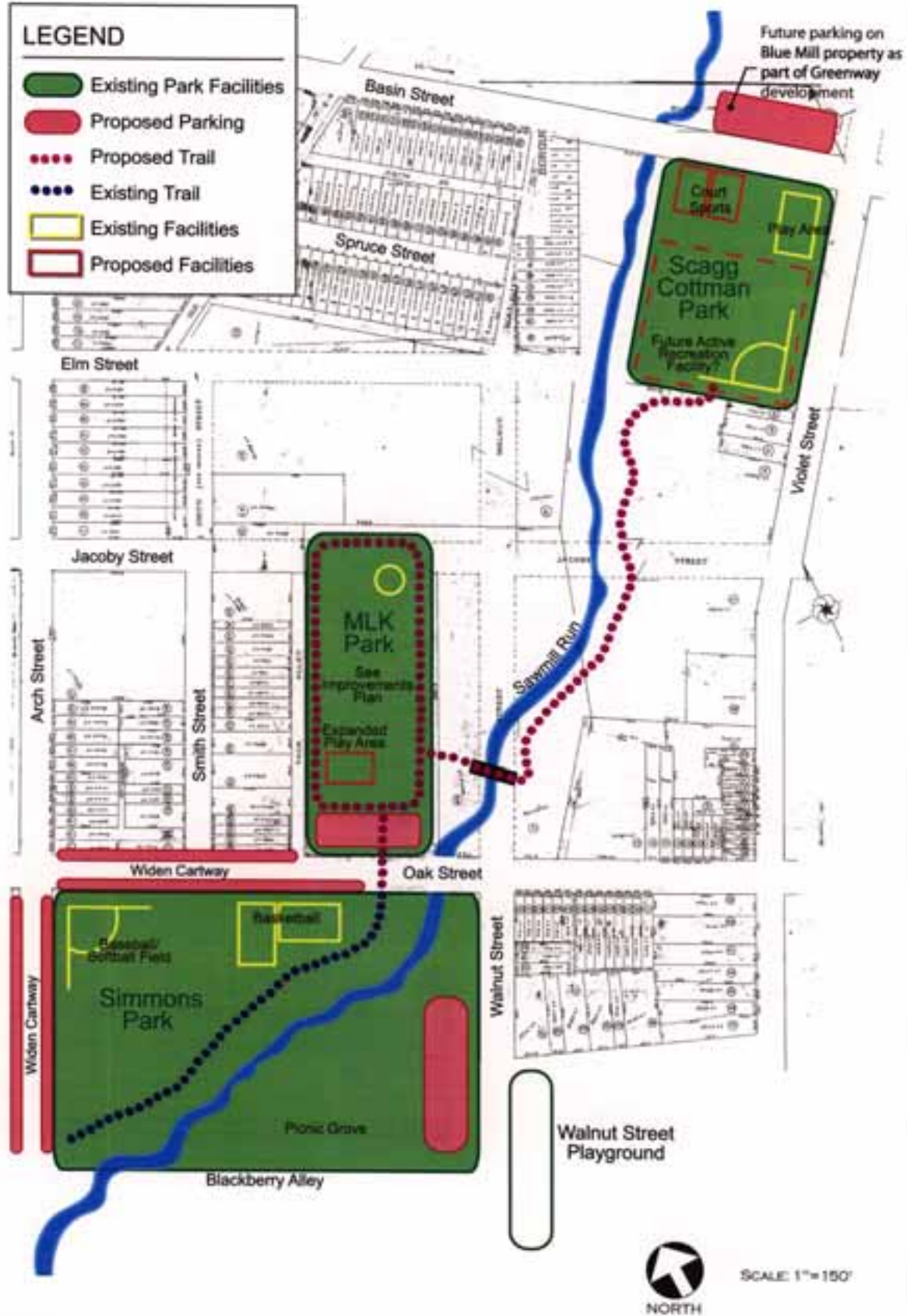
Site Amenities	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Pedestrian Walkway Lights	EA	\$3,400.00	20	\$ 68,000.00
Picnic Tables	EA	\$600.00	7	\$ 4,200.00
Game tables	EA	\$500.00	3	\$ 1,500.00
Security Gate	LS	\$5,000.00	1	\$ 5,000.00
Split Rail Fence	LF	\$6.00	250	\$ 1,500.00
Bridge	LS	\$55,000.00	1	\$ 55,000.00
Gazebo with Lighting	LS	\$30,000.00	1	\$ 30,000.00
Benches	EA	\$700.00	17	\$ 11,900.00
Drinking Fountain	EA	\$2,500.00	1	\$ 2,500.00
Trash Receptacles	EA	\$500.00	4	\$ 2,000.00
Bike Rack	EA	\$700.00	1	\$ 700.00
Park Sign - Entrance	EA	\$5,000.00	1	\$ 5,000.00
Interpretive signs - MLK legacy	EA	\$5,000.00	2	\$ 10,000.00
Subtotal:				\$ 197,300.00

Utilities	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Water meter pit, etc.	LS	\$5,000.00	1	\$ 5,000.00
Water piping	LF	\$25.00	125	\$ 3,125.00
Hose bibs	EA	500	2	\$ 1,000.00
Upgrade electric service	LS	\$5,000.00	1	\$ 5,000.00
Subtotal:				\$ 14,125.00

Improvements Sub-total:	\$ 453,210.00
Design and Engineering (7.5%):	\$ 33,990.75
Contingency (10%):	\$ 45,321.00
MLK PARK GRAND TOTAL:	\$ 532,521.75
THREE PARK TOTAL:	\$ 675,371.75

LEGEND

-  Existing Park Facilities
-  Proposed Parking
-  Proposed Trail
-  Existing Trail
-  Existing Facilities
-  Proposed Facilities



**MASTER PLAN
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL,
SCAGG COTTMAN & SIMMONS PARKS**

BOROUGH OF NORRISTOWN, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA
SIMONE JAFFE COLLINS, INC.
PROJECT # 01022.10

OCTOBER 2001





MASTER PLAN
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL PARK

BOROUGH OF NORRISTOWN, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA
 SIMONE JAFFE COLLINS, INC.
 PROJECT # 01022.10

SECTION 5

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Funding / Implementation Strategy

Improvements for Martin Luther King Park can be implemented in phases as funding allows. There are several sources of grant funding that are potential sources for these park improvements. As part of the consultant's scope of work, a grant application will be prepared and submitted to The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Montgomery County under the Community Revitalization Program.

The potential funding sources include:

KEYstone Community Grant Program

This program was initially funded by a bond issue approved in a statewide referendum. Perennial funding is through a dedicated percentage of the statewide real estate transfer tax. Funding from the program is dedicated toward recreation and cultural and heritage resources throughout the state. Several agencies distribute funds through competitive grants, including; the PA Fish and Boat Commission, PA Historic and Museum Commission, and the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). DCNR is the most likely source for these funds. Grant applications are due in November, 2001.

Montgomery County Community Revitalization Program

Montgomery County has initiated a Community Revitalization Program aimed at revitalizing the County's many Boroughs and small urban areas. Norristown completed its Economic Redevelopment Strategy Planning Study in 2000. The study was subsequently reviewed and accepted by both Borough

Council and Montgomery County. This study recommended improvements at Martin Luther King Memorial Park. Acceptance of this study qualified the Borough for additional implementation funding. Following completion and acceptance by the Borough of the Master Plan for Martin Luther King Park, Norristown will make application to the County for implementation funds for all or part of these improvements.

DCED Community Revitalization Funds

The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Community Revitalization Fund is a State program that supports local initiatives that improve the stability of communities and enhance local economies. The grant program covers a wide range of eligible uses including: acquisition of land, buildings, and right-of-ways; recreation projects; programs and developments that build capacity of the local community and relevant local organizations to better serve the needs of the community, and other reasonable and necessary expenses related to community-based activities. Active support of the township State Senator and State Representative is critical in a successful grant application.

"Growing Greener" Initiative

Growing Greener is funded for \$425 million from 1999 through 2003 on such initiatives as open-space preservation, riparian buffer reestablishments, projects that protect water quality, park improvements, and other related initiatives. The work along the Sawmill Creek may have direct applicability to this program.

DCNR - Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program

This program provides funds to states to

make grants for trail and trail-related projects. Funding to this program is provided to the Commonwealth through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21). In Pennsylvania, the Recreational Trails Program is administered by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Bureau of Recreation & Conservation (BRC) in consultation with the Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Advisory Board (PARTAB). The proposed creek side trail from Scagg Cottman to Martin Luther King Memorial Park may be a good candidate for this funding source.

Legislative Funding

State and federal elected officials can often include items into legislation for worthy projects in their districts. Clearly identifying reasonable needs is a key to securing this type of funding. A conversation between borough and county officials with area legislators is the way to begin this process. This type of funding should be targeted toward capital improvement projects.

Private Foundations

There are various corporations and foundations, which support public works such as trail development. The competition for these funds has become brisk, but the opportunities should be researched. Funding must often be to non-profit organizations.

Maintenance Philosophy

Martin Luther King Park will contain facilities for passive recreation, serving all age groups. Maintenance goals must strive to minimize any real or perceived risks of injury and provide residents with an attractive facility, all within a limited maintenance budget. "Best maintenance or management practices" should be implemented, assuring a quality facility and healthy habitat. As labor, equipment, and material costs continue to rise, so will the cost of maintaining the park. The Borough must continually strive to achieve high quality maintenance with as little public funds as possible.

In addition to the Borough upholding and increasing its efficiency in maintaining parks, borough residents must also share this responsibility. Residents, scouts, schools and others can greatly assist the Borough in its efforts by undertaking "clean-up" events, sponsoring planting events, and encouraging residents to keep the park clean and litter free.

The most important factor that the Borough will have under its control is the quality of its maintenance efforts. Quality relates to using the correct equipment for the specific task, performing a task at the correct time, and closely monitoring conditions so that the maintenance schedule can be adjusted to react to use, weather, or other factors. Even with the best maintenance, rehabilitation of lawns and plantings is periodically required.

Community involvement is another key element to the success of this park. A 'Friends of MLK Park' or similar volunteer group can greatly enhance the park's functionality, safety, and overall appear-

ance. This group could organize and sponsor a regular schedule of community events using park facilities. They could also regularly monitor park activities and help to provide park safety by discouraging vandalism and reporting any inappropriate or criminal behavior. Performing basic tasks such as removing trash and maintaining play equipment will help to retain the park's general upkeep and maintain the image of a well-used park, enhancing safety. Overall, community group efforts like these not only will reduce the amount of borough resources (tax dollars) needed for park maintenance, but they will also help to develop the bond necessary for long term success between the park and community.

Management / Maintenance

<u>Task</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Minutes/Task</u>	<u>Area/Task</u>	<u>Frequency/Yr.</u>	<u>Hours/Year</u>
Mow Lawn Areas	1 AC	35	2 AC	26	30
Edge Trimming	1,000 LF	15	2,000 LF	26	13
Leaf Removal	site	1200	site	2	40
Inspections (Fountains, Gazebo, Benches)	site	60	site	9	9
Collect Litter	site	60	site	18	18
Sweep Gazebo Area	1 ea	10	1	26	4.5
Sweep MLK Plaza	1 ea	15	1	26	6.5
Sweep MLK Memorial	1 ea	10	1	26	4.5
Empty Trash Receptacles	1 can	5	4 cans	116	40
Prune Trees (4 year cycle)	1 tree	120	50 trees	0.25	25
Miscellaneous					20

Average Maintenance Worker Hourly Rate, including Benefits: \$23.00

TOTAL LABOR HOURS: 210.5

Annual Labor Cost: \$4,841.50

