

LAKAWANNA PARK PLAYGROUND

DESIGN CONCEPT



JANUARY 2025

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PROJECT SUMMARY

This report presents the final design concept for the redesign of the Lakawanna Park Playground, part of the City of Penticton's 0.8 hectare (4 acre) Lakawanna Park. As the project is refined, this report will guide decisions related to the park's detailed design, form, and character.

The Lakawanna Park playground and spray park are much-loved components of this City-wide park, located across the street from Okanagan Lake. While a popular spot for residents and visitors, the playground's aging components and design restrict its use and accessibility. The playground and spray park were constructed in 2000, and with the City of Penticton's Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2018) recommended replacement cycles for playgrounds at 20 years and spray parks at 15 years, both are due for replacement.

Following reviews of site conditions and relevant municipal policies and guidelines, a series of design priorities were developed to

help guide the conceptual design process. This resulted in the creation of two design options which was used in a three-week public engagement process involving members of the community as well as key user and advisory groups. Those consulted were asked about their most desired elements within the playground area, issues and concerns that they wished to be addressed in the redesign, and whether they favoured larger potential changes to the playground (such as keeping a water play element or replacing a portion of the existing parking area with an expansion of the playground).

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and

constructive, with most people expressing a fondness for this shaded and centrally-located playground and their support of a redesign that is focused on the identified design priorities (discussed in the next section). With the City of Penticton Council's support, the project will move into the detailed design phase, with the intention of construction beginning in late 2025.

DESIGN PRIORITIES

While the Lakawanna Park playground and spray park have been well-used for many decades, their replacement also offers an opportunity to respond to changing desires in the design and function of such amenities. The redesign process began with a site inventory and analysis, which helped to establish an understanding of the site's assets, opportunities, constraints, and challenges.

City of Penticton staff identified five priorities for the playground redesign:

1. Increasing play opportunities, including considering expanding the area available for play;
2. Increasing accessible opportunities;
3. Protecting existing trees;
4. Allowing flexibility to accommodate connectivity and multi-generational use; and
5. Enhancing park safety.

A review of the City's established guidelines in bylaws and Master Plans relating to parks, playgrounds and recreation included:

- *2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan*
- *Official Community Plan 2045 (Bylaw 2019-08)*
- *Zoning Bylaw No. 2021-01*
- *Urban Forest Management Plan (2024) & City Tree Protection Bylaw No 2001-26*
- *Transportation Master Plan (2021)*
- *Accessibility Plan 2023-2026*

Integrating the information from these sources, resulted in the five Design Priorities shown to the right which guided the Lakawanna Park playground redesign.



Accessibility & Universal Design

Play equipment for diverse abilities and ages; accessible site furniture, pathways, and play surfaces.



Safety

Improvements to planting, fencing, and park entries to maintain clear site lines and safe connections to surrounding streets and parking areas.



Urban Forest & Sustainability

Protecting root zones of existing trees, incorporating permeable surfaces, and adding new tree plantings where possible.



Creative Opportunities & Public Art

Interactive play areas and equipment plus visual, aural, and tactile stimulation.

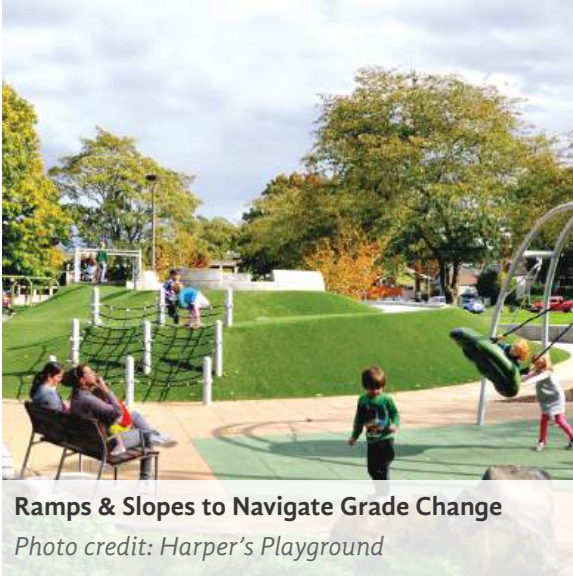


Gathering Spaces

Site furniture and flexible gathering options for people of all ages, abilities, and sizes, and a range of sunny and shaded spaces for sitting and playing.



ACCESSIBILITY & UNIVERSAL DESIGN



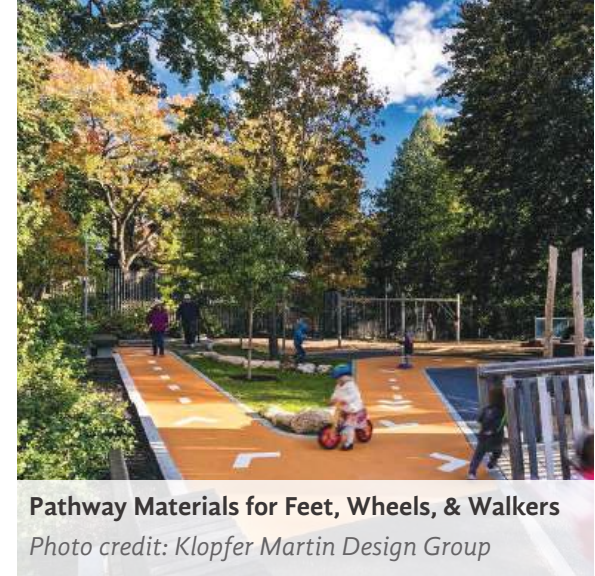
Ramps & Slopes to Navigate Grade Change

Photo credit: Harper's Playground



Accessible Play Equipment

Photo credit: Metro Recreation



Pathway Materials for Feet, Wheels, & Walkers

Photo credit: Klopfer Martin Design Group

Accessibility and universal design are identified priorities for the City's public spaces, including parks and playgrounds. Accessible playground design specifically considers the needs of children with physical and sensory disabilities, providing spaces and elements that can be navigated by wheels and walkers, or experienced by touch and sight. Because children and their caregivers have varying ages and abilities,

attention will also be given to playground-related infrastructure, including safe access from the adjacent parking area, accessible washroom availability, and comfortable seating types and locations. Accessible circulation routes and play surfacing, along with play equipment that can be used by children with disabilities or mobility aids, will be a priority.

Universal design emphasizes spaces and elements that are flexible, usable, and understandable for many abilities, including those who may be neurodiverse or have differing learning styles. As such, the Lakawanna playground will offer spaces and play equipment for a range of motor, social, and sensory development. Alternatives to printed text, such as braille, colour contrast, and pictograms, will also be considered.



SAFETY



Visually Permeable Fencing

Photo credit: Wilder Fence Company

Safety is a primary consideration for this playground. Problems of after-hours vandalism and anti-social behaviours in the park have been identified; the use of the existing washroom by non-playground users and the homeless population is a particular concern of many parents and caregivers.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles will be applied to the design. The playground and spray park areas will remain fenced to protect



Low Plantings and Clear Lines of Sight

Photo credit: Martha Stewart Living

small children from entering traffic, but the ability to see clearly through and over this fencing will provide a more secure atmosphere. Consideration to keeping the exterior washroom building open during the off-season to reserve the playground washroom for park users is recommended. Providing lighting in strategic locations, and increasing multi-season use of the playground, will animate the space and offer more 'eyes on the street' during off-peak times.



Increasing Year-Round Usability

Photo credit: Yalp Interactive

Low and durable groundcover plantings will be used to deter garbage accumulation and undesirable uses, and clear sight lines throughout the playground will be maintained. In particular, the park entries will be improved for visibility and safe connections to the surrounding community.



URBAN FOREST & SUSTAINABILITY



Lifting Play Above Tree Root Zones

Photo credit: OJB

Urban forests are recognized as an important element of both human comfort and ecosystem services within communities. Lakawanna Park, including the playground area, has exceptional mature tree specimens that are recognized by the community as one of its most valuable assets.

An arborist's review was completed as part of the preliminary design phase. All but two trees in the Lakawanna playground



Prioritizing Permeable Surfaces

Photo credit: Mikyoung Kim Design

and parking area were identified to be healthy and robust. These trees create a comfortable and shaded playground, and offer unique and fun play opportunities for children; they will be a highlighted feature of the playground redesign.

The use of permeable materials will be maximized to allow rainwater infiltration, and new tree plantings will be added where possible. Tree root zones will be protected



Low-Impact Footings (Pre-Boardwalk Installation)

Photo credit: Techno Metal Post

by elevating children's play and minimizing foot traffic with the use of groundcover plantings and low-impact construction methods, such as the use of helical piles and hand digging.



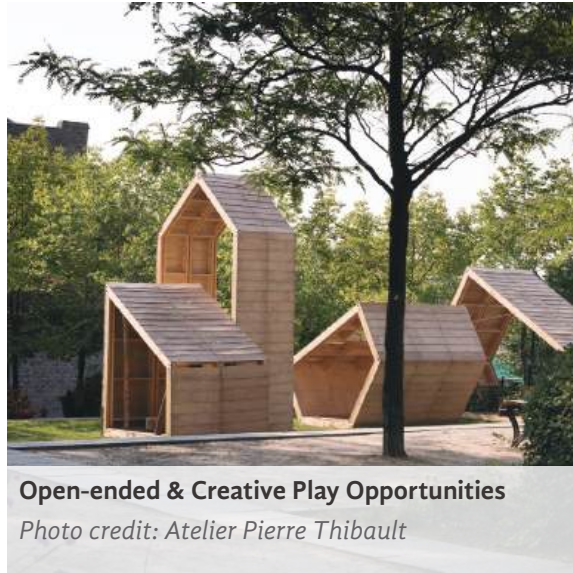
CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES & PUBLIC ART



Interactive Play Elements

Photo credit: ArchDaily

The playground redesign should foster creativity both in its design and use. Play elements that support creative and social development will be emphasized, such as interactive panels, natural play elements, and spaces to hide, perform, and visit. Visual, aural, and tactile stimulation will all be considered in play equipment,



Open-ended & Creative Play Opportunities

Photo credit: Atelier Pierre Thibault

wayfinding, and play surfaces.

In addition to re-locating the existing sculpture within the playground, opportunities for incorporating new public art will be suggested. Vertical surfaces, such as fences and the south exterior wall of the cafe and the washroom building, offer great



Murals and Colourful Public Art

Photo credit: Downtown Raleigh Alliance

opportunities for colourful and engaging artwork or additional play features. Likewise, horizontal surfaces, such as rubber play surfacing, walkways, and bench tops, can be used to add pattern and colour to the playground, inspiring imaginative games.



GATHERING SPACES



Varied Seating Options

Photo credit: ArchDaily



Accessible Furniture

Photo credit: Barco Products Canada



Informal Boulder Seating at Play Edge

Photo credit: Site Design

While play equipment is the primary draw to the playground, various types of small and medium-sized gatherings are common uses and functions identified by the community. Caregivers may need or want comfortable or accessible seating options, while daycare groups and young families may wish for tables for a play date or small birthday party.

Including spaces to park strollers or bike trailers will also be of use to increasing these community services.

To accommodate people of varying abilities and ages, comfortable and flexible seating will be provided throughout, from informal boulder seating next to the tot

play area to extra large picnic tables able to accommodate group gatherings. A range of accessible options will be provided, including wheelchair-friendly picnic tables and benches with backs and armrests. These will be placed to allow seating options with both shaded and sunny aspects.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A community engagement process took place in the fall of 2024 to consult with Penticton residents and stakeholders about the future design of the Lakawanna Park playground. Two conceptual design options were presented that incorporated the stated Design Priorities; participants were asked to share their preferences and identify any issues and considerations for the development of the final concept.

The major difference between the two options was a proposed expansion into the adjacent parking area, which would require the re-routing of the laneway and the conversion of 12 parking stalls to a play space for older children. Feedback was also

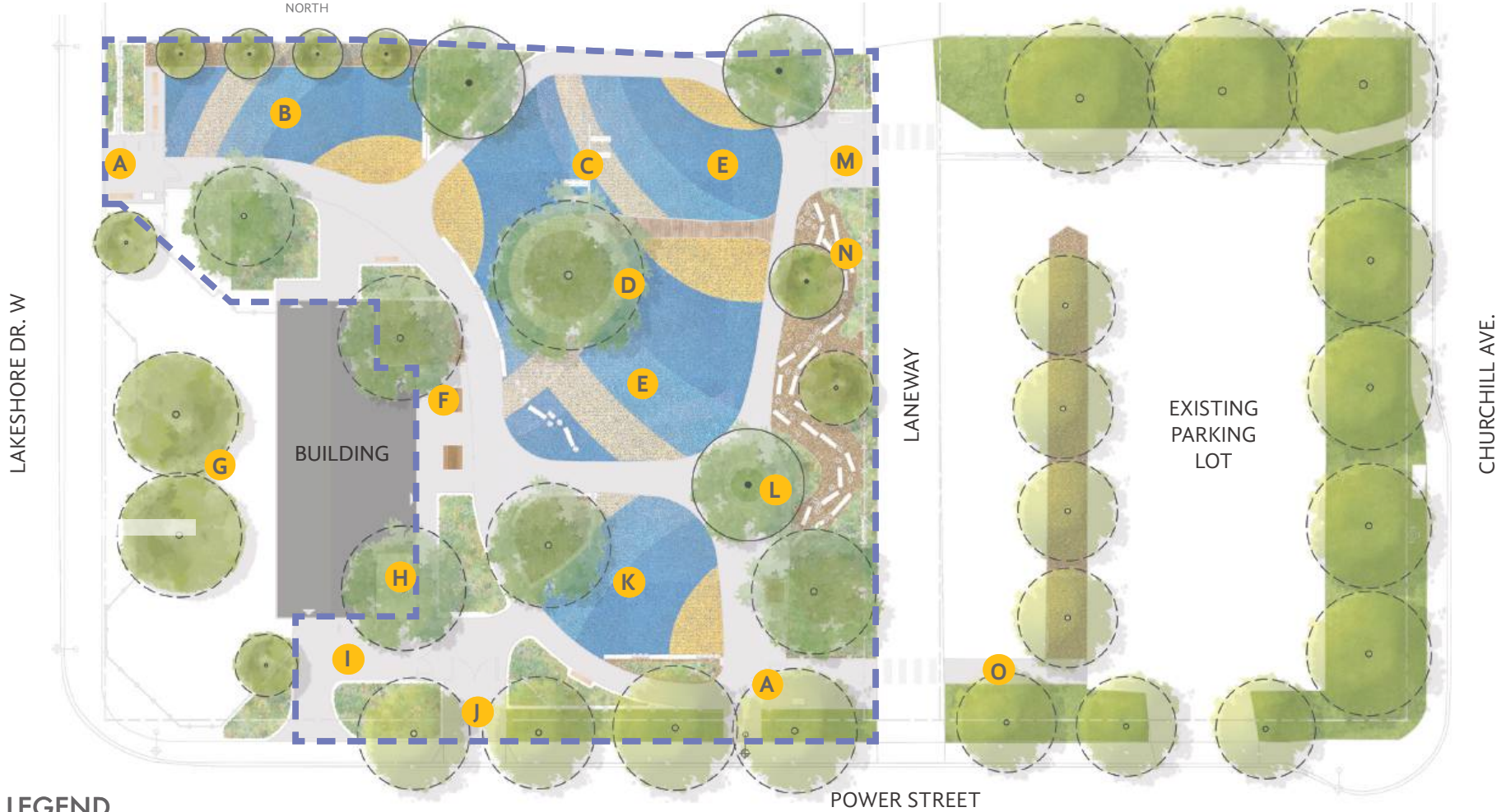
sought on the value of the spray park/water play area to inform whether this component should be re-purposed for additional play space.

The feedback received from all individuals and groups engaged was generally positive about focussing on accessibility and universal design, safety, and protection of the park's mature trees. Although the results were mixed regarding the water play area, there was a common desire for it to be usable year-round rather than only seasonally. The majority of respondents were in favour of seeing improvements in seating options and gathering areas, and for expanding play options for older children,

with some even expressing a desire for adult fitness options. While the majority of respondents registered their preference for Option 2, which included a phased expansion into the existing parking area, some people were nonetheless concerned at the loss of parking facilities.

See Appendix A for further details on the public engagement process and results.

ENGAGEMENT CONCEPT 1



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| A Main entry plaza | E Play space (ages 5-12) | I Washroom plaza | M Secondary entry plaza |
| B Play space or water play plaza | F Picnic area | J Maintenance access | N Meandering path |
| C Swings | G Cafe patio | K Play space (ages 0-5) | O Proposed walkway in existing parking lot |
| D Tree play feature | H Improved garbage enclosure | L Feature tree with circular bench | [Dashed Blue Box] Existing park limit |

ENGAGEMENT CONCEPT 2



LEGEND

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| A Main entry plaza | E Tree play feature | I Existing garbage enclosure | M Open lawn | Existing park limit |
| B Swings | F Play space (ages 5-12) | J Washroom plaza | N Play space (Ages 12+); Parkour | |
| C Water play plaza | G Sensory board on existing wall | K Maintenance access | O Secondary entry plaza | |
| D Picnic area | H Cafe patio | L Play space (ages 0-5) | Playground expansion - future phase | |

FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

Feedback received during the engagement process, combined with the design priorities, was used to refine and produce a final design concept. This concept consists of two construction phases. Phase 1 encompasses the existing playground footprint, but also includes minor interim safety improvements to the parking area connection on the south side. Phase 2 displays the expanded play area into the existing parking lot, which results in re-routing of the laneway to exit onto Churchill Ave.. The main park entry on this south side would be relocated to open onto a small entry plaza on Power St. and improves visual connectivity across Power St. to the rest of Lakawanna Park.

The following pages discuss specific features of the final design concept, which is shown on pages 15, 16, and 17.



Inclusive Play

Photo credit: Edmonton Playgrounds

ACCESSIBILITY & UNIVERSAL DESIGN

All circulation routes and the majority of play surfacing throughout the playground aims to use accessible concrete and rubber safety surfacing. All furnishings will be designed for a range of user needs, with options including bench backs and armrests,

varied seat height and style, and tables with different lengths, seats, and accessible table overhangs.

Play areas will offer diversity for age groups but also for play and learning types, with options for both active and quiet play, creative and physical play. Both braille and pictorial wayfinding will be provided, and sensory experiences will include interactive panels, colourful art, textural experiences, and noise-making elements. Nature play areas allow children to interact with natural elements such as boulders, logs, and bark mulch surfacing.

The large tree structure in the central play area has a ramped approach, and multiple options for getting up and down: ladders, slides, ropes, and poles. The swings extending off the play tower will

have toddler, group, and adaptable swinging opportunities.

 **SAFETY**

The entries to the playground have been reconfigured to prioritize visibility and safe community connections. The Lakeshore Drive entry is more direct and offers clear views into the main playground area, as well as new bike parking and a welcoming picnic plaza and lawn area. The entire playground will be fenced with low and visually permeable fencing. The south playground entry, set back from the road, has been reconfigured to provide a safer connection to the parking area, reducing children’s exposure to street traffic in both the Phase 1 interim condition and at the build-out of Phase 2.



Water Plaza
Photo credit: OJB

The suggested year-round opening of the washroom on the west side of the building, along with welcoming improvements to this small washroom plaza, would discourage non-playground users from using the washroom in the playground’s interior. The



Weight-activated Water Play
Photo credit: Waterplay

removal of the existing cedar hedge along the east property line will reduce hiding places within the playground; new plantings will consist of low groundcovers, well-spaced ornamental grasses, and single-stemmed trees for clear sight lines and a reduction



Ramps and Colour

Photo credit: Kinetics Play

in inconspicuous spots for undesirable behaviours.

The redesigned water play plaza will offer play value in all seasons, whether the water is turned on or not. Colourful posts with

weight-activated controls in the plaza paving will mist and squirt as children weave in and out; a focus on discovery is emphasized with movable and operable water play components. Decorative concrete paving will mimic waves and shoreline patterns.



URBAN FOREST & SUSTAINABILITY

All existing trees will be maintained, except a single tree that was identified as unhealthy in the arborist's review. The protection of these trees and their root zones is prioritized with the use of permeable materials (rubber safety surfacing and bark mulch) and sensitive construction (hand work and low-impact footings). Additional trees will be added to the playground to further build the canopy.



Existing Park Trees

Photo credit: BENCH

To further capitalize on the play value of trees, an elevated tree deck will bring children up above the playground and offer play elements such as bridges, ramps, ladders, slides, and cues for creative play.

CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES & PUBLIC ART

Children’s creativity will be fostered by encouraging open-ended play with quiet meeting spots, informal performance spaces, moving parts, natural play elements, and circulatory patterning in paving surfaces. Colour and textural elements will be incorporated throughout the playground.

There are also opportunities to incorporate public art and First Nations elements throughout various features of the park.

GATHERING SPACES

Many park users highlighted the importance of seating and gathering spaces in the engagement process. The final concept design provides benches and tables in a variety of locations around the playground

so that they may be used by caregivers who need a place to temporarily store belongings, as well as for those who want to sit and watch the children on the playground. Moreover, multiple respondents stressed the importance of seating and tables that can be used for groups, such as family picnics, daycare groups or children’s birthday parties, and so both small and large seating plazas have been included in the design. The large gathering area to the east of the building offers both large harvest tables and individual chess tables.

In summary, the final concept design for the Lakawanna Park playground offers a space that is safe for children to play, and welcoming for people of multiple ages and abilities. This plan maintains the features that have made this a loved and well-used






playground for several generations of residents while incorporating new features to address goals for City parks, such as accessibility and safety. The joy and excitement of children’s play is supported by new and fun play opportunities that aims to challenge children physically, creatively, and cognitively for years to come.




FINAL CONCEPT PLAN: PHASES 1 & 2



LEGEND

					
A Main entry plaza	•	•			•
B Swings (all ages)	•				
C Water play plaza (all ages)	•				
D Picnic area	•				•
E Tree play feature	•		•	•	
F Play space (ages 5-12)	•			•	•
G Sensory board or mural	•			•	
H Cafe patio					
I Garbage enclosure with deck			•		
J Washroom plaza	•	•			
K Maintenance access		•			
L Play space (ages 0-5)	•				•
M Open lawn	•				
N Play space (Ages 12+); Parkour	•				
O Secondary entry plaza	•	•			
P Rubber safety surfacing	•	•	•	•	
Q Concrete walkway	•				
R Large gathering area	•	•		•	
S Plaza with circular tree bench	•				•
T Nature play	•				•

 Existing tree

 Proposed tree

 Phase 1

 Phase 2



LEGEND

- 1A Interim park entry plaza
 - 1B Painted crossing
 - 1C Accessible parking stalls
 - 1D Interim planting bed
 - 1E Maintain existing trees
-
- Existing tree
 - Phase 1 interim improvements to existing parking area



FINAL CONCEPT PLAN: PHASE 1 INTERIM PARKING IMPROVEMENTS



APPENDIX A: ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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