



Elk River Water Tower **Historic Site** **CONCEPT PLAN**

11/07/2025



City of
Elk
River

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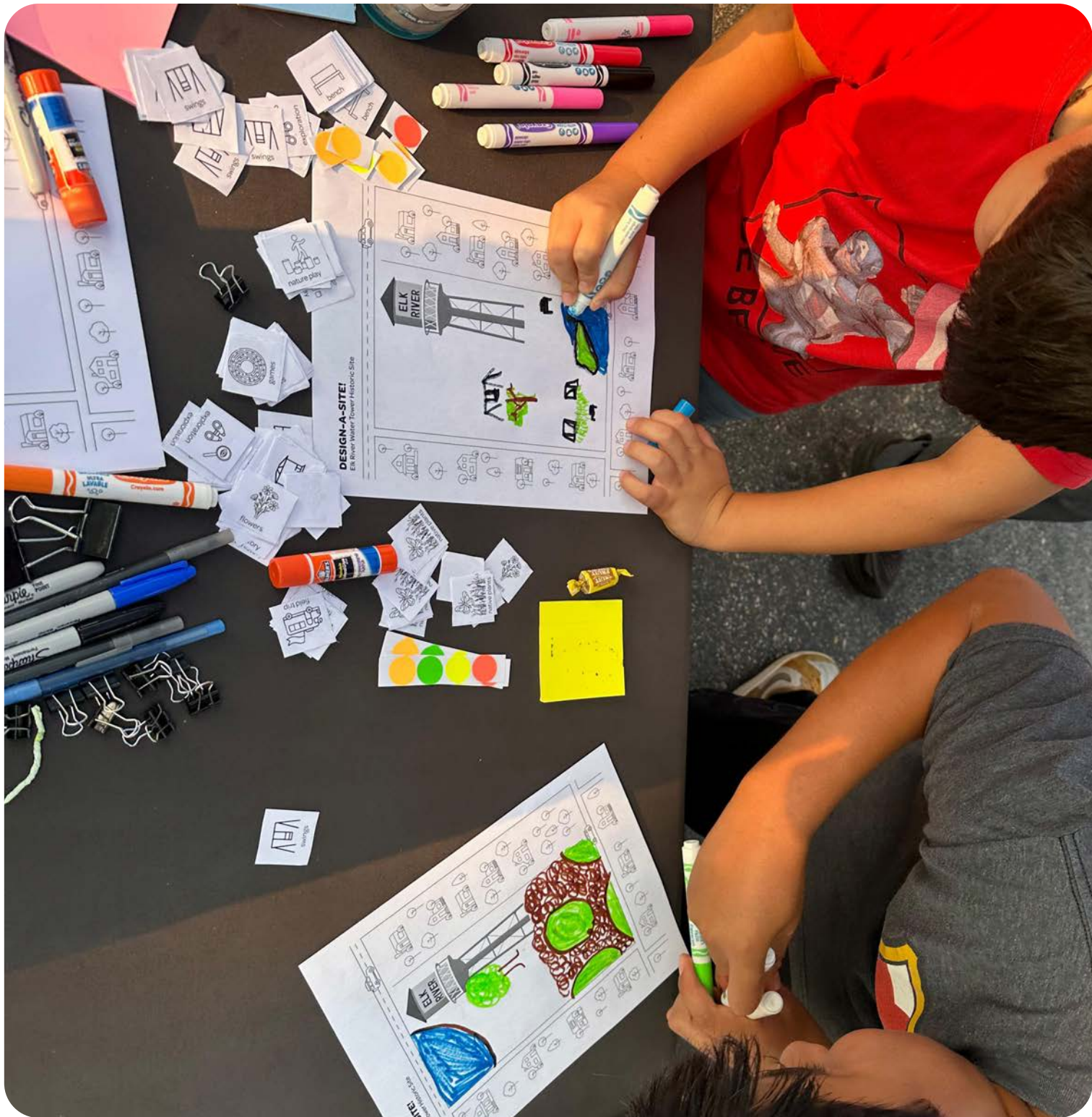
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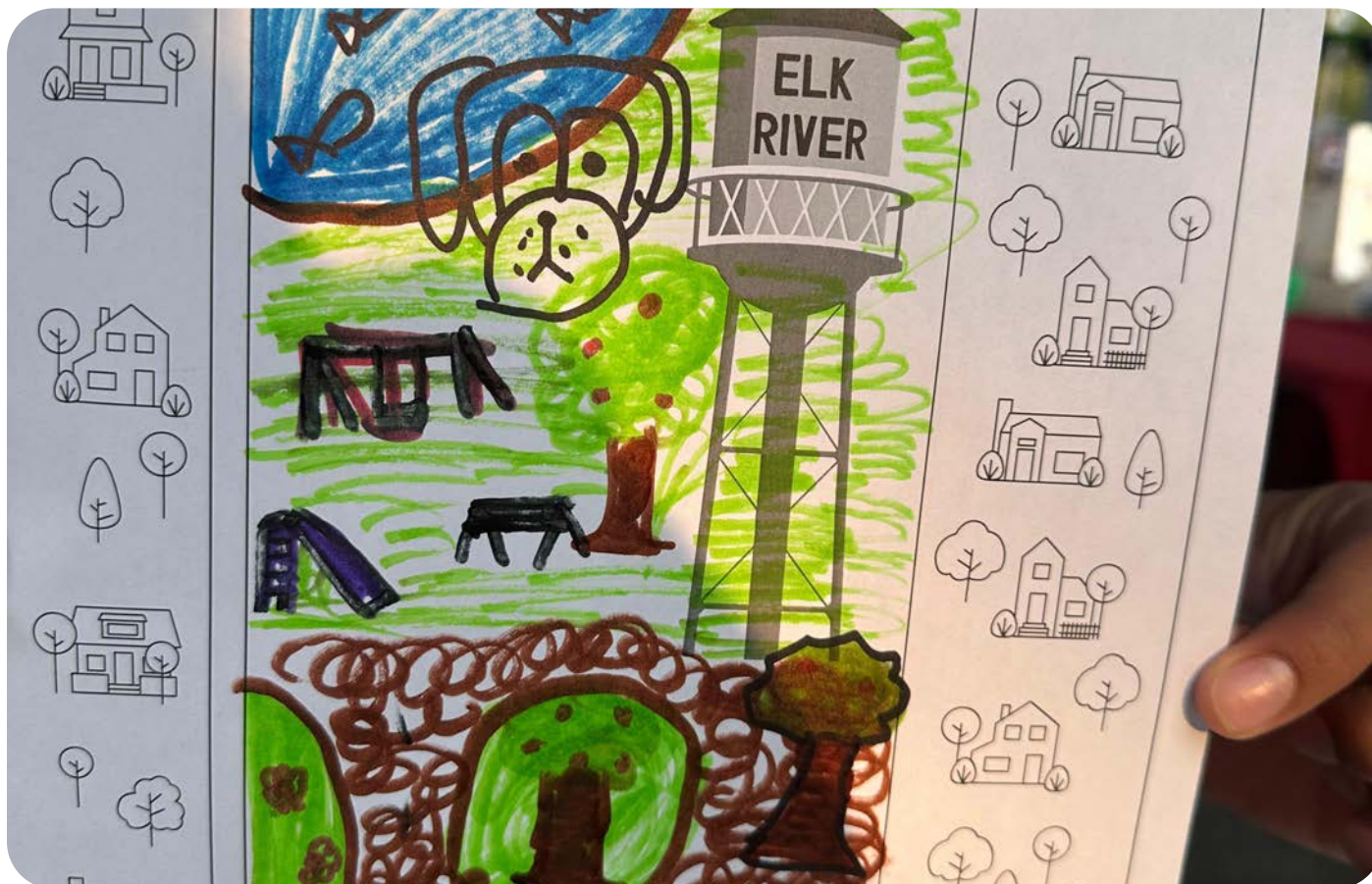
Project Goals

Vision Statement:

Water Tower Historic Site is a welcoming community space that celebrates the iconic water tower, local heritage, and everyday gathering. Designed for all ages, it supports connection, play, events, and ecological systems while reflecting the spirit of the community.

Concept Plan Goals:

- Elk River's history is celebrated through storytelling, art, and interpretive design.
- The site is a symbolic place for the community of Elk River.
- The site is welcoming, inclusive, and accessible for all ages and abilities to experience and enjoy.
- The site is a key stop along a future Elk River Heritage Walk, connecting various historic sites throughout the city.



Community Voice & Input

JULY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES (PRE-DESIGN)

What needs to be here?

- . Play
- . Pathways
- . History & Storytelling

How should history be told?

- . Live programs or events
- . Interpretive signage and panels
- . Public art & Sculpture

What do you want this place to be?

A place to celebrate and preserve Elk River's historic water tower as a symbol of community pride—sharing stories of Elk River's history, as well as educational information about the water tower.

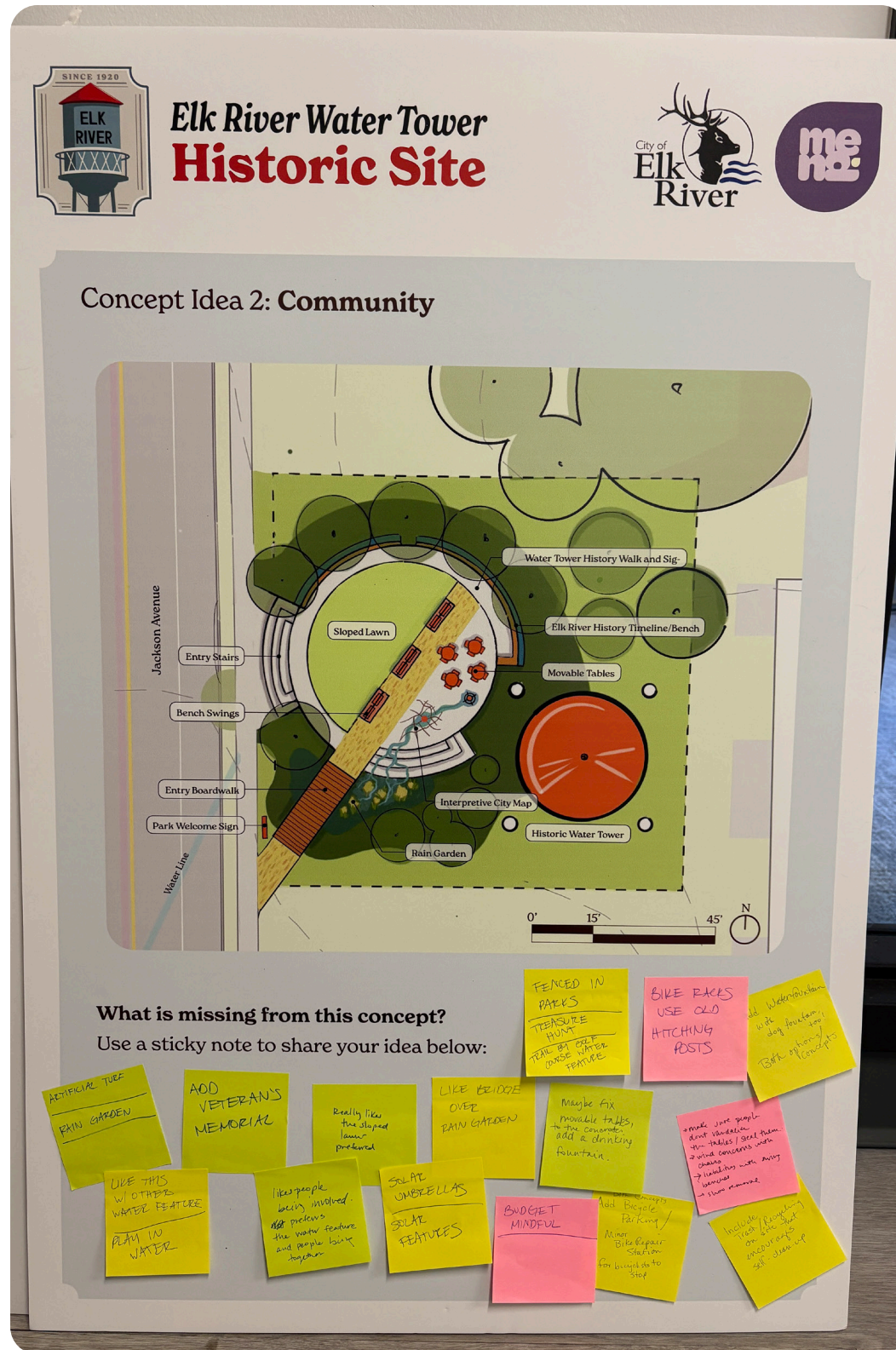
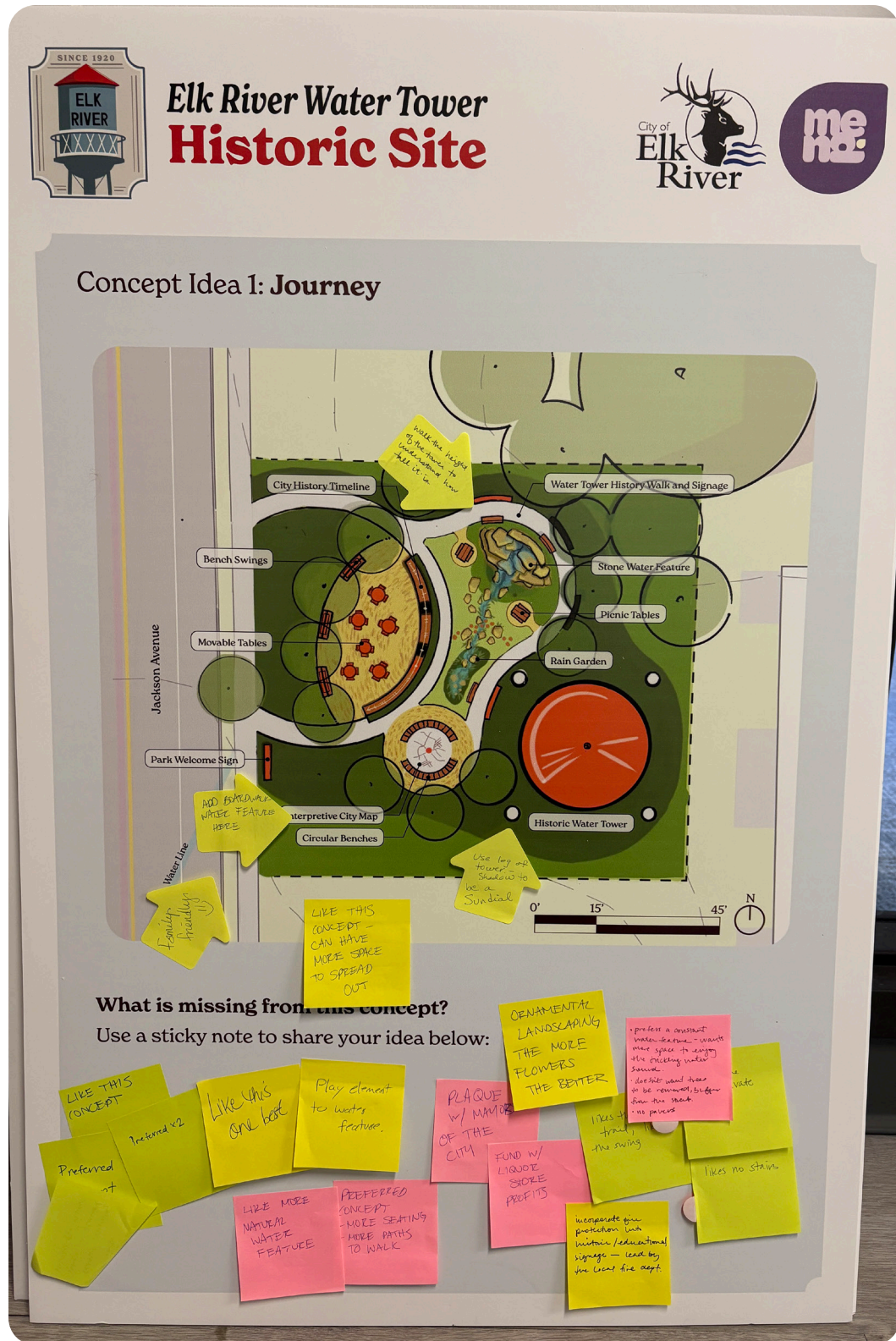
Main programmatic elements:

- . Space for small gatherings and learning sessions
- . History interpretation and education
- . Plantings
- . Pathways
- . Public art



Community Voice & Input

SEPTEMBER ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES (CONCEPT DESIGN)



- Community preference leans toward concept 1
- Interest in seeing the boardwalk integrated into concept 1
- The more flowers the better
- Preference for interactive water feature

Community Voice & Input

SEPTEMBER ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES (CONCEPT DESIGN)

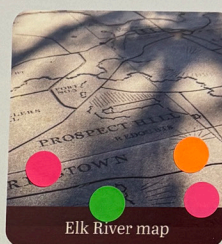
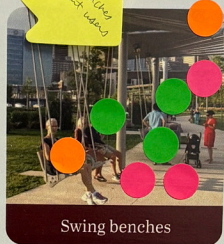
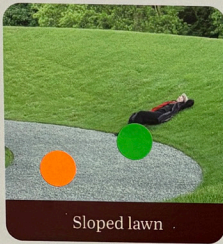
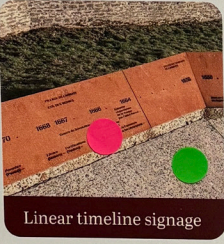


**Elk River Water Tower
Historic Site**



Which programs, materials and plantings do you like the most?
Place dots on your favorite elements.

Programs

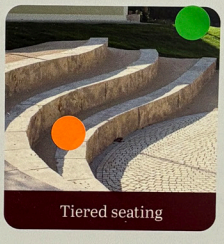
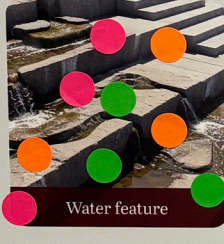


Linear timeline signage

Sloped lawn

Swing benches

Elk River map



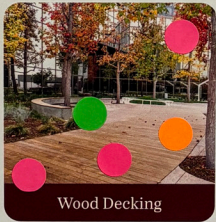
Water feature

Storytelling feature

Tiered seating

Water interpretation

Materials



Red furnishings

Wood Decking

Mixed Textures

Shou Sugi Ban

Plantings



Striking reds

Warm colors

Movement

Year-round interest

Programming

- Swinging benches are strongly preferred
- Interactive water feature is strongly preferred



Materials

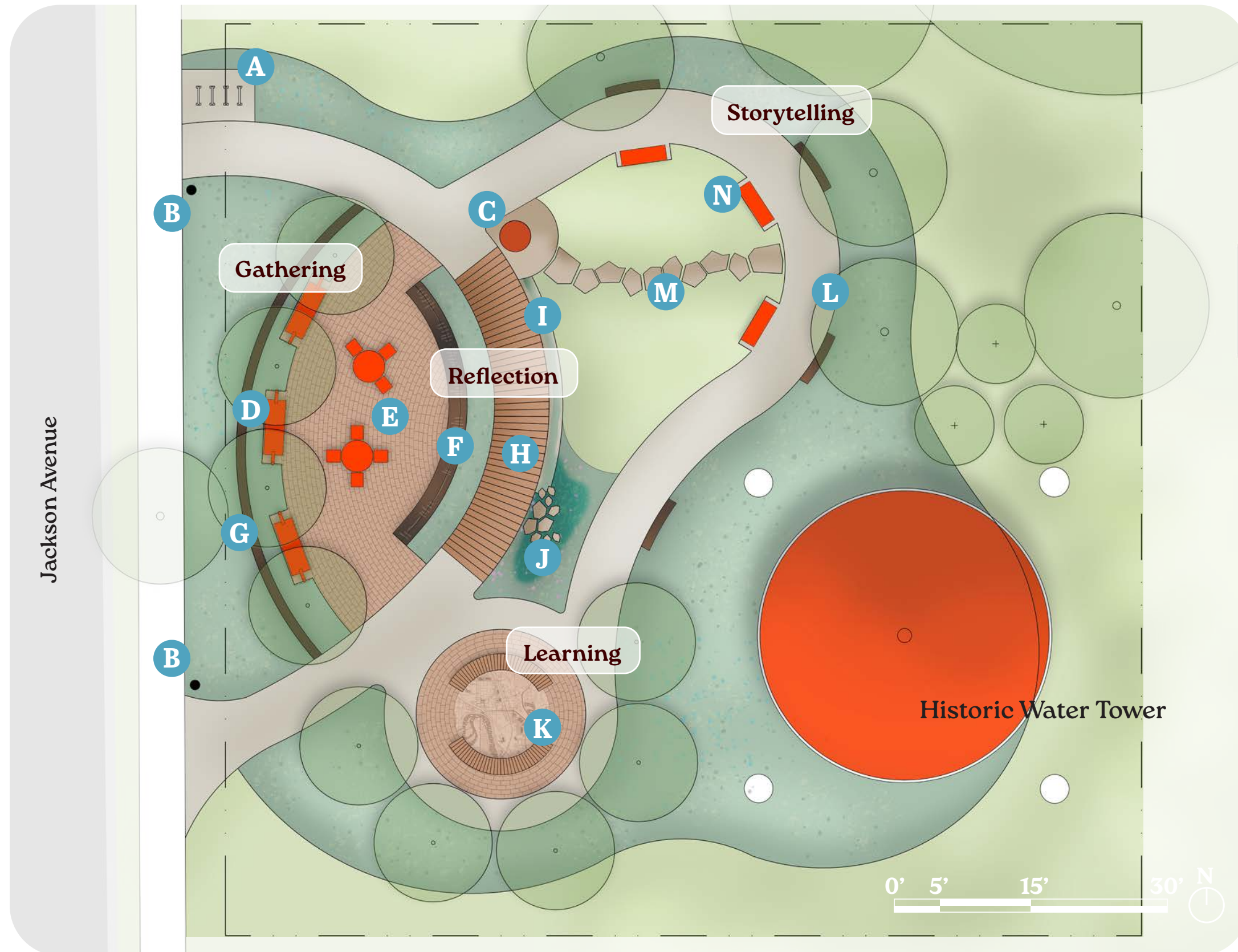
- Softer surfacing, like wood decking, is preferred
- Furnishings that reflect the character of the water tower is preferred



Plantings

- Year-round interest plantings are preferred
- Landscaping that reflects the story of the water tower is strongly preferred

Final Concept



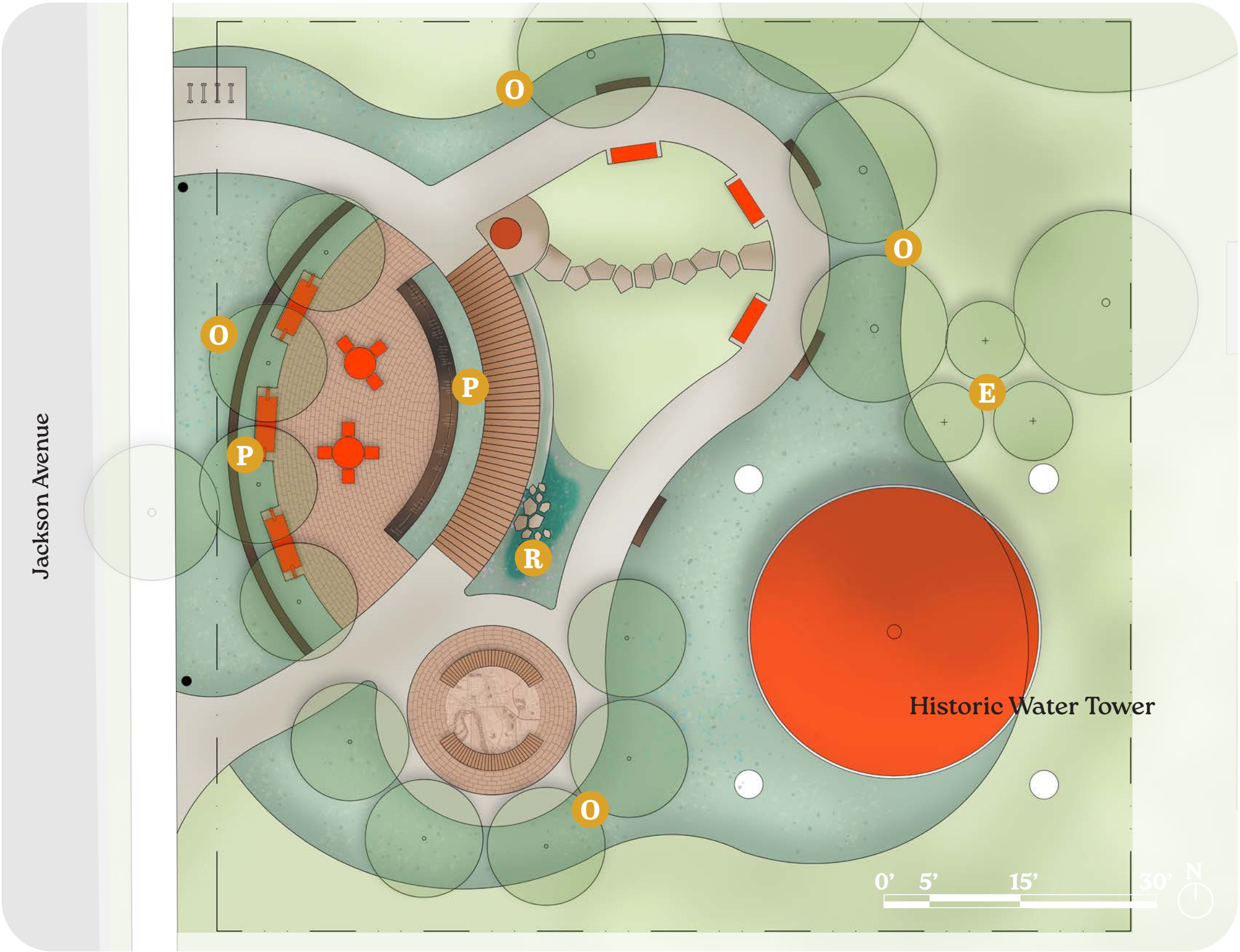
Legend

- A** Bike Racks (4)
See Page 9
- B** Historic Hitching Post
- C** Stone Water Feature
See Page 11
- D** Swinging Benches (3)
See Page 9
- E** Cafe Tables (2)
See Page 9
- F** City History Timeline
See Page 8
- G** Park Welcome Wall
See Page 8
- H** Boardwalk
See Page 11
- I** Interactive Water Runnel
See Page 11
- J** Rain Garden
See Page 11
- K** Outdoor Classroom
See Pages 7, 8, 9
- L** History Walk & Signage
See Page 8
- M** Stepping Stone Path
- N** Benches (3)
See Page 9

Experiential Rendering

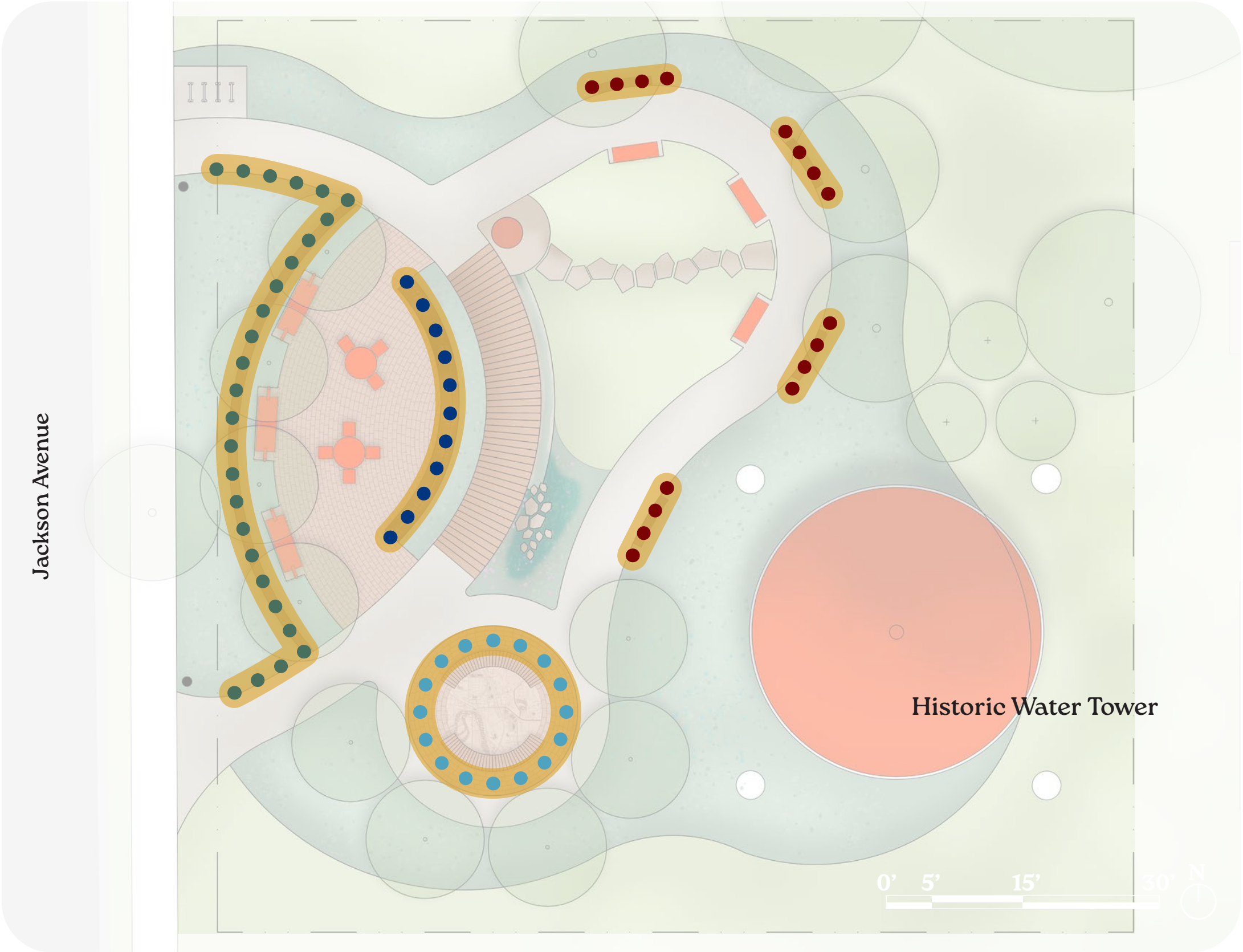


Materials & Plantings



- Legend**
-  **Concrete**
Broom finished standard
 -  **Specialty Concrete**
Stamped integral colored
 -  **Wood Decking**
Accoya decking
 -  **Stepping Stones**
Natural Limestone
 -  **Native Prairie**
Seeded application
 -  **Turf Lawn**
Sod rolls
 -  **Plant Bed**
See Page 12
 -  **Rain Garden**
 -  **Evergreen Trees**
See Page 12
 -  **Ornamental or Columnar Trees**
See Page 12

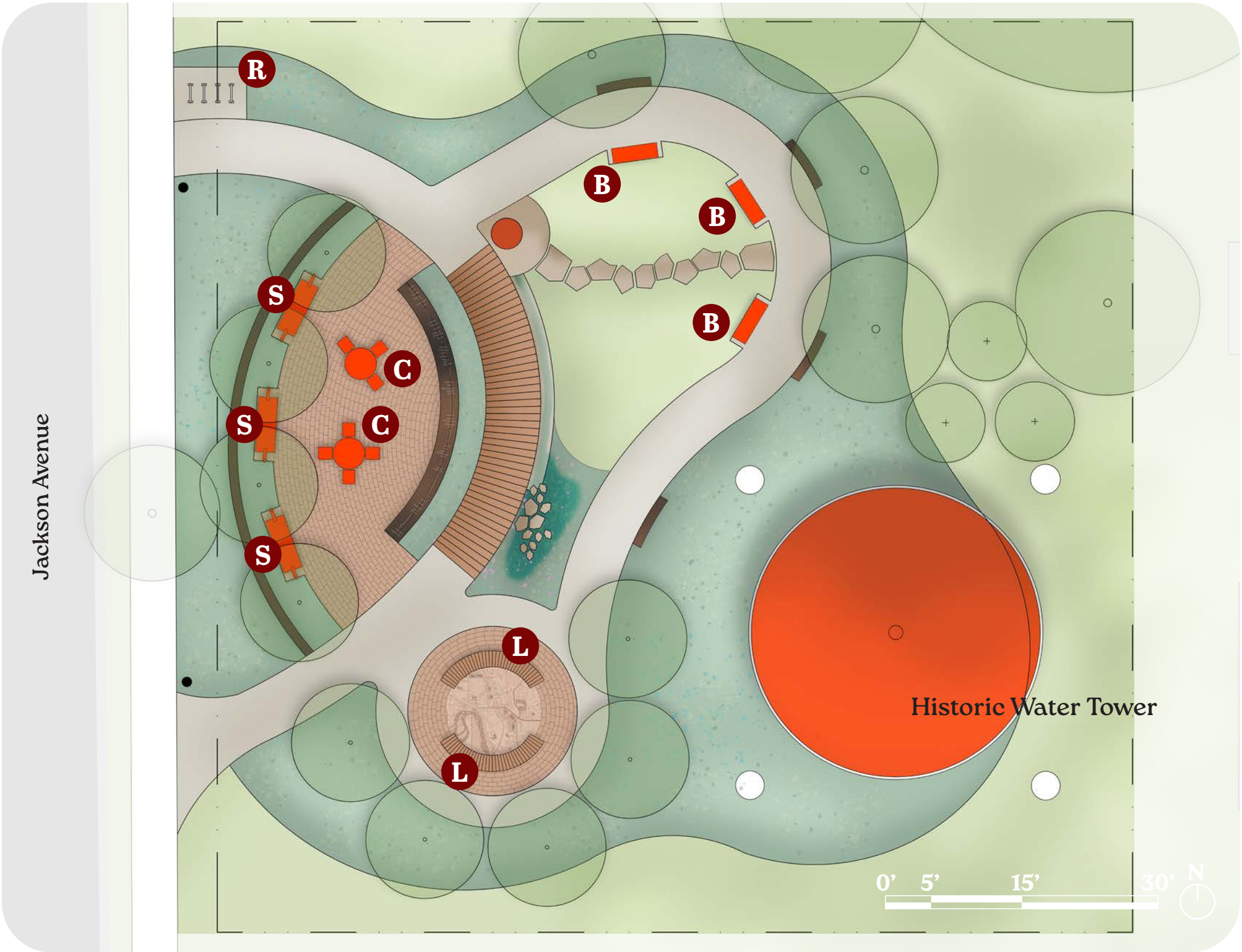
Storytelling



Legend

- Park / Heritage Welcome Wall
- City Timeline
- City Heritage Map
- Story Panels

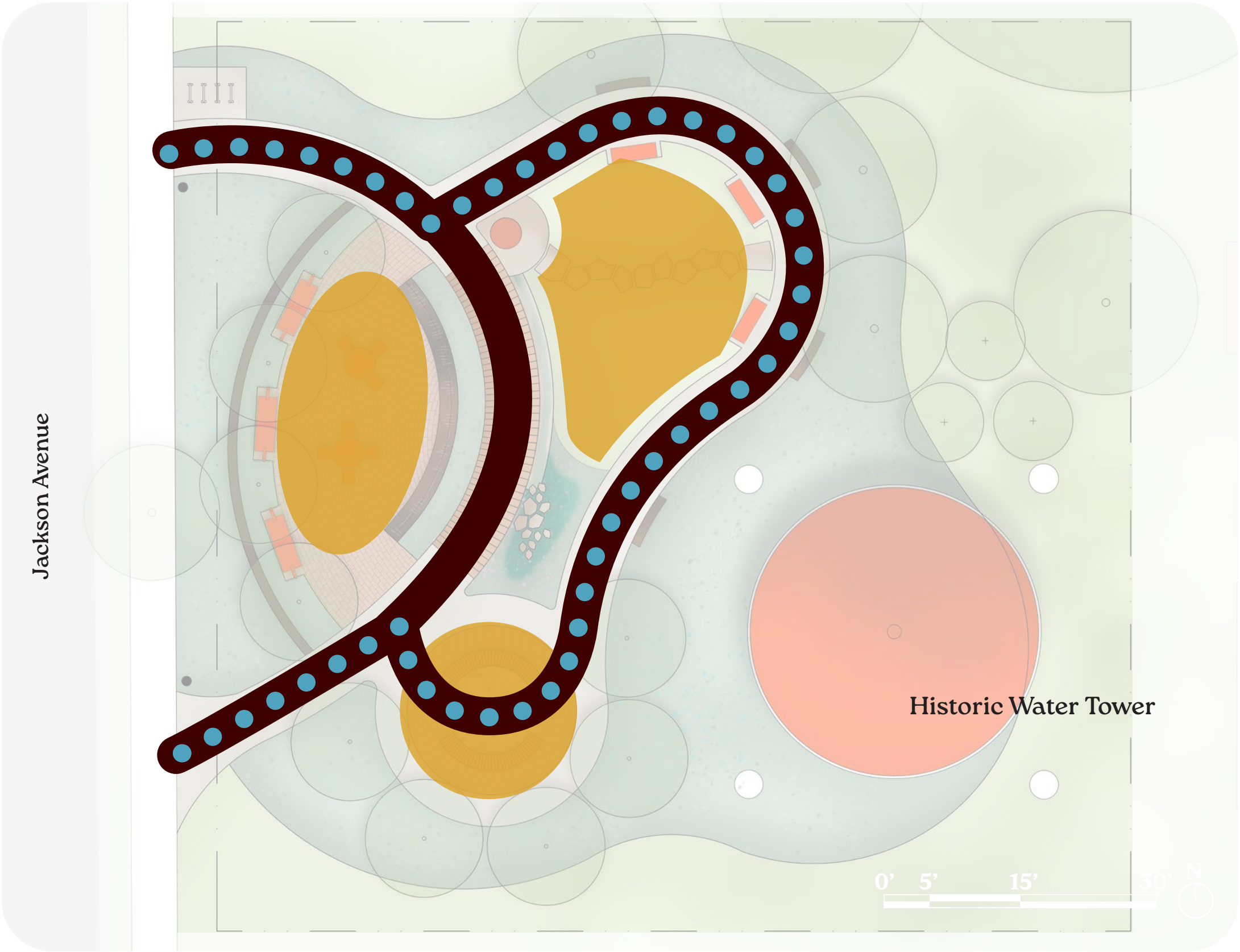
Furnishings



Legend

- S** Swinging Benches (3)
*Wabash Valley In-ground Estate
Perforated Swing Bench in red*
- C** Cafe Tables (2)
*Dumor Table 295 in red (ensure one
ADA compliant)*
- B** Benches (3)
*Flagship 6ft bench with back, cedar
recycled plastic seats, red frame*
- L** Circular Learning Benches
(4, arranged as 2 arcs)
*Vestre 630 Vroom bench top curved
Ø4000in custom red color*
- R** Bike Racks (4)
Dero Hoop Rack in red

Circulation



Legend



Summer Paths

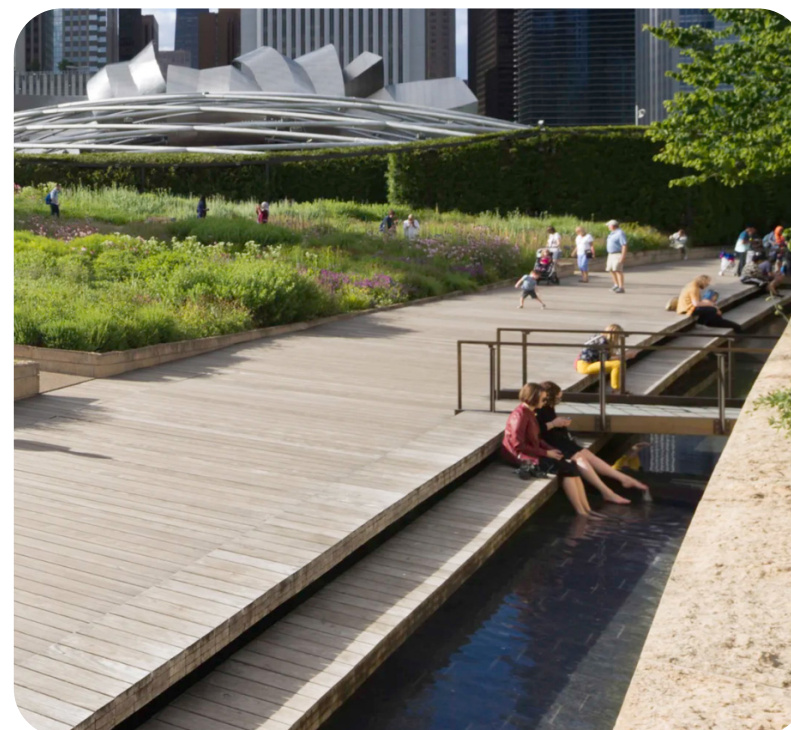
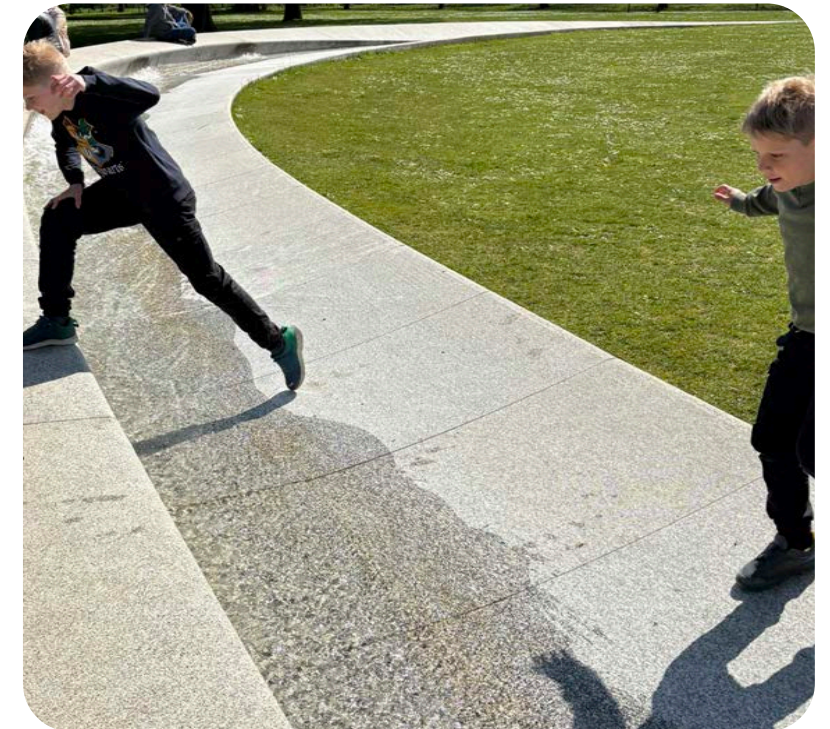
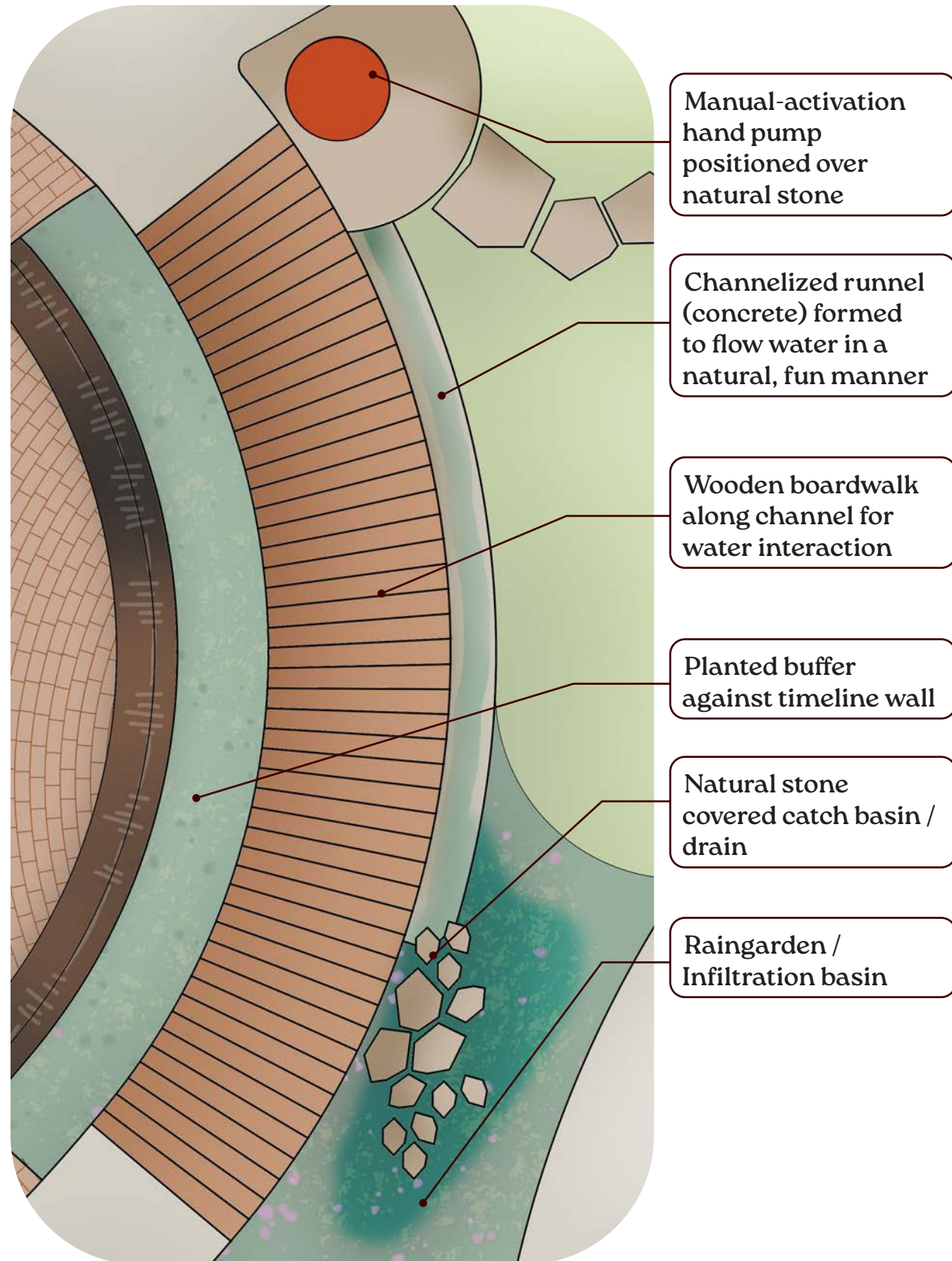


Winter Paths



Gathering Spaces

Water Feature



Plant Palette



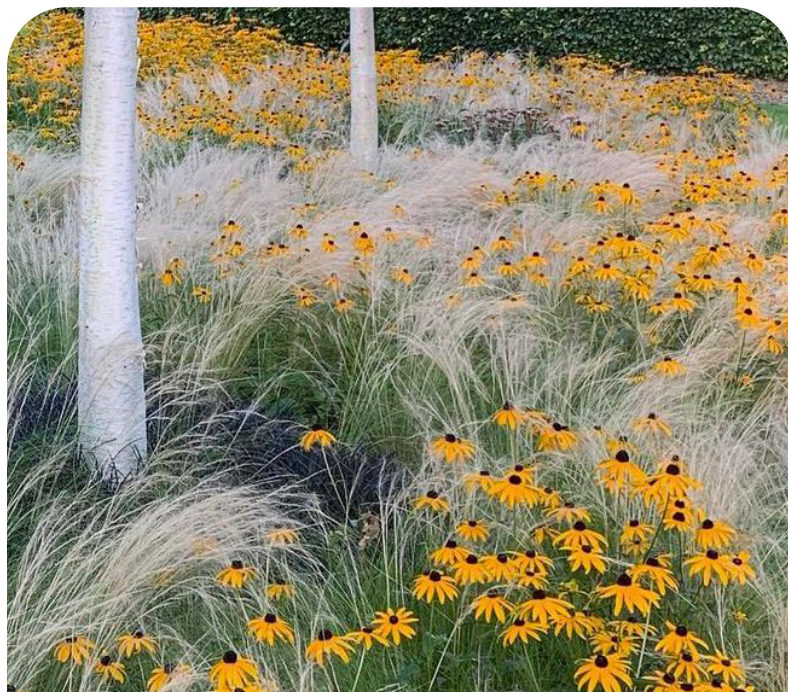
Striking reds



Smoke-like textures



Columnar showy seasonal trees



Movement



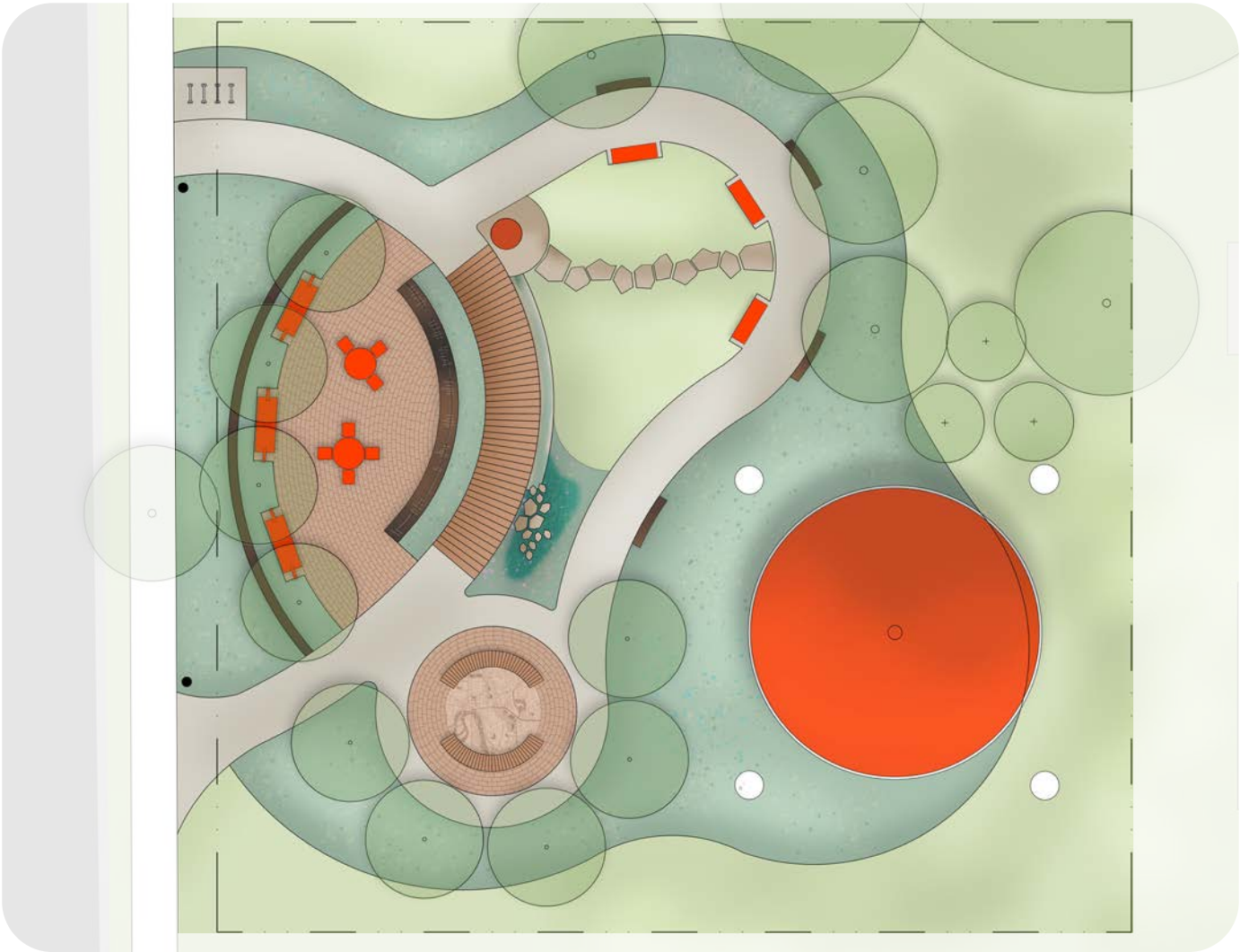
Year-round interest



Year-round interest

Opinion of Probable Cost

General Construction Conditions	\$14,420.00
Site Preparation and Grading.....	\$13,671.00
Hardscape	\$66,042.50
Plantings / Landscaping.....	\$23,546.80
Lighting / Electrical.....	\$19,525.00
Furnishings.....	\$38,578.75
Special Features	
<i>Signage and Storytelling</i>	\$60,000.00
<i>Interactive Water Feature</i>	\$65,440.00
Subtotal.....	\$301,224.05
Contingencies and OH&P*.....	\$121,865.99
Estimated Construction Total.....	\$423,090.04
Estimated Construction Documentation, Bidding Support, & Construction Administration Cost**	\$40,000.00 to \$50,000.00



**At this level of design, contingencies are estimated high - around 30%. This is done in effort to set expectations for any fluctuations in construction industry changes in labor costs, materials costs, or unforeseen circumstances.*

*** Estimated consulting fees for construction documentation includes the following specialties: Landscape Architecture, MEP, Civil Engineering, and Cost Estimation. General consulting fee estimation can be assumed around 12% of total construction cost.*

Note: This opinion of probable construction cost is made on the basis of Mend Collaborative’s experience and comparable project cost research. However, since Mend Collaborative has no control over the cost of labor, materials, equipment, or services furnished by others, or over the Contractor’s methods of determining prices, or over competitive bidding or market conditions, Mend Collaborative cannot and does not guarantee that proposals, bids, or actual construction cost will not vary from this opinion of probable construction cost.

Funding Strategy

STEP-BY-STEP STRATEGY

To fund the new park, we recommend a **layered strategy** that considers these steps:

STEP

The City should begin by pursuing larger grants from the **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission as primary funding sources**. As part of the application process, the City should confirm whether in-kind donations or additional grant funds can be applied toward the required match.

STEP

To support these applications, the City should also pursue additional **regional and national grants focused on historic interpretation, parks, placemaking, and community health**. These secondary funding opportunities can be used to **enhance key elements** of the project, such as bike racks, interpretive features, landscaping, and where allowable, to help meet the matching requirement. While not all programs will align with the project timeline this year, monitoring upcoming grant cycles and shifting program priorities will position the City for ongoing success.

STEP

Establish a clear local fundraising goal, led in partnership with the Heritage Preservation Commission. This effort can pursue contributions from **regional foundations and corporate partners**, as well as financial support from **local businesses** interested in contributing materials or sponsorships.

Additionally, **community-based giving programs**, such as Name Wall efforts, “Adopt-a-Tree” or “Adopt-a-Bench” sponsorships, and naming rights for park features, can deepen neighborhood ownership and broaden support.

STEP

Once external funding sources have been maximized, the City can source the remaining funds needed through its **general fund or capital improvement program**, ensuring the project is fully financed while demonstrating public commitment and leveraging community investment.

This blended approach, anchored by grants, supported by philanthropic and business support, along with grassroots contributions, positions the City to deliver a signature space with broad community support and minimal reliance on municipal dollars.

Funding Strategy

SOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Park and Open Space Grants:

- **MN DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant Program**
 - 50% up to \$350,000 Opportunity
 - Questions for the DNR: Does in-kind donation or other grants obtained count toward the match?
- **Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission**
 - Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Grant Program for “Regional significance”
- **Minnesota Recreation and Park Association New Initiatives Grant**
 - \$4,000 Opportunity

Placemaking Grants:

- **Project for Public Spaces**
 - Annual, Due in October, \$100,000
 - Doesn’t qualify this year (focus is street projects) but criteria changes annually
- **National Association of Realtors**
 - Between \$3,000 to \$7,500 Opportunity
 - 2025 funds committed, program will reopen in 2026
 - A local realtor would need to be a sponsor
- **T-Mobile Hometown Grants**
 - \$50,000 for shovel-ready projects including outdoor spaces, focused on small towns

Environmental / Stormwater Grants:

- **Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District**
- **Metro Blooms (Elk River is a BlueThumb partner)**

History Grants:

- **Minnesota Historical Society**
 - Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants
 - Likely would only fund the interpretive research
- **State Historic Preservation Office**
 - Matching grants, typically for preservation projects, but there may be a way to frame this in that way

Local Fundraising:

- **Local Foundations**
 - Central Minnesota Community Foundation
 - 3M Foundation Grants
 - McKnight Foundation
 - Mortenson Family Foundation
- **Community-Based Support**
 - Name Wall
 - “Adopt a Tree” or “Adopt a Bench”
 - Naming Rights Opportunities
- **Local Business Sponsorships / Donations**
 - The Bank of Elk River (monetary)
 - Allina Health (monetary)
 - Plaisted’s (material discounts / donations)
- **Faith or Civic Group Sponsorships/Fundraising**
 - Elk River Rotary Annual Grant
 - Annual Grant Application Window: January 15 through March 30