

EASTCHESTER PARK Master Plan



Approved

Anchorage Parks and Recreation
March 2025

Parks and Recreation Commission Res. 2025-01
Planning and Zoning Commission Res. 2025-006



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Acknowledgements

Community Advisory Group

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01

Master Plan Summary

The Eastchester Park Master Plan outlines a 20-year vision for the park's management, maintenance, and development. Created with input from residents and user groups, it addresses current and future needs, balances public access with environmental health, and sets a framework for sustainable development.



The Master Plan concept, **Cultivating Community**, focuses park infrastructure on gatherings, community, and celebrating Alaska life.

Guiding Themes

The Eastchester Park Master Plan is guided by five themes. They reflect public interest in year-round enjoyment of Eastchester Park, creating new connections to surrounding parks and neighborhoods, and building a place where everyone can gather, play, and celebrate.



Natural Environment



Safe Year-Round Recreation



Connectivity



Intergenerational Space



A Place to Celebrate



Existing Conditions



Woodside Park playground on E 20th Avenue

Park Features

Eastchester Park is an 80-acre stretch of the Chester Creek Greenbelt bounded by the New Seward Highway and Lake Otis Parkway. The park is a significant natural and recreational space in Midtown Anchorage. It has two focal points with developed play areas, commonly known as Woodside Park and Hillstrand Pond.

- **Woodside Park:** ages 2-12 playground, gravel parking area, and open lawns used for events, rugby, soccer, dog training, picnics, and dance classes.
- **Hillstrand Pond:** ages 2+ playground, pond viewing area and waterfowl habitat.
- **Natural Resources:** Significant wooded areas, wildlife habitat, and wetlands.



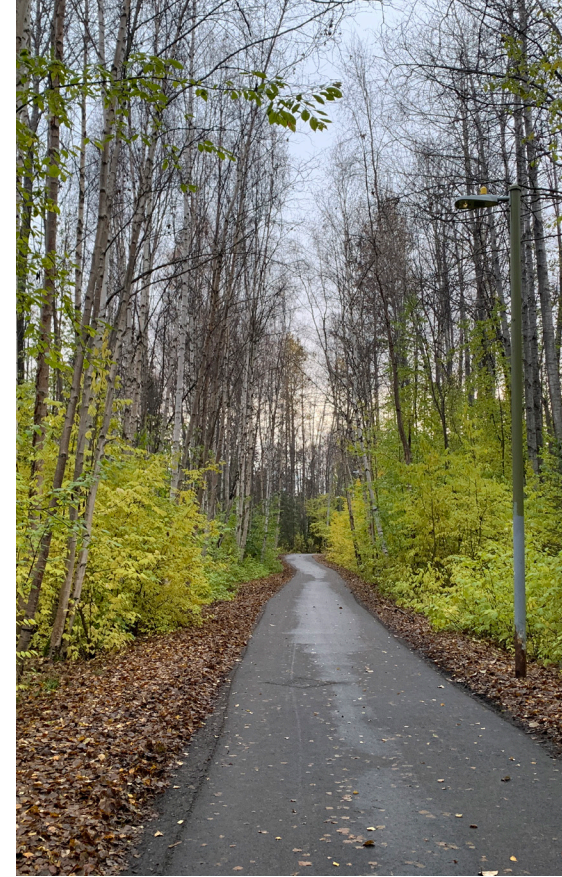
Chester Creek Trail from Woodside Park

Trails

A defining feature of this park is a one-mile segment of the Lanie Fleischer Chester Creek Trail, a 7-mile greenbelt trail connecting U-MED to Downtown Anchorage. A short natural trail also connects the Anchorage Senior Center to the main trail. A playful segment of singletrack trail parallels the paved trail and is part of a series of singletrack along the greenbelt.



Hillstrand Pond and Woodside Park are the two focal areas within Eastchester Park, connected by the Chester Creek Trail. Note that this map is showing a rotated view of the park, looking southeast.



Park Issues

Utility Access

There is repeated damage to the open field adjacent to the Seward Highway due to Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility access over grass. In winter, a large area is plowed by the utility. The leftover snow berms often create barriers to trail access.

Parking

The existing gravel parking area on E 20th Avenue has poor drainage and lacks striping or amenities. Additionally, the lack of barriers between the road and the park allow drivers to park on the grass closer to the play area rather than use the designated parking area.

Lighting

While the Chester Creek Trail received LED light upgrades, the parking area, tunnels, and play areas lack sufficient lighting to support use in all seasons. Some existing light poles have corrosion at the bases and will need to be evaluated.

Insufficient tunnel lighting

Lift station access damage



Drainage issues at parking area



Playgrounds and Amenities

The playgrounds and picnic areas in Eastchester Park are well-used by neighbors but outdated. At over 20 years old, some play features are now in fair or poor condition. Existing playground surfaces are sand or engineered wood fiber which require frequent maintenance. Seating and amenities around the play area are also in need of upgrades, including lighting, wayfinding and interpretive signs, bear-proof trash cans, picnic tables, and bicycle parking.

Invasive Species

Invasive bird cherry is present throughout the Chester Creek Greenbelt and Eastchester Park. Invasive bird vetch is also found in some areas and expanding its range. This is a natural resource concern and prevents native vegetation undergrowth and tree growth.

Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access is insufficient along E 20th Avenue in the winter. Without snow clearance of the sidewalk, pedestrians are forced into the road. The public also frequently brought up unsafe vehicle speed and pedestrian-vehicle conflicts on this road.



Hillstrand play area

Swings at Woodside playground



Lack of winter maintenance along E 20th Ave



Development History

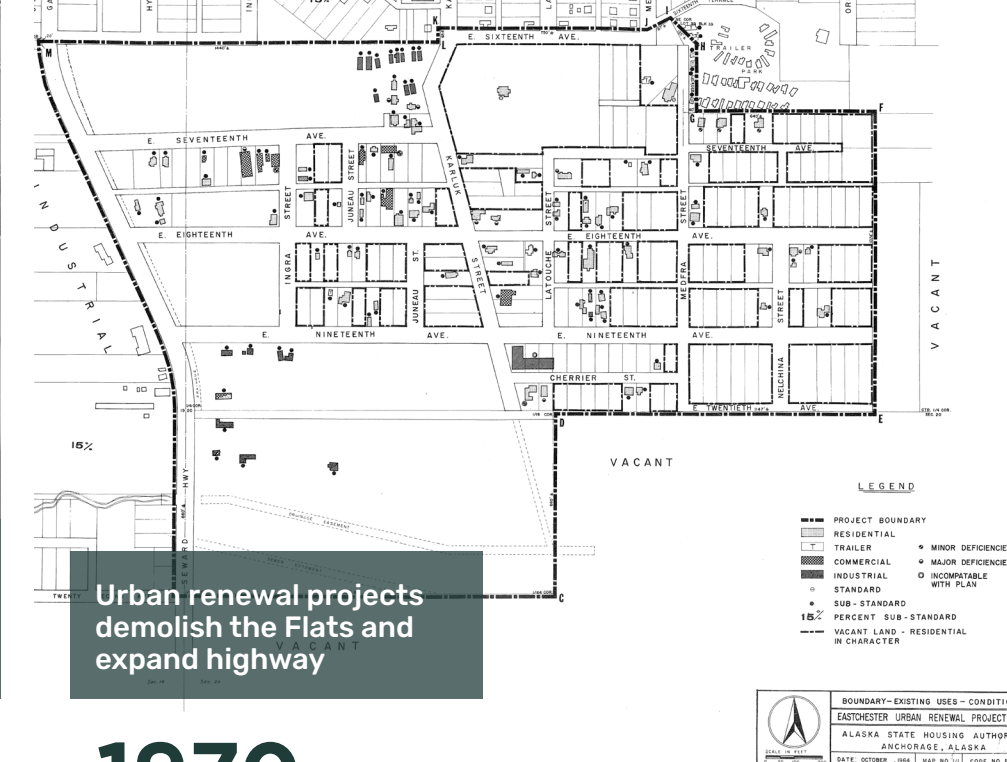


In the 1950s, Anchorage's first Black residents formed a vibrant community north of E 20th Avenue known as Eastchester Flats. Housing discrimination practices of this time period forced many Black people to buy homes outside of Anchorage city limits. As the city began to incorporate more neighborhoods, urban renewal projects eventually displaced homes, businesses, and churches in the Flats.

The park land was acquired by the city in 1973 during this development and displacement. The surrounding neighborhood was later renamed to Fairview once it became incorporated into the City of Anchorage. Today, Fairview is a dynamic neighborhood focused on community revitalization and promoting quality of life for its residents.



Eastchester Flats is a vibrant center of housing, community landmarks, nightlife, and Black-owned businesses.



Urban renewal projects demolish the Flats and expand highway



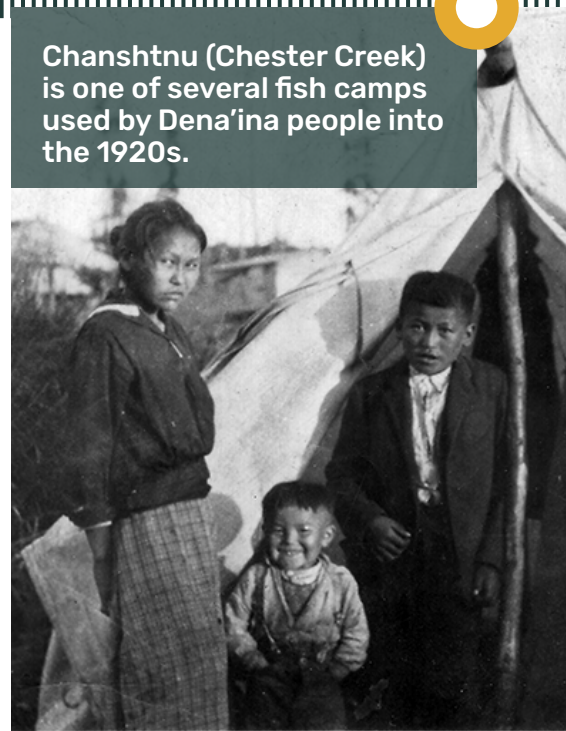
Municipal Park Bonds pass in 2023 and 2024

View over Eastchester wetland area in 1954



1920

Chanshtnu (Chester Creek) is one of several fish camps used by Dena'ina people into the 1920s.



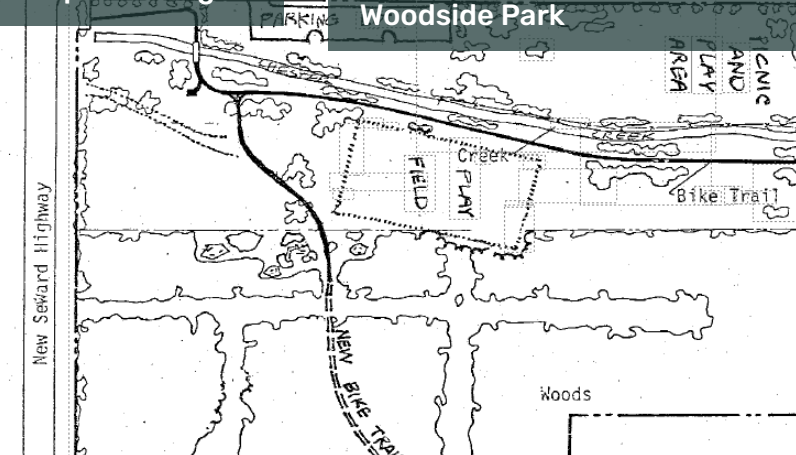
1950



1970

1973

Park land acquired, Chester Creek Trail development begins



1980

Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) used for first playground development at Woodside Park

2003

Current playground equipment installed at Hillstrand in 1998 & Woodside Park in 2003



2024

Changing Wetlands and Waterways

With development of the Anchorage Bowl, wetland areas were greatly reduced. The image below shows wetland extent in 1950 and original Chester Creek alignment meandering west and northeast. At right is the present day wetland extent and rerouted sections of creek.

North Fork of Chester Creek
Original Alignment

Chester Creek
Original Alignment

1950

Today, Chester Creek is channelized through Woodside Park. The North Fork is also channelized toward Sitka Street Park, where it enters a pipe. Wetland areas are smaller due to surrounding development.

2024

Channelization of Chester Creek

Aerial imagery of Woodside Park depicts the channelization of Chester Creek between 1960 and 1970 as urban renewal altered the Eastchester Flats neighborhood.



The first playground was installed in the west side of the park by Parks and Recreation in the late 1970s, and upgraded in the early 2000s. The playground site was originally more clear of vegetation and is becoming more overgrown today as trees along the creek and trail corridor mature.

A 1980 site plan identified a larger formal parking area along E 20th Avenue, however, this was never constructed. The current parking area looks much like it did in 1990.

Plan Review



Reviewing approved comprehensive and functional plans provides context for the growth and development surrounding Eastchester Park. The following plans and studies helped inform the development of the Eastchester Park Master Plan.

Anchorage Bowl 2020 Comprehensive Plan

The Anchorage Assembly adopted the Comprehensive Plan in 2001 to provide a long-term development guide for Anchorage. The Eastchester Park Master Plan supports the following goals of the Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 3:

- Promoting neighborhood identity and vitality,
- Providing safe transportation corridors,
- Development in harmony with nature and with elements of Northern city design,
- Preserving natural open space, water resources, wetlands, and wildlife habitat, and
- Providing a sustainable, accessible system of recreational facilities, parks, trails and open spaces that meets year-round neighborhood and community-wide needs.

Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan

Approved in 2018, the Land Use Plan provides a targeted update to the Comprehensive Plan and designates location and intensity of land uses through the Anchorage Bowl. It discusses the importance of natural open spaces to sustain urban development and economic growth.

The Eastchester Park Master Plan aligns with its land use designation of Park or Natural Area and focuses on development of recreation facilities and trails and the protection of natural habitats. This Plan is also inspired by the park's surrounding residential uses and the nearby U-MED, Midtown, and Downtown districts.

2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan is the primary long-range transportation tool for the Metropolitan Planning Organization. This plan recommends better pedestrian infrastructure and noise barriers along the Seward Highway in the area of Eastchester Park.

2022 AMATS Non-Motorized Plan

The Non-Motorized Plan provides the vision for a network of on-street bicycle facilities, pedestrian sidewalks, and shared use pathways that will help residents travel safely and efficiently without the need of a motor vehicle. The plan recommends E 20th Avenue become an Enhanced Shared Roadway between the highway and Karluk Street to improve bicycle travel just north of Eastchester Park (Project 19).

2006 Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resources, and Recreation Facility Plan

The Park Plan classifies Eastchester/Sitka Park as primarily a Natural Resource Use area with Preservation Lands. These are areas that Anchorage Parks and Recreation recognizes as performing important environmental functions with high ecological value, such as streams, riparian zones, Class A and B wetlands, and other areas determined to have unique or threatened habitat.

2014 Chester Creek Watershed Plan

This plan addresses issues confronting the Chester Creek Watershed, given the significant transformation and development of the Anchorage Bowl over the last century. It outlines general and specific actions to improve the creek's water quality in the area of Eastchester Park, including bank restoration, fish passage infrastructure, and runoff prevention.



2014 Fairview Neighborhood Plan

The plan is focused on facilitating the expansion and progress of the Fairview neighborhood. Goal 5.1 is to increase the supply, quality, safety and accessibility of well-maintained local parks and open spaces. Goal 5.2 is to improve and identify linkages to the Chester Creek greenbelt. Karluk Street is identified as a priority corridor for improved pedestrian and bike routes. An evaluation of park user needs at Eastchester Park is also identified as a goal.

2015 Anchorage Original Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Plan

This plan identifies several historic resources, identifies opportunities for improving walkability, and recommends highlighting elements of Fairview's history throughout the neighborhood.

Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Studies

A PEL study is a transportation planning process that weighs environmental, community, and economic goals and impacts. During the creation of this plan, two significant PEL studies proposed concepts that would drastically alter parkland in order to accommodate widening or diversion of the Seward Highway.

- The **Midtown Congestion Relief** study focused on the corridor between Tudor Road and 20th Avenue next to Eastchester Park, where intersections have the longest delays and highest crash rates in the state. The preferred concepts propose widening Seward Highway via a multi-interchange system. One of the concepts proposes using Seward Highway Buffer Park (southwest border of Eastchester Park) to accommodate the interchange. This park was dedicated in 2024 through Assembly Ordinance No. 2024-86(S).
- The **Seward to Glenn Connection** study is evaluating options to improve safety, livability, and regional travel between the Seward and Glenn Highways, along with local travel within surrounding neighborhoods. One of the alternatives proposed to the public would divert the highway through and over Eastchester Park and Sitka Street Park in a combination of viaduct bridge and at-grade highway.
- Both of these studies propose a replacement of the Chester Creek culvert and trail tunnel under Seward Highway be replaced with a bridge.



Site Analysis

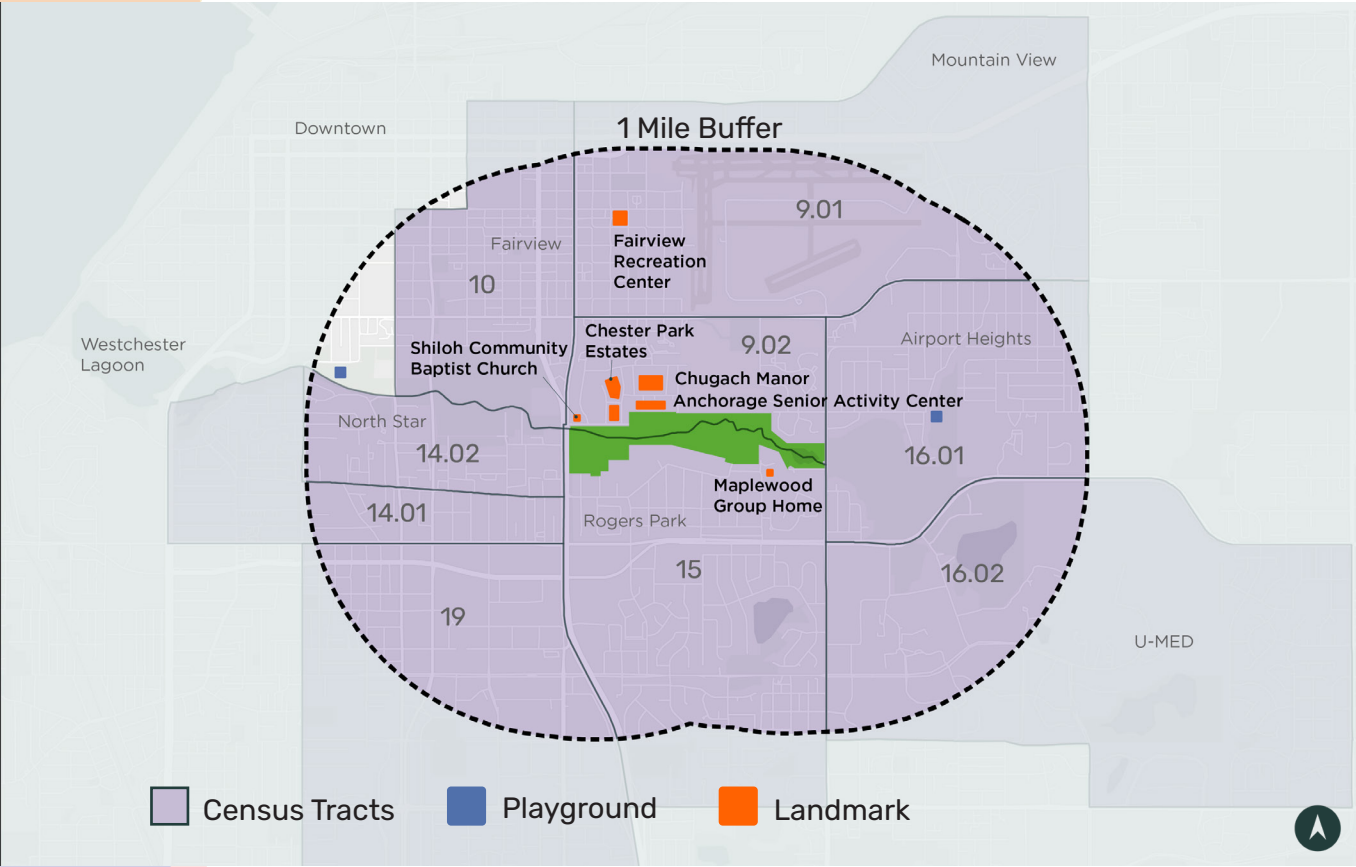
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02

Community Profile



Eastchester Park serves a dense and diverse cross-section of Anchorage. Approximately 34,366 residents live within a one-mile buffer of Eastchester Park in the neighborhoods of Fairview, Rogers Park, Airport Heights, Midtown, North Star, and the U-MED district.¹



Neighborhood Context

Neighborhoods surround the park and have varied housing types, including multi-family complexes, income-qualified housing, senior housing, educational group homes, and single-family lots.

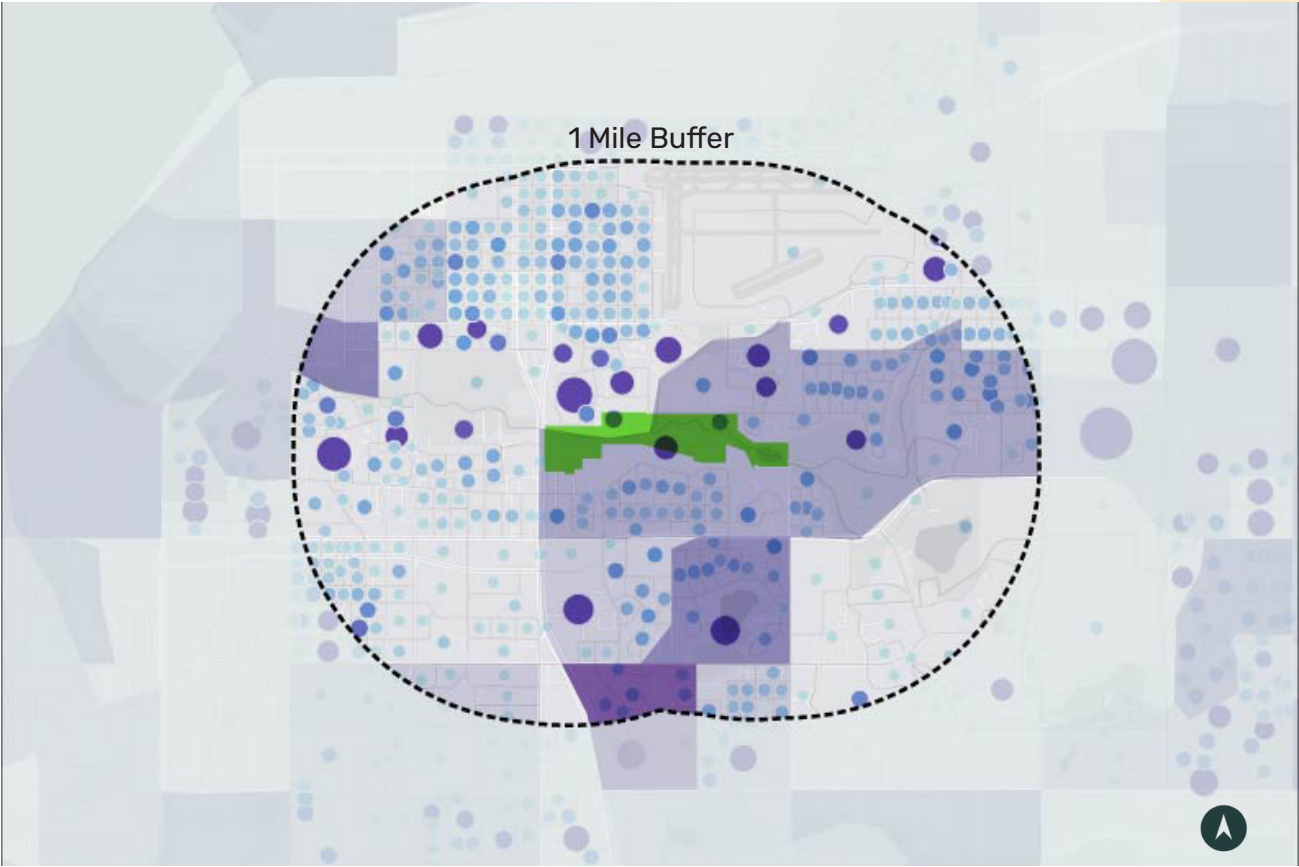
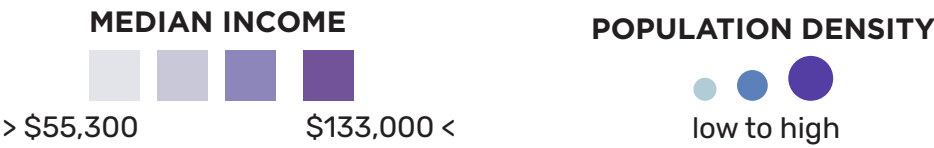
The park is centrally located to recreational and community landmarks, such as the Fairview Recreation Center and the Anchorage Senior Activity Center, and Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church.²

Other popular playgrounds along the Chester Creek Greenbelt include Tikishla Park, upgraded in 2021, and Valley of the Moon Park.

Sociodemographic Diversity

More densely populated and racially-diverse neighborhoods are found north of Eastchester Park.³ Housing is especially concentrated around the Woodside Park area on E 20th Avenue, including the Chester Park Estates apartment community.

Median household income of census block groups around the park also ranges widely – for example, \$52,500 in Census Tract 9.01 (Fairview, Mountain View) compared to \$97,024 in Tract 15 (Rogers Park).



1. Population estimate from 9 census tracts with at least 30% of area within a 1-mile buffer of park, according to the 2022 American Community Survey.
2. Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church was founded in 1952 and descended from Alaska's first Black church. It relocated across the street from the park in 1975.

3. In Census Tract 9.01 (Fairview/Mountain View), 31% of people identify as white compared to 63% of people living in Tract 15 (Rogers Park). See map on previous page for Tract locations

Park Activation



Eastchester Park is mostly unprogrammed and used leisurely by the community for walking, running, cycling, Nordic skiing, mountain biking, and playing with dogs. Rugby and volleyball are common sports played in the open fields.

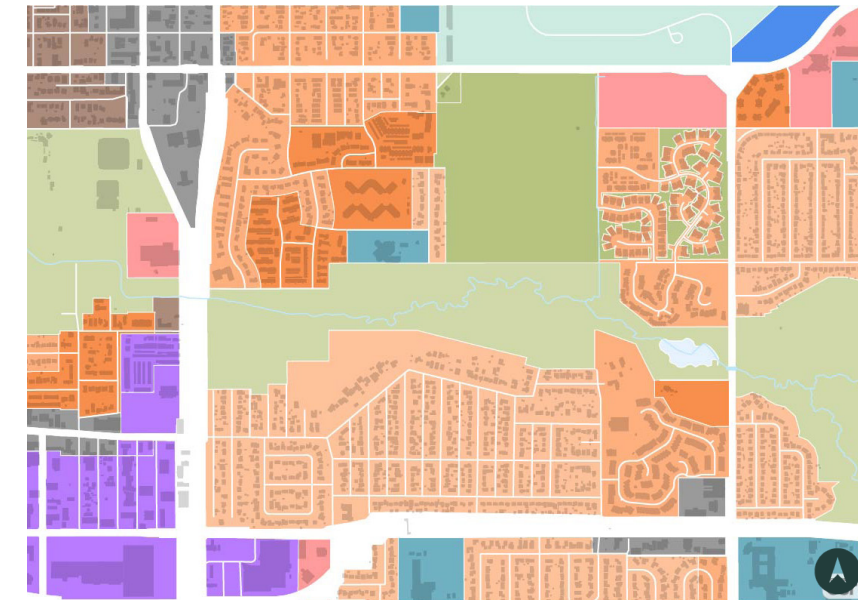
Use of the Chester Creek Trail generally peaks during morning and evening commute times. On average, 560 trail users pass through the park each day and 58% of those are cyclists.¹ Popular trail-based events activate this park each year, such as the Iditarod Ceremonial Start dog sled race, the Tour of Anchorage Nordic ski race, Bike to Work Day, and the Mayor's Marathon.



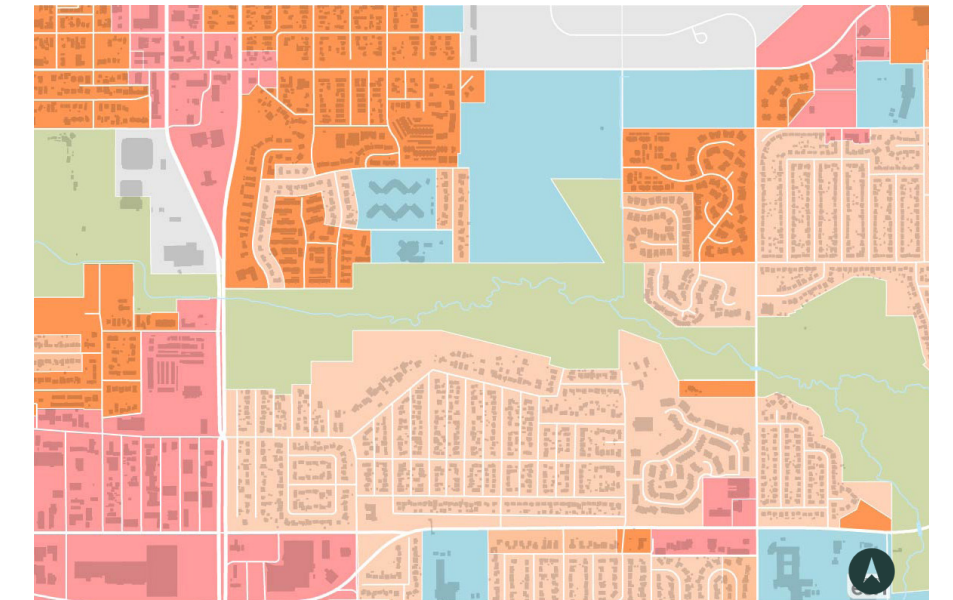
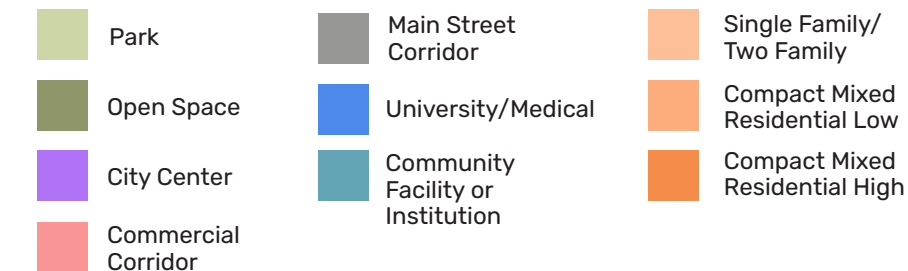
1. Municipality of Anchorage Traffic Report, Average Annual Daily Traffic from 2015-2019.

Land Use and Zoning

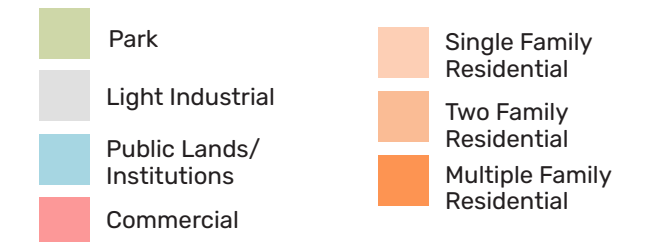
Eastchester Park is part of the Chester Creek Trail system that links Anchorage's main employment and commercial centers including U-MED, Midtown, and Downtown. The park land was dedicated by the Anchorage Assembly in 1984 and is currently zoned PLI-p. The park is also surrounded by neighborhoods. To the north, residential land use and zoning types are more dense, including compact mixed residential and multiple-family residential.



Land Use Plan



Zoning



Access and Connections



An analysis of access to Eastchester Park reveals the need for safer non-motorized access and improved winter maintenance. The Trust for Public Land estimates that 6,291 residents have access to Eastchester Park within a 10-minute walk of their homes. Of those, 42% are considered low-income residents.¹

Non-Motorized Access

There are three trailheads on the park’s southern boundary and three in the northwest area. A private access trail also serves a condominium development west of Lake Otis Pkwy. The park’s main access gap occurs on the north boundary between Sitka Street and Karluk Street within a mostly undeveloped parcel owned by Merrill Field Airport. This land includes a lease for Sitka Street Park, managed by Parks and Recreation.

In 2023, the Municipality improved curb and driveway cuts along the park’s boundary with E 20th Avenue. However, E 20th lacks traffic calming features like crosswalks or speed humps, and the sidewalk bordering the park is narrow. According to the Vision Zero Action Plan, Midtown Anchorage is considered a high injury network, with demonstrated pedestrian and bicycle-vehicle conflicts occurring on the Seward Highway just west of the park.



1. ParkServe. Trust for Public Land. (2024, June 5). <https://www.tpl.org/parkserve>

Vehicle Access and Parking

By car, the park is accessible on E 20th Avenue (a Neighborhood Collector) between the Seward Highway and Karluk Street. There is one unpaved parking lot with space for about 10 cars.

Winter Conditions

Anchorage Parks and Recreation maintenance teams groom Chester Creek Trail once or twice a week depending on snowfall patterns. Grooming keeps the snow base intact, allowing skiers, winter bicyclists, and pedestrians to use the trail. The trail is lighted which extends safe use during limited daylight hours. In April, maintenance will clear snow from the trail once the base substantially melts.

However, there is no winter sidewalk maintenance along E 20th Avenue, eliminating use of the path due to snow berms building up from street plowing. This is a significant safety concern for the community and reduces safe access to the park during winter.

Public Transit

There is no public transportation serving Eastchester Park. People Mover route 11 travels between the Senior Center and Downtown. An Anchorage School District bus serves students near Karluk Street and E 20th Avenue. However, there is no crosswalk and the sidewalks lack snow clearing during winter.



Chanshtnu / Chester Creek

- 1950 Creek Channel
- Current Creek Channel
- Proposed Naturalized Channel

Image shows approximate wetland boundary mapped from 1950 aerial photography, overlaid with contemporary street and building outlines.

Eastchester Park is located within the Chester Creek watershed. Chester Creek is an anadromous stream flowing 21 miles east to west across Anchorage into Cook Inlet. It supports habitat for a variety of wildlife, including moose, waterfowl, songbirds, and multiple species of salmon.

Prior to colonization, the Dena'ina Athabaskan people of Upper Cook Inlet fished and built homes along Chester Creek or Chanshtnu, the Dena'ina name for the creek: "Lots of grass with a creek coming through. That [name] means 'Grass Creek.'" ¹ The name "Chester" was likely derived from the original name of Chanshtnu.

1. Kari, J. M., Fall, J. A., Pete, S., & Alex, D. (2016). Shem Pete's Alaska: The territory of the upper cook inlet Dena'ina. The University of Alaska Press with the Alaska Native Language Center.



Environment

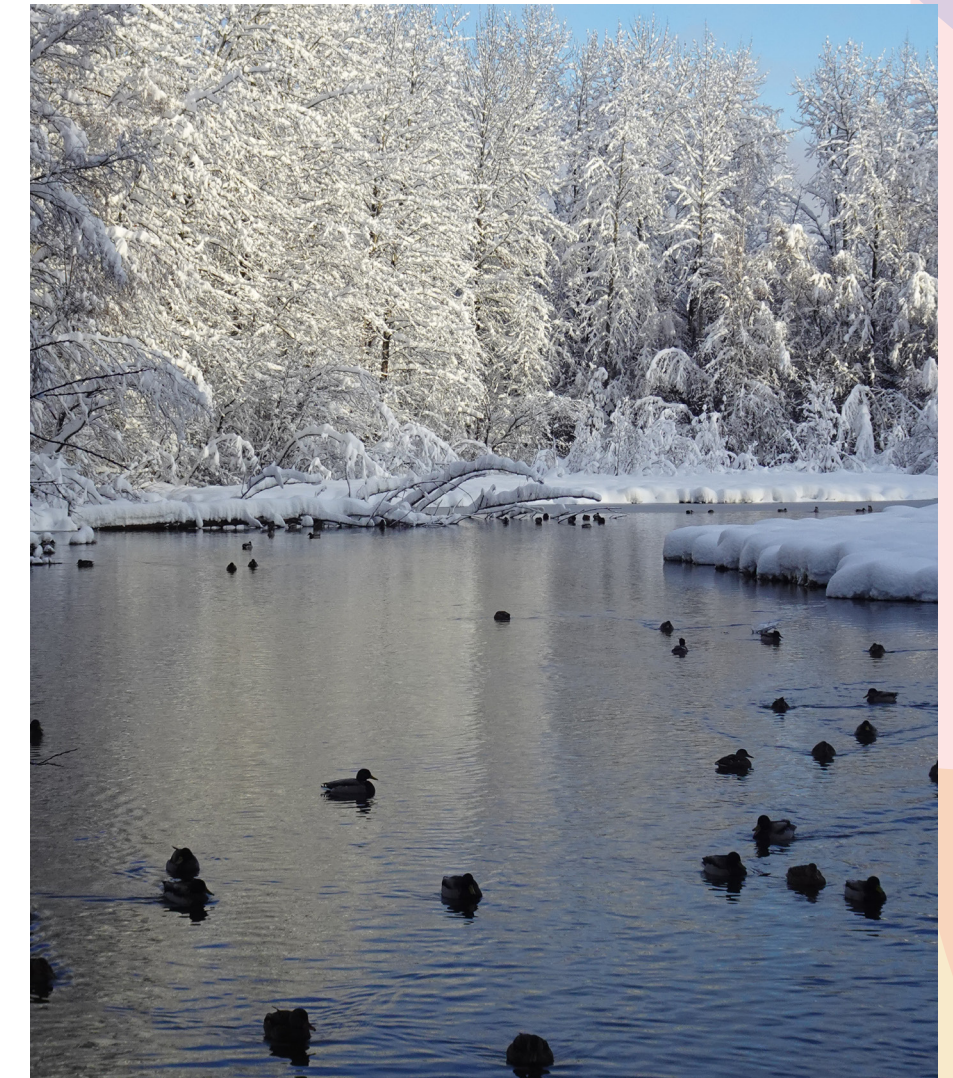
Hillstrand Pond

At the eastern boundary of the park, Hillstrand Pond was constructed in the 1960s as a small in-stream pond. By 1990, significant vegetation growth is visible in aerial imagery that reduces the effective pond area. In 1992, the Municipality assessed future sedimentation capability of the pond in a study conducted by CH2M Hill. The report recommends reconstruction and pond dredging to improve its water quality functionality. However, this work was never completed likely due to high costs.

Channelization of Chester Creek

Between Hillstrand Pond and Karluk Street, Chester Creek remains in a natural meandering state. Natural meanders allow streams to support native vegetation and store precipitation more efficiently. The channelization of Chester Creek throughout Anchorage has resulted in the loss of wildlife habitat, stream bank erosion, and water quality problems from sedimentation. In 1970, the portion of Chester Creek between Karluk Street and the Seward Highway was rerouted into a straight ditched channel with steep banks.

2. CH2M Hill. (1992). Hillstrand Pond Study (Draft).





Wetlands and Flood Zone

A majority of the central and eastern area of the park is covered by Class A wetlands. Within Eastchester Park's boundaries, Chester Creek falls within the 100-year flood hazard area established by FEMA. Throughout this area, Title 21 maintains a 50-foot stream setback for development on either side of the creek.

Topography and Seismic Zone

The park has relatively level topography throughout and is considered a Seismic Zone 2 (Moderately-Low Ground Failure Susceptibility) with areas of Zone 4 (High Ground Failure Susceptibility) found south of the park on the slope up to Rogers Park.

Vegetation

Eastchester Park features vegetation typical of shrub and spruce bogs, including willows, alders, and black and white spruce. Birch and cottonwood trees also frame the Chester Creek Trail.

Invasive bird cherry is also found throughout the park, which prevents native vegetation undergrowth and native tree growth. Efforts to improve sightlines along the trail corridor have led to extensive root systems that limit the potential for manual removal efforts.



Public Process

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03

Engagement



Anchorage Parks and Recreation used a broad public outreach strategy including pop-up events in the park and at the Fairview Recreation Center, an online survey, and outreach to Community Councils.

Community Advisory Group

The Community Advisory Group worked with park planners and landscape architects throughout a planning and design process. The group represented three Community Councils and a variety of park user types. The group joined three meetings, including a bike tour and a prioritization exercise of improvements. The Community Advisory Group also reviewed the draft plan and provided feedback before a general public comment period.

Pop-Up Planning

Residents helped brainstorm and visualize ideas in the park during pop-up events. This method intends to capture audiences who may face barriers to attending public meetings due to childcare needs, work schedules, or lack of transportation. Pop-ups also focus on visual exercises that are inclusive to those with less proficiency in English. This aspect was crucial for Eastchester Park as the surrounding neighborhoods are home to diverse language speakers.

Partnerships

Collaborating with other municipal departments, non-profit organizations, and businesses strengthened attendance at planning events. Free library books and bike tune-ups created incentives for participation. Catholic Social Services provided transportation to a summer pop-up event for clients in the Refugee Assistance and Immigration Program, many of who live near the park.

Stakeholder Park Audit

AARP and 8 80 Cities hosted a workshop and walking audit of Eastchester Park. The workshop asked stakeholders from non-profit and government agencies to envision future capital improvements in the park that could support all-season, intergenerational activity.

Surveys

An online survey was distributed during pop-up events and advertised on the website and through Community Councils.



Members of the public expressed support for:

- Developing active recreation and community gathering space at Woodside Park,
- Improving trail connections and loop options throughout the park, and
- Maintaining Hillstrand Pond as a quieter area for enjoying nature.





Findings

Community Advisory Group discussions, the online survey, and public workshops resulted in common favorites, issues, and opportunities at Eastchester Park.



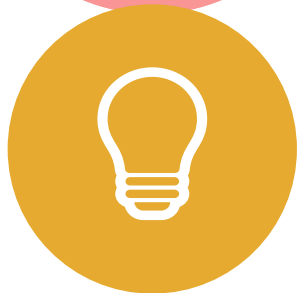
Favorites

People’s favorite things about the park were its connectivity – it is close to their homes and generally well-connected to the citywide trail system. People also like the park’s natural feeling, like the creek, forest and other undeveloped sections.



Issues

Issues and concerns brought up in the public process included personal safety, cleanliness and maintenance, invasive species, creek erosion, and outdated and missing amenities. Many residents also noted challenges of using the park in winter.



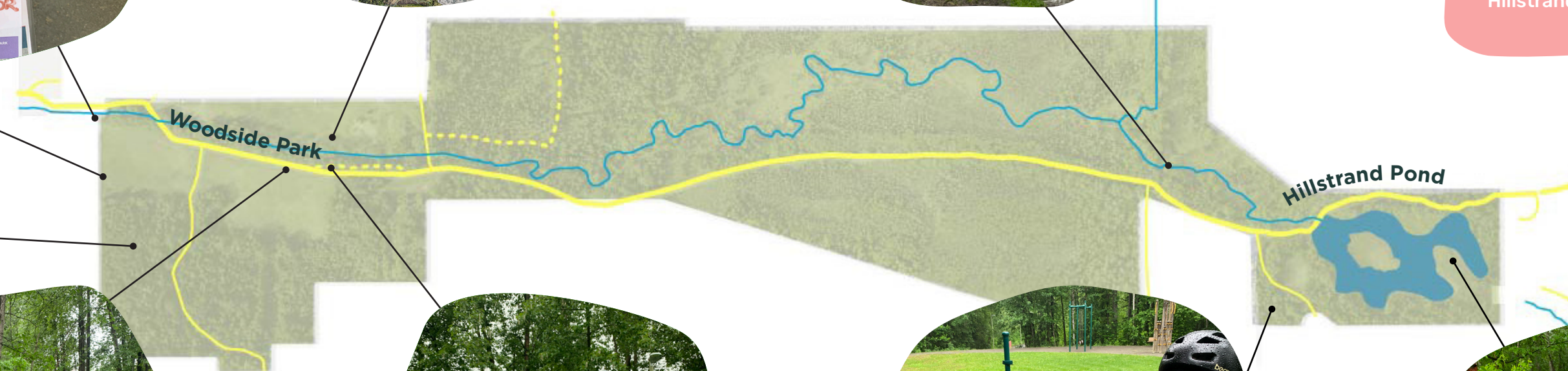
Opportunities

Ideas for new park development included an improved picnic and cookout area, a picnic pavilion, skateboard features, new trails, a modernized playground, more trail grooming, park lighting, improved access to creek viewing, more seating for all ages, and a new parking lot.



Winter Use

- Of 100 people who took the survey, 55% reported visiting very often in the summer, but only 25% visited very often in the winter.
- 37% of people said they rarely or never use the park in the winter.



On a bike tour of Eastchester Park, the Community Advisory Group filled in the blanks on their ideas for the park. Most active recreation amenities and gathering space were targeted at Woodside Park, while Hillstrand focuses on trail connections, amenities, and maintenance near Hillstrand Pond.



Guiding Themes

During the public process, five common themes emerged. These themes summarize the values guiding residents as they envisioned the future of Eastchester Park.



Safe Year-Round Recreation

Eastchester Park should provide a wide range of recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities, and should have safe walking and biking access.



Connectivity

Eastchester Park is the active transportation and recreational spine for Midtown, Downtown, and East Anchorage. Chester Creek Trail is both a recreation and transportation asset that should be enhanced and preserved.



A Place to Celebrate

Eastchester Park is a place where the community can come together to celebrate and connect with Anchorage's vibrant history.



Natural Environment

Eastchester Park is a unique natural oasis within Anchorage's urban landscape. Park development should be balanced with responsible landscaping and conservation efforts.



Intergenerational Space

Eastchester Park should invite people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to use the park through a variety of passive and active recreational spaces.

The Master Plan

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Concept Development



After analyzing the site, documenting community needs, and gathering feedback, the planning team identified **baseline recommendations** to include in any future development scenario for Eastchester Park. They address clear recreational, environmental, and community needs, including long-term, multi-agency efforts that will require raising federal, state, and local funds.

Baseline Recommendations

Hillstrand Pond

- Control erosion on the bank of Hillstrand Pond using an elevated light penetrating platform (ELP) (completed in 2024)
- Create a walking loop with viewing opportunities

Woodside Park

- Provide separate utility access to avoid damage to field
- Plant trees for visual and sound buffer between park and highway
- Upgrade the playground
- Add lighting and safety features

Multi-Agency Projects

- Provide traffic calming features along E 20th Avenue
- Create paved trail connection north to Sitka Street Park
- Restore Chester Creek through de-channelization

Concept Ranking

The planning team presented three design concepts to the Community Advisory Group that ranged from a focus on passive recreation amenities (concept 1) to more developed recreation and gathering infrastructure (concept 3). The Advisory Group discussed and ranked their favorite options.

01. Emphasizing Ecosystems

Emphasizing Ecosystems centers passive recreation and fostering people's connection with the natural environment of Eastchester Park.



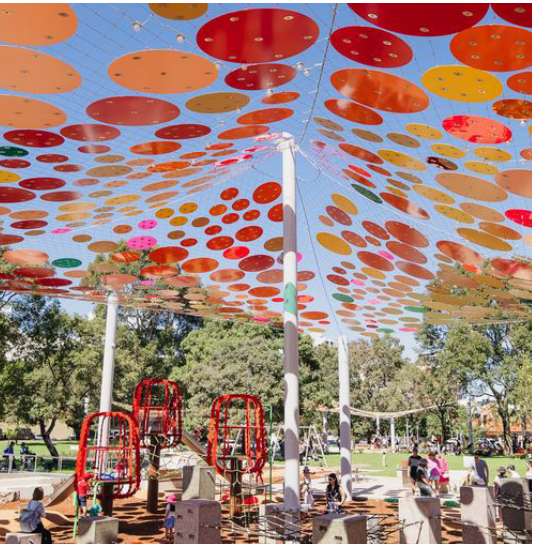
02. Active Lifestyles for All

Active for All Ages is a concept emphasizing inclusivity, movement, and skill building.



03. Cultivating Community

Cultivating Community focuses park infrastructure on gatherings, community, and celebrating Alaska life. This is the option for the most developed infrastructure.



less park development

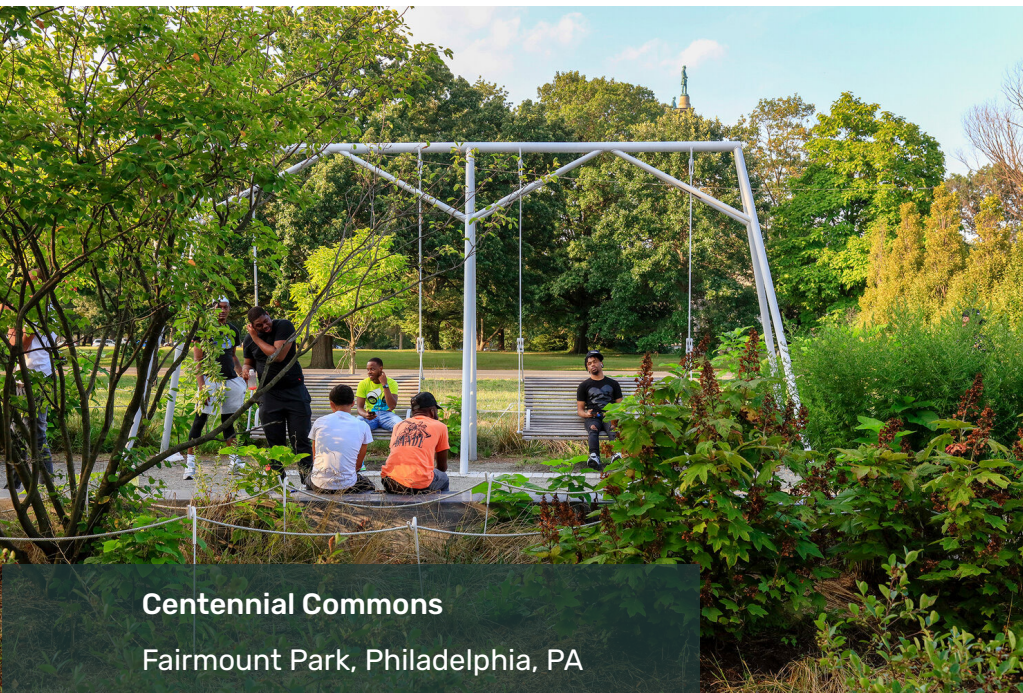
more park development

Preferred Concept

The **Cultivating Community** concept focuses park infrastructure on gatherings, community, and celebrating Alaska life.

Based on the survey, public engagement, and Advisory group feedback, the Cultivating Community concept was selected to best represent the future of Eastchester Park. An upgraded parking lot and playground, community garden, fitness area, and picnic pavilion would support gatherings and activation at Woodside Park. Hillstrand Pond would continue to be a trail destination for walking, biking, or skateboarding with a less developed, quieter atmosphere.

Inspiration and Precedent



Overview of the Eastchester Park Master Plan

WOODSIDE PARK

- Traffic calming along 20th Ave
- Vehicle access to lift station from E 20th Ave without crossing fields
- Landscape buffers along highway and riparian corridor
- Major parking lot improvements
- Pavilion to accommodate events and markets
- Community garden
- Destination playground by working with Indigenous artists/designers
- Designated play fields
- Singletrack on southern bluff
- Fitness area for all ages
- Sledding hill

NORTH-SOUTH CONNECTION

- Multi-agency effort to connect Chester Creek Trail with paved trail along 15th Ave

HILLSTRAND POND

- Restore eroded bank
- Add seating and wildlife watching areas
- Develop walking loop around pond
- Create skate dot or pump track skills development area

CHESTER CREEK

- Multi-agency effort to dechannelize Chester Creek, rerouting it south between Karluk St and the Seward Highway
- Reroute would open up park space accessible from E 20th Ave

Woodside Park

Access and Circulation

The preferred concept centers the Woodside Park area along E 20th Avenue. Moving the current playground and parking lot central from either end of the park will improves resident access, create easier maintenance routes, and improve visibility.

Community Garden

Given the proximity of multi-family housing complexes and neighborhoods with limited lawn access, a community garden provides residents space for growing produce and flowers in a walkable area. Community gardens also promote positive use and stewardship of the park.



Pavilion and Gathering Space

A pavilion and flexible gathering space would support markets, events, picnics, and cookouts. Architectural features and design of the plaza should draw on the natural surroundings. Safety features include lighting and being located close to the road for good visibility. Playful seating features add an intergenerational element.



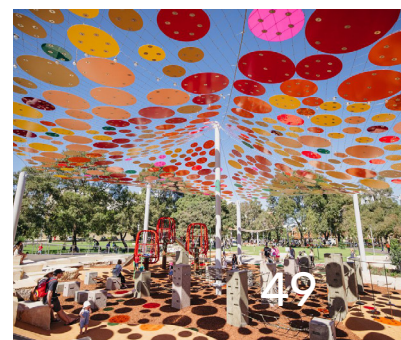


Playground

A playground upgrade will provide more inclusive play opportunities for all ages and abilities. The preferred concept recommends a custom Alaskan play feature, such as the popular Polar Bear Playground at Russian Jack Springs Park. However, the public wanted the playground to match the park character by using natural materials and textures, such as those created by playground manufacturer Earthscape. Dependent on funding, playground surfacing should be upgraded to engineered wood fiber or tile surfacing for improved access for people using mobility devices.

Fitness Area

Fitness areas provide a park feature for all ages. Rather than dispersing equipment on trails, placing the equipment near other activated park spaces promote feelings of safety and an option for parents near children's play equipment. Fitness equipment should be selected with consideration for easy long-term maintenance.



Open Lawn

This Master Plan recommends maintaining the existing large open lawns to support flexible use by the community. Consistent with Anchorage Park and Recreation’s rewilding initiative, this Plan also recommends reduced mowing at the park border areas and near the creek. Subtle reductions in mowing frequency can build more sustainable landscapes, improve water quality, and prevent erosion into waterways.

Sledding Hill

Sledding hills are a low-cost natural play feature that can be used year-round. Excavation of the new parking or play area could be left on site and covered with turf to develop a sledding hill.

Lighting

Improvements that support winter use is a key component of the Master Plan. Park lighting should be thoughtfully laid out at the activated areas of Woodside Park, including the playground, pavilion, and fitness areas.



Singletrack Trails

Singletrack trails are a popular asset in Anchorage for mountain bikers, but most of the available singletrack trails are located at Hillside, Kincaid, and Russian Jack Springs Park. The bluff in Eastchester Park near the Juneau Street spur provides good topography for singletrack and meets demand for more singletrack that is accessible by trail for midtown and East Anchorage.

Vegetated Buffer

This Master Plan recommends working with the Alaska Department of Transportation to develop a vegetation buffer along Eastchester Park’s interface with Seward Highway. This would provide benefit to park users and the whole community by creating a visual barrier and reducing noise for park users.



Chester Creek Trail interface at Seward Highway



New trees planted for a 2023 grant project at Woodside Park



Restoration of Chester Creek

Based on professional experience of members in the Community Advisory Group, an idea emerged to dechannelize and restore the creek corridor to a natural, meandering state in Woodside Park.

The planning team consulted Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility (AWWU) on the proposal, as a major barrier to the reroute is a 24" sewer main paralleling the creek on the south side. AWWU agreed that the relocation of the sewer main south along the base of the hill would promote easier year-round maintenance. AWWU also was amenable to new access to the lift station from 20th Avenue rather than the Seward Highway, eliminating the need for excessive snow clearing within the west portion of Eastchester Park.

While a project of this scale would require significant tree removal, much of the area is infested with invasive bird cherry and could be an opportunity to promote healthier forest growth. A full report of the anticipated impacts and costs are explored in the Plan appendix.

Significant funding for the reroute, access bridges, and permits would need to be acquired by the Municipality to realize this project. Potential funding sources for this type of effort could include federal environmental justice or other natural resource and restoration sources. A high-level cost estimate for these efforts are captured in the implementation chapter.



Hillstrand Pond

Pond Loop

The pond is a common walking destination and place for people to sit and enjoy the natural surroundings. Using old social trails, a new soft-surface walking loop around the pond would provide an additional option to enjoy pond viewing.

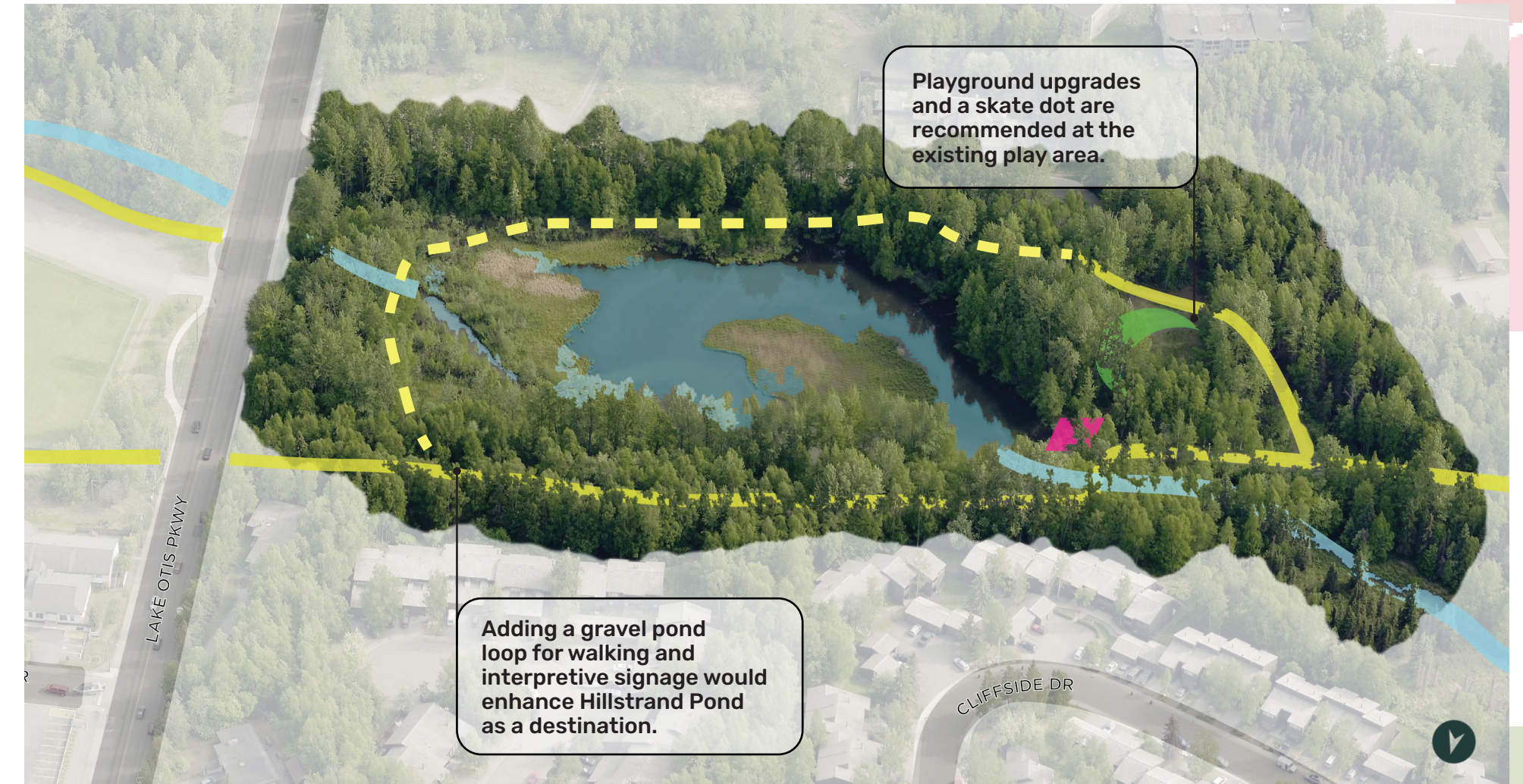
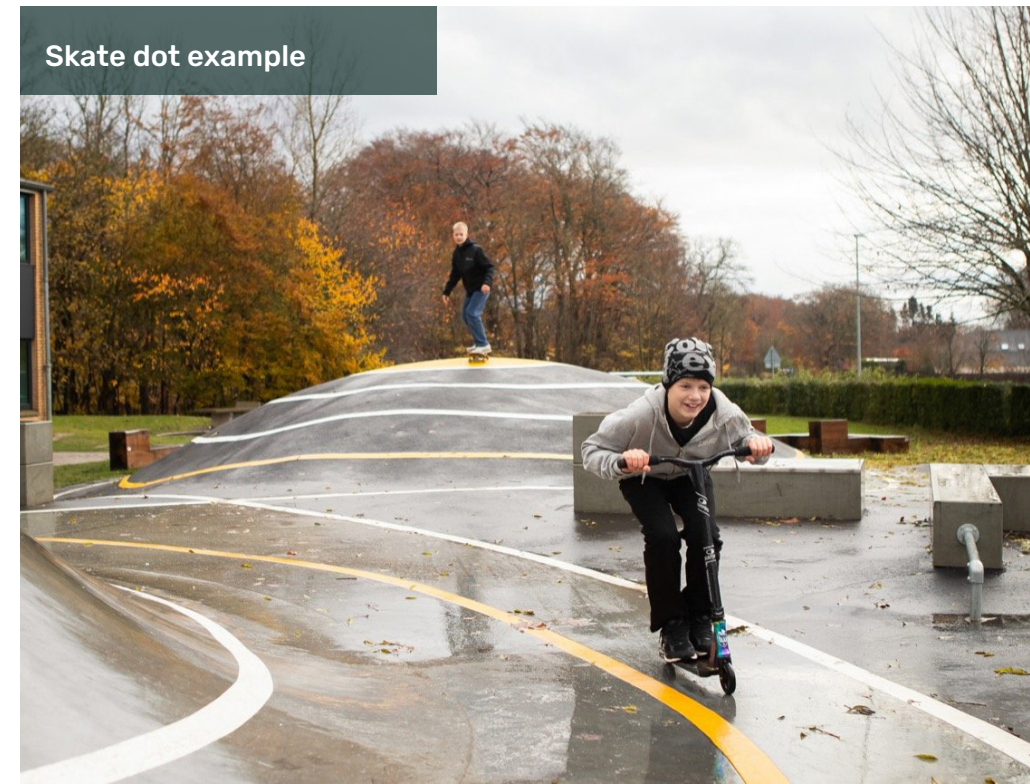
Skate Dot

Skate dots are skate features intended to provide skill-building alternatives to larger skate parks in Anchorage. Eastchester Park is an ideal location because of the good non-motorized access provided by Chester Creek Trail. There is also a strong desire from the public to have multi-generational activity in this park.

This Master Plan recommends further design and public process to create a skate dot layout that promotes positive, compatible use of the park. The Hillstrand Pond area is recommended in this Plan because there are fewer conflicting uses. An existing conflict in Anchorage is having skate areas located next to very popular playgrounds (for example, Polar Bear Playground at Russian Jack Springs Park). Fundraising and maintenance agreements should be explored with the skateboard user groups.

Playground

This playground lacks dedicated parking and is less accessible and visible from housing, making it the second priority after the play area at Woodside Park. This Master Plan recommends selectively upgrading play features with inclusive equipment and play surfacing as funding allows. Vegetation management at the play area would allow for scenic views and increased feelings of safety.



Erosion Control

During Master Plan development, an elevated light penetrating (ELP) platform was installed to control erosion and reduce the effects of pedestrian traffic on the shoreline. This area should be monitored and maintained to promote public access to pond viewing while mitigating the negative effects of foot traffic.



2021: Pond erosion



2024: After ELP install

Bridge Replacement

The Chester Creek Trail bridge at Hillstrand Pond requires frequent short-term repairs to fill crumbling asphalt between existing culverts. Culverts should be replaced with a steel bridge, consistent with other replacements throughout the greenbelt system. New bridge construction and design would allow fish passage and include interventions to maintain the pond surface elevation, similar to what is constructed at Westchester Lagoon.

This project may be eligible for funding sources related to fish passage projects under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. Goals that may align with funding sources include supporting migratory pathways and restoring access to healthy habitat for fish.



Sitka Street Connector Trail

The Sitka Street Connector Trail would connect the Chester Creek Trail to Sitka Street Park north of Eastchester Park. The connection would require approximately 2,000 feet of new trail, beginning near the Maplewood St spur and travelling north toward Sitka Street. The trail and a new access point from E 20th Avenue would both require bridge crossings.

The trail should be multi-use, paved, and lighted so that it could be maintained in the winter. The route will require further study within the constraints of wetlands and development setbacks from the creek. Additionally, it will require landowner coordination with Merrill Field.

The Community Advisory Group also supported the exploration of restoring the North Fork of Chester Creek alongside the trail. This project should also consider possible coordination with the Rogers Park Community Council Capital Improvement Program requests to improve the grade of Maplewood Street at the trail access point.



Existing social trail between Eastchester and Sitka Street Park



- Existing paved trails
- Future connector trail
- Bridge crossing needed
- Chester Creek

Parkwide Recommendations

Chester Creek Trail

The public process confirmed that Chester Creek Trail is an essential transportation and recreation corridor. Greenbelt trails provide physical and mental health benefits for all and should be considered essential to the fabric of Anchorage.

This Master Plan highlights the importance of maintaining this asset year-round for all trail users. Recommendations include keeping pavement in good condition, providing a complete wayfinding system, adding amenities for user comfort and safety, and continuing to provide frequent Nordic grooming in winter to benefit pedestrians, bikers, and skiers. Nordic grooming should be expanded to include the trail spurs in this park as staffing and resources allow. Bridges should be assessed for replacement as needed.

Invasive Species Management

This Plan recommends removal and control of invasive species in the park, including *Prunus padus* (European bird cherry), to support native forest health. This is consistent with goals of the department in managing the entire Chester Creek Greenbelt. Management styles should prevent further root system expansion, as this species can send up shoots when the stumps are roots are left untreated.

Park Signage

In addition to trail wayfinding, park name signage should be upgraded and consistent throughout the park. Park name signs should be upgraded at the new parking area near the Woodside play and gathering area and at the Hillstrand play area entrance. Pedestrian entrances should also include park name signage. Kiosks and wayfinding should identify Hillstrand Pond, Woodside Park, and Chester Creek/Chanshtnu to help with wayfinding.



Maintenance

The public emphasized the importance of keeping Eastchester Park clean and safe. This Master Plan supports department goals to maintain existing park assets and continue providing winter Nordic grooming and snow maintenance.

Park development and design should incorporate feedback from maintenance staff. Any new amenities and developments should aim to reduce maintenance burden as much as possible.



Programming

This Master Plan was inspired by the many neighborhood and regional events held in Eastchester Park. The intent of this Plan is that the future facilities will support these events, including sports, markets, concerts, and gatherings. As department capacity and resources for programming tend to vary over time, this Master Plan also recommends park design that does not rely on programs. The space should be able to become activated by daily users, neighbors, and families.

Implementation

- [62](#) Development Phasing
- [63](#) Funding Sources
- [64](#) Cost Estimates
- [67](#) Next Steps

05

Development Phasing

The following chapter provides a roadmap for completing capital improvements. Anchorage Parks and Recreation will leverage local, state, and federal dollars and partnerships to accomplish these improvements over the next 20+ years.

The following conceptual timeline – Today, Tomorrow, and Together – shows how the department could phase improvements based on cost and complexity. Development phasing allows this plan to adapt given evolving administrative priorities and funding availability.

TODAY

Next 5 years using local bond funding, public-private partnerships, and grants.

PROJECTS:

- Vegetative Highway Buffer
- Parking Lot Relocation
- Community Garden
- Playground Upgrades
- Skate Dot
- Singletrack

TOMORROW

Next ten years requiring substantial local/state funding.

PROJECTS:

- Pond Loop
- Picnic Shelter
- Fitness Equipment
- Lift Station Access
- Bridge Upgrades

TOGETHER

Major projects requiring multi-agency coordination and a variety of funding sources, including federal grants.

PROJECTS:

- Restoration of Chester Creek
- Sitka Street Connector Trail

Funding Sources

Anchorage Parks and Recreation will need to leverage funding from a variety of sources and partners to achieve the goals in this Master Plan.

Municipal Park Bonds

Voter-supported park bonds are the main source of funding for park development and improvements. Successful implementation of projects will continue to demonstrate the value of park investments to residents.

State and Federal Grants

In recent years, state legislative grants have helped fund millions of dollars in investments in Anchorage parks. However, this source of funding may be less reliable in times of budgetary uncertainty. A variety of federal grants, such as the Land Water and Conservation Fund (LWCF) program, may also provide significant funding for capital improvements.



Capital Improvement Program

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is the Municipality’s main planning and budgeting tool. The CIP identifies desired public facilities and capital improvements over a six-year cycle.

Each Community Council ranks various projects, including park development projects, on an annual CIP survey. The Municipality uses survey results to consider public priorities when creating the CIP.

Fundraising

This Master Plan supports continued engagement with local residents, park user groups, and corporations/businesses to build community ownership and provide added value to park improvements.

Public-Private Partnerships

Non-governmental partners such as the Anchorage Park Foundation continue to successfully leverage funds for park development. Philanthropic interests, such as the Rasmuson Foundation, have also worked closely with the Anchorage Park Foundation to invest millions of dollars into improving Anchorage parks.

Cost Estimates



Woodside
Park



Hillstrand
Pond



Restoration
of Chester
Creek



Sitka Street
Connector
Trail

This section provides a clear understanding of the costs associated with implementation of park improvements and partners who are key to implementation. Most of the park development costs would fall within the Parks and Recreation Department purview with support of partners. Due to higher costs and it being a component of the non-motorized transportation system, Parks and Recreation would advocate for the Sitka Street Connector Trail to be considered under the AMATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which identifies short-range capital improvements.

PHASE	PARK IMPROVEMENT	ESTIMATED COST	PARTNERS
Kick-Off	Approvals	\$5,500	
	Survey	\$25 – 45,000	
	Geotech	\$25 – 45,000	
Woodside	Parking lot relocation and expansion	\$350 – 600,000	
	Vegetative Highway Buffer	\$10 – 30,000	DOT
	Park and Trail Lighting	\$1 million	
	Playground Upgrade	\$500,000 – \$1 million	Anchorage Park Foundation
	Picnic Shelter	\$250 – 500,000	
	Community Garden	\$150,000	
	Singletrack	\$50 – 100,000	Singletrack Advocates, Alaska Trails
	Fitness Equipment	\$100 – 300,000	
	Lift Station Driveway Access	\$100,000	
	Bridge Upgrade – Woodside West	\$300,000	
	Bridge Upgrade – Woodside East	\$300,000	

PHASE	PARK IMPROVEMENT	ESTIMATED COST	PARTNERS
Woodside	Chester Creek Restoration	\$10 M +	Federal, State
	Pond Walking Loop	\$25 – 40,000	
Hillstrand	Skate Dot	\$50 – 150,000	Skateboard User Groups
	Bridge Upgrade – Hillstrand	\$300,000	
	Playground Upgrade	\$250 – 500,000	
AMATS	Sitka Street Connector Trail	\$6 – 9 million	Parks and Recreation. Merrill Field

Next Steps

The Eastchester Park Master Plan was a collaborative effort to envision the future of this important park. Through extensive site analysis and community engagement, this document serves as a road map to guide future development of the park.



Plan Approval and Adoption

Approval and Adoption of the Eastchester Park Master Plan included three steps:

- Fairview, Airport Heights, and Rogers Park Community Councils
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Planning and Zoning Commission

Construction Standards

Implementation will conform to specifications for construction and trail classification established in the Municipality of Anchorage Standard Specifications (M.A.S.S.) and the Design Criteria Manual, Chapter 4 (DCM).

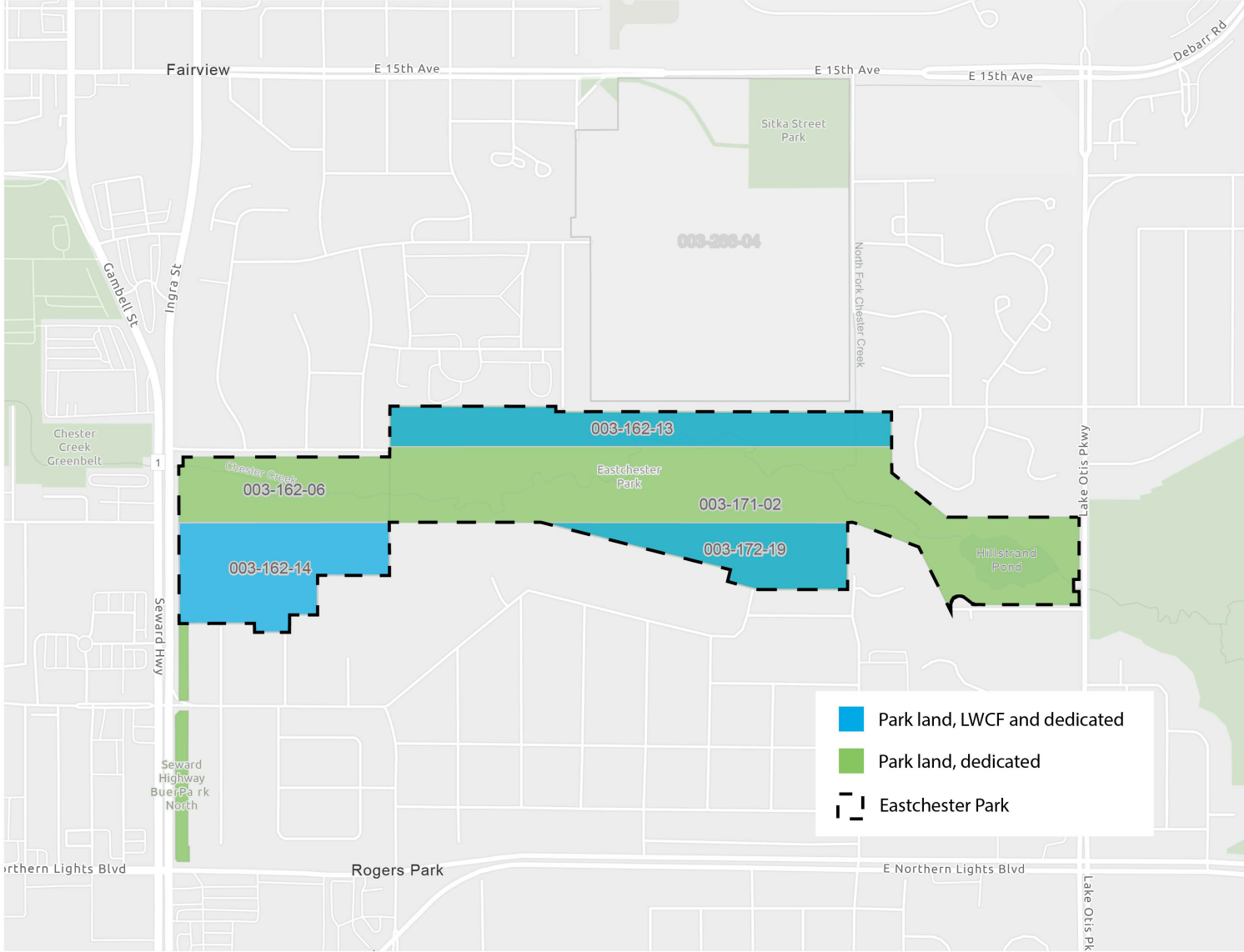
Regulatory Framework

Zoning and land use regulations established by Anchorage Municipal Code Title 21, Land Use Planning, will guide design and development, including property setbacks, stream setbacks, landscape requirements, parking requirements, allowable uses and dimensional standards.

Appendix

<u>70</u>	Property Information
<u>72</u>	Aerial Imagery
<u>74</u>	Community Advisory Group Meeting Minutes
<u>78</u>	Park Development Concepts
<u>81</u>	Creek Restoration Memo and Concept Plan
<u>88</u>	Meeting Minutes, AWWU Consult on Creek Restoration

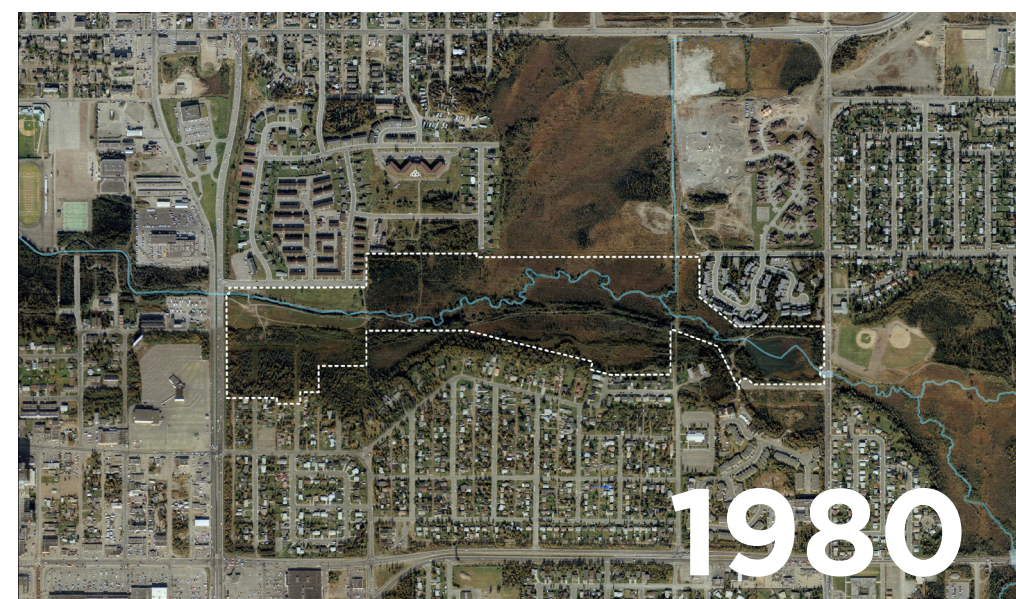
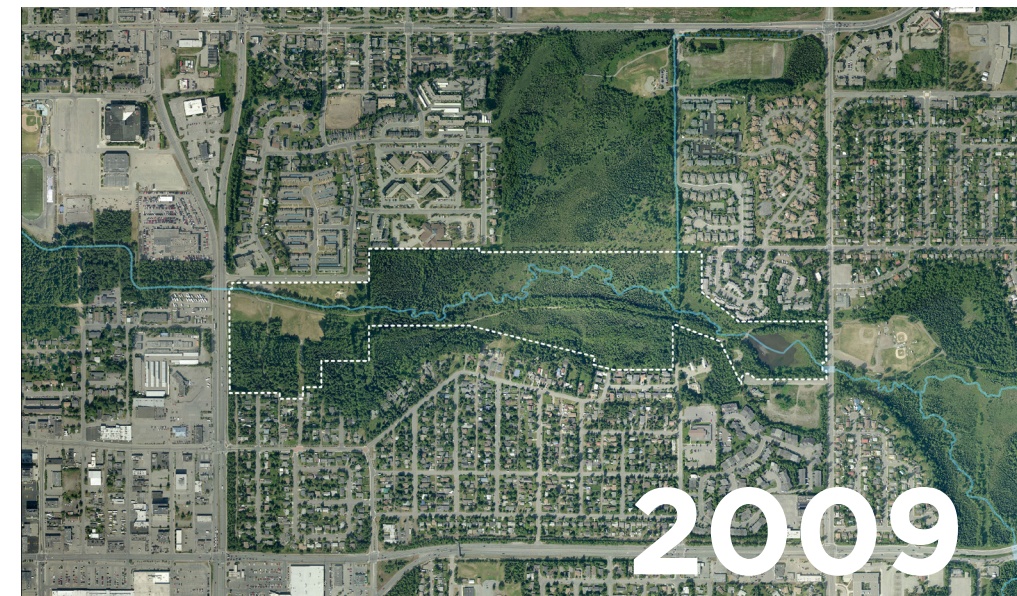
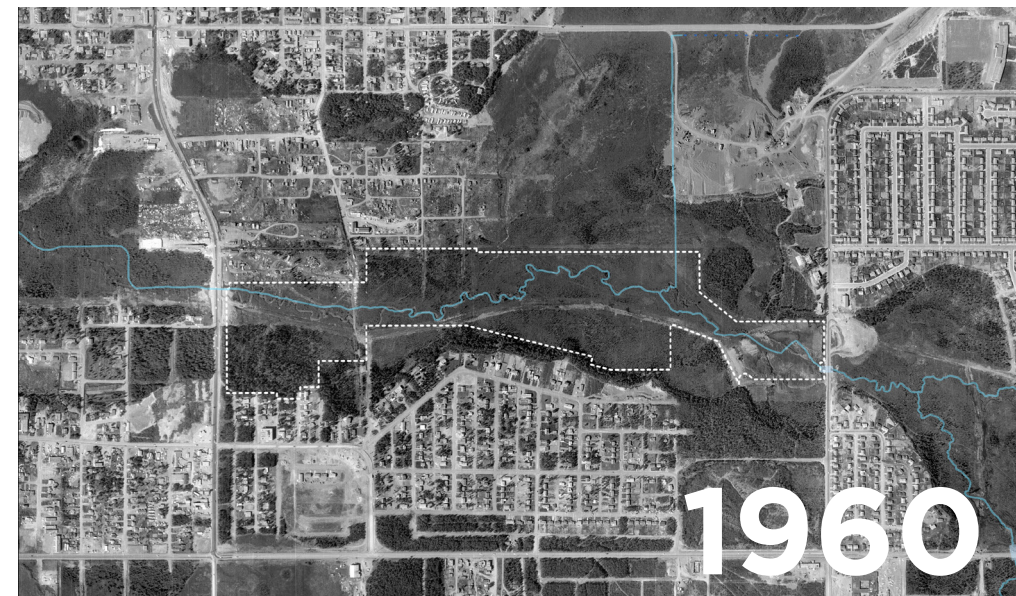
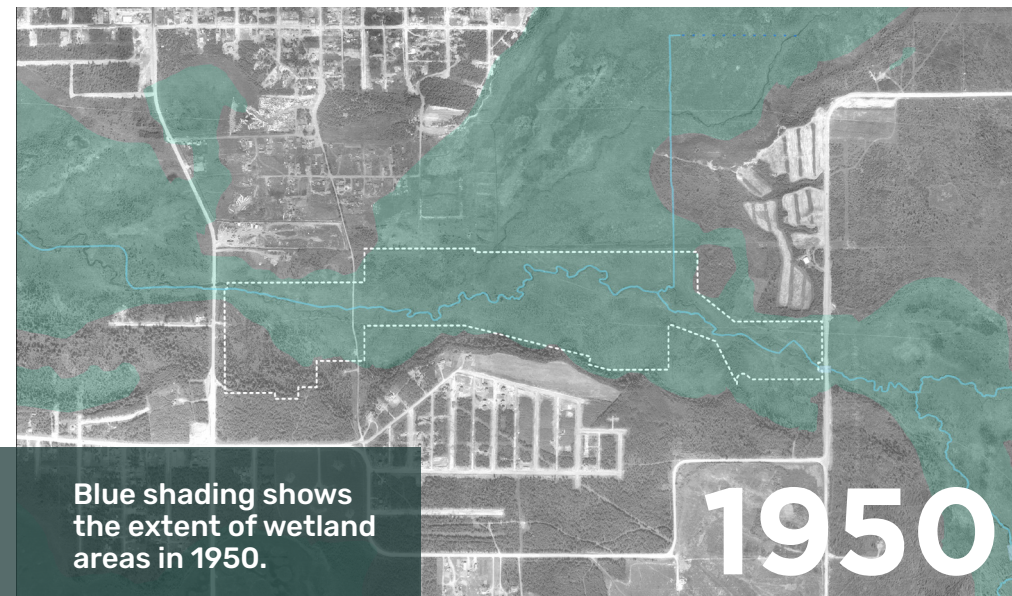
A: Property Information



- Eastchester Park is an 80-acre park made up of five parcels, listed in the table at right.
- All parcels have been dedicated for park and recreational purposes by Assembly Ordinance and are zoned PLI-p (Parks).
- Certain parcels, shaded in blue, are additionally protected for park and recreational purposes under the Land and Water Conservation Act (LWCF).

PARCEL ID	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	ZONING	DEDICATION
003-171-02	CHESTER CREEK PARK TR B	PLI-p	A0 84-199
003-162-13	CHESTER CREEK PARK #1 TR A-1	PLI-p	
003-172-19	ROGERS PARK TERRACE TR A	PLI-p	
003-162-06	EASTCHESTER TR H	PLI-p	
003-162-14	T13N R3W SEC 20 W2SW4 PTN	PLI-p	

B: Aerial Imagery, 1950 to 2021



C: Community Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

EASTCHESTER PARK
MASTER PLAN

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MEETING SUMMARY

Overview:
To establish a foundation for future planning and public involvement. The Community Advisory Group will help Anchorage Parks and Recreation identify park issues, community needs, and management and development priorities that should be considered in the Master Plan.

PARTICIPANTS:

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP
Bob Butera, Rogers Park neighbor
Maria Crawford, Fairview neighbor
David Evans, Rogers Park neighbor
Karen Gonne-Harrell, Fairview Community Council
Lindsey Hajduk, NeighborWorks Alaska
Allen Kemplen, Fairview Community Council
Mel Langdon, Rogers Park neighbor
Dan Smith, Airport Heights neighbor

PARKS AND RECREATION PROJECT TEAM
Taylor Keegan, Landscape Architect
Nicolette Dent, Park Planner

ABOUT THE MASTER PLAN:

- In 2022, voters supported a \$300,000 bond to improve Eastchester Park.
- The Master Plan will establish a 20-year vision for improvement, maintenance, and management.
- Bond funds will be used for planning, survey, geotechnical report, and public outreach. Leftover funds will allow us to start working on priorities established through the Master Plan process.

TIMELINE:

- Project team introduced the effort to Fairview, Airport Heights, and Rogers Park Community Councils over the winter.
- In addition to working with the Advisory Group throughout plan development, Parks and Recreation will host a public open house, pop-up meetings in the park, and an online survey in 2023.
- Plan drafting will begin in early 2024. Advisory Group will meet and review drafts.
- Community Council review and approvals will happen 2024 – 2025.

ABOUT THE PARK:

- **Park Features:**
 - Eastchester Park includes play areas and fields at Hillstrand Pond Park and Woodside Park. It does not include Sitka Street Park.
 - Chester Creek Trail is a main feature, plus short soft-surface connector to the Senior Center and to Eastridge residential area.
- **Natural Resources:**
 - Much of this park is Class A wetlands and heavily forested with spruce, birch, cottonwood, and invasive bird cherry. In recent years, funding has been available for spruce bark beetle removal in this area.
 - Chanshtnu (Chester Creek) was used for centuries by Dena'ina people for fish camps.
 - Previous studies include a Hillstrand Pond Study, which provided cost estimates for dredging the pond (\$440,000 in 1990).
- **History:**
 - Eastchester Flats was Anchorage's early black community, north of the creek. Largely dismantled by urban renewal projects in 1970s.
 - Shiloh Baptist Church is one of Alaska's oldest black churches and has a parking agreement to share the Woodside parking area for overflow.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

PARK ISSUES

- Woodside Section**
- Highway noise in Woodside fields area
 - High speed traffic along 20th Ave
 - Current curb cuts don't match the actual use patterns along 20th Ave
 - Presence of utility in fields
 - Tunnel under highway is narrow and dark
 - Play area is not sufficiently large for density of housing and lacks school age opportunity
 - No equipment features for adults (i.e. fitness, gardens, etc.)
 - Some camping issues in the drier wooded areas
 - Open fields seem to be underused
 - Lacking wayfinding into neighborhoods
 - Newcomers to Alaska don't always feel comfortable on Chester Creek Trail
- Wetland Section**
- Any development here would change ephemeral winter uses
 - Prunus padus and vetch (invasive species)
 - Sitka Street Park is airport-owned land and prevents the two parks from being considered together
 - Lack of trail connection north of creek from the Maplewood St spur
- Hillstrand Pond Section**
- Improve condition of the bridge at Hillstrand
 - Erosion at pond edge from people feeding ducks
 - Road noise from Lake Otis
 - Aging play equipment

BEST THINGS ABOUT THE PARK:

- Woodside Section**
- Serves a multi-lingual community
 - Lots of gardens in the neighborhood
 - The open field is nice for playing with pets
 - Woodside area is popular for picnics and birthday parties

- Wetland Section**
- Chester Creek is in its natural condition here
 - You can see animals here! Bears, eagles, etc.
 - Wetland areas become used in the winter
 - There are natural winter connector trails north of the creek toward Sitka Street Park
 - This is a great place to forage for edible plants
 - Chester Creek Trail is a bike "highway" and crucial transportation infrastructure
 - The park supports large events like Trailgate (Iditarod spectating) and Bike to Work Day
 - Neighborhood spur trails provide nice opportunity for walking loops

- Hillstrand Pond Section**
- Ducks!
 - Hillstrand Pond is a nice destination for walking
 - Provides feeling of solitude

OPPORTUNITIES AT EASTCHESTER PARK:

- Woodside Section**
- Integration with the Fairview Greenway plan
 - Integration with Fairview Community Council gardens plan
 - Dechannelize Chester Creek in Woodside area
 - Coordinate tunnel and culvert replacements under Seward Highway?
 - Singletrack in the wooded uplands toward Rogers Park to reduce camping
 - Create a "pit stop" in the open fields, for example, a sledding hill combo amphitheater
 - Outreach to RAIS newcomers (refugee resettlement program)
 - Public gathering space to support pop-up events
 - Infrastructure to support markets and vendors
 - Flooded ice rink to activate winter space
 - Landscaping intervention along 20th Ave

- Wetland Section**
- Keep Chester Creek in its natural condition
 - Are there additional opportunities for walking loops in the middle section across to Senior Center?
 - Identify water crossings with the Dena'ina name
 - Boardwalk for birding, something viable for winter activity
 - More education (signage) of wetland ecosystem and the north fork of Chester Creek
 - "Everything is there to restore the North Fork"

- Hillstrand Pond section**
- Keep ducks and people separate
 - Provide a hard edge at the pond bank
 - Soft surface pond loop (consider the former trail footprint that is now overgrown)
 - Connect Sitka Street Park with Chester Creek Trail, via the Maplewood St. spur. At a minimum, can we connect to 20th Ave at Eastridge?
 - Coordinate with existing plans to replace Lake Otis culverts

RAPID-FIRE ROUND:

- What do you want Eastchester Park to be known for in 20 years?**
- A safe, intergenerational, and accessible space!
 - A new feature combination sledding hill, pavilion, game area, and Seward Highway sound barrier!
 - A wild, grown-in, safe, beautiful trail corridor!
 - An environmentally holistic place!
 - A place with iconic art!
 - An incredible piece of wilderness next to high density urban housing!
 - Enhancing the quality of life for neighbors!

NEXT STEPS:

- Online Survey and Bike to Work Day Pop Up
- Eastchester Park Advisory Group Site Visit (early Summer)

Project Updates and Links: <https://www.muni.org/Departments/parks/Pages/EastchesterMasterPlan.aspx>

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Park Planner
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P: 907-343-4137



EASTCHESTER PARK

MASTER PLAN

Summary

Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting #3
Friday, December 15, 2023
Facilitated by Taylor Keegan, Landscape Architect & Nicolette Dent, Park Planner



Participants:
Mary Dean Broussard (online), AARP Age Friendly cities
Bob Butera, Rogers Park neighbor
Maria Crawford, Fairview neighbor
Dave Evans, Rogers Park neighbor
Karen Gonne-Harrell, Fairview neighbor
Lindsey Hajduk, Neighborworks Alaska
Allen Kemplen, Fairview neighbor
Mel Langdon, Rogers Park neighbor
Nelson Sherry, Airport Heights neighbor
Dan Smith, Airport Heights neighbor

- 1. Meeting Goals**
 - a. Review findings from public outreach events this year (surveys and 2 public workshops)
 - b. Work together to prioritize park improvements/concepts
- 2. Public Outreach**
 - a. Broad public outreach included Bike to Work Day, Online Survey, Summer Picnic, and Winter Workshop
 - b. Advisory Group outreach included a kick-off meeting and bike workshop
 - c. Question asked about basketball courts? Were teens consulted in the process?
 - i. By hosting events at the Fairview Recreation Center, students in the after-school program could easily participate.
 - d. Question about skateboarding popularity on the survey?
 - i. "Skate spots" are low-development skateboard features that can integrate into parks
 - ii. The [Anchorage Skate Spot Coalition](#) has interest in fundraising and contributing volunteer hours towards skate spots accessible from the trail system
- 3. Development Concepts**
 - a. Master Plan "cornerstones" will be included in any future concept for Eastchester Park, including:

- i. A walking loop, viewing platform, and erosion control and Hillstrand Pond
- ii. Vegetated buffer and defined utility access adjacent to Seward Hwy
- iii. Upgraded playground and lighting and safety interventions at Woodside Park play area
- iv. Multi-agency efforts that will require federal, state, and local dollars
 1. Traffic calming along E 20th Ave
 - a. Mary Dean shared that she is coordinating with Zak Hartman, municipal bike and pedestrian coordinator, to make improvements and add speed bumps along E 19th Ave between senior housing and the senior center
 - b. Would like to see if this effort can extend along the park
 2. A trail connection from Sitka Street Park
 3. The de-channelization of Chester Creek at Woodside Park

b. Next, we reviewed three Master Plan scenarios that ranged from low development to more development

- c. **Concept 1: Emphasizing Ecosystems**
 - i. Emphasis on ecology and connection with natural environment
 - ii. Highlights include nature play, dispersed interpretive signage, and minimal parking lot improvements
 - iii. An elevated light penetrating platform (ELP) at Hillstrand Pond
 1. Protects steambank from erosion
 2. Allows light to come through and vegetation to grow underneath
 3. One drawback is the same gaps are not fully ADA compliant
 4. The CAG expressed interest in ELP railings that were more natural looking (wood, green powder coating)

- d. **Concept 2: Active for All Ages**
 - i. Making it easy to move, together!
 - ii. Highlights include fitness stations on trail next to Senior Center, a skate spot/bicycle pump track at Hillstrand Pond for skills development, and Iditarod-themed play equipment

- e. **Concept 3: Cultivating Community**
 - i. Emphasis on gatherings, community, and celebrating Alaska life

EASTCHESTER PARK

MASTER PLAN

- ii. The most developed option, including a picnic pavilion for events and markets, a community garden, fitness area and playground

- 4. Discussion and Ranking**
 - a. The Community Advisory Group ranked Concept 3 highest, closely followed by Concept 1
 - b. The group wanted infrastructure to support gatherings and activation at Woodside Park while keeping Hillstrand Pond focused on passive recreation and ecology
 - c. People also liked the natural playground elements/textures/materials from Concept 1, and wanted to bring those into Concept 3
 - d. The group also wanted the plan to include more discussion of winter activation and keep the focus on intergenerational activity.
 - e. There was a discussion of implementation and timeline, and how this would be described in the plan. A good example is the [Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan](#) chapter on implementation, which pairs capital improvements with cost estimates.
 - i. The department would not have all funding needed to address all the Master Plan recommendations at the time of plan development. But with a plan in place, it becomes easier for the department to leverage local, state, and federal dollars for improvements over the next 20 years.

Rank these concepts from favorite (1) to least favorite (3).

Ranking Poll 9 votes 9 participants

1.	Cultivating Community: Focus on gatherings and community identity	2.2
2.	Emphasizing Ecosystems: Focus on passive use, preserving the Eastchester ecosystem, and connection to the environment	1.9
3.	Active for All Ages: Focus on inclusivity, movement, and skills development	1.4

EASTCHESTER PARK

MASTER PLAN

What is one thing you absolutely want prioritized in the Master Plan?

Wordcloud Poll 9 responses 9 participants



- 5. Wrap-Up**
 - a. Expectations for CAG involvement moving forward
 - i. Concept check-in
 - ii. Draft review with 2-week turnaround
 - b. Timeline of draft review and approvals
 - i. Community Council (3)
 - ii. Parks and Recreation Commission
 - iii. Planning and Zoning Commission

D: Park Development Concepts



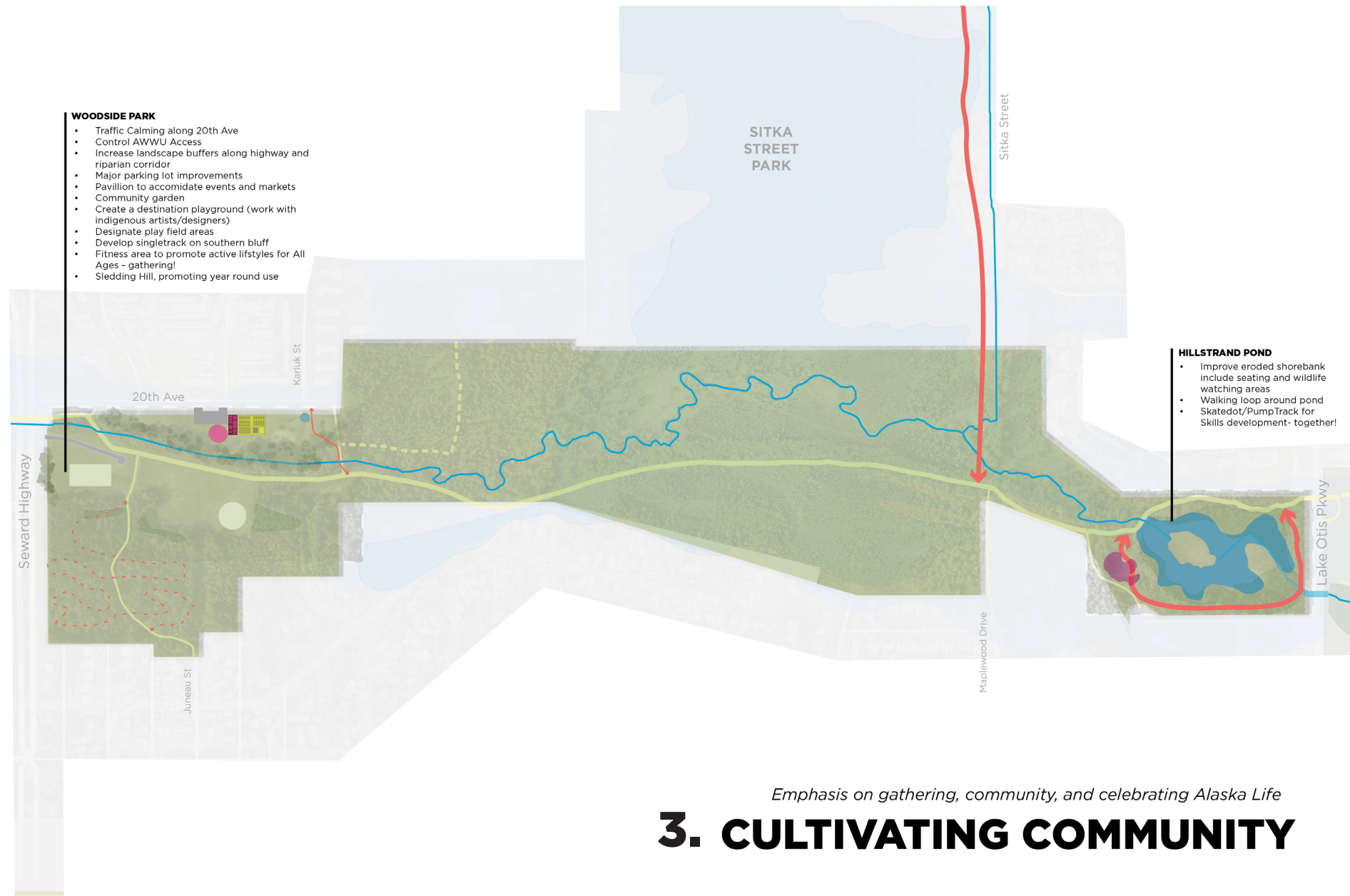
Emphasis on ecosystems and connection with our natural environment

1. EMPHASIZING ECOSYSTEMS



Making it easy to move, together

2. ACTIVE LIFESTYLES FOR ALL



E: Creek Restoration Memo and Concept Plan



Memorandum

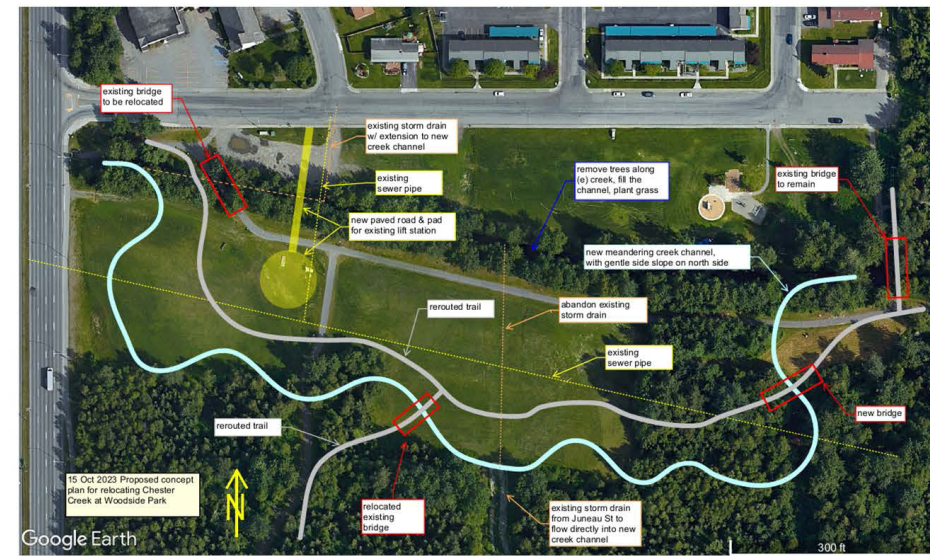
To: Taylor Keegan, PLA – Parks Superintendent

From: Jonathan Petrunic
Professional & Technical Services, Inc.

Date: November 6, 2024

Re: Eastchester Park Chester Creek Realignment, Concept Utility Study

As part of the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Parks and Recreation Department’s (PRD) master planning efforts, Professional and Technical Services, Inc. (PTS) has been asked by PRD to review a proposal to expand Eastchester Park to the south of E. 20th Avenue by rerouting Chester Creek.



This proposal was presented to PRD by the Eastchester Park Master Plan Advisory Group. The proposal would expand the park area on the north side of Chester Creek by moving the creek channel to the south between Karluk Street and the Seward Highway. In addition to the creek reroute, the proposed work would include rerouting Chester Creek Trail, relocating two existing trail bridges and installing an additional bridge, providing a new access driveway and pad for an existing sanitary sewer lift station, and storm drain and stormwater improvements.

Existing utilities in the project area consist of fiber optic cable, communication cables, electrical services for trail lighting, natural gas, a two storm drain systems, one with a Oil Grit Separator (OGS), leading to a ‘major outfall,’ and a sanitary sewer trunk. The project design team will need to coordinate relocation of the fiberoptic and communication utilities with the respective owners, while the utilities such as electric, stormwater, the sanitary sewer utilities will require engineered designs that could be completed by a consultant.

Primary Utility Conflict - Sanitary Sewer Trunk

It appears that with the reroute of the creek considered with this initial option, impacts to existing utilities would be able to be handled through relocations, abandonments, or extensions for all existing utilities except the two proposed crossings of the existing 24” diameter sewer trunk that runs parallel and south of the existing creek alignment. To evaluate the sewer crossings by the new creek alignment, PTS prepared a TIN surface based on MOA Lidar information, and correlated sewer elevations with Lidar information by performing a field survey of sewer invert elevations. We then prepared an alignment of the proposed creek alignment and prepared a uniform creek surface elevation to establish the new creek profile. We superimposed the sewer main elevation at the two creek crossing locations on the new creek profile. Based on this effort, it appears the new creek elevation would be in direct conflict with the sewer main at both crossing locations. The Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility (AWWU) Design Criteria Project Manual (DCPM) addresses creek crossings in 30.02.06.01. AWWU requires a minimum of 3’ of cover over the pipe from the bottom of the creek channel. This may have to be increased based on a scour analysis and/or the need for rip rap at these critical points or building in hydraulic calming zones. All analysis should be completed on the 100-year flood event. See Attachment A for the plan and profile drawings for this initial option.

PTS evaluated two solutions for the conflict between the realignment of Chester Creek and the sanitary sewer trunk; installing syphons that routes the sewer under the creek; and a reroute of the sewer. Each of these solutions would require major infrastructure work. While AWWU was not outright opposed to the syphon option, they indicated there would be a number of hurdles to overcome with respect to operation and maintenance and is more amenable to considering the sewer reroute option. AWWU will require a detailed study of either of these options prior to any modification to an already functioning system.

Syphon Option

The syphon alternative would maintain the existing sewer alignment but allow for portions of the sanitary sewer to pass under the creek. PTS used the existing sewer flow data and as-built information to evaluate the efficacy for the engineering for a syphon alternative. PTS determined this a possible option and presented it AWWU. Other syphons have been used at



locations throughout Anchorage but are only considered if alternate methods cannot be constructed. During our discussion, AWWU offered that syphons increased maintenance costs and require frequent and direct access by large and heavy maintenance equipment. Also, access to the syphons would be required from both sides of the creek, and with the proposed creek realignment, additional bridges capable of withstanding heavy vehicles would need to be constructed for maintenance access. Additionally, communication and electrical services would need to be extended to the syphons, increasing project costs. This option, although constructable, would negatively affect the intended character of the park and experience for park users.

Sanitary Sewer Trunk Reroute

The reroute of the sanitary sewer would relocate a significant portion to the south and onto the adjacent parcel (owned and managed by MOA Parks and Recreation). These parcels are undeveloped and consist of either open field (turf grass) or native forest vegetation. Initial investigation determined there are no other utilities in this area, therefore utility infrastructure impacts would be minimal. The DCPM requires a minimum slope (or grade) of sanitary sewer trunks to maintain consistent flow. A reroute would increase the length of pipe and reduce the slope. PTS again used existing as-built, survey, flow data, and investigated ideal pipe materials to evaluate the viability of the reroute option. The proposed reroute would realign the sewer trunk approximately 190-feet south and tie into existing two manholes; one at the far eastern and western extents of the park. The length of the pipe would be increased from approximately 1,100-LF to 1,255-LF but meet the minimum slope and flow requirement for sewer trunk. Furthermore, other than the excavation for the construction of the new sewer trunk and three additional sewer manholes, no other utility infrastructure would need to be added to the park for maintenance access. See Attachment B for a concept showing the creek and sanitary sewer reroute.

AWWU Lift Station

In addition to the realignment of the sewer trunk, the existing sanitary sewer lift station will require modification or the construction of a new lift station. The existing lift station provides service for the neighborhood north of Eastchester Park. The existing sanitary sewer leading to the lift station could remain but a force main will need to be constructed under the western portion of the creek alignment. The force main would connect into the realigned portion of the sewer trunk. PTS consulted with AWWU on the efficacy of a force main leading from the lift station and it is believed to be an acceptable solution. An added benefit to the creek realignment allows AWWU more easy and safe access to the lift station. The lift station is currently only accessible via a steep undeveloped driveway, accessed east from the New Seward Highway. AWWU maintains year-round access to the lift station, requiring AWWU maintenance crews to plow snow and clear a large area within the park just south of the existing creek alignment. The project improvements would construct a narrow access driveway leading to E. 20th Avenue. This access driveway would create a safer and more accessible route for AWWU maintenance crews.

Site Impacts, Planning, and Construction

Impacts to the existing vegetation on the adjacent parcel to the south would be severe as part of the sewer relocation. Most likely, the existing trees would need to be cleared to allow access by

the contractor(s). The trench to construct the new sewer trunk could be filled in and the adjacent turf field could be extended. After the realignment of Chester Creek is constructed, the existing alignment of the creek could be infilled to create a more contiguous park and recreation space. The current park layout does not incorporate any other park improvements for these areas.

The existing sanitary sewer trunk falls within a 30-ft Sewer Easement. Efforts to vacate this easement and reestablish a new easement would need to be part of this project. In addition to the sewer easement, the existing alignment of Chester Creek falls within a 30-ft Creek Easement. Vacating this easement and reestablishing a new easement for the creek should be a part of this project. Current Title 21 requires a setback of 50-ft of any constructed facility, including playgrounds. Vacating the existing easement would allow for a modified playground or garden presented in proposed layout plan (see attachment A).

Chester Creek Realignment

With the proposed sewer trunk realignment, PTS continued to evaluate other utility impacts for the park improvements as well as developed a conceptual creek realignment. The alignment presented in the initial concept plan was shifted slightly north and away from the proposed sewer trunk. The plan allows adequate space to create the desired natural meandering alignment. However, more information and study of creek hydrology will be required for this portion of the project. Realigning the creek would also require the construction of two pedestrian bridges for Chester Creek Trail.

- If the creek reroute were to be viable from a utility conflict perspective, a number of permits would be required. These permits may include:
- Corps of Engineers Individual Permit
 - MOA Debit/Credit Calculations
 - ADEC Certificate of Reasonable Assurance
 - ADF&G Title 16 Fish Habitat
 - ADEC Letter of Non-Objection
 - ADNR Temporary Water Usage Agreement
 - MOA Parks & Recreation and Urban Design Commission
 - FEMA Certified Letter of Map Revision
 - MOA Flood Hazard Permit

These permits will require extensive study and require overlap for review and issuance.

Communications Utilities

Impacts to shallow utilities are fairly minimal. The fiber optic and communication cables will need to be relocated/adjusted at two locations. The fiber and communication utilities currently cross under or are attached to the existing bridge at the west side of the park. The effort to adjust or relocate the utility at this location is anticipated to be minimal. The east end of the park where the creek realignment will cross these utilities will require these utilities to be attached to a proposed pedestrian bridge or be buried under the creek. Information on the preferred method of relocation was not solicited from the owners of these utilities. However, relocations are

commonplace in construction projects with Anchorage and can be coordinated during the planning, engineering, and design phase of the project.

Storm Drain Systems

Two existing storm drain systems collect stormwater runoff from the adjacent neighborhoods north and south of the park. These storm drain systems both outfall into Chester Creek near the west side of the park, just before the creek passes under the highway, and then near the center of the park. The creek realignment slightly shifts the creek south and would require the replacement of these outfall pipes.

The westernmost outfall is identified by the MS4 database as a ‘major outfall’ which typically includes an OGS prior to discharging into bodies of water. Given the location and age of this OGS, the project will likely need to upgrade the OGS to current standards. Other improvements to the storm drain system upstream of the OGS are not anticipated.

An existing storm drain system in the middle of the park collects stormwater runoff from the neighborhood south adjacent. This storm drain system also outfalls into Chester Creek near the center of the park. With the creek realignment, a short section of this system would be reconstructed/shortened to outfall into the new creek alignment. This outfall is also identified by the MS4 as a ‘major outfall’, but this OGS is located within the neighborhood. A new OGS for the south storm drain system is not anticipated.

Park Improvements

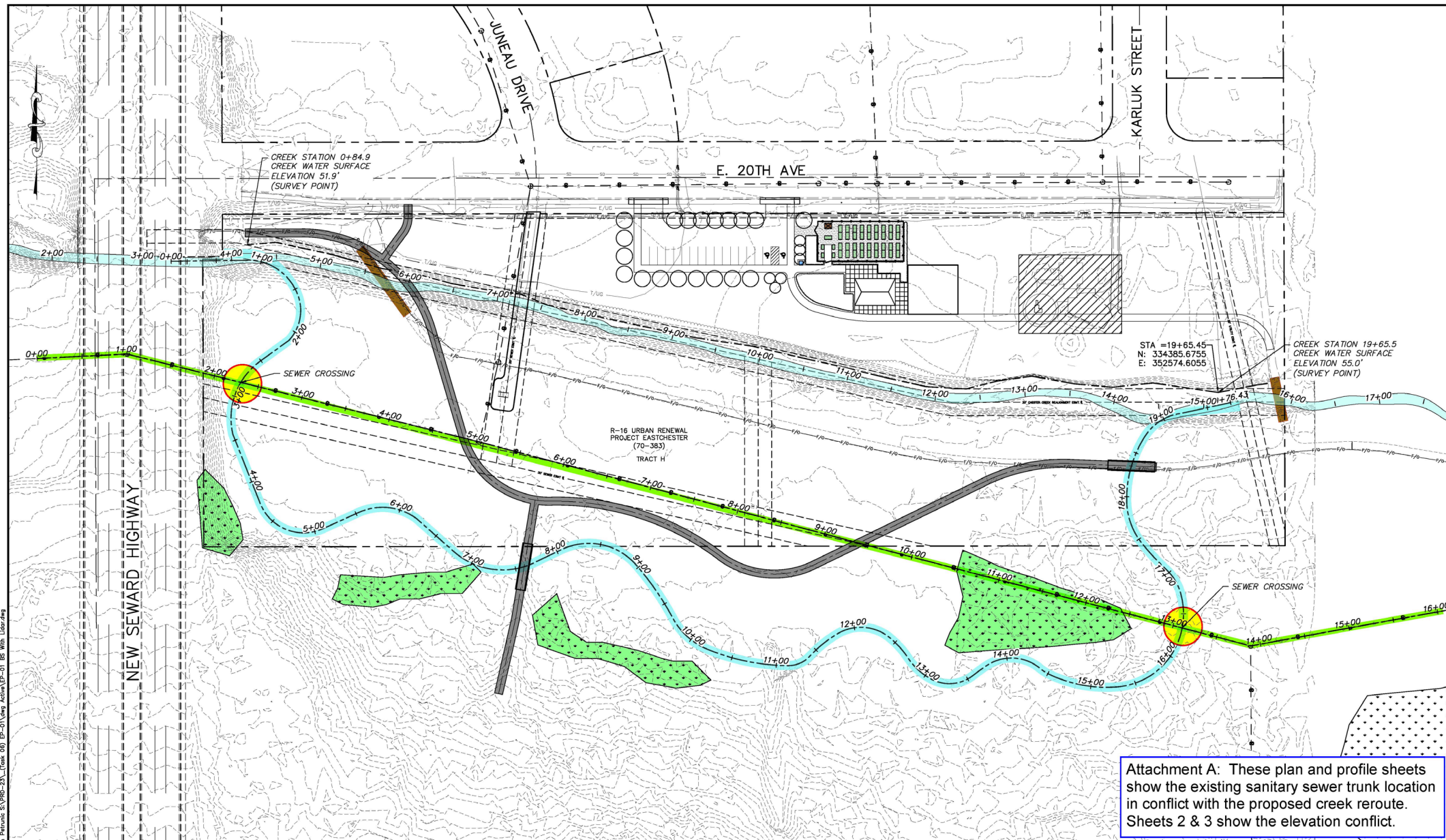
As part of the concept study of Eastchester Park, PTS evaluated costs and constraints to other desired park improvements. These include the construction of a 17-vehicle parking lot, reconstruction of a park playground, which would include a covered pavilion, a development of a community garden, and a realignment of the Chester Creek Trail. The sewer trunk and creek realignment will create a continuous usable park space, which will be more than double the existing space.

Project Cost Estimation

To assist with the master planning efforts, PTS evaluated construction costs from similar and recent projects for each of the major improvements in the park. Cost estimations presented in the table below provides rough order of magnitude costs associated with the items identified within this report. In addition to the construction, projected costs for have been included. These costs were estimated by using typical costs given the estimated construction costs. Project costs for permitting by governmental agencies have been estimated, as well. Additional costs may be incurred by the MOA depending on the funding source(s) and how the project(s) are managed. These costs a presented in the tables on page 6.

Chester Creek Reroute	Cost Estimate
Chester Creek Reroute	
Chester Creek Reroute	\$1,500,000
Sanitary Sewer Trunk Realignment	\$3,000,000
Chester Creek Trail Realignment	\$650,000
Trail Lighting	\$175,000
Pedestrian Bridges	\$600,000
Demolish Pedestrian Bridge	\$50,000
Fill and Grade Existing Creek Channel	\$1,000,000
Subtotal Construction Costs	\$6,925,000
<i>Construction Contingency (25%)</i>	<i>\$1,732,000</i>
Total Improvements Construction Costs	\$8,657,000
Design (15% of Construction)	\$1,300,000
Construction Management (10% of Construction)	\$866,000
Approximate Total Project Costs	\$10,823,000

Eastchester Park Improvements	Cost Estimate
Park Improvements	
Playground	\$870,000
Parking Lot	\$400,000
Garden	\$200,000
Demolish Existing Parking Lot	\$50,000
Storm Drain Improvements	\$150,000
Subtotal Construction Costs	\$1,670,000
<i>Construction Contingency (25%)</i>	<i>\$418,000</i>
Total Improvements Construction Costs	\$2,088,000
Design (15% of Construction)	\$314,000
Construction Management (10% of Construction)	\$209,000
Approximate Total Project Costs	\$2,611,000

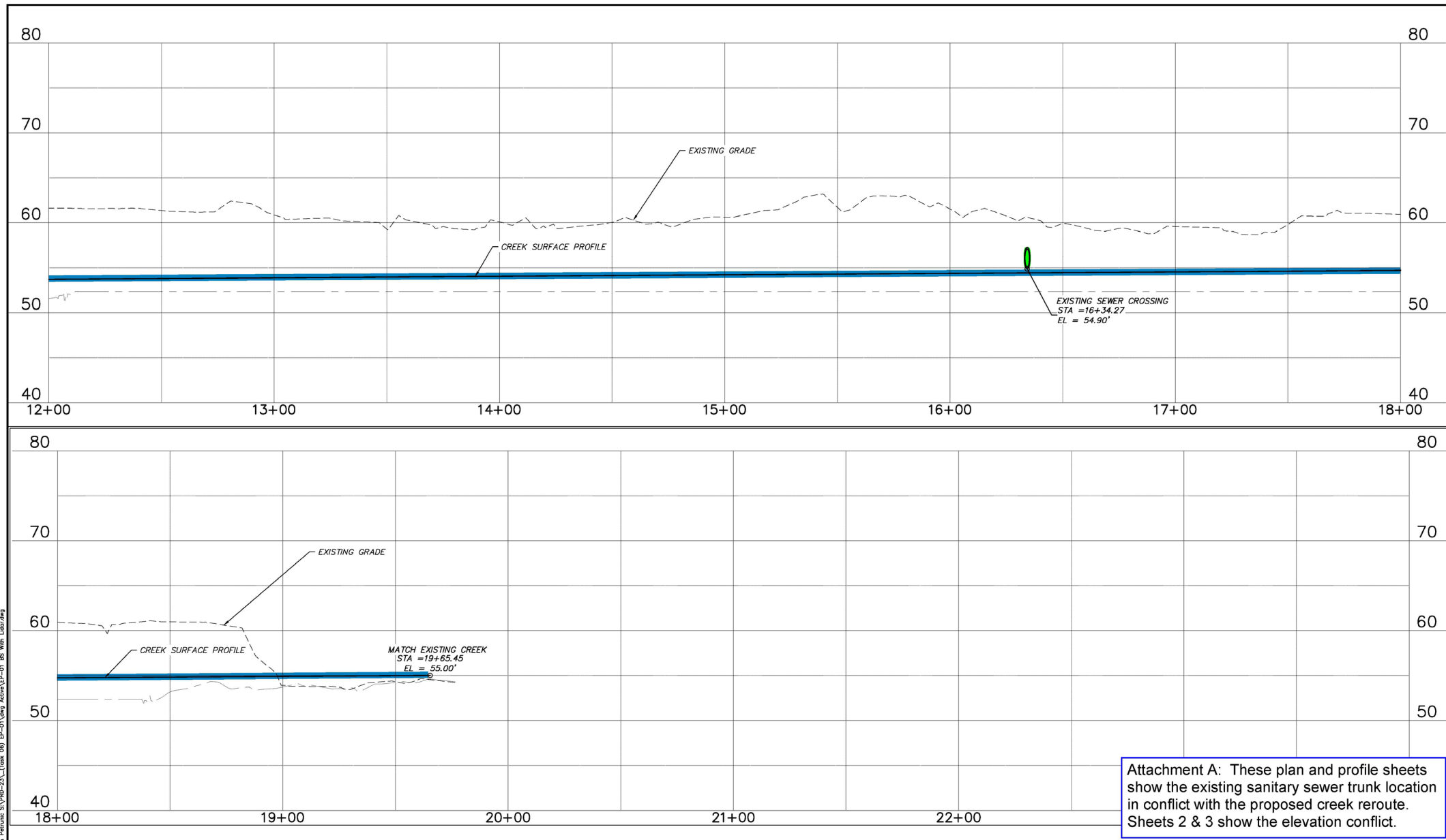


Attachment A: These plan and profile sheets show the existing sanitary sewer trunk location in conflict with the proposed creek reroute. Sheets 2 & 3 show the elevation conflict.

HORIZONTAL (IN FEET)										VERTICAL (IN FEET)											
FIELD BOOK	BM NO.	LOCATION	ELEV.	BASE	TOPOGRAPHY	TELEPHONE	REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	FIELD BOOK	BM NO.	LOCATION	ELEV.	BASE	TOPOGRAPHY	TELEPHONE	REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY
DESIGN											DESIGN										
STAKING											STAKING										
ASBUILT											ASBUILT										
CONTRACTOR											CONTRACTOR										
INSPECTOR											INSPECTOR										
CONSTRUCTION RECORD											CONSTRUCTION RECORD										

1. DATA PROVIDED BY:	2. DATA TRANSFERRED BY:	3. DATA TRANSFER CHECKED:
CONTRACTOR: BY: DATE:	CONTRACTOR: BY: DATE:	CONTRACTOR: BY: DATE:
Based on periodic field observations by the Engineer (or an individual under his/her direct supervision), the Contractor-provided data appears to represent the project as constructed.		
BY: DATE:	COMPANY: DATE:	BY: DATE:
TITLE: RECORD DRAWING	CONSULTANT	SEAL

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
EASTCHESTER PARK PLANNING
PLAN
SCALE: H: NA V: NA DATE: 3/08/24 GRID: SW1532 SHEET: 1 of 5

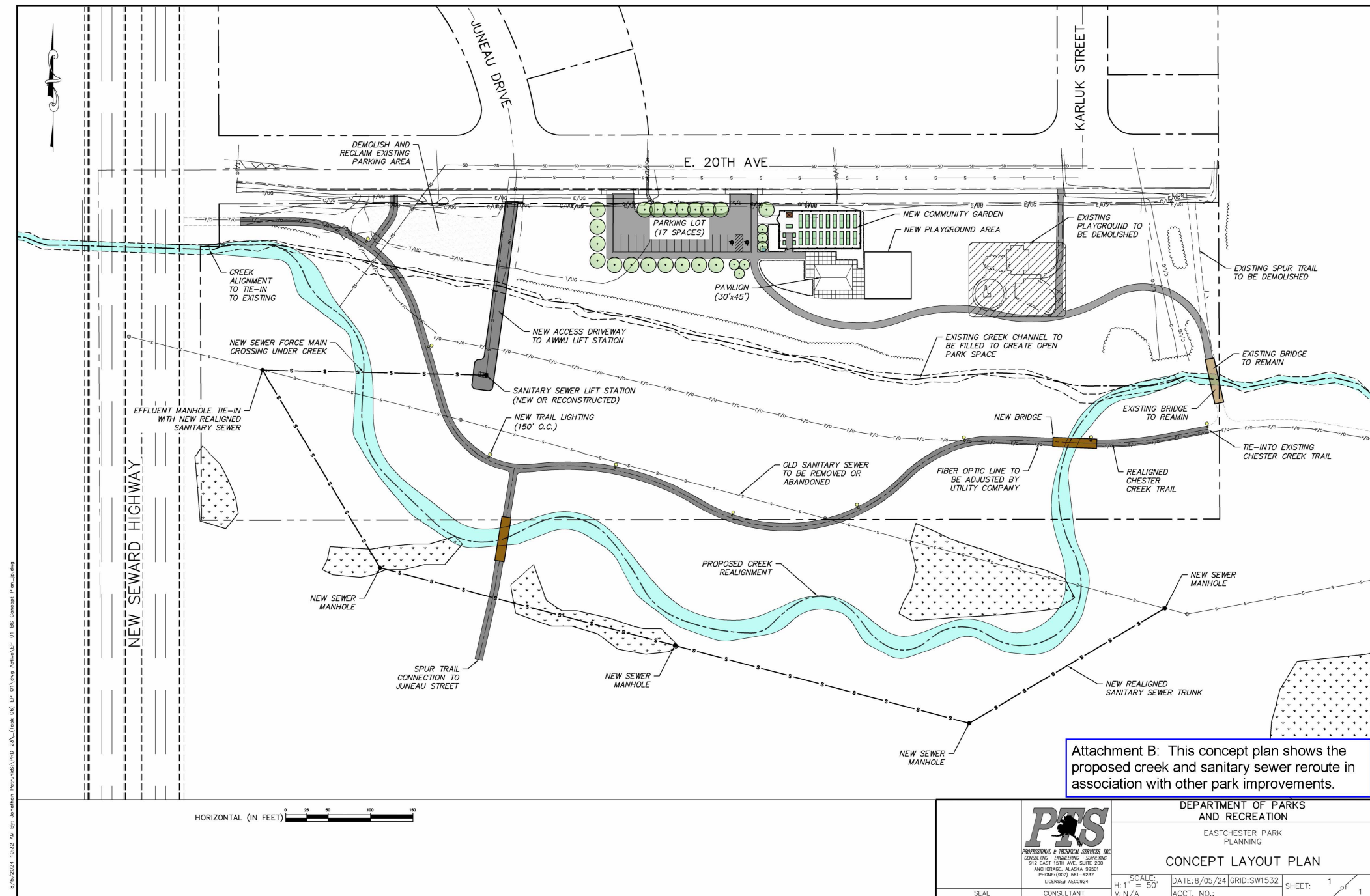
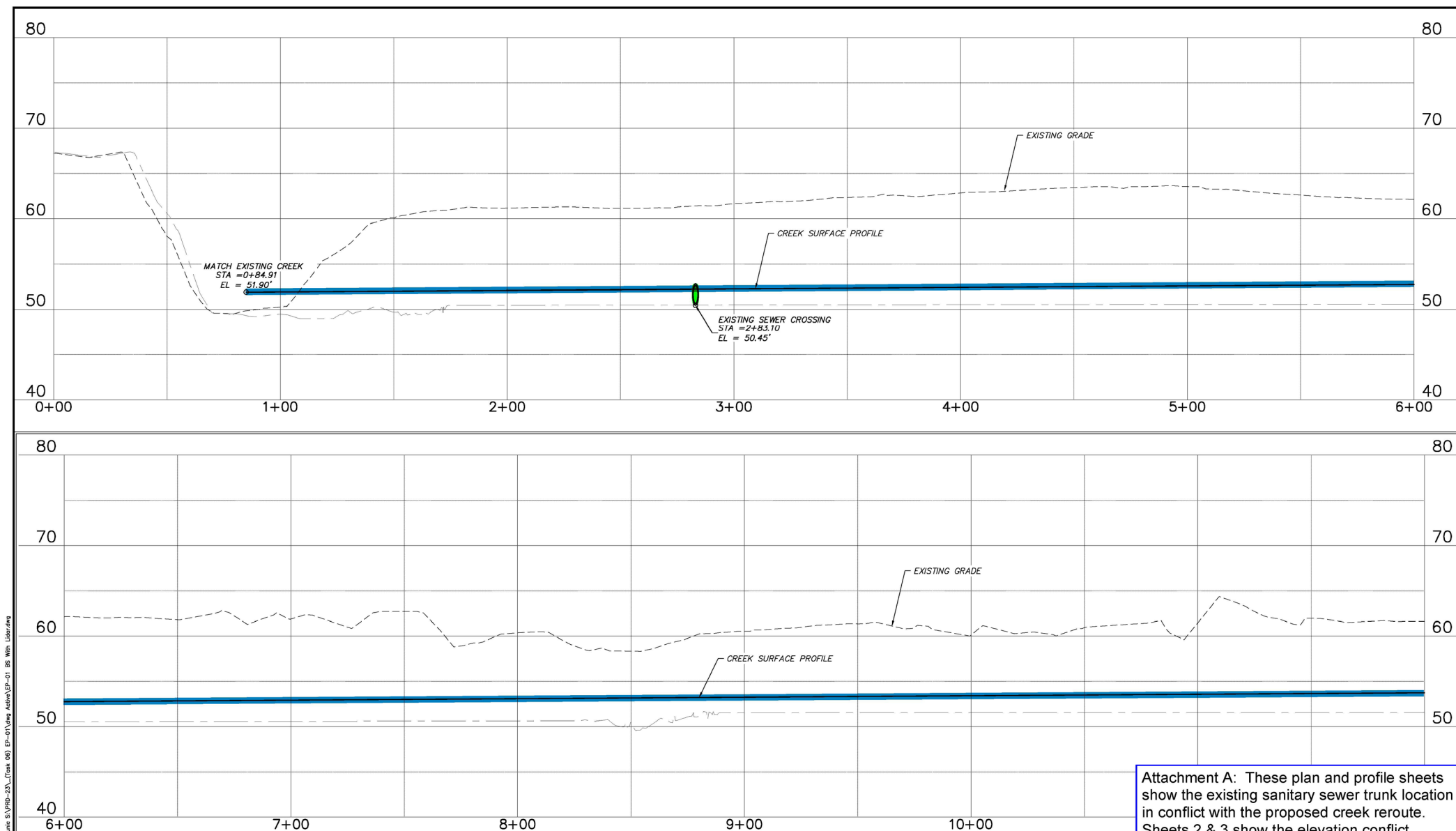


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BY: DATE:	COMPANY: DATE:	BY: DATE:
TITLE: RECORD DRAWING	CONSULTANT	SEAL

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
EASTCHESTER PARK PLANNING
CREEK PROFILE-2
SCALE: H: NA V: NA DATE: 3/08/24 GRID: SW1532 SHEET: 5 of 5



F: Meeting Minutes, AWWU Consult on Creek Restoration



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PTS, Inc.

Eastchester Park Improvements
April 15, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Meeting Agenda / Minutes

Date: April 15, 2024
Time: 10:00 AM
Location: AWWU - Conf. AWWU-Eng Main-3000 (15)
PRD Project No.: NA (PTS No. EP-01)
Subject: Eastchester Park Improvements – Chester Creek Reroute & AWWU Sanitary Sewer

Meeting Purpose

- Introduce the Eastchester Park Improvements & Master Plan project.
- Discuss Chester Creek Reroute impacts to existing sanitary sewer (SS).
- Discuss SS inverted siphon potential and impacts to AWWU maintenance and operations.

Introductions/Attendees

Dean Karcz, Pat Butler, Jon Petrunic – PTS | Shawn Dooley & Ed Sorenson – AWWU

Key Considerations

- Proposed Improvements
 - PTS is working on a task for MOA Parks & Recreation Department to evaluate expanding the Woodside/Eastchester Park, including the feasibility of rerouting Chester Creek to the south to allow expansion of Park area between E. 20th Avenue and the creek. A 24” sewer main parallels the creek on the south side, and the creek reroute would conflict with the existing sewer main. Preliminary evaluations indicate that to reroute the creek over the sewer main, inverted syphons would be needed at the crossings. The existing sewer main would be above the creek bottom if the creek is rerouted and no changes to the sewer line were made.
 - Two creek/SS crossings would be required for the current creek reroute configuration.
 - Other potential Park improvements include Chester Creek Trail reroute, lighting improvements, new bridges, a new playground, a parking lot, and community gardens.
 - Create access to existing AWWU lift station from 20th Avenue. This would eliminate the need for the existing access from New Seward Hwy/Ingra Street and excessive snow clearing within the west portion of the existing park.

- Inverted Syphons
 - Preliminary engineering suggests inverted syphons are a feasible solution with the existing SS system. Additional design and study would be required.
 - Each creek/SS crossing would require a syphon. The syphon configuration requires two structures, one on each side of the creek/SS crossing and two to three syphon pipes under the creek.
 - Each syphon structure would require year-round access for monthly AWWU inspection and maintenance. This would require bridges sufficient to carry heavy-duty equipment. The equipment required for syphon maintenance includes vac-truck as well as other utility-trucks/vehicles.
 - AWWU would need to assess whether the siphons would impact their 301-H Permit. AWWU stressed that sanitary sewer overflows, especially into a creek could lead to permit violations.
 - Hydrogen Sulfide generated in the effluent is a concern and structures would need to be designed to resist damage from gas emissions.
- Alternate Options
 - AWWU offered that rerouting a portion of the existing SS to the south along the base of the hill could be a viable option. The SS could be rerouted. This would eliminate the need for syphons and year-round maintenance access.
 - Additional study for the SS reroute is needed. PTS will investigate whether a reroute is an option.
 - PTS has requested flow data from AWWU for this portion of the SS trunk. AWWU expects modeling and data to be provided in the next two to three weeks.
 - An assessment of the portion of the SS trunk has not been performed recently. An assessment of the system would need to be performed if the project were to move towards design.
- Summary
 - AWWU is not opposed to the project and believes the park improvements are a benefit to the community. However, AWWU would prefer to see a reroute of the sewer line versus the utilization of syphons due to the maintenance and operational considerations. Funding for SS reroute, access bridges and other required improvements, would need to be provided by the Parks and Recreation Department.
 - AWWU is open to discussing alternate options as the project progresses.