

EMMA WEBB PARK MASTER PLAN

# PROJECT OVERVIEW & VISION



**KINSTON**  
NORTH CAROLINA



**KINSTON  
TEENS**  
ESTABLISHED 2014

DESIGNWORKSHOP



AMERICAN FLOOD COALITION

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PROJECT BACKGROUND</b> .....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	4
<b>ABOUT THE SITE</b> .....	5
EMMA WEBB PARK HISTORY .....	6
MEMORIES OF EMMA WEBB PARK .....	7
COMMUNITY .....	8
WATERSHEDS AND FLOODING .....	9
OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS .....	10
<b>PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT</b> .....	14
SUMMARY OF OUTREACH .....	15
KEY TAKEAWAYS .....	16
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS .....	18
<b>PARK AND STREAM MASTER PLANS</b> .....	19
DESIGN PROCESS AND PRINCIPLES .....	20
EMMA WEBB PARK MASTER PLAN .....	21
STREAM RESTORATION AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE .....	25
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS</b> .....	28
MAINTAINING MOMENTUM .....	29
FUNDING NEXT STEPS .....	30
REFERENCES .....	31

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**Image credits:** All photographs, drawings, and images in this document are courtesy of Design Workshop, unless otherwise noted in captions.

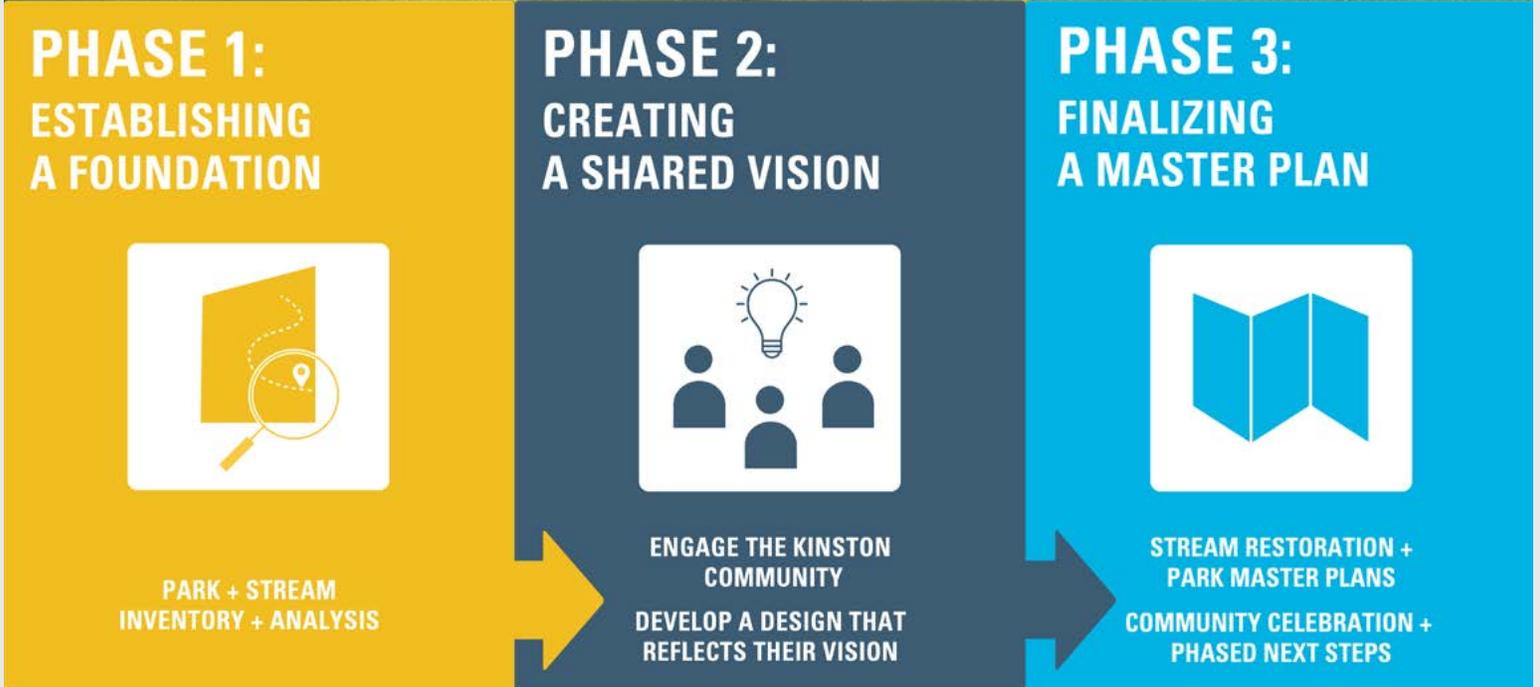
EMMA WEBB PARK MASTER PLAN  
**PROJECT BACKGROUND**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Emma Webb Park master plan offers a long-term vision to transform Kinston’s oldest public park into a greater community destination and a model for environmental restoration and education. The plan is the result of a public engagement process and a partnership between Kinston Teens, the City of Kinston, and the American Flood Coalition.

With funding from the Kresge Foundation, the American Flood Coalition partnered with Kinston Teens and the City of Kinston in February 2021 to advance the community vision for a flood-prone area of the city. The project partners identified an early need for design expertise to gather and translate community input into an actionable plan for future construction on the park. In May 2021, the project partners selected Raleigh-based design firm Design Workshop as the technical consultant to support community engagement and design concept development. Throughout 2021, the project team gathered community input through in-person and virtual surveys and exercises and used that feedback to develop a master vision of Emma Webb Park.



To create a master plan for Emma Webb Park that reflects the community’s vision, the project was carried out in three phases and included community engagement throughout, such as the in-person workshop photographed above.



EMMA WEBB PARK MASTER PLAN  
**ABOUT THE SITE**

# EMMA WEBB PARK HISTORY



Photo credits: Ruth Little (1995) and Penne Smith (1994), State Archives of North Carolina. Emma Webb Park, North Queen Street, Lenoir County. Archive records N.2000.7.1582-1584 and N.2000.7.1596-1599.

Previously a cow pasture, **Emma Webb Park became Kinston's first public park in the 1930s.** With support from the Works Progress Administration, the park early on featured a baseball diamond, bandstand, swimming pool, and even a small zoo (which was eventually replaced by paved tennis courts).

**Emma Webb Park is a site of memories for generations of Kinston residents** who for 85 years have visited the park to **swim, dance, play, attend summer camp,** and just pass the time. Emma Webb Park's popularity declined following years of deferred maintenance and the opening of other water facilities, culminating with the closure of the Emma Webb Park swimming pool in 2018. Today the park often goes unused, with activity mostly limited to the park's gymnastics center and picnic shelters.

# MEMORIES OF EMMA WEBB PARK

"Playing games in the park and going to Suttons for snacks for Fat Daddy's Café for their amazing milkshakes and burgers. Both places were right across the street from the park."



"Me and my friends would walk to the pool together everyday from St. John's Village and pay 75 cent to get in."



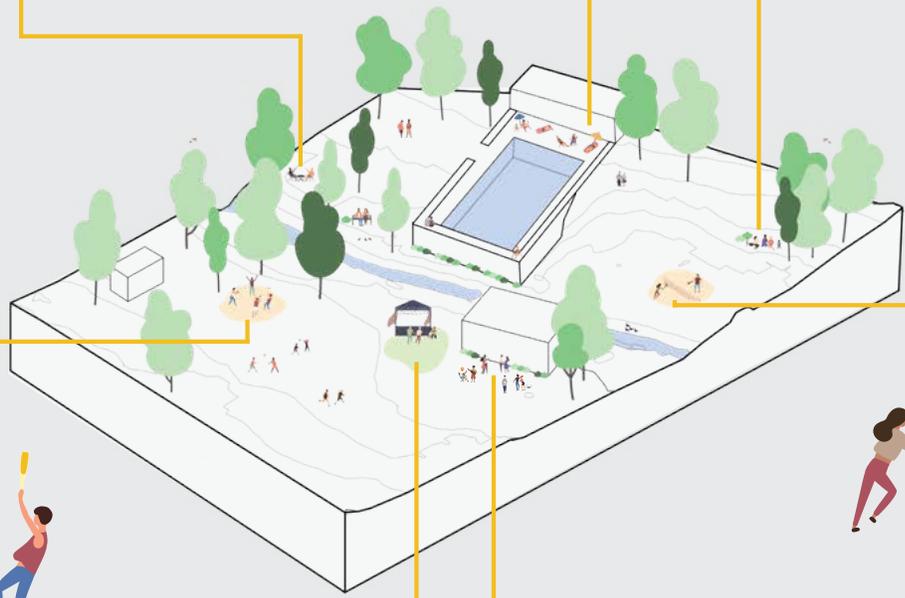
"Even when not playing, the park is a great place to walk, talk and have picnics."



"I attended Camp Kinston there for five summers, and my family played in the soft-ball leagues there. It was a big part of my favorite childhood memories."



"I took tennis lessons there annually. Then was able to have my children take lessons there as well. My family held family reunions there every year. It didn't matter your income, it just felt like a family place."



"It was a place of many wonderful memories for me and many others. The first Miss Kinston Pageant was held at Emma Webb Pool. Many swim meets, Summer Theatre, bands and the bandstand Junior High dances."

"I enjoyed the park because of the playground, the swimming pool, the gazebo and the main building which housed games."



To envision how Emma Webb Park might be restored as a beloved community destination, the project team engaged with Kinston residents, listening to them recount memories of the park. **The master plan vision for the park is inspired by the best moments of its past.**

# COMMUNITY

Emma Webb Park sits about one mile north of downtown Kinston, at the intersection of North Queen Street and East Highland Avenue. The seven-acre park is surrounded by residential neighborhoods — single-family dwellings and apartments built between the 1930s and 1960s — and sits across Queen Street from the Park View Shopping Center.

The design team used ArcGIS Pro to generate site walking and driving radii and studied how a restored Emma Webb Park might be a distinct but complementary asset within the city’s system of parks and open spaces.

With its nearby residential population, **historical significance, pedestrian and vehicle accessibility, and proximity to downtown, Emma Webb Park can be a true community park**, providing a recreational and social area, as well as a place for special events and programming.



Aerial view of downtown Kinston from the Emma Webb Park neighborhood.

# WATERSHEDS AND FLOODING

**Kinston has endured and rebounded from floods since the city's earliest establishment** along the Neuse River. As the frequency and intensity of storms increase, the city aims to build new, layered systems to absorb floodwaters and prevent them from damaging and displacing communities. One critical step will be restoring floodplains and retrofitting public greenspaces to act as sponges, holding and filtering stormwater that otherwise would flow downstream and worsen the flooding of the Neuse River and its tributaries, including the Adkin Branch stream. Parks can often absorb water well because their soil, plant, and paved elements can be designed to retain water – functioning as “[green infrastructure](#).”

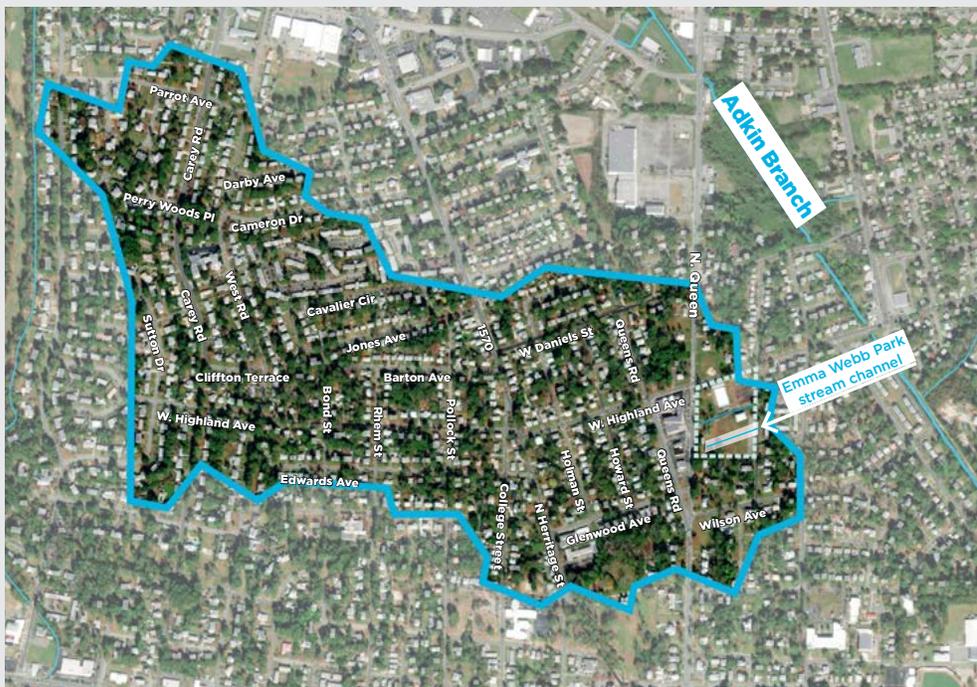
## EMMA WEBB PARK'S STREAM CHANNEL

The stream channel that runs from west to east across Emma Webb Park is fed by surface drainage and pipes that capture stormwater from a 300-acre area west of the site. From the park's stream channel, water flows into a series of pipes and drainage ditches before entering the Adkin Branch.

## THE ADKIN BRANCH STREAM

In 2021, the City of Kinston partnered with the Environmental Defense Fund and Ecosystem Restoration Partners to study flooding in the Adkin Branch watershed. This [study](#) found that during rainfall events, the timing of water flowing into the Adkin Branch stream matters a lot: when stormwater flows from many locations into the Adkins Branch all at once, the risk of flooding increases.

If retrofits to parks and similar spaces like **Emma Webb Park can slow and store more water during storms, the risk of downstream flooding can be reduced** by delaying the rush of stormwater into floodprone areas.



A watershed or basin is an area of land that drains to a specific water body. The Emma Webb Park watershed is outlined in blue, above. If a drop of rain falls within this boundary, it likely ends up in the Emma Webb Park stream channel. From there, the water flows into the Adkin Branch stream and eventually the Neuse River and Pamlico Sound. Illustrative boundaries of the Neuse River basin and Adkins Branch watershed are shown on the right.

# OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Through a thoughtful and robust community engagement process, and based on the community, history, and flood aspects of the park described in previous sections of this document, the project team identified the following overarching opportunities for Emma Webb Park:

## OVERARCHING OPPORTUNITIES

- **Honor the park's past while reflecting current and future needs** of the Kinston community
- **Promote a community conversation about flooding, green infrastructure, and the layered benefits of high-quality parks and greenspace**, to inform future community efforts in Kinston and beyond

The project team also used site visits and geographic information systems analysis to understand more about the park. From this combined analysis, the team identified a detailed set of opportunities and constraints on the site, across the park's buildings and infrastructure, landscape, and stream channel. These are described on the following pages.



Diagram of opportunities and constraints for built and landscape features at Emma Webb Park.

## BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Emma Webb Park's buildings and infrastructure are in different states of repair and use. Some can be restored or reused, including the bathhouse and remnant materials such as brick paving and stone stream walls. For other features — such as the swimming pool and its complex infrastructure of pipes, fencing, and retaining walls — the cost of repairs and ongoing maintenance might not be warranted. Specific features and their potential role in the park's future are described below:

- **Bathhouse:** The bathhouse was built by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s and is currently closed to the public and used for storage. Thoughtful restoration of this building could help future visitors connect to Emma Webb Park and Kinston history while providing space for site gathering, restrooms, concessions, event rentals, and other uses that could promote the park as a community destination and generate revenue for future upkeep.
- **Swimming Pool:** The pool was built in the 1930s and has been closed and drained since 2018. Renovating the pool would require extensive repairs to the pool and its surrounding patios, fencing, and retaining walls. The pool may also be at odds with the future restoration of the site stream: It can leak chlorinated water and its retaining wall constrains the northern edge of the stream channel, limiting both the function and experience of a future stream restoration project. Given the expense of renovation and maintenance, the limited three-month season of the pool, and the city's past difficulty in staffing that season, the city should consider other ways a future park incorporates water play and water features.
- **Gymnastics Center:** The gymnastics center is currently in use, and the city has no plans to relocate those classes and events. The building is very close to the site stream channel and risks flooding during storm events. Realigning and restoring the stream channel would help protect this building from future flood risk. The city could also move the building to another location in the park that is less likely to flood.
- **Picnic Shelter:** The picnic shelter is bordered by Queen Street to the west, mature trees to the north and south, and an asphalt drive to the east. The shelter is used daily, particularly in the summer. It could be improved by adding electrical outlets, ADA access, access to site restrooms, and more maintenance.
- **Utilities:** The site has electrical poles that provide overhead lighting and a system of catch basins and buried stormwater pipes that empty into the site stream channel. The bathhouse and gymnastics center have connections for water, sewage, and electricity.



There are opportunities to preserve or improve the picnic shelter (left) and gymnasium (right) in Emma Webb Park.

## LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The Emma Webb Park landscape is largely a blank slate for future park improvements, with the exception of the mature trees along the site's western and northern edges that should be preserved. Specific features and their potential role in the park's future are described below:

- **Mature Tree Canopy:** The existing mature tree canopy should be protected and restored. It is an irreplaceable site amenity for shade and habitat and reflects the park's history and longevity.
- **Mowed Turf:** All unpaved areas within the park are currently covered by mowed turf. By converting large patches of this turf to rain gardens, native seeded meadows, and tree groves with groundcover, the city can improve the site's stormwater storage capacity. The site's southern half is largely covered by a large mowed open field where the ballfield used to be. Currently this field drains poorly, but with regrading and other improvements the park area could become a valuable open lawn space for flexible play, gathering and events.
- **Former Tennis Courts:** The site's tennis courts currently serve as extra site parking, suggesting a need for parking north of the stream. The footprint of the tennis courts is large enough to accommodate restored tennis courts, as well as basketball courts, pickleball courts, or other recreational facilities, depending on community interest.
- **Playground:** The current playground occupies a small lot in the northeast corner of the site and is not heavily used. The city can expand and improve upon this play space, either to better serve the immediate community or to create a new city play area.
- **Paths and Drives:** Many of the site's parking lots and sidewalks are in disrepair, and the current circulation system serves only part of the site. Improved parking and paths should replace an asphalt drive that runs by the picnic shelter and fades away along the southern edge of the stream. New trails and paths could improve sitewide accessibility and connectivity, creating valuable new recreational opportunities.



There are opportunities to improve the playground and tennis court areas (shown above) in Emma Webb Park.

## PARK STREAM CHANNEL

The Emma Webb Park stream is a ditch channel that runs in a straight line from west to east through the middle of the site. It likely was designed to accommodate the swimming pool and baseball diamond; today, the stream remains tightly constrained by the swimming pool, tennis courts, and sidewalks to the north and by the crumbling asphalt drive and gymnastics center to the south.

While some Kinston residents have memories of playing in and around the stream, the stream currently has steep banks that are heavily overgrown, with slow-moving water and accumulations of trash. Residents are concerned that the stream is an eyesore and a health and safety hazard.

During or following heavy rain, the outlet underneath McAdoo can become overburdened, causing water to overrun the stream banks and flood the park and gymnastics center.

The stream presents an enormous opportunity for the Emma Webb Park master plan. By removing the site elements that currently constrain it, the stream could be realigned and its banks and surrounding floodplain expanded to create a new amenity that slows and absorbs floodwater; is beautiful, engaging, ecologically sound; and is integrated with the rest of the park.

The stream could also become a model for retrofitting parks and other spaces across Kinston. Retrofitting the Emma Webb Park's stream could be a **model for developing a broader community-wide network of restored ecosystems and green infrastructure** to further reduce flooding, while providing multiple other benefits for people and wildlife.



Diagram of opportunities and constraints for the Emma Webb Park stream channel.

# EMMA WEBB PARK MASTER PLAN **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**



**Emma Webb Park  
Community Workshop**

Where: Emma Webb Park  
When: Thursday, July 15<sup>th</sup> 5 – 7pm

To learn more please visit  
[EmmaWebbPark.com](http://EmmaWebbPark.com)

EMMA WEBB PARK

# SUMMARY OF OUTREACH

Community input has guided the Emma Webb Park master planning process. Prior to 2021, the city had already gathered input in recent years about the future of the park. This included input gathered through several City Council Meetings, Parks and Recreation Commission Meetings, and outreach to civic groups, including the local Rotary Club, Woodman Club, and Exchange Club. This past input served as a valuable foundation for the community engagement efforts in 2021, which included the following outreach methods:

- Kinston Teens and the City of Kinston led a **campaign to publicize the project** through local media, social media, mailers, and door-to-door canvassing. This included social media videos, and local coverage in the Kinston Free Press and on WNCT News.
- Organizers held a **public open house at the park in July 2021**. At that event, community members learned more about the project, shared park memories and vision, and weighed in on potential park programming and features. The city provided games, live entertainment, and frozen treats from local vendors. More than 75 residents attended.
- An **online survey** allowed the design team to collect similar feedback from Kinston residents who could not attend the Open House event. The survey was completed by 255 people.

**75+**  
JULY OPEN HOUSE ATTENDEES

**255**  
ONLINE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

**80+**  
DOORS KNOCKED IN THE PARK VICINITY

GET KIDS, HARRIED ADULTS, AND OLD FOLKS OUTSIDE AND HEALTHIER.

FOR ALL OF US THAT REMEMBER IT BACK IN THE DAY WE WISH WE HAD IT BACK!

REALLY EXCITED TO SEE THE RESULTS.

COMMUNITY CENTER, DAY CAMP, ARTS AND CRAFTS FOR SENIORS, OUTDOOR MOVIES.

IT IS MY HOPE THAT GENERATIONS TO COME ARE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO FORGE THEIR OWN MEMORIES AT THIS GREAT PLACE AS IT IS RESTORED.

MAKE IT A SHOW PLACE.

“ IN THE PAST 20+ YEARS, EVERY STORM AND HURRICANE AFFECTS ALL IN KINSTON ”

**THANK YOU KINSTON COMMUNITY!**

The public engagement in 2021 resulted in input from over 300 Kinston community members.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

The online survey responses, open house votes and Post-It notes, and in-person conversations with community members gave the project team invaluable insight into the community’s perception of Emma Webb Park and potential restoration.

Community members were presented with different amenities to prioritize, along with budget considerations for each amenity. The combined votes for two concept plans that each combined different sets of amenities can be seen in the graphic below.

## DESIGN OPTIONS AND TRADEOFFS

### CONCEPT NO. 1

SWIMMING POOL AND RECREATION



**394**  
COMBINED VOTES

### CONCEPT NO. 2

WATER PLAY AND GET-TOGETHERS



**401**  
COMBINED VOTES

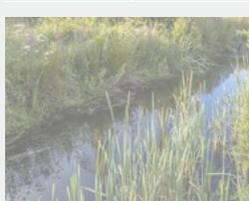
The engagement revealed clear preferences for certain park features and programming, as seen in the graphic site amenity menus below, while demonstrating some nuance on one of the biggest questions of the master plan: what to do with the park's swimming pool.

## SITE AMENITY & PROGRAM MENU

### CHOSEN BY A MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS:

	
<b>POLLINATOR GARDENS</b>	<b>PLAYGROUND</b>
	
<b>SPLASH PAD</b>	<b>BASKETBALL COURTS</b>
	
<b>OPEN PLAY FIELDS</b>	<b>OUTDOOR STAGE</b>
	
<b>WALKING &amp; JOGGING TRAILS</b>	<b>SWIMMING POOL</b>
	
<b>STREAM OVERLOOKS</b>	

### CHOSEN BY LESS THAN HALF OF RESPONDENTS:

	
<b>TENNIS COURTS</b>	<b>NATURE PLAY</b>
	
<b>SKATE PARK</b>	<b>RAIN GARDENS</b>
	
<b>CURVY STREAM</b>	<b>STREAM ACCESS</b>
	
<b>EVENT SPACE</b>	<b>PICKLEBALL COURTS</b>
	
<b>WIDE WALKWAYS</b>	<b>NATURAL PLANTING</b>
	
<b>HAMMOCK GROVE</b>	

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

## WHAT WE HEARD



## HOW THAT INPUT IS REFLECTED IN THE MASTER PLAN

People in Kinston have fond memories of Emma Webb Park and want to see it **restored as a community hub and destination.**



The master plan ushers in a new phase of park life while proposing a diversity of **social, recreational and natural spaces that honor the public's favorite memories of Emma Webb Park.**

Most Open House attendees and survey respondents want an **active, social park**, with a **variety of recreational and gathering spaces** for visitors of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.



The master plan proposes varied spaces for play, gathering, recreation and respite, with an emphasis on those park elements that were chosen by the public. **The result will be a park for all people, with spaces that are active at different times of the day, week and year.**

Several Open House attendees commented on how much flooding has affected the Kinston community. In the words of one survey respondent, **"Floods are debilitating and soul crushing for our community."**



Emma Webb Park will demonstrate **green infrastructure and restoration best practices** that absorb floodwaters and are critical components of a community-wide system of flood mitigation measures. The park will offer ample opportunity for **interaction, education and reflection** on the **importance of natural systems and parks for ecological health and flood prevention.**

When asked if they wanted a swimming pool at Emma Webb Park, most respondents said "Yes."

When asked to choose between a swimming pool and other features that could offer year-round opportunities for play, gathering and recreation, **there was a 50/50 split between respondents who wanted the pool and those who wanted a greater diversity of water play, recreational and gathering spaces.**



The design team and project partners weighed this input carefully. Open House attendees and survey respondents love the memory of the Emma Webb Park swimming pool, but they also expressed interest in the potential benefits of replacing the pool with **site features that are more varied and flexible, available for diverse users and year-round experiences, and lower-cost in the long term.** Given this feedback and the challenges of operating and staffing a swimming pool, the master plan proposes a dynamic new space that maintains a connection to the **restored historic bathhouse** while creating new opportunities for **gathering, water play and connections to the restored site stream and Neuse River ecology.**



EMMA WEBB PARK MASTER PLAN  
**PARK AND STREAM  
MASTER PLANS**

## DESIGN PROCESS AND PRINCIPLES

The master planning design process was guided by the principles below, which were established by the project partners and public feedback:

- Restore Emma Webb Park to the **showcase destination** remembered by Kinston residents, with features and programming that reflect Kinston's needs today.
- Restore the Emma Webb Park stream to its imagined pre-park condition, with subtle meanders and an **expanded floodplain** to create habitat, flood storage, and unique visitor experiences.
- Incorporate the **diverse features and programming** chosen by the community during the public engagement process, at a scale that can be supported by the park site and sustained by the city and its partners.
- Highlight the site's stream restoration and green infrastructure, making Emma Webb Park a **local and regional model** greenspace restoration and retrofitting and its layered benefits.



A view of proposed site elements including a community amphitheater and expanded path and stream spaces.

# EMMA WEBB PARK MASTER PLAN

The design team studied Emma Webb Park to determine proposed park features and programming, as requested by the community during the public engagement process. The result is a master plan with **features that serve people of all ages and backgrounds at all times of the year**. The master plan provides moments of natural beauty and respite while improving the park's ability to provide shade, habitat, stormwater management, and other benefits.

**Amphitheater:** The proposed 600-seat amphitheater uses the drop in site grades from the former swimming pool, replacing a park amenity used only three months of the year with a feature that can accommodate year-round gathering and events. The proposed amphitheater includes a 2,000 square-foot stage ringed by cypress trees that capture stormwater and provide a beautiful backdrop and reference to a Neuse River ecosystem. The vision of an amphitheater in the woods is a nod to the park's Works Progress Administration roots, with design elements that place the feature firmly in the 21st century.

## PROGRAM & CAPACITY STUDY

### OPEN LAWN

#### PLAY & RECREATION / 25,000 SF

Could accommodate **two games of 5-versus-5 pickup soccer**, or **one regulation Ultimate Frisbee game**, or **one 1,000-person yoga class**.

#### GATHERING & EVENTS / 25,000 SF

Could accommodate formal or informal gatherings of up to **2,500 people seated in lawn chairs or on picnic blankets**.

### PICNIC AREA

Room to add at least two more shelters, tripling the current picnic shelter capacity.

### POOL AREA

#### BATHHOUSE / 7,000 SF

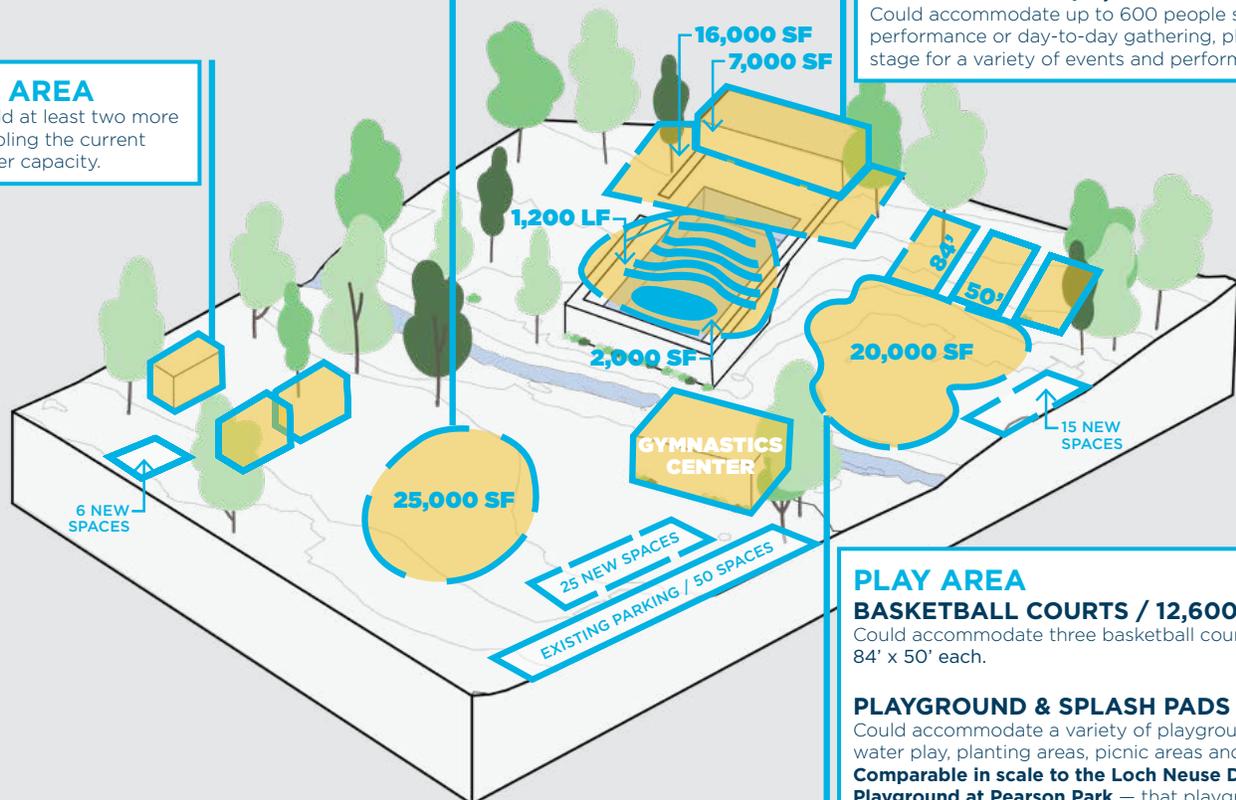
Could accommodate a ticket booth and concessions along with indoor gathering or recreation spaces for event rentals.

#### PLAZA / 16,000 SF

Could accommodate formal or informal gatherings plus splash pads and other water features. For event rentals, the space could hold up to **650 people standing** and **325 people seated at tables**.

#### AMPHITHEATER / 1,200 LF SEATING

Could accommodate up to 600 people seated for a performance or day-to-day gathering, plus a 2,000 sf stage for a variety of events and performances.



### PLAY AREA

#### BASKETBALL COURTS / 12,600 SF

Could accommodate three basketball courts at 84' x 50' each.

#### PLAYGROUND & SPLASH PADS / 20,000 SF

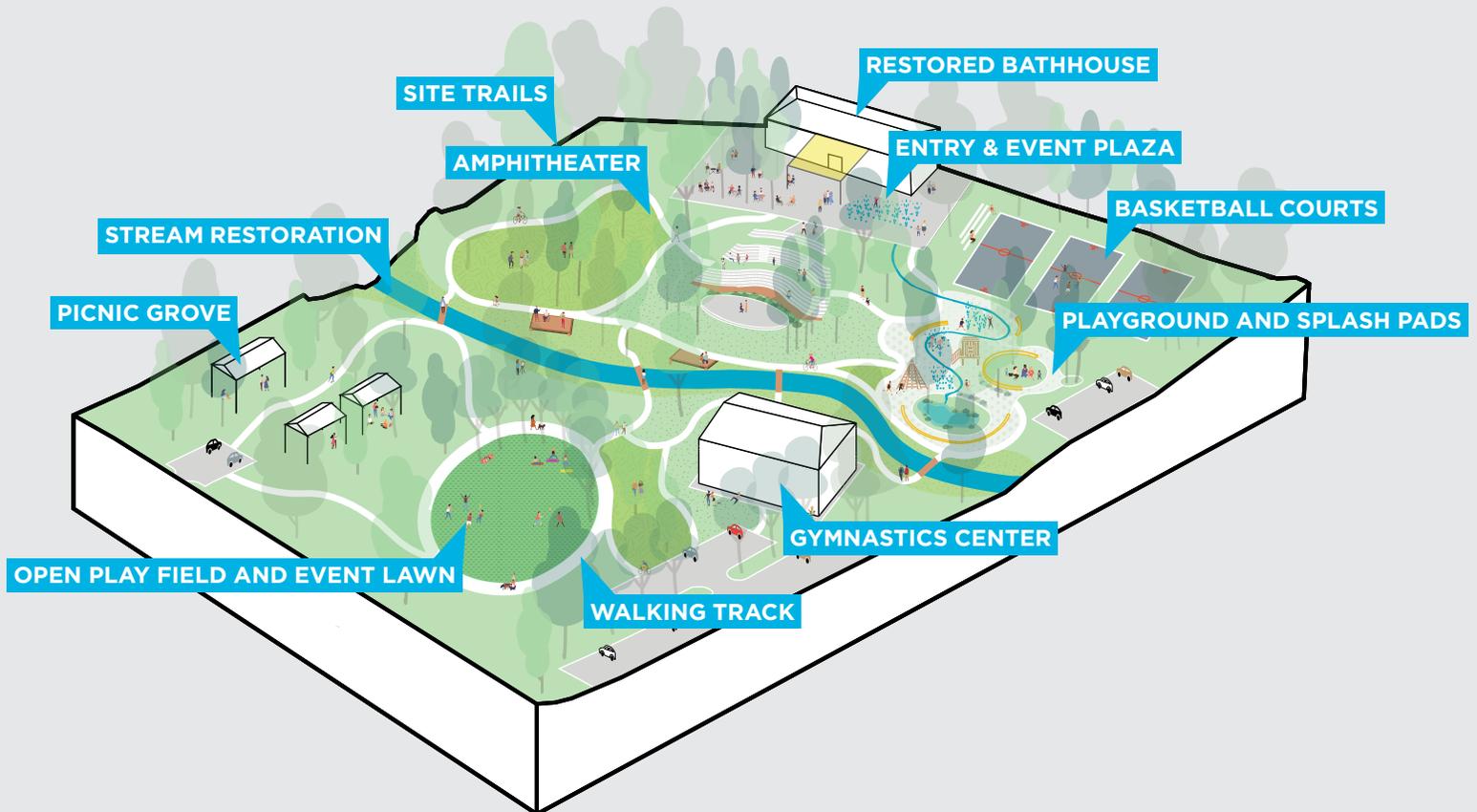
Could accommodate a variety of playground structures, water play, planting areas, picnic areas and seating. **Comparable in scale to the Loch Neuse Dragon Playground at Pearson Park** — that playground's primary play area is about 8,000 sf, and its total size is about 20,000 sf, including surrounding lawn and shaded seating.

**Restored Bathhouse and Plaza:** The master plan envisions a restored bathhouse with a ticket booth and concessions for the amphitheater, plus interior spaces to support gathering and event rentals. The bathhouse is surrounded by and connected to a proposed entry plaza that welcomes visitors. The plaza features a bosque of trees on its western edge, offering shade for tables and seating and a visual transition to the mature trees and wooded trails to the west. The eastern edge features a splash pad for water play, visual interest, and a water-driven soundscape. Water from the plaza splash pad enters a channel that flows to a series of less formal splash pads incorporated in the play area to the southeast, creating a visual connection and transition to other site elements. The plaza is a bridge between the bathhouse and the amphitheater, with flexible and comfortable spaces well-suited for both day-to-day gathering and large events. For event rentals, the space could hold up to 650 people standing and 325 people seated at tables.

**Play Area:** The site's northeastern corner is reimagined as a playscape for current and future Kinston residents, with basketball courts along Highland Avenue and a new play area with cypress trees, gardens, picnic areas, and a series of play equipment, all of which reinforce the connection of the park to its larger Neuse River watershed.

**Open Lawn and Walking Track:** South of the site's restored stream is a proposed 25,000 square-foot elliptical lawn that can be used year-round for activities and events, such as open play, picnics, pick-up games, yoga classes, and movie nights. The lawn is surrounded by a measured walking track, which connects to other sitewide trails and can also accommodate food trucks or pop-up markets. The lawn could accommodate two games of 5-versus-5 pickup soccer, one regulation Ultimate Frisbee game, or one 1,000-person yoga class. For formal or informal gatherings, the lawn could hold up to 2,500 people seated in lawn chairs or on picnic blankets.

## VISION FOR EMMA WEBB PARK



**Picnic Grove:** The master plan calls for expanding and improving the site's picnic area, with two additional shelters, improved parking and circulation, and newly planted trees.

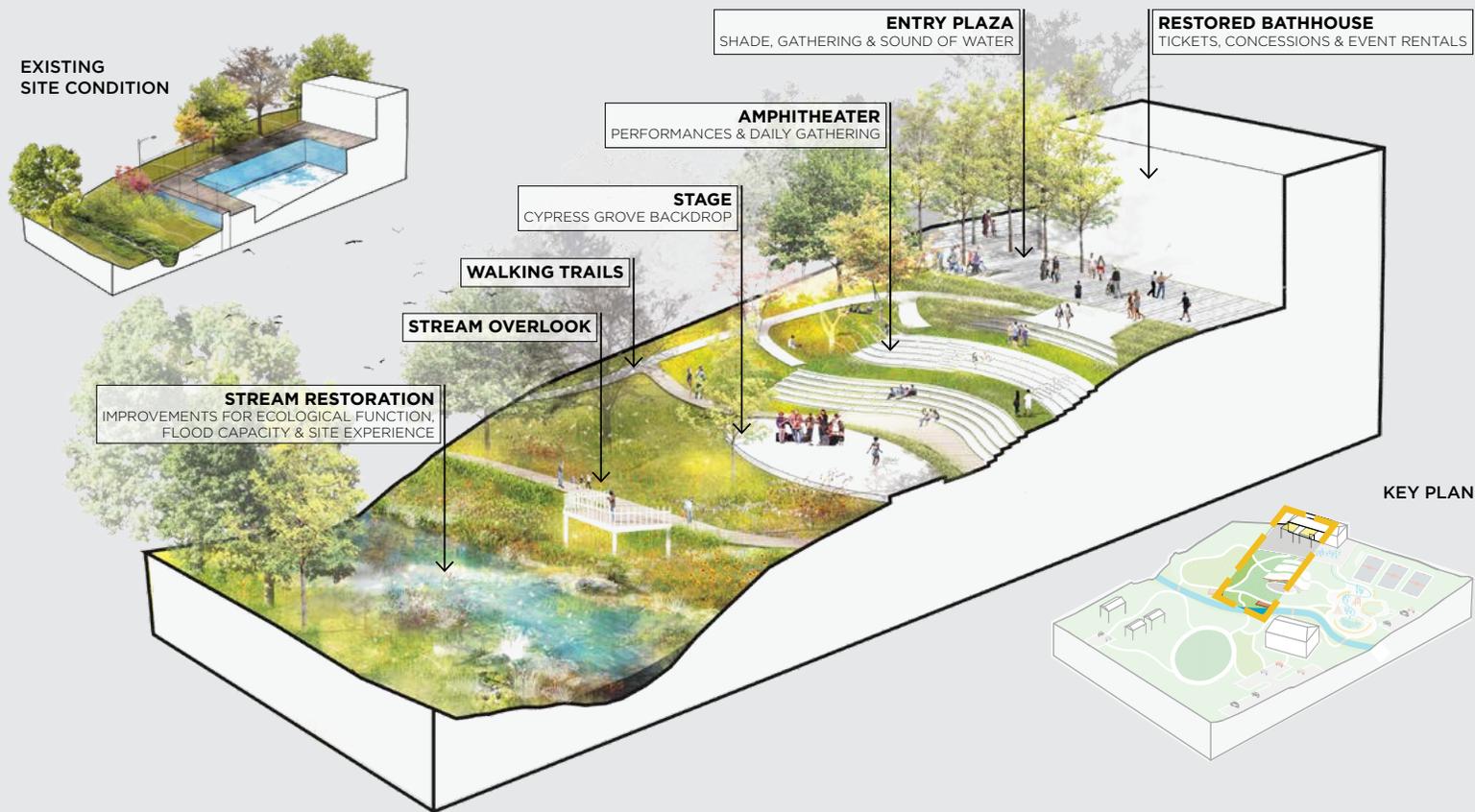
**Walking Trails:** The master plan proposes sitewide trails to provide measured walking and jogging loops and to guide visitors through the park's amenities and natural areas, building sitewide connections while also providing access to the park's quieter areas.

**Gymnastics Center:** The gymnastics center remains in its current location in the proposed master plan, with greater distance from the stream due to that feature's realignment. The master plan suggests the possible addition of a back porch to offer views over the floodplain and stream restoration. As with other site features, path connections are proposed to ensure ADA accessibility from new and improved parking lots throughout the site.

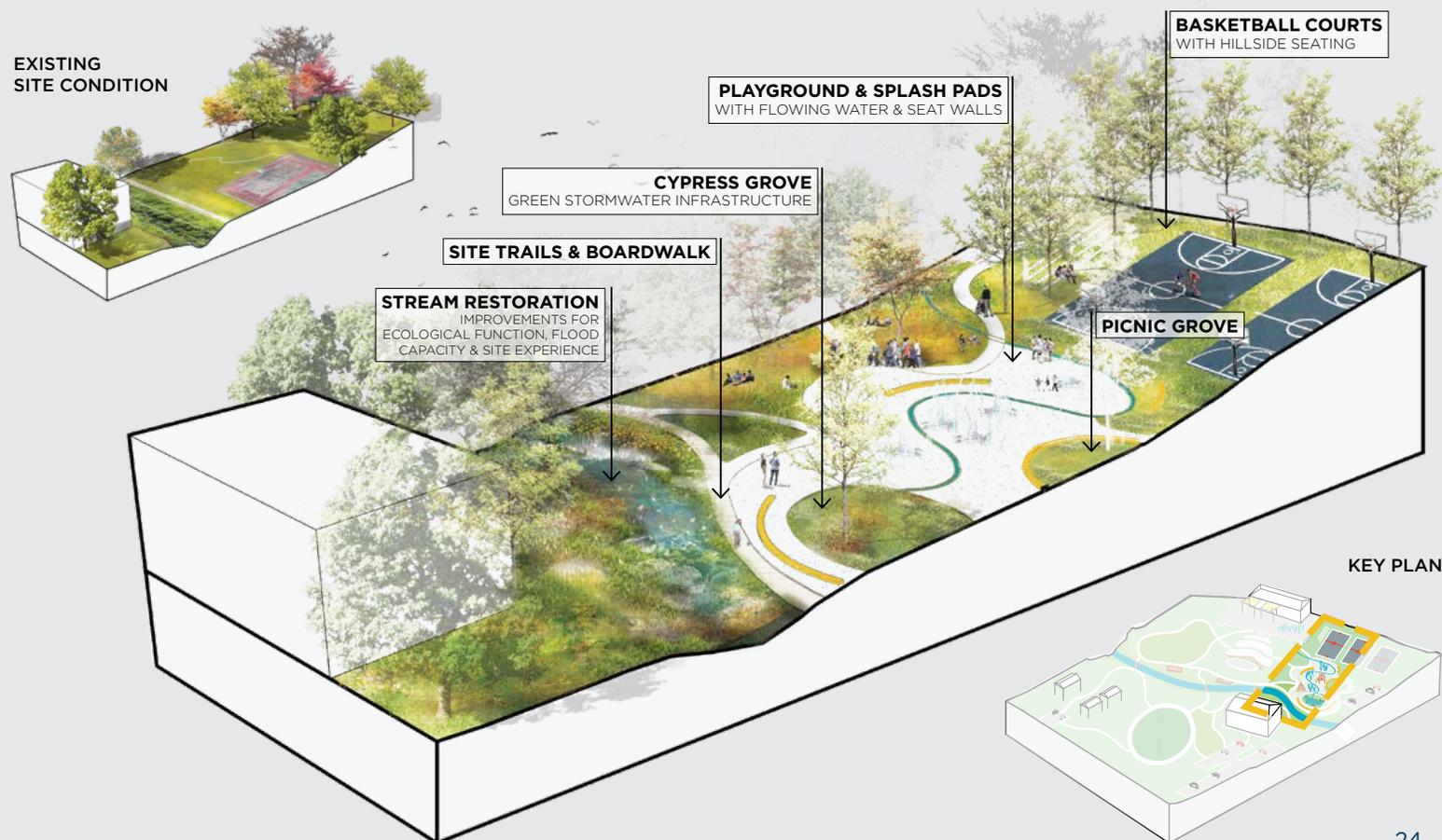
## YEAR-ROUND ACTIVITIES & EVENTS



# RESTORING A COMMUNITY PARK - VIEW 1



# RESTORING A COMMUNITY PARK - VIEW 2



# STREAM RESTORATION AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

## STREAM RESTORATION

The proposed Emma Webb Park stream restoration would transform what is currently an overgrown ditch into a primary site feature, with rich experiential and educational opportunities.

The design team worked with stream restoration specialists to identify appropriate treatment for the degraded stream channel, which currently runs for 500 feet between pipes underneath Queen and McAdoo Streets. Any realignment must maintain those primary stormwater connections and accommodate the small pipes that enter the stream channel from site catch basins.

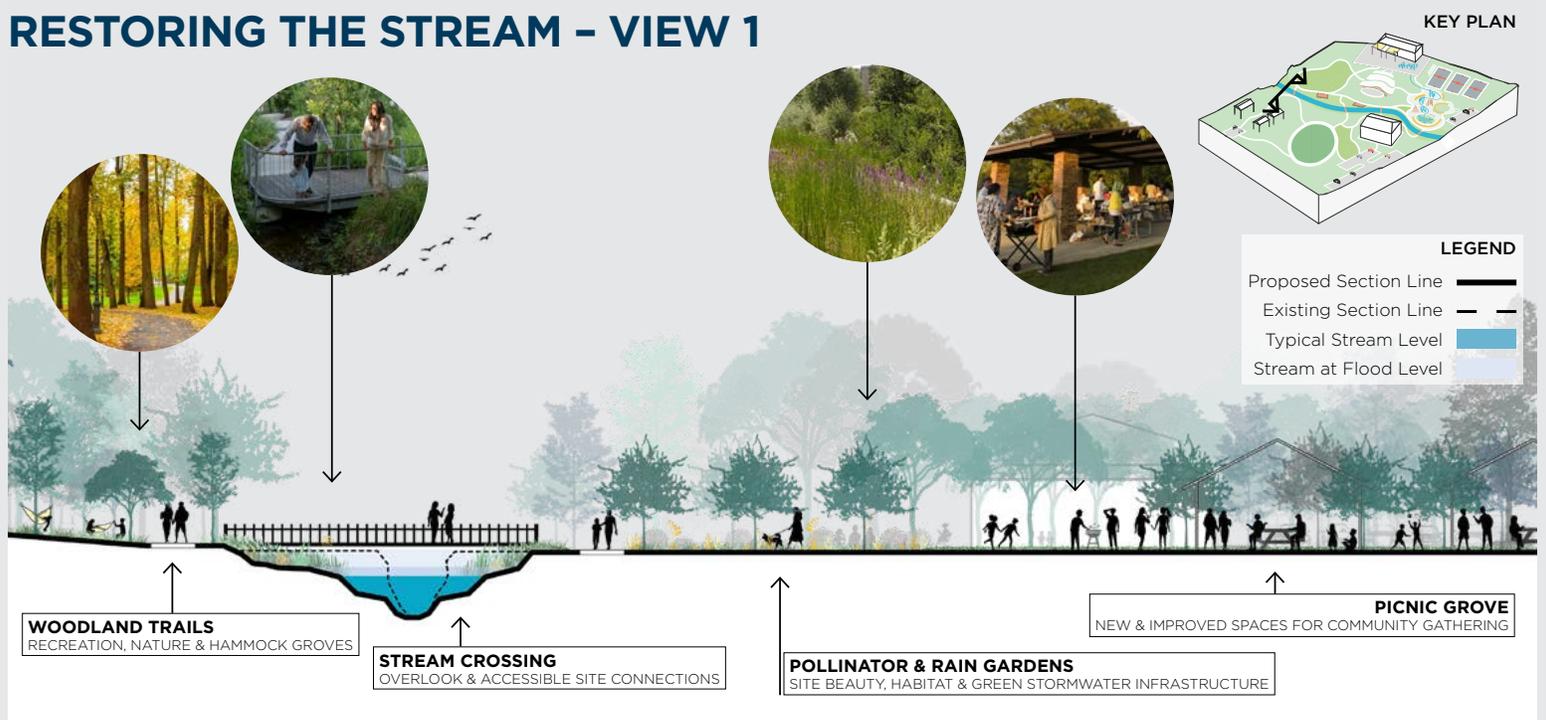
The design team studied the subtle meanders and sinuosity of Adkin Branch to determine an appropriate maximum radius for the new stream alignment. The proposed alignment has a series of small curves and one larger northward meander that pulls the stream away from the gymnastics center — and toward the play elements and site features on the site's northern half — while leaving room for it to gently curve back to the outlet that runs under McAdoo.

The proposed realignment is one critical piece of this conceptual stream channel design, creating greater complexity and health of the channel while allowing the stream to become a more prominent feature throughout the site.

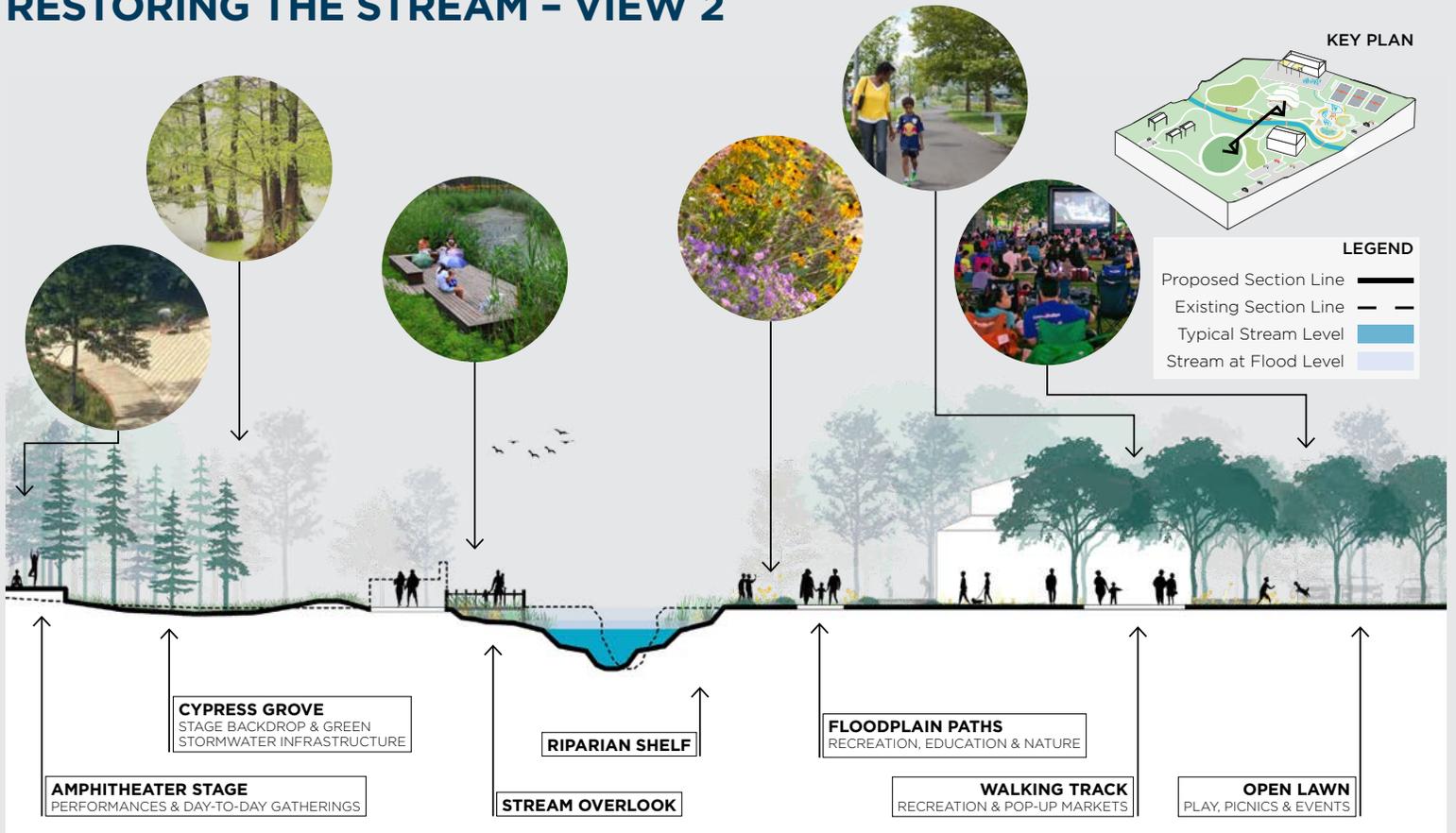
The stream cross-section is the other critical piece of the site. Currently the stream is a typical urban incised channel, with steep banks that have been cut and eroded over time. The proposed cross-section is much wider, with shallower banks and added floodplain benches that can support stable meadow and wooded plant communities.

This new cross-section would dramatically improve the stream's stability and floodplain function; create valuable wildlife habitat; and open up views to the water. Overall, the cross-section provides an expanded and diverse riparian corridor, with trails, boardwalks, overlooks, and crossings.

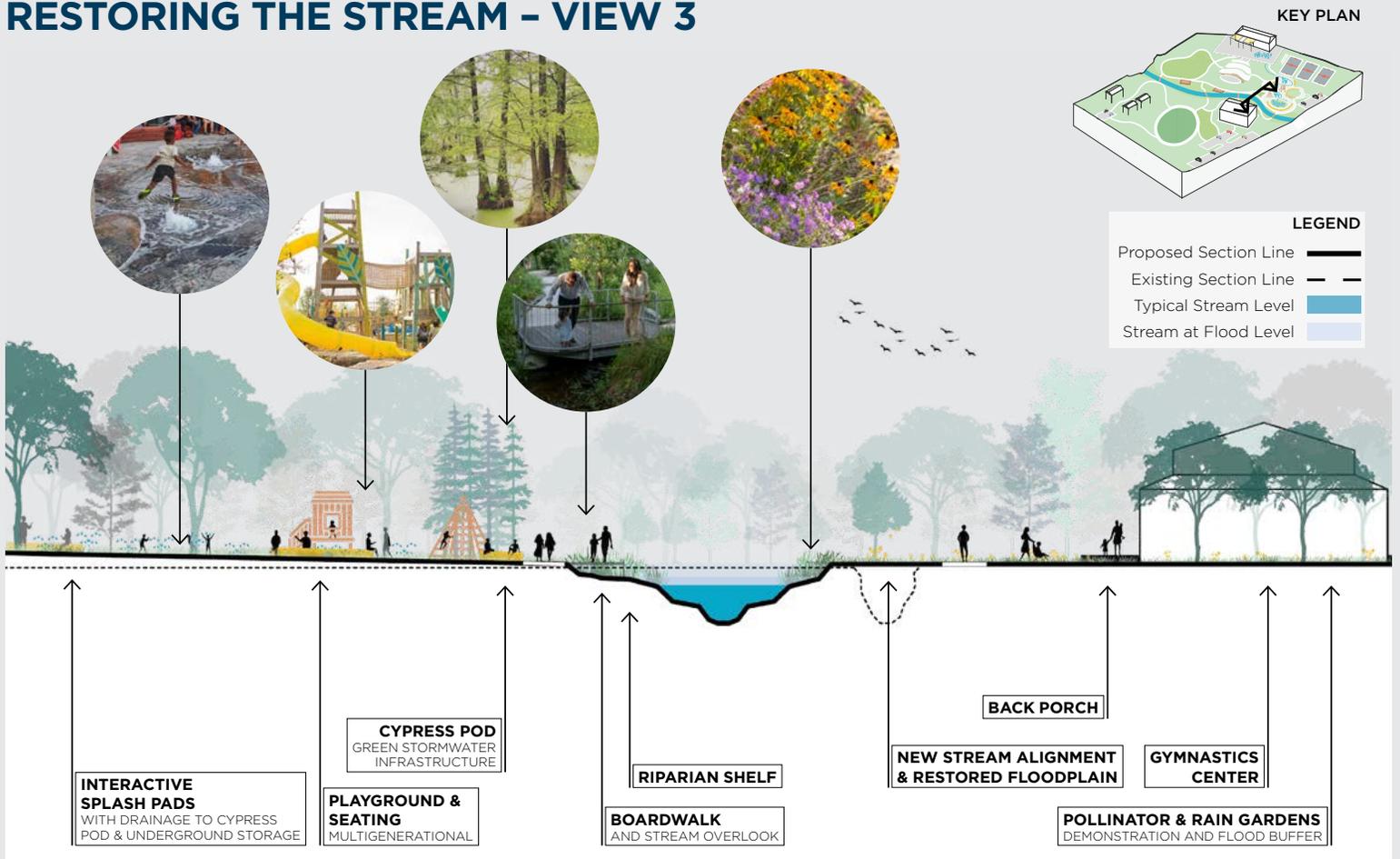
## RESTORING THE STREAM - VIEW 1



# RESTORING THE STREAM - VIEW 2



# RESTORING THE STREAM - VIEW 3



## GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The Emma Webb Park master plan envisions a parkwide system of green infrastructure that absorbs stormwater and creates beautiful park experiences:

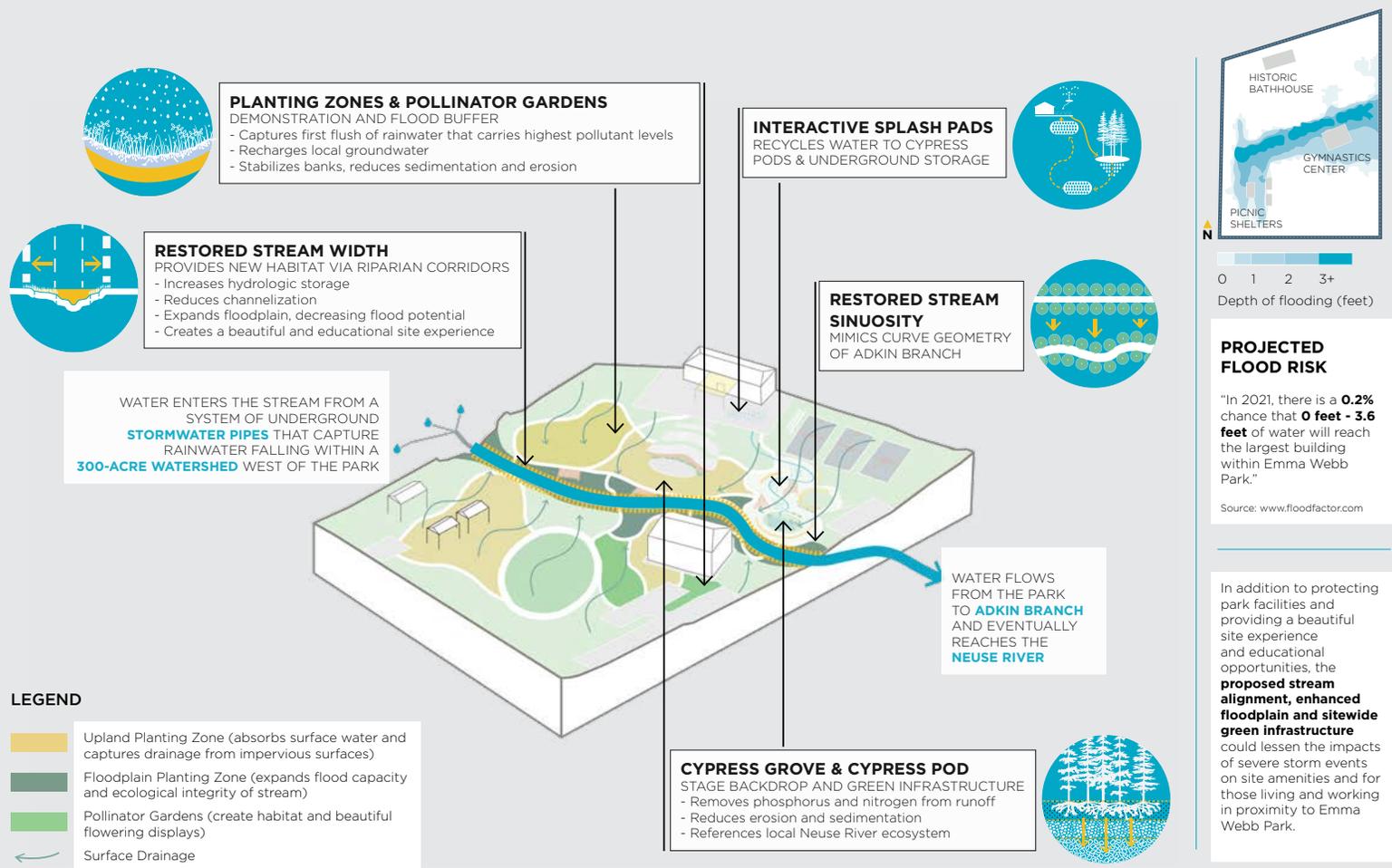
**Stream Restoration:** The naturalized stream restoration is the most prominent example of green infrastructure, using native ecosystems, a restored floodplain, and a stabilized channel to contain and absorb stormwater.

**Cypress Pods and Rain Gardens:** Rain gardens will capture runoff from existing and proposed impervious surfaces, including from buildings, plazas, the amphitheater, paths, and parking lots.

**Native Planting:** Large areas of the site would be converted from mowed turf to meadow or woodland landscapes, which can absorb 30–40% more stormwater than a standard lawn.

**Rainwater Harvesting:** Above-ground cisterns located near gardens and buildings are a highly visible way to educate park visitors about the benefits of capturing and reusing rainwater during storms. A rainwater harvesting and recirculating system for the series of splash pads would capture stormwater in underground storage, pump that water to feed the splash pads, rout the water through an aboveground interactive channel, and absorb the water again into site gardens and the underground storage.

## ABSORBING FLOODWATERS WITH GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE





EMMA WEBB PARK MASTER PLAN  
**RECOMMENDATIONS  
AND NEXT STEPS**

# MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

The Emma Webb Park master planning process generated much community publicity and enthusiasm for restoring the park over the long term. Project partners can maintain momentum built during the master planning process through design and planning next steps and temporary park activation. The recommendations below were developed by Design Workshop, with input from project partners:

## NEXT STEPS FOR DESIGN AND PLANNING

Further design and planning work is needed to refine the conceptual master plan designs and project cost estimates. Typically, the conceptual design phase would be followed by phases of Schematic Design, Design Development, and Construction Documentation before putting project elements out to bid for construction.

The design could be refined further in order to develop cost estimates. Flood considerations on and around the site could be further analyzed. These critical next steps can then inform further prioritization and scoping of the design elements, eligibility for a greater range of funding sources such as state and federal grants, and advancement into pre-construction stages. A site survey can inform future design and planning phases.

## TEMPORARY PARK ACTIVATION

That Emma Webb Park goes largely unused stands in stark contrast to the lively vision laid out by community members and the park master plan. In the short term, [temporary park activation](#) such as site events, programming, and temporary installations can bring life to Emma Webb Park, even as the city refines and builds out the full master plan vision.

## FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

A dedicated, community-based project advisory group can build support and assess funding options for Emma Webb Park and realize this master plan. Many grant programs could be a strong fit for various elements of the Emma Webb Park master plan, including future phases of planning and design. The table on the following page lists some grants that would be a good fit for various park elements.



This public art piece at a park in Raleigh, North Carolina, is an example of temporary site activation. Here, an exhibit called 'Our Reflective History' features glass portraits of founding members of the historic Rochester Heights neighborhood, with signage directing people to neighborhood oral histories. This art installation offers a place to gather and reflect during design of the permanent park features, and the glass portraits will be integrated into the future park pavilion.

## FUNDING NEXT STEPS

GRANT OPPORTUNITY	Listed Funding Maximum	Required Match?	'BEST FIT' MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS				
			Stream Restoration	Sitewide Green Infrastructure and Restoration	Recreation & Gathering	Bathroom Renovation	Future Phases of Planning and Design
North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund	\$500k	<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
North Carolina Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$500k	<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
North Carolina Land and Water Fund		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>
North Carolina Clean Water State Revolving Fund (1% interest loan)	\$20m		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
North Carolina Water Resources Development Grant	50% of nonfederal cost	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				<input type="radio"/>
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program	\$50k		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>
Environmental Protection Agency Urban Waters Small Grant Program	\$60k		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
North Carolina Small Cities Community Development Block Program							<input type="radio"/>
EPA Environmental Education Grants	\$100k	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program	\$500k	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				<input type="radio"/>
KaBOOM! Playground Grants	\$15k				<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

# REFERENCES

## PARK ACTIVATION RESOURCES

Toolkits that offer several short-term strategies to transform underused public sites into community destinations:

- [Safe Places, Actives Spaces! A Community Playbook for Transforming Public Spaces in Your Neighborhood](#), City of New York
- [District of Columbia Public Space Activation & Stewardship Guide](#), District of Columbia

## PARK FUNDING RESOURCES

Resources that compile best practices and success stories for raising public and private funds for local park investments:

- [Park and Recreation Professionals' Guide to Fundraising](#), National Recreation and Park Association
- [Investing in Equitable Urban Park Systems: Emerging Funding Strategies and Tools](#), Urban Institute

## RECENT KINSTON FLOOD STUDY

This 2021 study identifies a series of potential actions to reduce flood risk in Kinston and surrounding communities, including references to Emma Webb Park, its stream channel, and stream crossings such as bridges and culverts near the park:

- [City of Kinston Flood Resiliency Study Technical Memo](#), City of Kinston, Environmental Defense Fund, Ecosystem Planning & Restoration

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Environmental Protection Agency provides a range of resources about green infrastructure:

- [What is Green Infrastructure](#) and [Green Infrastructure Handbook](#), Environmental Protection Agency