

Liberty State Park Design Task Force Meeting

March 2, 2024



NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

Design Task Force Agenda



10:00 Commissioner's Welcome

- Revitalization Status
- Meeting Goals & Path Forward

10:10 LSP-North (Phase 1B) Design Recommendations

- Task Force Review of Public Comments
- Programming Discussion

11:10 LSP-South (Phase 2) Planning Recommendations

- Task Force Visioning Exercise
- Milestone Discussion

12:00 Lunch Break

12:30 Open Public Comment

Commissioner's Welcome

LSP Design Task Force Charge



The advisory LSP-D Task Force is charged with providing recommendations to DEP concerning:

1. **SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS** to improve public use and enjoyment of conservation and recreation areas within LSP; and
2. **A LONG-TERM MASTER PLAN** that includes (a) improvement of park facilities, programs, and amenities, (b) creation of new transportation and mobility services to and within the park, and (c) further preservation of the park's natural resources and wildlife and protection against climate change.

Task Force members are required to consider public comments, and those comments must inform the advisory recommendations that Task Force members share with DEP.



Commissioner's Welcome

Revitalization Program Status: LSP-Interior



LSP-Interior (Phase 1A) Cleanup, Restoration & Resilience

- Now underway: broke ground on 234-acre cleanup and restoration in October 2023
- End result: a 165-acre central park at the heart of LSP that provides opportunities for passive recreation, conservation activities, and outdoor environmental education atop and within a nature-based flood risk reduction project
- Also Includes: cleanup of site of future 50+ acre Southern Athletics Hub
- **DEP IS NOT "FLOODING" THE PARK**
- Phase 1A will add climate and flood resilience features that better protect LSP and neighbors from both 100- and 500-year storm events



100% DESIGNED, FULLY FUNDED, CONTRACTED, AND IN PROGRESS!

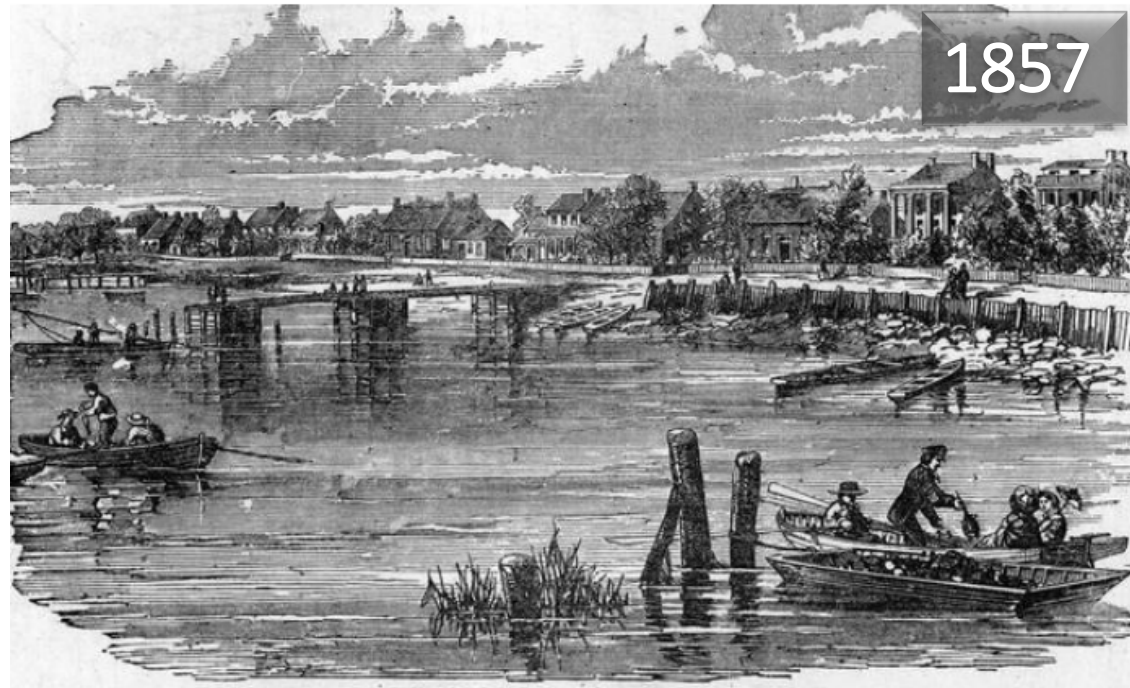
1760



JERSEY CITY, FROM COMMUNIPAW COVE.

1760

1857



1883



1941



Commissioner's Welcome

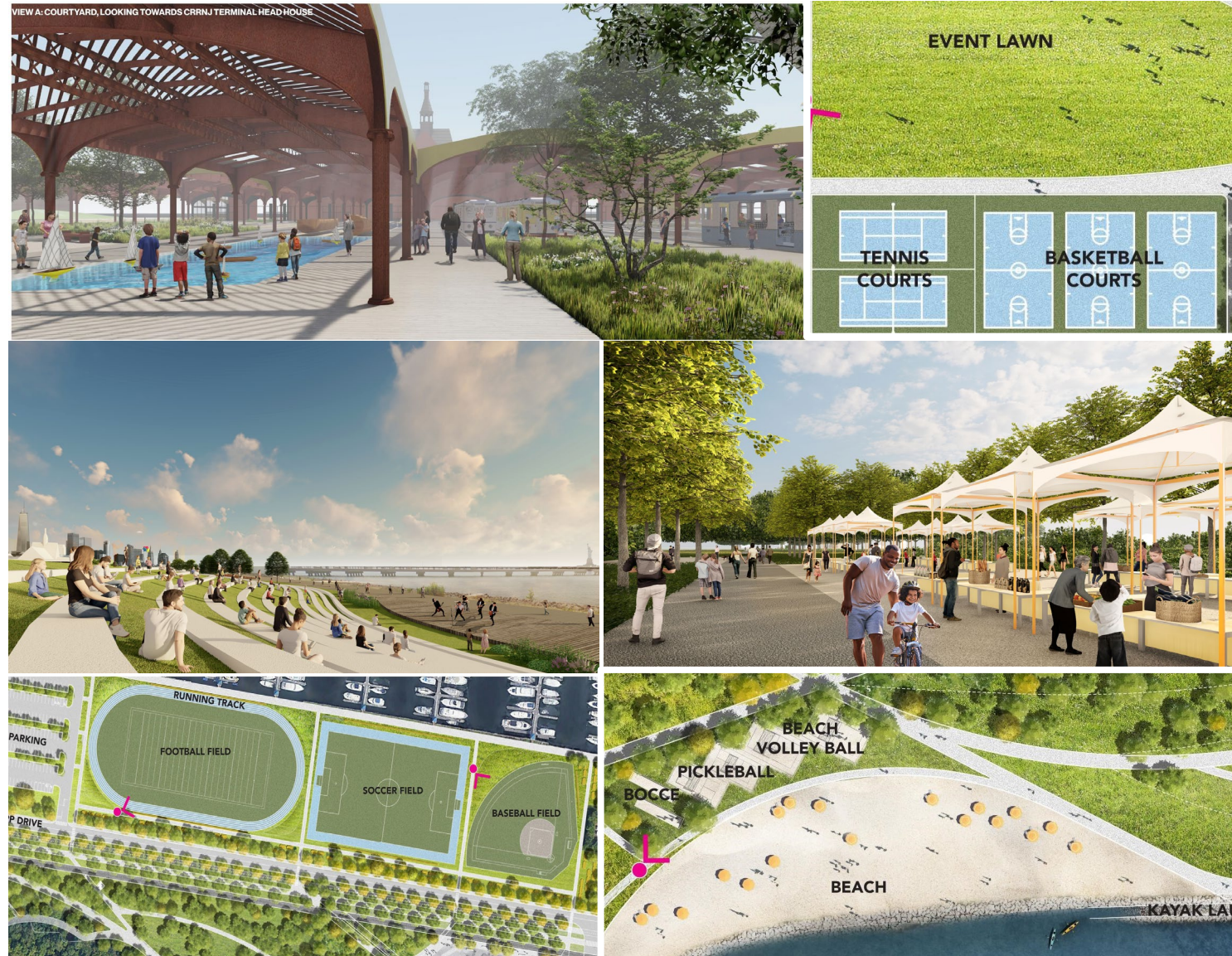
Revitalization Program Status: LSP-North



LSP-North (Phase 1B)

Active Recreation, Arts & Culture

- Immediate development of new amenities along the Audrey Zapp Drive Corridor
- Restoration of the CRRNJ train sheds into community, arts, and education spaces
- Northern Athletics Hub to include ball fields and courts, and other active recreation
- Waterfront amphitheater, marketplace, spray park, and playgrounds
- TODAY: Task Force to provide recommendations in view of ~2,700 public comments collected
- Next: DEP finalizes plan based on comments and recommendations, contracts engineered designs needed to bid and begin construction, informs legislature of additional funding needs



Commissioner's Welcome

Revitalization Program Status: LSP-South



LSP-South (Phase 2)

Southern & Waterfront Area

- Goal: Create a Master Plan for the Morris Pesin, Thomas McGovern, and Freedom Way Corridors
- Plan and design the 50+ acre Southern Athletics Hub to enable construction upon completion of interior cleanup now underway
- Plan outdoor public recreation and conservation improvements, including habitat enhancement at the Caven Point Peninsula Natural Area
- Secure and improve ample unstructured spaces capable of hosting large public celebrations
- **TODAY:** Task Force provides recommendations for uses and features throughout LSP-South
- *Next: Comments & recommendations used to develop concepts for further planning discussion and direct public engagement at open house*

LSP-South Visioning

imagine improvements throughout the southern half of Liberty State Park

**elements identified here offered only to spark discussion*



SAVE-THE-DATES FOR NEXT LSP-SOUTH PLANNING MEETINGS:
April 9, May 4, May 21

Design Task Force Agenda



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Public Comments on LSP-North (Phase 1 B)



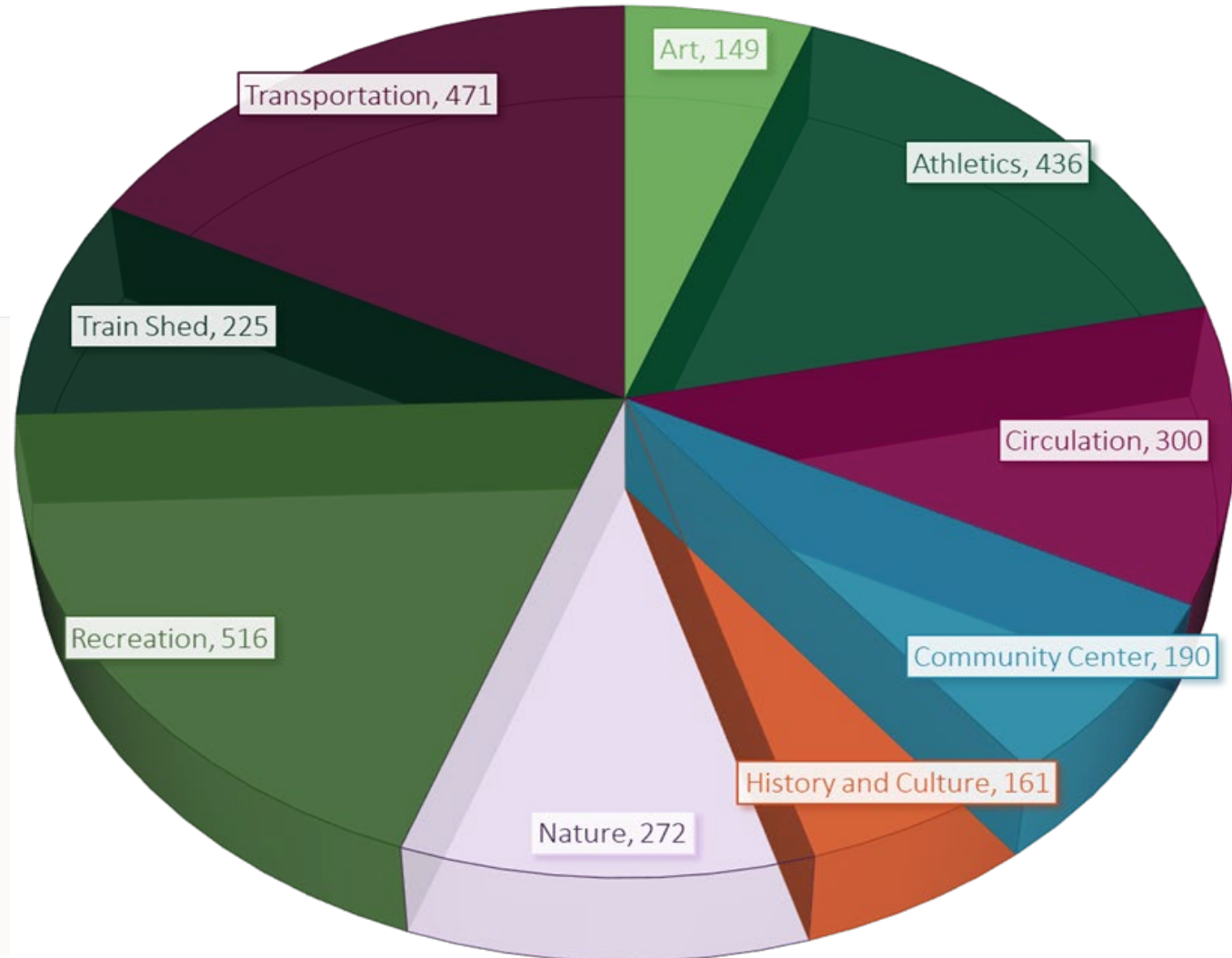
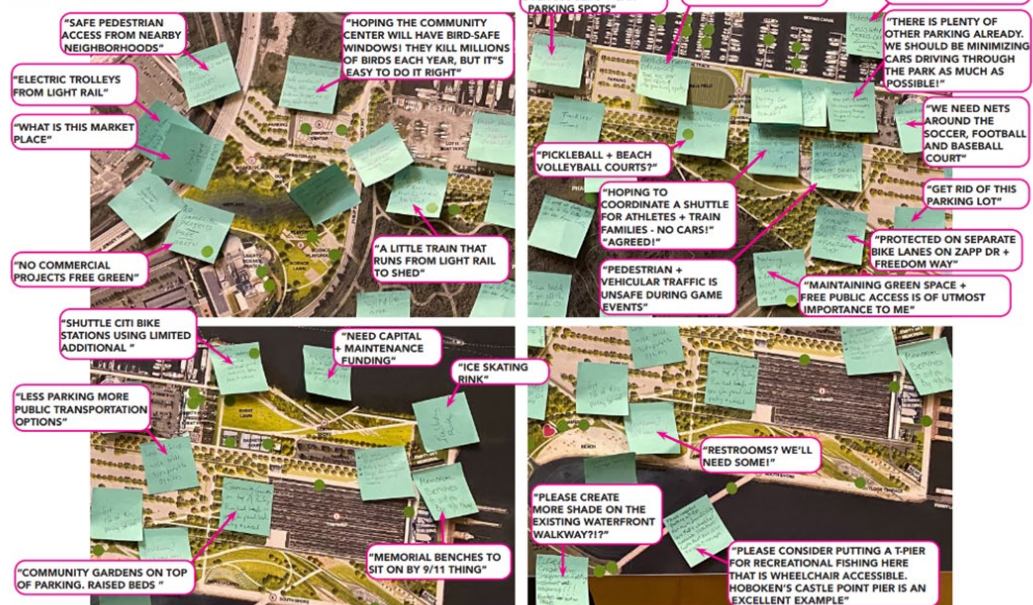
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209 Live Public Comments

10/18/23 Open House

2511 Online Public Comments

OCTOBER 18th, 2023 PUBLIC MEETING GENERAL IMPRESSIONS





Clear Consensus: Restore and Reuse Historic CRRNJ Trainshed

- Public comments show overwhelming support for restoration and reuse of train sheds, which has also been a consistent point of consensus among Task Force members
- Public suggests a wide range of potential uses for the space, including rail history exhibit, outdoor market, fitness classes, food trucks, and open space for community activities and events

Task Force Recommendations?

DEP notes public comments support:

- Preserving the historical and simple aspects of the train shed
- Emphasizing the historical and cultural significance of the train shed, its importance as a connection to the park's industrial and transportation roots
- Avoiding overcrowding or overprogramming of the space and to focus on historical preservation and the unique natural environment of the park
- Involving historic preservation organizations and community groups at the train shed has the potential to serve the community needs while also attracting tourists



Support for Historic Preservation and Cultural Celebrations

- Clear support for installments and events that honor history and celebrate diverse cultures
- Comments call for thoughtful displays that do not saturate the open space or become overtly *touristy*

Task Force Recommendations?

DEP notes public comments support:

- Permitting diverse cultural celebrations in designated location(s)
- Interest in historic reenactments and exhibits
- Preservation and interpretation of LSP's historical significance, particularly related to critical campaigns of the American Revolution





Support for Ball Fields & Courts; Concerns about Size, Density, Accessibility & Maintenance

- Support for development of ball fields and courts that are of reasonable scale, well-maintained, and managed to ensure broad public accessibility (*i.e.*, not exclusive) and avoid disruptions to natural park features
- Concerns that overdevelopment of athletics in LSP-North could create logistic challenges, such as added traffic and parking congestion, and increased demand on waste management infrastructure due to sporting events

Task Force Recommendations?

DEP notes public comments call for careful attention to:

- Reservation systems for certain athletic facilities
- Preserving the tranquility of nearby residential areas (*e.g.*, potential for traffic congestion and noise pollution)
- Potential for displacement of marina users
- Adequate lighting, maintenance to ensure athletic facilities are safe and contribute positively to the community
- Concerns that athletics could displace natural features and disrupt ecological balance



LSP-North Athletics Hub: Alternatives

Phase 1B



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LSP-North Athletics Hub: Alternatives

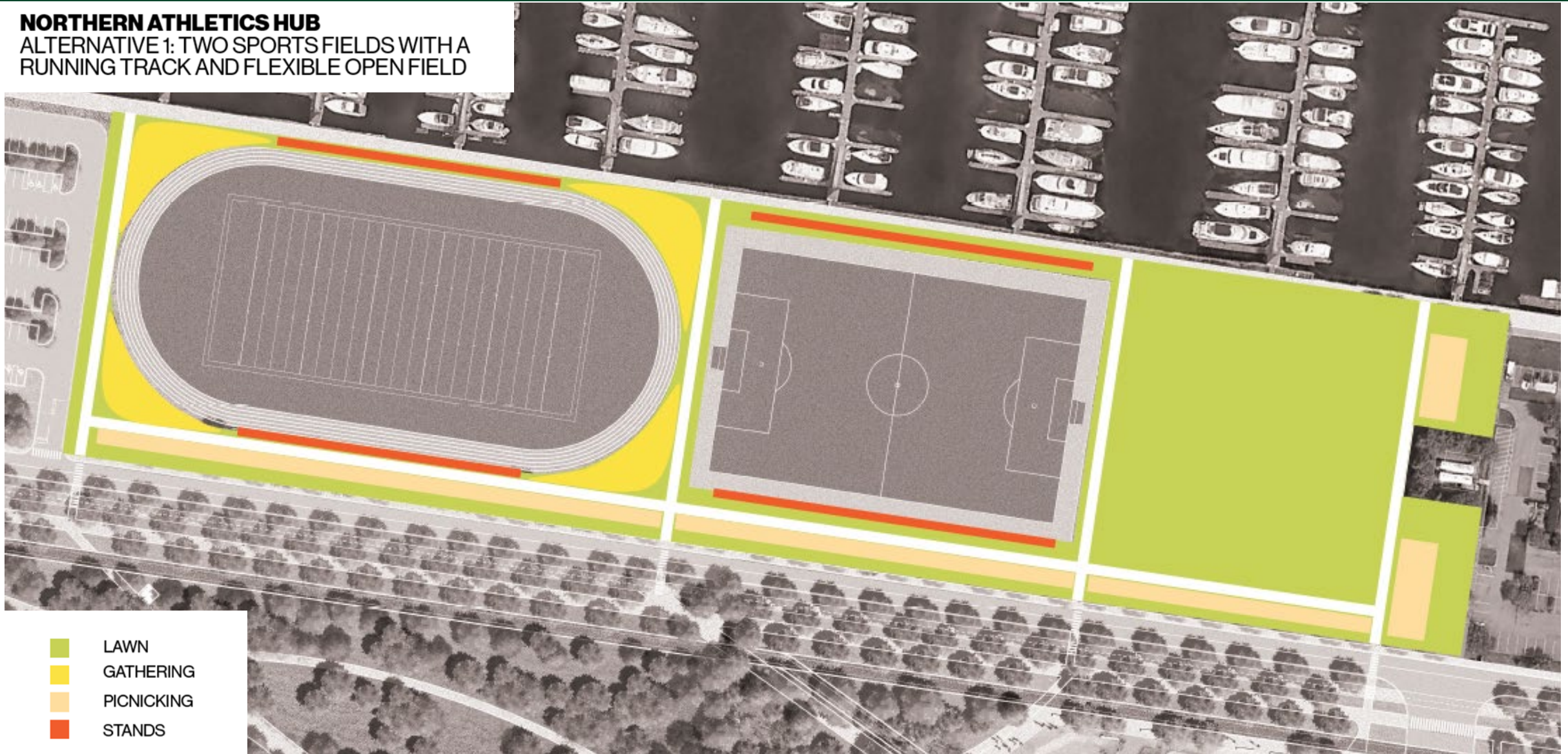
Phase 1B



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NORTHERN ATHLETICS HUB

ALTERNATIVE 1: TWO SPORTS FIELDS WITH A
RUNNING TRACK AND FLEXIBLE OPEN FIELD



- LAWN
- GATHERING
- PICNICKING
- STANDS

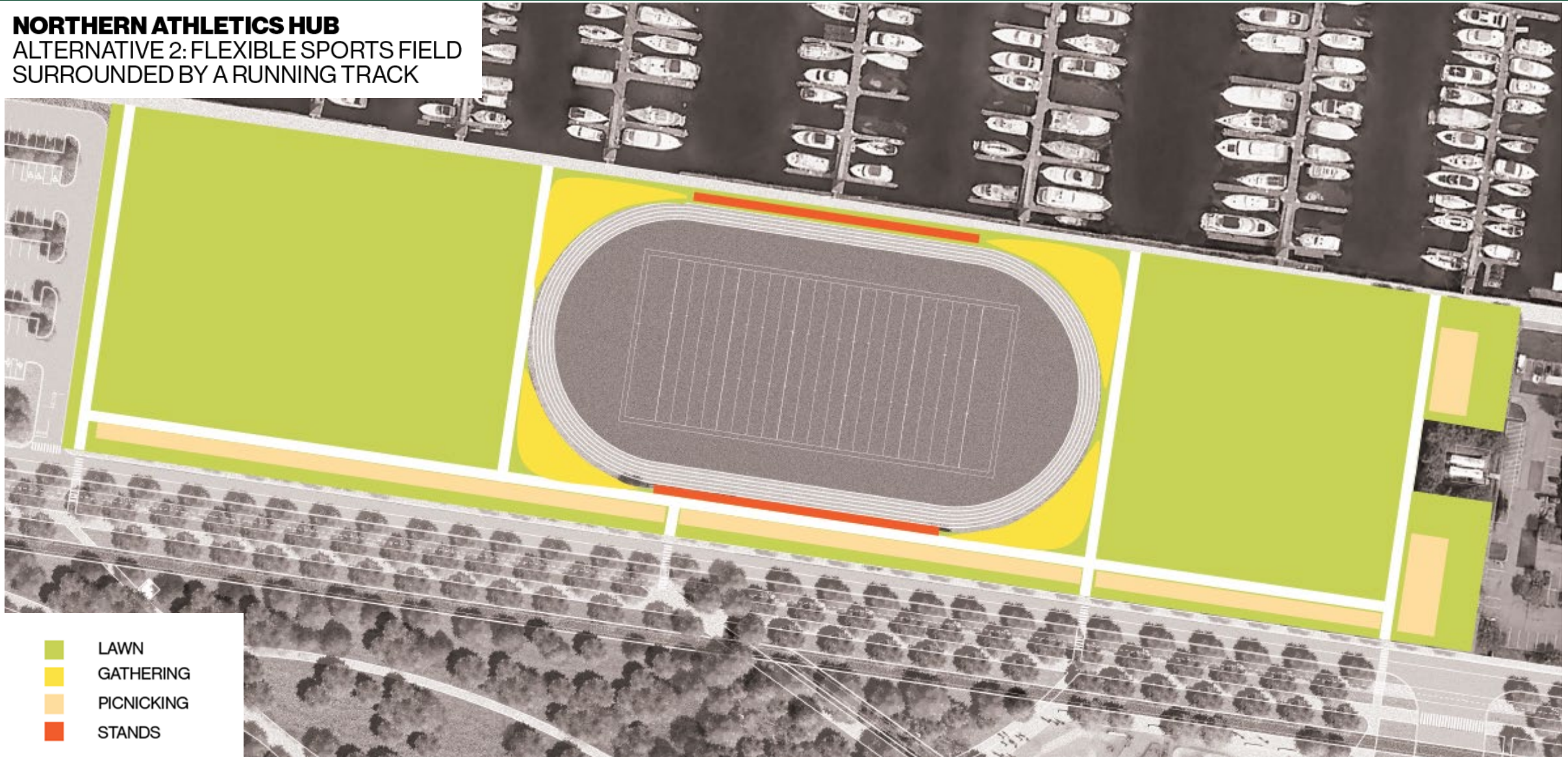
LSP-North Athletics Hub: Alternatives

Phase 1B



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NORTHERN ATHLETICS HUB ALTERNATIVE 2: FLEXIBLE SPORTS FIELD SURROUNDED BY A RUNNING TRACK



- LAWN
- GATHERING
- PICNICKING
- STANDS

LSP-North Athletics Hub: Alternatives

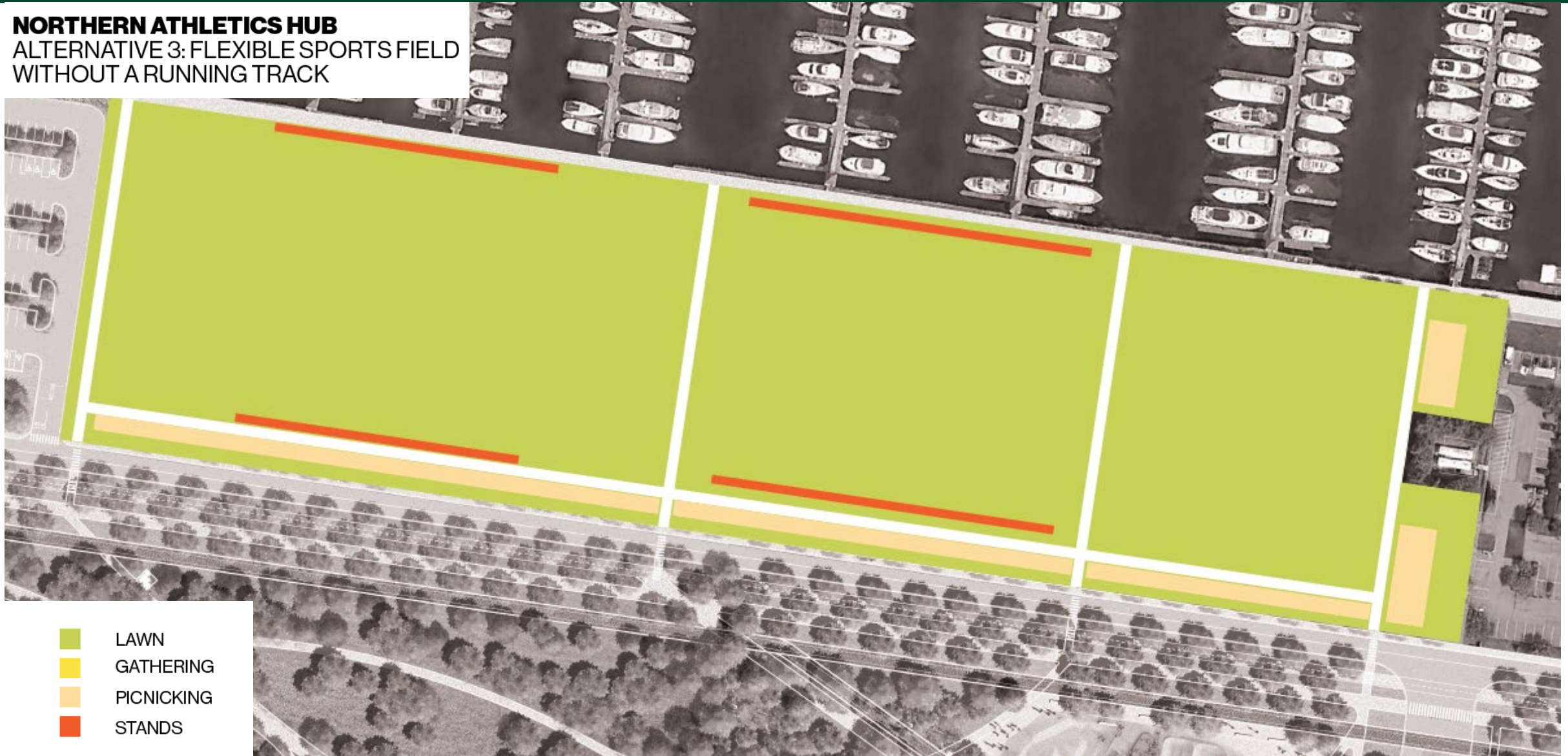
Phase 1B



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NORTHERN ATHLETICS HUB

ALTERNATIVE 3: FLEXIBLE SPORTS FIELD
WITHOUT A RUNNING TRACK



- LAWN
- GATHERING
- PICNICKING
- STANDS

LSP-North Athletics Hub: Alternatives

Phase 1B



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NORTHERN ATHLETICS HUB

ALTERNATIVE 4: 6 BASKETBALL COURTS + 4
TENNIS COURTS + 6 PICKLEBALL COURTS



- LAWN
- GATHERING
- PICNICKING
- STANDS



Call for Careful Selection with Integration in the Park and Local Focus

- Support for careful selection and placement of art, with suggestions for using local artists and ensuring that any installations blend in with the natural environment rather than competing with it.

Task Force Recommendations?

DEP notes public comments call for careful attention to:

- Importance of prioritizing natural elements and historical features
- Involvement of the local artistic community and the potential for showcasing local and regional artists
- Assertions that the natural beauty of the park should be preserved, and call for non-intrusive and limited art installations
- Support for outdoor installations and changing art shows

LSP-North: Amphitheatre Alternatives

North of Cove



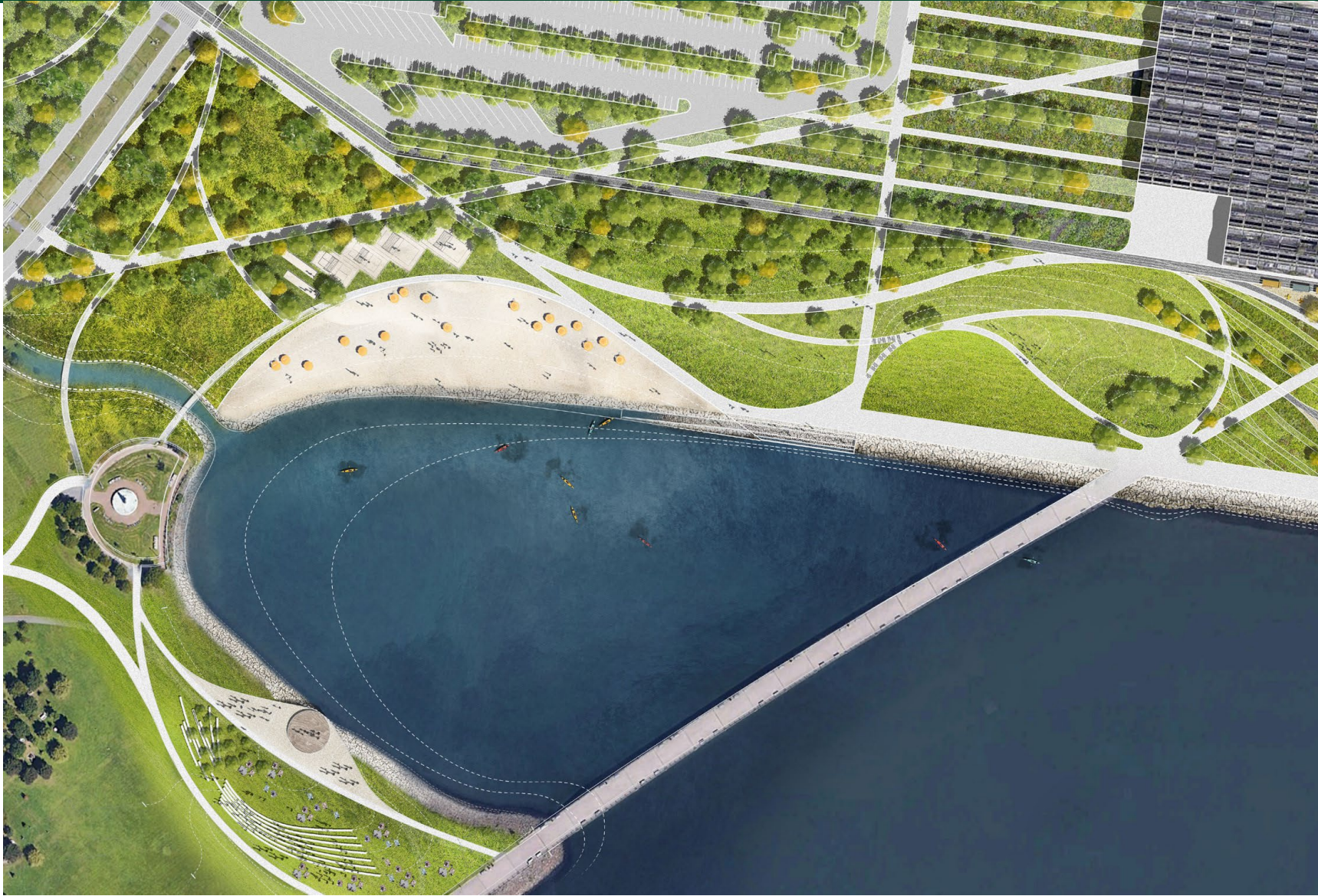
LSP-North: Amphitheatre Alternatives

North of Cove



LSP-North: Amphitheatre Alternatives

South of Cove



LSP-North: Amphitheatre Alternatives

South of Cove



LSP-North: Amphitheatre Alternatives

Seating Variations

GRASS TERRACES



GRASS TERRACES WITH CONCRETE SEATING



GRASS TERRACES WITH WOOD SEATING



GRASS TERRACES WITH WOOD SEATING





Support for Passive Recreation and Natural Elements

- Strong preference for activities that maintain the peaceful charm of the park such as walking, bird watching, and picnicking.
- Emphasis on the importance of balancing the diverse needs and preferences of park users while maintaining its natural and peaceful ambiance.

Task Force Recommendations?

DEP notes public comments call for careful attention to:

- Preference for passive recreational activities
- Preserving the natural and peaceful character of the park
- Concerns about potential changes that could detract from the current tranquil and green space
- Importance of balancing the diverse needs of park users while maintaining its peaceful ambiance
- Concerns about potential congestion or overly commercializing the space



Support for Community Center; Concerns about equitable use and operational considerations

- Support for the community center and a desire for the center to be inclusive and accessible to all
- Concerns include cost and funding of maintenance, cost of membership, qualifications of staff, organizational structure

Task Force Recommendations?

DEP notes public comments call for careful attention to:

- Impacts on the surrounding nature
- Practicality of the center: rate of utilization, availability of public transit options, and potential overcrowding at events/activities
- Focus on serving the needs of seniors and individuals of all abilities
- Suggested specific features i.e. basketball courts, pool, cultural events, community rooms
- Call for additional public engagement to ensure a community driven effort





Support for Preserving and Focus on Natural Landscapes

- Strong emphasis on preserving and enhancing natural elements, including native plants, wetlands, and habitats for wildlife.
- Advocate for minimal intervention in the park and focus on maintaining open green spaces and natural habitats and a clear desire for nature trails and green areas.

Task Force Recommendations?

DEP notes public comments call for careful attention to:

- Desire for more elements that allow people to feel surrounded by nature.
- Importance of the habitat for diverse bird species; strong desire to protect the park's role as a stopping point for migratory birds.
- Concerns about the park's resilience to environmental stressors and climate change
- Concerns that potential development could detract from the natural elements of the park
- Potential impacts of adding athletic fields and desire to relocate recreational elements to certain areas preserve more green space and nature.





Support for Shuttle Service; Call to Consider Mobility throughout the Park

- A variety of potential benefits of shuttle service were noted including improving accessibility to the park, especially for individuals with physical challenges or mobility issues.
- More generally improving mobility from park amenities to existing parking pedestrian and bike facilities was noted

Task Force Recommendations?

DEP notes public comments call for careful attention to:

- Appreciation the shuttle would cut down on residents' commute to the park.
- Suggestions for specific route/stops
- Preference for environmentally-friendly transportation options e.g. low-impact shuttles/electric buses
- Potential impact on the park's amenities, historical significance, and existing flora and fauna.



Support for Promoting Safety and Tranquility

- Support for separate pathways for pedestrians and cyclists that maintain the peaceful and contemplative nature of the park

Task Force Recommendations?

DEP notes public comments call for careful attention to:

- Concern that certain additions or changes could disrupt this atmosphere.
- Concerns of a rail system's potential impact on the park's peaceful/natural environment
- Support for more public transit access to and within the park due to
 - Limited public transit access to and within the park
 - Low rates of automobile ownership in the county



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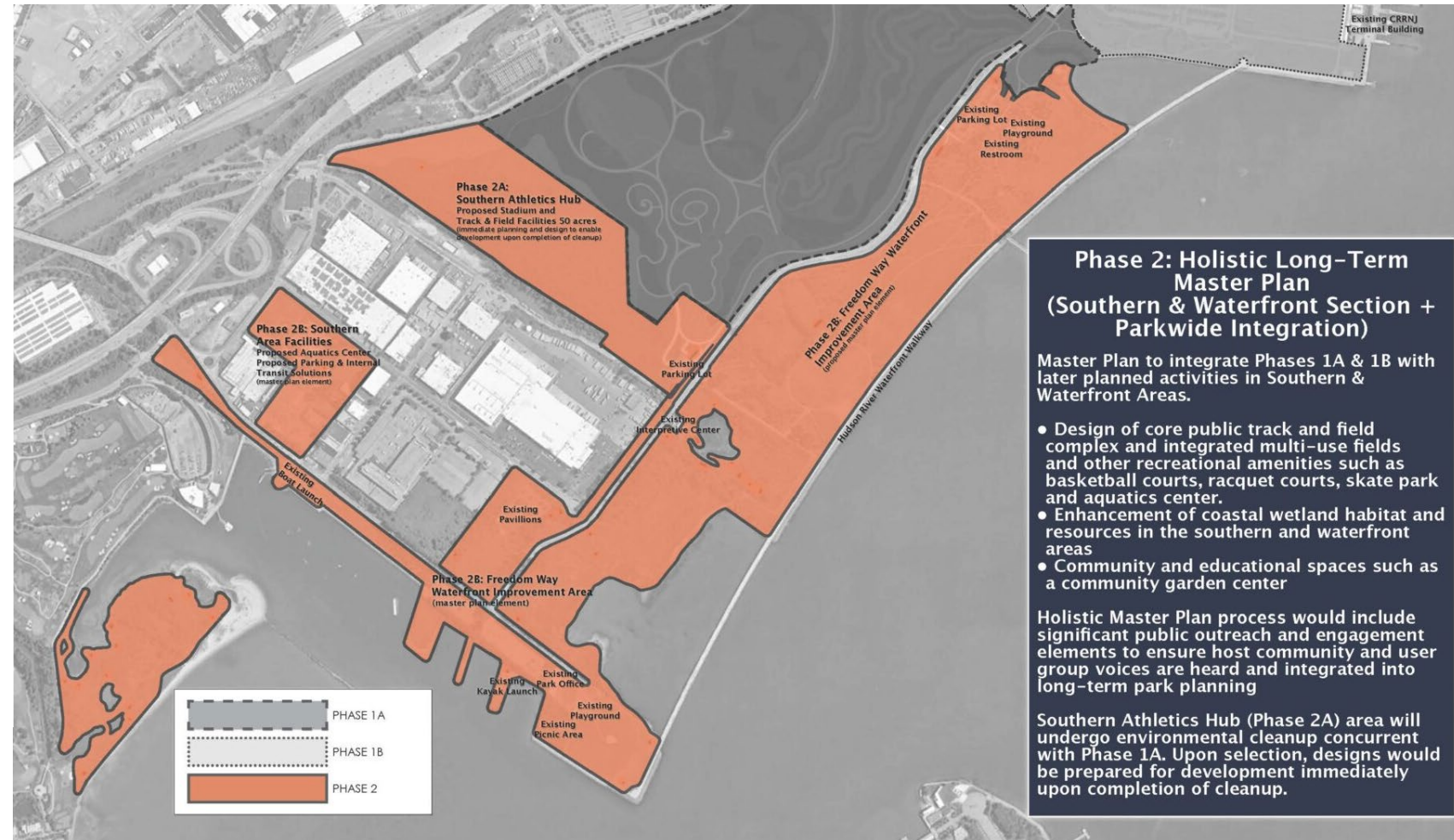
12:30 Open Public Comment

LSP-South Master Plan (Phase 2)



LSP-South Planning

- Goal: develop conceptual designs and a master plan for the waterfront and southern areas of the park.
- Improvement ideas include:
 - Active recreation and athletic facility elements along Thomas McGovern Drive
 - Unstructured recreational and community features like trails, overlooks, pavilions.
 - Natural resource restoration throughout other areas, including Caven Point Natural Area



LSP-South Master Planning

(Phase 2)



MARCH

APRIL

MAY

ASSESSMENT
AND VISIONING

CONCEPT
DEVELOPMENT

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND
CONTINUED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



MAJOR MILESTONES

MAJOR MILESTONES

MAJOR MILESTONES

MAJOR MILESTONES

Technical Analysis

Concept Development

Master Plan Drafting

Master Plan Refinement

Survey Work

Task Force Meeting and
Public Comment Session 2
(April 9)

Public Open House
(May 4)

Task Force Meeting and
Public Comment Session 3
(May 21)

Master Plan Visioning
Public Comment Session 1
(March 2)

LSP-South Visioning

imagine improvements throughout the southern half of Liberty State Park

**elements identified here offered only to spark discussion*



Programming Considerations

- Maintaining key existing assets such as the Interpretive Center, Camp Liberty, and Green Ring
- Creating community spaces, gardens

VISIONING KEY*

Athletics & Recreation Uses

- Skate Park
- Athletics Support Amenities / Parking
- Multipurpose Athletic Fields Track & Field Complex
- Playgrounds / Play Features
- Fitness / History Trail
- Aquatic Center
- Bike / Scooter Rentals

Natural & Waterfront Uses

- 1 Living Shoreline
- 2 Coastal Wetland Enhancement
- 3 Habitat Enhancement
- 4 Canopy Improvement
- 5 Waterfront Promenade
- 6 Waterfront Activity Amenities
- 7 Nature-based Seating

Park Amenities

- A Pavilion Improvements
- B Seasonal Event Space / Picnic Area
- C Welcome Center / Park Operations Facility
- D Concessions & Restrooms

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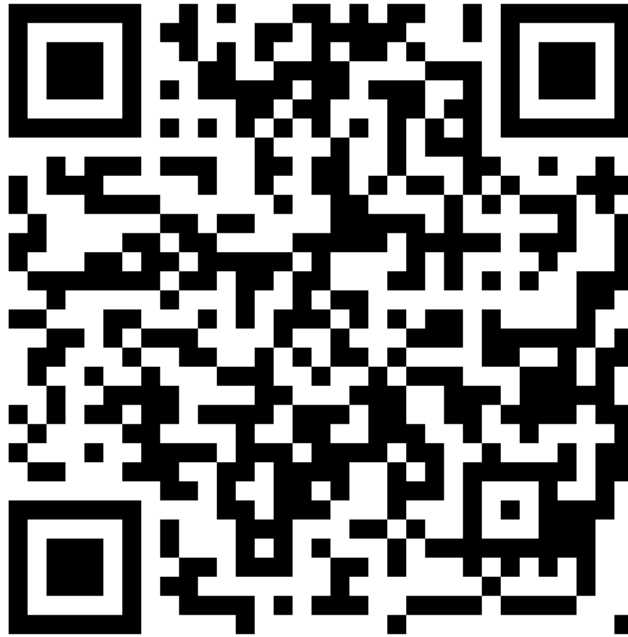
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Public Comment Session



dep.nj.gov/revitalizelsp/comment/