

eliza howell park

CONCEPT PLAN



September 2018

acknowledgements



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Sidewalk Detroit is a non-profit, community arts presenting organization that celebrates the landscape and culture of Detroit through presentation of original place-based and traditional performance, installation art, and land art. Sidewalk Detroit led the development of this plan.

This material is part of a study commissioned by Sidewalk Detroit. For usage and/or inquiries please email info@sidewalkdetroit.com

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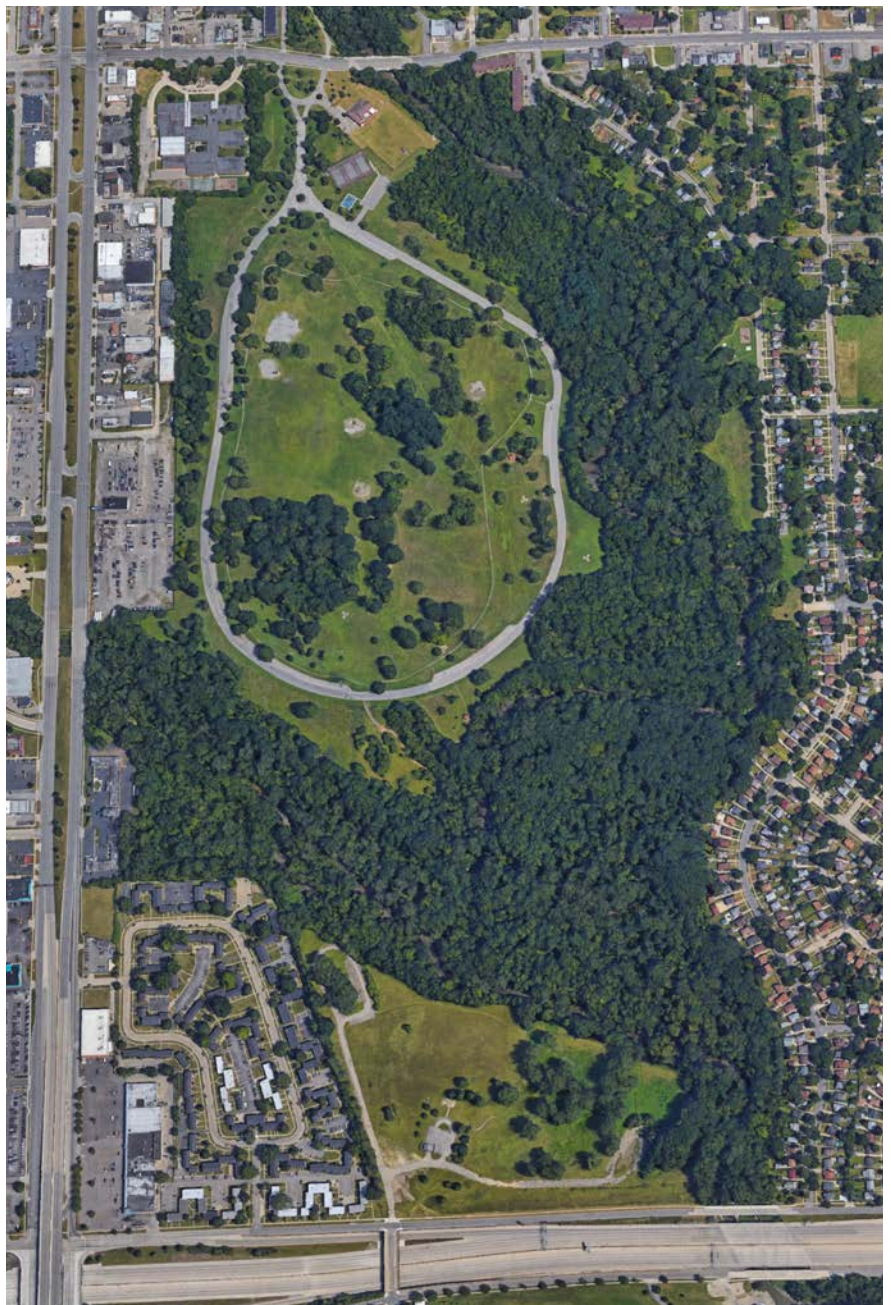
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overview

Through Sidewalk Detroit's use of Eliza Howell Park for various programs and events, it became evident that the non-profit organization wanted to get involved in not only bringing programs to the park but also assist in making and/or influencing physical improvements. To do so in context and with long-term sustainability in mind, funding was secured to lead the development of a vision and concept plan for Eliza Howell Park.

A 250-acre park in Detroit's northwest Brightmoor neighborhood, Eliza Howell Park is Detroit's 4th largest park and home to the confluence of two branches of the Rouge River.

The goal of this plan and vision for Eliza Howell Park is to inform improvements that Sidewalk Detroit can make in the near-term as well as to advocate and influence investment in Eliza Howell Park by the City and other potential funders and organizations.



process

Working with their established Community Leadership Team and building off several years of discussions, Sidewalk Detroit engaged livingLAB (landscape architects + planners) to assist in documenting and developing the vision for Eliza Howell Park. This was developed over approximately 4 months from March - June 2018.

data review + site walk

In March 2018, existing GIS data was collected to create a basemap for use during the project including aerial photography, parcel lines, floodplain, floodway, contour lines and existing utilities. The Sidewalk Detroit and livingLAB team walked and photographed the park to begin to better understand opportunities and constraints of the property.

community values + city meetings

Utilizing input previously gathered by Sidewalk Detroit, Community Values for the park were developed and modified over time. The Community Values serve as a framework to guide not only the development of the concept plan, but also guide future investment at Eliza Howell. The team also met with staff from the City General Services and Planning Departments three times over the 4-month process to discuss

community values, ensure awareness of the work as well as gather feedback on the vision and implementation strategy.

plan development + engagement

A concept plan was developed to reflect the drafted Community Values. The plan was discussed and modified based on feedback from the Community Leadership Team, city staff as well as input gathered at the Brightmoor Days event. The 31st Annual Brightmoor Community May Day Parade and Celebration is organized by Mt. Vernon Baptist

Church. This community event gathers hundreds of residents at Eliza Howell Park to enjoy food, live music, bounce houses, petting zoo, pony rides, face painting, balloon images, health screening, education, and more. Sidewalk Detroit set up a tent to share progress on the concept plan and gather input on attendees preferences and dreams for Eliza Howell Park.



community values for eliza howell park

engage nature

Support purposeful, active engagement with nature through the protection, restoration, and enhancement of natural areas.

be safe and welcoming

Create a safe and welcoming park that draws the community in.

respect current users

Ensure current user groups are not displaced by proposed improvements.

celebrate art

Incorporate and celebrate place-based nature art.

connect to people

Connect park spaces to neighborhoods while respecting wishes and privacy of neighbors.

be accessible to all

Ensure that the park is accessible to all ages and abilities.

be vibrant

Actively support programmed spaces within a natural setting.

be a gathering space

Focus on community gathering spaces that support a variety of uses and users.

be sustainable

Design for resiliency through sustainable design practices.

encourage wellness

Incorporate elements that encourage and support increased activity, wellness and fitness.

eliza howell concept plan

Using the Community Values for the park as a framework, as well as existing conditions and input gathered by Sidewalk Detroit and city staff, a concept plan for Eliza Howell Park was developed.

The Plan represents a long-term vision for the 250+ acre park focused on the desires of residents. This vision will inform Sidewalk Detroit's efforts to make physical change to the park; but perhaps more impactfully, will be used to continue to advocate for and influence investment by others at Eliza Howell Park.

The following pages capture an overview of the vision. While there are a number ideas for park improvements, the majority fall into 1 of 4 buckets. Within each of these four buckets is an overarching theme and goal to infuse art, nature and a character unique to the neighborhood into the park.

1 habitat protection + restoration

Eliza Howell Park is an environmentally rich and diverse property that includes significant forested areas and floodplain associated with the confluence of the Main Rouge River and the Upper Rouge River. The vision for the park supports habitat protection, restoration and enhancement including the reduction of mowed lawn areas. Significant acreage is proposed for prairie creation associated with wet meadows and rain gardens to support a variety of targeted species.

2 connectivity

A network of trails is envisioned within the park to connect park spaces to neighborhoods while respecting wishes and privacy of neighbors. A hierarchy of trails is envisioned with the regional spine of Detroit's planned Rouge Greenway Trail traversing the park. Primary trail entrances into the park are at Fenkell and Schoolcraft. A number of limestone and mulched spurs and loops are planned that will allow for quieter reflection and exploration of some of the parks more environmentally sensitive areas. A more formalized trail connection may be desired between the Rouge Greenway Trail and the Lyndon Greenway.

3 active recreation + wellness

Activity is proposed to be clustered in the northwest section of the park with a large pavilion for family reunions and events, restrooms for park and trail users, a unique and challenging playground, splash pad, and one improved soccer field and softball diamond. Signage is envisioned around the park to assist in wayfinding, encourage wellness, and educate with habitat and wildlife interpretation. Benches and picnic tables throughout will provide for places of respite and gathering.

4 spaces to gather

Gathering has historically been and continues to be a beloved use of Eliza Howell Park. The plan supports the community continuing to be able to have mowed spaces to gather and hold events and activities of various sizes such as Brightmoor Days, Orange | Gold | Green Autumn festival, music in the park, yoga, dance, drum lessons, etc.

existing floodplain



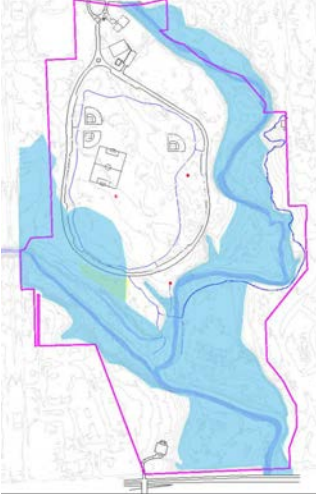
Utilizing the community values and input from a variety of stakeholders, these thumbnails illustrate the design process that led to the development of the concept plan.



existing tree canopy



existing prairie



proposed regional trail



precedent imagery



proposed limestone paths



precedent imagery



proposed mulched paths



precedent imagery



prairie habitat



precedent imagery



green infrastructure



precedent imagery



amenities



precedent imagery





LEGEND

- Prairie Restoration | Protection
- Forested | Reforested Area
- Open | Flex Area
- Wetland | Wet Meadow | Rain Garden
- River
- Regional Trail
- Secondary Pathway (limestone or mulch)
- Road | Parking

I-96

envisioned elements

enhanced entrance

new signage, simplified entrance with 3-way stop at circle, convert from one way to 2-way road throughout.

road + parking

transition to 2-way traffic, reconstruct pavement, install barrier free parking and access to trails and amenities.

rouge greenway trail

the city is conceptually planning a regional trail system that would traverse through Eliza Howell Park. This plan proposes modifying the existing loop road as a part of that system.

trailheads

parking, amenities (fix-it stations, benches, seating, signage, etc.) and access points to the regional rouge greenway trail system.

park trail system

stone and mulch trails with benches and signage improve connectivity within and to the park providing access to underutilized areas.

active recreation area

large pavilion with restrooms, improved softball diamond, improved soccer field, large playground, seating, shade, gardens, picnic area, splash pad.

edible landscape

expand upon existing edible area with additional edible plants and expanded interpretive signage and education.

open mowed areas

for use by the community for everyday play, family gatherings or large events.

prairie habitat

prairie grasses and native flowers are used to create spaces within the park for people, habitat for animals and reduce mowing and maintenance.

rain gardens | meadows

restoration and expansion of existing wet meadow along with the creation of rain gardens throughout to improve water quality and prevent direct discharge to the Rouge River.

reforestation

restoration and management of the forested areas of the park to ensure the health of the natural ecosystem.

off-leash dog area

open, fenced natural area for off-leash dog exercise in a safe, dedicated space.

neighborhood edge

maintain existing neighborhood spaces and enhance connections into Eliza Howell Park and to the Lyndon Greenway with improved pathways.

boardwalk

wood boardwalk connecting over and through the existing vernal pond.

existing pavilions

improve access to the existing pavilions and provide picnic tables to improve usable gathering space.

green buffers

plant trees to screen adjacent light industrial and commercial development and/or to provide privacy to residential where trails are adjacent.

proposed elements + precedent imagery

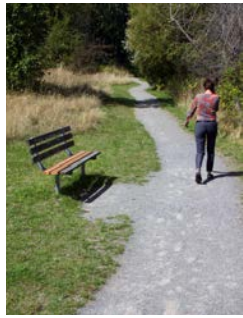
2.1 miles

rouge greenway trail



1.6 miles

limestone paths



1.8 miles

mulched paths



3

trailheads



7 acres

rain gardens



45 acres

restored prairie



130 acres

forested areas



65 acres

mowed areas



playground



splash play



art



pavilion | restroom



programs



seating



signs



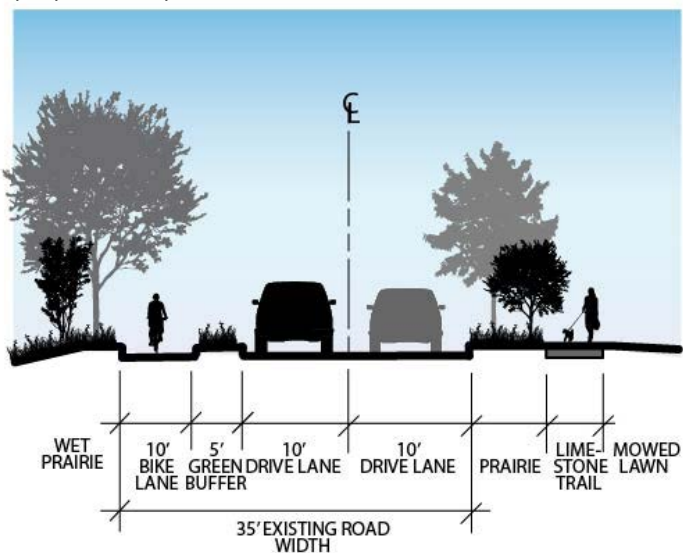
proposed rouge greenway trail

The City of Detroit is working on a concept plan for a connected regional trail that would traverse the west side connecting Hines Drive, Rouge Park, Eliza Howell Park and the former Rogell Golf Course property. This Eliza Howell Park Concept Plan supports that vision and proposes a route that would take trail users across two branches of the Rouge River and through forests, prairies and wet meadows. It is envisioned that the portion of the Rouge Greenway Trail that traverses through the park will be 12'-16' wide asphalt. Additional spurs that are narrower and limestone or mulched, will offer access to quieter portions of the park. As part of the Rouge Greenway, this Concept Plan also proposes modifying the cross-section of the Eliza Howell Park loop road to include two-way vehicular traffic and a 10' wide bike lane separated with a green buffer. Trailheads are proposed on the southend near Schoolcraft, at the active recreation area near restrooms and amenities as well as at the northend near the existing tennis courts.

existing loop road



proposed loop road cross-section



precedent images



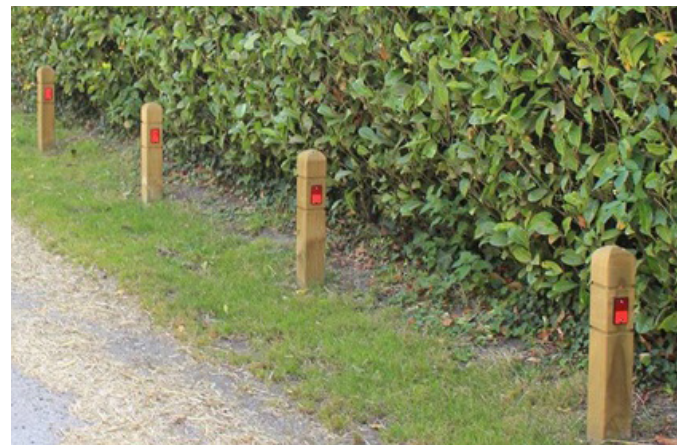
proposed stormwater management

More than 7 acres of rain gardens are proposed at Eliza Howell Park to manage flooding, create habitat, reduce amount of mowing and to capture and clean stormwater prior to it reaching the Rouge River. Rain gardens are proposed to include the integration of artists to make art more accessible to the public, to create a fun and unique space, to celebrate culture and nature, and provide opportunities to interpret and educate. A limestone path is proposed to traverse through the interior of the loop road including a section of boardwalk over a vernal pond. Delineators are proposed to assist with maintenance and establishing no mow edges.

precedent images



precedent images



near-term implementation strategy

The concept plan for Eliza Howell Park illustrates a vision for significant investment at one of Detroit's largest parks. Moving this vision forward will require years of on-going work and effort on the part of many organizations, agencies and residents. Sidewalk Detroit is committed to continuing to be a part of the effort. A number of priorities came out of a discussion with the Community Leadership Team - some of which Sidewalk Detroit can do, and some of which are beyond Sidewalk Detroit's capacity and resources. Priority next steps for Sidewalk Detroit are outlined below as a start to advance the work captured in the development of this plan and document.

leadership team priorities



convene potential partners

Various elements included in the concept plan may align with the mission and goals of a number of potential partner organizations. Sharing the vision with potential partners will be important to build capacity, leverage resources and advance improvements at the park. A near-term opportunity may be the integration of artists in stormwater management. This may include organizations such as the City of Detroit, DWSD, Erb Foundation, Kresge Foundation, Ralph Wilson Foundation, Audoban Society, The Nature Conservancy, Friends of Eliza Howell Park, Councilman Tate's Office, etc.

seating, signage, trees + art in 2018

Sidewalk Detroit has funds available in 2018 to move some of the vision forward. Focus on design and installation of seating (benches + tables), wayfinding + interpretive signage, planting of trees (along the western edge of the property), and infusing art into the park via installation(s) and/or performances.

advocate for the park

Continue to be a champion and advocate for Eliza Howell Park. Maintain regular contact with the City of Detroit General Services and Planning Department staff to coordinate improvements and be a voice for ensuring the community values for Eliza Howell Park remain at the forefront of decision-making.

continue to engage the community

Engagement with the community and neighbors should continue. This concept plan should continue to be shared at various events, via targeted outreach, and in informal discussions to raise awareness and build support. Effort is required to continue to gather input as conceptual ideas are advanced. More detailed discussions are particularly needed in relation to a potential connection to the neighborhood and Lyndon Greenway as well as when conversations advance related to protection and creation of special habitat areas.

Consider focusing Sidewalk Detroit 2018 and 2019 resources into seating, signage and art into the portion of the park that is at the north end and interior to the loop road. This may include reconstruction of limestone paths and associated installation of seating and signage. Depending on resources, this could also include habitat restoration and boardwalk construction associated with the vernal pond as well as restoration of the vernal pond and stormwater management and rain gardens on the western edge of the park.



PROPOSED PHASE ONE	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	
Limestone 8' wide trail	3500	LF	\$17	\$59,500
Boardwalk over vernal pond	120	LF	\$275	\$33,000
Picnic tables	5	EA	\$800	\$4,000
Benches	5	EA	\$1,800	\$9,000
Signage	4	EA	\$2,500	\$10,000
		Subtotal		\$115,500
		Design/Arch/Engin Fees		\$11,550
		15% Contingency		\$17,325
		Total		\$144,375

PROPOSED PHASE TWO	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	
Rain Garden Vernal Pond Wetland	65000	SF	\$9.00	\$585,000
No-mow delineators	3000	LF	\$3.75	\$11,250
		Subtotal		\$596,250
		Design/Arch/Engin Fees		\$47,700
		15% Contingency		\$89,438
		Total		\$733,388

photo renderings

Photo renderings were created to illustrate the potential for Eliza Howell Park and to assist in continuing to build enthusiasm for moving the vision for the park forward.



vernal pond | meadows | boardwalk

This rendered view illustrates potential improvements in the northeast corner section of the interior loop. Proposed improvements include restoration and protection of a vernal pond and associated meadow/prairie, limestone path and boardwalk section through the vernal pond, as well as inclusion of art and educational signage.

existing condition image



rendered image





active recreation area

This rendered view illustrates potential improvements in the western section of the interior loop. This area of the park is envisioned to be the Hub of the park and the center of active recreation and amenities. Proposed improvements include a large pavilion with restrooms, improved soccer field, improved ballfield, large playground, seating, shade, gardens, picnic area, and splash pad.

existing condition image



rendered image





northend rouge greenway trailhead area

This rendered view illustrates potential improvements in the northern section of the park near the existing play equipment. A trailhead area adjacent to the existing parking lot is proposed as a resting place with informational signage and maps related to the park and overall planned Rouge Greenway. Potential amenities could include seating, bike fix it station, and drinking fountain with art thoughtfully incorporated throughout. The rendered image also illustrates to the concept of converting a portion of the loop road into a segment of the Rouge Greenway Trail.

existing condition image



rendered image





loop road and rouge greenway trail

This rendered view illustrates modifying the cross-section of the Eliza Howell Park loop road to include two-way vehicular traffic and a 10' wide bike lane separated with a green buffer. This will simplify vehicular movement around the park, reduce vehicular speeds, provide a separated trail and increase tree coverage along the roadway.

existing condition image



rendered image

