



CITY OF ST. PAUL
MERRIAM PARK
DAC Meeting 10.27.2025

A large, leafy tree in a park setting with a playground in the background. The tree's branches are thick and gnarled, with dense green foliage. In the background, a colorful playground with yellow slides and blue structures is visible on a sandy area. The foreground is a grassy lawn with dappled sunlight. A dark blue banner with the word 'AGENDA' is in the bottom right corner.

1. Introductions [5 min.]

2. Project Background [5 min.]

3. Project Charter & Site Analysis [10 min.]

4. Concept Review [20 min.]

5. Discussion [20 min.]

AGENDA

MERRIAM PARK

Project Charter

PROJECT VISION

Remove barriers and create a park that is safe, connected, and welcoming – a hub for recreation, gathering, and wellness for all.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Increase Visibility of and within the park.
2. Accessibility: improve circulation for all.
3. Safety: address real and perceived safety issues.
4. Fun and exciting
5. Reflects the neighborhood

PROJECT GOALS

1. **Goal 1:** Create comfortable, accessible facilities for all users.
2. **Goal 2:** Allow spaces to be flexible for a variety of programming and user abilities.
3. **Goal 3:** Improve circulation to support active and passive recreation.
4. **Goal 4:** Plan for succession of mature landscape.

SCOPE/AMENITIES	BUDGET	SCHEDULE	PROJECT PHASES
• Accessible walking paths • Updated tennis courts • Tree health/preservation, succession • New play equipment • Update ballfields, drainage improvements • Expand basketball court • Gathering areas • Update lighting	Construction Budget: \$1.87M	Analysis/Schematic Design: Sept-Oct. 2025 Design Development: November 2025 Construction Documents: December 2025 – January 2026 Permitting Review: February 2026 Bidding & Construction: March-September 2026	• PHASE I: Engagement and Schematic Design • PHASE II: Final design and construction documents • PHASE III: Bidding and construction

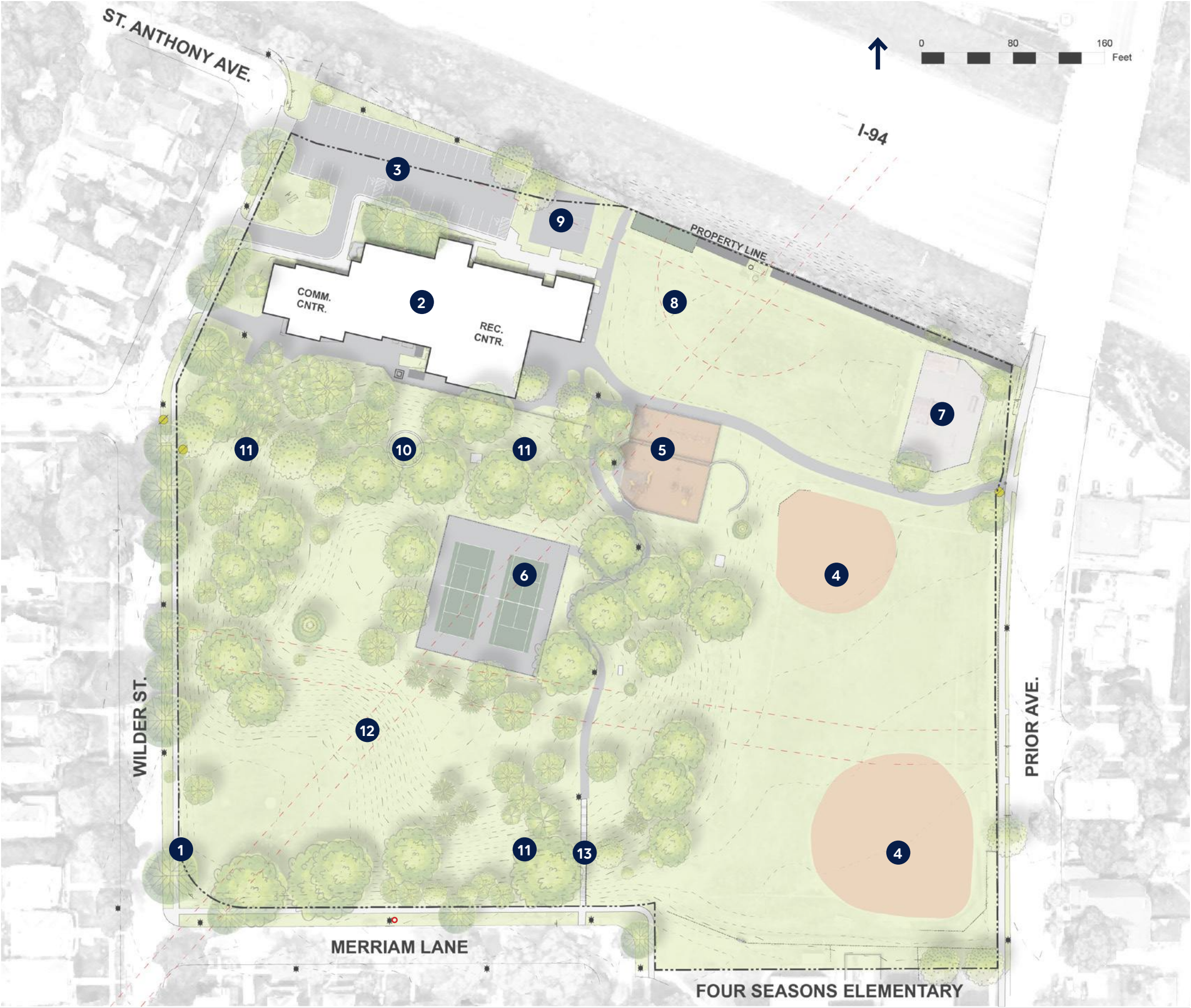
Overall Site Diagram

Items of Interest

- 1. Property line
- 2. Community & recreation center
- 3. Parking lot
- 4. Youth baseball field
- 5. Playground
- 6. Tennis courts
- 7. Skate park
- 8. Open play field
- 9. Half-court basketball
- 10. Site feature (historic water tank footing?)
- 11. Bur oak woodland
- 12. Sledding Hill
- 13. Stairs

Legend

- Property Line
- - - Easement
- - - Contour Line
- - - Major Contour Line
- * Light Fixture
- ⦿ Power Pole



Existing Utilities & Easements

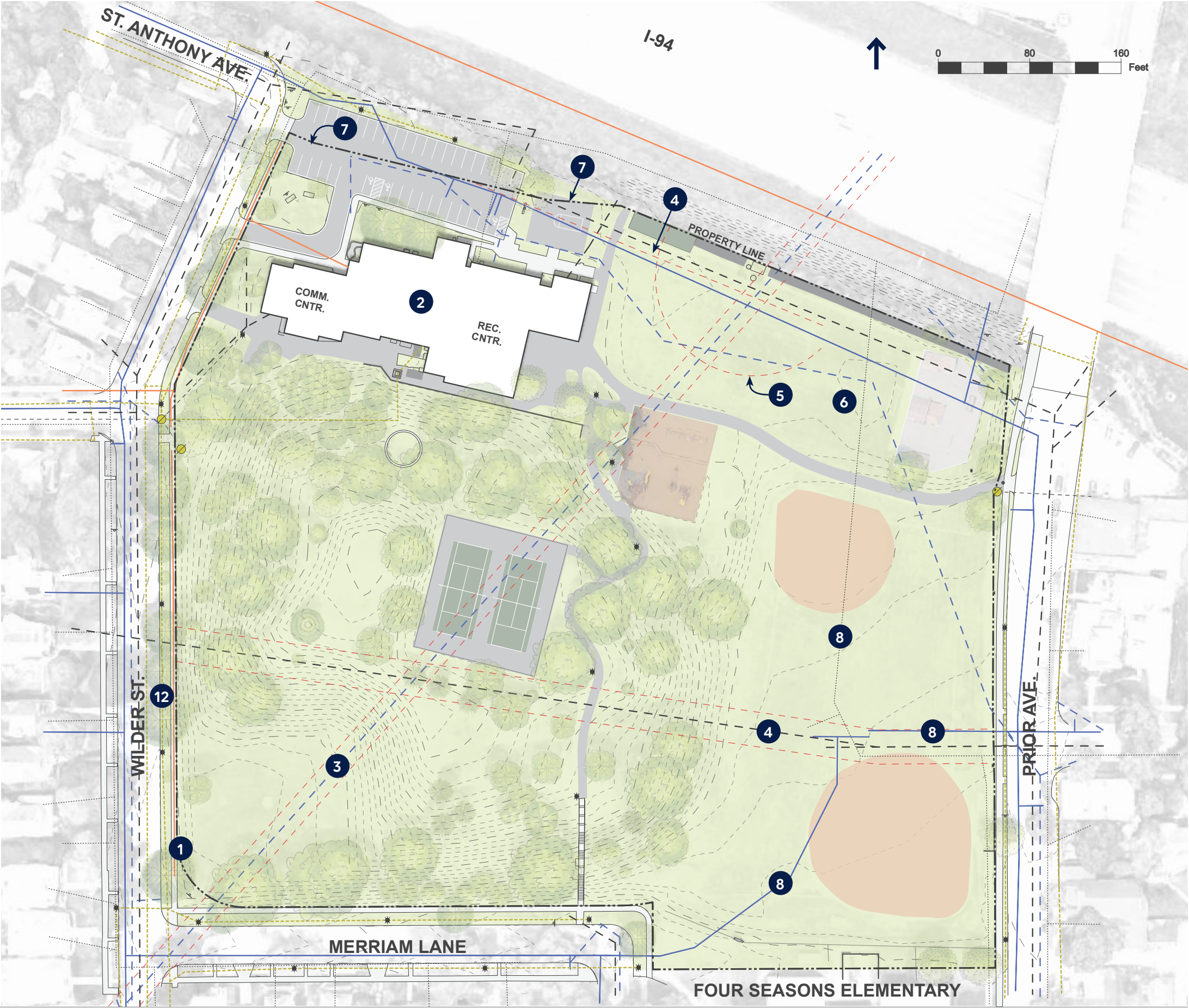
The north side of the property is restricted with numerous encumbrances. Careful layout of programs and structural footings will need to be considered to avoid design disruptions.

Items of Interest

- 1. Property line
- 2. Community & recreation center
- 3. Sewer easement - 20'
- 4. Sewer easement - 30'
- 5. Cell tower setback - 85'
- 6. Vacated Merriam Lane ROW
- 7. Property line conflict
- 8. Abandoned utilities

Legend

- Property Line
- - - Easement
- - - Contour Line
- - - Major Contour Line
- * Light Fixture
- ⦿ Power Pole
- Underground Gas
- Overhead Power
- Watermain
- Underground Fiber Optic
- - - Underground Sanitary Sewer
- - - Underground Storm Sewer
- - - Underground Electric



Existing Slope

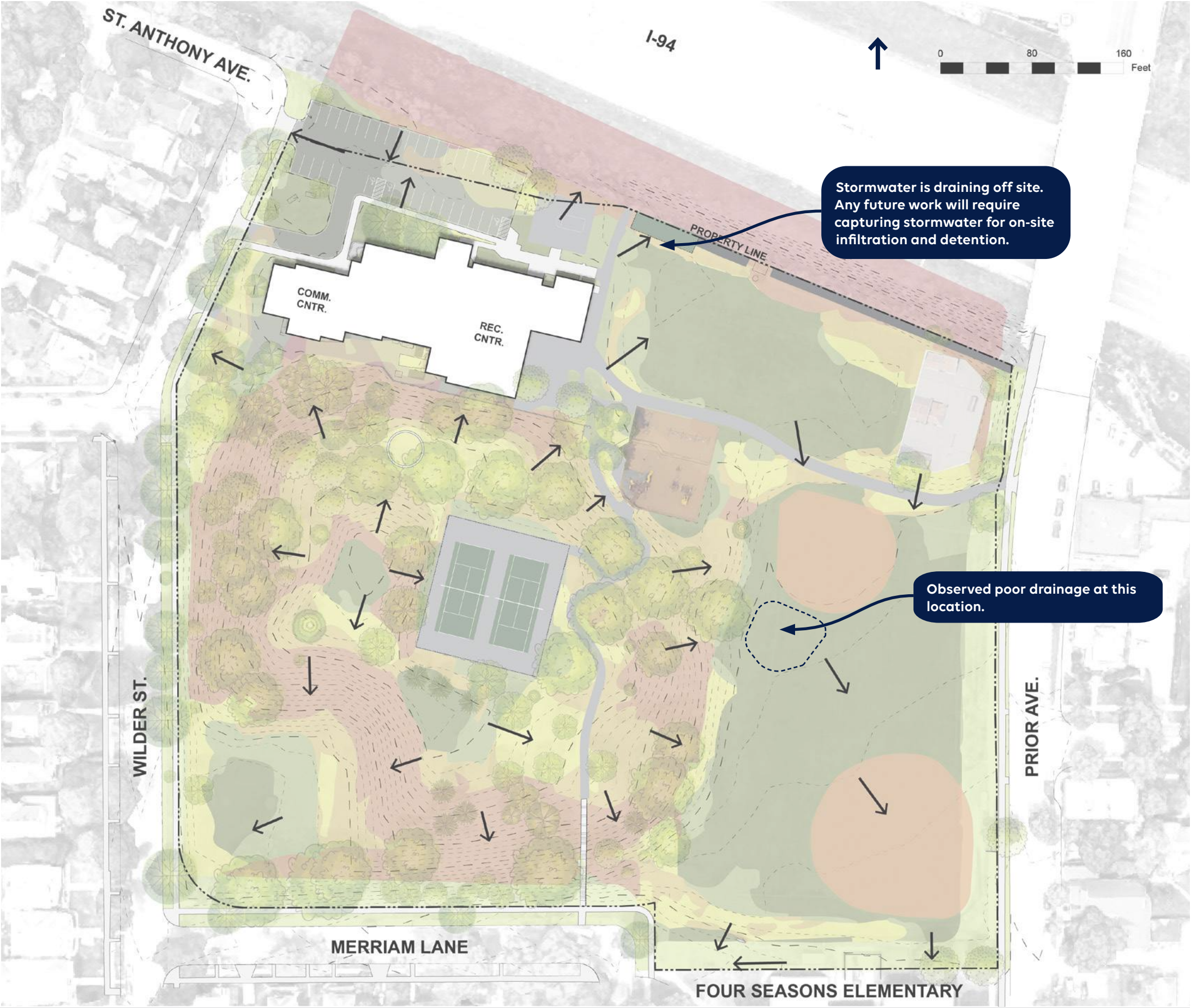
Merriam Park's oak hilltop is the most dramatic feature of the park featuring slopes in excess of 30% in some areas. Providing access while navigating tree impacts is an important design consideration.

Gradients of Slope

- 20+% Slope
- 10-19% Slope
- 5-9% Slope
- 2-4% Slope (accessible)
- 1% Slope (accessible)
- Direction of drainage



Stairs from Merriam Lane



Existing Slope



South slope



North slope to building



East slope to play area



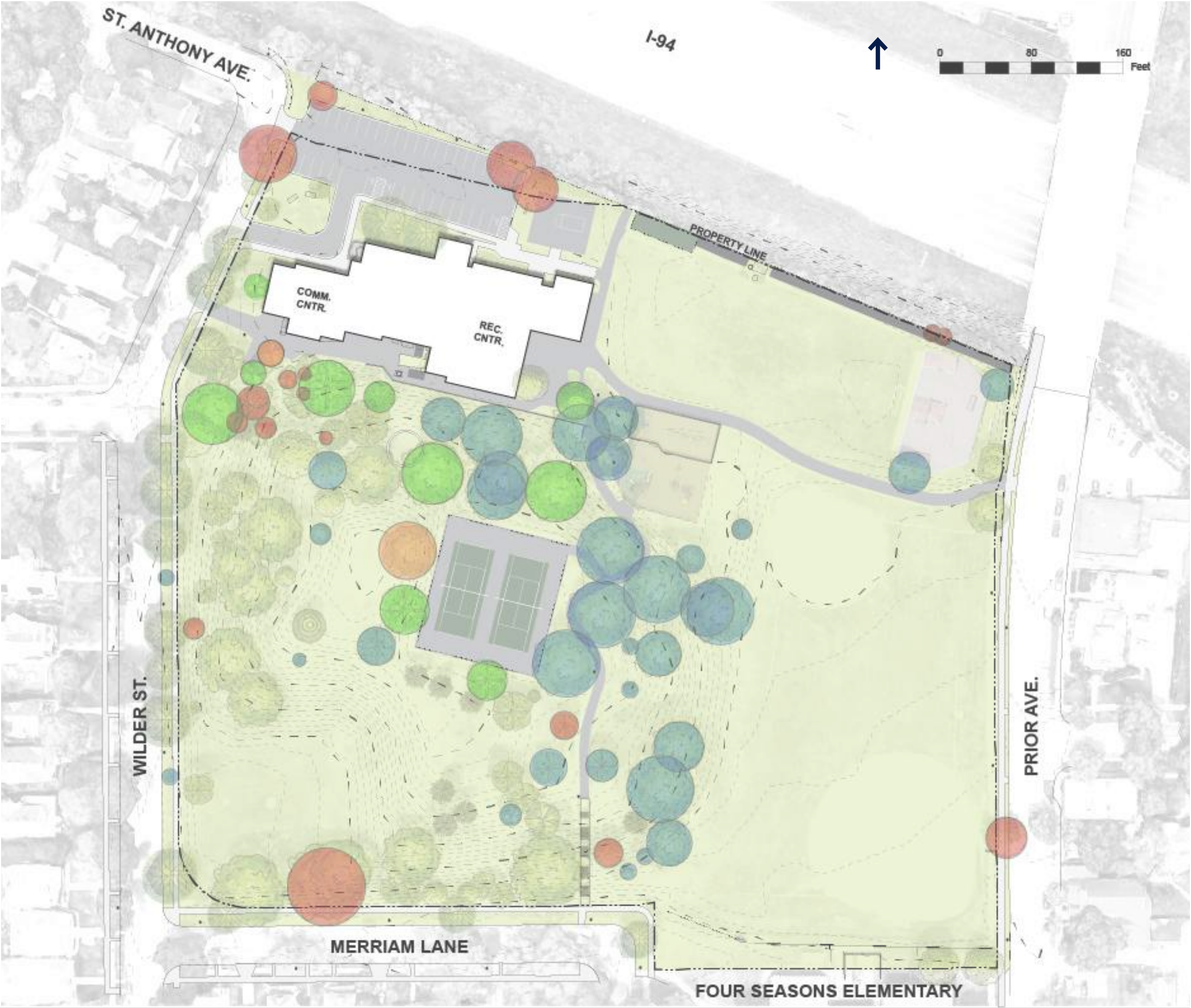
Open play field to skate park

Existing Tree Health

Most of the mature trees on site are in fair condition, including the bur oaks located on Merriam Hill. Because oaks are highly sensitive to disturbance, any impacts may take several years to become apparent. The park also contains small areas with trees in good or poor condition. Healthier trees are generally more recent plantings.

Tree Health

-  **Good**
full crown, strong and healthy bark, no signs of structural problems or disease
-  **Fair -Good**
some limb loss, high value due to type, size, and age
-  **Fair**
shows some sign of stress, decline, or weakness, but is not overall unhealthy
-  **Poor-Fair**
shows some defects that reduce its strength, health, or stability
-  **Poor**
shows 2 or more defects that reduce its strength, health, or stability



Existing Tree Health



Athletic Program Areas & Circulation

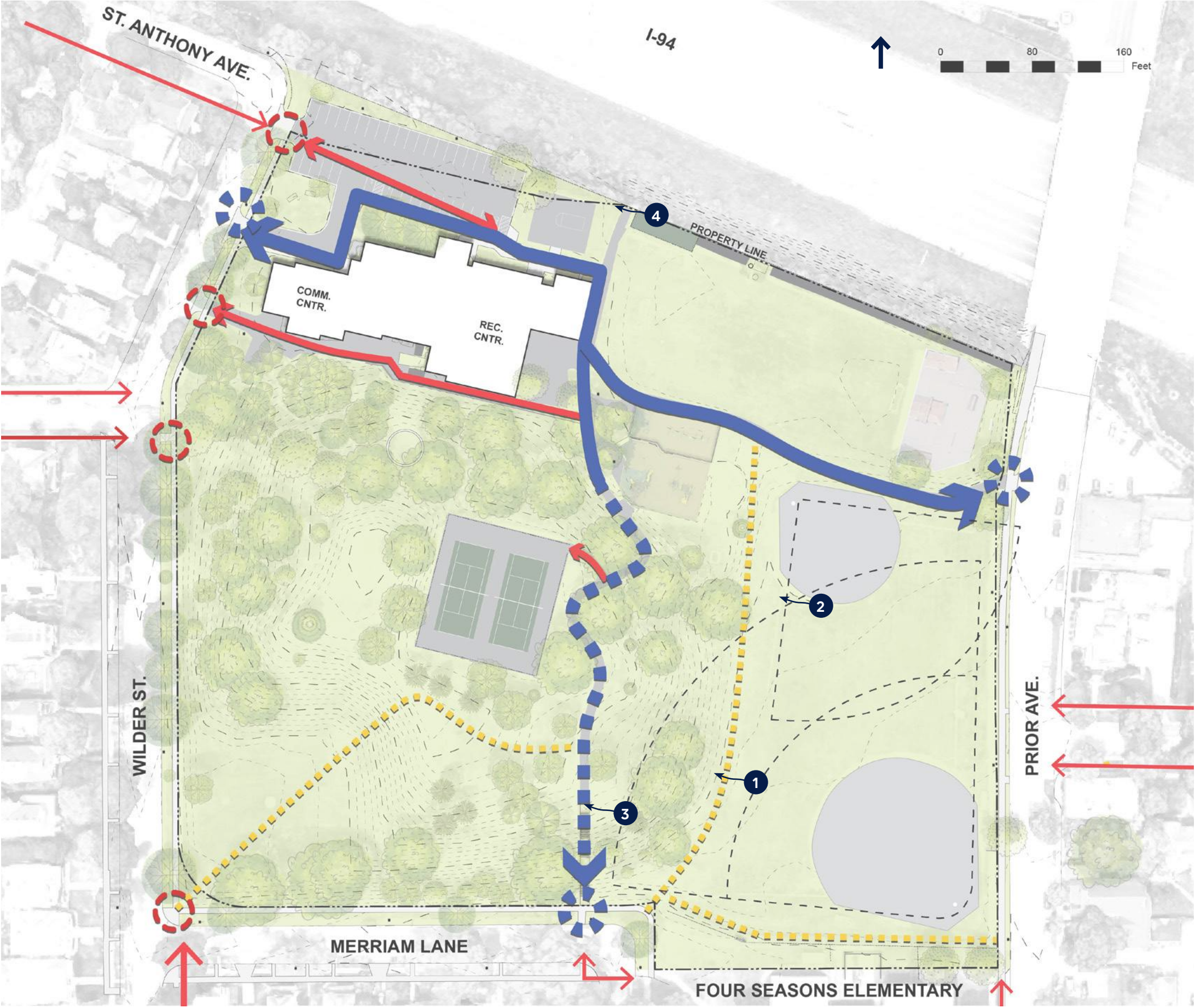
The baseball outfield setback overlaps the hillside impacting an accessible north/south connection at the foot of the hillside. Right-sizing the fields could be a strategy to eliminate this conflict.

Items of Interest

- 1. Baseball field (300' outfield radius)
- 2. Softball field (225' outfield radius)
- 3. Timber stairway (poor condition)
- 4. Path dead ends at property fence

Legend

- Property Line
- - - Easement
- - - Contour Line
- - - Major Contour Line
- * Light Fixture
- ⬮ Power Pole
- ▬ Primary Circulation
- ▬ Primary - ADA Inaccessible
- ▬ Secondary Circulation
- ▬ Desire Paths
- ⊙ Primary Entrance
- ⊙ Secondary Entrance



Athletic Program Areas & Circulation



North building entry



Walk from Prior to recreation center



South ballfield



Walk on south side of building

Existing Site Lighting Analysis

Foot Candle Study

Light levels were recorded during a night-time site visit. Readings were measured in foot candles (FC). Overall, light levels fall below recommended levels for various programs (play, athletics, gathering). Increasing the quantity and providing consistent spacing of fixtures could address this need. The cell tower and skate park lights are high-intensity discharge (HID) lamps that require 5-10 minutes to warm-up. High-efficiency fixtures could provide greater output at lower costs. Additionally, the current fixtures used for sports lighting are not shielded and do not meet Dark Sky standards. There were also several instances where light fixtures were subjected to copper wire theft and were not operating.

Legend

Actual Measurement: Considered a low reading

Actual Measurement: Considered a sufficient reading

Light levels taper to zero

Field lights not turned on - no measurement taken

Property Line

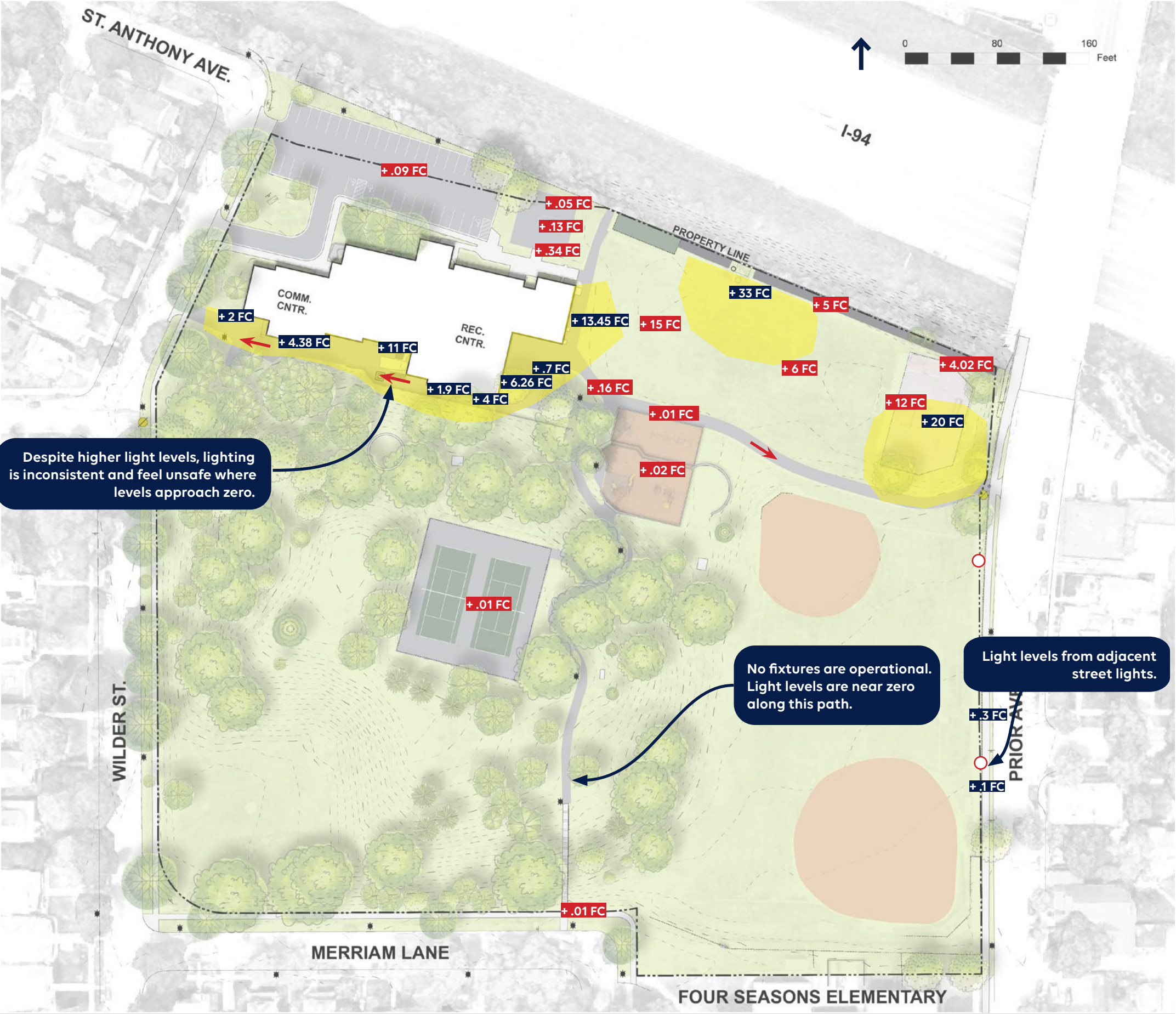
Easement

Contour Line

Major Contour Line

Light Fixture

Power Pole



Existing Site Lighting



East side of building



South side of building



Walk to tennis courts



Field Lighting [type 1]

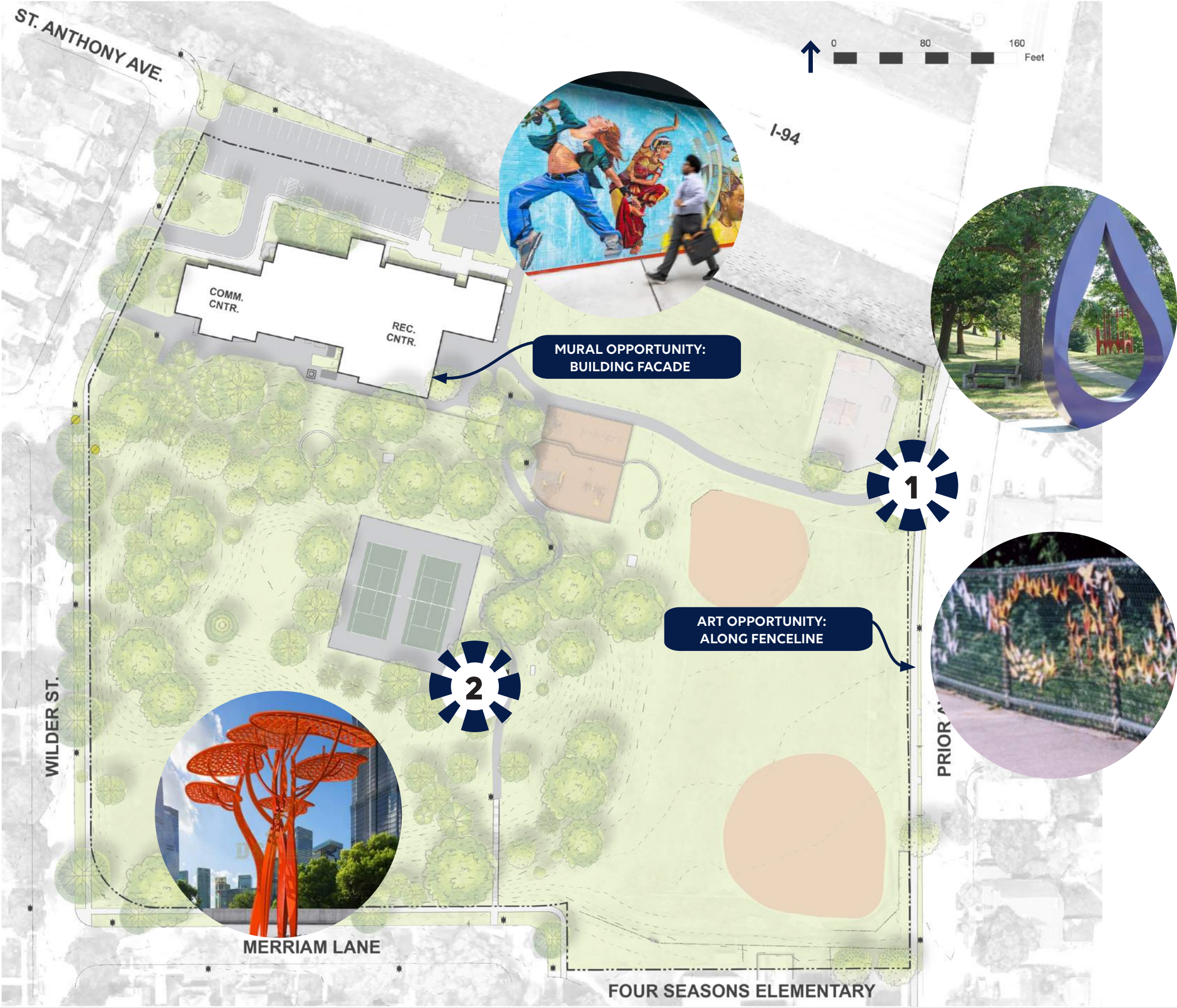
Potential Art Locations

Two locations were identified during the site walk as high-impact locations for art investment. The first location is along Prior Avenue. As the most restricted park edge, art could increase awareness of the park for vehicular traffic thereby increasing safety for visitors. The second location is Merriam's hill. This high-visibility location could provide a landmark and/or destination at the top of the hill.

1 Prior Avenue Location



2 Hilltop Location



Preliminary Engagement

The design team attended PB and Jam, an annual event held in Merriam Park on Saturday, September 20, 2025. The design team sought feedback from attendees about the three proposed concepts, documented feedback on post-it notes, and then tallied input. The results can become a framework for prioritizing outcomes over others. Refer to the Appendix for the Community Feedback Report.

Community Priorities

- 1. Play Spaces & Youth Activities
- 2. Community Gathering & Safety
- 3. Walking Paths & Connectivity
- 4. Sports & Active Recreation
- 5. Green Space & Nature
- 6. Underutilized Space & Programming
- 7. Dog-Friendly Areas

Most Requested Site Elements

19

New playground

07

E/W Connection
Prior Ave. entry
Natural areas

05

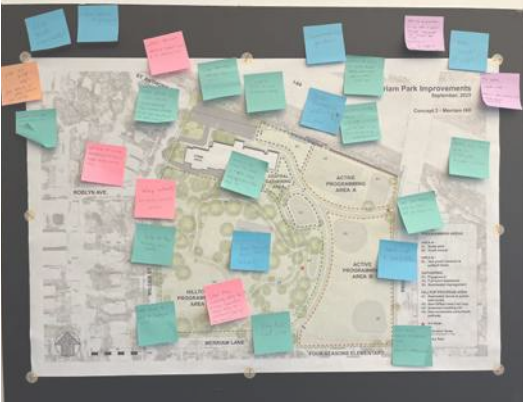
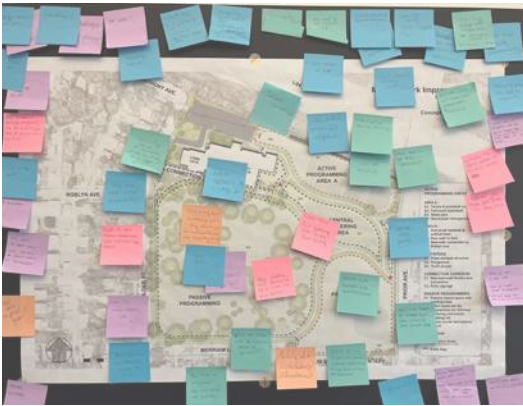
Gathering spaces

04

Wayfinding signage
Hilltop trail loop
Sledding hill
Bike infrastructure
Lighting & safety

03

Additional seating
Gardens
Water element



Merriam Park Improvements

October 2025

Concept 1 - Heart of the Park



Merriam Park Improvements
October 2025

Concept 2 - The Island

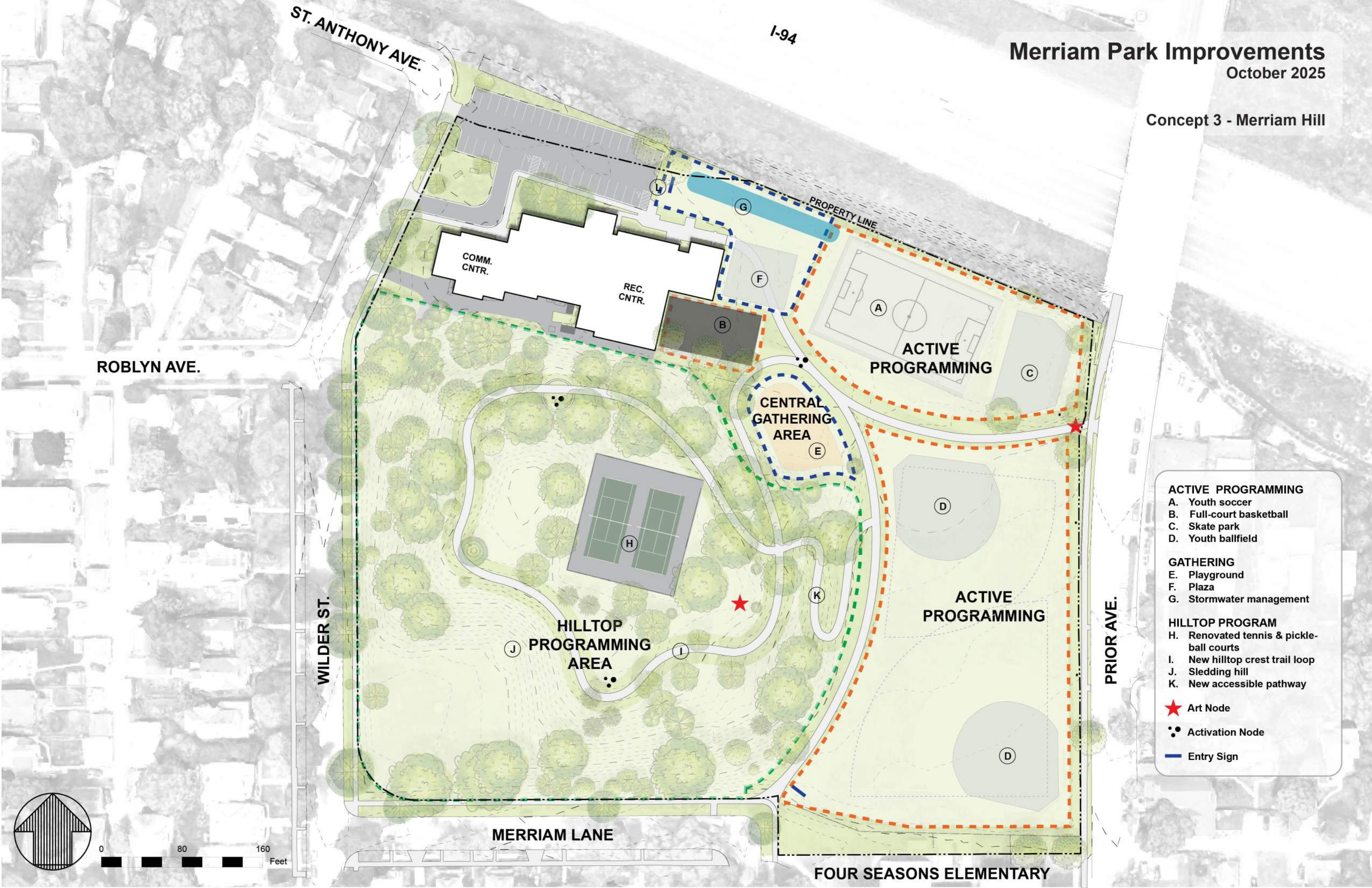


- ACTIVE PROGRAMMING**
- A. Tennis & pickleball courts
 - B. Full-court basketball
 - C. Skate park
 - D. Youth ballfield
 - E. New walk to field
 - F. New walk to Roblyn Ave.
- GATHERING**
- G. Plaza w/shade structure
 - H. Playground
 - I. Youth soccer
 - J. Stormwater management
- CONNECTION CORRIDOR**
- K. New east-west Roblyn Ave. walk
 - L. Entry signage
 - M. New accessible N/S walk
- PASSIVE PROGRAMMING**
- N. Former tennis court area - informal open space [picknicking, tree planting]
 - O. Sledding hill
- ★ Art Node
- Activation Node
- Entry Sign

Merriam Park Improvements

October 2025

Concept 3 - Merriam Hill



- ACTIVE PROGRAMMING**
- A. Youth soccer
 - B. Full-court basketball
 - C. Skate park
 - D. Youth ballfield
- GATHERING**
- E. Playground
 - F. Plaza
 - G. Stormwater management
- HILLTOP PROGRAM**
- H. Renovated tennis & pickleball courts
 - I. New hilltop crest trail loop
 - J. Sledding hill
 - K. New accessible pathway
- ★ Art Node
- Activation Node
- Entry Sign