

*Community Meeting #1*

# **James H. Roberts Playground**

112 Hooker St, Boston, MA 02134



December 15, 2025  
Boston Parks and Recreation





# MEETING RECORDING



*The Boston Parks and Recreation Department will be recording the meeting and posting to our project webpage for those who are unable to attend the Zoom meeting live.*

*It is possible that participants may also be recording the meeting with their phone cameras or other devices. If you do not wish to be recorded during this meeting, please keep your microphone muted and camera off.*

*Please share with your neighbors and friends,  
<http://boston.gov/james-roberts-playground>.*

# VIRTUAL MEETING ETIQUETTE

*We want to ensure this conversation is a pleasant experience for all and that all community members/stakeholders are comfortable sharing their comments, questions and feedback.*

*Please be respectful and mindful of each other's time when asking questions/ providing comments, so that all attendees are able to participate in the meeting.*

*Keep questions/ comments project-specific and not personal to yield solution-driven discussion.*

*Please wait until all attendees have had the opportunity to ask a question/ provide a comment before providing additional questions/ comments.*

*You can always set up a conversation with **Kenya Thompson**, [kenya.thompson2@boston.gov](mailto:kenya.thompson2@boston.gov), to further discuss the project or process.*

# ZOOM TIPS

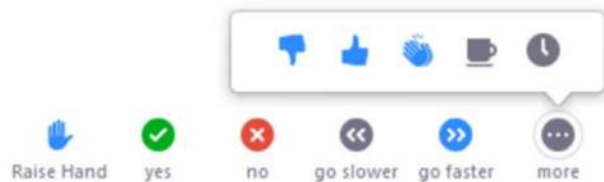
Here is how you can participate during the question and answer part of the presentation.

## DURING THE PRESENTATION:



### VIA WEB:

Turn video on / off.



To use these non-verbal options click on participants (bottom of screen); these options will pop up in side bar.

## DURING THE Q&A:



### JOINING VIA PHONE?

Use \*9 to raise hand to ask for audio / video permission to ask questions or provide comments.



### VIA WEB:

Chat to ask questions / comments or provide responses to poll questions



Raise hand to ask for audio / video permission to ask questions or provide comments.

# AGENDA

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1

## **PROJECT TEAM & TIMELINE**

Introductions  
Play and Park Design  
Goals and Objectives

2

## **SITE INVESTIGATION—PAST TO PRESENT**

Site History  
Site Location  
Site Existing Conditions  
Site Analysis

3

## **DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

Park and Playground Inspiration

4

## **LISTENING & DISCUSSION**

# PROJECT TEAM

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## **Kenya Thompson**

Project Manager, BPRD

[kenya.thompson2@boston.gov](mailto:kenya.thompson2@boston.gov)

617-961-3098

## **Jennifer Roberts**

Allston-Brighton Liaison,  
Office of Neighborhood Services

[jennifer.roberts@boston.gov](mailto:jennifer.roberts@boston.gov)

617-635-3485

## **My'Kel McMillen**

Outreach Coordinator, External Affairs

[corey.mcmillen@boston.gov](mailto:corey.mcmillen@boston.gov)

617-201-1294

## **Weston & Sampson**

### **Cassie Bethoney, RLA**

Team Leader

### **Gracie Swansburg, RLA**

Project Landscape Architect

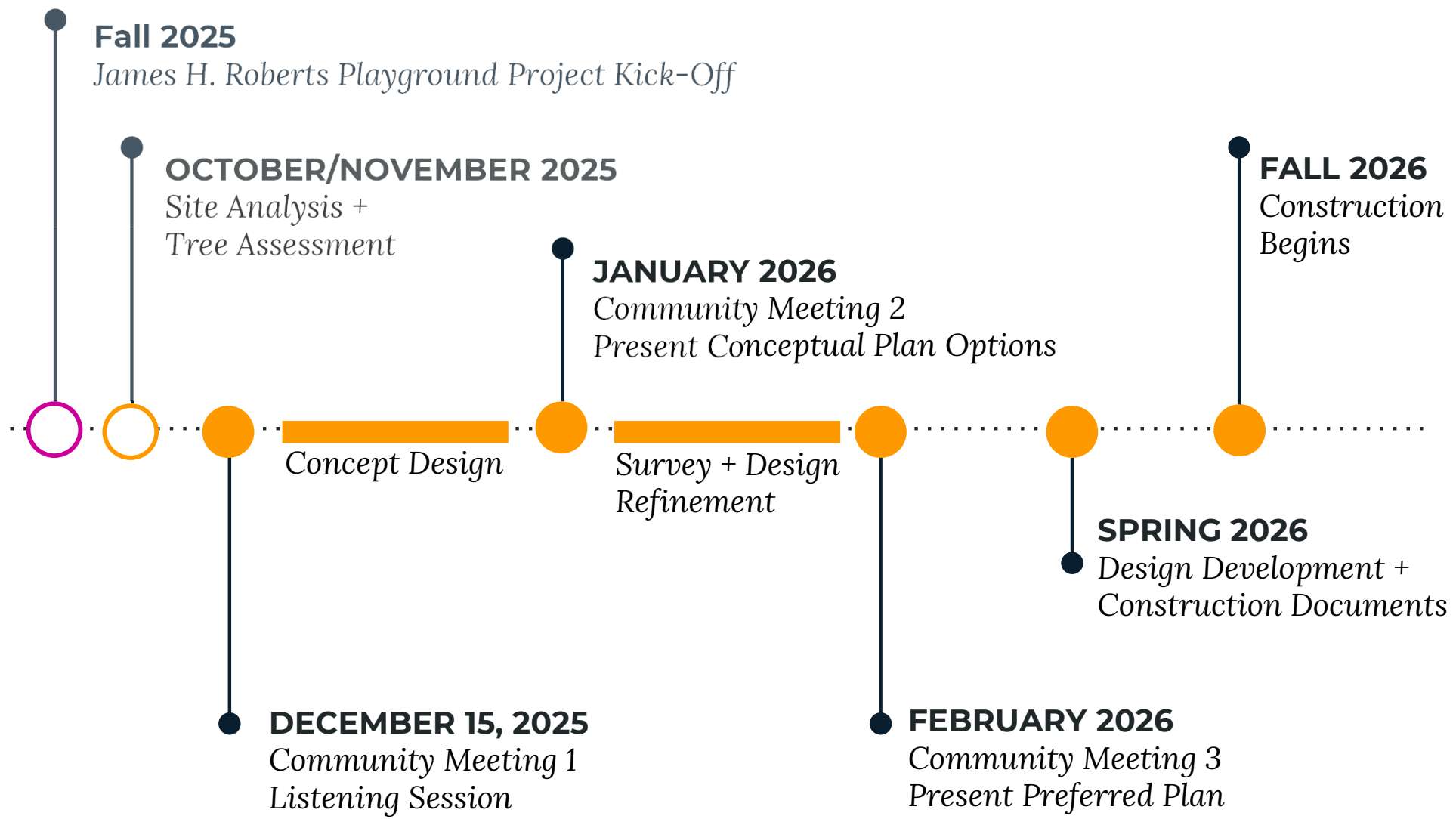
### **Emma Uzgiris**

Landscape Designer



# PROJECT TIMELINE

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# THE 5 ELEMENTS OF PLAY





## **SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL**

COOPERATION, DRAMATIC +  
IMAGINATIVE PLAY



SEATING + TABLE AREAS,  
THEMATIC PLAY ELEMENTS  
(SHIPS), PLAY HOUSES

## **PHYSICAL**

GROSS MOTOR/ FINE MOTOR SKILLS,  
FLEXIBILITY, ACCESSIBILITY,  
HEALTHY RISK + VARIETY



DISH SWINGS, MOVEABLE  
OBJECTS, SWINGS, MONKEY  
BARS, BALANCE

## **SENSORY**

TOUCH, VISUAL, AUDITORY, SMELL  
VESTIBULAR, PROPRIOCEPTIVE +  
INTEROCEPTIVE



PUSH/ PULL ELEMENTS  
WATER ELEMENTS, VARIED  
TEXTURES + COLORS, SPINNING,  
MOVEABLE OBJECTS, ROCKING

## **COGNITIVE**

CREATIVITY, SENSE OF  
ACCOMPLISHMENT, PROBLEM-  
SOLVING, CAUSE + EFFECT, RISK  
ASSESSMENT



INTERACTIVE WATER  
ELEMENTS, ROPE CLIMBER,  
LINKED PLAY ELEMENTS

## **COMMUNICATION**

DEVELOPMENT OF RECEPTIVE +  
EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE



TALK TUBES, SLIDES, THEMATIC  
PLAY ELEMENTS, TRIKE TRACK,  
SEE SAWS

# SITE HISTORY

## 1700s - 1800s

For decades, Allston is a primarily agricultural community and has an established cattle market



1885

## Late 1800s

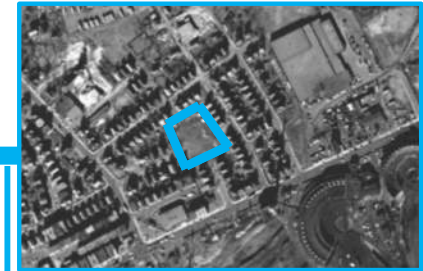
Allston develops its own civic identity after being annexed by Boston, it's home to a depot for the Boston & Albany Co.



1897



1925



1955

## 1950s - 1960s

The Massachusetts Turnpike extension to Allston is built



1969



1995



2011



Today

## Site Location

## 1951

The Hooker-Sorrento St. Playground is officially established

## June 16, 1969

The Boston City Council renames the Hooker-Sorrento St. playground after the late James H. Roberts

## 2005

The most recent round of renovations to the Hooker-Sorrento St. Playground are completed

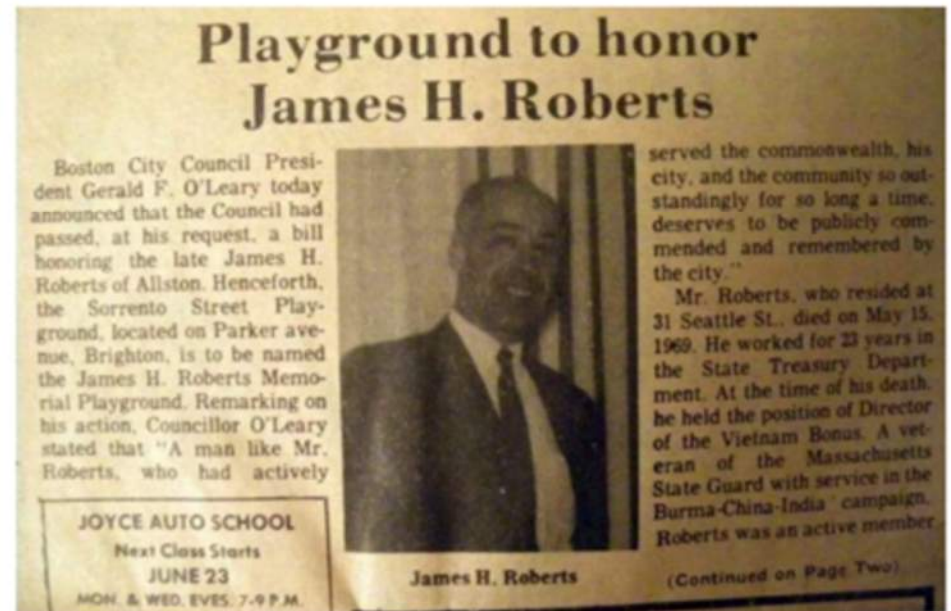
## February 2021

The Hooker-Sorrento Playground is officially renamed the James H. Roberts Playground

# SITE HISTORY | WHO WAS JAMES H. ROBERTS?

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- Roberts resided at 31 Seattle St. in Allston
- A World War II and Massachusetts State Guard veteran, he honorably served in the China-India campaign
- He served the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the State Treasury Department for 28 years
- He was the director of the Vietnam Conflict Veterans' Bonus program at the time of his death in 1969
- He was active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Allston Civic Association (ACA)
- He was Cubmaster and Committee Chair of Cub Scout Pack One, and was a youth advisor for the Catholic Youth Organization of St. Richard's parish



*A photo of the late James H. Roberts in a 1969 article from the Allston Citizen (boston.gov).*

[1] <https://www.boston.gov/news/city-council-reaffirms-renaming-allston-playground>

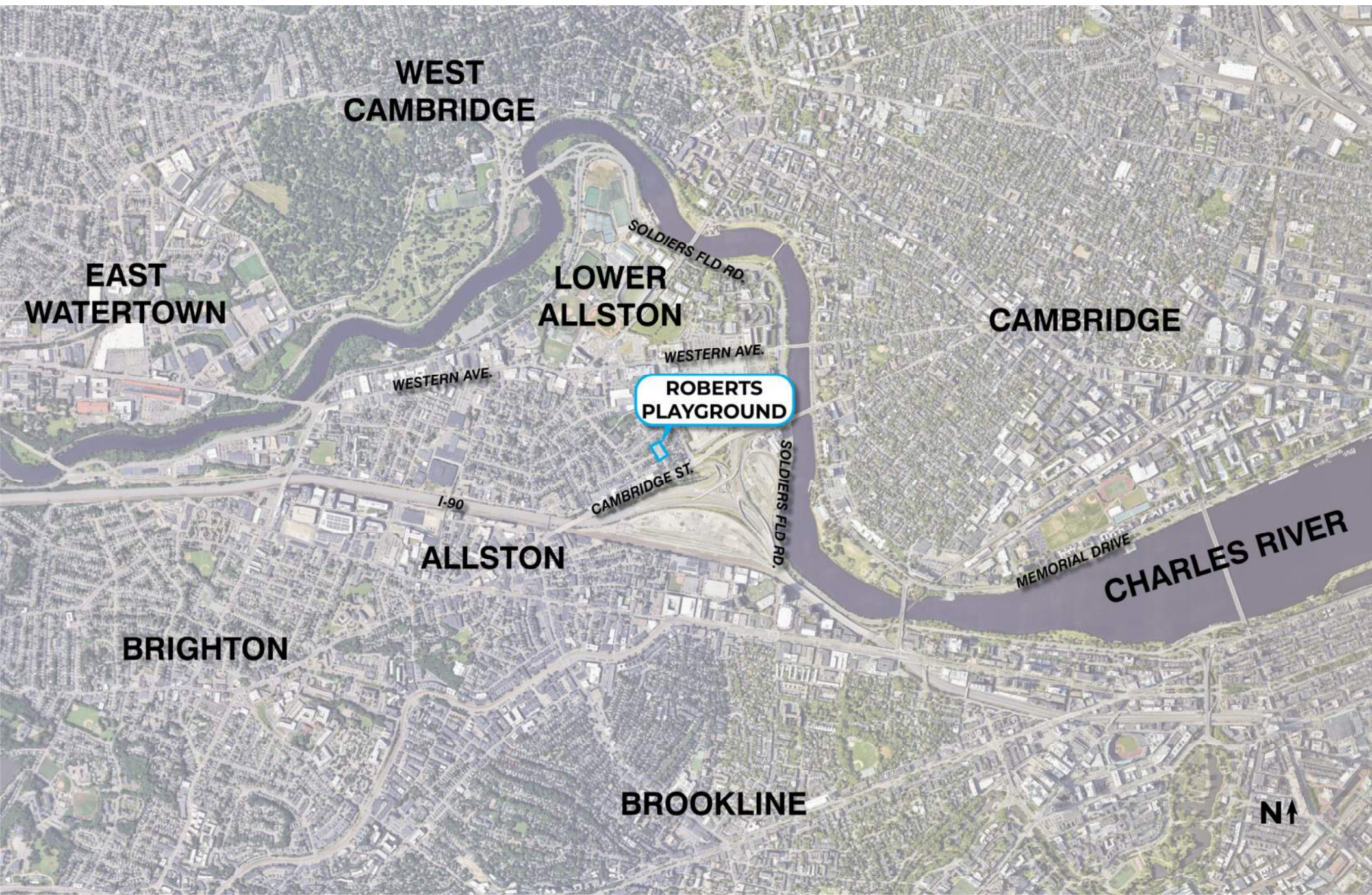
[2] <https://www.boston.gov/news/boston-parks-and-recreation-commission-ratifies-roberts-playground-naming>

[3] <https://dailyfreepress.com/03/01/22/175333/allston-park-renamed-to-honor-black-wwii-veteran-city-employee/>



# SITE LOCATION

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# **SITE LOCATION |** WHAT DO NEARBY PARKS HAVE TO OFFER?

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## **Comfort Amenities & Passive Recreation Opportunities**



**Benches**



**Community Garden**



**Walking Path**



**Space for Dogs**



**Water Fountain/Bottle Filler**



**Restroom**



**Picnic Area**

## **Active Recreation Opportunities**



**Playground**



**Tot-Lot**



**Ball Field**



**Basketball Court**



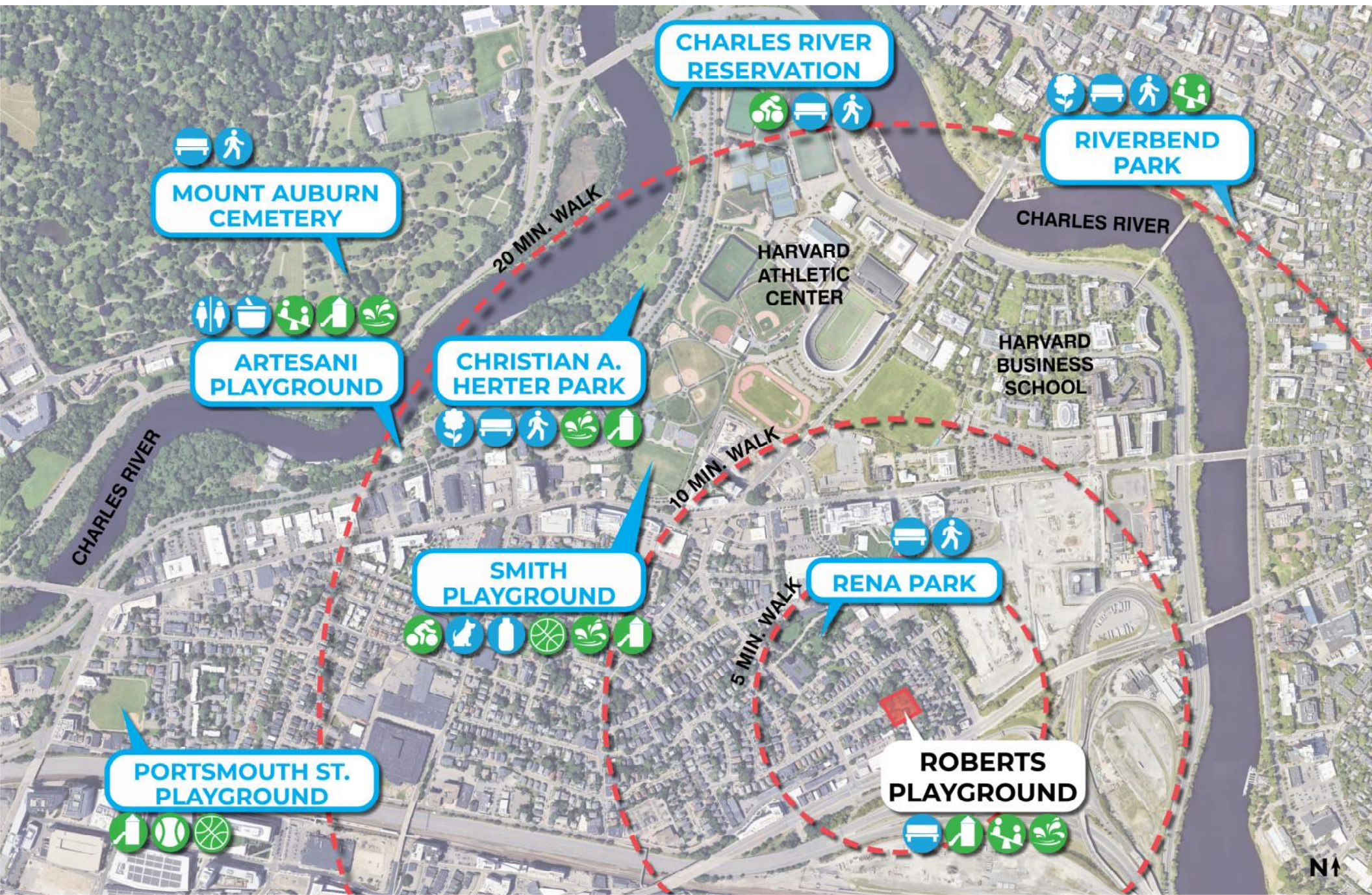
**Splash Pad**



**Biking Amenities**



# SITE LOCATION | PROXIMITY TO OTHER PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS





# SITE LOCATION | ROBERTS PLAYGROUND NEIGHBORHOOD





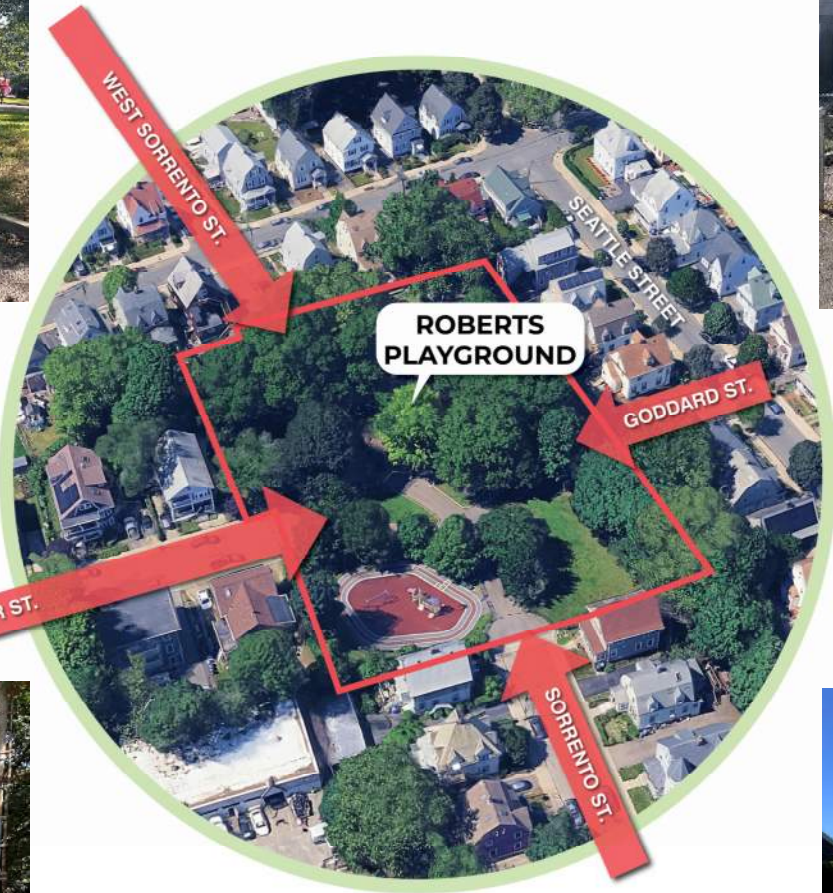
# EXISTING CONDITIONS | PARK ENTRANCES



Park entrance at W Sorrento St.



Park entrance at Goddard St.



Formalize entry?



Park entrance at Hooker St.

Signage location?

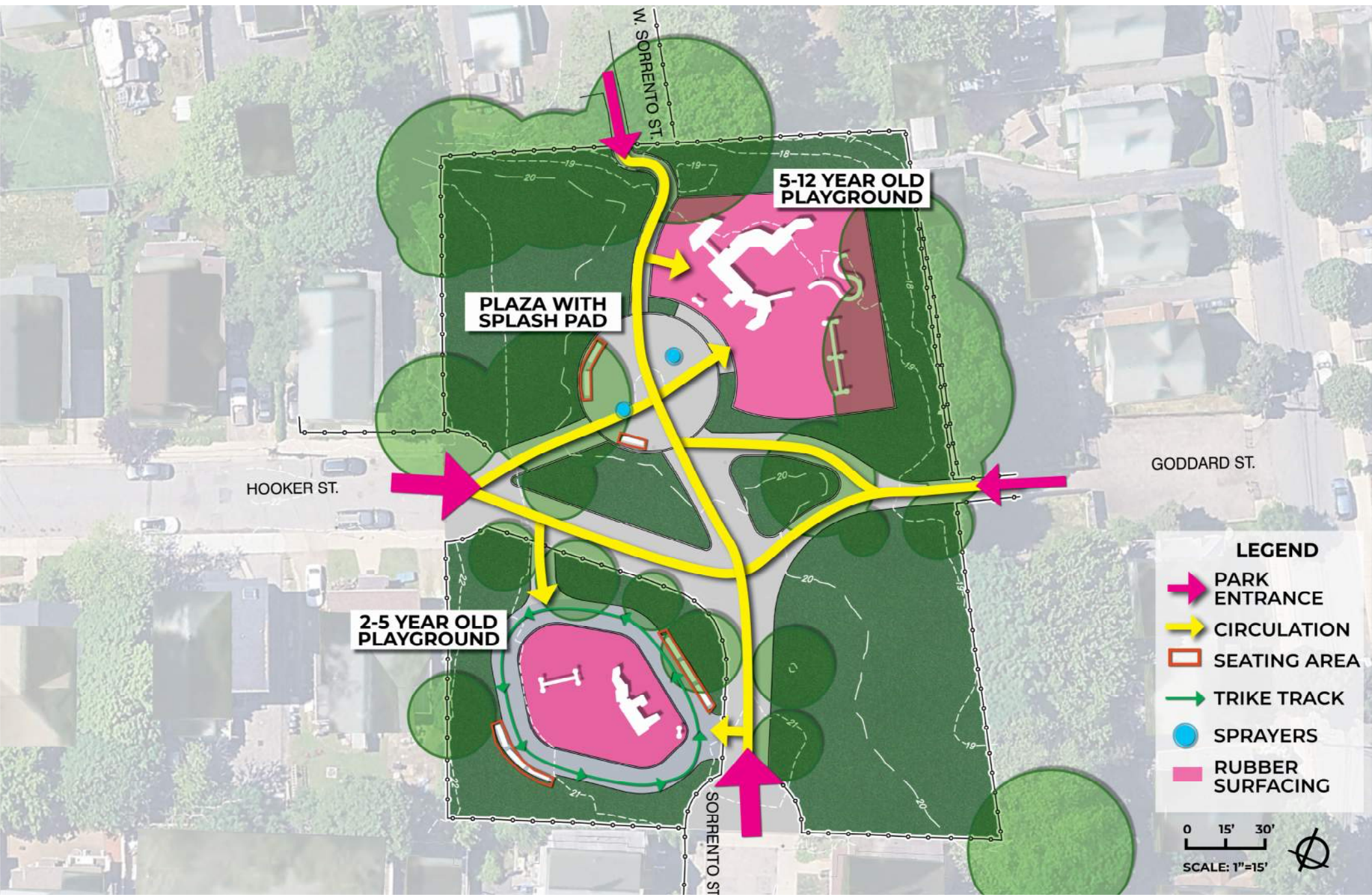


Park entrance at Sorrento St.

Strengthen connection to neighborhood?



# SITE ANALYSIS | CIRCULATION AND SITE ELEMENTS





# EXISTING CONDITIONS | OBSERVATIONS

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**Park is at intersection  
of four streets**



**Seating plaza doubles  
as splash pad**



**Wide paths**



**Mature shade trees**



# EXISTING CONDITIONS | OBSERVATIONS

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**5-12 Year Old  
Playground**



**Swings at 5-12 Year Old  
Playground**



**2-5 Year Old  
Playground**

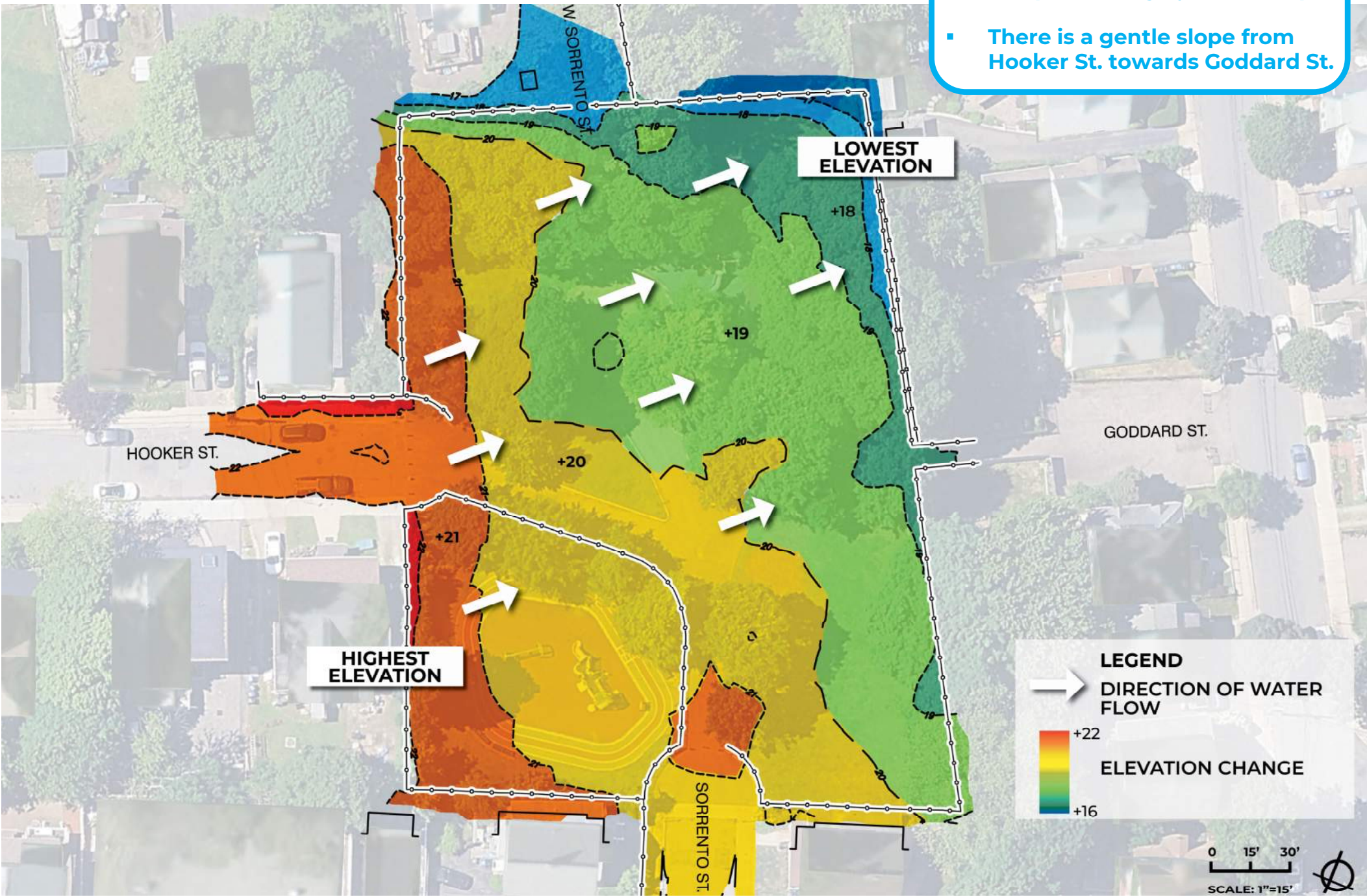


**Benches and fence at  
2-5 Year Old Playground**



# SITE ANALYSIS | TOPOGRAPHY

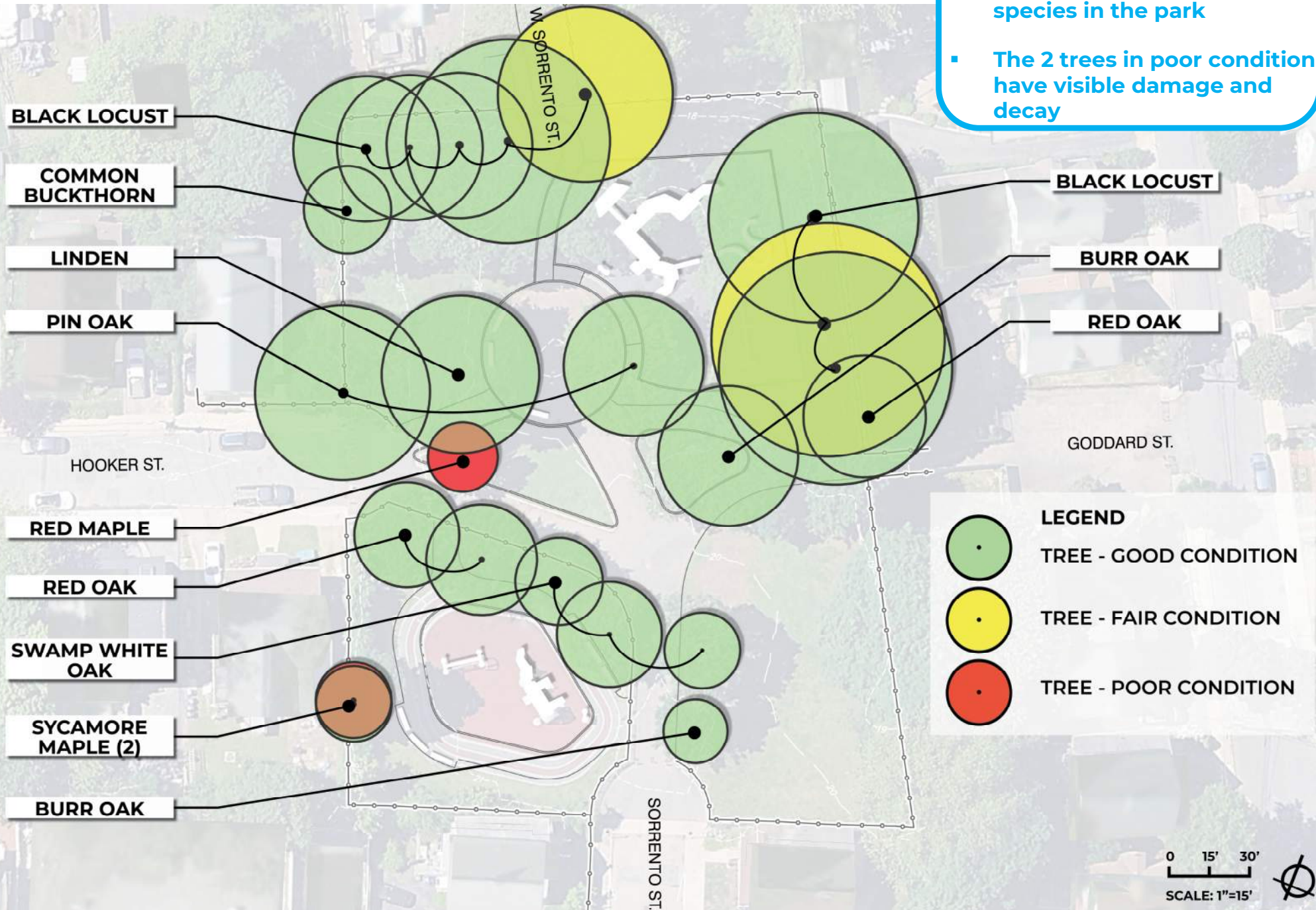
- Topography determines where water drains and pools
- The park is largely flat and open
- There is a gentle slope from Hooker St. towards Goddard St.





# SITE ANALYSIS | TREE ASSESSMENT

- The health and preservation of existing trees is a priority
- There are 9 different tree species in the park
- The 2 trees in poor condition have visible damage and decay



# SITE ANALYSIS | SHADE STUDY

SUMMER SOLSTICE – JUNE 21

- During the summer, shade is limited at the hottest time of day
- Opportunity to add more shade and cooling elements



8 AM



12 PM



4 PM



# INSPIRATION | TYPES OF PLAY

- All of these play types exist at Roberts – is there one you want to see more of?



Swinging



Sliding



Climbing



Rocking and Balance



# INSPIRATION | PARK THEMES

- Which park theme fits the best at Roberts?



Traditional



Modern



Nature-Inspired



Imaginative



# INSPIRATION | PARK AMENITIES

- How can the existing splash pad be improved?
- Which other amenities could serve the community?



**Splash Pad on Plaza**



**Cooling Station**



**Fitness Equipment**



**Table Top Games**



# INSPIRATION | GATHERING SPACES AND ENTRANCES

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**More Benches**



**Shade Trellis and  
Picnic Tables**



**Gathering Space**



**More Open Lawn Space**



**Consistent Entrances**

## **LISTENING + DISCUSSION | WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

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- ☐ **What works about Roberts Playground now? What do you love about it?**
- ☐ **What new features would make Roberts Playground even better?**
- ☐ **What types of play do you want to see at Roberts Playground?**
- ☐ **Is there anything we haven't mentioned that is important for us to know?**



# THANK YOU!

## Meeting #2 TBD

For questions, maintenance requests or concerns regarding any of our parks contact 311



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