

Fair Park Master Plan

Dallas, Texas

Planning and Urban Design

Abstract —

Fair Park is a 135-year-old, 277-acre historic park situated just outside of downtown Dallas. It began as a fairground for the State Fair of Texas, a use that continues today. The Park has extensive accolades – the site of the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition and the 1937 World's Fair, one of the largest collections of Art Deco art and architecture in the world, and a National Historic Landmark on par with the Alamo.

Key recommendations for the master plan focus on resilience, regeneration and equity by creating new greenspaces on former parking lots, improving stormwater management onsite to manage 100-year rain events, planting of over 1500 new trees, increasing overall site biodiversity by creating new habitat areas, improving access to the park by creating gateway parks located outside of the barrier fence, providing more daily park activation focused on community programming, and provide living wage jobs/training.

The plan was informed by an inclusive engagement process to define a 20-year planning and implementation roadmap for the transformation of Fair Park into a premier park and a daily destination for the surrounding neighborhoods.

Narrative —

Fair Park is the crown jewel of Art Deco architecture and art, Dallas history, and Texas culture. The primary purpose of the Master Plan update was to identify ways in which Fair Park can realize its untapped potential as a center for culture, a driver of economic development, and an asset for the community.

The landscape architect led design team focused on creating a Master Plan update for Fair Park to serve as a roadmap for redeveloping the Park in a manner fully consistent with its prominence as an iconic National Historic Landmark and its historic context as a symbol of Texan culture to the world, ensuring that the campus thrives as a vital community resource for generations to come.

The Master Plan update also considers the recreational and environmental resources of the Park, while responding to the needs of users and visitors, protecting the cultural and historic resources, and ensuring sustainability. Finally, the plan looks also to respond directly to social inequalities and displacement of historic African American neighborhoods by creating a truly community accessible park, defining community based programming, offering jobs/training, and creating opportunities to celebrate the cultural diversity and remembering the neighborhood resources that have been lost.

Project Challenges —

- The Park lacks daily use and activation because of minimal open/greenspaces, no programming, and no public amenities (food/beverage service, restrooms, wi-fi connectivity).
- Lack of environmental sustainability on the site that is subject to flooding (site designed to manage a 5-year rain event), increased urban heat island effect (76% impervious surface on campus and only 22% tree cover), and little to no usable open space (approx. 26 acres of existing green areas).
- Park has a lack of physical and cultural connectivity to the adjacent neighborhoods that is a direct result of the City using eminent domain to destroy traditional African American neighborhoods to build surface parking lots.

Project Goals —

- Provide enhanced green space that contributes to improvements in urban community health and an enhanced quality of life for South Dallas community members.
- Create Park amenities that foster a place for year-round community gathering, education, entertainment, and cultural celebrations.
- Ensure improvements in the Park serve as a source of relaxation, recreation, and cultural programming will present new daily uses for the site.
- Create park improvements that provide enhanced access, connections and provide new opportunities for neighboring communities that include access to jobs, advanced training, and community development.
- Define park improvements that emphasize renewal and revitalization by improving overall site resilience and enhancement of site ecological systems

Design Recommendations —

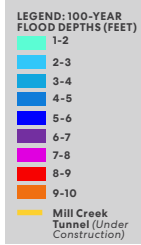
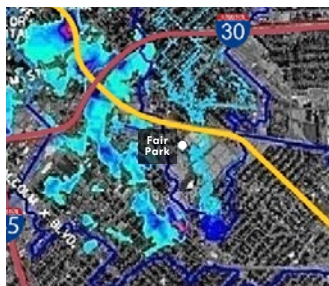
- Develop over 52 acres of new open/green spaces that provide enhanced recreation opportunities and improved connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods. These include larger greenspaces like the Community park and music green, smaller gateway parks that offer 365 day a year access to the park, provide areas for community gardens, and create specialized areas for the remembrance of historic African American neighborhoods that were removed and replaced with surface parking.
- The plan proposes comprehensive measures involving both landscape and mechanical improvements to increase stormwater management on the campus to manage a 100-year rain event and reuse captured stormwater for irrigation purposes.
- The plan recommends the planting of over 1500 new trees (to increase tree canopy cover from 22% to over 48% and reduce heat island effect) and new landscape areas (including 15 acres of new prairie) to improve biodiversity, create educational programming opportunities, and improve site stormwater functions.
- This Plan recognizes and supports the existing diversity of tourist and visitor attractions and recommends increasing daily programming by securing tenants for several unoccupied buildings.
- The plan makes recommendations to remove over 70 acres of surface parking, creates a pedestrian-only zone within the park that limits vehicular circulation within the core area, and improves access to regional transit options.
- The plan recommends the expansion of pedestrian and bicycle pathways throughout and around Fair Park and makes recommendations on areas where the surrounding security fence is removed or relocated.
- Create a new business plan that defines new job training resources, access to “green” living wage jobs, and access to community resources and services.

Award Worthiness —

The project is worthy of consideration for an award as the outcome of a collaborative and integrated design process that balances the functional, aesthetic and cultural needs of the Park users. The masterplan integrates a systems thinking approach to focus design recommendations on resilience, regeneration and equity by creating greenspaces, improving stormwater management, planting new trees, removing barrier fence, creating jobs/training, and ensuring all voices are heard during a transparent and inclusive engagement.

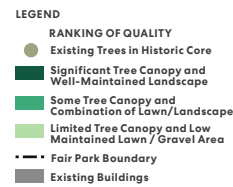
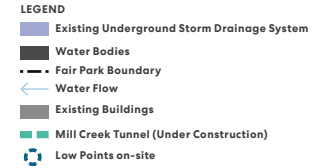


Existing Stormwater Infrastructure and Existing Green Space / Open Space



Existing 100-Year Flood

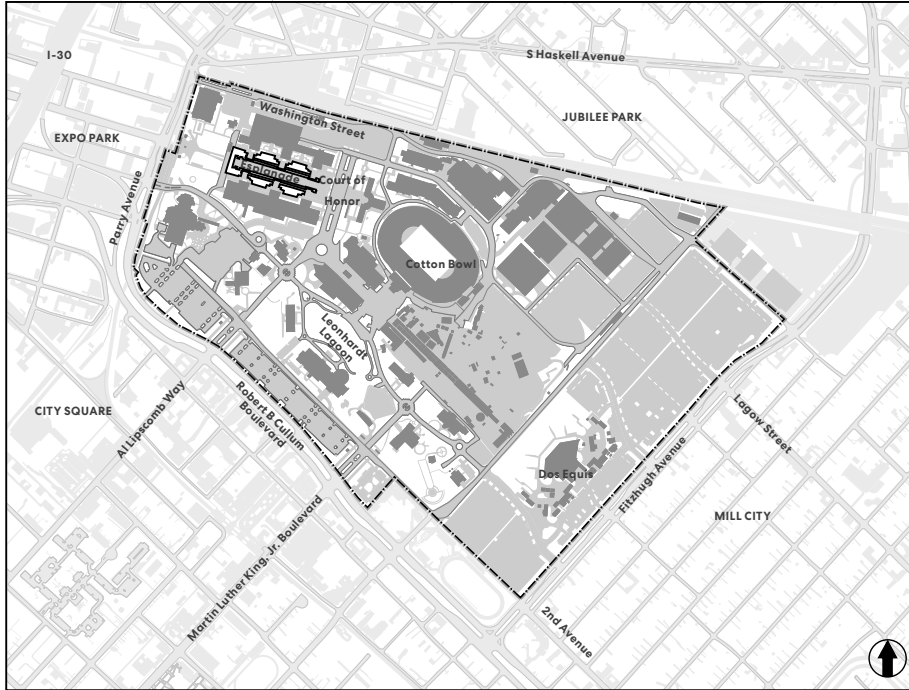
Existing Stormwater Infrastructure



Existing Green Space / Open Space

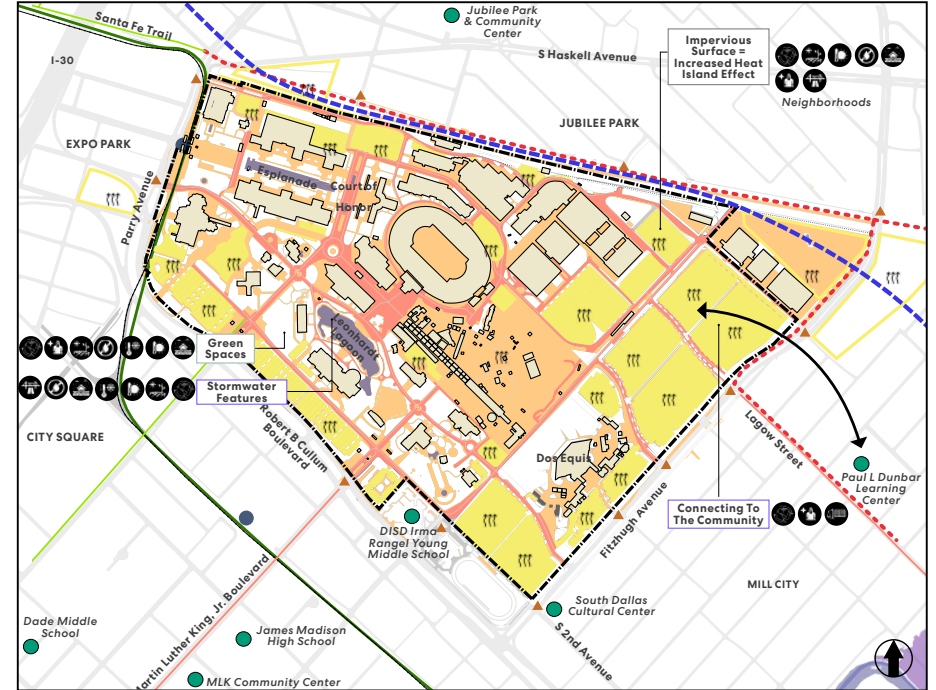


Impervious Surfaces and Resilience



Impervious Surfaces

- LEGEND
- - Fair Park Boundary
 - Impervious Surfaces
 - Existing Buildings



Resilience

Dallas Shock and Stresses

(Source: 100 Resilient Cities)

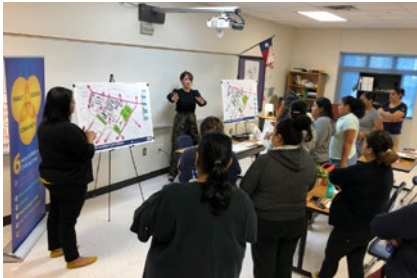
- Climate Change
- Disease Outbreak
- Drought
- Extreme Cold
- Extreme Heat
- Inadequate Educational Systems
- Rainfall Flooding
- Infrastructure Failure
- Water Insecurity

LEGEND

- Existing Trails
- Planned Trails
- On-Street Bike Routes
- DART Station
- DART Green Line
- Water Bodies
- Fair Park Boundary
- Schools & Community Centers
- Existing Buildings
- Mill Creek Tunnel (Under Construction)
- Urban Heat Island Effect
- Neighborhood Street Connections / Gateways
- Impervious Roadway
- Impervious Paving
- Surface Parking Lots

Engagement

A comprehensive, meaningful public engagement process was established to guide the planning process. Identified below are the types of meetings included in the process and the number of stakeholders engaged.



Multiple Surveys with over

765 Responses

24 Neighborhood events with

over **651** Participants

4 Public Workshops with over

480 Participants

12 Pop Up events in the Park

with over **180** Participants

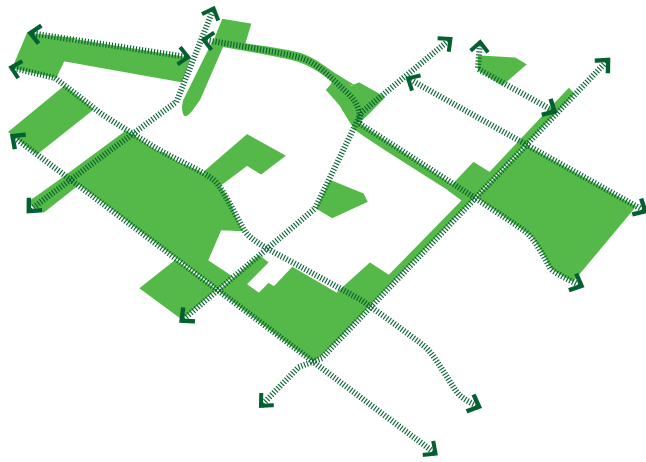
12 Resident Institution Meetings and

15 Meetings with City Departments and Regional Partner Organizations

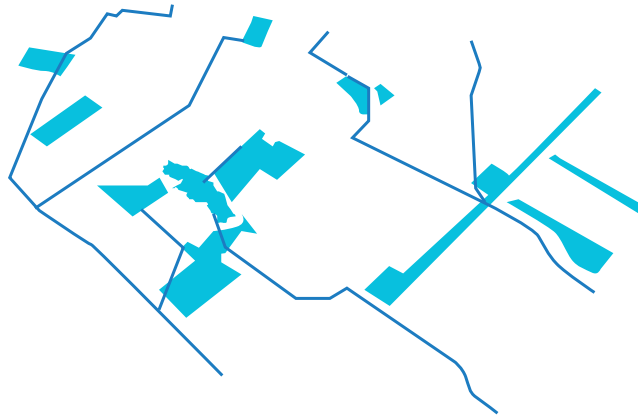
Design Recommendations / Goals

Project Goal: provide park improvements that contribute to improved community health, responds to historic displacement of African American neighborhoods/homes to expand the park, and enhanced quality of life for South Dallas community members

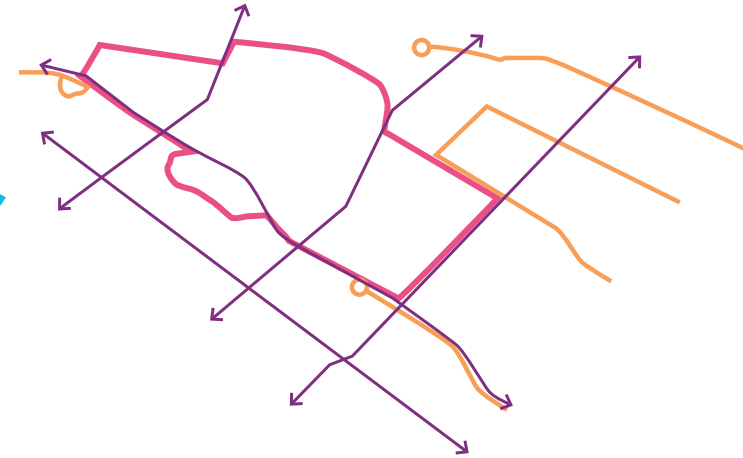
Connected and activated greenspaces



Celebrate and capture stormwater



Coherent and attractive pedestrian environment



Fair Park Master Plan Update



New Gurley Gateway Park
Enhanced Landscaping

Enhancements to Esplanade and Court of Honor
Enhanced Open Space

New Music Green
New Mixed-Use Development with Hotel and Parking Ramp

Improved Pedestrian Connection
Improved Parking Lot Greening

Improved Midway Area
New MLK Gateway Park

Improved Entrance Gate
New Jubilee Gateway Park
Improved Public Realm Greening

Blackland Prairie Trail
Blackland Prairie Park
Community Park

Improved Parking Lot Greening

Note: The Master Plan Update graphic represents some of the recommendations and not a comprehensive list of all improvements.



Music Green



Location



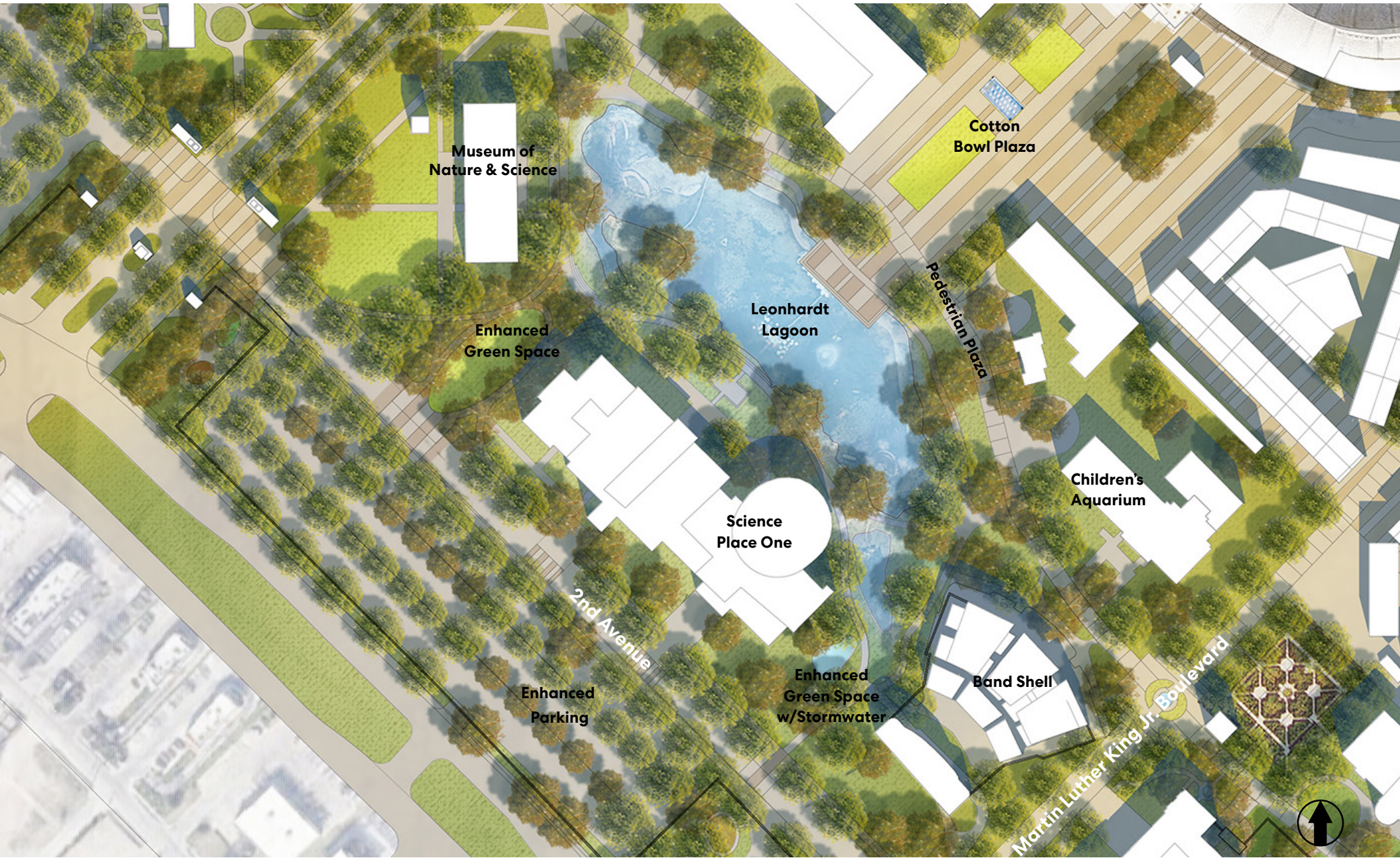
MLK Gateway Park



Location



Lagoon and Cotton Bowl Plaza



Resilience and Stormwater Recommendations

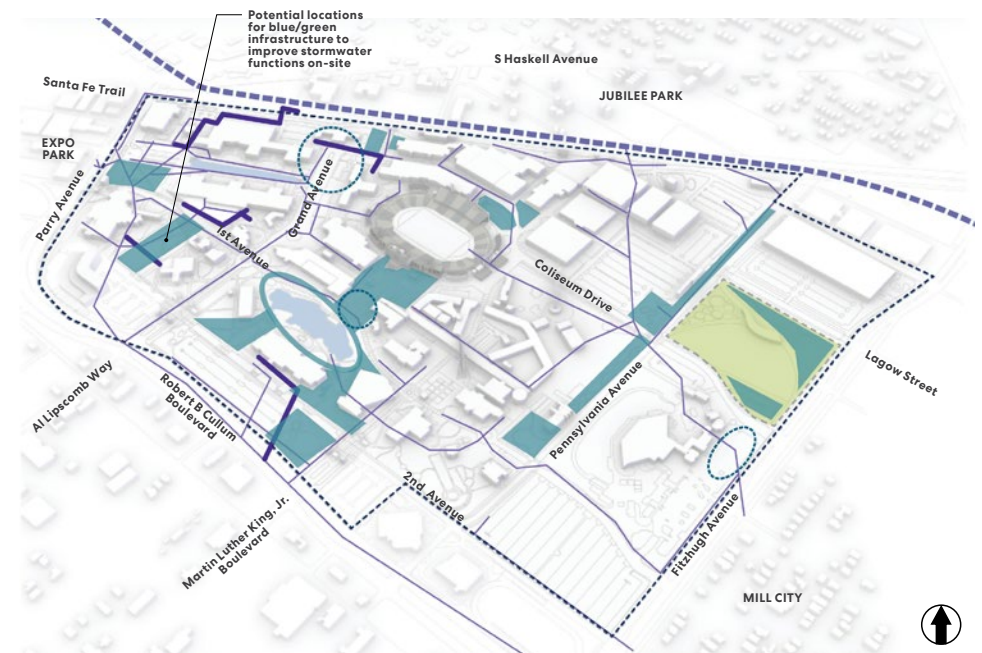


- LEGEND**
- Fair Park Boundary
 - ▭ Pedestrian Zone
 - ▭ Community Park Location
 - ▭ Water Bodies
 - ▭ Existing Structures/Buildings
 - Stormwater Management Areas
 - Areas of Increased Tree Canopy
 - Improved Pedestrian Access

Resilience and Sustainability

800,000
SF conversion
of Impervious
Surface

1,500+
Proposed new
Trees on site

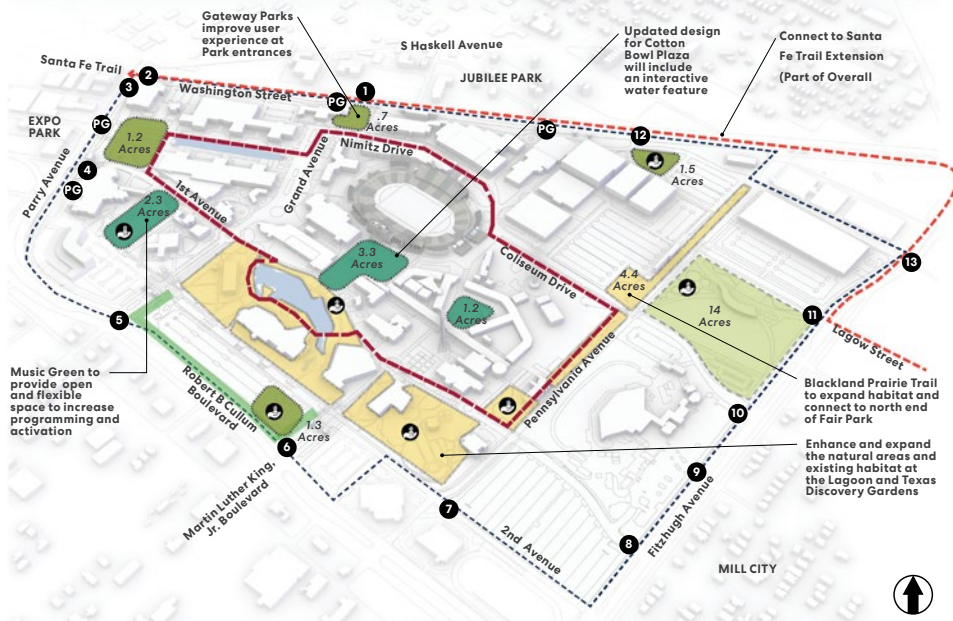


- LEGEND**
- Fair Park Boundary
 - ▭ Water Bodies
 - ▭ Existing Structures/Buildings
 - ▭ Community Park Location
 - ▭ Green Infrastructure Features
 - ▭ Mill Creek Tunnel Project (Under Construction)
 - Areas of Current Flooding
 - Existing Stormwater Lines
 - Proposed Stormwater Lines

Blue and Green Infrastructure

24
Acres of new
Stormwater
Areas

Open Space and Connectivity Recommendations

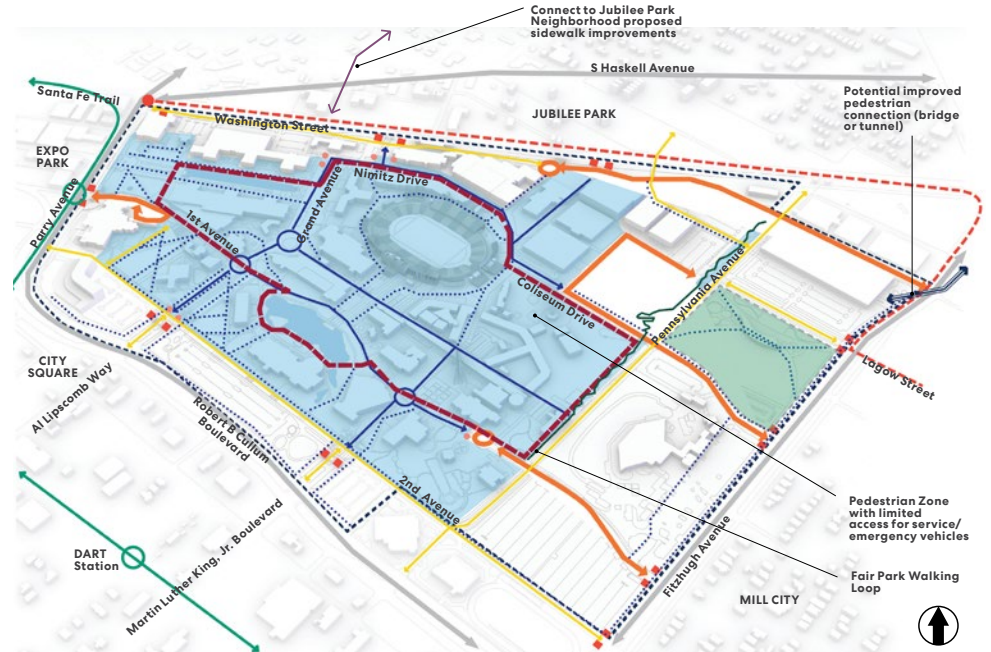


Parks and Open Space

- LEGEND**
- Fair Park Boundary
 - Water Bodies
 - Existing Structures/Buildings
 - Community Park Location
 - Ecological Park Zone/Garden
 - Gateway Parks
 - Civic Park/Plaza
 - Walking Loop
 - Outdoor Learning Area
 - Santa Fe Trail Connection
 - Pedestrian Gates
 - Parking Entrance Gates

52
Acres of New/
Expanded Park/
Open Space

65,000
Sq. Ft. of New
Prairie on site



Access and Circulation

- LEGEND**
- Fair Park Boundary
 - Vehicular Access
 - Enhance Multimodal Street
 - Primary Pedestrian Circulation (Restricted Vehicles Allowed)
 - Secondary Pedestrian Circulation
 - Major Adjacent Roadways
 - Prairie Walk
 - Pedestrian Zone
 - Jubilee Park Improved Sidewalk Connection
 - Park Walking Loop (With Amenities)
 - Bollards
 - Gates
 - Future Regional Bike Loop Trail
 - DART Green Line & Stations
 - Community Park Location
 - Water Bodies
 - Existing Structures/Buildings

12,000
Lin. Ft. of New
Trails/Walk

1.5
Mile Central
Walking Loop

Community Park



Community Park

View looking northwest towards Community Park

