



Parks & Recreation

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Keene Creek Park Public Informational Meeting Minutes March 10, 2020

I. Welcome and Overview

(Meeting commenced at 5:03pm)

Jim Shoberg: Described purpose of public informational meeting as opportunity for community to hear details and timeline of proposed improvements to Keene Creek Park. Gave brief overview of one of primary funding sources of ½ and ½ Tourism Tax Funds, which are intended to invest in west Duluth parks and trails. Described expectations of civility and cooperation during public meeting. Shared Parks and Recreation Mission and Vision and indicated this is available online for further review. Followed up with overview of meeting agenda.

II. Current Conditions and Prior Planning Efforts

Shoberg: Gave overview of current conditions at Keene Creek Park

- a. Keene Creek Park is built on Minnesota Power and MNDot land by agreement. City and public must take this into consideration, as the park is not protected public park land.
- b. Assessments were done of current infrastructure in the 2016 Keene Creek Mini-Master Plan. These assessments of individual park amenities were done by city staff, consultants, and partners as part of the Mini-Master Planning process.
- c. Keene Creek Park sustained significant damage from the 2012 flood, which has left a debris field, damaged a culvert, and washed out some of the paved trail infrastructure in the park. Noxious weeds are also present in some areas of the park. Planned improvements to the park will hope to address these issues.
- d. A sidewalk connection to lower Keene Creek Park from Grand Avenue was recommended in the Mini-Master Plan. This feature was added recently during road construction on Grand.

Shoberg: Provided overview of prior planning recommendations

- a. A total of 24 recommendations were made in the 2016 Mini-Master Plan for different amenities in the park.
- b. Funding has been secured for 13 of these recommendations. These are highlighted in red on the presentation and include:



1. General: cleaning up/removing flood debris, removing some of the noxious weeds, removing abandoned/hazardous remnant infrastructure, converting low-quality turf areas to naturalized vegetation, fixing drainage issues in lower portion of park.
2. Trails: trail resurfacing, new trail connections including potentially creating a new trail connection to the Cross City Trail, and installing wayfinding signage.
3. New amenities: Installing water fountain for dog park, bike park/pump track, accessible parking space, porta potty with vandal resistant enclosure near playground, entrance monument signs at each parking lot, new playground.

III. Proposed Improvements

Shoberg: Shared technical rendering from consultant of current proposed improvements:

- a. Proposed improvements were made alongside consultant, guided by 2016 Mini-Master Plan recommendations. These improvements were also made within the constraints of current funding, as well as grant requirements.
- b. Proposed improvements were offered up by Shoberg with caveat that not all improvements may be possible if construction bids come in higher than expected.

Shoberg: Shared specific details of proposed improvements

a. Dog park improvements:

1. A waterline will be installed from N 63rd Ave W to the northeast corner of the dog park in order to install a water fountain. This water fountain would be accessible from both inside and outside the dog park fence, allowing both dog park users and general park users to access water.
2. The area of the dog park will be reduced by approximately 0.1 acres so that park can comply with stream set-back requirements as defined in the Unified Development Code for the City of Duluth. This will ensure future decisions do not characterize the dog park as out of code, ensuring an extra level of protection to this amenity.
3. A berm within the dog park will be regraded to allow for increased functionality and safer use of this portion of the dog park.
4. Stormwater management improvements will be made to manage any pooling water within the dog park.

b. Trail improvements:

1. The paved trails within the park will be resurfaced and widened for increased access.
2. The paved trail adjacent to the dog park will be widened to allow for Park Maintenance staff to access the dog park via truck to more easily conduct dog waste and garbage removal.

c. Pollinator meadow features:

1. Duluth Parks has been approached by local citizens interested increasing pollinator spaces within the park system.
2. In alliance with recently implemented Park Maintenance standards, vetted unused open park space will be converted to "no mow" zones. There are opportunities for multiple no-mow zones within Keene Creek Park. Some zones will be no mow while others are proposed to be full restoration to native pollinator habitat.
3. No mow designation saves significant reoccurring maintenance costs, while also providing pollinator habitat, stormwater runoff mitigation, and carbon sequestration.

These benefits align with the vision statement of Duluth Parks and Recreation.

- d. Porta potty installation:
 - 1. Porta potty will be installed near the playground and upper parking lot.
 - 2. A screened metal enclosure will protect the porta potty from being blown over or vandalized.
- e. Wayfinding and signage:
 - 1. New sign will be installed for the park, following the new system-wide signage plan and style, most recently demonstrated at Quarry Park.
 - 2. Additional wayfinding signage is planned throughout the park.
 - 3. Entrance monument sign added to each parking area denoting the name of the park
- f. Parking lot:
 - 1. Designated accessible parking will be installed in the upper parking lot.
 - 2. Stormwater management features will be installed to collect parking lot run-off and treat it before it leaves the site
- g. Playground upgrades:
 - 1. When the 2016 Mini-Master Plan was created, the playground at Keene Creek Park was not due for upgrade. Since then, the playground has since been flagged for scheduled renewal by Park Maintenance.
 - 2. Funding for playground upgrades is unrelated to the grant funding for the rest of the proposed improvements to the park.
 - 3. A public meeting will be held after school is out for the year to allow children to participate in deciding which playground equipment they would like.
- h. Bike park/pump track
 - 1. In collaboration with Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores (COGGS) and pending an agreement with Duluth Parks and Recreation, a bike park/pump track will be constructed on the east side of the stream in the park.

Shoberg: Provided current timeline of project

- a. Bidding the construction of the project in Spring 2020
- b. Playground public engagement meeting in early June 2020
- c. Construction to occur between Summer and Fall 2020
 - 1. Schedule of construction will be determined by construction contractor who wins the bid for the project
 - 2. The dog park will likely be closed down for a period of time during construction. These details will be shared with the public at a later date, once a more detailed construction plan is determined
- d. Project expected to be completed in Fall 2020

IV. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:10pm, followed by Shoberg addressing one-on-one questions and comments from community members until approximately 6:45pm.

Keene Creek Park

2020 Improvements

Public Meeting
March 10, 2020



Expectations For a Public Meeting

- Treat each other with respect
- Work to build consensus
- Share the floor
- Offer your opinions – everyone has valid ideas!



City of Duluth Parks & Recreation Mission & Vision

OUR MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of Duluth Parks and Recreation division is to promote the health and wellbeing of our community, environment and economy by facilitating recreational opportunities and coordinating the enhancement of our parks, facilities and natural resources now and into the future.

OUR VISION STATEMENT: Duluth parks and recreation will continue to be the central driving force in strengthening the heritage of a healthy, active community for future generations by continuing on the path of improving and enhancing our parks and facilities; protecting our natural resources; and developing partnerships to deliver recreation programs and services

Agenda

Part I: (15 min)

- Current conditions
- Past planning projects

Part II: (25 min)

- Proposed improvements
- Timeline

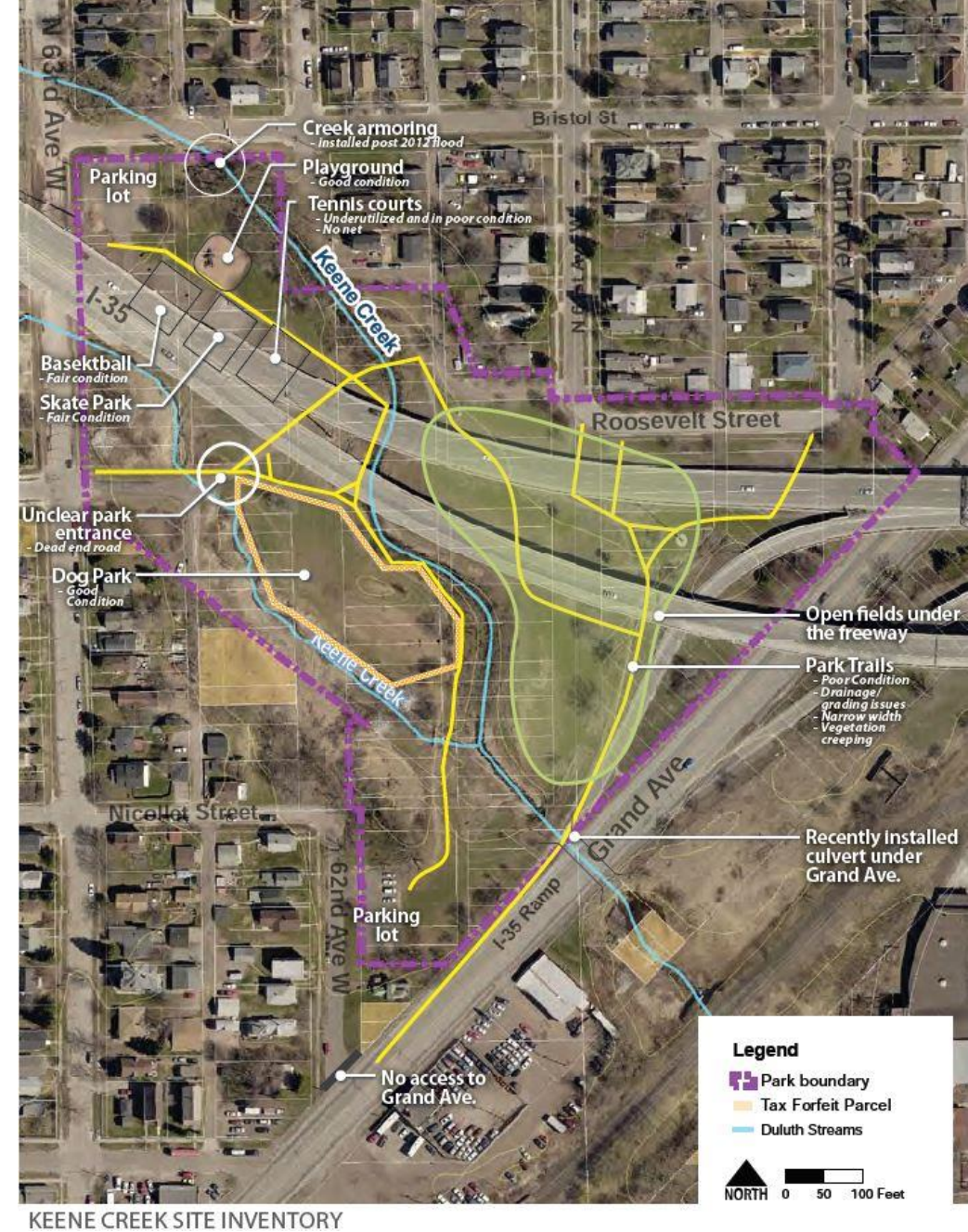
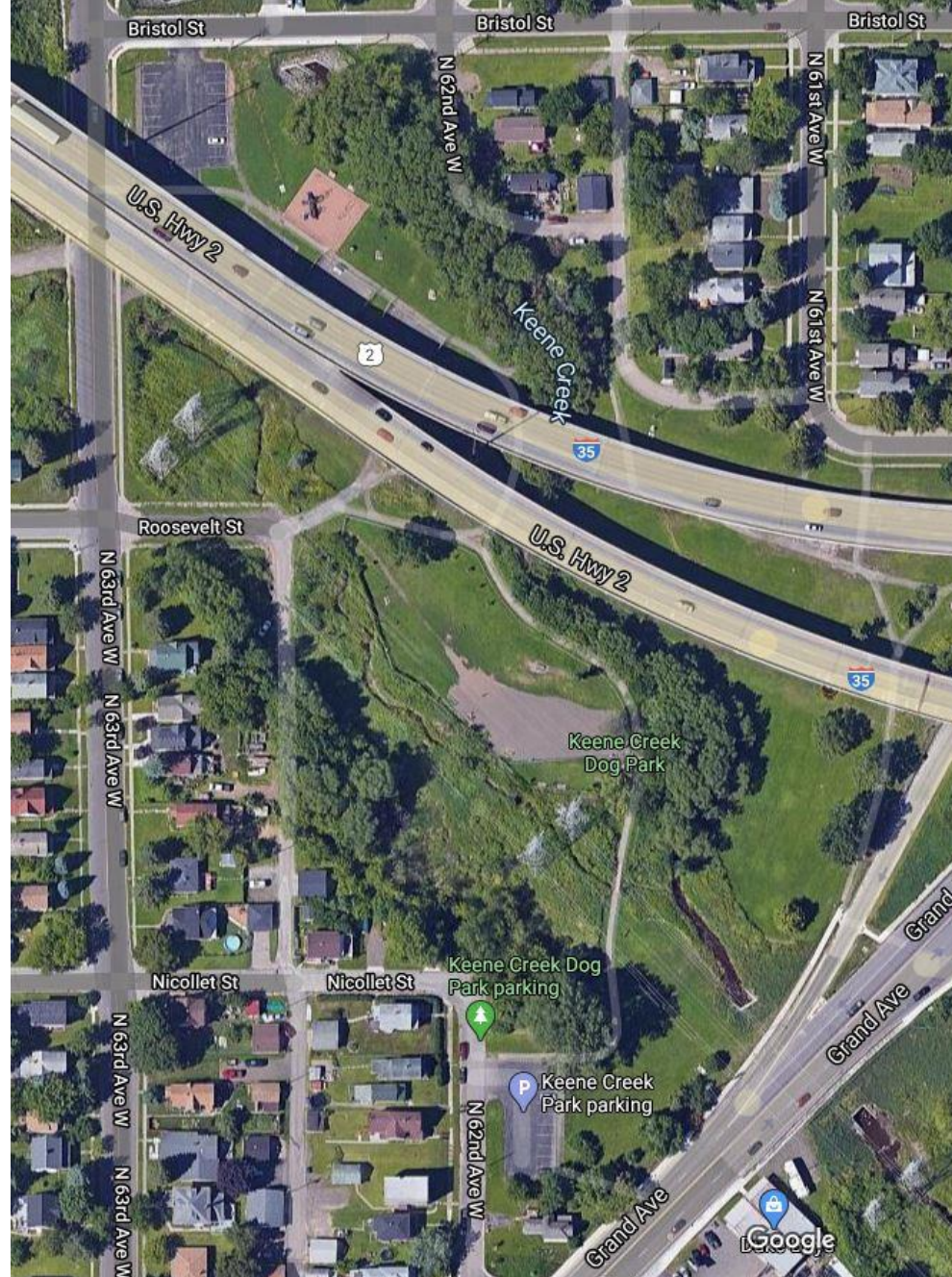
Part III: (10 min)

- Questions

Adjourn

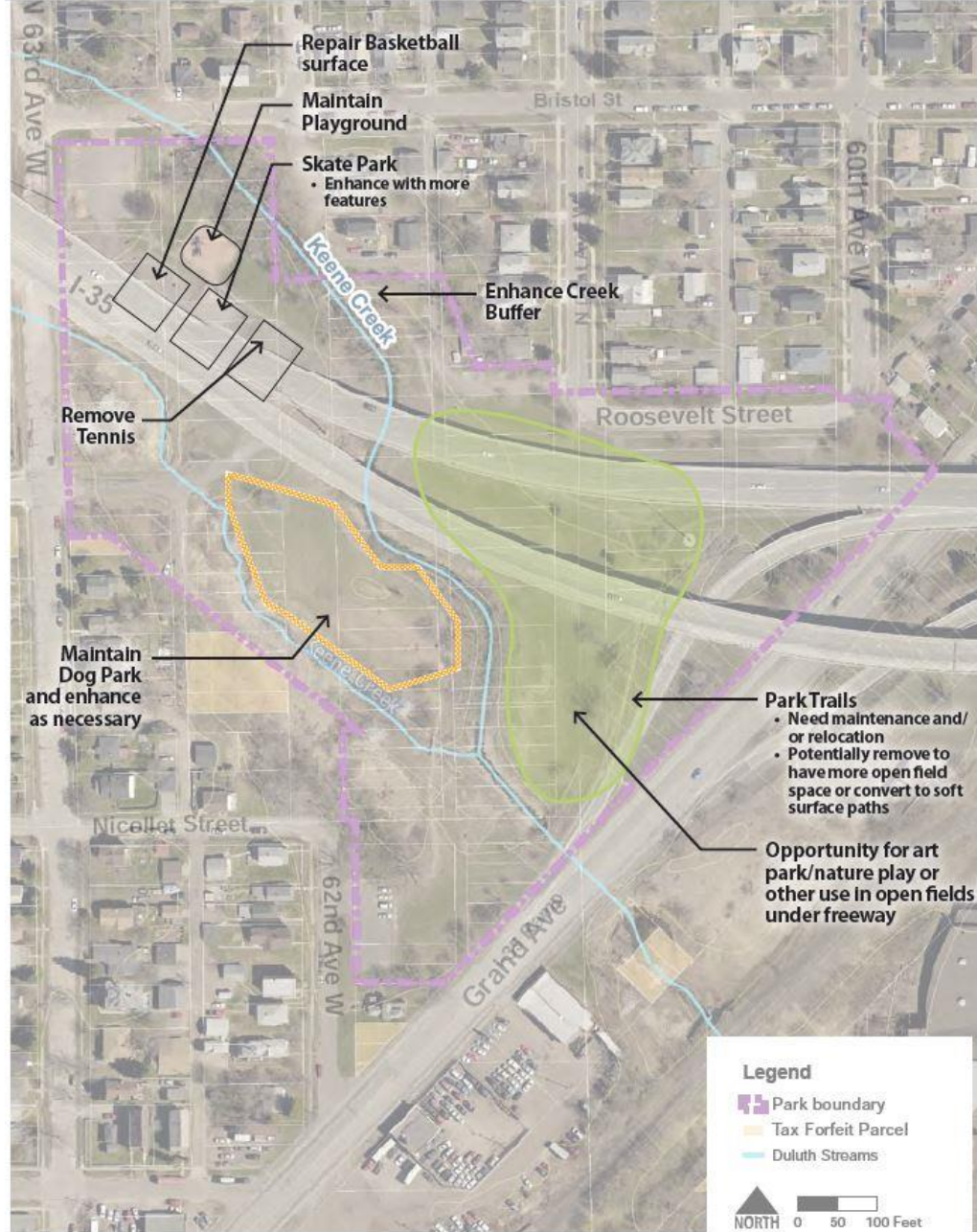


Existing conditions

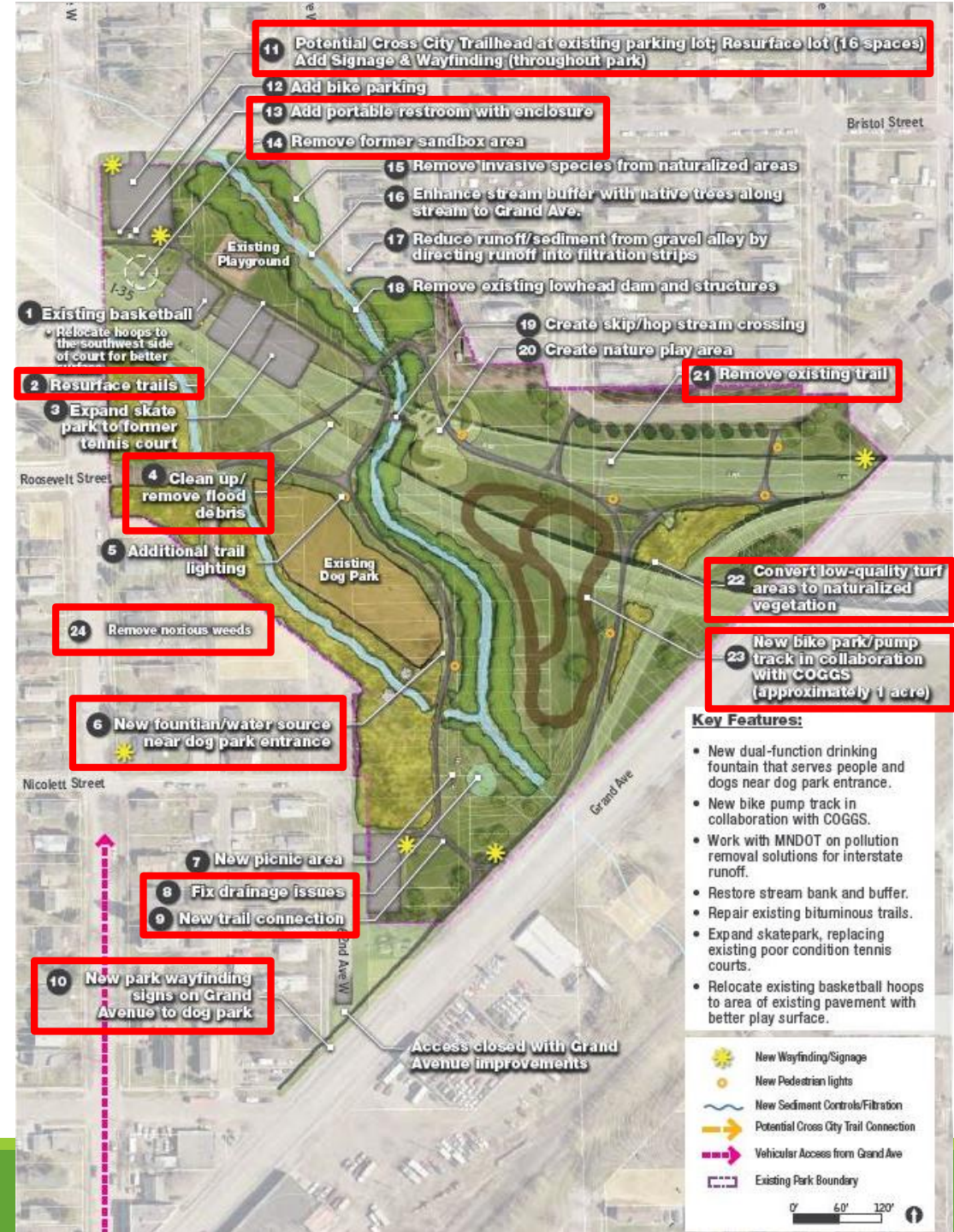


2016 aerial

Planning efforts to date

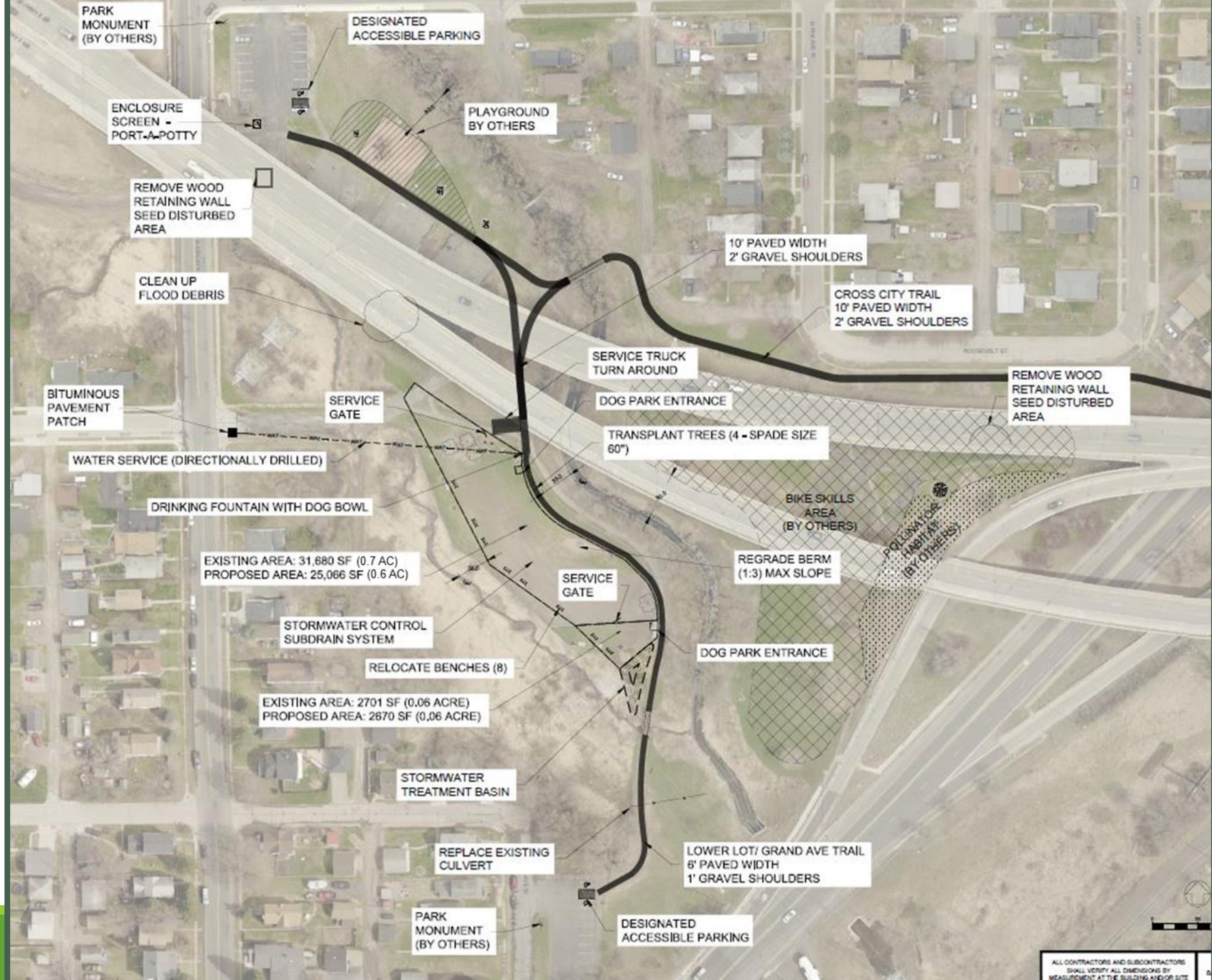


KEENE CREEK PARK SITE ANALYSIS



2016 Mini-Master Plan

Proposed improvements



Timeline

- **Bid project** – *Spring 2020*
- **Playground public engagement meeting** – *early June 2020*
- **Construction** – *Summer and Fall 2020*
- **Project complete** – *Fall 2020*



Questions?

Jim Shoberg, PLA

Landscape Architect

Senior Parks Planner

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