

03 HIGH PRIORITY SITES

HOWARD PARK

Howard Park is one of South Bend’s largest riverfront parks, hosting nearly 12 acres. Howard Park has a very passive landscape with a recreation building, ice skating rink, playground, and open fields. Because of its size, Howard Park is home to some of South Bend’s largest festivals, events and celebrations. Notably, the Cinco de Mayo Festival and the Celtic Fest are major city-wide events at the park, at times hosting over 2000-3000 participants. The recreation building on the site also provides programs as a senior activity center that hosts events for South Bend retirees. The ice skating rink has been removed due to outdated equipment. However, ice skating is an important activity at Howard Park to be included in future plans.

Howard Park is also the location of many memorials and historic features. The Vietnam Memorial and the Worker’s Memorial are both sited in the park within ceremonial landscapes. Howard Park offers strong history and a gravitating focal point for South Bend activity and culture. However, many of the features are outdated, underutilized and under whelming for its proximity to the river and Downtown.



Howard Park Aerial View



Howard Park Existing Conditions





Howard Park Aerial View

The vision for Howard Park includes a new combined ice and water feature, play areas, new buildings, an event lawn, and a stormwater/habitat feature. The recommendations for Howard Park strive to offer multiple spaces for various sized events, and to be a prominent destination for residents and visitors. The Howard Park recommendations include:

1. New Plaza – A new at-grade entry plaza opposite Hill Street to establish a presence on Jefferson Boulevard. This may be a location for public art, wayfinding and signage. It is suggested that two new buildings be located there to create a vital new public space off of St. Louis that can be flexible in its programing.
2. New Buildings – Two new buildings are recommended at the corner of Jefferson Boulevard and St. Louis Street. The building fronting Jefferson (shown as a 4,800 SF footprint with two-stories) can serve park administration functions, and small-scale retail services. The building facing St. Louis (shown as a 2,400 sf footprint with one-story) may accommodate vending for multi-season activities along with housing the mechanical needs for those

amenities.

3. Interactive Water/Ice Skating Feature – This feature is one of the primary attractions to Howard Park and it is critical that it is multi-seasonal in its capacity. Howard Park had a long association with ice skating and it was important to maintain through the park's reimagining. Rather than a traditional rink configuration, skating here is envisioned in a more organic form allowing users numerous experiences and even the potential to create space for pick-up games such as broomball. This configuration can also provide an opportunity to support private events without closing the entire facility. This feature should be creative in form and interactive in its capacity surrounded by various types of seating for observation.

4. Child Play Area – The child play area should also be creative in its form and provide numerous opportunities for exploration and discovery. Separated by age groups, it is important to consider security and safety in the design of these areas providing containment that is integrated into the site.

5. Central Event Lawn – This space is intended to accommodate larger festivals and musical performances. The gently sloping lawn should be graded to focus attention on a stage area backing to the river. The stage area should be designed as a plaza for daily use but could fit a trailer-mounted stage as needed. Service to the stage area is shown off of St. Louis and a 20-foot wide path around the lawn space facilitates circulation. This path can also serve as vendor space for art fair type of events.

6. Athletic Fields – This lawn expanse is planned for informal sports and passive uses.

7. Stormwater/Habitat Zone – These multi-functional areas are intended to accommodate stormwater from the park, high spring groundwater events and provide interpretive and interactive opportunities. A low berm separates these areas from the Riverwalk and they should include stepped areas to get close to the vegetation. These areas are envisioned as rain gardens and to be planted with a wide variety of flowers and grasses creating habitat for numerous species.

8. Memorial Landscape – This area is proposed to for relocation of some of the smaller memorials in the park. The Vietnam Memorial was originally intended for a quiet location where it would be “discovered”. The ultimate location for this is to be determined but suggested for the south side of the path south of the event lawn.

9. Historic Park Building – The building will serve new Venue, Parks & Arts staff needs.

10. Sloped Hill – This area has historically been the sledding hill in Howard Park and is maintained in that capacity.

11. Flexible Parking Space – This area should be designed with structural soil to accommodate overflow parking for large events but serve as lawn a majority of the time. The amount of parking and extent of the area needs to be evaluated but this space could easily accommodate 50 cars.

12. Festival Street – St. Louis is envisioned as a flexible space. Under normal conditions, it would be maintained as part of the street network. Back-in, angled parking is suggested along the western edge. During festivals, the street could be closed to expand the functional area of the park providing an exciting pedestrian space.

13. Riverwalk – A new 20-foot wide Riverwalk is proposed to accommodate a variety of users and even to provide space for small vendors or exhibitions. The existing balustrade is maintained and repaired where needed.



Howard Park Existing Conditions



This illustrative section shows the proposed festival street at St. Louis Street. The festival street is envisioned to host a series of organized events, including food fairs, art tours, artisan booths, food truck events, and local music and creative events. During times of inactivity, St. Louis offers shady on-street parking for park users and adjacent residents.



Chandler Non Profit Food Truck Benefit, Phoenix, Arizona



Seattle Street Food Festival, Seattle, Washington

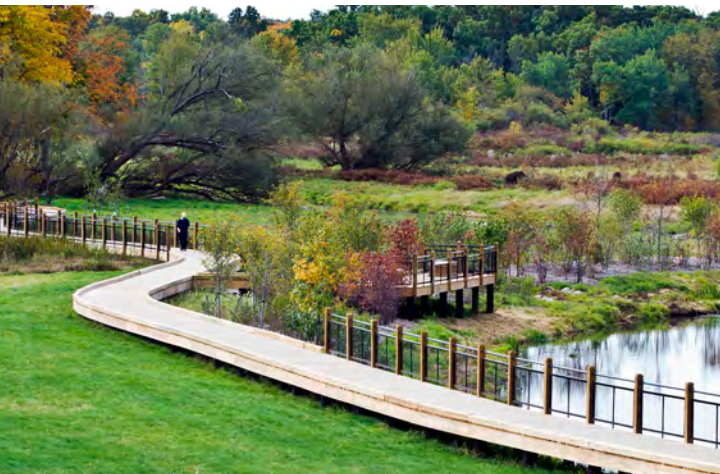


NoHo Food Truck Collective, Hollywood, California

This series of precedent images were used as inspiration for the proposed festival street at St. Louis Street.



This illustrative section shows the proposed riverfront edge with the stormwater/habitat zone. The riverfront edge maintains the historic balustrade, but offers a wider pathway to accommodate a variety of users. The stormwater/habitat zone is slightly depressed to hold stormwater and provide habitat near the river edge to promote hands-on learning.



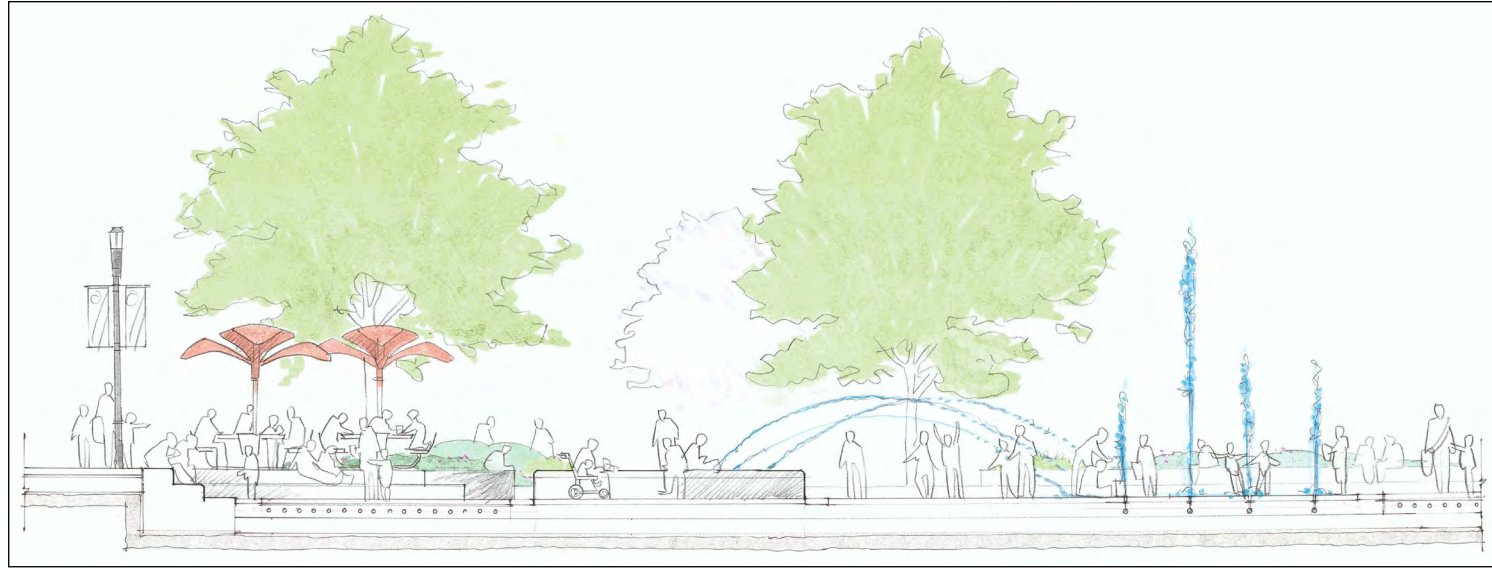
Mill Creek Park, Dexter, Michigan



This series of precedent images served as inspiration for the habitat creation and overlooks proposed for Howard Park.



Rendered Image of the Riverwalk and the Stormwater/ Habitat Zone at Howard Park



This illustrative section shows the activity at one of the main plazas, near the proposed park building locations. In the spring and summer seasons, this space can be activated as an interactive water feature, with adequate shady places for park users to watch the activity, eat and enjoy lunch in the park, or play in the water feature. This special place was designed to keep Howard Park a downtown destination.



This illustrative perspective shows how the plaza space can be used in the winter season as an ice skating amenity. Rather than in the traditional rink configuration, the skating experience is intended in a more organic shape even allowing some areas to be separated for private events. The plaza offers many amenities, like a cafe, seating, a fire pit and a center platform for ornaments, sculptures or festive elements.



Warren City Center, Warren, Michigan



This series of precedent images served as inspiration for how the interactive water feature might look and operate within a landscape similar to that of Howard Park.



Huntington Station ice Rink, Long Island, New York



Maggie Daly Park, Chicago Illinois



Elkhart Skating Ribbon, Elkhart Indiana

These series of precedent images informed the proposed ice skating facility at Howard Park.