

SUBJECT: **HART PARK PHASE 1 IMPROVEMENTS DESIGN UPDATE**

PREPARED BY: **URBAN DESIGN + ARCHITECTURE STUDIO**

(Ric Abramson, FAIA, Manager)

(Michael Barker, AIA NCARB, Project Architect)

STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

The Board will receive an update on the general approach and disabilities-related upgrades as part of the Phase 1 Hart Park Improvements Project and provide input on the schematic design.

RECOMMENDATION:

Review the design update presented for the Phase 1 Hart Park Improvements Project and provide input for staff and the design team.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

William S. Hart Park is located at 8341 De Longpre Avenue and was once the property and residence of the silent film star William S. Hart. Hart donated the property to the City of Los Angeles in exchange for a promise to erect a fountain and preserve the estate as a park in his honor. When West Hollywood was incorporated, the City began negotiations with the City of Los Angeles to lease the estate and turn it into a park. The estate has needed attention for many years, and in 1989 the City of West Hollywood took control of it and improvements were made including the addition of landscaping, a fountain, walkways, benches and a small AIDS Memorial. Upon expiration of the original lease, new negotiations were completed and at its October 7, 2019, meeting, the City Council approved a new 35-year lease agreement with the City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks. The current off-leash dog area was authorized by the Council on a trial basis in 1999. In 2004, a Public Facilities Ad-Hoc Subcommittee was formed to

study alternative off-leash dog play area configurations which informed further subsequent design studies.

On March 19, 2018, the City Council directed staff to develop a comprehensive plan for improvements to the park, including consideration of accessibility and disability access-related improvements, parking, historical aspects of the site, the Hart House, dog area improvements, lighting, security, and existing programming and facilities. The Council also directed staff to replace the existing wood chips with synthetic turf and present recommendations to the Public Facilities Commission (PFC) for review before returning to City Council. The City worked with a consultant team and a Certified Access Specialist (CAsp) to evaluate the property's existing outdoor facilities and identify areas in need of upgrades or found as non-compliant with the latest ADA Standards for Accessible Design and the California Building Code, Chapter 11B.

On August 8, 2018, the Public Facilities Commission approved the formation of a Hart Park Ad-Hoc Committee, which included Commissioners Block, Torres, and Isaacs. This Committee built upon initial off-leash play area concepts developed by the previous Ad-Hoc Subcommittee in 2004 and provided comments and guidance regarding the planned improvements.

Between February of 2020 and mid-2021, several community engagement efforts took place, including two events in Hart Park, a pop-up event at West Hollywood Park Dog Park, a pop-up booth at Plummer Park, and a community event at the Helen Alpert Farmers Market. These efforts also included discussions with representatives of the Actor's Studio who currently use the Hart House, an update to the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce's Government Affairs Committee, a staffed Hart Park presentation board at the West Hollywood Day event at the ARC, and a presentation to the Sunset Business Improvement District. Staff then worked closely with the Commission's Hart Park Ad-Hoc Committee who attended many of the outreach events and helped craft ideas for the full Commission to consider.

Staff presented multiple options for consideration to the PFC, the Older Adults Advisory Board (OAAB), and the Disabilities Advisory Board (DAB), and all three bodies

recommended the design option that included a reconfigured, split-level dog play area extending around the south side of the Hart House, creating opportunities for additional park uses along the north side of the dog play area and increasing visibility of the historic house from within the park. Although a slight majority of the community members involved preferred wood chips over synthetic turf in the off-leash dog area, a majority of the PFC and Advisory Board members preferred synthetic turf. At their May 12, 2021 meeting, the PFC received public comments and recommended their preferred option to the City Council.

On April 3, 2023, the City Council reviewed the results of the outreach and recommendations from the Commission and Boards and directed staff to proceed with the Phase 1 Improvements including:

- a) Upgrades to all pedestrian path-of-travel routes and site accessibility barrier-removal improvements in locations identified in the Certified Access Specialist (CASP) Report; and
- b) Reconfiguration of the off-leash dog area in a split level small and large play area in accordance with the results of the community outreach process and PFC recommendations; and
- c) Removal of the existing wood chip surface material and replacing it with dog-friendly synthetic turf; and
- d) Retaining a consultant to provide design and engineering services to produce construction documents; and to work with a Construction Manager to prepare a revised project cost estimate.

On September 16, 2024, the City Council approved the award of an agreement with Stoss, Inc. to provide design and engineering services for the project and directed staff to return to a future meeting to discuss ground cover options for the off-leash dog area. During the meeting, numerous members of the community voiced their concerns about the environmental and health impacts of synthetic turf, and the Council voiced support for either continuing the use of wood chips or exploring other natural surfacing options in a

newly reconfigured and redesigned off-leash play area.

Project Goals and Site Constraints

The design team at Stoss has performed a thorough site analysis related to site grading, slopes, and the condition of the existing canopy trees at Hart Park. They also studied the original concept design that was prepared by the previous consultant and found other areas for improvement.

Key elements of the design brief were derived from the CASp report, supportive of other directions to date, and reflected City objectives such as the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) include:

1. Re-grade and reconfigure the parking lot and provide a van accessible parking space, including associated striping and signage. Significant re-grading of this area will be required to create a more accessible parking area.
2. As part of this reconfiguration, remove the current stairs along De Longpre and replace them with a new staircase that provides improved site visibility, security, and pedestrian safety. A new, consolidated, and reconfigured stair/ ramp entry location will allow staff to properly secure the park at night, which is not currently possible due to the many distributed access points.

The eastern stair has been plagued by maintenance issues due to its distant location from other park uses and by the nature of it being tucked into the landscape and not visible, creating safety concerns. The western stair forces people walking between Sunset Blvd. and De Longpre to traverse the parking lot where vehicles may be backing up. This current route also bypasses much of the park experience. Replacing both stairs with a newly consolidated stair and ramp entry point could alleviate these concerns.

3. Reconstruct paths of travel throughout the park to be accessible, including sloping walkways and ramps throughout, for disability compliance. Provide an accessible route from the parking lot to both buildings onsite. Like the parking area, the current

paths far exceed accessibility standards in terms of their slope, so significant re-grading and reconfiguration will be required. Due to the additional length required to meet accessibility standards, this path of travel reconfiguration will likely require the removal and replacement of some trees onsite. Care must be taken to retain existing mature canopy trees wherever possible.

4. Reconfigure the off-leash dog play area and consider alternative natural surfacing options. The option previously recommended by the PFC and approved by Council is a split-level configuration wrapping around the south side of the Hart House, creating opportunities for additional park uses to the north of the dog play area, and opening up one of the “postcard” views from inside the park near the AIDS Memorial to the Hart House. Aim to maintain the current size of the off-leash play area, at a minimum, with a preference to increase the total size if possible while not sacrificing other functional needs and desires for greater inclusivity in the park.

The current entries and wood chip surfacing are not disability compliant. Regardless of the final surfacing option, whether wood chips, decomposed granite, compacted organic material, synthetic turf, or some combination of materials, the reconfigured off-leash play area will include disability compliant areas for enhanced access. These areas can be surfaced with options such as concrete, stabilized decomposed granite, or permeable pavers.

5. Reconfigure the AIDS Memorial and fountain to ensure both elements are fully accessible while providing an experience that is more aligned with the original intent of the design, which has since been disrupted by the addition of the off-leash dog play area. Significant reconfiguration will be required because of the steep slopes fronting the fountain and the current memorial, and a commitment to facilitate full access for park users with disabilities to both elements. The design of this element of the park will also be reviewed by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs.
6. Retain existing canopy trees wherever possible and integrate them into the design. In situations where trees must be removed for the creation of accessible routes

and compliant grades, new trees will be replaced as part of the design.

The city's landscape consultants and Facilities staff have identified specific trees that are impediments to access (such as the angled *Leptospermum* tree adjacent to the driveway), create safety or head clearance concerns, or are crowding out larger canopy trees and should be removed to improve the health of the larger trees. In some cases, these trees will likely need to be removed and replaced with new canopy trees in more suitable areas of the park, such as the newly created plaza area to the north of the off-leash dog play area.

7. Integrate signage at entrances indicating accessible routes and ease wayfinding throughout the Park. Signage should complement and be designed in coordination with a consolidated ramp/ stair entrance along De Longpre.
8. Modify stairway and ramp design and handrails and landings with seating areas for accessibility.
9. Add an accessible drinking fountain.
10. Strategically locate companion seating areas next to benches and along pathways for park users with disabilities to share these areas with other users.
11. Provide seating and landscaped privacy screening between the Hart House and reconfigured dog area.
12. Create a plaza and picnic area between Memorial and Hart House. Historically, the Hart House was surrounded by generous open space and a large lawn. When Hart Park was established, the lawn was a central feature in the park and provided people a place to gather, picnic, and enjoy the grounds. This area was reduced significantly with the addition of the off-leash play area. Through the reconfiguration of the dog area, the opportunity exists to bring back at least some portion of this space and its original use as a multi-functional park area for all users without a reduction to the total footprint of the off-leash play area.

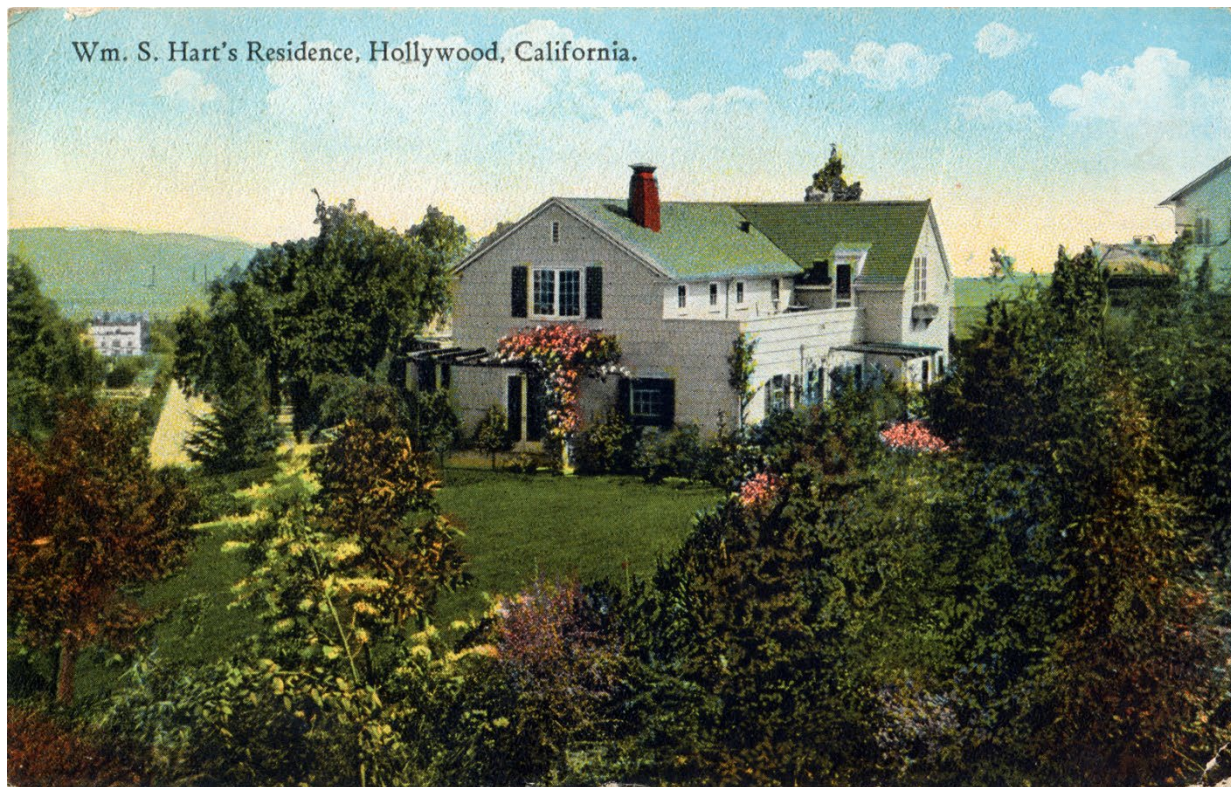


Figure 1- Postcard View of the Hart House, 1924.

Design Options and Commission and Advisory Board Input

The Stoss team developed two conceptual-level planning options in response to the design brief above. These two options were presented to the Public Facilities, Recreation, and Infrastructure Commission on February 12, 2025. The Commission voiced their support for the general approach overall and found consensus regarding replacing the current fountain with a water feature wall adjacent to a reconfigured memorial. The Commission was also unanimous in its support for the design strategy that would re-grade and reconfigure parking lot and pathways and make the accessible route to the AIDS Memorial and fountain flatter. In the meeting, some members of the community that utilize the off-leash play area voiced concerns that splitting the dog play area into two for small and large dogs would compromise the usable area for both and urged to Commission to recommend that Council consider removing this requirement from the project. As a result, the Commission was generally more supportive of the option presented for the site circulation and off-leash play area that allowed the off-leash play

area to function as either one large area mixing small and large dogs, or with a separation per previous Council direction. Finally, the Commission was comfortable with the proposed off-leash dog area reconfiguration and the creation of a small multi-functional plaza with new trees, seating, with a high degree of visibility throughout for improved security, and a clear view of the Hart House from the AIDS Memorial. Commissioners stressed the need within the park for a flexible open space that can be used for various members of the community, including workers from the Sunset Strip on their lunch breaks, small groups of community members, and families with children.

As the work is still early in the design phase, the focus is currently on soliciting input and receiving feedback on the major design and planning directions. The Older Adults Advisory Board is asked to provide comments, suggestions, and feedback regarding the proposed design with a particular focus on inclusivity and access, parking needs, park programming, circulation and flow, and related desirable improvements including but not limited to:

- A. Entryways and Pathway Access and Finishes
- B. Seating and Other Amenities
- C. Parking Improvements
- D. Off-Leash Dog Area Surface Suggestions
- E. Signage and Wayfinding Considerations
- F. Lighting Recommendations
- G. Refer to Attachment A for diagrammatic plans and visualizations of the design options.

Next Steps

The consultant team will work with city staff to produce a series of final recommended design solutions once all the comments from the Commissions, Boards, and the City of

Los Angeles' Department of Recreation and Parks and the Department of Cultural Affairs have been compiled. Staff will then return to the Public Facilities, Recreation, and Infrastructure Commission for another update including Advisory Board comments and suggestions, and then to City Council to present a preferred schematic design update and options for surfacing of the off-leash dog play area. Barring any major delays due to reviews by the City of Los Angeles or other stakeholders, it is currently anticipated that construction documents will be completed in Q4 of 2025. Staff will return to the City Council for approval of the construction budget and the award of a construction contract. Construction is currently anticipated to begin in Q2 of 2026.

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

CITY MANAGER'S DEPARTMENT / URBAN DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE STUDIO
DIVISION

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A - Design Update and Diagrammatic Plans

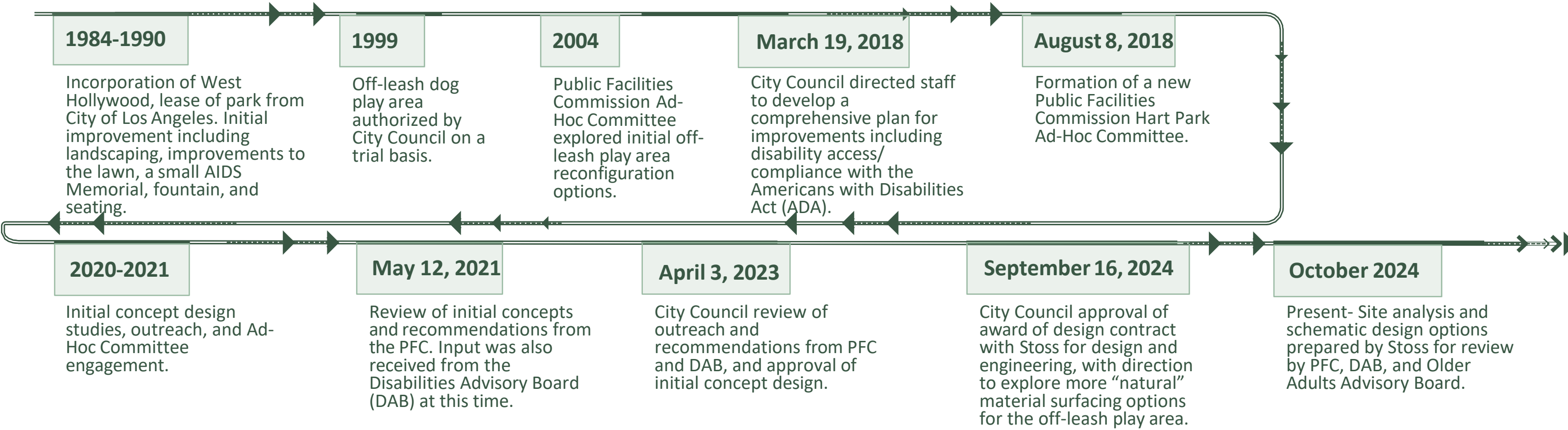
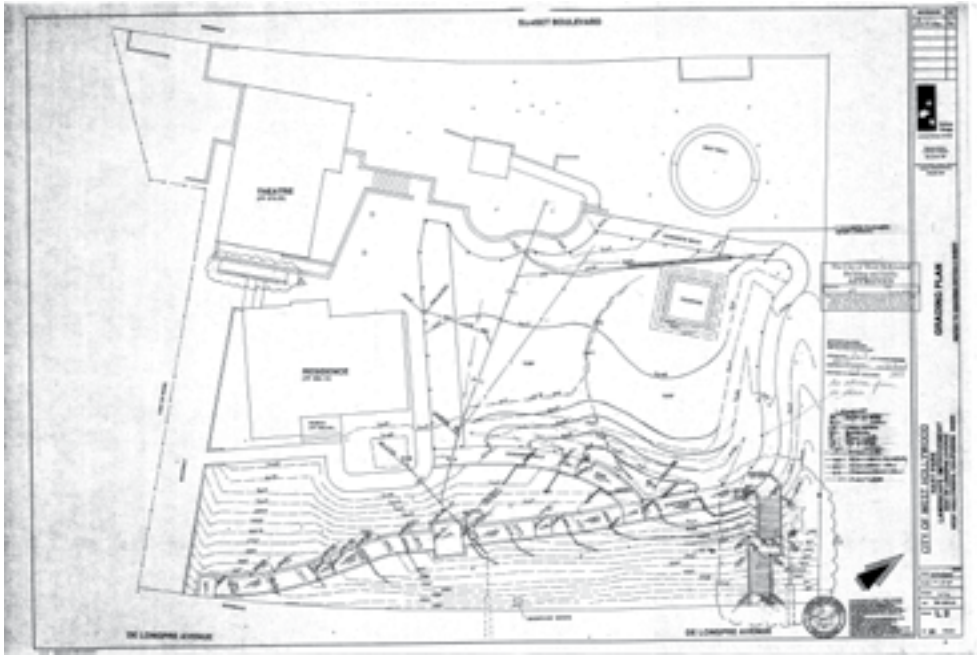
WILLIAM S HART PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Older Adults Advisory Board Commission
February 26, 2025



SOIS

Project Background



Project Goals and Drivers

- **Upgrade and reconfigure park paths**, parking lot, AIDS memorial, and off-leash play area for accessibility and ADA compliance per the **CASp** report.
- **Reconfigure off-leash play area** per previous Council and Commission direction, for accessibility purposes and to create new usable park space to the north of the dog area with a more open view to the Hart House.
- **Improve site security and pedestrian circulation**, upgrade stair and park entry locations, signage, lighting, and seating.
- **Retain existing canopy trees where possible**, and provide replacement for those that must be removed to create accessible paths.
- **Consider natural materials**, canopy trees, and other design features in support of the City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP).



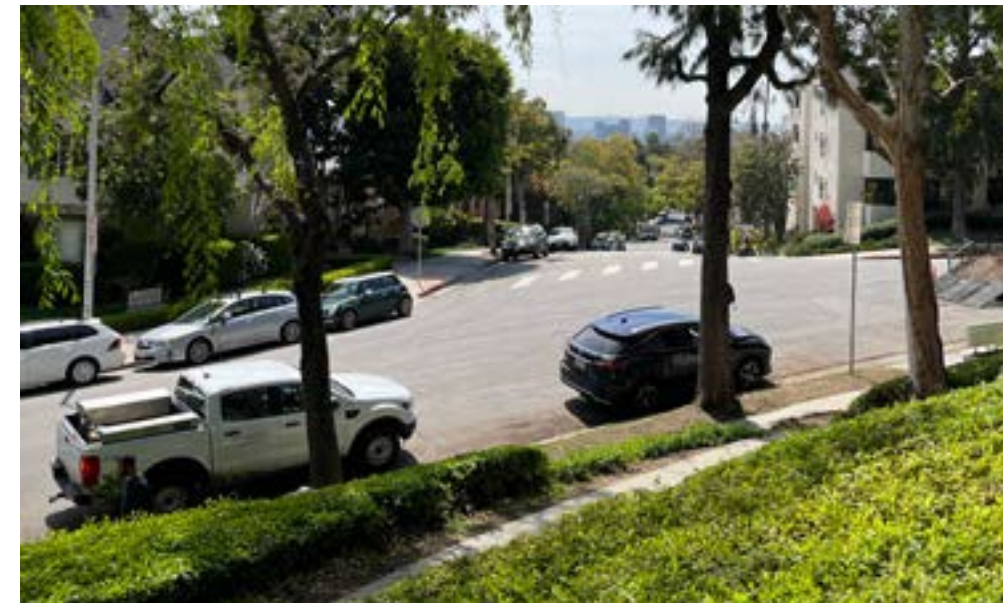
Site Challenges (Existing Conditions)

Slopes, Connectivity, and Accessibility



Parking Area

Needs to be re-graded and reconfigured for ADA compliance with van-accessible space.



Pathways Throughout the Park

Need to be reconfigured and expanded for ADA compliance with reduced slopes, new landings with accessible companion seating areas, and handrails for steeper ramped portions.

Site Challenges (Existing Conditions)

Slopes, Connectivity, and Accessibility



Off-Leash Area

Needs to be reconfigured for disability compliance with reduced slopes, accessible surfaces, and accessible seating areas.

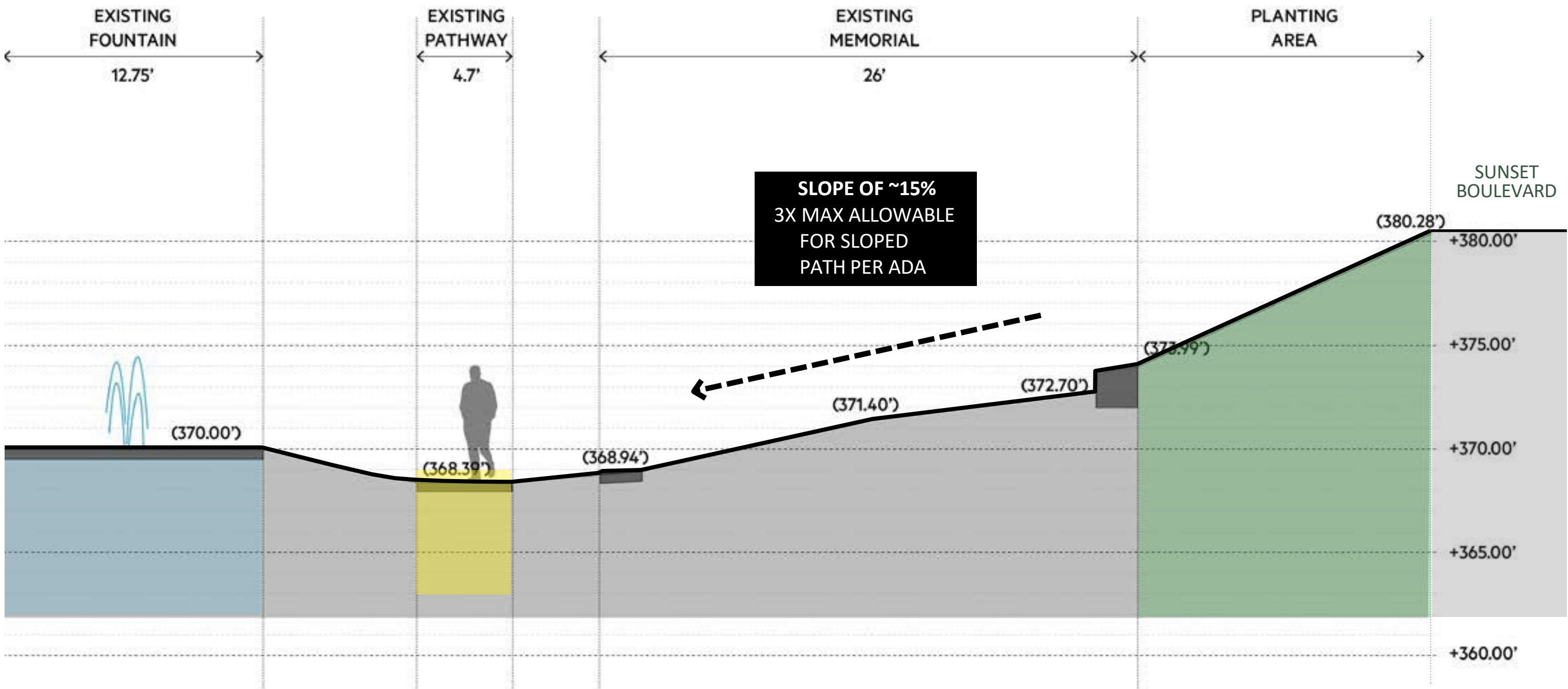
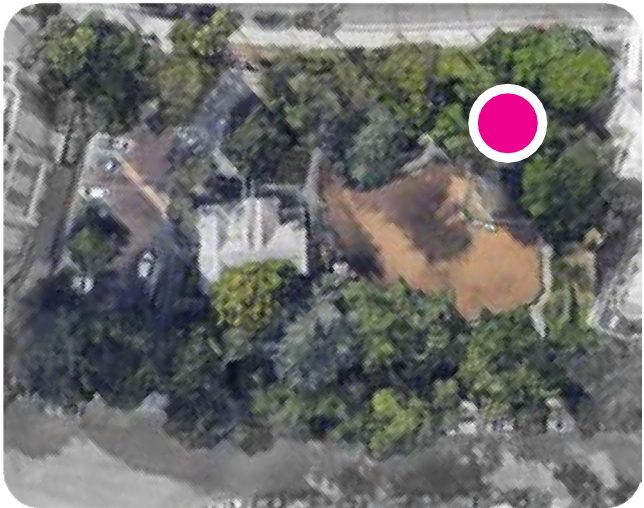


AIDS Memorial + Water Fountain

Steep slope limits access for those with disabilities.

Site Challenges (Existing Conditions)

Aids Memorial + Water Fountain



Site Analysis

Initial Concept Design (by MIG)

This initial concept plan was developed in response to community, Commission, and Advisory Board comments in 2021 and was approved by Council in 2023. This informed the current design work.



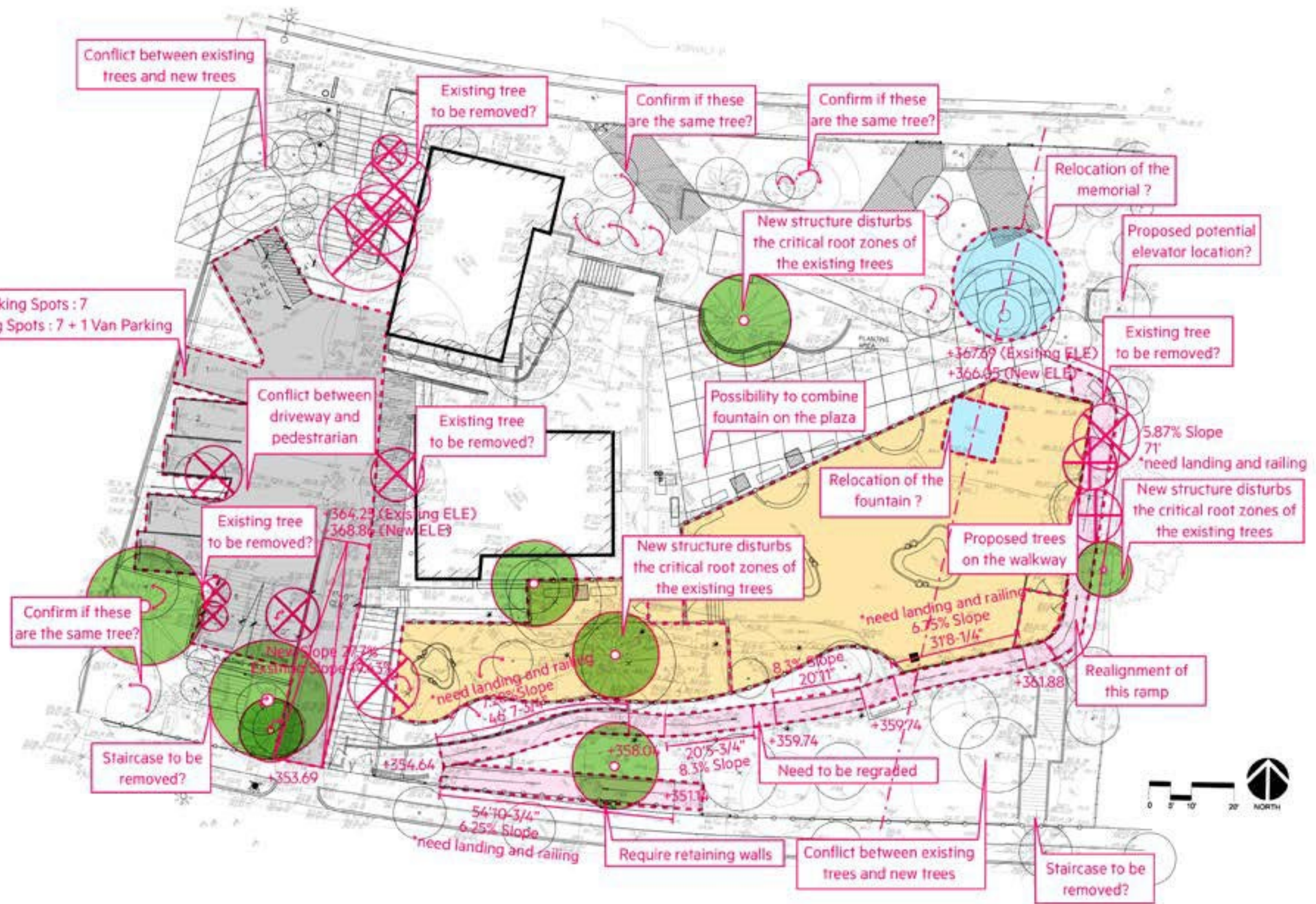
Site Survey



Council- Approved Concept- Source: City of West Hollywood

THE GAME OF THRONES BOARD

- Constructing new accessible paths while protecting mature trees and critical root zones.
- Reconfiguring parking lot within minimal footprint.
- Balancing grading and cut/ fill throughout the site.
- Enhancing existing uses while finding additional park improvement opportunities.



	Existing	Proposed
Big Dog Area	5218 sqft.	4630 sqft.
Small Dog Area	-	1785 sqft.
Total Dog Park Area	5218 sqft.	6415 sqft.

-  Potential Tree Removal (Typically for Accessible Paths/ Grading/ or Maintenance/ or Tree Health)
 -  Potential New Tree Planting

-  Potential Off-Leash Play Area
-  Potential Ramp Reconfiguration

-  Parking Lot
-  AIDS Memorial and Fountain

ADVISORY BOARD INPUT IS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED ON:

- Effectiveness of the entry sequence, pathways, and proposed circulation route between Sunset Blvd. and De Longpre Ave.
- The off-leash dog play area configuration.
- Input on a preferred parking lot layout.
- Comments on the newly accessible AIDS Memorial and reconfigured fountain.
- Additional aspects of the design options presented. For example, any programming opportunities in the plaza area that should be considered.

Parking Adjacent Circulation/Tiered Off-Leash Dog Area

Concept

Legend

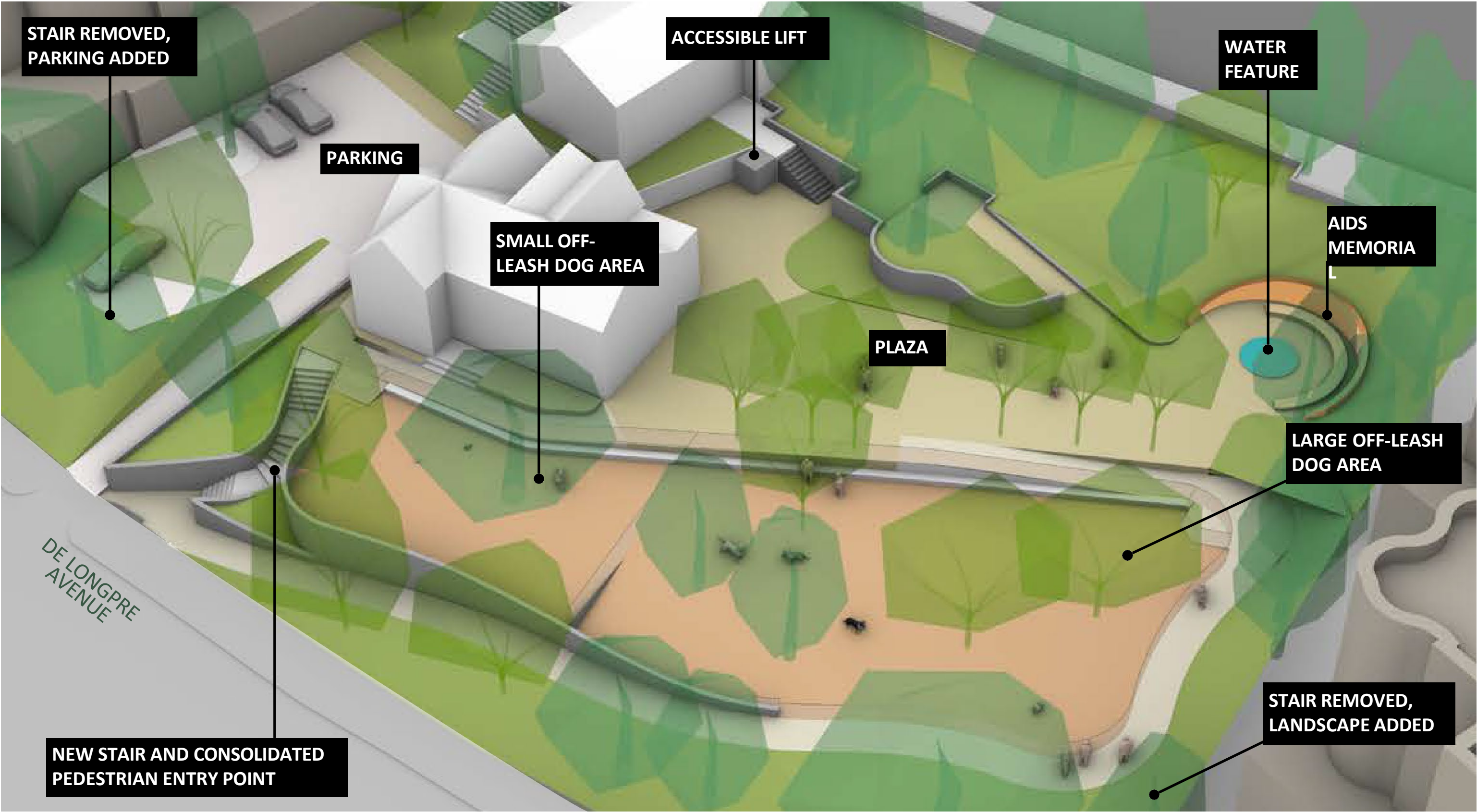
- Vegetation**
- EXISTING TREES TO BE RETAINED: (59)
 - EXISTING TREES TO BE REMOVED: (7)
 - PROPOSED TREES: (14)
- Circulation**
- ROUTE FROM SUNSET TO DE LONGPRE
 - ACCESSIBLE ROUTE FROM VAN PARKING
 - SLOPED PATHWAY (<5%)
 - SLOPED PATHWAY WITH HANDRAILS (5-8%)
- Program**
- WATER FEATURE
 - LANDSCAPE AREA
 - OFF-LEASH DOG AREA: 6,075 SF
LARGE: 4,447 SF + SMALL: 1,628 SF
EXISTING OFF-LEASH DOG AREA: 5,218 SF
 - AIDS MEMORIAL
 - PLAZA: 3,730 SF
 - PARKING LOT: 2,601 SF

*Elevations shown are approximate.



Aerial View

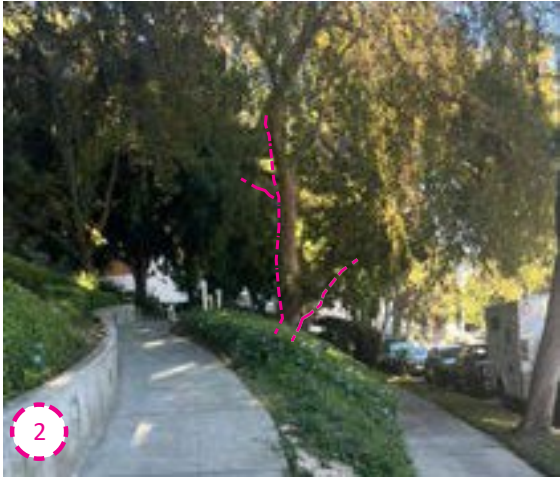
Overall Park Layout



Proposed Tree Removals + New Trees



LIQUIDAMBAR STYRACIFILIA
PATH RECONFIGURATION



ULMUS PARVIFOLIA
PATH RECONFIGURATION



MELALEUCA QUINQUENERVIA
PATH RECONFIGURATION/ LEANING/
ADA HEAD CLEARANCES



EUGENIA PANICULATA
PATH RECONFIGURATION



LEPTOSPERMUM LAEVIGATUM
LEANING/ ADA HEAD CLEARANCES/
VEHICLE CLEARANCES



PODOCARPUS GRACILIOR
RE-GRADING AND PARKING LOT
RECONFIGURATION



LIQUIDAMBAR STYRACIFILIA
LEANING/ OVERCROWDING

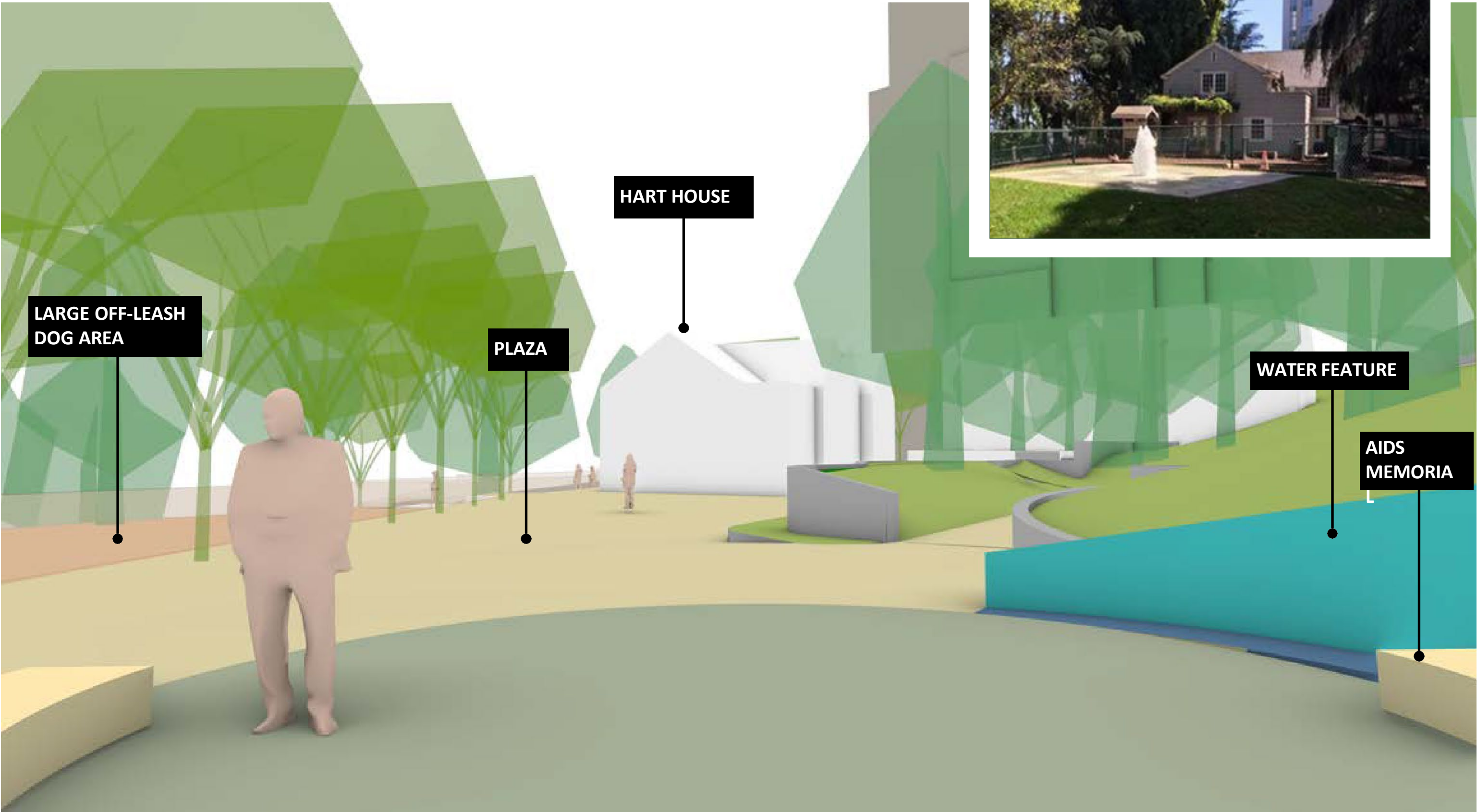


Legend

- EXISTING TREES TO BE RETAINED: (58)
- EXISTING TREES TO BE REMOVED: (8)
- PROPOSED NEW TREES: (15)

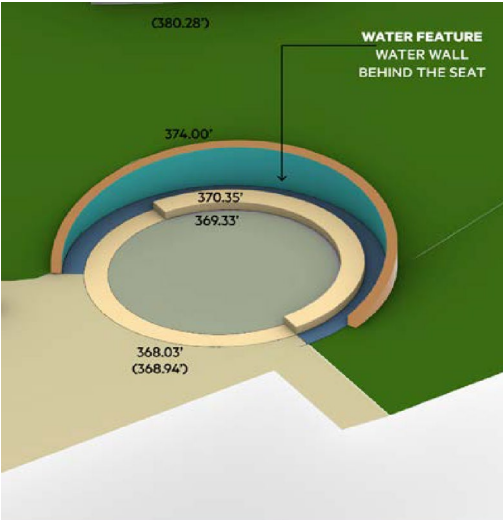
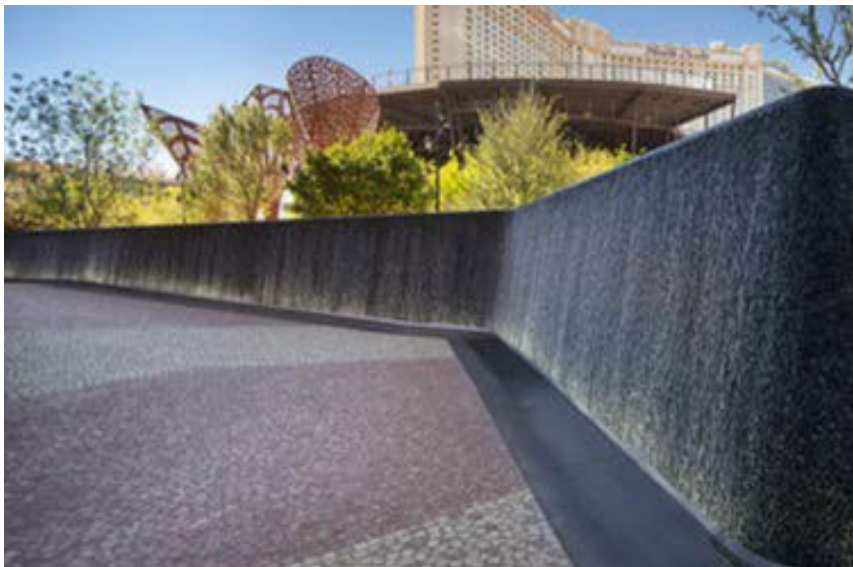
View of Hart House

AIDS Memorial Overlooking Hart House



Reference Images

AIDS Memorial and Plaza



NEXT STEPS:

- Presentation of these design updates and options for consideration to the **Disabilities Advisory Board and Older Adults Advisory Board**.
- Team will incorporate recommendations from Advisory Boards and Commissions into a **schematic design drawing set and report**.
- This will be reviewed by the **Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks and Department of Cultural Affairs**.
- The updated design and recommendations from Boards and Commissions will be **presented to City Council**.
- Once the schematic design is approved, the team will move into **design development and construction drawings**, which will likely be complete near the end of 2025 and ready for bidding for construction in mid-2026.

Concept

Legend

Vegetation



EXISTING TREES TO BE RETAINED: (59)



EXISTING TREES TO BE REMOVED: (7)



PROPOSED TREES: (14)

Circulation



ROUTE FROM SUNSET TO DE LONGPRE



ACCESSIBLE ROUTE FROM VAN PARKING



SLOPED PATHWAY (<5%)



SLOPED PATHWAY WITH HANDRAILS (5-8%)

Program



WATER FEATURE



LANDSCAPE AREA



OFF-LEASH DOG AREA: **6,075 SF**
LARGE: 4,447 SF + SMALL: 1,628 SF
EXISTING OFF-LEASH DOG AREA: 5,218 SF



AIDS MEMORIAL



PLAZA: **3,730 SF**



PARKING LOT: **2,601 SF**



Thank You